



Convention on the Rights of the Child

Distr.: General
1 February 2017

Original: English

Committee on the Rights of the Child Seventy-fourth session

Summary record of the 2179th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Wednesday, 25 January 2017, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Mr. Mezmur

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Consideration of reports of States parties (continued)

Fourth periodic report of Georgia (continued) (CRC/C/GEO/4, CRC/C/GEO/Q/4 and Add.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Georgia took places at the Committee table.*
2. **Ms. Totladze** (Georgia) said that the Government remained concerned about the occupied regions of Georgia and systematically appealed to the international community to take immediate and adequate measures in that regard. As of 2015, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had begun preparing quarterly reports, based on open sources, on the human rights situation in those regions.
3. **Mr. Kankava** (Georgia) said that 20 per cent of Georgian territory was occupied by the Russian Federation. Native Georgians in Abkhazia and South Ossetia were subjected to various forms of abuse and violence, particularly at the hands of the Russian military, and children in those areas were particularly badly affected. Nonetheless, the Government sought to provide education and socioeconomic assistance, as well as health-care services, to the people there. Between 2015 and 2016, 435 children from the occupied regions had received free medical care in Georgia, and the Government continued to supply vaccines and treatment for conditions such as diabetes, HIV, AIDS and tuberculosis. The overall budget allocated to meet health-care requirements in the occupied territories was about 14 million lari.
4. Currently, the only forum for discussions with the Russian Federation was the Geneva International Discussions. More needed to be done to protect the rights of children and others in the occupied territories, and he appreciated the help provided by the United States of America, the European Union and the United Nations, particularly the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).
5. **Mr. Baramidze** (Georgia) said that the Labour Law, which had been highly biased in favour of employers, had been abrogated in 2006. Subsequent reform of labour legislation had led to the restoration of certain basic workers' rights. For example, a pregnant woman could no longer be dismissed from her post between the time she informed her employers of her pregnancy and the end of her maternity leave. Nonetheless, the reform process was a difficult one that involved many conflicting political and economic interests. One of the negative side effects of the abrogation of the Law had been the suppression of the Labour Inspectorate. That institution had been revived two years previously but it remained fragile.
6. The total number of stateless persons in Georgia was just 580, including 12 minors under the age of 16 years. Until 2010, the main cause of statelessness had been that persons could renounce their Georgian citizenship without providing evidence that they had received, or were about to receive, the citizenship of another State. Thanks to recent legislative reforms, that was no longer possible. Also under the reforms, a child living in Georgia of parents of unknown nationality would be granted Georgian citizenship. Otherwise, non-Georgians could be granted citizenship after five years of residency, unless the authorities withheld that privilege for security reasons.
7. **Ms. Sarajishvili** (Georgia) said that sexual abuse and exploitation, as well as the trafficking and sale of human beings, were being actively combated by the Government, particularly when those offences involved minors. Policies in that regard focused on prevention, protection, prosecution and partnership. A national action plan had been put in place for the period 2015-2016 and a new one recently adopted for 2017-2018. Under the

Criminal Code, in line with international standards, trafficking offences involving children attracted prison terms of between 8 years and life. Furthermore, provisions had been introduced into the Code to criminalize the engagement of minors in prostitution or pornography, in line with the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse. Anti-trafficking legislation had been amended to include provision for individual risk assessment on the basis of the child's best interests.

8. Child victims of trafficking and children who accompanied their trafficked parents received assistance from the State Fund for Protection and Assistance of (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking. Guidelines and standard operating procedures had been circulated among law enforcement personnel who dealt with minors, to help them interpret the Criminal Code and to follow correct procedures when conducting interviews. Anti-trafficking measures in Georgia had been positively assessed by the United States Department of State in its 2016 *Trafficking in Persons Report*, as well as by the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) and the Global Slavery Index.

9. The law allowed the State to intervene in families where children were being abused or neglected. In 2016, the Government had approved the new Child Protection Referral Mechanism, under which government agencies, medical institutions, educational establishments and local municipalities had an obligation to refer suspected cases of child abuse to the police and social services. The Mechanism also set out methodologies for dealing with child abuse, such as separating the victim from the perpetrator, and included provision for an integrated database, administered by the police and accessible to all government child protection agencies. Apart from legislative measures to combat violence against children, Georgia had permanent programmes in place to build the capacities of professionals and raise awareness among the public, including rural populations and ethnic minorities.

