



Convention on the Rights of the Child

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Committee on the Rights of the Child

Sixtieth session

29 May – 15 June 2012

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 12, paragraph 1, of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography

Concluding observations: Nepal

1. The Committee considered the initial report of Nepal under the Optional Protocol (CRC/C/OPSC/NPL/1) at its 1706th meeting (see CRC/C/SR.1706), held on 4 June 2012, and adopted, at its 1725th meeting (see CRC/C/SR.1725) held on 15 June 2012 the following concluding observations.

I. Introduction

2. The Committee welcomes the submission of the State party's initial report, which was informative, analytical and self-critical, and the written replies to its list of issues (CRC/C/OPSC/NPL/Q/Add.1). The Committee appreciates the constructive dialogue held with the State party's delegation.

3. The Committee reminds the State party that these concluding observations should be read in conjunction with its concluding observations adopted on the fourth report of the State party under the Convention (CRC/C/15/Add.261).

II. General observations

Positive aspects

4. The Committee welcomes the various positive measures in areas relevant to the implementation of the Optional Protocol, in particular the adoption of:

- (a) Caste-Based Discrimination and Untouchability (Crime and Offences) Act in May 2011;
- (b) Domestic Violence Control and Punishment Act in April 2009;

(c) Human Trafficking and Transportation Control Act in July 2007 and its 2008 Regulations;

(d) Minimum Standard Rules for Running Child Welfare Homes in 2007;

(e) Gender Equality Act in 2006;

(f) Act to Amend Some Nepali Acts in November 2006 which raises the legal age of Marriage of girls to that of boys (20 years) and authorizes both male and female family members to register their children at birth.

5. The Committee also welcomes the ratification of the following international human rights instruments:

(a) Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict in January 2007;

(b) Convention against Transnational Organized Crime in December 2011;

(c) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol in May 2010;

(d) International Labour Convention No. 105 on the Abolition of Forced Labour in August 2008;

(e) Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in June 2007;

(f) South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation Convention on Regional Provisions on Child Welfare in 2006;

(g) South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution in 2005.

6. The Committee further welcomes the progress achieved in the creation of institutions and adoption of national plans and programmes that facilitate the implementation of the Optional Protocol, including:

(a) The Three-Year Plan 2010-2013 to promote child friendly local governance;

(b) The National Plan of Action for Children (2004/5-20014/15);

(c) The National Plan of Action against Trafficking in Children and Women for Sexual and Labour Exploitation;

(d) The establishment of Women and Children Directorates within the Nepal Police;

(e) The creation of the Legislature-Parliament Committee on Women and Children and Women Caucus in 2009 to examine the Government's actions on women and children;

(f) The establishment of the Emergency Children Rescue Fund to provide immediate rescue and relief to the child who has been trafficked or sexually exploited.

III. Data

7. While noting with appreciation the data contained in the State party's report and noting the collection of relevant data by the Nepal Police, the Office of the General Attorney and the Supreme Court, the Committee is however concerned about the lack of a comprehensive data collection system to enable the recording, referral and follow-up of all

cases covered by the Optional Protocol and to analyse and assess progress in the implementation of the Optional Protocol.

8. **The Committee urges the State party to set up a comprehensive and centralized data collection system with the support of its partners and to analyse the data collected as a basis for assessing progress achieved and to help design policies and programmes to implement the Optional Protocol. The data should be disaggregated by age, sex, geographic location, ethnicity and socio-economic background to facilitate analysis of the offences covered by the Optional Protocol. The Committee recommends that the State party strengthen its technical cooperation with, among others, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Development Programme in this regard.**

IV. General measures of implementation

Legislation

9. While commending the State party for the numerous laws adopted in relation to the Optional Protocol, the Committee expresses concern that the State party has not taken the necessary measures to ensure the full incorporation of the Optional Protocol into its domestic legal system. The Committee is also concerned that the State party has not yet finalized the revision of the Children's Act of 1992 which only applies to children under the age of 16.

