



Convention on the Rights of the Child

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Summary record of the 2445th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Wednesday, 29 January 2020, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Mr. Pedernera Reyna

Contents

Consideration of reports of States parties (*continued*)

Initial report of the State of Palestine (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Consideration of reports of States parties (continued)

Initial report of the State of Palestine (continued) (CRC/C/PSE/1; CRC/C/PSE/Q/1 and CRC/C/PSE/RQ/1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of the State of Palestine took places at the Committee table.*
2. **Mr. Majdalani** (State of Palestine) said that, the previous day, the President of the United States and the Prime Minister of the occupying State of Israel had held a press conference during which they had announced a pledge to grant all of Palestine to the Israeli occupiers, marking a turning point in the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The American President's intention to flout international law, deny the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and disregard various Security Council resolutions calling for a two-State solution would wreak havoc in the region and throughout the world. He wished to reaffirm the commitment of the State of Palestine to international law and to ensuring that its children would be raised to respect human rights and freedoms.
3. Despite the political division between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, the Government collaborated, to the extent possible, with Hamas to ensure the implementation in the Gaza Strip of all laws adopted by the legitimate authorities of the State of Palestine, with much success.
4. The rehabilitation centres for juveniles in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank were not prisons or detention centres but open facilities with a focus on protection and rehabilitation. The open regime had proven successful: to date, there had not been a single escape attempt from one of the centres.
5. The bill on the rights of persons with disabilities had been drafted with input from civil society organizations and Birzeit University. It had been under discussion since 2018 and had been presented just the week before to the Council of Ministers for discussion and approval before being issued as a decree-law. The bill provided for the establishment of a committee to implement policies in all areas concerning persons with disabilities. The Ministry of Social Development had received special funding for a capacity-building programme for persons with disabilities that had benefited 5,600 people so far.
6. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) provided various forms of assistance to Palestinian refugees living in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. The Palestinian authorities provided them with services in addition to those provided by UNRWA and preserved their political right to return to the land from which they had been expelled, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 194 (III).
7. **Ms. Badwan** (State of Palestine) said that guidelines had been adopted for the collection of data to inform child rights policies. All statistical reports were published on the website of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics and categorized by topic. The Sustainable Development Goal indicators could be cross-referenced with data on the rights of children and information was available on the level of implementation of policies in that area.
8. Data had been collected on issues related to children's rights in the State of Palestine since 1999. In 2012, child rights indicators had been developed in collaboration with Save the Children, and they had been used to prepare the country's initial report under the Convention. The data were gathered using surveys and disaggregated according to various factors such as age, gender, disability and civil status. The Bureau had created an interactive website for schoolchildren and held yearly events with the support of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education to raise awareness among children of the importance of statistics.
9. **Mr. Majdalani** (State of Palestine) said that, since November 2017, when President Trump had declared Jerusalem to be the capital of Israel, the United States had cut off aid to the Palestinian people as well as funding to UNRWA. The United States Government had

also put pressure on other donors to reduce their contributions to UNRWA. The funding shortfall had forced the Agency to cut back its services, including education and health care, and obliged the Palestinian authorities to fill the gap in services using funding from its own budget. Moreover, the occupying Israeli Government had withheld millions of dollars in tax transfers to the Palestinian Authority on the pretext that the money was given to the families of martyrs and prisoners. Between 2010 and 2018, international aid to the country had fallen by 40 per cent, resulting in a budget deficit of US\$ 1.5 billion in 2019. Despite the critical financial situation, funding for education, health and social protection policies had remained unchanged.

10. **Mr. Zaid** (State of Palestine) said that any differences between the statistics gathered by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics and the Ministry of Education and Higher Education were due to differing research methodologies: the Bureau conducted surveys whereas the Ministry used samples to compile its statistics.

11. School fees ranged between \$7 and \$14 per year, but children who were unable to pay were not barred from attending school. Many children in the Gaza Strip had been unable to pay for many years and had been allowed to attend nonetheless. Some children did not need to pay at all, either because their fees were covered by the Ministry of Social Development, or because they were exempt on humanitarian grounds. Exemptions were decided by school committees on a case-by-case basis.

12. Under the 2017 Education Act, corporal punishment was completely prohibited in schools. If such offences were reported, investigations were conducted and the teachers in question faced a warning, suspension, dismissal or even prosecution. The victims were referred to psychologists. Steps were taken to ensure that all teachers, especially new recruits, school principals and counsellors received training on the ban on corporal punishment.