10. Georgia was a signatory to the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction, which was often cited by the courts when dealing with abduction cases. In order to fulfil its obligations under that Convention, amendments had been introduced to the Civil Code and the Code of Civil Procedure, including provisions entitling courts to issue rulings ordering the return of a child who had been wrongfully removed or retained. Guidelines on child abduction cases and referral enforcement mechanisms in such cases were currently being developed.

11. Legislative measures had been introduced to provide children living in street situations with free identity documents, thereby facilitating their access to education and health care. Since 2014, mobile groups made up of social workers, psychologists and former street children, operating under the authority of the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs, had managed to identify more than 700 children living in street situations. The figure of 2,500 street children in Georgia was out of date and probably incorrect. The Ministry of Justice had allocated funds to two local NGOs that worked to help identify homeless children and reintegrate them into society.

12. State policy to combat drug use was shaped and coordinated by the Inter-agency Council on Combating Illicit Drug Use, established in 2011. The strategies and action plans elaborated by the Council, which were in line with international standards, also focused on combating drug use among children through awareness-raising activities and the promotion of healthy lifestyles. Around 200 cases of drug abuse by minors had been recorded between 2013 and 2016.

13. **Mr. Dateshidze** (Georgia) said that inspections by the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs were intended to prevent forced labour and the exploitation of workers in

public and private enterprises. Both regular and unannounced inspections took place, and inspectors were required to submit their findings to the relevant authorities if they felt that further action needed to be taken. In particular, efforts were made to identify establishments where the risk of child labour was greatest and to raise awareness about the issue among both employers and workers. Georgia had not yet ratified the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention concerning Equal Opportunities and Equal Treatment for Men and Women Workers, 1981 (No. 156), but a working group had been set up to examine the feasibility of ratifying that and other ILO Conventions and to consider amendments to labour legislation in areas such as gender equality, the protection of pregnant women, equality of opportunity and discrimination in the workplace.

14. Family planning services had been integrated into primary health care in order to make them as widely accessible as possible, particularly in rural areas. The issue of the sexual and reproductive health rights of adolescents was a sensitive one in Georgia. Nonetheless, an educational programme on healthy lifestyles had recently been launched in schools, and there were plans to set up youth-friendly reproductive health services as part of primary health care. In 2015, a website had been created containing information about youth health, including sexual and reproductive health and rights. Seminars and lectures on the same subject had taken place throughout 2016, and the Government distributed information to young people about other health-related issues such as substance abuse and tobacco.

15. Free contraception was available across the country, and the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs was in the process of developing a maternal and newborn health strategy for 2017-2030 that included family planning and access to modern contraceptives. As a measure to prevent selective abortion, health-care providers were prohibited from revealing the gender of a baby before the end of the twelfth week of pregnancy. Despite the fact that Georgia had achieved the Millennium Development Goal of reducing child mortality, and that neonatal and infant mortality rates were declining, the provision of quality care for mothers and children remained a government priority. A system had been introduced whereby all maternal and newborn child deaths had to be notified to the authorities and investigated.

16. The Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs had adopted the “essential nutrition actions” approach to target micronutrient deficiency. All pregnant women were offered free folic acid supplements, and pregnant women who had been diagnosed with iron deficiency were offered free iron supplements. There were plans to provide all pregnant women with low-dose iron supplements. Children aged 6-23 months from socially vulnerable families were given micronutrient powder supplements. In 2016, a sentinel surveillance system had been established to obtain high-quality data on the baseline micronutrient levels of women of reproductive age, pregnant women and children, with a view to developing evidence-based policy and programme interventions.

17. All pregnant women underwent testing for HIV, and those who tested positive were offered free medical treatment in maternity facilities. The Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs was developing an action plan for the elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV and syphilis, and a committee was being formed to oversee its implementation. More than 120 counselling and testing centres had been set up in antenatal care clinics throughout the country. The Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs had implemented a policy to regionalize and thereby improve the organization, delivery and quality of care in maternity and newborn care facilities.

18. With regard to mental health, there were 12 beds for children aged under 15 years. Children aged 15 to 18 years were able to access adult mental health services. The services available to children included inpatient care, day care and outpatient care.

19. The Government acknowledged the importance of bringing up children in families. The Civil Code established children's right to grow up in a family and defined parental duties and the legal basis for the restriction and deprivation of parental rights. The draft Law on Adoption and Foster Care stipulated that parents who failed to fulfil their parental duties could be denied the exercise of their parental rights. A wide range of services had been developed to support families and prevent the abandonment of children.