10. **The Committee urges the State party to take all necessary measures to ensure the full incorporation of the Optional Protocol in its domestic legal system. The Committee also urges the State party to speed up the revision process of the Children's Act and ensure that this act and all child-related laws protect all children under the age of 18.**

National Plan of Action

11. While welcoming the existence of various plans of action in relation to the Optional Protocol, in particular the National Plan of Action for Children 2005-2015, the National Master Plan for Child Labour 2011-2020 and the National Plan of Action against Trafficking in Children and Women for Sexual and Labour Exploitation, the Committee expresses concern that:

(a) These plans of action are overlapping both in terms of the target groups and the types of activities to be undertaken which impede their effectiveness and dilute responsibilities for their overall implementation;

(b) Insufficient linkages exist between national plans of action for children and plans of action developed by the District Child Welfare Boards (DCWBs);

(c) Plans developed at national and local levels often fail to indicate clear targets and indicators and do not allocate sufficient budget to support interventions and activities.

12. **The Committee urges the State party to:**

(a) **Consider incorporating the various plans of action into a single National Plan of Action for Children covering all provisions of the Optional Protocol and establishing clear targets and indicators. This plan should take into account the Declaration and Agenda for Action and the Global Commitment adopted at the First,**

Second and Third World Congresses against Sexual Exploitation of Children held in Stockholm, Yokohama and Rio de Janeiro in 1996, 2001 and 2008, respectively;

(b) Conduct a comprehensive assessment of budget needs and establish clear budgetary allocations to support activities for the implementation of the Optional Protocol;

(c) Establish a monitoring and evaluation plan to assess progress and challenges in the implementation of the revised National Plan for Children.

Coordination and evaluation

13. The Committee notes that the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare (MoWCSW) is responsible for the coordination of the implementation of the Optional Protocol in the State party. However, the Committee is concerned that this coordination remains inadequate and that no information was provided by the State party on the evaluation of its coordination mechanisms. The Committee is particularly concerned about the insufficient funding of the coordinating Ministry, the multiplicity of other bodies with coordination functions, including the Central Child Welfare Board (CCWB) and the 75 District Child Welfare Board (DCWB) and the absence of a clear definition of the roles and competencies of all these child protection authorities.

14. **The Committee urges the State party to:**

(a) Reinforce and evaluate the coordination role of the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare by ensuring that it has sufficient authority and adequate human, financial and technical resources to effectively coordinate the implementation of the Optional Protocol across different sectors and from the national to the provincial and district levels;

(b) Carry out a thorough organizational review to rationalize the work of the various existing child-related bodies and clearly redefine the mandates and responsibilities and accountabilities both at central and district levels and provide them with the necessary resources, guidelines, protocols and procedures to enable and guide their action at central and district levels.

Dissemination and awareness-raising

15. While noting the State party's efforts to incorporate the principles and provisions of the Convention and its two Optional Protocols into the school and university curricula and into the curricula of professional training institutions, the Committee is however concerned that measures to raise awareness about the Optional Protocol both among the general public, including children as well as among professionals have been insufficient.

16. **The Committee recommends that the State party strengthen its efforts to make the provisions of the Optional Protocol widely known to the public at large, including to children in a child-friendly manner, their families and communities. The Committee also urges the State party to:**

(a) Systematically incorporate issues related to the Optional Protocol into the curricula of primary and secondary schools;

(b) Develop, in close cooperation with the community, children and child victims, awareness-raising programmes, including campaigns on preventive measures and harmful effects of the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

These programmes should be made available in all the languages of the State party and in forms that are accessible to illiterate persons;

(c) Disseminate the Optional Protocol among all relevant professional groups, especially members of the police, judges, prosecutors, representatives of the media and social workers, and members of the Central Welfare Board and the District Child Welfare Boards;

(d) Develop cooperation with civil society organizations, the media and the private sector in order to support awareness-raising on the provisions of the Optional Protocol, particularly in areas with high risks of incidence of such crimes and use mass media to disseminate key messages among the general population and children in particular.

Training

17. The Committee is concerned that relevant professional categories, in particular the police and those working with the administration of justice receive insufficient training on the provisions of the Optional Protocol.

18. **The Committee recommends that the State party strengthen systematic gender-sensitive education and regular training on the provisions of the Optional Protocol for all professional groups working with child victims of offences under the Optional Protocol, inter alia the police, lawyers, prosecutors, judges, medical staff, social workers, migration officials and the media.**

Allocation of resources

19. The Committee is concerned about the lack of resources allocated to the implementation of the Optional Protocol, in particular as concerns the prevention of offences and the provision of assistance to child victims. The Committee is particularly concerned that:

(a) Cost analysis is generally not conducted to support the implementation of new laws;

(b) Most of the activities to implement the Optional Protocol, including the payment of the salaries of child district officers are funded through international cooperation and by non-governmental organizations;

