



**Convention on the
Rights of the Child**

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COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD
CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES
UNDER ARTICLE 44 OF THE CONVENTION

Third periodic report of States parties due in 2003

JORDAN* ** ***

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** Annexes can be consulted in the files of the secretariat.

*** For the second report submitted by Jordan, see CRC/C/70/Add.4, for its consideration by the Committee, see documents CRC/C/SR.621, 622 and CRC/C/15/Add.125.

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. At the World Summit for Children in 1990, the States of the world, including Jordan, and their leaders put children and their needs on the world's development agenda, announcing that by ratifying the Convention on the Rights of the Child they were undertaking to allocate resources, develop plans aimed at enhancing the status and welfare of children, bring their national legislation into line with the provisions of the Convention, and report periodically on the extent to which they had met their commitments in that connection.

2. The Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan hereby submits to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, pursuant to article 44 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, its third periodic report, covering the period 1998-2005. This report contains full information relating to the various measures and actions taken by the Government, including changes to national legislation, policies and programmes and strategies developed for the purpose of implementing the Convention. It also responds to the Committee's concluding observations on the previous report. As the Committee will recall, Jordan submitted its first periodic report in 1993 and its second in 1998.

3. This third periodic report on Jordan's implementation of the Convention may be described as a collective national report that is the outcome of consultations and discussions among a broad range of sectors in Jordanian society. Eight task forces were established, with their membership including representatives from governmental agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), legal experts, sociologists, psychologists and independent investigators in the field of child welfare, with a view to ensuring input from a broad spectrum of social sectors in the process of preparing the report. A preliminary workshop attended by all these contributors was held in mid-2003 with a view to announcing that the process of preparing Jordan's third periodic report had begun. The workshop also served to enable the representatives of the various groups involved to familiarize themselves with the Committee's concluding observations on the previous report and with the guidelines established for the submission of periodic reports.

4. A steering committee was subsequently established to oversee the work of preparing the third periodic report. This committee was made up of representatives from a number of governmental agencies, NGOs and international organizations, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Social Development, the National Centre for Human Rights, the National Council on Family Affairs, the Greater Amman Municipality, and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). The steering committee spent a year and a half preparing this report.

5. Thanks to close cooperation between governmental institutions and non-governmental bodies and the combination of their efforts aimed at strengthening and protecting children's rights and welfare, rapid progress was made toward many of the objectives contained in the Convention. A number of factors present in Jordanian society also contributed to the attainment of most of the end-of-decade goals. The most important of those factors were a high level of political determination and a clear commitment to children's rights on the part of successive Jordanian Governments, and the translation of that commitment into many practical actions in recent years. In addition, the country's well-developed infrastructure has been a contributing factor in bringing child-related services and educational messages to all governorates in the Kingdom, and this has been reflected in the tangible progress that has been achieved in all areas of child development and the quality of life enjoyed by Jordanian children.

II. FOLLOW-UP MEASURES UNDERTAKEN AND PROGRESS ACHIEVED BY THE STATE PARTY

6. Since the submission of Jordan's second report in 1998, numerous amendments to national legislation concerning children have been enacted with a view to ensuring that Jordanian children are guaranteed the enjoyment of all the rights set forth in the Convention. The most important of these are law No. 82 of 2001 amending the Personal Status Act, law No. 86 of 2001 amending the Penal Code, laws Nos. 11 and 52 of 2002 amending the Juveniles Act, and law No. 51 of 2002 amending the Labour Code. In addition, a draft Children's Rights Act was prepared in 2004 and is proceeding through legislative channels, a project for a system of infant day care establishments was developed in 2004 and has been submitted to the Office of the Prime Minister for approval, and a draft Act to Safeguard the Future of Orphans and a draft amendment to the Welfare of the Disabled Act (law No. 12 of 1993) have been prepared.

7. At the strategic planning level, a number of national strategies and plans with a direct bearing on children's rights have been developed since the submission of the second report. The most important of these are the Jordanian National Plan of Action for Early Childhood Development, 2004-2013, the National Early Childhood Development Strategy, 2000, the Plan of Action for Early Childhood Development, 2003-2007, the National Strategy for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour, 2003, the Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Social Development and the National Assistance Fund, 2004-2006, the National Anti-Poverty Strategy, 2002, the Government's Socio-Economic Strategic Plan, 2004-2006, and the draft National Strategy for Youth, 2005-2009.

8. Early in 2001, a Child Labour Unit was established within the Ministry of Labour, in cooperation with the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), which is an arm of the International Labour Organization (ILO). This action was taken pursuant to the Government of Jordan's commitment to the principles of ILO Convention No. 182 of 1999, on the elimination of the worst forms of child labour. This unit is mandated to study the various economic, social, educational and health-related aspects of the problem of child labour. Subsequently, in February 2003, the National Strategy for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour was approved; the Strategy is based upon the principles of ILO Convention No. 182. In addition, there have been numerous reports and field studies on the issue of child labour in Jordan, including one entitled "Report on the Situation of Child Workers in Jordan, 2001", which have gone some way toward rectifying the lack of information relating to the problem with a view to its gradual elimination.

9. One of Jordan's most striking achievements in the area of the protection and promotion of human rights was the establishment of the National Centre for Human Rights late in 2002, by the enactment of Law No. 75 of that year. The Centre was established as an independent national institution concerned with human rights. Part of its mandate is to contribute to the monitoring and evaluation of progress made in the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

10. The National Council on Family Affairs was established in mid-2001 by law No. 27 of that year. Its function is to provide national support and coordination for the efforts of all bodies working in various fields with a bearing on family affairs and the welfare of children, including civil society institutions and organizations, and to promote integration among them with a view to securing the rights of children as defined in the Convention.

11. In the area of the protection of children from abuse, the Dar al-Aman (“house of safety”) was established by the Jordan River Foundation in 2000, with support from the Minister of Social Development, as a centre dedicated to the protection of abused children. The Dar al-Aman is the first of its kind, not only in Jordan but in any Arab State.
12. Regulations governing family protection shelters were issued by law No. 48 of 2004. These regulations were designed as an official initiative aimed at providing protection for battered women until such time as their cases are definitively settled by legal or administrative means. Under the regulations, children under the age of five years may accompany their mothers when they are admitted to these shelters.
13. As regards the provision of information aimed at the development of Jordanian social groups, especially children, an Information and Research Centre was established by the King Hussein Bin Talal Foundation on 14 June 2001. The Centre is an independent research body mandated primarily to conduct research in the various areas of human development policy, including in particular the rights of young people and children, legislation concerning children, and early childhood development. The Centre works closely with institutions of higher education and scientific research, such as universities.
14. At the present time, the executive power is devoting serious, intensive efforts to the task of expediting the enactment of a Children’s Rights Act by the National Assembly and its publication in the Official Gazette. Once enacted, this Act will become a major component of the country’s legislation in force in the area of children’s rights.

III. FACTORS AND DIFFICULTIES IMPEDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION

15. Various external and internal factors have led to difficulty in guaranteeing Jordanian children’s full enjoyment of the rights specified in the Convention, despite the fact that all concerned governmental and non-governmental bodies have been working assiduously to that end. Some of the most important of these factors are listed below:
 - (a) Economic factors: the consequences of the third Gulf war, the occupation of Iraq and the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories have been extremely burdensome for Jordan’s economy. These factors have limited the quantitative and qualitative expansion of projects, programmes and services for children in Jordan, as financial and material resources have been in short supply. Other factors have been the rapid expansion of urban areas at the expense of agricultural land, the modest budgets at the disposal of local councils, declining domestic food production as a result of the rising prices of essential agricultural inputs, the scarcity of water, the rising cost of living, and the rising dependency ratio within families, which is now 4.3:1;
 - (b) Legislative factors: there is a backlog of draft legislation before the National Assembly, and as a result the approval of new Acts is a slow process, despite the Government’s efforts to expedite matters in the field of children’s rights. This situation has hampered the process of modernizing the law to keep pace with evolving social conditions. Statutes for which amendments are pending include the Juveniles Act, the Penal Code and the Personal Status Act. However, interim measures adopted during this period have remained in force, and the work of enacting new legislation is proceeding in accordance with the successive stages prescribed in the Constitution;

(c) Technical factors: Jordan is short of qualified human resources specializing in the field of children's rights, and there have been few scientific studies on such relevant issues as child abuse and child labour. Furthermore, we lack specialized medical technologies designed expressly for children. These factors, too, have impeded the implementation of the Convention. However, most of these difficulties are being addressed by public institutions, national agencies and international organizations, all of which have devoted a great deal of attention to awareness programmes and the development of qualified human resources in the field of children's rights. In addition, these various bodies have focussed on the issues of children's health, the elimination of child labour, and the entitlement of children under six years of age to comprehensive health care. Thanks to their efforts, the difficulties and obstacles confronting the implementation of the Convention have been greatly reduced;

(d) Demographic factors: Jordan's high population growth rate (2.5 per cent), which is the result of a high birth rate, a falling death rate and increased immigration, has inevitably affected the provision of services for children, in urban areas in particular. This situation has been exacerbated by an unnatural population increase caused by the return of approximately half a million Jordanians from the Gulf States as a result of wars, to say nothing of the three previous waves of refugees;

(e) External factors: there are a number of external factors that have impeded the process of development in the area of child welfare in Jordan. These include the stalled peace process, the second Gulf War and its legacy of political and social instability in the region, the international economic pressures and changes to which Jordan has been subjected, and the fact that international financial institutions and donor States impose harsh conditions when making loans available, with the result that the Government has been compelled to reduce spending on health, education and social welfare services. Another factor has been the reduction in the budget of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), which has placed a heavier burden upon Jordan, as a host country, for the provision of health care, education and other services to refugees. The Government spends over \$400 million yearly on services to Palestinian refugees in Jordan, a figure that is equal to 8 per cent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP). Jordan, in fact, spends more than UNRWA in the five areas in which it operates (the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, Syria, Jordan and Lebanon).

IV. PRINCIPAL AREAS OF CONCERN AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. General measures of implementation (articles 4, 42 and 44)

Legislation

1. Reservations

16. The Government of Jordan has entered reservations to articles 14, 20 and 21, relying on the international principle recognized both by custom and at law that a State may enter reservations to the provisions of a treaty when signing, ratifying or accepting it or acceding to it. Moreover, there is nothing in the Convention on the Rights of the Child to prohibit States from entering reservations. In any case, Jordan's reservations are not incompatible with the spirit and aim of the Convention, and they do not impede the Government's efforts to promote the development and protection of children and their rights, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention.

(a) Reservation to article 14 of the Convention

17. With respect to Jordan's reservation to article 14, which has to do with freedom of thought, conscience and religion, the following points may be made:

- In addition to what was said about this matter in the two previous reports, it is important to emphasize that Jordan does not prohibit freedom of thought or conscience in the case of either adults or children. This is a freedom guaranteed under the Jordanian Constitution and enshrined in Jordanian law. Freedom to practise religious rites is also protected by the Constitution and legislation in Jordan, and no group or denomination has ever complained that restrictions or limitations have been imposed upon their practice of their religious observances;
- We may also note that it can never be permissible to change a child's religion, as that would be a violation of the child's legal rights and would jeopardize social cohesion and peace among the members of the various religious denominations in Jordan, who live together in harmony and mutual acceptance. A child, i.e. a person in the stage of life that is internationally recognized as childhood, in Jordan as elsewhere, is not competent to make such a decision. Accordingly, Jordan maintains its reservation to this article while simultaneously implementing that part of its content that has to do with freedoms which are permissible under Jordanian law, despite the efforts of some Jordanian NGOs to persuade the Government to consider withdrawing its reservation in respect of the second and third paragraphs of the article in question.

(b) Reservations to articles 20 and 21 of the Convention

18. In its two previous reports to the Committee, the Government of Jordan stated its position in the matter of adoption and its reservations to articles 20 and 21. The Government wishes to reiterate that it does not deem it necessary to withdraw its reservations to these two articles. Nor does it consider that such withdrawal would serve in any way to strengthen or add to children's rights in Jordan from a practical standpoint, inasmuch as those reservations are consistent with Jordanian law, based as it is on Islamic law (the Sharia), which does not allow adoption in order to preserve the child's right to retain his or her own name and patronymic. However, the principle of the Islamic institution of *kafalah* (foster care) is applied in Jordan, and this makes it possible for an abused or neglected child to be cared for and his or her needs fully met. A child cared for under *kafalah* can inherit through a bequest. This is consistent with Islamic law: the child's caregiver may make a will stipulating that a portion of his estate shall go to the child after his death. However, some NGOs in Jordan have continued to urge the Government to withdraw its reservations to these two articles of the Convention.

2. Publication of the Convention in the Official Gazette

19. With respect to the Committee's observation concerning publication of the Convention in the Official Gazette, we should like to point out that the Government of Jordan placed the Convention on the Rights of the Child before the National Assembly in 2004 for ratification and publication in the Official Gazette. Unfortunately, the National Assembly has not yet been able to consider the Convention because of the backlog of other legislation on its agenda.

3. Legislation concerning children

20. With respect to the Committee's observation concerning the adoption of the draft Children's Rights Act, we should like to point out that the draft legislation was submitted by the Ministry of Social Development to the Legislation Bureau at the Office of the Prime Minister. Discussion of the draft within the Bureau was characterized by a participatory approach involving all competent agencies. The draft legislation was subsequently approved by the Council of Ministers, which forwarded it to the National Assembly for consideration at its current session. This is a preparatory step which will be followed by debate and adoption of the legislation in its final formulation. A copy of the draft Children's Rights Act of 2004 in its final formulation will be found in annex 1.