20. The child welfare system had been successfully reformed in a process that had involved the replacement of large State-run residential childcare institutions with alternative facilities: of the 48 such institutions that had been operational before the implementation of the reform, 46 had since been closed down. Between 2010 and 2016, the number of children in large institutions had decreased significantly and the number of children placed in foster care had increased significantly. In 2016, the first family-type home for children with severe disabilities had been opened with the cooperation of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and other stakeholders.

21. In 2013, the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs had launched a programme to address the problem of street children, with the support of UNICEF and the European Union. The programme involved the identification of children in street situations, multidisciplinary outreach work, and the referral of such children to day-care centres and 24-hour shelters. Day-care centres and 24-hour shelters provided services to cover the basic needs of such children, including psychosocial support, developmental opportunities, and preparation for long-term placement in foster care. In an emergency situation, a child in a street situation could be taken into care for a short period until a long-term placement could be arranged. Children in street situations were concentrated in the three or four largest cities in the country. Mobile support groups worked on the ground to gain the children's confidence, establish primary contact, and promote the services available to them. However, many children in street situations lacked identification papers, which complicated the work of such groups. As a result of the programme, in 2016 up to 100 children had benefited from day centres, 35 had been placed in alternative services, 16 had been integrated, 56 had started school and 97 had left the streets. While disaggregation of data was inappropriate for many programmes, the data collected on street children showed that 52 per cent were of Georgian ethnicity, 25 per cent were of Roma ethnicity, 17.5 per cent were of Azeri and Kurdish ethnicity, and 5 per cent were from other ethnic groups. Further efforts would be made to understand the root causes of the problem and develop policy recommendations.

22. The Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs had recently initiated the process of deinstitutionalizing unregulated childcare institutions operated by religious associations, local government bodies and private individuals. Before June 2016, childcare institutions had not been required to hold a licence if the children living in them had not been deprived of parental care. In June 2016, the Parliament had approved the Law on the Licensing of Childcare Activities, which covered all institutions providing 24-hour childcare services. Efforts had been made to ensure that children were not institutionalized if they could be cared for by their families.

23. The central body of guardianship and custody supervised and managed foster care placements. The Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs had worked with the Social Services Agency, UNICEF, NGOs and other stakeholders to develop standards for foster care placements, and they would be adopted in 2017. The ratio of caregivers to children in small group homes had been set at one caregiver for every five children, and no more than 10 children could live in a single such home. Children could stay in small group homes up to the age of 18 years or until they left school.

24. The draft Law on Adoption and Foster Care prohibited direct adoption and the separation of siblings, and it obliged adoptive parents to undertake training courses and obtain the necessary certification. Pursuant to the draft Law, adoptees could access

information on their biological parents on reaching the age of 18 years. That information could not be made available to the adoptee without the consent of both the biological and adoptive parents. The adoptive parents could apply to have the adoptee's place and date of birth changed to guarantee the confidentiality of the adoption placement. In such cases, his or her true place and date of birth would be restored at a later stage.

25. **Ms. Khazova** said that she would be grateful for more information on the central body responsible for intercountry adoption and cross-border disputes. The Committee had been informed that it lacked adequate financial and human resources.

26. **Mr. Madi** said that, while it had been helpful to learn that 12 of the 580 stateless persons in Georgia were aged under 16 years, he wished to know whether any of them were aged 16 or 17 years. More information was needed on the security considerations that prevented stateless children from being naturalized as Georgian citizens.

27. **Mr. Cardona Llorens** said that he would be grateful if the delegation could confirm that, although adolescents had access to information on sexual and reproductive health, it was not included in the school curriculum. He wished to know whether contraceptive programmes continued to be funded largely through donor assistance, what steps had been taken to prevent adolescents from using drugs, and what measures, for example awareness-raising campaigns, had been taken to remove the stigma associated with disability.

28. **Ms. Sandberg** asked what protection was provided for children aged 15-17 years who were treated for mental health conditions in facilities for adults, whether the officials tasked with monitoring foster care were able speak with children who had been placed in foster care, and whether a mechanism had been set up to allow children placed in foster care to file complaints and register concerns. Clarification of the conditions under which adoptees could access information on their biological parents would also be welcome.

