

"CRC, Alternative Reporting and Follow-Up on Concluding Observations in Arab Countries"

A report on a regional workshop held in Broummana-Lebanon
between Sep. 28th 2005 and Oct. 1st 2005

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Arab Resource Collective

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The Arab Resource Collective (ARC), in collaboration with Save the Children Sweden (SCS) and Save the Children Denmark (SCD), held a regional workshop entitled "**CRC Alternative Reporting and Follow-Up on Concluding Observations in Arab Countries**" between the 28th of September 2005 and the 1st of October 2005 at Le Crillon Hotel in Broummana, Lebanon.

I- Background / Introduction

The workshop agenda was based on research studies conducted in Lebanon, Palestine, Yemen and Jordan, and that examined the processes of CRC reporting and follow-up on concluding observations.

The workshop aimed at building NGO capacities regarding alternative reporting and follow-up on concluding observations through the exchange of Arab country experiences and recommendations.

CRC reporting has developed into a national process that involves contributions of diverse actors, among which are government agencies, civil society organizations and international organizations. It is a process that is intended to be a tool for policy development and planning, in addition to the implementation of CRC obligations undertaken by states; it is not to be regarded as a mere bureaucratic fulfilment of the Article 45(a) requirement.

NGOs and the CRC Committee have had a key role in inducing governments to observe their obligations, and have thus increased government compliance to submit high-quality transparent reports. Alternative reports submitted to the CRC Committee by national NGOs are considered to be analytical supplements to State party reports; they provide alternative information to the State party report's as regards the implementation of each of the CRC provisions. The concluding observations (CO), issued by the CRC Committee after examining the State report, are a reference for analysing country progress over the reporting period, and for advocacy towards legislative and policy reforms.

The contribution of NGOs to the reporting process represents civil society's position on state representation of the child rights situation; it includes independent information on violations of child rights, and highlights shortcomings in government policy and practice. NGOs can also play a major role in increasing public awareness of CRC content and mechanisms through integration of CRC standards into their own policies, programmes and planning documents, and through advocacy for application of necessary measures by the authorities.

The workshop commenced with Ms. Samar Haydar, coordinator of ARC Child Rights Programme, who informed the participants of the reasons of the choice of 'CRC Reporting' as a workshop theme, and its significance in promoting the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in Arab countries.

Ms. Tove Myrhman, officer in charge at Save the Children Sweden OPT (Palestine) office, explained the work of SCS in Arab countries, and affirmed SCS full and concrete commitment to child rights issues and the implementation of the Convention in these countries.

Ms. Alice Lisberg, representative of Save the Children Denmark in Arab countries, highlighted the future prospects of SCD work in the region - mostly in Syria and Jordan.

Finally, Mr. Ghanem Bibi, ARC General Coordinator, pointed out the importance of organizing regional workshops that focus on the implementation of CRC through monitoring and reporting. He emphasized the value of regional sharing and consultations towards better practice and realization of child rights in Arab countries. He concluded by thanking SCS, SCD, CRIN, the CRC NGO Group representative Ms. Denise Allen and Dr. Hatem Kotrane of the CRC Committee.

II- Workshop Objectives

The workshop aimed at building NGO capacity as regards the processes of alternative reporting and follow-up on concluding observations through the exchange of Arab country experiences.

The workshop plan was proposed to meet the following objectives

1. Promoting NGO follow-up on concluding observations
2. Advancing CRC reporting procedures based on lesson learnt
3. Improving networking and coalition-building among attending NGOs towards further development of reporting practices in Arab countries
4. Advancement of stakeholder knowledge as to legislation, practice and recommended line of action
5. Building stakeholder capacity in report writing, monitoring and advocacy

Furthermore, the workshop intended to bring about concrete outputs on which further action may be pursued.

III- Workshop Themes

The workshop revolved around the application of reporting procedures in Arab countries. It thoroughly discussed the CRC Committee working mechanisms and the CRC NGO Group. The workshop tackled the reporting experiences of participating Arab NGOs, their achievements, needs and the challenges they faced in the reporting process, in addition to lessons learnt and follow-up on concluding observations. Special attention was allotted to the issue of child participation in reporting and follow-up on concluding observations. Research on CRC and alternative reporting in Arab countries was also presented. An action plan for each country was set at the end of the workshop.

The workshop verified that the reporting process has evolved into a vibrant national process that involves diverse contributions from government agencies, civil society and inter-governmental organizations.

Methodology

Plenary meetings were held, at which several presentations by resource persons were made, work-groups on specific topics were convened and case studies that built on the experiences of the participants were shared. The workshop adopted interactive participatory methods throughout the sessions.

IV- Participants

Seventeen (17) persons from local and international NGOs working in five (5) Arab countries (Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Yemen) participated in the workshop, along with three (3) resource persons: Ms. Denise Allen of the CRC NGO Group, Dr. Hatem Kotrane of the CRC Committee and Mr. Tom Hewitt of CRIN. The participants' ages ranged from twenty-eight (28) to sixty (60) years, the majority of which had extensive experience in child-related issues. (See List of Participants, Annex 1)

Another 3 participants were prevented from attending (2 from Palestine for difficulty of crossing borders due to restriction by the Israeli occupation and 1 from Sudan). Here to note that Sudan presentation is included in annexes.

V- Workshop Preparation team

The workshop preparation team was chiefly composed of Ms. Samar Haydar (ARC Child Rights Programme Coordinator), Mr. Ghanem Bibi (ARC General Coordinator), Kalle Elofsson (Save the Children Sweden), Alice Lisberg (Save the Children Denmark) and Ms. Rania Fazah (Workshop Facilitator).

VI- Funding

Workshop funding came from SCS, SCD and participation fees.

VII- Acquaintance

Ms. Samar Haydar led the acquaintance session whereby she requested of each participant to identify themselves and the organization they represented, and convey their feelings about participating in the workshop.

VIII- Workshop Discussions / Proceedings

The workshop focussed on four (4) major issues:

- The CRC Committee working mechanisms, reporting procedures and follow-up on concluding observations
- Child participation in the CRC reporting process and follow-up on concluding observations
- Role of the CRC NGO Group
- CRIN

Ms. Rania Fazah presented the workshop agenda. (See Annex 2)

For participatory management of the workshop, the participants were divided into four (4) teams listed in the table below.