(c) Very high levels of corruption greatly reduce the funds available to prevent and fight against the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

20. **The Committee urges the State party to increase budget allocations for the implementation of the Optional Protocol, including by earmarking human, technical and financial resources from the regular budget to set up programmes relating to its provisions, in particular criminal investigations, legal assistance and physical and psychological recovery of victims. The Committee also urges the State party to take immediate measures to efficiently prevent and combat corruption and prosecute acts of corruption.**

V. Prevention of the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (art. 9, paras. 1 and 2)

Measures adopted to prevent offences prohibited under the Optional Protocol

21. The Committee welcomes the numerous measures taken with the view to preventing the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and in particular the programmes specifically targeting children from Dalit and Indigenous community and from marginalized and disadvantaged families, the promotion of child participation in policies and programmes, and the measures to combat illiteracy, especially among women. However, the Committee is concerned that existing laws, administrative measures, social policies and programmes are insufficient to address the root causes and contributing factors of the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, among them, widespread poverty, gender discrimination, unsafe migration, and the lack of a comprehensive child protection system. The Committee is especially concerned about:

(a) The continued strong caste discrimination, particularly towards the Dalit as well as the prevailing legal and de facto discrimination against women and girls;

(b) The difficulties encountered by single mothers, mothers married to foreigners, refugees and stateless persons to register their children at birth which greatly exposes them to becoming victims of offences under the Optional Protocol;

(c) The lack of priority measures targeted to groups of children who are in the most vulnerable situations, notably internally displaced and refugee children, children with disabilities as well as children living in the street, the number of which is increasing;

(d) The inadequate protection of victims of domestic violence under the Domestic Violence Control and Punishment Act of 2009, the lack of protection of boys from sexual abuse and the high incidence of child sexual abuse in the home and in educational facilities.

22. **The Committee urges the State party to adopt a comprehensive and targeted approach which addresses the root causes of offences under the Optional Protocol and targets children in the most vulnerable situations. In particular, the Committee urges the State party to strengthen its poverty reduction strategies and supportive social protection measures for disadvantaged and marginalized families including child-centred early intervention programmes to support parents in better performing their care and protection responsibilities towards children. The Committee further urges the State party to:**

(a) **Take active measures for the effective implementation of the prohibition of “untouchability” and in doing so involve all sectors of society so as to facilitate social and cultural change and promote the creation of an enabling environment supportive of equality among children belonging to marginalized communities;**

(b) **Take all necessary measures to ensure that all children are registered at birth;**

(c) **Repeal legal provisions that discriminate against girls, and take all the necessary measures to eliminate societal discrimination against them through public educational programmes, including campaigns organized in cooperation with opinion leaders, families and the media to combat the stereotyping of gender roles in line with the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW/C/NPL/CO/4-5 para. 18 (a));**

(d) **Develop prevention programmes targeting children in the most vulnerable situations and in particular take all necessary measures to ensure that children in street situations are provided with adequate and secure shelter, health care, education and clothing. Particular focus should be placed on their protection from police brutality, physical and sexual abuse as well as substance abuse;**

(e) **Ensure that prevention strategies incorporate key actions to address domestic violence and child sexual abuse which are among the root causes of child sexual exploitation.**

Adoption

23. The Committee welcomes the Terms and Conditions and Process for granting approval for the adoption of a Nepali child, adopted in 2008 and amended in 2011 which constitute the operating legal framework for intercountry adoptions from Nepal as well as the establishment of the Inter-Country Adoption Management Committee as the Central Authority for planning, and management of intercountry adoption. However, the Committee is concerned that children are still insufficiently protected from unlawful adoption, a situation which may give rise to the sale of children for adoption purposes. The Committee is particularly concerned about:

(a) The increasing number of major irregularities in intercountry adoption procedures;

(b) The practice of informal adoption which coincides with high risk for children to be exploited as domestic servants;

(c) Cases of trafficking and smuggling of babies in the State party, and of families reportedly relinquishing their children as a consequence of soliciting, coercion or inducement;

(d) Cases of children being abused by foreign paedophiles who run so-called “orphanages” and “street shelters”, as recognized by the State party in its report.