21. As regards new draft legislation relating to children's rights, we may note that a number of draft bills, some of them provisional in nature, have been submitted to the National Assembly for discussion and debate, although they have not yet been adopted. The most important of these laws are listed below:

1. Personal Status Act (law No. 82 of 2001): amended to set the age of marriage at 18 years for both men and women, except where a court decides that an exception should be made in the interests of the child.
2. Interim Penal Code (law No. 86 of 2001): article 340 relating to justifiable homicide amended.
3. The two interim Juveniles Acts (laws Nos. 11 and 52 of 2002), under which a number of innovations have been introduced, including:
 - A prohibition on the detention of juveniles in correctional and rehabilitation centres for adults;
 - Action to expedite the establishment of a Social Defence Bureau within every juvenile court to assist the magistrate in reaching decisions. Every such Bureau will include specialists in forensic medicine, psychological counselling and social services;
 - Designation of homeless children as children in need of protection and care, and victims of domestic violence to be covered by protection and care measures;
 - Authorization for courts to make broader use of alternative measures and conditional release.
4. Interim Juvenile Conduct Monitoring Act (law No. 51 of 2002), which prohibits the sale of tobacco, alcoholic beverages or narcotic drugs to children. The Act also restricts children's access to places where these substances are sold or consumed, and specifies legal penalties for the exploitation of children for purposes of begging and other offences.

5. Labour Code (law No. 51 of 2002).
6. Civil Status Act (law No. 9 of 2001).
7. The Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances Act of 1988, subsection 9(c)(iii) of which provides that every person who offers narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances to anyone (including children), or takes narcotic substances lawfully in his possession for specified purposes and uses them for other purposes, or prepares or manages with the help of a minor a place where narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances are taken or employs a minor for that purpose, shall be liable for a term of imprisonment at hard labour.

Copies of the interim statutory instruments referred to above will be found in annex 2.

4. Coordination among national organizations concerned with the welfare of children

22. With respect to coordination and cooperation at the national level among organizations concerned with the welfare of children, we should like to note that the efforts of various sector at the governmental level, in partnership with a number of NGOs and civil society institutions, are mutually reinforcing in a context of concern with children and their rights within the family and in society. Witness the present report, which is the outcome of a cooperative endeavour involving all concerned parties in the public and community sectors, as well as United Nations specialized agencies working in Jordan.

23. The National Council on Family Affairs was established in the second half of 2001 by law No. 27 of that year as a national organization with legal personality. It is headed by Her Majesty, Queen Rania Al-Abdullah. The Council's membership includes representatives from government ministries and other institutions and NGOs concerned with family issues, as well as leading experts and prominent figures in that field. The Council is mandated to strengthen the position of Jordanian families and expand their role in society with a view to enabling them to contribute to the preservation of the nation's cultural heritage and values while also keeping pace with socio-economic and cultural change in Jordan. To that end, the Council pursues a variety of initiatives. Among other things, it supports the efforts of civil society institutions and organizations concerned with family issues.

24. The National Council on Family Affairs plays an important role in improving the lives of Jordanian families, and children are a key component of families. Accordingly, the Council has established a Child Welfare Unit as a means of addressing one of its main strategic objectives: contributing to the qualitative enhancement of the lives of Jordanian children by developing strategies and policies, reviewing and evaluating legislation, and making recommendations to governmental bodies, NGOs, and experts and professionals working in the field of children's issues. In this way, the Unit addresses issues relating to children from a family perspective, adopting a comprehensive approach to their welfare.

25. The objectives of the Child Welfare Unit may be summarized as follows:
- In cooperation with governmental and non-governmental bodies working in the field, development of strategies and plans relating to children's issues that are deemed to be of high priority in Jordan;
 - Scientific research on policies relating to issues affecting children and their welfare and the welfare of families as an integrated whole;
 - Evaluation and analysis of existing legislation affecting children and formulation of recommendations as appropriate;
 - Joint action with policy- and decision-makers and relevant institutions to develop effective policies, programmes and plans focussing on children's issues;
 - Tracking and assessment of the implementation and application of the Child Welfare Unit's action within its strategic objectives.

26. Since the establishment of the National Council on Family Affairs in 2001, the Child Welfare Unit has realized a number of noteworthy initiatives. A partial list of these initiatives is given below:

1. Development of a national plan of action for early childhood development (2003-2007).
2. Follow-up and evaluation of the implementation of the National Early Childhood Development Strategy.
3. Preparation of a National Plan of Action for Children (2004-2013), in cooperation with the Ministry of Planning, UNICEF, and all organizations concerned with issues of relevance for children.
4. Preparation of Jordan's third report on children's rights, in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Development, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and UNICEF.
5. Development of an interactive curriculum for use in kindergartens.
6. Upgrading the skills of 100 senior personnel working in kindergartens administered by the Ministry of Education, the private sector and the community sector.
7. Production of directives on the licensing and establishment of kindergartens.
8. Production of early childhood development standards and indicators, in cooperation with UNICEF.

5. National strategies and plans

27. Since the submission of Jordan's second report on the Convention of the Rights of the Child in 1998, a number of national strategies with a direct bearing on children's rights have been developed. These are discussed below.

(a) **Jordanian National Plan of Action for Children for the years 2004-2013**

28. This plan, which is Jordan's second National Plan of Action for Children, was designed as the logical continuation of its predecessor, supplementing the Socio-Economic Plan of Action for 2004-2006. It was prepared by the National Council on Family Affairs in cooperation with the Ministry of Planning, international agencies, the Ministry of Social Development, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education and UNICEF, working in partnership with other stakeholders and with representatives of children themselves. The plan is articulated around a number of main themes: securing a health life, development and capacity-building, protecting children in difficult circumstances, the role of the media, and monitoring and evaluation. The plan is intended as an expression of the concern of the Government and the community sector to conform to international conventions and other instruments relating to the welfare of children, the most important of which is the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The plan is consistent with the Plan of Action to Build a world Fit for Children which was the outcome of the special session of the United Nations General Assembly in May 2002, and it was also inspired from the draft Arab Plan of Action for Children, 2004-2015. The preparation of the plan was characterized by comprehensiveness and integration of the factors of children's rights to survival, development, protection and participation. Jordan's National Plan of Action for Children was launched in October 2004 under the distinguished patronage of His Majesty King Abdullah II and Her Majesty Queen Rania Al-Abdullah.

(b) **The National Early Childhood Development Strategy, 2000 and the Plan of Action for Early Childhood Development, 2003-2007**

29. Government agencies, working in cooperation with NGOs concerned with children's rights, have prepared a national strategy and plan of action for early childhood development covering the years 2003-2007, under the general direction of the National Council on Family Affairs and with the support of UNICEF. The Strategy comprises 14 main lines of emphasis covering various aspects of childhood. The Strategy will be reviewed in some detail in part VII of this report ("Education, leisure and cultural activities"), under the heading "Early childhood care".

(c) **The National Strategy for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour, which was promulgated by the Ministry of Labour in February 2003**

30. This strategy is based on the principles laid down in ILO Convention No. 182 of 1999, on the prohibition and immediate action for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour (published in No. 4623 of the Official Gazette, 1 October 2003, p. 52), and ILO Convention No. 138 of 1973, on the minimum age for admission to employment (published in No. 4219 of the Official Gazette, 16 July 1997). The most important of those principles are as follows:

- Prevention of the engagement of children in the worst forms of child labour;

- Immediate and appropriate direct assistance for the removal of children from the worst forms of child labour and for their rehabilitation and social reintegration;
- Guaranteed access to free basic education, and, wherever possible and appropriate, vocational training, for all children removed from the worst forms of child labour;
- Action to identify and reach out to children at special risk; and
- Action to take account of the special situation of girls.

(d) The Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) and the National Assistance Fund for the period 2004-2006

31. The MSD's Strategic Plan comprises a vision, a mission, objectives, policies and programmes concerning individuals and local groups and communities. The Strategic Plan seeks to ensure that children are given priority in all development programmes. Its vision may be summed up as the realization of an improved quality of life for Jordan's citizens and enhanced social development with a view to creating a secure, productive, mutually supportive society that provides a life of dignity and contributes to the sustainable development process. The Plan's mission may be epitomized as advancement through development-oriented social effort, coordination among the various stakeholders, the forging of comprehensive, integrated social development policies, and the provision of outstanding services that will contribute to the qualitative enhancement of families and individuals through investment in human resources and action to build their capacities, and the harnessing of information and knowledge to consolidate the sustainable development process.

32. The objectives that the MSD's Strategic Plan seeks to attain include strengthening the Jordanian national identity in line with Arab values and ideals and the tenets of the Islamic faith, achieving justice and social security, addressing social challenges, investing in human capacities, deepening social awareness, strengthening cooperation and coordination between the public sector and the private and community sectors, and working to encourage developmental initiatives. These objectives are based on a set of policies that assign priority to children in development programmes, on the grounds that investment in children is the foundation-stone of investment in human resources.

(e) National Anti-Poverty Strategy: Fighting Poverty for a Stronger Jordan, 2002

33. The Ministry of Social Development, in cooperation with a number of governmental and non-governmental sectors, has prepared and launched a national anti-poverty strategy. The Strategy comprises six components:

- Raising the ceiling of recurrent benefits to families receiving support from the National Assistance Fund;
- Adding new groups to those eligible for support from the National Assistance Fund;
- Introduction of a supplementary income system;
- Development of a data base for national assistance programmes;

- Action to unify the efforts of social assistance funds;
- Action to develop national systems to address the problem of poverty.

Thanks to the integration of this Strategy, unemployment rates edged downward from 14.4 per cent in 1997 to 12.5 per cent in 2004, while poverty rates declined from 21 per cent in 1997 to 14.2 per cent in 2002.

(f) The National Youth Strategy, 2005-2009

34. The High-Level Council for Youth has developed a National Youth Strategy, in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UNICEF, and in partnership with a broad range of sectors and organizations, both official and non-governmental, and with young people themselves. The project is based on a participatory, gender-sensitive approach. The draft National Youth Strategy, 2005-2009 comprises nine key lines of emphasis: education and training, health, recreation and leisure, the environment, employment, information technology and globalization, participation, civil rights and citizenship, and culture and the media. The launch of the Strategy under the title “We are Jordan” is scheduled for early 2005; the Council of Ministers approved the Strategy in January of that year.

(g) The Socio-Economic Plan of Action, 2004-2006, “A new vision for sustainable development”

35. This plan consists of two main parts. Part I deals with the overall framework of the plan of action: the basic methodology, development objectives, policies and vision, and work plans for all the major sectors, which are assigned to four major themes: human resource development and basic government services, governorate development and the effort to combat poverty and unemployment, the institutional and organizational setting, and policy and funding. Part I also covers the financing plan for projects and programmes under the Socio-Economic Plan of Action for 2004-2006. Part II contains lists of all development projects and programmes that are to be implemented over the coming three-year period, and plans of action and timelines for each of them. Copies of the strategies outlined above will be found in the annexes.

6. Independent monitoring structures

36. The Committee recommended the establishment of an independent mechanism to monitor and evaluate progress in the implementation of the Convention. In response to that recommendation, the following remarks are in order.

The National Council on Family Affairs is the main umbrella organization mandated to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Convention at the national level. Furthermore, the National Centre for Human Rights was established late in 2002 under interim law No. 75 of that year as an independent national corporate entity enjoying financial and administrative independence and with complete freedom to engage in intellectual, political and humanitarian activities relating to human rights. The NCHR is mandated to watch for violations of the human rights and public freedoms that are guaranteed under the Jordanian Constitution and Jordanian law and under international instruments to which Jordan is a party, and to take action to stop any such

violations. The NCHR began operating in June 2003. It is supported in its work by a number of independent institutions and non-governmental and community organizations active in the field of human rights, including the rights of children.

37. The NCHR's aims may be summarized as follows: to protect and strengthen human rights and public freedoms, to strive to propagate and strengthen the principles of human rights, and to monitor and follow up national legislation with a bearing on human rights. The NCHR's most important working mechanism is its action to monitor and track any violations of human rights and public freedoms that may occur in Jordan. It receives complaints relating to human-rights violations and takes action to put a stop to them and eliminate their impacts. It also endeavours to ensure that the principles of human rights are taught at all levels of the education system, and it makes public statements of position on human-rights cases in Jordan, including cases involving the rights of children.

38. In addition to the above, the NCHR is mandated to follow up complaints relating to the rights of children that are within its field of competence. To that end, the NCHR:

- Conducts investigations and takes follow-up action relating to the rights of children that are within its field of competence;
- Follows up issues relating to the rights of children;
- Studies Jordanian legislation and reports on its conformity with the Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- Promotes awareness of children's rights and encourages the general public to recognize their importance;
- Provides assistance and advice in the formulation of programmes relating to the teaching of children's rights and conducts studies and research in that area;
- Takes legal action as necessary to defend the rights of children, or provides children with legal assistance where possible;
- Offers mediation or reconciliation services before formal complaints are laid in cases where it provides legal assistance.

The NCHR Act and an explanatory article on the NCHR will be found in annex 3.

7. Allocation of budgetary resources

39. The Government of Jordan allocates funds under a number of items in its general budget for the implementation of the Convention, subject to the availability of the necessary resources. By way of example, the Ministry of Social Development allocates a substantial fraction of its budget to the development of services for early childhood development, the welfare of children in need of protection and care, and children with disabilities. It also makes financial support available to specialized associations under cooperation and partnership agreements that it concludes with them, and it works to implement various programmes and activities in cooperation with NGOs in order to strengthen Jordan's commitment to and implementation of

international conventions and treaties relating to criminal justice for juveniles accused of breaking the law. At the present time, moreover, the work of equipping and furnishing a shelter for battered women and their children is nearing completion; the shelter is expected to open its doors early in 2005.