Evaluation	Documentation - Daily Wrap-Up	Energizing	Timing
Abdel Rahman Abdel Wahab Farouq Al Amad Alice Keyrouz Tove Myrhman Youssef Hajjar Raja El Derbashi	Tom Hewitt Ghanem Bibi Carole Garde Walid Al Bashir Mikkel Balslev	George Abou Zoulof Qassem Saad Dennis Walto Fadia Al Asaad	Hassan Kassem Souad El Amine Dalia Al Farouqi

A- Participants Expectations (RF)

Each participant wrote down their expectations on a yellow stick note; the expectations mainly related to acquiring knowledge on and/or having hopes for:

1. How the CRC Committee feeds into the decision process of individual countries
2. How the CRC Committee measures effectiveness
3. Fresh ideas on handling obstacles in monitoring and implementation of concluding observations
4. Recent studies on Arab countries
5. Sharing NGO experiences and knowledge on CRC reporting in Arab countries
6. The CRC reporting process in Geneva, and how it is handled and examined by the CRC Committee
7. Child participation in the CRC reporting process
8. Evaluation of the Arab experience in CRC reporting
9. Prospects for joint efforts in reporting among Arab NGOs
10. Practical application of reports in the realization of child rights
11. Launching of an on-going monitoring mechanism and reporting process
12. Strengthening the capacities of Arab NGOs in CRC monitoring, reporting and implementation
13. Methodology of report-writing
14. Preparation of a unified Arabic manual for reporting procedures
15. Networking among NGOs and child rights coalitions
16. Application of at least one of the workshop recommendations

These expectations can be classified into the categories of

- Knowledge and experiences / reporting skills and methodology
- Obstacles and challenges
- Practical application (networking, joint activities, continuous monitoring)

B- General Workshop Guidelines

- Concise comments / questions
- Respect of the agenda
- Adherence to allotted time
- Adherences to one language for translation purposes
- Silencing of mobile phones
- Building on others' ideas
- Non-interruption
- Requesting permission to speak
- Non - smoking
- Respect of different views

C- The CRC and its Work Mechanisms

Presentation by Dr. Hatem Kotrane, member of the CRC Committee in Geneva
(See Annex 3)

The Committee on the Rights of the Child is a body of eighteen (18) independent human rights experts. They are elected for a term of four (4) years by State parties in the UN General Assembly. Members serve in their personal capacity, and may be re-elected if nominated. The members are not compensated.

The Arab members of the CRC Committee are: Ms. Ghalia Mohammad Bin Hamad AL-THANI (Qatar), Mr. Kamel FILALI (Algeria), Ms. Moushira KHATTAB (Egypt) and Mr. Hatem KOTRANE (Tunisia).

The Committee is elected to monitor the implementation of the CRC by State parties that have ratified it. It also monitors the implementation of the two Optional Protocols to the Convention regarding 'Children in Armed Conflict' and the 'Sale of Children Child Prostitution and Pornography'.

The Committee examines the State report and addresses its concerns and recommendations to the State party in the form of 'concluding observations'. The Committee also reviews additional reports submitted by states that have ratified the two Optional Protocols.

The Committee normally holds three sessions per year at the United Nations Office in Geneva consisting of a three-week plenary and a one-week pre-sessional working group, normally in January, May and September. Starting 2006, the Committee will consider reports in two parallel chambers of nine (9) members each, in order to clear the backlog of reports.

The Committee cannot consider individual complaints, although some INGOs are currently advocating for this. However, a mechanism for urgent action and appeals is possible through the *Special Rapporteurs* on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, and on Torture.

Prior to the Committee session at which the State party report is reviewed, the pre-sessional working group of the Committee holds a private meeting with UN agencies, NGOs and other bodies that have submitted additional information to the Committee.

The pre-sessional working group discussion of the State report results in a 'list of issues' which represent discussion priorities on which the Committee requests additional or updated information in writing from the government involved prior to the session; this usually takes place between three (3) and four (4) months after the working group.

The Committee may invite specialized agencies, the United Nations Children's Fund and other competent bodies to provide it with expert advice.

The Committee has systematically and strongly encouraged NGOs and National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) to submit reports, documentation and other information in the purpose of attaining a comprehensive picture as to how the Convention is being implemented in a particular country. Information may be submitted by individual NGOs or national coalitions / committees of NGOs.

Based on submitted written information, the Committee will issue a written invitation to selected NGOs to participate in the pre-sessional working group of the Committee thus providing an opportunity for dialogue regarding the implementation of the Convention of the Rights of the Child. The NGOs coming from in-country are allowed introductory remarks to a maximum of fifteen (15) minutes and five (5) minutes are allotted to others, after which the Committee members engage in dialogue with all participants.

The pre-sessional working group is a meeting closed to the public, but NGOs, NHRIs and other competent bodies may request a private meeting with the Committee.

The discussions focus on the analysis of 'progress achieved' and 'difficulties encountered' in the implementation of the Convention. The discussions deal with 'implementation priorities' and 'future goals'. The Committee requires that the state delegation be highly involved in strategic decisions relating to the child rights, and that it have potential to impact policy-making and implementation activities.

Dialogue is initiated after a brief introductory statement by the Head of Delegation. The Chairperson of the Committee will request the country *rapporteur(s)* to provide a brief overview of the state of child rights in the concerned country. The Chairperson will thereafter invite the Committee members to ask questions or make comments on the first cluster of rights, and the delegation may respond. The discussion moves step by step through the next

group of issues identified in the reporting guidelines. At the end of the discussion, the country *rapporteurs* summarize their observations concerning the report and the discussion itself, and may also make suggestions and recommendations. Finally, the delegation is invited to make a final statement.

The Committee appoints two of its members to act as 'country *rapporteurs*' to lead the discussions with the delegation.

The Committee on the Rights of the Child is active on numerous levels. It recently published an interpretation on the "Treatment of Unaccompanied and Separated Children Outside their Country of Origin". Dr. Korane urged present NGOs to effectively participate in these sessions to expose their views and increase their output.

Structure of the report: Guidelines for State party reporting

Under Article 44, paragraph 1 (a), the Committee has prepared guidelines regarding the form and content of reports to be submitted by State parties, of the Convention. The Committee recommends that all State parties report to it in a thorough and timely manner and in accordance with the guidelines.

According to the guidelines, and to give the Committee solid analytical reference, the reports should contain relevant legislative, judicial, administrative and other information, including statistical data. State parties are requested to supplement information on "factors and difficulties encountered" and "progress achieved". "Implementation priorities" and "specific goals" for the future are also requested.

The guidelines group the CRC articles as follows:

- (a) General measures of implementation (Arts. 4, 42, 44.6)
- (b) Definition of the 'Child' (Art. 1)
- (c) General principles (Arts. 2, 3, 6, 12)
- (d) Civil rights and freedoms (Arts. 7, 8, 13-17, 37 (a))
- (e) Family environment and alternative care (Arts. 5, 18.1, 18.2, 9, 10, 27.4, 20, 21, 11, 19, 39, 25)
- (f) Basic health and welfare (Arts. 6.2, 23, 24, 26, 18.3, 27.1, 27.2, 27.3)
- (g) Education, leisure and cultural activities (Arts. 28, 29, 31)
- (h) Special protective measures
 - i. Children in situations of emergency (Arts. 22, 38, 39)
 - ii. Children in conflict with the law (Arts. 40, 37, 39)
 - iii. Children in situations of exploitation, including physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration (Arts. 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 39)
 - iv. Children belonging to a minority or an indigenous group (Art. 30)

The committee discusses the reports with State parties according to the above list.