24. **The Committee reminds the State of its obligations under article 3, paragraph 5 of the Optional Protocol to take all legal and administrative measures to ensure that all persons involved in the adoption of a child act in conformity with applicable international legal instruments. In particular, the Committee urges the State party to:**

(a) **Develop and implement strict criteria for the adoption of Nepalese children and ensure that exhaustion of all means to prevent termination of parental responsibility and/or separation of the child is set as a clear criterion in all cases involving adoption;**

(b) **Urgently review the current mechanisms and procedures for domestic and intercountry adoption, and ensure that professionals responsible for adoption cases are fully equipped with the technical expertise needed to review and process cases in the light of the Hague Convention;**

(c) **Regulate and monitor the practice of placing children with close relatives or others, to prevent children from being exploited;**

(d) **Investigate all cases of irregular adoption, smuggling of children and opening of unauthorized shelters and “orphanages” for the purpose of sexual exploitation and abuse of children;**

(e) **Ratify the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption signed in 2009 as well as the**

International Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children supplementing the 2000 United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (Palermo Protocol).

Child sex tourism

25. While welcoming the State party's efforts, in collaboration with national institutions and non-governmental organizations, to combat child sex tourism and the establishment in 2005 of a Committee against Paedophilia and Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children through Tourism, the Committee is however concerned about the numerous cases of children being sexually exploited by foreign paedophiles in the State party and the particular vulnerability of children in street situations and children from slum areas to this form of sexual abuse and exploitation.

26. **The Committee urges the State party to establish and implement an effective regulatory framework and take all necessary legislative, administrative, social and other measures to prevent and eliminate child sex tourism. In this regard, the Committee encourages the State party to strengthen its international cooperation by multilateral, regional and bilateral agreements. The Committee further urges the State party to strengthen its advocacy with the tourism industry on the harmful effects of child sex tourism, widely disseminate the Charter of Honour for Tourism and the WTO Global Code of Ethics for Tourism among travel agents and tourism agencies and encourage them to sign up for the Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism.**

Harmful practices

27. The Committee recalls the concern it expressed in its concluding observations adopted on the fourth report of the State party under the Convention (CRC/C/15/Add.261 para.67) concerning harmful practices such as *deuki* (offering girls to deities to fulfil religious obligations); *jhumas* (offering young girls to Buddhist monasteries for performing religious functions); *kamlari*, (offering girls for domestic work to the families of landlords), and *badi* (widespread practice of prostitution among the Badi caste) which still persist in the State party and constitute serious breaches in the State party's obligations under article 2 (a) of the Optional Protocol. The Committee is also concerned about the prevalence of early and forced marriages, which in the case of « Dhan-Khaane », parents receive money for the solemnization of the marriage of their children, which amounts to sale of children.

28. **The Committee urges the State party to take as a matter of urgency, all necessary measures to eradicate all practices harmful to the physical and psychological well-being of children and which constitute forms of sale of children. The Committee also urges the State party to take active measures to ensure an effective implementation of laws prohibiting child marriage, including through massive awareness-raising measures as ordered by the Supreme Court of Nepal in the case *Sapana Pradhan Malla and others v. Government of Nepal* of 2006.**

VI. Prohibition of the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and related matters (arts. 3, 4 (paras 2 and 3) and 5-7)

Existing criminal or penal laws and regulations

29. The Committee welcomes the commitment made by the State party's delegation to ensure full compliance of its legislation with the provisions of the Optional Protocol. The Committee however notes with concern that despite the incorporation of some of the provisions of the Optional Protocol into national laws, domestic legislation is still not fully in compliance with all of them. In particular, the Committee notes with concern that:

- (a) The Country Code does not cover all offences under the Optional Protocol;
- (b) All forms of sale of children defined in article 3 of the Optional Protocol have not been criminalized;
- (c) There is a lack of specific legal provisions that define and prohibit child prostitution or punish the act of procuring and providing a child for prostitution;
- (d) Child pornography is not specifically addressed in any laws of the State party including the Electronic Transaction and Digital Signature Act-Ordinance also known "Cyber Law".

30. **The Committee urges the State party to revise and bring its Criminal Code into full compliance with articles 2 and 3 of the Optional Protocol and ensure that all children under the age of 18 are fully protected by the Optional Protocol. In particular, the State party should ensure that the following acts are criminalized:**

- (a) **The sale of children by offering, delivering or accepting, by whatever means, a child for the purpose of sexual exploitation, transfer of organs of the child for profit, or engagement of the child in forced labour or by improperly inducing consent, as an intermediary, for the adoption of a child in violation of the applicable legal instrument on adoption;**
- (b) **Offering, obtaining, procuring or providing a child for child prostitution;**
- (c) **Producing, distributing, disseminating, importing, exporting, offering, selling or possessing child pornography;**
- (d) **An attempt to commit any of these acts and complicity or participation in any of these acts;**
- (e) **The production and dissemination of material advertising any of these acts.**

31. The Committee expresses serious concern that child victims of sexual exploitation still risk being arrested for disturbing public order and safety in accordance with provisions of the 1970 Public Offences and Control Act.