40. Under article 26 of the Civilian Health Insurance Regulations (law No. 83 of 2004), all Jordanian children under six years of age are entitled to health insurance coverage. This is an important stride forward in the area of health care for children and the disadvantaged stratum of society. In addition, funds have been allocated for the implementation of health care programmes for mothers and children.

41. The Ministry of Health allocates part of its general budget for health care for pregnant and nursing mothers and children as a means of expanding and upgrading the services it provides at health care centres and hospitals. This initiative has been reflected in an improvement in mortality rate indicators for children.

42. The Ministry of Education is currently developing a project known as Education Reform for the Knowledge Economy (ERfKE) and the linking of schools to the Internet over the period 2004-2008. This project is designed to realize His Majesty King Abdullah II's vision of an educational model designed to contribute effectively to the building of a knowledge-based economy. An amount of \$380 million has been earmarked for educational development featuring reorientation of the objectives of educational policy and strategy through administrative reform and the restructuring of programmes and practices to yield an educational outcome that is consistent with the knowledge economy, to improve physical learning environments to support quality education, and to promote preparation for learning through early childhood education.

43. The Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation has allocated funding under its programme for a social security package relating to school meals for children in economically disadvantaged areas.

44. The Ministry of Culture and the Greater Amman Municipality, in a joint effort involving a number of other agencies, have allocated funds for cultural and recreational programmes, libraries, clubs, centres and parks for children.

45. Total funding earmarked under the Jordanian National Plan of Action for Children, 2004-2013 is approximately 805 million Jordanian dinars. Of this total, 70 per cent is already available, and the Government is seeking to raise the remaining 30 per cent from international donors. These monies will be used to fund a variety of programmes aimed at enhancing the survival, development and protection of children.

8. Training in dissemination of the Convention

46. Governmental agencies and NGOs, working in cooperation with international organizations in Jordan, hold workshops, lectures and seminars on children's rights and the dissemination of the Convention for the benefit of persons working in various areas of socialization and formal education, such as educational supervisors, psychological counselling personnel, teachers, law enforcement officials, and employees of various Government ministries and agencies. These bodies are currently working to introduce the principles of the Convention

on the Rights of the Child into university and school curricula. In addition, “rights of the child” clubs have been founded at a number of Jordanian schools in cooperation with various NGOs and the Ministry of Education.

47. A number of organizations working in the field of children’s welfare and human rights have issued manuals for training in the rights of the child. Moreover, calendars, date books, leaflets and posters providing information about the Convention have been produced and distributed in large numbers to schools in every one of the country’s governorates. Some examples of this type of action are listed below:

- The Greater Amman Municipality published a special issue of the magazine *Bara'im* (“buds”) focussing on the Convention;
- A poster providing information about the Convention was prepared in cooperation with UNICEF and a number of NGOs and 120 000 copies of it distributed as a flyer with daily newspapers to celebrate Universal Children’s Day on 10 December 1998;
- The NCHR’s Advocacy and Training Unit participated in an initiative designed to enhance awareness of human rights (including the rights of children) in all areas.

48. The Ministry of Labour’s Child Labour Unit participates in the effort to heighten awareness of children’s rights through its “Scream” programme, which supports children’s rights through education, the arts and the media. This is a socio-educational initiative launched by IPEC as a tool designed to enhance awareness of child labour. The groups targeted by the initiative include young people enrolled at formal and informal educational institutions. The Ministry of Social Development plays both a preventive and a curative role in reaching out to vulnerable children through its programmes and projects.

49. The results of a study conducted in 2001 by UNICEF in cooperation with the Department of Statistics showed that 66 per cent of young people in the 10-24 age group had previously heard of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (74 per cent of female respondents and 58.7 per cent of male respondents), and this indicates that the work of disseminating information about the Convention is being satisfactorily carried out.

B. Definition of the child (article 1)

1. Definition of the child consistent with the principles of the Convention

50. The definition of the child in Jordan’s national legislation conforms to the definition and minimum age requirements contained in the Convention. Under article 2 of the draft Children’s Rights Act of 2004, a child is defined as “any person, male or female, under 18 years of age”. This, in turn, is consistent with the provisions of other Jordanian legislation, such as the Civil Code, the Juveniles Act and other statutes as discussed in greater detail in paragraph 1 of Jordan’s first periodic report to the Committee.

2. Gender equality in legislation and the age of marriage

51. The Committee recommended that the State Party should endeavour to ensure gender equality in respect of minimum age requirements. In response to this recommendation, it should be noted that gender equality and gender neutrality are the rule in Jordanian law. There was

formerly an exception to that rule, namely the minimum age for marriage, which was set at 15 years for women and 16 years for men. That provision was amended by the interim Personal Status Act (law No. 82 of 2001): the minimum age for marriage is now 18 years for persons of both sexes.

52. In this connection, it is also noteworthy that the age of nurturing for a child under his or her mother's care extends to the age of puberty. However, the age of puberty varies for different individuals, and for that reason some NGOs have been endeavouring to have the age of nurturing raised to 15 years for children of both sexes, on the grounds that that is the maximum age of puberty in the opinion of many experts in Islamic law.

3. Age of criminal responsibility

53. The Committee expressed concern that the age of criminal responsibility was too low: In response to that concern, it should be noted that under article 36 of the Juveniles Act (law No. 24 of 1968) and successive amendments thereto up to the year 2002, "Criminal proceedings shall not be instituted in respect of an offence committed by a person who was under seven years of age at the time the offence was committed." Many organizations, including NGOs, have vigorously advocated amendment of the Juveniles Act. A number of proposals in that connection have been put forward, including raising the age at which criminal proceedings may be instituted from seven years to 12 years. Many legal experts have argued that according to established legal principles, the age of puberty (15 years) should also be the age at which criminal proceedings may be instituted. We may note at this point that the draft Children's Rights Act includes a paragraph raising the age of criminal responsibility to 10 years.

4. Early and forced marriage

54. The Committee recommends continued efforts to combat early and forced marriages. As will be seen from the table below, marriages of girls under the age of 18 have clearly declined in percentage terms over the past five years. It is believed that this trend is directly related to the promulgation of the interim Personal Status Act (law No. 82 of 2001), under which the minimum age for marriage is set at 18 years for persons of both sexes. Under article 5 of the Act, the prospective bride is required to consent to marriage in the presence of two witnesses.

| Year | Total number of married women, all ages | Number of married women under 18 years of age | % |
|------|---|---|-------|
| 1998 | 37 681 | 7 585 | 20.1 |
| 1999 | 39 811 | 7 813 | 19.6 |
| 2000 | 42 401 | 7 892 | 18.6 |
| 2001 | 44 699 | 8 236 | 18.4 |
| 2002 | 39 963 | 5 729 | 14.3 |
| 2003 | 41 598 | 6 284 | 15.1 |
| 2004 | 33 365 | 5 150 | 15.44 |

Source: Civil Status Department, 2004.

55. The Statistical Yearbook for 2002 indicates that mean age at the time of first marriage was 29.3 years for men and 26.8 years for women. This points to a palpable rise over the last two decades of the past century in the age of marriage for both sexes, amounting to three years in the case of men (from 26 in 1979 to 29 years in 2002), and to six years in the case of women (from 21 to 27 for the same two reference years).

56. The results of a 1999 statistical study conducted jointly by the Department of Statistics, ESCWA and UNDP indicate a substantial degree of convergence between rural and urban areas as regards the mean age of marriage for women under 20 years of age: 15 per cent of women in urban areas married before reaching their twentieth birthday, while the corresponding figure for rural women was 15.4 per cent.

57. A number of institutions, Government ministries, such as the Ministry of Social Development and the Ministry of Health, and the National Population Committee, in cooperation with some civil society organizations, have organized media campaigns aimed at propagating awareness of the health risks and adverse social effects of early marriage and its negative impacts on the family and society.

5. Capital punishment

58. Under article 36/2 of the Juveniles Act currently in force, “No juvenile shall be sentenced to death or to imprisonment with hard labour.” That is, the death penalty may not be applied in the case of a child under 18 years of age. Nor may a child under that age be sentenced to life imprisonment, as the Act prescribes a lighter penalty consisting of “detention” for a term of three to nine years, and specifies that the sentence is to be served in one of the centres run by the Ministry of Social Development.

6. Minimum age for employment

59. The age up to which a child is barred from engagement in hazardous work or work that is injurious to his or her health has been raised from 17 years to 18 years under an amendment to the wording of article 74 of the Labour Code (law No. 8 of 1996 as amended by law No. 51 of 2002). The purpose of this change was to bring the Labour Code into line with the provisions of the National Child Labour Strategy, which specifies 18 years as the minimum age of employment and prohibits the employment of children in hazardous kinds of work, in accordance with ILO Convention No. 182, on the elimination of the worst forms of child labour, which was ratified by Jordan in 2000. That Convention defines the nature of work that is hazardous and injurious to health and safety, and consequently should not be performed by children. An ordinance issued in 1997 by the Ministry of Labour, listing kinds of work that are hazardous, physically demanding or injurious to the health of juveniles, will be found in annex 4.

7. Minimum age for voluntary enlistment in the armed forces

60. Under article 5(b) of the Military Service Act (law No. 2 of 1972) and article 139(b) of the Officers' Service Act (law No. 35 of 1966), no one under 16 years of age may serve as an ordinary soldier, and no one under 17 years of age may serve as an officer. No soldier under 18 years of age may take part in military operations. Persons under 18 years of age are no longer accepted as volunteers in any case. The National Child Labour Strategy recommends that

children under the age of 18 should not be conscripted into the armed forces, in accordance with ILO Convention No. 182. We may note at this point that the whole strength of the Jordanian armed forces, both soldiers and civilians, includes only 21 persons who are under 18 years of age, and all 21 of them have reached the age of 17. Of those 21 persons, 17 are soldiers and four civilians.

C. General principles (articles 2, 3, 6 and 12)

1. Non-discrimination

61. The Committee recommended that the State Party should take effective measures to prevent and eliminate discrimination on the grounds of sex and birth status in all fields, and, among other things, should incorporate equality on the basis of sex in the Constitution. In response to that recommendation, the following remarks are in order:

(a) The principle of non-discrimination is enshrined in article 6 of Jordan's Constitution. As such, it applies to all groups in Jordanian society, including men, women and children without distinction. Moreover, the term "citizen" refers to persons of both sexes, and hence may be taken implicitly to denote equality between the sexes, even though that is not explicitly stated in the article in question. The provisions of the Constitution take precedence over all legislation: in the event that a statutory instrument should be found to contain a provision that was at variance with the Constitution, the provision in question would be deemed unconstitutional and consequently null and void;

(b) Part I, section 8 of the National Charter promulgated in 1991 confirms the provisions of article 6 of the Constitution (see paragraph 4 of Jordan's first periodic report and paragraphs 9-11 of its second periodic report);

(c) The document entitled "Jordan First", which was promulgated by royal decree in 2002, reaffirms the principle of partnership between the sexes. Concept 2 of the ten concepts formulated in that document states, "Jordan First is a social accord between Jordanian men and women, individuals and groups..." Concept 3, for its part, runs as follows: "Jordan First is a melting pot that fortifies the national fabric for all Jordanian men and women and respects the diversity of their propensities, origins, attitudes, racial stocks and feelings ...";

(d) Jordanian law emphasizes the principle of non-discrimination among children on the basis of race, colour, sex, language or religion. As an example, we may mention the Education Act (law No. 3 of 1994) and part 14 of the Education Regulations issued in 2003 by the Statutory Instruments Division of the Ministry of Education's Department of Legal Affairs. Under article 3, section (c) of the Education Act, "Jordanians are equal in respect of their political, social and economic rights and duties; they are differentiated in terms of their respective contributions and degree of commitment to society" (paragraph 1), and "Education is a social necessity, and is a right for all in accordance with their individual capacities and aptitudes" (paragraph 6). Article 2(b) of the Act states, "For the purposes of this Act, the masculine form of words shall be taken to include the feminine, and the singular shall be taken to include the dual and plural."

62. The Committee's observations on discrimination in various fields.

(a) Children born out of wedlock

63. There is nothing in Jordanian law from which it might reasonably be inferred that children born out of wedlock do not enjoy the same rights as children born within the bonds of lawful marriage. Such children enjoy full rights to education, health and citizenship. However, there are some Jordanian statutory instruments that confer rights on legitimate children which are not the same as the rights conferred upon illegitimate children. Under the Personal Status Act, for example, a legitimate child has the right to lineage, inheritance, nurture and support, whereas an illegitimate child does not, owing to the fact that those rights are not enforceable where the identity of the child's parents is unknown. These matters are addressed differently: by way of illustration, the property of the child's guardian or caregiver may be registered in the child's name before the guardian or caregiver's death, or after his or her death under the terms of a will drawn up during his or her lifetime. The Civil Status Act, for its part, provides for the registration of every illegitimate birth (articles 19-22).

64. Jordan's legislation addresses the situation of children born out of wedlock in article 3, paragraphs 4 and 5, of the Jordanian Nationality Act. Details of the provisions of those two paragraphs were given in the first report (paragraph 16). Paragraph 4 of article 3 of the Act states that any child born in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to a mother possessing Jordanian nationality and a father whose nationality is unknown or who has no nationality shall possess Jordanian nationality. It is also noteworthy that under article 4, paragraph (b) of the draft Children's Rights Act of 2004, all scientific means may be used to determine a child's parentage.

