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COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 1431st MEETING

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva,
on Wednesday, 16 September 2009, at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Ms. LEE

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS OF STATES PARTIES (continued)

Second periodic report of Mozambique (continued) (CRC/C/MOZ/2 and CRC/C/MOZ/Q/2)

1. At the invitation of the Chairperson, the members of the delegation of Mozambique took places at the Committee table.
2. Mr. KRAPPMANN said that, while the Committee recognized the progress made by Mozambique in improving the education system, much still remained to be done. Mozambique still had no law establishing that education was compulsory and free of charge, and although enrolment was nearly 100 per cent at the beginning of primary school, only half the pupils completed primary education, while enrolment was extremely low in secondary school. Did students drop out of school because of the cost of education? While there were fee exemptions for certain students, only the poorest of the poor qualified for them. He asked what the State could do to more effectively encourage children to remain in school.
3. The country already lacked teachers, and classes were far too large. Noting that certain reports stated that up to 10,000 teachers could die of AIDS in the coming years, he said that in such circumstances, full enrolment could become so burdensome that the educational system might simply collapse. The delegation should explain how teachers were trained both before and during their service, and should inform the Committee whether the Government was still hiring untrained teachers. It was especially crucial to ensure that caregivers at day-care centres and in the early years of primary school had the necessary qualifications. What kind of remuneration could teachers expect? Were they able to motivate the students in their classes?
4. He asked what became of the hundreds of thousands of 11- and 12-year-olds who dropped out of school, and whether they had opportunities for vocational training or for work. If they did enter the world of work, were the jobs mainly in the informal sector?
5. Mr. KOOMPGRAPHANT, noting the high number of orphans, many of whom had lost their parents to HIV/AIDS, asked what forms of care were available for them and whether there were specialized caregivers for such children. The report stated that access to basic social services was becoming more difficult for orphans. What solutions were envisaged?
6. Ms. VARMAH expressed particular concern about reports that sexual abuse had become so common in the education system that parents were often reluctant to send their daughters to school. Male teachers regularly forced their female students to have sex, failing which they would not permit them to pass their exams. Furthermore, such teachers enjoyed impunity. When confronted or caught, they were merely forced to pay monetary compensation to the victims. Girls were apparently discouraged from complaining, and some had even been killed for doing so. In that context, she asked what the Government was doing to effectively implement the national code of conduct for teachers, to protect children and to punish such sex offenders.

7. While some measures had been taken by the Government to ensure that disabled children enjoyed the right to health and education without discrimination, the facilities available to such children were still very rare, and specialized teachers were lacking. What steps were being taken to improve the education provided to disabled children?

8. Mr. ZERMATTEN noted that the age of criminal responsibility had been set at 16, and that persons over that age were exposed to deprivation of liberty lasting up to eight years. What were the conditions of detention of such persons? The delegation should explain where they were held, whether they were incarcerated separately from adults and to what extent they were able to maintain communication with their families. It should also clarify what criteria applied to the pretrial detention of children over 16. Part of the recent effort at legislative reform included the establishment of juvenile courts, but for the time being, just one such court existed, in the capital. What progress had been made in setting up similar courts in other parts of the country?

9. As for those children in conflict with the law who were under the age of 16, the report enumerated a list of disciplinary measures that could be taken, some of which were quite serious. However, it did not explain who determined exactly which measures, procedures and guarantees were applicable. Lastly, he asked whether specific provisions were in place for the protection, compensation and possible rehabilitation of children who were victims or witnesses of criminal acts.

10. Ms. ORTIZ said that while the Convention emphasized that parents had primary responsibility for the upbringing of their children, it also stipulated that the State should render appropriate assistance to them. Considering the very high number of children who were institutionalized in Mozambique, she asked what efforts were undertaken at the community level to support and strengthen families. Were children whose births had never been registered able to have access to public services such as education and health?

11. According to a report by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), some 60 per cent of women had reported that they had been victims of discrimination in relation to inheritance, apparently because of the application of customary law, despite the fact that a relatively new law recognized the right of women to inherit property and land. Such discrimination naturally affected the family, including children, and the ensuing lack of resources could result in the separation of mothers from their children. Addressing that problem would help to reduce the number of children who ended up in institutions.