The Committee on the Rights of the Child has also issued reporting guidelines regarding the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, and the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict.

State reports shall not exceed 120 standard pages, as decided by the Committee in its 30th session.

Dr. Kotrane indicated that many Arab governments tend to issue child-related legislation in the same year of CRC periodic report, which well indicates that governments feel a moral

obligation towards the implementation of CRC, and therefore tend to achieve some progress. On the other hand, this may indicate that Arab governments do not include child rights implementation and child issues in national planning policies. He urged NGOs to be more active and involved in the CRC reporting saying "The committee sessions are a great opportunity for NGOs to meet and interact with government agents and international NGOs and openly discuss the situation of children in a certain country".

The participants raised the following issues with Dr. Kotrane:

1. Independence of the Committee work mechanisms
2. Mechanisms for monitoring the work of CRC Committee
3. Committee expectations of NGOs
4. NGO nomination of the members of the Committee
5. Committee role in inducing governments to apply legislative amendments
6. The importance of establishing a governmental body to monitor the CRC
7. Communication of the Committee in the states concerning the role of NGOs
8. Membership criteria
9. NGO role in the choice of Committee members
10. Raising the Committee's annual report to the Secretary General and meeting the HCHR
11. The contribution of UNICEF and other UN agencies to the State report and presenting reports of their own; UNICEF is currently sending nationals to represent them in the CRC committee session
12. The growing number of participating children in the CRC committee meeting

Dr. Kotrane confirmed the availability of a guide on monitoring and CRC reporting procedures; it seems, however, that it is not well disseminated among the NGOs in the region.

D- Applied Reporting Procedures and Processes in Arab Countries

The participants were divided into groups to answer the following list of questions:

Q1: Why is there a need for an alternative report?

Q2: What are the steps taken in the preparation of alternative reports?

Q3: What is the most important information in the report?

Q4: How do NGOs send alternative report to the Geneva NGO group?

The groups came out as follows:

Group1: Denis, Tom, Alice Keyrouz, Kassem Khan, Carole Garde, Mikel Balslev

Group2: Alice Lisberg, Walid Al Bashir, Qassem Saad, Denise Allen, Tove Myrhman, Fadia Al Assaad, Souad Al Amine

Group3: Dalia Al Farouqi, Ghanem Bibi, Essam Ali, George Abou Zouluf, Youssef Hajjar, Abdel Rahman Abdel Wahab

The groups discussed the above questions, and concluded that the CRC reporting process is a multi-stakeholder contribution. They agreed that it is an essential element to ensure the full implementation of the CRC in their countries. The groups affirmed the importance of qualitative as well as quantitative data, with a special focus on how the CRC is actually implemented, and what its practical impact on the child is. The NGOs affirmed the need to collect data that compliments the State report and fills its gaps.

Apparently, in Arab countries the reporting process passes through the following steps:

1. Internal training on CRC reporting mechanisms
2. Meeting of the stakeholders (social actors, caregivers, judges, educational institutions...)
3. Setting a plan of action
4. Allotting tasks according to the relevance and focus of each NGO (in the case of coalition work), and establishing committees (drafting, research...)

5. Collection of relevant data and information
6. Analysis of collected data
7. Writing-up of the first draft
8. Examination of the State report
9. Introduction of needed modifications and comments (feedback from the stakeholders)
10. Sending the final draft to the CRC committee or the CRC NGO group

Question/Response Matrix by Group

Questions Answers	Q1: Why is there a need for an alternative report?	Q2: Steps of alternative report preparation	Q3: Most important info in the report	Q4: Sending Process
Group 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To comply with Convention Art. 45(1) - To assess facts presented in the State report - To supplement lacking info. - To highlight violations not included in governments reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote awareness on CRC reporting among NGOs - Induce the government to produce a report - Establish a coalition or networking among NGOs - Hold workshops on reporting mechanisms and content - Track violations - Collect data on key indicators - Disseminate government report - Present initial findings - Stake holder and child feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evaluation and presentation of government report /preparation method/ /participants - Point-by-point comparison of concluding observations with articles of CRC/analysis discrepancies of state report - Missing info related to child rights - Child participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Send to "liaison Unit" / NGO Group in Geneva
Group 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To reveal discrepancies between government and alternative reporting - To get info. on specific issues - To focus on violations e.g. by governments - To ensure child participation - To ensure more qualitative data' - To monitor implementation of CO - To raise level of commitment of NGOs - To increase networking and collective efforts - To raise awareness on CR issues - To update general child-related info 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review state report - Read and describe the guidelines of alternative report - Build group capacity - Review CO of recommendations - Map NGO actors - Gather info and analysis (including children's view) - Validate info collected - Draft the report and circulate for consultation - Info gathering must be an on-going process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The relation between the drafting committee and the monitoring and info gathering committee - Child participation, including vulnerable children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NGO group in Geneva - The CRC Committee
Group 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It is a right assured by the CRC - State reports usually lack objectivity and are not very transparent in uncovering child realities - Preparation of the alternative report includes all of the monitoring, follow-up and raising awareness processes - To promote the importance of child participation - The alternative report enriches the state report - Preparation of the alternative report enhances the coordination and networking among NGOs - Civil society is also a duty bearer in CRC implementation - it is a learning exercise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish coalitions of NGOs from different sectors dealing with children - Distribute tasks according to the specialty and field of every NGO - Continuous monitoring and reporting, setting database, gathering info on continuous basis regardless of the date of the report - Collect info from every NGO - Set up the drafting team - Hold workshops/ seminars/ meetings to discuss the report draft - Involve children - Present the report - Evaluate the experience 		

D-1 Country Reporting Experiences

Participants from the same country came together to present their experience in CRC reporting. Presentations of country experiences regarding CRC reporting were shared and discussed.

Two (2) sets of questions were given, the first of which was directed towards countries that do not present alternative reports, while the second was directed towards NGOs that prepare alternative reports.

SET 1

1. Is it important to have an alternative report? Why or why not?
2. What are the obstacles that are hindering NGOs preparation of alternative reports?
Do you want to do it and how? (procedures)

Note: Different questions were set for Jordan and Lebanon since they have a joint and not an alternative report.

Participants from Jordan objected to the distinction between countries that present alternative reports and those which present joint reports with the government, clarifying that a joint report is acceptable if it is appropriate for the country's circumstances.

Jordan (See Annex4)

The 1st CRC report in Jordan was prepared by the government; no NGOs were involved in the initial report. Five (5) years later, the Jordanian government prepared the second alternative report which was overly optimistic. In response, NGOs tried to establish a coalition to impact the report.