(b) Rights of mothers to the custody of children

65. The rights of children in the matter of custody is addressed in articles 154-166 of the Personal Status Act. We recall that some of those articles were discussed in detail in Jordan's first periodic report, submitted to the Committee in 1993 (paragraph 73), and in its second report, submitted in 1998 (paragraph 36). Article 154 deals with the subject of women's rights to custody, while article 157 is concerned with situations where there are a number of individuals who have a right to custody of the same child. Article 161 specifies the age at which custody ends for children of both sexes.

(c) A woman's right to transmit her nationality to her child

66. Under the Jordanian Nationality Act (law No. 7 of 1954), a Jordanian woman who is married to a non-Jordanian does not have the right to transmit her nationality to her children. However, in order to deal with humanitarian cases that call for special attention, the Ministry of the Interior, pursuant to instructions issued by the Office of the Prime Minister, studies all cases in which it appears that Jordanian nationality should be granted to the children of a Jordanian woman married to a non-Jordanian. In every such case, an appropriate decision is reached that takes the humanitarian need of the mother and the best interests of the child into account.

67. In the view of a number of NGOs, there are special circumstances in which it is imperative for a Jordanian mother's nationality to be transmitted to her minor children in order for them to be able to receive nurture, education and health care. Where the non-Jordanian

husband dies, for example, or where he has disappeared and his whereabouts are unknown, or where the woman has been divorced, she is compelled to assume full responsibility for bringing up her children alone, without the support of her husband.

68. Despite calls for amendment of the Nationality Act to guarantee that a Jordanian woman has the right to pass on her nationality to her children, the Government considers that the issue of nationality remains subject to a number of considerations that do not by any means imply discrimination against children. These include the political situation prevailing in the region, the fact that nationality of two Arab States simultaneously is not permissible under a decision of the League of Arab States, and the objection of some States to the granting of Jordanian nationality to the children of Jordanian women married to their nationals because those States do not permit dual nationality. In addition, it is important to recall an international principle that is applied in all parts of the world: a child takes his or her father's surname.

(d) Discriminatory social attitudes toward the education of girls in rural areas

69. The Committee expressed concern about discriminatory attitudes toward the education of girls. It should be noted that both the Constitution and the Education Act provide that girls are entitled to education at all levels: primary, secondary and university. If there are discriminatory social attitudes, they are not based on any national legislation; rather, they have to do with habits, traditions and unwritten customs that are gradually dying out. There are indications that place of residence (urban or rural area) may constitute an important factor in determining illiteracy rates, as illiteracy among both sexes has been found to be twice as prevalent in rural areas as it is in urban areas.

70. Statistics show that in some cases, more young women than young men are now being accepted at State-run universities to complete their studies. This is clear evidence of non-discrimination. This trend is being reinforced by the spread of concepts that have been imposed by socio-economic changes, such as the importance of a woman's having a job after her marriage, so that both spouses can cooperate in providing the necessities of daily life in order to establish a family.

(e) Disparities among children in the enjoyment of rights

71. Jordanian law contains a number of provisions under which non-Jordanians are granted the same rights as Jordanians. Jordanian passports, for example, may be issued to non-Jordanian children for a period of five years in humanitarian or special cases: under the Passports Act of 2003, a regular Jordanian passport may be issued for a period of five years, renewable for a further five years, but the passport does not entitle its holder to Jordanian nationality.

72. Both governmental institutions and NGOs administer a variety of programmes designed to help groups of children in special circumstances or with special needs, including children in conflict with the law, children with disabilities, children deprived of family and natural caregivers, and child workers.

73. There are a number of national programmes and services that are designed for the benefit of orphans. There are approximately 35 000 beneficiaries under programmes run by the Orphans' Property Development Administration, while 7750 children are beneficiaries of the

Orphan's Guardian programme administered by the Islamic Charity Fund, which is an arm of the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, and its various subcommittees. An estimated 1300 orphans, illegitimate children or children from broken homes are receiving institutional care under a programme administered by the Ministry of Social Development in cooperation with charitable associations. In addition, the National Assistance Fund provides support for approximately 71 000 families, most of them consisting of widows and orphans.

74. The rights of disabled persons are addressed in a special law, the Welfare of the Disabled Act (law No. 12 of 1993). That Act provides for a number of rights, including:

- The right of disabled persons to be integrated into the common life of society;
- The right of disabled persons to basic and higher education in accordance with their capacities;
- The right of disabled persons to employment that is suitable in terms of their capacities and skills, and their right to recreation and leisure;
- The right of disabled persons to preventive health care and curative medical care;
- The right of disabled persons to an appropriate environment that enables them to travel freely from place to place in security and safety;
- The right of disabled persons to obtain tools, equipment and materials that will help them learn, become trained, and travel freely;
- The right of persons with multiple and acute disabilities to education, training and rehabilitation;
- The right of disabled persons who are economically disadvantaged to relief and support services;
- The right of disabled persons to participate in decision-making in matters concerning them.

75. Disability does not affect a Jordanian citizen's enjoyment of the rights to which he or she is entitled by law. Disabled persons in Jordan are entitled to care under the Welfare of the Disabled Act (law No. 12 of 1993): they have the right to receive medical treatment, the right to an appropriate environment, the right to be integrated into the common life of society, the right to education and to employment that is suitable in terms of their capacities and skills. Article 4, paragraph (f)(ii) of the Act stipulates that "Institutions of the public and private sectors and commercial firms with no fewer than 25 workers and not more than 50 workers shall employ one disabled person. Firms with more than 50 workers shall ensure that not less than 2 per cent of their workforce consists of disabled persons, subject to the condition that their disabilities shall not be incompatible with the nature of the work performed at the firm's facilities. Article 13 of the Labour Code provides that "Every employer who has 50 or more workers shall be required, where the nature of the work so permits, to employ disabled persons who have received vocational skills development training through training programmes and vocational

rehabilitation institutes for disabled persons accredited by the Ministry of Social Development, or established by the employer in cooperation with official or private institutions. Such disabled workers shall account for not less than 2 per cent of the total workforce, and the employer shall submit a report to the Ministry stating the kinds of work performed by them and the wages paid to them.”

(f) Stereotypical attitudes about the roles and responsibilities of women and men

76. Government agencies, NGOs and international organizations in Jordan are all doing their utmost to alter the prevalent stereotyped attitudes about the roles and responsibilities of women and men in Jordanian society. A 2000 study on the sources of these stereotyped social attitudes, conducted jointly by the National Committee on the Status of Women and UNICEF, showed that the components of those attitudes were the popular heritage, the media, and upbringing. The study also highlighted the roles of schools and the media in changing those stereotypes.

77. A comprehensive study of primary-level school textbooks conducted in 1999 found that women’s roles as portrayed therein focussed on the family setting, while men’s roles tended to focus on working life. As a result, the Ministry of Education called for periodic reviews of school textbooks in an effort to change their portrayal of stereotyped roles and responsibilities for women and men, and to incorporate information on the rights of children and human-rights principles into them.

78. A survey report entitled “Jordanian Youth: Their Lives and Views”, conducted in 2003 by UNICEF in cooperation with the Department of Statistics, showed that in the view of these young people, husbands and sons carried the burden of earning a living and were responsible for making financial decisions, while wives and daughters were responsible for housekeeping and bringing up children. That study will be discussed in greater detail in part VI of this report (“Basic health and welfare”).

79. The amendment of the Civil Status Act (law No. 9 of 2001) has been one of the most important legislative measures to date in the area of changing stereotyped attitudes toward the roles and responsibilities of women and men. This is because the amended Act now defines the meaning of the term “head of family” to include:

(a) The father, but in the event of his death or his loss or renunciation of Jordanian nationality, the head of the family shall be the wife. Where he has more than one wife, a family record book shall be issued to each wife, with her children, and a separate civil register entry shall be kept for each;

(b) The wife in the event of the death of her husband or his protracted absence from Jordan, for civil registration purposes;

(c) The eldest unmarried child in the event of the death of the head of the family and his wife.

80. In response to the Committee’s recommendation that comprehensive public education campaigns should be undertaken in order to change negative attitudes, with the participation of religious leaders, we may note that both government agencies and NGOs have striven tirelessly

to educate the public about children's rights and about the position of children according to the revealed religions. The Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs has undertaken a number of actions in this connection, including:

- (a) Discussion of child-related issues in religious instruction courses and Friday sermons, especially those broadcast via television and radio. These issues have included the raising of children, domestic violence against children, the education of children and the summer holiday, Islam's teaching about the importance of educating daughters, and Islam's teaching about the care of orphans;
- (b) Participation by a number of Ministry officials in the work of committees concerned with the protection of children, including committees established by the High-Level Council on Population, UNICEF's Promotion of Children's and Women's Rights programme, and the Family Protection Department project team;
- (c) Participation by imams and men and women preachers of the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs in training workshops on the welfare of children held in the northern, southern and central regions of Jordan. Some 600 preachers received training in concepts relating to early childhood, including care in early childhood, the protection of children from abuse, and dealing with children who have been subjected to abuse. In addition, a training manual on early childhood has been prepared expressly for the use of preachers at Friday services, and trainers specializing in the welfare of children in early childhood have been provided with training;
- (d) Signing of an agreement between the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs and UNICEF's Amman office on the preparation of trainers to provide training in early childhood issues.

2. The best interests of the child (article 3)

81. The Committee commented on the application of the general principle of the best interests of the child contained in article 3 of the Convention, and recommended a review of national legislation to ensure that that principle was duly reflected therein. That principle is taken into consideration both in the Jordanian Constitution and in Jordanian law and regulations made thereunder. However, the Constitution does not explicitly define the best interests of the child, simply because the Constitution enunciates general principles which guide the preparation of Acts, other statutory instruments and regulations. It is noteworthy that the principle in question is enshrined in the draft Children's Rights Act of 2004.

82. The Committee recommended a review of legislation and administrative measures and statutory amendments to ensure that the best interests of the child were incorporated therein. The foregoing discussion has touched on some of the Jordanian legislation that has been amended by the enactment of interim statutes. These include law No. 24 and amendments thereto up to the year 2002, the interim Personal Status Act (law No. 82 of 2001), and the Labour Code (law No. 51 of 2002). In addition, implementing regulations have been issued for the Juvenile Conduct Monitoring Act of 2001, pursuant to the provisions of article 11 of the Act, and a draft Children's Rights Act has been prepared, as we have seen.

83. A summary of new legislative measures that enshrine the principle of the best interests of the child will be found in the paragraphs below.

(a) Juveniles Act

84. The principle of the best interests of the child appears prominently in the provisions for the protection of children contained in the Juveniles Act (law No. 24 of 1968 and amendments thereto up to the year 2002). That Act provides guarantees aimed at ensuring their protection before and during judicial procedures and after sentencing in the event that a juvenile defendant is found guilty of having broken the law. Furthermore, one amendment to the Act designates a homeless child as one in need of care and protection, and another states that juveniles may not be detained in correctional facilities for adults, but should be dealt with by such measures as conditional release and alternatives to imprisonment. Details of the amendments contained in the interim Juveniles Act (law No. 52 of 2002) will be found in part VIII, section 5(c) of this report, which discusses the matter of how Jordan's legislation relating to juvenile offenders has evolved over time.

(b) Labour Code

85. Jordan's Labour Code (law No. 8 of 1996) guarantees that minimum age criteria will be applied in the case of juveniles. A decree issued by the Minister of Labour under article 74 of the Code lists kinds of work that are deemed to be hazardous or injurious to a juvenile's health. It also specifies periods of work, rest and time off, and working conditions that conform to international criteria for the employment of juveniles and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Details of the provisions of the Labour Code as amended by law No. 51 of 2002, which reflect the best interests of the child, will be found in part VI of this report, in the section dealing with economic exploitation.

(c) The Education Act

86. Under article 10 of the Education Act (law No. 3 of 1994), the basic (compulsory) stage of education extends up to the age of 16 years, in the best interests of the child. That is to say, a pupil may not terminate his or her education before he or she is 16 years old. The Ministry of Education has taken a number of additional measures in the children's interests:

1. Enhanced access to preschool, with reduced fees for disadvantaged groups in society.
2. An initiative aimed at making the second year of preschool, for the 5-6 age group, a part of free and compulsory basic education.
3. Continuation of the existing policy of allowing the non-governmental sector (both for-profit and not-for-profit) to establish and manage preschool institutions.
4. Support and encouragement for the voluntary community sector to establish and administer educational institutions for children and to provide services, either free of charge or for small fees, for groups of children with special needs, children from low-income families, slow learners and disabled children.

5. Action to upgrade the academic level of preschool teachers with the aim of ensuring that they are all university graduates who are properly qualified in their field of specialization.
6. Expansion of in-service training programmes for preschool teachers and workers.
7. Development of criteria and approved standards for the licensing of preschool institutions, including technical requirements, equipment and facilities.
8. Development of programmes, curricula, materials and manuals for preschool teachers.
9. Activation of educational supervision of preschool institutions by the Ministry of Education through action to ensure the availability of adequate number of qualified educational supervisors at the preschool level.

87. In the light of the foregoing, it is noteworthy that the first kindergartens in public schools were opened in 1999-2000. The project has been expanded since that time, and by the 2003-2004 school year the number of kindergartens had grown to 203.

(d) The draft Children's Rights Act

88. Article 3(c) of the draft Children's Rights Act, which deals with general provisions, states that the best interests of the child shall be an important consideration. Article 6 of the draft Act provides that priority shall be given to the best interests of the child when any measures relating to him or her are taken. Moreover, article 9(b) provides that the best interests of the child shall be considered when any measures relating to either of his or her parents are taken.