13. Though they were few in number, there were sharia-based and Christian religious schools in the country. All schools followed the same curriculum established by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, except that children were taught about the Qur'an and the Sunna in the Muslim schools and about Christianity in the Christian schools. An evaluation conducted by an independent body had concluded that all school textbooks contained a strong human rights component. As in all countries, children in the State of Palestine learned about national heroes and martyrs, who were glorified for their actions in the national interest.

14. The vast majority of State-run schools had emergency units with staff trained to deal with situations that threatened public safety, and students and teachers received training in that area every year. There were also medical units in almost all schools that provided a range of services, such as eye tests. Children received age-appropriate sexual and reproductive health education as part of the school curriculum and sexual health advice was available to students on an individual basis.

15. Students with disabilities had been incorporated into the mainstream education system since the adoption of the national strategy for inclusive education in 2014. Programmes had been established to provide specialist training to teachers on inclusive education, and assistive devices were available for children with visual and hearing impairments. Campaigns were carried out to raise awareness of children with disabilities, particularly among local communities.

16. **Ms. Todorova** said that, notwithstanding the difficult political situation faced by the State party, it was important for education policy to promote understanding, peace and tolerance. She was concerned that some textbooks incited violence and that school premises were sometimes used for events that fostered intolerance. She would like the delegation to elaborate on policies and measures to prevent children from bringing guns and knives to school.

17. **Mr. Rodríguez Reyes** (Country Task Force) said that he would be interested to learn whether corporal punishment was prohibited by law in all settings and whether steps were taken to prevent children from being subjected to corporal punishment in their homes. He wished to know what approach the State party adopted to sex education and whether adolescents were encouraged to use contraceptives, particularly with a view to preventing

HIV/AIDS. The Committee would be interested in hearing about public policies and strategies for persons with disabilities.

18. **Mr. Majdalani** (State of Palestine) said that age-appropriate reproductive health and sex education was included in the curricula for the first to twelfth grades. However, sexual relations among adolescents were rare and were not encouraged on account of prevailing cultural and moral values. Condoms and contraceptives were not distributed in schools.

19. Although children were provoked daily by their treatment at checkpoints and by racial discrimination and settler fascism, incitement to violence was not included in the school curricula, which had recently been reviewed. Any content that might be deemed to constitute incitement had either been amended or deleted. The use of schools for political, military or other extracurricular activities was also prohibited. During the Israeli assault on Gaza, schools, including those run by UNRWA, had been targeted on the pretext that they were harbouring Hamas fighters, although they had actually been used by displaced persons whose houses had been demolished.

20. **Mr. Zaid** (State of Palestine) said that Palestinian children were already well aware of the repeated human rights violations perpetrated, for instance, against refugees and prisoners and did not need to learn about them in textbooks. Committees had nonetheless been established to ensure that school textbooks were in line with Palestinian interests, international law and recommendations issued by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Any student who was found to be carrying a weapon was referred to a disciplinary board.

21. Article 14 of the 2017 Education Act on inclusive education stipulated that children with disabilities should have access to high-quality educational facilities and resources, such as materials in Braille. Services were provided by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in coordination with the Ministry of Health. Civil society organizations had donated extrabudgetary funds in 2019 totalling about US\$ 3,100,000 to implement the inclusive education plan.

22. **Ms. Ayoubi Idrissi** (Coordinator, Country Task Force), referring to the State party's current budgetary constraints, said that she would be interested to know whether the State had devised a child-sensitive budgetary strategy. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) provided support for such strategies. She would also like to know whether the 1960 Jordanian Criminal Code, which permitted parents to use corporal punishment against their children, would be aligned with the provisions of the Convention.

23. **Mr. Rodríguez Reyes** said that children and adolescents in the State party doubtless suffered severe stress on account of the prevailing situation. He would therefore be interested in hearing about measures taken to deal with mental health issues.

24. **Mr. Majdalani** (State of Palestine) said that international standards were invariably taken into account in drawing up budgets. Notwithstanding the financial crisis of the past three years, the budget for education, health, social welfare and culture had not been reduced. The Ministry of Culture continued to use its funds to promote a culture of tolerance and peace.