The Jordanian government had also discovered the impact of concealing the real situation of children on funding prospects. Consequently, it established a Coalition of Royal NGOs to participate in the preparation of the third report.

The NGOs entered into a dialogue with the government in the preparation of the third report under the umbrella of the National Council for Family Affairs.

The third report included factual information of CRC violations; NGOs focused on the implementation aspect which was usually neglected by the government, while the government highlighted the legislative achievements. The NGOs are currently working with the government towards the issuance of a National Law on Child Rights.

The participants from Jordan indicated the following obstacles facing their reporting efforts:

- Poor coalition between NGOs due to political interventions
- Poor reporting skills and competencies
- Need of external technical and financial support
- Conflict between NGOs
- Poor child participation

Lebanon (See Annex5)

One Lebanese NGO coalition issued an alternative report to the Initial State Report in 1993. The Lebanese NGOs then entered into the framework of the Higher Council of Childhood "HCC" - a governmental body established to follow-up the implementation of Child Rights- in the preparation of the second and third periodic reports (joint reports). The role of NGOs in the second report was restricted to commenting on some of the issues that were discussed in the HCC periodic report. In the third report, NGOs participated in the thematic groups that provided the data and drafted the various report's sections. The Lebanese NGOs indicated that cooperation with the government will eventually lead to the issuance of a National Plan of Action for better implementation of the CRC.

The main obstacles facing Lebanese NGOs in preparation of alternative reports were:

- Absence of a continuous monitoring system
- Absence of relevant accurate information, statistics and data
- Limited funding that had lead the NGOs to cooperate with the government
- Poor monitoring and reporting skills due to limited experience
- Scattered efforts and political affiliation of some NGOs that had lead to weak coordination efforts

The Lebanese group started report preparation with a meeting of stakeholders followed by an internal training on CRC reporting mechanisms. Then they set up a plan of action where the interested members divided tasks among themselves according to relevance and focus of each NGO and official body. Following that came data compilation, research and analysis, and then finally report drafting. The draft was then reviewed and commented on before the final report was sent to the CRC committee.

NGOs in Lebanon and Jordan confirmed that cooperation, not confrontation, may produce better results concerning reporting,

SET 2

What are the methods used for monitoring?

1. What are the obstacles you faced?
2. What are the gaps in alternative report preparation?
3. What are recommendations to handle obstacles or difficulties faced by the NGOs?

Palestine and Palestinians in Lebanon (See Annex5)

In Palestine, the Palestinian Child Rights Coalition reviewed the Israeli initial report, and then gathered information regarding child rights violations, highlighting the missing information in the State report. Eight (8) experts then drafted the report, which was discussed by coalition member NGOs. Finally, the report was sent to the CRC committee.

The coalition faced hardships in collecting information during the Israeli Invasion despite the fact that the Palestinian coalition has a continuous monitoring mechanism (system) of the CRC.

The Palestinian NGOs prepared the alternative report while Israeli forces were invading the Palestinian territories. The Palestinian Child Rights Coalition is quoted to be rather critical of UNICEF's role in the process of NGO reporting. "The government of Israel also hindered – and usually hinders- NGO efforts ". Another problem that faced the coalition concerned the inclusion of the children of the 1948 occupied territories in the report, as well as Palestinian children in other Arab countries.

The Palestinian NGOs in Lebanon actively prepared three (3) alternative reports highlighting the circumstances of Palestinian refugee children in Lebanon

The Palestinian group discussed terms and opportunities for cooperation between Palestinians in Lebanon and Palestine concerning reporting and follow-up on COs.

Yemen (See Annex5)

The Yemeni Coalition has so far issued three alternative reports. The Coalition investigated cases of violations and met victims of abuse, reviewed media outlets, relevant reports and studies, collected children's input, followed-up on legislative changes, examined government policies, proceedings, reports, statistics and activities, and identified gaps in CRC implementation that are not exposed in the state report.

The Yemeni coalition formed a committee that examined the government report submitted to the CRC. It then collected data to draft the alternative report, which was then reviewed in content, and finally sent to the CRC committee.

The coalition is currently preparing a study to document its reporting experiences throughout the three (3) reports.

The main difficulties that the Yemeni coalition has faced in the preparation of the alternative report were the absence of a regular monitoring system (thus making monitoring efforts more occasional than continuous), lack of access to information, statistics and data, poor funding and the non-availability of experienced resource persons to write the report.

Egypt (Annex6)

The Egyptian Coalition of Child Rights prepared the initial alternative report to reflect a comprehensive vision of the rights of children. They used evidence-based data, and investigated implementation and policies; yet, they could not cover all the elements indicated in the guiding principles. The coalition issued a number of recommendations which focused on long-term solutions.

The coalition started the reporting process by establishing three groups: education and cultural activities, health and environment, children in especially difficult circumstances. They afterwards held seminars on disability, child labour and street children in the aim of exchanging opinions, after which a general meeting would be held for the revision of the report draft.

The coalition is currently facing hardships in the preparation of the second report as the government is dominating the process. It has issued the "National Report for the Evaluation of the Progress in the Last Decade" in Dec.2000, "UNICEF Children Situation Analysis 2000", and has delayed the second periodic report.

Common Practice Among NGOs Involved in CRC Reporting

It was clear from the country presentations and work-groups that NGOs made use of the following monitoring methods:

- Investigation of cases of child rights violations
- Meeting victims of violations
- Meetings with government officials for data collection
- Tracking books and periodical articles from national media, and monitoring local media
- Collection of reports and research findings relevant to child rights issues
- Assessment of the extent of implementation of legislation
- Evaluation of the compliance of the national legislation with the CRC
- Evaluation of the compliance of national policies with the CRC and CO
- Looking into budgets allocated to children, whether directly or indirectly
- Evaluating government reports and statistics
- Reviewing records of parliamentary session proceedings and discussions

Obstacles facing NGO reporting in Arab countries

- Lack of statistics and information on children
- Info collection is not a continuous process
- Taboo issues whereby no information is gathered or available thereof
- Poor/unrepresentative child participation
- Poor report-writing skills
- Only few organizations employ a child rights perspective in their work
- Fear of criticizing the government
- Conditional funding for production of alternative report
- NGO bias through political affiliation
- Internal politics of NGOs on involvement
- Absence of a secretariat to follow-up on the alternative report
- Poor coordination/cooperation and fierce competition among NGOs
- Absence of local NGOs in the reporting process
- Taboo topics
- Insufficient role on reporting by UNICEF
- Loose overall perspective of report (details)
- Poor consensus building among NGOs for report