29. **Ms. Aho Assouma** said that she wished to know the results of the pilot project to regionalize perinatal care and the pilot project to conduct home visits to detect developmental disorders in children aged under 3 years. More information on policies or strategies introduced to promote breastfeeding and on the status of the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes would be welcome. Had awareness-raising campaigns been conducted to promote breastfeeding? Had health-care professionals been trained to explain the importance of breastfeeding to new mothers and assist them with the process? More information on the provision of health care for juvenile offenders in prison would also be helpful. Lastly, she wished to know whether many cases of obstetric fistula had been recorded and whether campaigns had been organized to raise awareness of female genital mutilation.

30. **Mr. Rodríguez Reyes** asked whether any of the mental health centres for adolescents operated in rural areas.

31. **Mr. Baramidze** (Georgia) said that there were two stateless children aged 16 or 17 years in Georgia. The stateless children currently in the country could not be naturalized as Georgian citizens because they had applied to other States for citizenship, and dual citizenship was not recognized under the Constitution. He could not envisage a situation in which a stateless child would be denied citizenship on security grounds. The authorities tasked with investigating recent cases of female genital mutilation had encountered some resistance, but the criminalization of the practice would simplify their task in the future.

32. **Mr. Khandolishvili** (Georgia) said that juvenile offenders were imprisoned in penitentiary establishment No. 11. Currently, it housed only 13 inmates, as compared to more than 200 just four years previously. Moreover, the establishment had recently been renovated; it was equipped with civilian-standard health-care facilities, and social workers, psychologists and a psychiatrist were on hand to assist the young detainees. Education for

juveniles in detention was provided by the Ministry of Education. Class attendance figures were very high, in part because education was one of the factors that the authorities took into account when considering early conditional release. The women's prison had a special unit in a separate building where mothers could look after their young offspring and receive visits from family members. Once children reached the age of 3 years they were removed from the unit, but mothers still had the right to visit them outside prison for a period of 12 months.

33. **Ms. Jaliashvili** (Georgia) said that, thanks to the country's Universal Health Care Programme, the problem of obstetric fistula was practically non-existent in Georgia.

34. **Ms. Kildaze** (Georgia) said that drug abuse among young people was a global challenge, and Georgia had taken a number of steps to combat the problem. Following amendments to the Criminal Code and to other legislation, the use of psychoactive substances had fallen by 90 per cent and of homemade drugs by 99 per cent. Another contributory factor to that decline had been a 2014 campaign, involving both government agencies and NGOs, to raise awareness about the perils of new psychoactive substances. Free medical care was available for persons, including children, with drug addiction issues.

The meeting was suspended at 4.35 p.m. and resumed at 4.45 p.m.

35. **Ms. Peradze** (Georgia) said that the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Prosecutor's Office organized continuous training for law enforcement officials in issues related to human trafficking. A special division within the Ministry of Internal Affairs was charged with investigating and preventing trafficking and illegal migration, including the forced labour and sexual exploitation of children. In 2014, a memorandum of understanding had been signed for the creation of an anti-trafficking task force in the region of Adjara, made up of seven investigators and five prosecutors.

36. A cybercrime division had been established within the Ministry of Internal Affairs in 2013 to detect, suppress and prevent illegal online activities such as child pornography and online sexual abuse. The Ministry of Internal Affairs had developed standard operating procedures on the handling of digital evidence, and a special forensic unit had been set up to examine and analyse such evidence. The Ministry of Internal Affairs had access to the International Child Sexual Exploitation image database and, in 2014, an agreement had been signed between the National Central Bureau of the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) and the United States National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. The Ministry of Internal Affairs in cooperation with the Ministry of Justice had developed a special module on the new Juvenile Justice Code, which was being introduced as part of the training and retraining of members of law enforcement agencies so that only duly qualified police officers would deal with cases involving children.

37. The police were involved in combating domestic violence and had the authority to issue restraining orders to prevent recurrence. If an incident of domestic violence had criminal implications, it would be pursued under the Criminal Code. The law recognized six forms of domestic violence: physical, sexual, economic and psychological violence, as well as coercion and neglect. Corporal punishment was considered to be a form of physical violence. The Ministry of Internal Affairs had organized campaigns about the dangers of domestic violence and distributed information in five languages: Georgian, Russian, Azerbaijani, Armenian and English. As a further awareness-raising measure, Ministry officials also made appearances on radio and television programmes. In addition, specially trained police officers conducted interactive lessons in schools on domestic violence, sexual abuse and bullying. Police officers also received training on theoretical and practical aspects of domestic violence and children's rights, as well as on the newly adopted referral mechanisms.