32. **The Committee urges the State party to repeal the provisions of the 1970 Public Offences and Control Act which are used to arrest and prosecute child victims and ensure that no child victim of any of the crimes under the Optional Protocol be criminalized.**

33. The Committee notes with appreciation the State party's efforts to combat trafficking, in particular the establishment of the National Committee and district

committees to support trafficking prevention and response efforts. The Committee is however deeply concerned that thousands of children are trafficked every year within and outside the country mainly for the purpose of sexual and labour exploitation, but also for use in circuses, forced begging, forced marriage, slavery and for the sale of organs and that trafficking of children is on the rise. In this regard, the Committee is concerned that the implementation of the Human Trafficking and Transportation (Control) Act of 2007 has been ineffective, as noted by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW/C/NLP/CO/4-5, para. 21).

34. **The Committee urges the State party to ensure effective enforcement of its legislation and in particular to promptly establish an effective system to detect and dismantle brothels and other places where child prostitution takes place. The Committee also urges the State party to complete the establishment of district-level anti-trafficking committees and initiate the establishment of committees at the Village Development Committee level, possibly by utilizing existing structures and provide anti-trafficking bodies, including the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children with the necessary human, financial and technical resources to effectively carry out their role. The Committee further urges the State party to ratify the Palermo Protocol.**

Jurisdiction and extradition

35. The Committee expresses concern that the State party's legislation remains unclear concerning the establishment of extraterritorial jurisdiction over all the offences under the Optional Protocol and the possibility of extradition of persons who committed offences addressed in the Optional Protocol.

36. **The Committee urges the State party to ensure that its domestic legislation enables it to establish and exercise extraterritorial jurisdiction over all crimes covered by the Optional Protocol. The Committee also recommends that in the absence of bilateral agreement, the State party use article 5 of the Optional Protocol as a legal basis for extradition.**

Prosecution of offences under the Optional Protocol

37. The Committee notes with deep concern that although thousands of children are involved in prostitution in the State party, especially in the "cabin restaurants", the dance bars and the massage parlours of the Kathmandu Valley and in the major cities of the State party, limited measures have been taken to rescue them from those prostitution places. The Committee is particularly concerned that:

(a) The revised version of the Children's Act currently under review still fails to define procedures and mechanisms for the identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and coordination of cases of children victims of sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography;

(b) The Nepal Police lack adequate infrastructure, capacity and power to investigate complaints lodged;

(c) Cases of child trafficking are highly underreported due mainly to widespread lack of confidence and trust in law enforcement and judicial authorities who in many cases discourage citizens from reporting cases and encourage disputants to resolve cases privately;

(d) Impunity remains pervasive in the context of trafficking-related investigations and often results from high levels of corruption among officials.

38. **The Committee urges the State party to strengthen the presence and capacity of law enforcement authorities to detect offences under the Optional Protocol, arrest perpetrators and bring them to justice. The Committee also urges the State party to:**

(a) **Set clear procedures in the revised Children's Act and establish mechanisms for the identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and coordination of cases of child victims of sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography;**

(b) **Take all the necessary measures to ensure that children and parents are not encouraged to solve cases privately and that perpetrators of offences under the Optional Protocol are brought to justice;**

(c) **Adopt a zero tolerance approach towards cases where authorities may be directly involved in cases of sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and address vigorously the issue of corruption and impunity as a matter of priority.**

VII. Protection of the rights of child victims (arts. 8 and 9, paras. 3 and 4)

Measures adopted to protect the rights of child victims of offences prohibited under the Optional Protocol

39. While noting the establishment of Women and Children Service Centres (WCSC) within police stations in 23 districts, the Committee notes with concern that these centres lack the necessary resources to adequately protect children and their families before, during and after the criminal justice process. The Committee is particularly concerned that:

(a) Law enforcement authorities do not systematically utilize child-sensitive investigation procedures, including in-camera investigations;

(b) Protection of the privacy and safety of child victims are not ensured and despite existing prohibitions, the media publish the child victim's picture;

(c) Child victims are not provided with free legal aid or with the support of child psychologist and social workers during the criminal justice process;

(d) Child witnesses who agree to testify do not receive special protection measures and are insufficiently protected from the risk of retaliation from offenders against whom they have provided evidence.