NGOs fail to act independently of the government for the following reasons

- Poor practice of democracy, governance and public transparency
- Corruption and lack of public transparency
- Violations of rights and freedoms
- Government funding for NGO report tends to be dependent on governmental approval of it
- Governments tend to practice direct censorship on NGO activities, personnel and finances
- Fear of confrontation with the government among NGOs
- Government officials tend to create affiliated NGOs for community access; therefore, these affiliated NGOs only serve political agendas

Common issues

- Children of minority groups and refugee children
- Limited Capacity of NGOs in periodic reporting

D- 2 Common Obstacles and Recommendations

Obstacles

- Absence of relevant information, statistics and data
- Access to information, especially to government statistics
- Absence of a monitoring system
- 'Politicization' of the monitoring and reporting mechanism in front of the Committee
- Poor monitoring skills
- Lack of funding
- Poor availability of experts or experienced resource persons in report-writing
- Occasional/non-continuous monitoring efforts
- Hesitancy or Obstruction by governments
- Poor regional input in national reports
- Poor child participation
- Poor coordination among the NGOs and poor NGOs willingness
- NGOs' link to /dependency of political and religious groups
- Hidden agendas of INGOs
- Difficulties in addressing taboo issues

Recommendations

The NGOs agreed on the following points that need further development to improve CRC reporting in the region:

- Monitoring should be an ongoing process that includes follow-up on changes
- Cooperation between NGOs produces more accurate results
- The need for a mechanism to ensure continuous and regular access to data and information is pressing
- Monitoring and reporting skills are a significant must among NGO members
- The participation of children is vital throughout the whole reporting process
- Funding is a major factor in ongoing monitoring and the delivery of a precise report
- Monitoring the implementation of CO is essential in the overall reporting and monitoring process
- Ongoing staff capacity-building on CRC and CRC reporting is essential
- Expert report-writing experience is needed
- Monitoring on local levels can occur through finding community-based sources of info (tracking violations/ contact with vulnerable groups...)

E- Follow-Up on Concluding Observations

E-1 CRC and Follow- up on Concluding Observations Presentation by Dr. Hatem Kotrane

The session was presented by Dr. Kotrane, who explained the process by which the committee issues concluding observations, and the most common concluding observations among Arab countries. (See Annex 7)

Concluding observations/comments

After discussions with the State party, the Committee will- in a closed meeting- agree on written concluding observations which include suggestions and recommendations.

The concluding observations contain an introduction, positive aspects (including progress achieved), factors and difficulties impeding the implementation, principal subjects for concern, and suggestions and recommendations addressed to the State party.

The Concluding Observations are issued as an official document of the Committee, and are made public on the last day of a Committee session during the adoption of the session report. Once adopted, they are made available to the State parties concerned, relevant United Nations agencies and other concerned bodies.

It is assumed that concerns expressed by the Committee in its Concluding Observations will be addressed in a detailed manner by the State party in its next report. The Committee expects to receive written information on the follow-up measures taken by the State party to address the issues of concern identified in the previous Concluding Observations.

CO are imperative because they set the guidelines for further work towards the implementation of the CRC.

Ms. Denise Allen indicated that NGOs should use the concluding observations as a:

- tool for follow up / implementation
- tool for monitoring to assess change
- tool for advocacy to promote change

Major Common Issues regarding Concluding Observations (Dr. Kotrane)

Reviews of the Arab country reports show that there are many similarities concerning child-related issues. (See Annex 5)

1- General measures of implementation and definition of the 'Child'

- a- Reservations applied to Articles 14, 20, and 21 on basis of contradiction with the interpretation of Islamic provisions and Shari' a Law
- b- CRC awareness is weak in Arab countries
- c- The extent of compatibility of national legislation with the CRC regarding the personal status law, and the age of the child with respect to criminal responsibility, marriage, and labour
- d- Poor budget allocation to economic, social and cultural rights of children
- e- Absence of systematic data collection and an organized child abuse reporting system
- f- Absence of independent human rights institutions to monitor and evaluate progress in the CRC implementation

2- General Principles

- a- Discrimination against children born out of wedlock, the female child, vulnerable groups and children of minorities living in these countries
- b- Discrimination regarding the right to nationality, which is granted solely to children based on the sex of the parent(s) i.e., the father only
- c- The best interest of the child is not guarded by state legislation and administrative measures
- d- Child participation severely lacking

3- Civil rights and freedoms

- a- Reservation regarding Article 14
- b- Violation of the right of association and assembly for children under 18; they are not allowed to form NGOs

4- Family environment and alternative care

- a- Spread of physical and mental violence within the family, and in schools and institutions

5- Basic health and welfare

- a- Denial of community-based rehabilitation and inclusive education to children with disabilities
- b- Adolescent health matters under-discussed, mainly regarding reproductive health and family planning, AIDS and other Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs)
- c- Disparities in the enjoyment of health rights between rural and urban areas

6- Education, leisure and cultural activities

- a- Incomplete access to education for all children; only to those considered "citizens"
- b- Full and compulsory education, particularly for girls and vulnerable groups, is missing
- c- Quality education concerning the curriculum and teaching methodology is lacking
- d- Rural/urban disparities
- e- Poor budget allocated to cultural and leisure activities targeting children

7- Special measures of protection

- a- Death penalty for child offenders below the age of 18, if domestic law allows
- b- Poor administration of juvenile justice
- c- Child labour
- d- Commercial sexual exploitation of children
- e- 'Street Children' and abandoned children phenomena
- f- Violations imposed on refugee children in Arab countries

The participants raised some questions with Dr. Kotrane

1. The linguistic disparities between English and Arabic in the translation of the phrase 'best interest of the child'
2. Who decides the best interest of the child? Is it the adults?
3. Which rights prevail in case of conflicting rights?
4. A checklist for report reviews
5. Marginalization of child rights through linking them to women rights and family rights
6. Is it more effective to advocate for CRC on the national or regional level?
7. The role of the Arab members of the CRC committee in supporting Arab NGOs

E-2 Arab Country Experiences on Follow-Up on Concluding Observations

Palestine (OPT)

No measures have been taken by the Israeli Government towards the realization of the CRC among the Palestinian children. Israel persists in denying Palestinians their rights, although

the CRC Committee and the International Court of Justice affirmed the applicability of the CRC to Palestinian territories under Israeli occupation. The Concluding Observations are a good tool for the Palestinians to set priorities for action concerning child rights. The Palestinian NGOs have to urge international NGOs and the international community to exert pressure on Israel to abide by the international legal standards.

Yemen

The State of Yemen applies some legislative amendments and policies; special efforts are exerted in the field of sexual exploitation of children and fighting child trafficking. Concluding Observations are not dealt with efficiently and fully.