(e) Ratification by Jordan of a number of ILO conventions relating to children

89. Jordan ratified Convention No. 182 of 1999, on the elimination of the worst forms of child labour, in the year 2000. In addition, the Jordanian Ministry of Labour and the ILO have launched a "National Project for the Elimination of Child Labour", which aims to persuade 3000 children to leave the job market and return to school or vocational training, and also to provide assistance to 500 families of child workers to enable the children in question to return to school. In addition, all social services to families are provided subject to the condition that their children are attending school, as required under the Ministry of Social Development's Strategic Plan and the National Assistance Fund for the period 2004-2006.

3. The child's right to life, survival and development (article 6)

(a) The child's right to life as enshrined in Jordanian law

90. Jordanian law guarantees children's right to life. Provisions designed to protect that right are included in various statutory instruments. Under the Jordanian Penal Code, for example, children are protected while still unborn. The pre-birth stage of life is deemed to begin from the moment of conception in the mother's womb, and under articles 321, 322, 323 and 325 of the

Penal Code (law No. 16 of 1960), induced abortion is a criminal offence, except in cases where the pregnant woman's life is in danger and the attending physicians are unanimously agreed that that action is essential in order to save her.

91. There are many articles of Jordan's Penal Code that are aimed at the protection of children. A partial list will be found below. It should be noted that heavier penalties are prescribed in cases where the victim is a child:

1. Articles 333-338 are designed to protect children from physical violence. These articles are concerned with the protection of children, as living human beings, from violence likely to jeopardize their physical integrity. Under articles 326, 327, 328 and 329, the particular form of physical violence known as homicide is expressly stated to be a criminal offence.
2. Articles 287, 291 and 302 are designed to protect children from infringements on their freedom.
3. Other examples of provisions aimed at protecting the child's right to life appear in articles 279, 288 and 487 of the Penal Code.

92. Under article 358 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, a pregnant woman who is sentenced to death may not be executed until three months after she has given birth. This provision is expressly designed to protect the child's right to life. Jordan has also enacted legislation aimed at protecting the child's right to life after he or she is born, as is explicitly stated in article 289 of the Penal Code. Article 290 of that Code provides that every parent, tutor or guardian who fails to care adequately for an infant shall be liable to a term of imprisonment. The Personal Status Act, for its part, addresses the issue of the child's right to life in article 150, under which every mother is required to suckle her child (see paragraph 13 of Jordan's first periodic report to the Committee).

(b) Cases of homicide to which article 340 of the Penal Code applies

93. The Committee expressed concern about the fact that articles 340 and 98 of the Penal Code did not appear to take the right to life seriously, arguing that they dealt in a discriminatory fashion with matters relating to crimes of passion, which have sometimes been termed "honour killings". We may note here that that expression is not used in any statutory instrument of Jordanian domestic law currently in force. There are, however, what are known as extenuating or exonerating circumstances, which under Jordanian law are applicable to some offences. Article 340 was amended by the provisional Penal Code (law No. 86 of 2001), which makes mitigating circumstances applicable to a person of either sex who catches his or her spouse in the act of infidelity and abolishes exonerating circumstances in that situation. The text of the amended article reads as follows:

1. Every person who catches his spouse or one of his ascendants, descendants or sisters in the act of infidelity or an adulterous situation and kills, mortally wounds or maims for life the woman involved or her partner or both of them on the spot, shall be entitled to the benefit of extenuating circumstances.

2. Similarly, every wife who catches her husband in the act of infidelity or an adulterous situation in the family home and kills, mortally wounds or maims for life the husband or his partner or both of them on the spot shall be entitled to the benefit of extenuating circumstances.
3. The right of self-defence may not be used in respect of persons entitled to the benefit of extenuating circumstances, and provisions relating to aggravating circumstances shall not be applicable.

94. An intensive campaign calling for the abrogation of article 340 altogether was conducted by some non-governmental organizations and associations working in the field of human rights, but the National Assembly refused to make any amendments to it at all, including the amendments introduced under the provisional Penal Code (law No. 86 of 2001). Despite this opposition, however, the amended text of the article in question is currently in force.

95. NGOs point out that no action of any kind has been taken to amend or abrogate article 98 of the Penal Code, which is concerned with extenuating circumstances in cases of crimes of passion, despite repeated calls for such action. These NGOs regard homicide as a crime punishable by law regardless of motive.

96. The Government, for its part, emphasizes that not all homicides deserve the same punishment, and that the circumstances under which the crime was committed must be taken into account. Accordingly, article 98 provides that a person who commits a crime in the heat of ungovernable passion provoked by an unjustifiable and extremely grave act on the part of the victim should be entitled to the benefit of extenuating circumstances. The article in question enshrines a legal principle that is recognized by all legal authorities, especially Western authorities; indeed, it is borrowed from those very authorities.

(c) Measures to replace protective custody in correctional and rehabilitation centres for women who are involved in cases relating to honour

97. The Committee recommended that forms of protection other than protective custody should be devised for women who are detained to protect their lives. Some official and unofficial initiatives in this connection are outlined in the paragraphs below:

1. Girls who are in need of protection and care are dealt with by means of the measures prescribed in article 31 of the Juveniles Act (law No. 24 of 1968 and amendments thereto). They are placed in social welfare institutions that are specially mandated to provide care and protection for girls, instead of being placed in protective custody in correctional and rehabilitation centres, and they are provided with a full range of social, cultural and recreational programmes. We may note at this point that another institution has been established expressly for girls who are accused of breaking the law. To date, only three girls have been held there.
2. Early in 2004, the Ministry of Social Development completed the preparation of draft regulations governing family protection shelters. The regulations were then approved by the Council of Ministers and published in the Official Gazette

on 1 April 2004. These regulations were designed as an official initiative aimed at providing protection and rehabilitation for battered women in shelters where they can be received and provided with diagnostic and counselling services. They may also be accompanied by their children under three years of age, or, in exceptional cases, under five years of age. The first family protection shelter is expected to be ready early in 2005. A suitable building has been rented and equipped with most of the necessary furnishings and fittings, and it is to be staffed with 26 civil service personnel. Similar experiments in other countries facing situations analogous to Jordan's, such as Tunisia, the Palestinian Authority and Morocco, were evaluated and considered before this initiative was undertaken. The Family Protection Shelter Regulations (statutory instrument No. 48 of 2004) will be found in annex 6.

3. A good deal of work has been done at the voluntary community level as well. One NGO (the Jordanian Women's Union) runs a temporary shelter for battered women and their children: in 1999 the Women's Shelter opened its doors and began to admit cases referred to it by the Union's own telephone helpline service and by other institutions, both official and non-governmental, such as the Family Protection Department. Women stay at the Shelter for periods of time ranging from a few days or a week to as long as three months, depending on the nature of the problem and how much time is required to solve it. In many cases, the children accompanying the battered women receive psychological and social counselling from specialists employed by the institution, while the women's educational and health situations are monitored in collaboration with the competent authorities.
4. The two tables below show the numbers of women and children who were beneficiaries of services provided by the Jordanian Women's Union at its Women's Shelter, and the services of its telephone helpline.

**Women and children beneficiaries of services provided
by the Shelter and the telephone helpline**

| Year | No. of cases (women) | Children referred from the Family Protection Dept. | Children accompanying their mothers in the Shelter | Children who used the telephone helpline |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|--|--|--|
| During the period from 11 Dec. 1999 | 34 | 1 | 16 | 31 |
| 2000 | 42 | 6 | 7 | 38 |
| 2001 | 43 | 4 | 16 | 30 |
| 2002 | 66 | 15 | 22 | 52 |
| 2003 | 77 | 52 | 48 | 63 |
| 2004 | 81 | 98 | 40 | 70 |

Women beneficiaries of the telephone helpline programme, 1996-2004

| Year | Total number of users |
|------|-----------------------|
| 1996 | 600 |
| 1997 | 1 097 |
| 1998 | 1 000 |
| 1999 | 1 350 |
| 2000 | 1 457 |
| 2001 | 1 752 |
| 2002 | 1 650 |
| 2003 | 1 850 |
| 2004 | 1 800 |

(d) Road accidents resulting in the deaths of children

98. The Committee expressed concern about the high incidence of traffic accidents that claim the lives of children. The table below presents statistics on the numbers of children killed and injured in traffic accidents in Jordan and those children as percentages of total numbers of children killed and injured from all causes between 1998 and 2003. As will be seen, deaths and injuries of children in traffic accidents continue to constitute a problem that is far from negligible.

**Deaths of children in traffic accidents by age group,
percentage of total, 1999-2003**

| Year Age group | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 |
|-------------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 0-5 | 13.6 | 14.3 | 12.4 | 11.6 | 9.7 |
| 6-10 | 7.4 | 9.0 | 9.2 | 9.9 | 8.1 |
| 11-15 | 5.3 | 5.5 | 5.5 | 4.9 | 6.4 |

**Injuries to children as a result of traffic accidents, by age group,
percentage of total, 1999-2003**

| Year Age group | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 |
|-------------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 0-5 | 9.8 | 9.5 | 9.2 | 8.7 | 8.3 |
| 6-10 | 9.9 | 9.7 | 9.8 | 9.3 | 9.0 |
| 11-15 | 6.6 | 6.9 | 6.4 | 6.2 | 6.3 |

**Child deaths and injuries resulting from traffic accidents,
consolidated percentage of total, 1999-2003**

| Year Age group | 1999 | 2000 |
|-------------------|------|------|
| 0-5 | 12.3 | 9.1 |
| 6-10 | 8.7 | 9.5 |
| 11-15 | 5.2 | 6.5 |

**Numbers of children killed and injured in traffic accidents in Jordan
and percentage of total deaths and injuries, 1998-2003**

| Year | Injuries | | | Deaths | | |
|------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|
| | Children under 15 | Total No. injured | Traffic accidents/ all causes | Children under 15 | Total No. of deaths | Traffic accidents/ all causes |
| 1998 | 4 766 | 17 177 | 27.7% | 192 | 612 | 31.4% |
| 1999 | 5 008 | 19 015 | 26.3% | 178 | 676 | 26.3% |
| 2000 | 4 923 | 18 842 | 26.1% | 198 | 686 | 28.9% |
| 2001 | 4 784 | 18 832 | 25.4% | 200 | 782 | 25.5% |
| 2002 | 4 214 | 17 381 | 24.2% | 200 | 758 | 26.4% |
| 2003 | 4 354 | 18 368 | 23.7% | 201 | 832 | 24.1% |

Source: Traffic Department, 2004.

99. Ever since the Jordanian Traffic Institute was founded in 1996, it has striven assiduously to heighten traffic awareness through campaigns in the media and at schools and universities in an effort to create a traffic awareness culture, especially among children, road users and drivers. The Institute has developed a comprehensive national accident prevention plan which the Minister of Education is now actively working to implement.

100. The Institute has launched a Web site that may be termed a gateway to traffic awareness. It includes awareness programmes and information about traffic-related laws and regulations, and it sheds light on the issue of accidents. The Institute has also produced an electronic traffic education programme for school children between 6 and 18 years of age. The programme is now being used by the Ministry of Education in schools at all levels.

101. The Institute's plans include the establishment of an education and training centre designed to teach children about road safety, and the establishment of a number of traffic parks to teach children about the proper use of traffic rules with a view to reducing the numbers of road accidents that claim so many victims among children. In addition, public information campaigns are undertaken from time to time, with the daily newspapers used to convey information about the dangers of traffic accidents, especially for children. The watchword of these campaigns is, "Traffic accidents are a danger that threatens us all".

102. Statistics on road accidents issued by the Traffic Institute indicate that in 2003, children under 5 years of age accounted for more deaths among pedestrians than children in any other age group; the under-5 age group represented approximately 20.4 per cent of the total number of children killed in traffic accidents, with 68 out of a total of some 833 victims in that year. The second-largest category was children between the ages of 6 and 10, with 55 deaths, followed by the 11-15 age group with 34, and the 16-20 age group with 16.

103. Government agencies and NGOs are working together to heighten traffic awareness, and at the same time they are pressing for the enactment of amendments to legislation providing for stiffer penalties for drivers who cause accidents. Under article 16 of the draft Children's Rights Act, children are guaranteed road safety and the right to move and live in a safe traffic environment.

4. Respect for the views of the child (article 12)

104. Article 15 of the Jordanian Constitution provides that freedom of opinion and expression is guaranteed for all Jordanians within the limits of the law; a citizen who contravenes the laws in force in this matter is held liable. A child continues to enjoy his or her rights even if his or her parent or guardian contravenes the law.

105. Jordanian law currently contains no provisions granting a child the right to make his or her own decisions or express his or her views. However, a child may exercise his or her right of expression through the various media (see paragraphs 174-177). Furthermore, article 3(d) of the draft Children's Rights Act provides that children are free to express their views, and that they have a right to participate in all matters affecting them.

106. Under the Welfare of the Disabled Act (law No. 12 of 1993), disabled persons are guaranteed the right to express their views, while article 3(i) of the Act enshrines the principle that disabled persons have a right to participate in the making of decisions in matters affecting them. Article 230 of the Code of Criminal Procedure provides that a disabled child who is accused or suspected of having committed an offence is entitled to receive such specialized technical assistance as the nature of his or her handicap may require in order to ensure that he or she is given a fair trial.

D. Civil rights and freedoms (articles 7, 8, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 and 37)

1. Right to name, nationality, identity and family relations

(a) Child's nationality

107. Under article 3, paragraph 3 of the Jordanian Nationality Act of 1954, every child born to a father possessing Jordanian nationality is deemed to be of Jordanian nationality.

(b) Protection of child from being stateless

108. Article 3, paragraph 4 of the Jordanian Nationality Act states that any child born in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to a mother possessing Jordanian nationality and a father whose nationality is unknown or who has no nationality shall possess Jordanian nationality. This provision serves to protect children from being stateless.