40. **The Committee urges the State party to adopt appropriate measures to protect the rights and interests of child victims of the practices prohibited under the Optional Protocol at all stages of the criminal justice process. In particular, the Committee urges the State party to ensure that:**

(a) **Women and Children Service Centres are made available in all districts and that they utilize child-sensitive investigation procedures, including special interview rooms designed for children and child-sensitive methods of questioning;**

(b) **A guardian is appointed to guide and accompany child victims throughout the entire process until a durable solution in the best interests of the child has been identified and implemented;**

- (c) Child victims are treated sensitively throughout investigation and trial process and that protection of their privacy is respected;
- (d) Child victims are provided with free legal aid and with the support of child psychologists and social workers during the criminal justice process;
- (e) During the investigation, prosecution and hearings, direct contact between the child and the defendant is avoided and provide for every human, technical and financial resources to ensure the active usage of in-camera investigations;
- (f) Legal and practical measures are taken to guarantee the adequate and sufficient protection of child witnesses from retaliation.

Recovery and reintegration of victims

41. The Committee while noting the establishment of rehabilitation and emergency centres for child victims of trafficking, expresses concern that the lack of clear procedures and standards for the care and protection of child victims—including the provision of psychosocial support, case assessment based on the ‘best interests’ determination, temporary and durable solutions, and follow-up until the child reaches the age of majority puts children at further risk. The Committee is particularly concerned that:

- (a) Despite the establishment of some rehabilitation centres and emergency shelters for child victims of trafficking, child-centred services remain largely unavailable and their expansion and improvement is limited due to budget constraints;
- (b) Legislation does not establish any right for child victims to receive free-of-cost medical treatment, mental health and other care;
- (c) Reparation is only available for victims of trafficking.

42. **The Committee urges the State party to take all the appropriate measures for the physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of child victims of offences under the Optional Protocol and ensure that those measures take place in an environment which fosters the self-respect and dignity of the child. In particular, the Committee urges the State party to:**

- (a) **Take every necessary measure to facilitate and increase access to child-centred services, particularly for children living in remote areas and increase the budget allocated to these services to ensure that they are sufficiently and adequately equipped;**
- (b) **Adopt clear measures guiding the rescue, repatriation, rehabilitation and reintegration of child victims and establish by law the right of child victims to receive free-of-cost medical treatment, mental health and other care;**
- (c) **Ensure that all child victims of the offences covered by the Optional Protocol are provided with access to adequate procedures to seek compensation, without discrimination, in accordance with article 9, paragraph 4 of the Optional Protocol.**

VIII. International assistance and cooperation

43. In light of article 10, paragraph 1, of the Optional Protocol, the Committee encourages the State party to continue to strengthen international cooperation through multilateral, regional and bilateral arrangements, especially with

neighbouring countries, including by strengthening procedures and mechanisms to coordinate the implementation of such arrangements, with a view to improving prevention, detection, investigation, prosecution and punishment of those responsible for any of the offences covered under the Optional Protocol. In this respect, the Committee encourages the State party to implement the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Convention on Regional Provisions on Child and the Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution.

44. The Committee encourages the State party to continue its cooperation with United Nations agencies and programmes, and with non-governmental organizations in developing and implementing measures aimed at the effective implementation of the Optional Protocol.

IX. Follow-up and dissemination

45. The Committee recommends that the State party take all appropriate measures to ensure full implementation of the present recommendations, inter alia, by transmitting them to the Head of State, the Supreme Court, Parliament, relevant ministries and local authorities for appropriate consideration and further.

46. The Committee further recommends that the second periodic report and written replies submitted by the State party and related recommendations (concluding observations) adopted be made widely available, including (but not exclusively) through the Internet, to the public at large, civil society organizations, youth groups, professional groups and children, in order to generate debate and awareness of the Optional Protocol, its implementation and monitoring.

X. Next report

47. In accordance with article 12, paragraph 2, the Committee requests the State party to include further information on the implementation of the Optional Protocol and the present concluding observations in its next periodic report under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, in accordance with article 44 of the Convention which is overdue since 13 March 2010. The Committee also invites the State party to submit its initial reports under the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the involvement of children in armed conflict, due on 2 March 2009, as soon as possible.