12. Were any programmes implemented at the community level to assist widows and single mothers, or to increase social tolerance of persons who were sexually abused, so as to prevent situations arising in which children had to be placed in institutions? Lastly, she asked whether the Government had enlisted the support of traditional leaders to ensure that children's rights were defended, and what steps it had taken to make sure that no corporal punishment was applied in schools.

13. The CHAIRPERSON invited the delegation to respond to the questions put by the Committee members at the morning meeting.

14. Mr. MACASSAR (Mozambique) said that under the Mozambican legislative system, laws generally entered into force after a period of 15 days, but that those laws that required the adoption of specific mechanisms often entered into force later, sometimes after 180 days. For example, the Child Protection Act, which was one of the laws adopted in July 2009 in support of children's rights, was to enter into force after 180 days. The lack of a clear regulatory framework for the application of such laws was being addressed by a working group established to draw up regulations. It was hoped that by mid-2010 the regulations would be ready.

15. The lack of regulations did not, however, mean that implementation of the laws in question could not begin. The legal framework had already been accepted, and the courts were already able to apply the new laws in cases involving the relevant offences.

16. Mozambique had been the first country in southern Africa to adopt a law on human trafficking, and the Government was working with civil society on dissemination activities in that field. The new law prohibited trafficking in humans both internationally and domestically.

17. In July 2009, after a two-year process in which the designation, composition and functions of the National Human Rights Commission had been redefined to bring them into line with the Constitution, the Commission had been set up by a unanimous decision of the Mozambican parliament. The Commission consisted of 11 members, of whom 4 would come from human rights organizations addressing issues such as the rights of women, people with HIV/AIDS and disabled people. The Commission's mandate also included the protection and promotion of children's rights. Three of the Commission's members would be experts in health, education and justice, and were to be appointed by the Mozambican parliament. Another member of the Commission would be chosen from the Bar Association.

18. Mozambique had entered into bilateral and multilateral agreements with the countries of southern Africa, in particular with South Africa, to deal with a wide variety of issues, ranging from the management of cross-border national parks to the movement of persons affected by HIV/AIDS, malaria and other problems.

19. Ms. MAURÁS PÉREZ (Country Rapporteur) requested clarification concerning the agreement concluded between Mozambique and South Africa on persons with HIV/AIDS. What was the content of that agreement?

20. Mr. MACASSAR (Mozambique) said that the agreement identified fields of activity for partnership between the two countries. It would make it possible to estimate the numbers of Mozambicans in South Africa and of South Africans in Mozambique affected by HIV/AIDS, and would help determine their need for assistance. In particular, it addressed the need for the two Governments to share information.

21. Noting that the Committee had referred at the morning meeting to possible budget cuts in HIV/AIDS programmes, he said the delegation was unaware of budget reductions in that area. He was under the impression that both the activities and the resources available for them had increased. The delegation would need to look into the matter more closely before it could respond to the Committee's concerns.

22. Ms. AIDOO (Country Rapporteur) said that while Mozambique had made great strides in providing legal protection of children's rights, it was still unclear whether the Children's Act and the Juvenile Justice Act were currently operational. Were all the respective agencies and services aware of the new provisions and of the roles they were supposed to play under the new laws? She had understood that the two laws in question required the adoption of regulations prior to their implementation.

23. Mr. MACASSAR (Mozambique) said that while there had been some delay in the establishment of the corresponding regulations, a team was currently working on that question, and also on the implementation of the Human Trafficking Act. The team would assign functions to all those working in the fields covered by those laws.

24. Ms. MABUNDA (Mozambique) said that road traffic accidents were a real concern to the Government. Regulatory instruments for road transport had been adopted. New road signs and improved pedestrian crossings had been introduced and higher fines and harsher penalties placed on drink driving, the use of mobile phones at the wheel and speeding. Work to prevent road traffic accidents included sensitizing road users and pedestrians to potential dangers. Basic road safety had also been included in the primary education syllabus and traffic police officers visited schools every week to explain such concepts as how to cross the road safely. The Government was furthermore ensuring proper regulation of driving schools and vehicle inspections. Civic education campaigns were broadcast on radio and television.