(c) Child's name

109. Jordanian legislation contains no provisions requiring parents to follow a specific form of names in naming their child. However, Islamic law encourages the choice of good names for children. Moreover, a child can change his or her name by making application to a court of law in the present of his or her parent or guardian.

(d) Identity of child

110. Article 15 of the Civil Status Act provides that every birth must be reported, and that the information to be provided must include the child's name and sex, the parents' full names, nationalities, place of residence, occupations, religions, and place of registration.

2. Right to freedom of expression

111. The right to express an opinion is a constitutional right enjoyed by every Jordanian citizen. Consequently, there is no need for an explicit legal provision granting that right to children in particular, and, indeed, Jordanian law does not expressly grant children the right to express their opinions. As a practical matter, Jordanian children express their views in programmes and articles devoted to children in the various media, and through student councils in schools, which include student representatives elected by their peers. It is noteworthy that in October 2003, the Government established the Ministry of Political Development; early in the following year, the Ministry launched a draft Strategic Political Development Plan, many articles of which focus on participation by young people and enshrine children's rights.

112. Radio Jordan, with the support of UNICEF, has taken up the idea of celebrating an annual Children's Broadcasting Day, when special children's programmes are broadcast, featuring and presented by children of various ages.

113. The most striking applied experiment in children's right to freedom of expression to date, not only in all Jordan but in the entire Arab world, is the Children's Parliament organized in 1997 by the Jordanian Women's Union (a women's NGO). The Parliament has proved to be a forum for free discussion of children's rights that has strongly influenced the country's leaders and decision-makers. The initial Parliament was preceded by a founding conference at which the participants discussed a number of working papers with a direct bearing on children and their rights, and finally elected the representatives who would attend the first session of Jordan's Children's Parliament.

114. The Children's Parliament comprises 120 members elected for a single two-year term; all candidates must be at least 14 years old but not more than 16 years old as of the date of their candidacy. The objectives of the Parliament are to publicize and strengthen the work of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to strengthen equality between the sexes, democratic performance and behaviour, to propagate a culture of democracy, to train children in the responsibilities of citizenship and participation in public life, and to enable them to influence public opinion and decision-makers in order to promote their best interests.

115. The general conference of the second (current) session of the Children's Parliament was held late in 2002 (from 31 October to 2 November) under the watchword "A Jordan fit for us". It was the outcome of 18 preparatory conferences held in all the country's governorates, with approximately 200 children participating in each conference. The function of these conferences was to elect representatives from the governorates who would sit in the Children's Parliament. We may note at this point that a total of approximately 1600 children participated in the Children's Parliament. In addition, children have participated as representatives in numerous meetings and workshops held to discuss the draft Children's Rights Act and the second National Plan of Action for Children. Their participation was an effective factor in the formulation of the plan and the articulation of views about it.

116. Furthermore, a theme relating to participation by young people is included in the draft Political Development Strategy announced by the Ministry of Political Development early in 2004. This theme illustrates the ongoing effort to broaden participation by young people and children in public life. An explanatory article on the Jordanian Children's Parliament will be found in annex 6.

3. Right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion (article 14)

117. The exercise of the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion referred to in article 14 of the Convention was discussed in part I of this report, on general measures of implementation.

4. Legislative measures and recent developments with a bearing on the information provided in the previous report

(a) Protection of the rights and freedoms of the child in the Civil Status Act

118. The information in the previous report is out of date in some respects. One particularly noteworthy development has been the promulgation of the Civil Status Act (law No. 9 of 2001) and the repeal of its predecessor, law No. 34 of 1973, with the introduction of a number of amendments, the most important of which are outlined in the paragraphs below:

1. Simplification of the birth notification procedure by allowing the informant to report the birth at any Civil Status office, instead of requiring him or her to do so at the office for the district where the birth occurred, as was the case with the former Act. Article 13 of the Civil Status Act (law No. 9 of 2001) reads as follows: "Every birth shall be reported to any Civil Status office within 30 days after it has occurred. Where there is no Civil Status office in the district in which the birth occurred, the local mayor shall be notified, and he, in turn, shall notify the competent Civil Status office within 30 days following the date on which he was notified. Where a birth occurs outside Jordan, it shall be reported within 90 days following its occurrence. The official birth notification form shall be used in all cases."
2. Liability of the informant to a fine if the birth is not reported within the period required by law. The purpose of this provision is to induce citizens to report births promptly. Article 13, paragraph (c) reads as follows: "Every informant who reports a birth after the period specified in paragraphs (a) and (b) of this article has elapsed shall be liable to a fine of 10 dinars."
3. Simplification of the procedure for reporting a birth that occurs while the parents are travelling by allowing the informant to report it to the Jordanian consulate in the country of destination, or to the competent authority. Under article 18 of the Civil Status Act, where a birth occurs in the course of travel outside Jordan, it must be reported to the Jordanian consul in the country of destination, or to the competent authority as defined in articles 6 and 13 of this Act.
4. The secretary of the Civil Status office shall register the birth in his records after making the necessary inquiries to ascertain that the information is correct. This requirement is stated in article 34 of the Act.

119. It is also noteworthy, in this connection, that under the regulations currently in force, an illegitimate birth may be registered at any time on the basis of a letter from the Ministry of Social Development supported by a birth record (in the case of children born in hospital) or a document issued by a Public Security Centre (in the case of illegitimate children).

120. The information indicated on the official reporting form includes the day, date, time (hour and minute) and place of birth, child's name and sex (male or female), full names of both parents, and parents' national ID numbers if they are Jordanian citizens, or their country of citizenship, place of residence, place of civil registration and registration numbers otherwise. The Civil Status and Passports Department has taken measures to heighten citizens' awareness of and mobilize public opinion about the importance of registering new births and notifying the authorities without delay. The Department's measures to that end include:

(a) Awareness campaigns in the audio-visual media, and interviews with the Director of the Department;

(b) Publication of a pamphlet stating the conditions required for the registration of births, the necessary supporting documents, and the deadline prescribed by law. The pamphlet also notes that there is a fine for late registration;

(c) General guidelines printed on the family record book that is issued to every family. Those guidelines include the words, "Every birth must be reported within 30 days after the date of its occurrence."

The Civil Status Act (law No. 9 of 2001) is appended to this report (annex 7).

(b) Protection of the rights and freedoms of the child in other legislation

121. The Committee recommended that in order to protect children, legislative measures should be taken to prohibit all forms of physical and mental violence. Jordan's Penal Code includes provisions aimed at protecting children from abuse and exploitation, as noted in the first periodic report to the Committee. Those provisions are contained in articles 285, 287-292, 293.2, 294.2, 295-298, 279.2, 334.1, 328.2, 330-336, 43, 302, 304-306, 310, 314 and 389. This issue will be discussed in detail in part V, section 6 below ("Abuse and neglect (art. 19), including physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration (article 39)"). Accordingly, the paragraphs below will deal only with new amendments to the Personal Status Act and the Sharia Procedure Act, which are in use in courts of Islamic law. It is the function of these courts to safeguard the life of a child in special cases where there is reason to fear that he/she may be at risk of death or physical or psychological harm, and to protect his/her right to see his/her parents and their right to see him/her in a climate conducive to his/her best interests and dignity. Those amendments are outlined in the paragraphs below:

(a) Article 97 of the Sharia Procedure Act (law No. 31 of 1959) was amended by the Act to Amend the Sharia Procedure Act (law No. 84 of 2001). That Act reads as follows: "Article 97 of the Act is amended by the addition of a paragraph (d), to read as follows: 'Where a case has to do with a claim for custody, access or visitation, the judge, where he is persuaded that it is necessary to do so, and subject to adequate guarantees, may issue an order for immediate implementation pending the issue of a final decision.'" This amendment gives the judge the authority to issue orders for immediate implementation in cases involving custody, access or visitation where there are grounds for deeming such an order necessary, as, for example, to preserve the life of a young child, to guarantee a definite benefit for the child, or to avert clear and present harm from him or her. The task of determining when it is necessary is left for the judge to decide on the basis of the circumstances of the particular case that is being heard before him;

(b) Article 163 of the Personal Status Act (law No. 61 of 1976), which had formerly provided that “The mother, the father or the paternal grandfather have an equal right to see a young child living with another person who has custody of him.” Under article 8 of the amended Personal Status Act (law No. 82 of 2001), that article was repealed and replaced by the following:

1. The mother and the legal guardian have an equal right to visit a young child living with another person who has custody of him.
2. In the event of disagreement over visitation, the mother and the legal guardian shall have the right to see the child once every week, the maternal grandparents, once per month, and other persons with visitation rights, once per year.
3. The judge shall set a time and place for visitation on the basis of the child’s best interests where the parties do not agree.

Under the amended version of article 163, the mother and the legal guardian have the right to visit the child once per week; the matter is not left to the court’s discretion. Furthermore, the judge is given the right to set times and places for visitation in the event the parties disagree in the matter. This serves the child’s best interests, as the judge can select a suitable place for the visitation, such as one of the country’s shelters for children. Formerly, the issue was left to the executing authorities, who would arrange for the visitation to take place at a security centre or a court, and this was psychologically damaging to the child involved and tended to have an adverse impact on his or her behaviour.

(c) Child’s right of residence

122. Under article 26 of the Residence and Foreign Nationals’ Affairs Act (law No. 24 of 1972 and amendments thereto), and regulations made thereunder, a child of foreign nationality shall be granted permission to reside in Jordan where the competent authorities are satisfied that the grounds justifying such residence are valid, and subject to the conditions that such permission is granted only to a disabled person or a minor, and that his or her only family resides in Jordan. In addition, under Jordanian law a minor having a Jordanian mother and a father of foreign nationality is allowed to live in the country with his or her Jordanian mother, and children of a woman with Jordanian nationality are not liable to fines for exceeding the term of such residence, if any.

(d) Protection of the rights of juveniles

123. Under the Juveniles Act (law No. 24 of 1968 and amendments thereto), juveniles may not be detained in correctional and rehabilitation centres, but only in juvenile welfare centres run by the Ministry of Social Development. Jordan’s correctional and rehabilitation centres thus include no juveniles among their inmates.

124. The interim Juvenile Conduct Monitoring Act (law No. 51 of 2001) prohibits the use of tobacco, smoking, alcoholic beverages or narcotic drugs by juveniles, and also the sale of these substances to juveniles by establishments that deal in them. Under the Act, in addition, juveniles are prohibited from frequenting nightclubs and bars, and the exploitation of juveniles for

purposes of begging is an offence. Lastly, the Act authorizes the establishment of one or more committees in every governorate to monitor the conduct of juveniles by organizing periodic rounds to make sure that the provisions of the Act are being complied with (article 6).

125. The interim Correctional and Rehabilitation Centres Act (law No. 40 of 2001), for its part, specifies the rights of a child born to a mother who is an inmate of a correctional and rehabilitation centre, as follows:

- Article 15(b): Where the inmate is delivered within the centre, the child's place of birth shall be indicated, both in official birth registration records and on the child's birth certificate, simply as the municipality in the governorate where the birth occurs;
- Article 15(c): The inmate may keep her child with her until the child is three years old. He or she shall then be turned over to his or her relatives or to an institution specializing in the care of such children;
- Article 15(d): A woman sentenced to a term in a correctional and rehabilitation centre may bring her child with her where the child is not more than three years of age.

(e) Directives for the implementation of the Juvenile Conduct Monitoring Act (2001)

126. The Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Social Development are working jointly to follow up the implementation of the above-mentioned directives in respect of the matters outlined below:

- Action to require the proprietors of establishments frequented by juveniles for the purpose of consuming prohibited substances to post a prominent sign clearly stating what kinds of substances are prohibited to juveniles;
- Action to require the proprietors of nightclubs, hotels and cafés to post a prominent sign clearly stating that juveniles are prohibiting from frequenting the premises because of the presence of substances that are prohibited to juveniles;
- Enforcement of measures to prevent begging in public places and streets;
- Definition of the powers of juvenile conduct monitoring committees.

127. Juvenile conduct monitoring committees established pursuant to the interim Juvenile Conduct Monitoring Act visit the establishments specified in the Act in order to detect and deal with cases of contraventions and to make sure that the Directives are being implemented, having regard for the protection of children.

128. Ministry of Social Development committees, in cooperation with the Public Security Directorate, execute social defence programmes as contemplated in the Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Social Development through intensive campaigns aimed at getting child beggars off the streets and taking appropriate administrative or legislative measures to deal with their problems and those of their families.

(f) Creation of the Human Rights and Public Freedoms Division within the Ministry of the Interior and the International Relations Directorate within the Ministry of Justice

129. In 2003, a division within the Ministry of the Interior known as the “Human Rights and Public Freedoms Division” was created. This is a major initiative in the field of the protection of rights and freedoms, including the rights and freedoms of children. The Division is mandated to monitor reports by international and national organizations and agencies that deal with human rights in Jordan, to study and prepare reports on these matters in its turn, and to develop appropriate solutions to any problems identified. The Ministry of the Interior, as represented by this unit, participates in all national meetings, conferences and workshops organized in the context of human rights, including the rights of children. By way of illustration, the Ministry participated in this way in the work of the national committee established to address the issue of child labour and develop a national strategy for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour.

(g) Creation of an International Relations Directorate within the Ministry of Justice

130. A new Directorate, known as the International Relations Directorate, has been created within the Ministry of Justice. It is mandated to attain a set of objectives, one of which is to ensure that Jordanian legislation conforms to the country’s commitments arising from international instruments to which it is a party, including instruments relating to the rights of the child.