The coalition works on lobbying authorities and increasing awareness on the CRC. Yemeni NGOs have developed a proposal for regular monitoring and reporting mechanisms which will lead to the preparation of an annual progress report. They have also initiated training programmes on child protection. After the issuance of the third Concluding Observations, a meeting of all stakeholders (NGO coalition, government agencies, UNICEF, SCS) concluded a joint plan of action to implement and follow-up on the Concluding Observations.

Lebanon

The Lebanese NGOs chose to launch dialogue and cooperation with the government to implement the CRC. Some advocacy activities have led to a change in legislation concerning child labour, compulsory education, juvenile justice and disabled children. One of the major obstacles hindering the follow-up on Concluding Observations is the poor dissemination of reports and concluding observations, lack of full knowledge of CRC mechanisms, in addition to the political situation that dominated the country for a long time. No national action plan was prepared to implement Concluding Observations in Lebanon.

Jordan

NGOs in Jordan have participated in the National Plan of Childhood (2004-2013) that was prepared by the National Council for Family Affairs, under the patronage of Queen Rania. This plan provides a general framework and direction for action in all sectors that are children-related.

Egypt

The Coalition made major efforts in the field of violence against children through promoting awareness and conducting training on CRC. Activities were also conducted to ensure the participation of children.

E-3 Common Practice and Recommendations

The following activities are the most prominent among the NGOs in Arab countries concerning follow-up on concluding observations:

- Advocacy to change laws
- Close evaluation of governmental efforts towards implementation of CO (ministries, municipalities...)
- Pressuring government to abide by the CRC provisions
- Building coalitions and networks with other stakeholders and social actors (caregivers, lawyers, judges, educational institutions...)
- Initiating projects that implement certain rights
- Conducting awareness campaigns on CRC / CRC education
- Media outreach
- Involving and ensuring child participation
- Initiating a regular monitoring system

F- Child Participation in CRC Reporting and Follow-Up on Concluding Observations

F-1 Arab Country Experiences

Lebanon

Both the Lebanese and Palestinian NGOs claimed that children participated in the 3rd Alternative Report through focus groups with children (public schools/ juvenile in conflict with law/ working children/ street children and children in refugee camps). Palestinian NGOs in Lebanon used the CtC approach (See Annex 8). The NGOs collected data on children's lives, surveyed children recommendations and their future perspective. The NGOs are also committed to enhancing child participation in the planning and production of the report and the follow-up on the Concluding Observations. However, no action has been taken yet, and children did not participate in the report drafting.

Child participation in the third report and alternative report was a good starting point but faced some challenges, mainly cultural. The children themselves are not used to participating in CRC monitoring and reporting.

Palestine (See Annex 5)

Palestinian children did not participate in the alternative report due to Israeli military action against the second Intifada. However a girl child from Jenin camp did participate in the CRC committee session to discuss the Israeli report, and shared her experience regarding the Israeli Invasion.

Yemen

Yemeni children participated in the 3rd Alternative Report through the Children Parliament. NGOs started by CRC awareness-raising, then by involving children in the planning stage, and as sources of information. The children then commented on the report before it was sent to Geneva. The Children Parliament includes children aged 10-17, girls and boys, with a certain quota for orphans. The children are elected in intermediate schools and represent all regions of Yemen. The parliament was a platform where children expressed their views, priorities and concerns. They presented recommendations to concerned governmental agencies and ministries. The children were not involved in drafting the report. The Yemeni Coalition will also involve children in the follow-up on the Concluding Observations, and the Parliament will issue an annual report on the progress achieved in the follow-up process. The Parliament will be preparing for the 4th Alternative Report.

Jordan

The children in Jordan were not involved in the preparation of the first and second reports. The NGO network discussed the involvement of children in CRC reporting; there were concerns that the children in Jordan are not ready or capable of participating. The NGO network established a Children Parliament to enable children to participate in CRC reporting. It was established in 1997 upon an initiative from the Jordanian Women's Union in collaboration with UNICEF. 500 children representing all governorates elected the one-hundred and twenty (120) members of the Children's Parliament during the Jordanian Children's Conference. In collaboration with the Ministry of education, the NGOs formed children groups in schools to nominate parliament members who also chose members to participate in the process.

The Parliament is elected for a two-year term of office, during which members are active in identifying youth problems, monitoring violations of children's right and lobbying for legislative amendments. Training on CRC for the children was held, and the children had discussion sessions where the children raised major critical issues, mainly concerning child labour. The parliament also discussed the concluding observations of the 2nd report.

In the preparation of the 3rd report, under the umbrella of the National Council of Family Affairs, the children were more involved in the preparations, and the process as a whole, they have even suggested a different way to draft the report.

Some obstacles faced the Children's Parliament

- 1- Limited time for child participation
- 2- Parental concerns about the effect of participation on child academic performance
- 3- Lack of funding and technical support

Egypt (See Annex 6)

The Children and Adolescents Forum offers children a large representative platform: 716 children (425 girls and 291 boys) from 85 NGOs in 13 governorates. The Forum ensures child participation, and conveys their opinions to government officials. The children participated in the alternative report where children from seven governorates and from different social backgrounds identified and analysed their problems and needs.

Three workshops discussed the most important subjects in the report, and the input was presented to The National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM) and consultants drafting the report. The forum then discussed the draft of CRC report. The report crystallized when 47 representatives met for 5 days to consolidate the outcomes in one report. They presented the final report to NCCM.

F-2 Observations

It is worth noting that the presented cases of child participation in Arab countries do not meet the basic requirements of child participation. A discriminatory approach dominated the choice of the children (the best, the brightest, the cleverest), protection measures were not present and participation was severely lacking since children had little input in planning and drafting. Only 2 parties said that they use the CtC approach to ensure participation.

G- Stakeholders Role

G-1 NGO Group for the CRC

Ms. Denise Allen Presentation (See Annex 9)

The NGO Group is a coalition of international non-governmental organizations, formed in 1983 as the informal ad hoc group during the drafting of the CRC. It continues to work towards the promotion, monitoring and implementation of the CRC. The NGO group is an entity independent of governments, donors and UN agencies.

The NGO Group aims to

- Promote awareness on the Convention
- Promote and facilitate the full implementation of the Convention
- Facilitate the flow of information between the CRC Committee, UN bodies and NGOs
- Facilitate cooperation and information-sharing on monitoring and implementing the Convention within the NGO community
- Draw-up policies and strategies and undertake action in fields covered by the Convention
- Contribute to the monitoring work of the Committee on the Rights of the Child
- Facilitate the creation and support of the work of NGO networks that advance child rights at the national level

Structure

The NGO Group has a membership of over 70 international NGOs that have child welfare as a primary focus or to whom child rights are a work area. Full member meetings are held twice yearly in Geneva to coordinate NGO Group action and develop joint strategies. NGO Group members form subgroups and taskforces to work on themes or issues related to

specific articles of the CRC. Through these subgroups, members have a platform for debate and joint action. These thematic areas include:

- Child labour
- Children in armed conflict and displacement
- Juvenile justice
- Education, literacy and media
- Commission on Human Rights
- Children and violence
- Sexual exploitation
- Children's right to health
- UNGASS on children
- Children of indigenous groups
- National child rights coalitions

Coordinating Committee

The overall work of the NGO Group is facilitated by the Coordinating Committee. Two bodies, the Liaison Unit and the Focal Point on Sexual Exploitation of Children form the coordination committee.