25. Violence against children in Mozambique was partly a cultural issue. While some of the cultural barriers mentioned in the State party's initial report to the Committee (CRC/C/MOZ/1) had been removed, a single strategy to tackle violence against children could not be applied throughout the country, since the specific nature of violence needed to be studied area by area.

26. The Ministry of the Interior had established 204 care units within police stations which were specifically designed to receive complaints from victims of domestic violence. The Family Act of 2004 and the Domestic Violence Act of August 2009 reinforced the work being done by the care units.

27. Instances of crimes against children included sexual abuse, physical abuse, negligence, kidnapping and some cases of trafficking. In that light, the Government had set up separate, specialized offices with staff trained to deal with children. As part of the work of the offices, a national helpline had been made available for reporting violence and a network had been set up to ensure coordination between the police force and other institutions, such as the Ministry of Health and hospitals to which victims of violence were admitted. Victims of violence could also submit complaints to the Public Prosecutor's Office and to civil society organizations, if they were fearful of addressing the police directly. Legal-aid associations were part of the network as all victims of violence were entitled to legal aid. The Ministry for Women and Social Action was also involved in the care of children who had been victim to non-physical abuse, for example, by providing temporary accommodation.

28. Cases of violence could be processed quickly and victims were not obliged to pay for the medical report that was a vital element in any complaint. Psychological care was also provided to victims of violence through State and private institutions.

29. The CHAIRPERSON requested further information about cases of children being raped by male teachers in schools.

30. Mr. FILALI asked how corruption might affect the issues of traffic accidents and violence and how the phenomenon was addressed.

31. Mr. CITARELLA asked what kinds of preventive action had been taken to educate children and parents on the issue of violence against children.

32. Ms. MABUNDA (Mozambique) said that, in addition to responding to complaints of violence, the police force conducted awareness-raising campaigns in various communities and schools. The national hotline for victims of violence could help children who were the secondary victims of violence and could prevent violence from escalating by informing children of their rights and reporting cases to the police. Community and grass-roots leaders were trained to prevent and react to violence, as well as to pass information to the relevant Government authorities. As part of a nationwide campaign against child abuse, meetings were held in schools to educate teachers about the need to protect the children in their care. “Friends of the Children” centres could also monitor any violence in schools, whether perpetrated by a teacher or a student.

33. Ms. VILLARÁN DE LA PUENTE asked whether teachers found guilty of sexual abuse of children were given administrative or criminal penalties. She also asked whether any teachers or family members who had sexually abused children had been prosecuted, and requested examples of the sentences handed down in those cases.

34. Ms. VARMAH asked whether the teachers’ code of conduct was already operational.

35. The CHAIRPERSON asked whether the prosecution of perpetrators of violence against children might be affected by corruption in the police and justice systems.

36. Ms. MABUNDA (Mozambique) said that teachers had been prosecuted and sentenced for violence against children, and statistics were given in table 12 of the State party’s second periodic report (CRC/C/MOZ/2). While the teachers’ code of conduct was operational in all schools and allowed administrative action to be taken against teachers, the code did not serve as a substitute for criminal prosecution of violence against children.

37. Instances of corruption in the police force did occur and the authorities relied on the public to submit complaints. Instances of police corruption were considered to be very serious offences: police officers had been dismissed and given criminal sentences when found guilty of corruption. To address the problem, the Government was currently conducting an anti-corruption campaign aimed at State officials.

38. Ms. MAURÁS PÉREZ (Country Rapporteur) said that NGO reports and a survey of children in certain regions of Mozambique had indicated that sexual abuse and threats by teachers were very common. She therefore asked what specific measures were being implemented to combat the phenomenon.

39. The CHAIRPERSON asked whether sexual abuse and violence committed by teachers were covered by the Criminal Code.

40. Ms. LEVI (Mozambique) said that cases of abuse in schools were not ignored or overlooked and that measures had been taken to tackle the problem in conjunction with representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The Government was working to ensure that any information about abuse would reach the relevant authorities. All forms of child abuse could be prosecuted. Child abuse was a public offence under the Criminal Code, which meant that it could be reported by any person, not only the victim or the caregiver.

41. Ms. SALES (Mozambique), in response to the questions on adoption, said that a policy for social action had been adopted in 1998 and a strategy for social action for children approved. Those instruments served as guidance for caring for children in vulnerable situations and established a series of principles, which covered the institutionalization of children. Wherever possible, children had to be kept in a family environment, in other words, within the biological family or a foster family.