25. There was a general directorate for persons with disabilities in the Ministry of Social Development. Care and rehabilitation services for children and adults with intellectual disabilities were provided in centres supervised by the Ministry of Health and centres run by civil society organizations. A centre in Hebron provided care for 124 children and a centre in Ramallah for about 80 children. The Government covered all expenses. UNICEF was supporting a project for the early detection of disabilities among schoolchildren in the first to sixth grades in the West Bank and Gaza.

26. **Mr. Elkhatib** (State of Palestine) said that the Ministry of Health had prepared the first draft of a protocol for the early detection and prevention of disabilities. Pregnant women had access free of charge to clinical tests, ultrasound scans and vaccinations and were referred, if necessary, to public hospitals. Newborns and their mothers also underwent a range of medical tests in the neonatal period. The infant mortality rate currently stood at 11.7 per 1,000 live births, the under-5 mortality rate at 13.4 per 1,000 live births and the maternal mortality rate at 24.7 per 100,000 live births. The main reason for the recent increase in

mortality rates was that pregnant women and infants were particularly vulnerable to the influenza viruses that had spread during the past two years.

27. The Ministry of Health had issued a decision prohibiting female genital mutilation in 2011 and the Ministry of Social Development had issued a circular in 2014 prohibiting the practice in the case of girls with disabilities. No cases had been recorded in the years since then, but penalties would be imposed on parents and doctors who failed to comply with the directives. Abortion was prohibited unless the mother's life was at risk. Each case was assessed by a medical committee.

28. There were 732 primary health-care centres, including many in villages and remote areas, as well as mobile clinics. About 64 per cent of the centres were supervised by the Ministry of Health. Others were run by the private sector or UNRWA. Medication shortages were largely due to the blockade of Gaza, which had also led to delays in child immunization. The Ministry of Health frequently sought vaccines and medicines from the World Health Organization (WHO) and other international partners. Shortages in other parts of the State of Palestine were due to administrative issues and the failure of companies to deliver supplies on time. As the health budget was inadequate, the State of Palestine was cooperating with WHO, Save the Children, UNICEF and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to obtain support for health services.

29. An adolescent health programme had been incorporated into the general school health-care programme. It provided, in particular, for preventive tests and awareness-raising campaigns. Steps were also being taken to set up a unit for sexual health care and medical treatment for adolescents. Of the 170 recorded cases of HIV/AIDS, 52 of the patients were still alive. One 14-year-old girl had contracted the virus from her parents, but no minors had contracted HIV/AIDS as a result of sexual relations.

30. Two special mental health programmes had been developed. The first involved the inclusion of mental health services in the primary health-care programme. The second was a school mental health programme, which provided early detection services for all students aged between 3 and 18. Children with mental health problems were referred to qualified specialists and clinics for therapeutic interventions. The Ministry of Health attached great importance to the early detection of symptoms of depression among young people that might lead to suicide. A suicide prevention committee had been established with the support of primary mental health-care units. About 9 per cent of the patients in the special mental health-care centres were minors. All therapy was provided free of charge by the Ministry of Health and no health insurance was required. Every health directorate employed a team of psychological and psychiatric specialists and nurses to provide treatment and ensure the rehabilitation of child victims of violence referred to them by the private or public sector.

31. A two-year scientific study on oral and dental health, which would be used to develop preventive oral health programmes for schoolchildren, would shortly be completed.

32. **Mr. Majdalani** (State of Palestine) said that social development policies and programmes based on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development were reviewed and amended each year by a national team headed by the Minister of Social Development and composed of representatives of other ministries. The concept of multidimensional poverty relief had recently been incorporated into the national strategy.

33. The provision of the Jordanian Criminal Code of 1960 concerning corporal punishment had not been amended, but all other laws, including the Children's Act of 2012, prohibited corporal punishment. The draft Family Code also prohibited corporal punishment in the family. The draft Criminal Code that would eventually replace the Jordanian Code would also address the issue of violations perpetrated against children within the family.

34. **Mr. Khamis** (State of Palestine) said that the duty of the State to protect all persons with disabilities was enshrined in the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act of 1999, while the Criminal Code envisaged severe penalties for anyone who committed an act of violence, abuse or exploitation against a child with disabilities. The police, child protection counsellors and branch offices of the Ministry of Social Development responded promptly to all reports and complaints of ill-treatment against children with disabilities. A total of 42 cases had been reported to the police in 2015, and violations were found to have occurred in 6 per cent of

them. Thirteen cases of violence had been reported directly to the Ministry of Social Development in 2015 and 17 cases in the first half of 2016.