5. Role of the Jordanian media and news agencies in consolidating the rights and freedoms of the child

131. In general, the Jordanian media have been responsive to innovations and developments relating to children. The UNICEF survey entitled “Jordanian Youth: Their Lives and Views” indicated that two thirds of Jordanian young people has some knowledge of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and this was attributed to the enhanced awareness resulting from intensive coverage of the Convention and its provisions by the various Jordanian media. In addition, the Jordanian news agency Petra has been focussing on various aspects of children’s lives since 1998. Petra is seeking to achieve two objectives: to highlight weak points in an effort to deal with them, and to look into what the public and private sectors and community organizations are doing to enrich children’s lives in pursuit of the objectives set forth in the Convention, namely to ensure the survival and development of children and to promote their best interests. Petra’s programmes and reports on children in the course of the past five years have dealt with the rights of the child enshrined in the Convention. Moreover, the media provide daily coverage of official and community activities relating to children. Coverage of the rights in question is summarized in the paragraphs below:

1. Children’s right to shelter, and children’s right to play and rest: these aspects have been presented through reports on older sisters who fulfil the role of mothers to their younger siblings, children who sell assorted items at traffic lights, and children who work in garages and other places.

2. Children's right to physical, emotional, social and moral well-being: this aspect has been presented through reports on achievements of benefit to children in the field of culture, including theatre, television programming, children's libraries, books and magazines, and cultural centre activities, as well as writing for children, and presentations on such problems as homework, the weight of school bags, and other matters.
3. The right of mentally and physically disabled children to a life of dignity: there have been reports on the integration of disabled persons into society, schools, and community empowerment programmes in that area.
4. Children's right to expression and participation: there have been reports and follow-up analyses on the Children's Parliament, the Arab Children's Congress, and the Arab Child Week conferences held in Manama, Tunis and Sana'a.
5. Children's right to protection and care: there have been reports on physical and psychological violence against children and the institutions that are active in the field, such as the homes for the care of children and young people that are run or supervised by the Ministry of Social Development, the Dar al-Aman, and the Children's Shelter. These issues have also been publicized through reports on children's right to protection from harassment and the use of videotape for interrogating children.

132. Jordanian television broadcasts informational programmes designed to enhance public awareness of the rights of children and adolescents. These programmes include "My rights" and "12-18". Besides specialized programming of this kind, the print and audio-visual media provide intensive day-to-day coverage of new legal and social developments and conferences with a bearing on children's issues.

E. Family environment and alternative care (articles 5, 9-11, 18, 19, 20-21, 25, 27 and 39)

1. Responsibilities, rights and duties of parents (article 5, article 18)

(a) Legislative and preventive measures taken to provide appropriate assistance for parents and legal guardians in performing their child-rearing responsibilities

133. We should like to emphasize here that Jordanian law contains a number of provisions relating to parents' responsibilities (some of which were not referred to in the two previous reports). The most important of these provisions are outlined below:

(a) Under article 290 of the Penal Code, parents or guardians are liable to penalties if they neglect their children or damage their health (see the initial report, para. 74);

(b) Article 67 of the Labour Code provides that a woman is entitled to leave without pay for a period of not more than one year to look after her children. Under article 70 of the Code, a woman is entitled to maternity leave at full pay before and after the birth of her child, for a total of 10 weeks.

134. Under article 71 of the Labour Code, a woman worker is entitled, after the termination of her maternity leave, to one or more breaks with pay, the aggregate time of such breaks not to exceed one hour per day, for the purpose of nursing her newborn child.

135. Under article 72 of the Code, every firm that employs not fewer than 20 married women workers is required to provide suitable premises, under the responsibility of a qualified child care worker, for the care of its workers' children. Working fathers, however, are not granted any special treatment.

136. Jordanian law includes measures expressly aimed at the protection and care of children to whom the provisions of article 31 of the Juveniles Act (law No. 24 of 1968 and amendments thereto) are applicable. That article specifies cases in which a child is deemed to be in need of care and protection. The matter is discussed in greater detail in section 6 below. Jordanian law also includes a set of other protective measures, including financial support for economically disadvantaged families from the Ministry of Social Development and the National Assistance Fund, and advice and counselling for parents (or one parent) requesting such advice, through the maternal and child welfare centres run by the Ministry of Health and a number of NGOs.

(b) Measures for the benefit of children in single-parent families and children who belong to the most disadvantaged groups in society

137. Both official agencies and community-based NGOs deliver a number of programmes for children from the most disadvantaged families. Those programmes include:

- Recurrent financial assistance programme (for low-income families). This programme is delivered through the National Assistance Fund, which provides its services to more than 71 000 families. Similar programmes are delivered through the Islamic Charity Fund, UNRWA and benevolent associations;
- Income-generating projects for able-bodied individuals in the transitional poverty group and the at-risk-of-poverty group. This programme is delivered by a number of agencies, including the Ministry of Social Development, the National Assistance fund, the Development and Employment Fund, the Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development, the Nur al-Hussein Foundation, the Islamic Charity Fund, the General Union of Benevolent Associations, and many local associations, as well as a few foreign associations;
- Other programmes, such as assistance to needy students through grants, delegations, financial assistance and interest-free loans, and assistance in kind that helps ease the burden of poverty for low-income families;
- A programme of housing projects for chronically poor families, administered by the Ministry of Social Development, which has completed over 300 housing projects to date.

(c) Measures to safeguard parents' rights in the upbringing of their children

138. The statutes of institutions for the care, education and rehabilitation of juveniles provide that the parents of children who for any reason are separated from their families may visit them at the institution, and that the children may converse freely with their parents.

139. The text of article 27.4 of the interim Juveniles Act (law No. 24 of 1968) and amendments thereto (law No. 52 of 2002) states that the Director of an institution, with the consent of the competent Director at the Ministry, may allow juveniles who have demonstrated good behaviour to leave the institution for a period of not more than one week to visit their families for holidays or other occasions when necessary.

140. The interim Correctional and Rehabilitation Centres Act (law No. 40 of 2001) provides that a child who is not over three years of age and who has no one to support him or her may stay with his or her mother where the mother is an inmate of a correctional and rehabilitation centre. The Act also provides that a nursery must be established to ensure that the children of women inmates are provided with quality care in a secure and stable environment.

141. The Personal Status Act, for its part, provides that a child in the custody of one of his or her parents has a right to see the non-custodial parent.

142. The Sharia courts have competence in matters of personal status relating to the issues of divorce, support, the custody and visitation of children, and communication between the child and his or her parents. Some NGOs, such as the Jordanian Women's Union, administer visitation programmes in an effort to preserve healthy relations among family members in cases of separation or divorce. In addition, the Ministry of Social Development and 13 governmental and non-governmental organizations have been administering a parenting skills programme since 1997, with support from UNICEF. No fewer than 65 000 families have been trained in good parenting practices under that programme.

2. Children deprived of their family environment (article 20)

143. Jordanian legislation has made great humanitarian strides, in line with the Bill of Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, by providing that every child deprived of his or her family environment shall be cared for and protected in the best possible conditions, with a view to building the child's character, preserving his or her life, and ensuring his or her upbringing in accordance with modern principles. Another great advance has been the establishment of what are known as substitute families for children whose social situation is such that a substitute family must assume responsibility for their care, instead of their natural family, because their homes are devoid of an appropriate family atmosphere. The substitute family, or foster family, is defined in the Care of Children Regulations (statutory instrument No. 34 of 1972) as a family entrusted by the Ministry of Social Development or a court with the responsibility of caring for and supporting, for a limited time or indefinitely, any child in need of temporary or permanent protection.

144. Since the foster care programme was first introduced in 1998, it has taken in a total of 1050 illegitimate children. Of these, 650 are with foster families, while the remainder are living in homes pending an opportunity to place them in foster care. We may note here that these children are eligible for benefits under the Al-Aman Fund for the Future of Orphans project launched by Her Gracious Majesty Queen Rania Al-Abdullah late in 2003. In order to specify the conditions governing the foster care of illegitimate children, the Ministry of Social Development has prepared draft foster care regulations and submitted them to the Legislative Bureau at the Office of the Prime Minister for approval following the promulgation of the Children's Rights Act.

- Foster placement is subject to the following conditions:
 - (i) The husband and wife must apply for acceptance as foster parents;
 - (ii) The foster family must be of the Islamic religion;
 - (iii) The social, environmental and cultural level of both husband and wife must be satisfactory;
 - (iv) The relationship between husband and wife must be characterized by affection, closeness and harmony;
 - (v) They must have spent a period of not less than five years in the conjugal home;
 - (vi) The husband must be at least 35 years of age and not over 55 years of age;
 - (vii) The wife must be at least 30 years of age and not over 50 years of age;
 - (viii) The husband or both spouses must be unable to have children;
 - (ix) Both spouses must be in good physical and psychological health in order to be able to raise a child satisfactorily;
 - (x) Every foster family must ensure every aspect of the child's welfare by seeing to his or her upbringing, education, health, and psychological, material and social well-being;
 - (xi) The family's average monthly income must be not less than 350 dinars;
 - (xii) If the family moves, the Ministry of Social Development must be informed in writing of the new address, and the Ministry must be notified beforehand if the family leaves the country. If the family goes to live outside Jordan, the competent official authorities (such as the Embassy) in the country of residence must be advised of any change in the child's address, and the Embassy, in its turn, must notify the Ministry in order to facilitate the task of keeping track of the child.

145. The Ministry of Social Development or a court may decide to place the child in a social institution to ensure that he or she is provided with the necessary services, after a full sociological study of the substitute family, foster family or family of origin. The alternative family may receive recurrent financial support from the National Assistance Fund. The child's father, legal guardian or caregiver may petition for his or her return in the event of a change in the circumstances that made it necessary for the child to be sent to an institution or placed with a substitute family or foster family, and the Ministry of social Development or a court may grant the petition if it deems it expedient to do so in view of the altered circumstances. The child's ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious background do not affect the case; all children are treated equally in terms of legal procedures, having regard to the personal rights of some communities.

146. There are a number of governmental agencies that support families' efforts in the matters of children's welfare, alternative arrangements for children who have no families, and foster care, education and training in productive projects and vocational training courses for orphans.

147. A Women's Affairs Directorate, which is concerned with the welfare of women and children, has been established within the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs. The Directorate advocates the non-discriminatory upbringing of children in order to strengthen equality between the sexes. Substitute family protection is provided for children who are victims of family disintegration or unlawful relations (illegitimate children) through family and child welfare institutions, of which Jordan has 24 in all, accommodating approximately 1300 children, of whom 394 are illegitimate, 550 from broken homes, and 354 orphans.

3. Adoption (article 21)

148. In addition to what was stated in part I of this report, it should be noted that Jordan has acted in accordance with the tenets of its religion and the characteristics of its society in making its choice among the alternative care options set forth in article 20 of the Convention. That choice is the foster care programme, under which children deprived of their families are provided with alternative care. The Ministry of Social Development endeavours to ensure that all illegitimate children are cared for by families, pursuant to the foster care directives issued under the above-mentioned Care of Children Regulations (statutory instrument No. 34 of 1972). In this connection, a workshop on the role of families in caring for illegitimate children was organized in July 2004 by the Ministry of Social Development for the purpose of preparing draft foster care regulations designed to promote the integration of illegitimate children into natural families.

4. Periodic review of child placements (article 25)

149. Periodic reviews of the situations of children separated from their families are conducted through periodic follow-up studies and visits to the children themselves and to their families. Decisions are made on the basis of the findings of those studies and visits: if it appears that it would be in the child's interest for him or her to be returned to his or her family, that is arranged, and if it appears that it would be preferable for the child to continue living apart from his or her family, he or she remains with the foster family. Further visits are made periodically to keep the situation under observation.

150. The Ministry of Social Development reviews the situations of children being cared for in institutions, in coordination with the juvenile court (through periodic reports by the probation officer) and the superintendent of the institution in question, and the Minister makes recommendations accordingly. The procedure is as follows:

(a) The situations of children who have been placed in the institution under the Care of Children Regulations are reviewed by social work specialists at the institutions concerned, and the Minister of Social Development makes appropriate decisions on the basis of their findings;

(b) The situations of children who have been placed in the institution by a court under article 34 of the Juveniles Act (law No. 24 of 1968 and amendments thereto) are reviewed in a study conducted by the probation officer or a social work specialist at the institution concerned, and the Minister of Social Development makes recommendations to the court for appropriate action. The court may hand down its decision after receiving the Minister's recommendations.

5. Child's right to maintenance (article 27)

(a) Recovery of maintenance

151. Under Jordanian law, the maintenance of children is enforced in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Personal Status Act. Those provisions were quoted *in extenso* in Jordan's second periodic report to the Committee (paragraphs 86-90). They include article 168 (provision of food and drink, clothing and shelter), 169 (provision of education), 170 (provision of medical care), 171 (maintenance of children with low-income fathers), 173 (maintenance of needy children) and 174 (affluence and indigence in maintenance cases).

152. Under the Personal Status Act, respect for the principles of non-discrimination and the best interests of the child are guaranteed in respect of maintenance:

1. The Act does not distinguish between the maintenance of a male child and that of a female child, and it is the regular practice of the Sharia courts to issue orders for the maintenance of male and female children on an equal basis.
2. The Act gives male and female persons who are of age the right to petition the courts for enforcement of their rights, again making no distinction between male and female petitioners.
3. The Act makes no distinction between males and females as regards the provision of education.