42. For various reasons, however, refugee children could not always be reunited with their families and care centres would look after those children while their families were being traced. The State played a key role in managing the centres to monitor and provide the necessary regulatory framework, thereby ensuring appropriate and adequate care and the protection of the children's rights. The Government also provided training for the centres' staff. The country had some 50 centres, although not all were currently in operation.

43. The Government's primary goal, however, was to readmit children to their biological families, or place them in foster families. It had established family reunification programmes to trace the families of refugee children. Where a child had to be placed with an adoptive family, extensive preliminary enquiries were made to ensure that the family could provide satisfactory care and that the child would be able to adapt to the new family. All adoption requests were considered by a judge. Where a prospective family met the necessary requirements, the adoptive child would be placed with the family on a trial basis, during which period the family would be visited regularly. Once the trial period was complete, the social welfare services would conclude the adoption process.

44. Mr. GURAN asked why Mozambique had not ratified the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption.

45. Ms. SALES (Mozambique) said that her country was currently considering ratification.

46. The CHAIRPERSON asked whether adopted children continued to have access to their biological families. She also asked how foster families were chosen.

47. Mr. KOTRANE asked for more details regarding the exploitation of children placed in foster or adoptive families that appeared to be mentioned in the State party's report (CRC/C/MOZ/2).

48. Ms. ORTIZ said that the Hague Convention on the Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption was a useful tool from the point of view of organizing alternative care and adoption, because it insisted upon the link between the child and

its biological family and upon a freely consented decision to adopt. She wished to allay any fears that adhering to the Hague Convention obliged a signatory to practise intercountry adoption; that choice was made only if necessary.

49. It was essential to maintain and strengthen that link when children requested alternative care. While the State party could be commended for its efforts to institutionalize children, it was unclear what steps had been taken to prevent children from leaving their biological families to receive alternative care. Therefore, it was important for the State party to ratify the Hague Convention and to align its adoption law with it.

50. Ms. SALES (Mozambique) said that the previous speaker's insights would be particularly helpful as the State party went forward in its deliberations concerning ratification of the Hague Convention.

51. Ms. LEVI (Mozambique) said that intercountry adoption was a burning issue in Mozambique because many children were in a vulnerable situation. The State party was doing its best to ensure that the situation did not worsen. The problem of adoption had to be considered within the overall national context. There was a sharp divide between rural and urban settings, and the notion of extended families was prevalent in rural areas. Families naturally extended their care to children who were not necessarily their own, especially owing to the disintegration of the nuclear family in the wake of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Guardians often helped families during their recovery. When alternative family care was sought, the first step was to look for a family at the local level. Intercountry adoption was considered to be a last resort. Throughout the process, emphasis was placed on maintaining the link between children and their biological families.

52. There were diverging opinions within the State party on intercountry adoption, with trafficking in children a potential risk. The guiding principle remained the best interests of the child. However, ratification of the Hague Convention might open up other opportunities for dealing with the problem. In reply to a question by Ms. Ortiz, she said that isolated cases of intercountry adoption had been known to occur in Mozambique.

The meeting was suspended at 4.35 p.m. and resumed at 4.55 p.m.

53. Ms. SALES (Mozambique) said that there were three special schools for disabled children. The State party had adopted a policy of inclusive education, whereby children with special needs could either receive individual attention in a normal classroom setting with other children, or attend special classes within a regular school. To tackle the problem, it was necessary to raise awareness of the needs of disabled children among families, stressing that the former had the same rights as other children, and to provide training for teachers and health-care personnel. A decree passed in 2009 stipulated that all public premises, including schools, should be accessible to the disabled. That involved the installation of ramps and special lifts.

54. Progress had been made in education in general, which was reflected in increased access to primary education and a rise in the number of schools. Because children from vulnerable families became more vulnerable if they did not attend school, the State offered families a number of incentives, such as socio-economic and skills training, subsidies

and income-generating projects. The Government had developed a mechanism enabling children to have free access to schools, depending on their socio-economic situation.