35. In June 2018, with support and funding from Save the Children, the Ministry of Social Development had rolled out an awareness-raising programme intended to counter stereotypical attitudes towards persons with disabilities. For its part, the Ministry of Information had developed a plan to build the capacities of media professionals when dealing with disability issues. The Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation had created programmes to disseminate knowledge about disability rights while the Higher Council for Youth and Sports had organized activities intended to remove social stigma surrounding disability, notably for children with Down syndrome.

36. A total of 657 children were currently in alternative care institutions. The Ministry of Social Development had organized three workshops on positive parenting and nine more were planned across the governorates. Government and civil society bodies had cooperated to produce a parenting guide and the Bureau of the Chief Qadi ran premarital education courses. The child protection system was regularly reviewed, also with the assistance of bodies such as UNICEF and Save the Children. In line with recommendations emerging from the 2019 review, efforts were being made to double the current number of 29 child protection counsellors.

37. Capacity-building workshops had been held on matters such as violence and child labour, and the same subjects had been addressed in numerous television programmes and interviews. The first draft of a strategy to protect children from violence had been prepared, in collaboration with UNICEF. Regulations governing the activities of kindergartens were currently being amended. A survey conducted on 360 kindergartens had found that 240 conformed to those regulations, and efforts were being made to regularize the others.

38. Meeting in October 2019, the National Council for Children had decided to adopt a restructuring programme covering such matters as financial independence, legal personality and membership, which was to be extended to include children themselves. The restructuring proposal had been submitted to the Council's partner organizations and to civil society institutions, which had all expressed their views, on the basis of which a final draft had been drawn up and submitted back to the Council for approval.

39. **Mr. Gudbrandsson** (Country Task Force) said that he very much welcomed the delegation's remarks concerning forthcoming legislative reviews, which he hoped would remedy a number of lacunae that currently existed in domestic law, notably with regard to protecting children from sexual abuse. He was troubled by the fact that the draft decree-law on the protection of the family from violence did not appear to contain a definition of incest, meaning that victims of sexual abuse within the family might potentially have no grounds to submit a complaint. Furthermore, the Committee was concerned that recourse to non-judicial remedies might also hinder children's access to justice; for example, in cases where girls who had suffered sexual abuse were required to marry their abuser. Was it true that children engaged in prostitution were treated not as victims but as criminals? He urged the State party to consider introducing a minimum age of sexual consent. That was an important tool to help prevent the sexual abuse of children because anyone engaging in sexual relations of any kind with a person under that age would, ipso facto, be committing an offence. Maternity leave in the State party was just 10 weeks, well short of the international standard of at least 14 weeks.

40. **Ms. Khazova** said she wished to know if female genital mutilation was prohibited by law and, if not, whether there were any plans to enact such a law. Did the State conduct any awareness-raising activities in that regard?

The meeting was suspended at 11.40 a.m. and resumed at noon.

41. **Mr. Majdalani** (State of Palestine) said that he wished to assure the Committee that the Government was doing everything in its power to fulfil its obligations under international law and human rights treaties. It had signed the Safe Schools Declaration, which was intended to prevent schools from being used or attacked during military conflict. Recent legislation, such as the Palestinian Children's Act, had precedence over the 1960 Criminal Code.

42. There was no desire to overlook or ignore incest or rape within families. That issue, along with sexual exploitation in general, would be addressed at length in the decree-law on

the protection of the family from violence. Setting marriageable age at 18 for both sexes meant that 18 was the minimum age of sexual consent and that sexual relations with a person under that age would automatically constitute rape. Child victims of sexual aggression received support and were encouraged to file complaints. Similarly, children engaged in prostitution were treated not as criminals but as victims.

43. The right to 10 weeks' maternity leave was enshrined in the Labour Code and the Civil Service Act, and for a year following that statutory period, a woman was given an hour out of each working day in which to breastfeed her infant. One hour per day over the course of 12 months amounted to more than 4 weeks, meaning that effective maternity leave was, in fact, in excess of 14 weeks. Female genital mutilation was prohibited by law and was, in any case, alien to Palestinian culture.

44. In no way did the Government seek to justify corporal punishment on the grounds that it was a widespread cultural norm that was in some way above the law. Rather, the authorities attempted to change such cultural norms through awareness-raising and education while, at the same time, seeking to impose the law.