1- The Liaison Unit represents the core area of the NGO Group work. It ensures that national level NGOs participate in the reporting process of the Committee on CRC. It strengthens cooperation between NGOs and the Committee.

The Unit also monitors the work of national Child Rights coalitions worldwide, and provides technical support to coalitions. It also assists NGOs to participate in the pre-sessional working group meetings of the Committee, provides regular information to keep NGOs/coalitions in over 90 countries informed about and involved in key international events and developments related to children rights, creates tools and guides for NGOs/coalitions concerning advocacy and monitoring and finally provides training to NGO representatives regarding advocacy and networking. Another important area is the management of alternative reports submitted to the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

2- The Focal Point on Sexual Exploitation of Children, Abuse and Violence (FPP) facilitates the coordination of global action to combat child sexual abuse, exploitation and violence within the framework of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Stockholm Agenda for Action. Its main role is to provide information on child sexual exploitation, and to monitor progress, challenges and emerging issues regarding child sexual exploitation and abuse.

www.againstsexualexploitation.org

www.childrenandviolence.org

The NGO group sets the strategic goals of 2004 -2006 to be

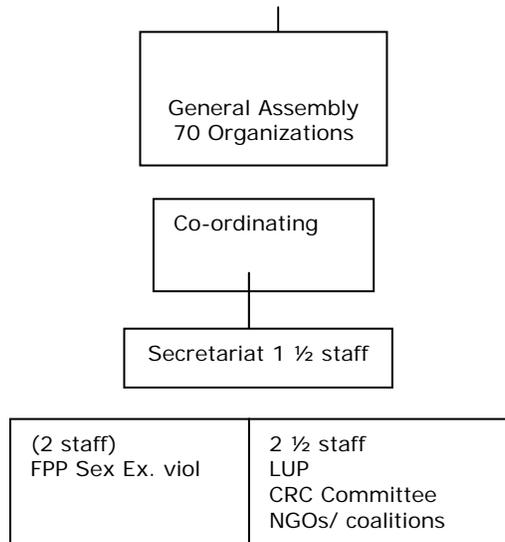
- Voicing child rights globally
- Mainstreaming child rights
- Strengthening the network through acquiring new members

Membership

To become a member of the NGO Group, the applying NGO should present:

- A letter of application
- Copies of recent annual reports and audited account.
- Legal status

The application will be reviewed based on existing criteria for membership, and approval awarded by the General Assembly. The NGO must pay a minimum of a hundred (100.00) USD in membership fees.



G-2 CRIN (See Annex 10)

For more information on CRIN:

www.crin.org/index-a.asp; www.crin.org

G-3 UNICEF

UNICEF Regional Office for the Arab Countries was invited, but no representative attended. Some participants indicated that there will be a change in UNICEF policy and strategic direction for the next five (5) years – a shift from advocacy to the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) - which will be reflected in future UNICEF activities and projects.

Some participants complained of the "passive role" of UNICEF, mainly in dealing with NGOs. However, in countries as in Yemen and Jordan, the participants indicated that UNICEF supports all efforts towards the realization of the CRC.

H- Country Action Plans

In the last session, the participants -grouped by country, placed a joint working plan to support the monitoring and reporting efforts in their country as regards

1. Steps to be taken
 - A- Internally (inside the NGO)
 - B- Regarding relations between NGOs in the country
 - C- Regarding relations between NGOs in the region
 - D- Regarding relations with INGOs
 - E- Regarding relations with UN agencies
2. Methodology
3. Participants' activities and initiatives upon return to home country

Palestinians (OPT and Lebanon)

Steps to be taken by NGOs	Relations among National NGOs	Relations with Regional NGOs	Relations with INGOs	Relations with UN Agencies	Methods
Developing continuous and ongoing monitoring and reporting mechanisms	Networking between NGOs in Palestine and in Lebanon	Networking with NGOs in Lebanon	INGOs should not influence alternative report	Policy of non-intervention of UN agencies in the NGO reports	Distribution of tasks among NGOs based on field of work
Capacity-building			Unconditional funding for the report		Unified mechanism for information gathering and documentation
			Launching an open dialogue between NGOs & INGOs to establish a balanced partnership based on transparency and best interest of the child		Drafting a comprehensive alternative report covering Palestinian children inside and outside of Palestine
					Developing NGO work irrespective of political agendas
					Setting an unified plan including advocacy
					Promoting the coverage of Palestinian child rights in Lebanon in the Lebanese report

Yemen

Steps to be taken in NGO Coalition	Relations among National NGOs	Relations with Government	Relations with Children	Relations with Regional NGOs	Relations with INGOs & UN Agencies
Developing continuous and monitoring mechanisms on a yearly basis	Networking between NGOs that are not in the coalition	Preparing a national plan in coordination with all stakeholders	Discussing the Concluding Observations with the Children Parliament	Sharing experiences and documents	Continue the cooperation and coordination with INGOs towards the best interest of the child.
Setting a plan 2005 - 2008 for the follow up on Concluding Observations	Holding meetings between NGO members on the 'Mouhafaza' level	Holding meetings between NGOs and local governments in the mouhafazat for follow-up on Concluding Observations	Setting a plan to guarantee child participation in reporting and follow-up on Concluding Observations	Setting up a website on CRC reporting and follow up Concluding Observations	
Translation and dissemination of State and Alternative report, as well as the Concluding Observations			Training on CRC monitoring and reporting	Support NGOs in Gulf countries towards issuing alternative reports	
Preparing progress reports by each 'Mouhafaza' based on the Concluding Observations			Getting involved in advocacy efforts		

Jordan

	Steps to be taken by NGOs	Relations among National NGOs	Relations with Government	Relations with Regional NGOs	Relation with INGOs & UN Agencies
J W U	Raising the issue within the Union board and the executive committee	Developing continuous monitoring mechanism and a database of CRC issues	Preparing a national plan in coordination with the government to follow-up on Concluding Observations	Sharing experiences and documents	Training from SC on reporting procedures
	Introducing CRC monitoring and reporting in the yearly plan	Holding workshops with NGO to follow-up on the Concluding Observations	Pressuring the government towards the adoption of the Child Law	Setting up an Arab website on CRC reporting and follow-up on COs	Cooperation with CRIN to develop the ARABIC CRINMAIL
	Holding meetings on central and chapters level to introduce the topic and decide on the action steps		Advocacy to discuss the CRC with the parliament and publish it in the official gazette	Establishing a Child Rights Arab committee within the Arab League	Continuous support from UNICEF (technical and know how)
	Translation and dissemination of state report & the Concluding Observations.				
	Involving the children parliament				
S C J o r d a n N H R C	Meeting with the child rights team to read the 3 rd State Report				
	Capacity building on CRC reporting & follow-up on CO.				
	Following up the CO with the relevant sectors				
	Reviewing the 3 reports and categorizing the COs (Yemeni table)				
	Launching Jordan reports and COs on the website				
	Covering the CRC reporting in the periodic newsletter				