55. With regard to the labour legislation, children were allowed to work at the age of 14, provided that the work did not endanger their lives and could be reconciled with school attendance.

56. Mr. KRAPPMAN noted that some 50 per cent of children in grade one left school before graduating from the lower level of primary school. He wished to know how they spent their time if they were not in school and were not allowed to work.

57. The CHAIRPERSON asked whether the State party envisaged making primary education compulsory.

58. Ms. SALES (Mozambique) said that she was aware of the high dropout rate in primary schools. However, in addition to the incentives mentioned previously, efforts were being made by the Government and civil society to promote education through vocational training provided from the eighth grade, after completion of primary school, and by experimental distance learning for adolescents who could not attend school.

59. Ms. LEVI (Mozambique) said that the country had inherited a disastrous situation in terms of education when it had become an independent State. The literacy rate had stood at 57 per cent and was still low in comparison with the rest of the world. However progress had been made: nearly 5 million children were currently attending school, more than ever before. In some provinces, female schoolchildren outnumbered male schoolchildren and in some private universities in Mozambique, there were more female students than male students.

60. With regard to the problem of dropouts, all children were encouraged to attend school, at least through the primary level, with special incentives for girls, who often left school because of unwanted pregnancies. A combination of factors, including the need to survive, lay at the root of the problem. In principle, teachers could play a key role in persuading children to stay in school. The Government had to be content with palliative measures for the time being.

61. It was true that teachers did not receive adequate pay, but there was hope that better pay for teachers and other civil servants could be achieved thanks to a recently approved wage-incentive programme.

62. Mr. FILALI wished to know what tangible measures were being implemented to improve education in Mozambique.

63. Ms. LEVI (Mozambique) said that the challenges were greater in rural areas because people in cities had access to other types of information and were more aware of the value of education. Concrete measures included incentives aimed at girls, such as school meals and a food basket which they could take home after school, and encouragement derived from role models in television and radio programmes.

64. Mr. KRAPPMAN said that while the Committee appreciated the progress Mozambique had made in education, it appeared to suffer from its success. Although the schools had more

teachers, there was a need for better training, which was key to quality education. A good educational system producing well-educated people was essential to a country's development. He wished to know what the State party intended to do to improve the situation.

65. Ms. VILLARÁN DE LA PUENTE recalled that no answer had been given regarding plans for compulsory primary education and repeated the question.

66. The CHAIRPERSON said that inclusive education placed a great burden on teachers and that architectural modifications for children with disabilities, though called for in the legislation, were not always carried out.

67. Ms. AIDOO (Country Rapporteur) said that the historical backlog had a significant impact on the current educational situation. In 1975, shortly after independence, about 99.5 per cent of women were illiterate, because they had no access to education. Investing in women's education was worthwhile because it affected children's education as well.

68. Based on the experience of her own country, Ghana, she suggested that to meet the pressing need for teachers in rural areas, the State party should consider using funds available to heavily indebted poor countries to support volunteers - retired former teachers - and to recruit unemployed secondary school and university graduates to form a corps of temporary teachers.

69. Ms. SALES (Mozambique) said that the Government recognized the need to reduce the teacher-pupil ratio. It was, however, difficult to ensure quality teaching while trying to ensure access to education for as many children as possible. In an effort to increase the number of teachers, the Government had introduced a scheme whereby students in their twelfth year of high school could complete an accelerated one-year teacher training course instead of the usual three.

70. Compulsory primary schooling was being introduced progressively, since any attempt to impose it too quickly immediate introduction would doubtless be met by resistance on cultural grounds and would create capacity problems. Families and communities were being encouraged to send primary-age children to school. Access to universal education remained, nonetheless, the Government's ultimate goal.

71. Mr. MACASSAR (Mozambique) added that one measure currently under consideration was the introduction of distance learning for schoolchildren in order to reduce class sizes.

72. Ms. LEVI (Mozambique) said that the Government continued to explore all possible ways of increasing access to education, while at the same time improving the quality of education. Education, along with health and agriculture, were the Government's priority areas. She recognized that there remained much to do to improve educational provision in her country and would welcome further suggestions from the Committee.