45. **Mr. Khalil** (State of Palestine) said that provisions relating to corporal punishment contained in the Jordanian Criminal Code of 1960 had been definitively abrogated by the Palestinian Basic Law of 2003. Corporal punishment was prohibited, including in families, and anyone who violated that provision was answerable before the law.

46. In the case of children involved in criminal proceedings, alternatives to detention were generally applied and detention was used only as a last resort or to protect the child from possible harm. Cases involving children were dealt with promptly and expeditiously, always taking into consideration the child's best interests. Since 2016, just 1,500 of the 8,133 children involved in criminal proceedings had been held in detention.

47. Palestinian legislation distinguished between children at risk of delinquency and children or juveniles in conflict with the law. The latter category included minors between the ages of 12 and 18. Persons under that age could not be held criminally responsible and were referred to child protection counsellors. Protection measures were applied in regard of both categories, and such measures stayed in place until the person concerned reached the age of 21.

48. Most online violations to which Palestinian children had been exposed, as monitored by the Office of the Public Prosecutor, had been perpetrated by the occupying power, which used the Internet to convey a negative image of Palestinian children. In addition, the Ministry of Social Development had recorded 43 instances of online violations from within Palestine, in response to which appropriate action had been taken.

49. The decision to place a child with a foster family was taken by the courts on the basis of a proposal made by the child protection counsellor. Foster families had to fulfil a series of conditions set forth in law. The Office of the Public Prosecutor had special mechanisms to protect children who had suffered sexual exploitation, including online sexual exploitation. Such children were treated as victims and never criminally prosecuted. A special register of cases was kept and yearly statistics compiled. Severe penalties were envisaged for persons responsible for sexual exploitation.

50. **Mr. Al-Hardan** (State of Palestine) said that, on the basis of the principle that specific laws had primacy over general laws, the draft decree-law on the protection of the family from violence would – like the Children's Act – have precedence over the Criminal Code. Committees existed to ensure that new legislation was consistent with the Palestinian Basic Law and the country's international obligations, and bills were drafted via a process that involved wide-ranging consultation with experts, civil society groups and the public at large.

51. Acting on the recommendation of a high-level commission set up following the accession of the State of Palestine to a number of international treaties in 2014, the Government had recently created a legal harmonization committee. The committee, which included representatives from the Independent Commission for Human Rights, the Bar Association and the General Union of Palestinian Women, based its work on concluding observations issued by United Nations treaty bodies. The new body was still in its early stages and its members were undergoing training but it had already worked on the draft decree-law

on the protection of the family from violence, which now included a definition of the child that was consistent with the Convention. It had also turned its attention to the Labour Code and the decree-law on cybercrime. In addition, the committee had been instrumental in raising marriageable age to 18 and, most recently, had identified numerous areas where the Jordanian Criminal Code of 1960 required amendment.

52. A committee set up to produce a draft law on human trafficking was due to complete its work by the end of 2020 and an invitation to visit the State of Palestine had been extended to the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children.

53. The fact that the occupying power controlled border crossings was one of the reasons for the delay in drafting a citizenship law. All Palestinians were entitled to an identity card that showed their national registration number, which was issued at birth. Under the Civil Status Code, parents must register the births of their children within 10 days or face a symbolic fine. If children had not been registered by the time they turned 16, they were, regrettably, deprived of their right to an identity by the occupying power. Similarly, the occupying authorities denied Palestinian identity cards to children whose parents did not have identity cards. Holders of Palestinian identity cards whose children were born outside the State territory must register the births of those children as soon as they returned to Palestine – and before their sixteenth birthday – in order to obtain a national registration number.

54. All individuals in possession of a Palestinian registration number had the right to a Palestinian passport. The Palestinian authorities also issued passports to forcibly displaced persons and refugees with a view to facilitating their movement around the world. Many countries recognized such passports, but the occupying authorities did not.

55. **The Chair** said that he would appreciate further information on the process in place to allow children to petition the court when there were religious differences between them and their parents. He would also be interested to know more about the role of the Press Council. He wondered whether children born in the territory of the State of Palestine were considered Palestinian if their parents did not have Palestinian identification documents.

56. **Ms. Aldoseri** said that she would like to know what measures the Government took to register children born to parents of two different religions.