38. With the entry into force of the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, the Ministry of Internal Affairs had begun organizing interactive events with juveniles on cyberbullying and online sexual abuse and providing the relevant hotlines. Representatives of the Ministry of Education, in cooperation with NGOs, organized meetings between parents of high school students and experts to discuss the problem of early marriage. The Ministry of Internal Affairs also sought to prevent crime among minors and develop their legal culture. As part of its efforts in that regard, police officers and teachers delivered lessons to ninth-grade students on their legal rights and responsibilities.

39. **Ms. Jaliashvili** (Georgia) said that, as part of its child-friendly justice system, Georgia was seeking to introduce the so-called “Iceland model” for investigating crimes involving sexual abuse and violence against children. A pilot project with UNICEF support would be launched by the end of 2017.

40. **Ms. Zaalishvili** (Georgia) said that reception procedures and other aspects of the asylum system had been enhanced in recent years and brought into line with international standards. Illegal entry and presence in the country was not penalized, and Georgia respected the principle of non-refoulement. Asylum legislation had also been improved. The new law on international protection, which was due to come into force in February 2017, fully complied with the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol and took account of the Committee’s general comment No. 6 on the treatment of unaccompanied and separated children outside their country of origin (CRC/GC/2005/6).

41. Under the new legislation, protection fell into three categories: core protection, humanitarian protection and temporary protection. Children in the asylum system, particularly unaccompanied children, were afforded priority treatment. Special guidelines existed to help staff decide how to act in the best interests of children depending on their age, maturity and specific vulnerabilities. The legislation also included a non-discrimination clause, and asylum procedures were duly monitored to ensure that there was no discrimination at any stage in the process.

42. The birth registration system for asylum-seeker and refugee children was working well. Newborns were issued with a birth certificate, which immediately gave them the form of international protection known as derivative status. Asylum seekers and international protection holders had access to national health-care and education services, as well as to a special Georgian language course. Forty-three children had successfully completed the course in 2016. Asylum seekers and international protection holders also received monthly allowances to ensure that they could enjoy a decent standard of living, and a special integration centre for them had been opened in 2017. Legislation provided for free legal aid and assistance for asylum seekers on cases concerning their asylum claim. In order to facilitate policymaking, Georgia planned to collect data on asylum seekers, particularly unaccompanied minors, disaggregated by age, country of origin, disabilities and gender.

43. Efforts to ensure a dignified life for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Georgia focused on four main areas: legislation, registration, living conditions and integration. On the legislative front, a new law on IDPs passed in 2014 incorporated the United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. The new law included clauses on non-discrimination, legal ownership of IDP living spaces and family reunification. The registration system for IDPs was working effectively, and the data collected were updated and disaggregated on a daily basis. Currently, there were 273,425 IDPs in Georgia, of whom 75,251 were children.

44. Durable housing solutions for IDPs were enshrined in Government policy and regulated by strict guidelines. The Government took various measures to put that policy

into effect, including the purchase of homes from private owners, the renovation of existing structures and the construction of new ones, mortgage assistance and a rural housing programme. Under the policy, it was incumbent on the Government to provide housing in the places where the IDPs were already located, in order to avoid them having to move and reintegrate elsewhere. As citizens of Georgia, IDPs had access to national education and health care, but they also received additional assistance to help them integrate. That assistance included monthly allowances and special assistance for the most vulnerable persons. A livelihood strategy for IDPs in rural areas had been launched in four regions in 2016, whereby they received grants and professional training, as well as assistance with rent and transportation costs.

45. **Mr. Khandolishvili** (Georgia) said that all children were entitled to free education, irrespective of their place of residence and social, ethnic and religious background. Following recent increases in spending, 3.1 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP) was now allocated to education. The Law on General Education established legal safeguards for a secure, secular and tolerant environment in all schools. A comprehensive revision of the national curriculum would be completed in the following few months. Teacher training was a priority, and the Ministry of Education and Science had trained some 40,000 teachers over the previous four years. In 2015, a system for assessing teaching quality had been introduced. Human rights education formed part of the national curriculum at every level. The National Centre for Educational Quality Enhancement under the Ministry of Education and Science was responsible for ensuring that all schools complied with national standards.