Egypt

Steps to be taken by NGOs	Relations with Regional NGOs	Relations with Government	Relation with INGOs & UN Agencies
Internal meeting to set future plan 2006-2008	Coordination of activities with Arab NGOs	Working with the government on national conference on child protection policies	Hold a meeting to evaluate the cooperation experience with UNICEF
Revision of internal legal and structural framework. (the coalition is not registered by law)		Holding a consulting meeting for the final drafting of the second report with the government	Hold a meeting to agree on the future cooperation lines with UNICEF
Developing continuous monitoring and reporting mechanism		Agreeing with the government on launching a child protection action plan	
Setting a framework for the Children Forum			
Establishing a yahoo group to facilitate the dialogue and joint activities among children			

I- Recommendations

- **Setting national and regional CR monitoring “systems” to ensure continuous and regular flow of data and information relating to child issues**
- **Training of NGO personnel in monitoring and reporting procedures used in the system**
- **Mapping relevant websites and creating links in Arab NGO websites**
- **Dissemination of reports (State/ Alternative/ and Concluding Observations) on the national level**
- **Monitoring and reporting on a local and a national level**
- **Deliberate partnerships with INGOs and UNICEF in funding, agenda and priority setting**
- **Advocacy for follow-up on Concluding Observations**
- **Ensuring child participation in advocacy efforts regarding the follow-up process**
- **Ensuring child participation in child programmes**
- **Further participation of children in CRC reporting and monitoring and production of a child-friendly version of the report**
- **Collaboration between NGOs in reporting and monitoring the follow-up on COs on a national and regional level**
- **Cooperation with government in the plans to follow up the implementation of COs**
- **Promotion of general awareness of the CRC monitoring and reporting through the local media**
- **Cooperation between governments and NGOs is a build-up process that further develops after the 1st report**
- **Joint work can provide a basis for National Plans of Action**
- **Alleviation of false perceptions among NGOs that alternative reporting is necessarily an act of antagonism against governments, and that joint reporting is an act of surrender**

J- Evaluation

J-1 Pre and Post Tests

The preparation team prepared *Pre* and *Post* tests.

The pre-test results showed good knowledge about the reporting process. However, it uncovered some misconceptions mainly regarding the role of NGOs in the processes of CRC monitoring, reporting and follow-up on Concluding Observations. The reporting mechanism was ambiguous for some of the participants.

The post-test results clearly manifested that participants had formed a clearer and more comprehensive picture on the CRC reporting mechanisms, the role of children, the follow-up on concluding observations, relations with government and the methods to overcome national and regional obstacles.

J-2 Workshop Evaluation

The final written evaluation of the participants revealed high levels of interest and an adequate level of satisfaction. The evaluation centred on logistics and preparations, agenda and session content, resource persons and participation evaluation. The key results were:

54% of the participants received essential information about the workshop prior to arrival. Participants concluded that the objectives of the workshop were met by a percentage of 90%. Only 1 participant said that the objectives were partially met.

The workshop agenda was topic-extensive; however, there was not enough time to fully cover all of them. This may have been due to the fact that some sessions were lead by resource persons who had limited time to allocate for the workshop.

50% of the participants were satisfied with the discussions; the participants highly valued the resource persons. The logistics, location and services were generally satisfactory.

The participants stated that the workshop was a learning experience that provided them with a better understanding of the importance of regular and continuous monitoring and reporting, the key role of NGOs in the process of follow-up on concluding observations and the many ways of ensuring child participation in the two processes.

Major Strengths

- Exchange of regional knowledge and experiences
- Valuable input of resource persons
- Work-groups
- Concrete outputs
- Good participation and interaction
- Concrete monitoring and reporting knowledge acquired
- Solutions to problematic issues
- Excellent translation
- Certificates

Major Weaknesses

- Better organization was needed
- Time constrictions on sessions
- Facilitator sometimes tense
- Duplication
- Ambiguity regarding the significance of the reporting process
- Participants were not involved in agenda preparation
- More attention to reporting mechanisms was needed
- Country experiences may have been better presented at the beginning of the workshop

Recommendations

- Employing more than one facilitator
- Participant involvement in agenda preparation
- The Arab Institute for Human Rights should have been present

General Impressions (oral evaluation by all participants)

- General participation
- Various training methods
- Smooth interaction
- Facilitator flexibility in changing the agenda to cater to participants needs
- Diverse experience of participants
- Constructive information
- Respect of various opinions
- Presentations were too long
- Valuable application information
- Child participation session was valuable

K- Equivalent Arabic Terminology

A brainstorming session was held to agree on a unified Arabic terminology for the alternative report. The following terms were suggested:

	parallel report
	counter report
	shadow report
	complementary report
	NGO report
	opposing report
	alternative report

The participants approved unified use of the term “parallel report” التقرير الموازي

Finally, participation certificates were distributed.

Annexes:

- 1- The workshop participants' list
- 2- The workshop implemented Agenda
- 3- Presentation on the CRC Committee: work mechanism and reporting procedures (Dr. Hatem Kotrane. Available in Arabic)
- 4- Research Study on Reporting in Jordan-SCD presentation (Ms. Alice Lisberg)
- 5- Research Study on Reporting in Lebanon, Palestine and Yemen-SCS presentation (Ms. Rania Fazah)
- 6- Egyptian NGOs Coalition for Child Rights presentation (Mr. Essam Ali)
- 7- Presentation on Concluding Observations in Arab countries (Dr. Hatem Kotrane. Available in Arabic)
- 8- Handouts on children participation- Nabaa Presentation (Mr. Qassem Saad)
- 9- Yemen presentation on concluding observations (Mr. Abdelrahman Abdel Wahab. Available in Arabic)-
- 10- Presentation on NGO group and practical aspects of reporting on CRC (Ms. Denise Allen).
- 11- CRIN presentation (Mr. Tom Hewitt)
- 12- LUCW presentation (Ms. Fadia Asaad. Available in Arabic)
- 13- Palestinian CR in Lebanon (Ms. Souad Amine. Available in Arabic)
- 14- Sudan Presentation- Amal Society (Mr. AbdelKhalig Mohamed Elnewairi. Available in Arabic)