57. **Ms. Ayyad** (State of Palestine) said that juveniles in conflict with the law were not, in any circumstances, incarcerated alongside adults. Juvenile offenders were provided with adequate living conditions, their human rights were respected and properly trained officers were in charge of their well-being. Moreover, the decree-law on the protection of juveniles stated that the competent court must place juveniles with peers of their own age category, as per the recommendations made by child protection counsellors.

58. The Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of the Interior, governors and prosecutors were authorized to pay visits to places of detention that held juvenile offenders. Juvenile detainees could be visited by their parents on a regular basis. Any complaints submitted to the competent authorities were dealt with in accordance with the law. Civil society organizations were encouraged to make unannounced visits to centres for the detention and rehabilitation of juvenile offenders. If conditions of detention were found to be inadequate, detainees were transferred to alternative centres.

59. Any pregnant woman who was incarcerated was supervised and provided with medical care as per the recommendations of the attending physician. If a woman gave birth while in detention, the hospital rather than the detention facility was named as the place of birth. Mothers could keep their children with them up to the age of 2 and were held separately from other inmates. If the mother did not wish to keep the child with her, the father was granted custody, if appropriate. In other cases, the child was assigned to a foster family and could receive visits from his or her birth relatives. Pregnant women were detained only as a measure of last resort: of the 43 women incarcerated in 2019, only 1 had been pregnant at the time of her imprisonment.

60. The State implemented measures to prevent suicide, including awareness-raising initiatives, helplines, and media information campaigns. Children who attempted suicide were treated as victims and provided with psychological care as well as protection, if

required. Social follow-up took place with the child's family members. Very often, children would not attend medical centres and so psychiatrists were sent to their homes.

61. Where there was reason to believe that a child with disabilities was being isolated, abused or held against his or her will, the Public Prosecutor had the power to order the inspection of his or her home. Special capacity-building training was provided to State employees who worked with children with disabilities.

62. **Ms. Abu Ali** (State of Palestine) said that all cases in which it was suspected that a child had been subjected to violence within the family were referred to child protection counsellors. Sharia courts followed up cases with the competent authorities. Article 18 of the Basic Law guaranteed freedom of religion in the State of Palestine.

63. **Mr. Majdalani** (State of Palestine) said that a distinction must be drawn between residency and nationality: as a State under occupation, the State of Palestine only had the power to grant the former. In accordance with the laws in force, a woman with a Palestinian identification document could transfer Palestinian identity to her children whether or not they were born in the State of Palestine.

64. There had been no recorded cases of disputes between parents and their children on the subject of religious beliefs. In fact, a person's religion was not routinely recorded in his or her passport or birth certificate. He was aware of only one case in which a mixed-religion couple – a Muslim father and a Christian mother – had wished their children to be registered as Christians. The Ministry of the Interior, which could record religious affiliations in its computer system, had acceded to their request. Although the procedure was seldom used, no laws were in place to prevent anyone from choosing their own religion or practising it wherever they wished.

65. **Mr. Mezmur** (Country Task Force) said that the State party was to be commended on the efforts it had made to promote the rights of children both after its ratification of the Convention and prior to that date. The Committee was acutely aware of the very particular and challenging situation the State faced and would focus, in its concluding observations, on those matters that were within the State party's control.

66. He encouraged the State party to share the Committee's recommendations with stakeholders within the State of Palestine and also with international partners so that further resources, support and technical assistance might be garnered.

67. **Mr. Majdalani** (State of Palestine) said that he hoped that the Committee had been convinced that the people and State of Palestine had only one need: to see an end to the Israeli occupation and become an independent State that enjoyed full sovereignty over its territories. He wished to announce that the Ministry of Social Development and its partners were designating 2020 as the Year of the Palestinian Child in order to defend the civil, political, cultural, economic and social rights of children and ensure that their best interests prevailed. He called on the international community to provide continued support to UNRWA. He also urged the Secretary-General to protect Palestinian children in accordance with Security Council resolution 1612 (2005) on children and armed conflict.

68. **The Chair** said that the Committee acknowledged the difficulties inherent to pressing forward with the implementation of the Convention while facing occupation and a blockade. The Committee also appreciated how difficult it was to be a child in the State of Palestine. Designating 2020 as the Year of the Palestinian Child would certainly help to advance the child rights agenda and raise awareness among Palestinians about their own rights. He encouraged the Government to disseminate the Committee's concluding observations to the children of the State of Palestine.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.