46. Every school had an elected council made up of teachers, parents and pupils. In 2011, a pupil self-governance system had been introduced, and in 2013, a manual for pupil self-governance bodies had been produced. Over the previous two years, approximately 1,500 civil education clubs had opened at schools across the country.

47. The Ministry of Education and Science had prioritized inclusive education. There were more than 6,500 pupils with special educational needs in Georgia. Textbooks had been produced in Braille, the use of sign language in schools was being promoted, and an alternative curriculum for pupils with severe disabilities was being drafted. In 2015, a system had been set up to monitor the provision of inclusive education. One of the principal challenges in that regard was the provision of adequate physical infrastructure for students with disabilities. In recent years, wheelchair ramps, elevators and accessible lavatories had been installed in a large number of schools. Special multidisciplinary teams had been set up in every region to assess the educational needs of pupils.

48. The Ministry of Education and Science had launched a social inclusion programme to support the integration of children belonging to vulnerable groups, including Roma, refugees and asylum seekers, and children with disabilities. In 2015, a programme to support the education of children in street situations had been launched. Special emphasis had been placed on the integration of Roma children. The Ministry of Education and Science had set up special clubs targeting Roma children with a view to promoting their integration into mainstream schools. The quality of data on the school dropout rate had improved in recent years. Over the previous two years, only 528 pupils had dropped out of school.

49. **Ms. Aldoseri** said that more information would be welcome on the protection of the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts. What recreational and cultural activities were organized for children? Were any radio or television programmes broadcast specially for children?

50. **Ms. Sandberg** asked whether, either as a rule or on a case-by-case basis, unaccompanied child asylum seekers were granted temporary residence until they reached the age of 18 years, and whether child asylum seekers were fully integrated into the education system.

51. **Ms. Ayoubi Idrissi** asked whether the Convention had been included in the school curriculum, whether teachers received training in its provisions, and whether the reforms of the school curriculum and teaching manuals would be sufficient to address the high level of functional illiteracy among children aged 15 years.

52. **Mr. Kotrane** (Country Rapporteur) asked what measures had been taken to harmonize standards at the preschool level and whether there were any plans to ratify the International Labour Organization (ILO) Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81).

53. **Ms. Winter** (Country Rapporteur) asked whether measures had been taken to prevent the recruitment of children by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

54. **Ms. Kiladze** (Georgia) said that no reports of children leaving the country to join terrorist organizations had been received. Nevertheless, three cases had been recorded of adults from the Pankisi Gorge leaving the country in the direction of the Syrian Arab Republic and Iraq. In 2014 and 2015, the Government had strengthened its efforts to prevent citizens from leaving the country to join terrorist groups. The Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs and local NGOs were involved in the organization of prevention activities. The offence of departure from the country for the purpose of terrorism had been incorporated into the Criminal Code, and the definitions of the offences of terrorism and recruitment for the purpose of terrorism had been broadened. The Government would do its utmost to carry on prevention activities.

55. **Ms. Zaalishvili** (Georgia) said that international standards for the protection of refugees and asylum seekers, including the provisions of the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the European Union Qualification Directive, had been enshrined in national law. Children who met the necessary criteria would be granted humanitarian or refugee status as appropriate. Temporary protection could be granted in the event of a mass influx of displaced persons.

56. **Mr. Khandolishvili** (Georgia) said that all children, including child asylum seekers, were entitled to free education. In Tbilisi, the city in which the largest number of asylum seekers lived, special classes had been organized for child asylum seekers. In rural areas, specially trained teachers were assigned to work with child asylum seekers on an individual basis. The Government had identified the provision of extracurricular activities for children as an area for improvement. In 2016, a pilot project had been conducted to provide free sports and art classes, and there were plans to expand their provision in the near future.

57. The rights of the child formed part of the school curriculum, and teachers also received training in those rights. In 2016, a new module on human and civil rights had been included in the school curriculum. The number of preschool institutions had increased from 1,263 in 2012 to 1,444 in 2016.

58. **Ms. Winter** said that the Committee wished to thank the delegation for providing detailed responses to its questions, in particular those concerning legislation. While more information on the implementation of the legislative acts mentioned by the delegation would have been helpful, the Committee acknowledged that many of them had only recently been adopted.

59. **Ms. Totladze** (Georgia) said that her delegation was grateful for the Committee's questions, comments and recommendations. The Inter-Agency Commission responsible for implementing the Convention would study the Committee's comments and recommendations carefully and reflect them as fully as possible in all relevant action plans.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.