

I. General discussion on the economic exploitation of children

186. In view of the importance it attaches to the enhancement of a deeper understanding of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Committee had decided to devote one day of its fourth session to a general discussion on the economic exploitation of children. The decision to consider this topic reflected the importance of the issue in the framework of the promotion and protection of the rights of the child, the urgency of creating awareness and raising concern at the growing number of children in situations of economic exploitation; the need for integrated and concerted action by Governments, United Nations bodies and other competent bodies active in the field of the rights of the child, as well as the decisive role the Convention on the Rights of the Child could play in that regard.

187. The Committee had been provided with some important background documents, in addition to the two Programmes of Action adopted by the Commission on Human Rights for the Elimination of Child Labour and for the Prevention of the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography.

188. Several organizations had submitted documents on the theme, as follows:

Protection of children against economic exploitation by the International Labour Organisation;

Sale of children by the Special Rapporteur on the sale of children of the Commission on Human Rights;

Eliminating the exploitation of child labour by the sub-group on child labour of the NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child;

Comments regarding the monitoring by the Committee of the Convention's articles relating to child victims of sexual exploitation by the Sub-group on sexual exploitation of children of the NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child;

Economic exploitation of children (extreme poverty and child labour) by the International Movement ATD Fourth World;

Niños trabajadores: organizando la esperanza de América Latina y el Caribe by Radda Barmen;

Wish you weren't there: the sexual exploitation of children in connection with tourism and international travel, and Children and income-generating projects by Save the Children UK;

Possible causes and solutions of child prostitution in Taiwan by the Association François-Xavier Bagnoud;

Reflexiones en torno al trabajo infantil en el Perú by the Grupo de Iniciativa Nacional por los Derechos del Niño.

189. The following organizations and bodies made statements on the day of the general discussion: United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations

Development Programme, International Labour Organisation, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, World Health Organization, International Monetary Fund, Board of Trustees of the United Nations Voluntary Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, Anti-Slavery International, Child Workers in Nepal, International Catholic Child Bureau, International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, International Federation of Social Workers, International Institute for Human Rights, Environment and Development, International Movement ATD Fourth World, International Movement of Apostolate of Children, Movement for Child Workers in Latin America, World Federation of Methodist Women, Youth for Unity and Voluntary Action.

190. The Committee took note of the steps taken in that regard by the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, namely its decision, contained in resolution 1993/5 of 20 August 1993, to appoint a Special Rapporteur to update the report of Mr. Abdelwahab Boudhiba on the exploitation of child labour (E/CN.4/Sub.2/479/Rev.1).

191. The Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography also submitted a document concerning the steps he has taken within the framework of his mandate and made a statement before the Committee.

192. The general discussion was a meaningful occasion for a fruitful exchange of views between the members of the Committee and United Nations bodies, specialized agencies and other competent bodies, in particular non-governmental organizations.

193. Situations of child labour, including the question of domestic servants, child prostitution and pornography and sale of children, were considered by the participants. During the discussion, which was introduced by members of the Committee (Mrs. Marta Santos Pais, Mr. Thomas Hammarberg and Mrs. Akila Belembaogo; see annex V), particular emphasis was put on the need for the child to be put at the centre of all policies, whether they are adopted by international financial institutions, development agencies or Governments. Attention was also drawn to the need to respect the dignity of the child, while enhancing the values of solidarity, participation and equity.

194. The discussion made clear the need for a comprehensive and concerted action for prevention, protection and rehabilitation. The need to strengthen preventive actions was stressed and education was referred to in that regard as an essential tool. Recommendations were also made in the field of the protection of the rights of the child, including the establishment of an ombudsperson who might intervene and assist the child victim of economic exploitation. The important role of recovery and social reintegration of child victims of any form of economic exploitation was recognized. At all levels of action, effective coordination was recognized as an essential aspect to achieve progress, both at the national and the international level.

195. The discussion emphasized the relevance of the general principles of the Convention to assess the reality, design adequate policies and implement effective plans of action to combat the plight of exploited children and ensure the effective enjoyment of their right to childhood.

196. In view of the contributions made and the importance of the problems considered, the Committee decided that there was a need for a continuous response to this urgent question. It therefore decided (i) to make a public statement on the outcome of the general discussion day (see annex VI); (ii) to establish a working group among its members to prepare, in the light of the discussion and of the provisions of the Convention, a set of recommendations to be considered at its regular session scheduled for January 1994; (iii) to consider issuing a publication based on the general discussion on the economic exploitation of children.

V. DRAFT PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE FIFTH SESSION

197. The following is the draft provisional agenda for the fifth session of the Committee:

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. Information by the secretariat on the action taken pursuant to decisions adopted by the Committee at its previous sessions.
3. Submission of reports by States parties in accordance with article 44 of the Convention.
4. Consideration of reports of States parties.
5. System of documentation and information.
6. Question of indicators.
7. Follow-up on the general discussion on "Protection of the child against economic exploitation".
8. Cooperation with other United Nations bodies and specialized agencies.
9. Methods of work of the Committee.
10. Future meetings.
11. Other matters.

VI. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

198. At its 104th meeting, held on 8 October 1993, the Committee considered the draft report on its fourth session. The report, as amended during the course of the discussion, was unanimously adopted by the Committee.