73. Ms. MABUNDA (Mozambique) said that, while the Maputo City Minors Court was the only specialist youth court in the country, all provincial courts included a judge who was competent to hear cases involving minors. The minimum age of criminal responsibility was 16 years, with 16- to 18-year-olds having reduced criminal responsibility. An eight-year sentence would be handed down to an individual in that age group in exceptional circumstances only, for a very serious crime or if the perpetrator had committed a previous offence. Sentences were

served in so-called “prison school” (prisão-escola), where inmates continued their education, including vocational training. Deprivation of liberty was applied only in exceptional circumstances, as a last resort for juvenile delinquents under the age of 16. That decision rested with the judge, who took advice from other specialists such as psychologists and social workers. Judges, police officers and social workers had been instructed in the provisions of the new law on juvenile justice. A centre for young offenders had been established in Maputo, and further measures would be taken to implement the provisions of the new legislation.

74. The police played a limited role in dealing with minors who were in conflict with the law. Once the police had registered the complaint and identified the minor, he or she was brought before a judge within 24 hours. If for any reason the minor could not be brought before a judge within that time, the police had to make a written report explaining why, and ensure that the minor was held in decent conditions at the police station.

75. Mr. ZERMATTEN asked who was responsible for taking the decision to place children under 16 years of age who were in conflict with the law in prison schools or other establishments, and what guarantees were given.

76. Ms. MABUNDA (Mozambique) said that judges competent in the area of juvenile justice decided on the measures appropriate for children under 16 years of age who were in conflict with the law.

77. Ms. LEVI (Mozambique) said that, while the definition of the child was not entirely consistent across the country, all minors under the age of 16 who were in conflict with the law came under the jurisdiction of juvenile justice, which applied preventive measures, not punishment. Those measures were aimed at ensuring that the young person did not become a criminal. Those aged between 16 and 18 were tried by regular courts, although their age was taken into account and the maximum possible prison sentence was 8 years, as opposed to 22 years for adults.

78. Mr. CITARELLA asked how a 15-year-old who committed murder would be treated by the justice system.

79. Mr. KOOMPRAHANT asked what the minimum age was to be sent to court.

80. Ms. MABUNDA (Mozambique) said that all children under the age of 16 were heard by judges specializing in juvenile justice. A 15-year-old who committed murder would also come before the youth court or a judge specializing in juvenile justice. In consultation with other specialists, the judge would be likely to sentence the young person to a period in a rehabilitation centre, where efforts would be made to ensure that he or she could resettle in society and lead a normal, peaceful life.

81. The CHAIRPERSON asked what action had been taken to respond to the list of issues the Child Parliament had submitted to the Government in 2006.

82. Ms. SALES (Mozambique) said that, while she had no precise information regarding that list of issues, the Government had implemented several recommendations made by the Child Parliament.

83. Ms. MAURÁS PÉREZ (Country Rapporteur) noted the significant progress that had been made in the State party and its potential to improve the situation of children still further.

84. The Committee would welcome an update in writing on the reduction in budget allocations to social sectors, particularly those concerned with HIV/AIDS.

85. The exact status of the national children's council remained unclear. It would be useful to learn whether that body was completely independent from the Government or was in fact a department within the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social Welfare.

86. The Committee looked forward to more specific information in the forthcoming periodic report on the implementation of the new legislation the delegation had mentioned and the work of the bodies that had been created under that legislation. The report should also contain disaggregated data on the situation of children in the State party, highlighting the differences between the sexes and at the local, district and provincial levels. She hoped the State party would be in a position to clarify its definition of the child in its forthcoming report, and the steps that had been taken towards ratifying the Hague Convention.

87. Despite its fruitful dialogue with the delegation, the Committee required further information on several major issues including health, breastfeeding and the cultural change needed to prevent violence against women and children. She urged the Government to continue its efforts to revise the code of conduct for teachers in that respect. More details were also needed on the steps taken to ensure children's right to be heard, starting with the family, and safeguarding that right at every level, including in the Child Parliament. While progress had been made in the field of education, the Committee remained concerned at the large number of children who did not complete primary education. It was unclear whether the State party planned to establish more specialist youth courts, and whether juvenile justice would be extended to 16- to-18-year-olds.

88. Ms. LEVI (Mozambique) thanked the Committee for its useful questions and advice on priority areas for future action. The Government looked forward to receiving the Committee's concluding observations.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.