(b) Measures for the recovery of maintenance and legal action to that end

153. Article 25, paragraph (a) of the draft Children's Rights Act provides for the establishment of a child maintenance credit fund. The purpose of the fund is to ensure that maintenance which has been awarded to a child by a court can be paid without delay, in order to mitigate some of the difficulties that may confront women. For example, a woman who has legal custody of a child may have difficulty in recovering maintenance for her child because the date set for her court hearing is some time off, or she may be unable to afford the cost of litigation, or the amount of maintenance may be excessively small. In addition, she may be required to provide security in cash and pay fees of various kinds.

154. A number of NGOs working in the field of child maintenance recovery agree that it is essential to work for the enactment of effective measures to prevent and remedy the difficulties faced by women with custody of their children who are petitioning for maintenance. Their view

is that judges should award immediate maintenance, regardless of the child's social situation and without requiring any guarantees, that a maximum time limit should be set for dealing with maintenance cases, that the father should be responsible for all maintenance costs for the child, and that a permanent guarantor should be appointed to assist the person ordered to pay maintenance in complying with the court judgement.

6. Abuse and neglect (article 19), including physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration (article 39)

(a) Legislative measures to prohibit all forms of violence against children

155. The Committee expressed concern about legal provisions relating to the protection of children from mistreatment in the home, in schools and in other institutions. Since its inception, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has consistently enacted legislation designed to protect children and guarantee their survival and healthy development. That legislation includes an array of laws aimed at protecting children from abuse, neglect and sexual exploitation, as stated in the two previous reports. As we have seen, recent amendments have been made to the Juveniles Act (law No. 24 of 1968), and those amendments include a number of provisions expressly formulated to secure the protection and care of children who are at risk of harm at the hands of their parents, or one parent, or who are at risk of bodily harm if they remain with their families (article 31). In addition, the draft Children's Rights Act, which is currently before the National Assembly, includes clear provisions aimed at protecting the rights of children and ensure their lives, survival and development (article 3, paragraph 1).

156. A number of articles of Jordan's Penal Code are concerned with protecting children from mistreatment and exploitation, as noted in the previous report. Those articles are Nos. 285, 287-292, 293.2, 294.2, 295-298, 279.2, 334.1, 328.2, 330-336, 343, 302, 304-306, 310, 314 and 389.

157. Article 62 of the Penal Code defines the kinds of disciplinary measures that parents or persons acting in their stead may use on their children, by common custom. However, there are a number of NGOs that regard that article as in need of amendment on the grounds that the wording can be interpreted in various ways. There have also been many calls for the amendment or strengthening of some of the articles referred to in the preceding paragraph.

158. Nor have Jordan's legislators been content with prescribing penalties for persons who committed offences under the above-mentioned articles; they have also enacted laws expressly aimed at protecting children from abuse and neglect. Under article 31 of the Juveniles Act (law No. 24 of 1968 and amendments thereto), children who fall into any of the categories listed below are deemed to be in need of protection or care. Article 31, incidentally, is itself one of the amendments that have been made to the Act since the submission of Jordan's second report to the Committee:

- Every child who is in the care of a father or guardian who is unfit to look after him or her by reason of habitual criminal behaviour, alcoholism, addiction to narcotics or psychotropic substances, or moral degeneracy;

- Every child who engages in activities relating to prostitution, fornication or gambling, or works for persons engaged in those activities, or frequents persons who are notoriously of bad character;
- Every child who has no fixed abode or habitually lives in the streets;
- Every child who has no lawful livelihood or reliable person to support him, and one or both of whose parents are dead, in prison or absent;
- Every child who is of bad character and cannot be controlled by his father, legal guardian, tutor or mother, or whose guardian is dead, absent or legally incompetent;
- Every child who engages openly in begging by any means;
- Every child, whether legitimate or illegitimate, whose father has been convicted of an offence against morality with any of his children;
- Every child who is at risk of deliberate harm, more severe than disciplinary measures deemed permissible by common custom, at the hands of one of his parents or both parents;
- Every child who is at risk of bodily harm if he remains with his family;
- Every child who is exploited for purposes of begging or activities relating to prostitution, fornication or immorality, or who works for persons engaging in those or any other unlawful activities.

(b) Governmental agencies and non-governmental organizations working in the area of the protection of children from abuse and neglect

159. A number of governmental agencies and non-governmental organizations have been established in Jordan to ensure the enforcement of legislative provisions relating to the protection of children from abuse, neglect and sexual exploitation, and, in particular, to receive complaints about violations of those provisions and deal with them. These agencies and organizations include the Ministry of Social Development, the Jordan River Foundation, Public Security/Family Protection Directorate, and the Ministry of Health/National Forensic Medicine Centre. These are the agencies that are directly concerned with the issue.

160. There are also a number of other non-governmental organizations that are active in the field of the protection of children's rights, notably Save the Children - Jordan and the Rights of the Child Association. Organizations concerned with receiving complaints of violations of children's rights include the National Centre for Human Rights, the Jordanian Human Rights Association, the Jordan office of the Arab Organization for Human Rights and the British Council. In addition, there are a number of organizations whose activities involve, but are not restricted to, children's rights; these include the Jordanian Women's Union and the Family

Awareness and Counselling Centre. We may also mention organizations that offer legal counselling for women in such matters as divorce, maintenance, inheritance and other issues of rights and law, such as the Jordanian Women's Union, the International Institute for Women's Solidarity, Mizan (the Law for Human Rights Group), and the Jordanian National Forum for Women's Rights.

161. Jordanian organizations, both official and non-governmental, are seeking through their various programmes to implement educational and legal measures that will strengthen positive, non-violent forms of discipline, with a view to promoting methods of caring for and dealing with children that are free of violence and abuse. They are also endeavouring to develop effective programmes and forms of action to provide both abused children and children at risk of abuse, as well as the persons responsible for their care, with support and guidance.

162. The Committee expressed concern about programmes for the rehabilitation and reintegration of abused children, including adequate measures for receiving complaints about cases of abuse. There are a number of official and community-based organizations that are working actively to confront the problem of child abuse. These include the Ministry of Social Development, the Ministry of the Interior/Family Protection Directorate, the Jordan River Foundation, the Jordanian Women's Union, and the Family Protection Project.

1. Ministry of Social Development

163. The Ministry of Social Development and a number of community-based voluntary organizations work through 24 child care institutions harbouring approximately 1300 children, and 10 institutions for the care, education and rehabilitation of juvenile delinquents that hold approximately 450 children. These institutions provide a full range of basic educational, psycho-social, health and recreational services for the children in their care, and the Ministry constantly monitors the delivery of those services to ensure, first, that they are of good quality, and second, that the rights of the children are respected. We may note that under the regulations governing the operations of these institutions, all forms of corporal punishment or abuse are prohibited. Indeed, the use of corporal punishment as a disciplinary measure in MSD institutions is prohibited under the Penal Code.

164. The Ministry has also established a unit to deal with complaints. The unit, which reports directly to the Internal Oversight Unit and the Minister, is mandated to identify any violations of the rights of children placed in child care institutions and institutions for the education and rehabilitation of juveniles. However, the unit has not yet received any complaints from children, according to the results of a field study conducted in 1999 on the care provided in government-run child care institutions.

165. Under Jordanian law, child abuse is a punishable offence. Accordingly, every person in charge of a social institution for the care of children who is aware of a case of child abuse is required to report the matter to the competent authorities so that the offender can be prosecuted, regardless of his status.

2. Family Protection Department

166. The FPD is an arm of the Public Security Directorate and was established in 1997 (replacing the former Family Protection Division). It receives information and complaints on cases of sexual aggression, regardless of the victim's age, and regardless of whether the offender is a family member or a person outside the family. It is also concerned with cases of physical abuse against children where the offender is a family member, and cases of neglect. In effect, the Department is an observatory for possible cases of violence and abuse against children. It is the first institution of its kind in the Middle East.

167. The FPD receives complaints in a number of ways: direct communication from the victim via the Department's helpline, which is manned 24 hours a day; personal appearance of the person concerned; reports from one of the persons involved, or a relative or neighbour; or through a school or hospital casualty ward. All such cases are investigated having regard to the psycho-social state of the victim and with full confidentiality and respect for privacy.

168. In the cases that come to the FPD's attention, the victim undergoes a medical examination at the clinic of the National Forensic Medicine Centre, which is located at the premises of the FPD and is specially equipped to make examinations. Cases are subsequently followed up by the Social Service Bureau, which is also located at the FPD's premises and is an arm of the Ministry of Social Development. Cases requiring psychiatric treatment are referred to the psychiatric clinic, which is located at the FPD's premises as well, but is an arm of the Ministry of Health.

169. The Family Protection Department has taken a number of effective steps in the context of its development of its activities. The most important of these are outlined below:

- Distribution to all Public Security Centres of a circular describing the FPD's mandate and competence and the cases it handles, and explaining that such cases should not be investigated by other bodies, but should be referred to the FPD, as the competent authority in the matter;
- Expansion of the services delivered by the FPD: four new divisions have been opened in the governorates of Zarqa, Balqa, Irbid and Aqaba, organized along the same lines as the head office and working in the same way. Two additional divisions of the FPD are to be opened in the governorates of Karak and Madaba in 2005;
- Introduction of the use of videotape as a method of taking statements from children who have been abused. This technique has now been codified by law. It greatly lightens the psychological pressure on children who are required to repeat their statements over and over again. Furthermore, the Department organizes talks aimed at various groups in Jordanian society with a view to enhancing awareness of child abuse.

170. The table below presents some statistics compiled by the Family Protection Department on numbers of physically and sexually abused children of both sexes during the period 1999-2004.

| Year | Physical abuse | Sexual abuse | Neglect |
|-------|----------------|--------------|---------|
| 1999 | 64 | 227 | 5 |
| 2000 | 59 | 300 | 6 |
| 2001 | 51 | 242 | 4 |
| 2002 | 67 | 338 | 9 |
| 2003 | 157 | 533 | 17 |
| 2004 | 163 | 760 | 22 |
| Total | 561 | 2 400 | 63 |

171. Cases of sexual violence against children will be discussed in greater detail in part VIII of this report, in which measures relating to the protection of children from sexual exploitation and mistreatment are surveyed.

3. The Jordan River Foundation

172. The Jordan River Foundation was established in 1995 and is headed by Her Majesty Queen Rania Al-Abdullah. It is a non-governmental foundation that administers a number of programmes, including in particular a programme known as the “Child Protection Programme”, which is concerned with child abuse. The Child Protection Programme was instituted in 1997. It comprises two main components: prevention and treatment. These components are described more fully in the following paragraphs.

(a) Prevention component

173. The Jordan River Foundation opened a Prevention Centre in mid-1997, in line with the Committee’s recommendation of preventive measures such as public education campaigns about the negative consequences of ill-treatment of children. The Centre targets basic caregivers and persons who work with children, endeavouring to equip them with sound concepts and practices based on an awareness of children’s developmental characteristics and healthy family characteristics, with a view to preventing all forms of child abuse in so far as possible. This fundamental objective has given rise to a number of preventive projects and programmes that have attracted the support of UNICEF. Some of the most important of them are outlined in the paragraphs below:

- Programme designed to instil awareness of the concepts of child abuse prevention (for caregivers and child care workers): between 1999 and 2002, nearly 950 persons of both sexes signed up for this programme in the Al-Nasr district of the city of Amman. By the end of 2003, the total had grown to nearly 1230 persons of both sexes;
- Training programme for primary caregivers, dealing with the concepts of abuse and sound developmental practices in the case of children in the birth-to-4 age group and the 15-18 age group: by early 2004, some 420 fathers and mothers had taken training under this programme;

- Training programme for child care workers, dealing with the concepts of abuse and sound developmental practices in the case of children in the birth-to-4 age group: by the end of 2004, 130 child care workers of both sexes had taken training under this programme;
- Programme designed to teach children about the importance of protecting themselves from abuse: between 1999 and 2003, nearly 300 children from the local community in the Al-Nasr district had enrolled in this programme. The aim of the programme is to improve children's social skills, strengthen their self-confidence, equip them with adaptation skills and the ability to adjust to circumstances, and teach them anger management and effective communication between individuals and within working groups, as well as self-discovery skills. It is noteworthy that this programme is offered in conjunction with an activity known as "school messages", which is directed at a broad range of school children and features educational messages designed for children of various ages, and a puppet play for school children, all aimed at serving the aims of the child protection programme;
- The child protection programme has implemented a number of informational activities, including in particular:
 - Information campaigns, including one in the year 2000 that was conducted under the watchword "Protect a child and build a country". A second campaign launched late in 2003 was aimed primarily at strengthening positive child-rearing methods through television broadcasts and announcements about public services available in that connection, and through the distribution of audio-visual informational materials;
 - Publication of a yearly calendar containing various informative messages about the issue;
 - Launch of the "Ajiāluna" ("our generations") campaign by Her Majesty Queen Rania Al-Abdullah on 6 June 2004;
 - The Jordan River Foundation also oversees the production and presentation of a television programme entitled "Beit saghīr" ("a little house"). The programme, which consists of 13 episodes, is intended as the first part of a series dealing with the early childhood stage, and it seeks to convey the idea of child abuse prevention. It is aimed at all components of Jordanian society. The first episode appeared on Jordanian television late in March 2004 amid an extensive promotion campaign. The programme won the Jordan River Foundation the International Society for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN) award as an outstanding contribution to dealing with child abuse. The programme also won the gold medal for artistic achievement at the Cairo Biennale.

(b) Treatment component

174. The centre for the protection of children known as Dar al-Aman was founded in the year 2000 in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Development as an institution specializing in the protection, care and treatment of children at risk of abuse. The centre receives cases referred to it by the Family Protection Department. It works in close cooperation with the Ministry of Social Development, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, and the judiciary, through the juvenile court. Since it was founded, the centre has handled some 93 cases of abuse of various kinds (physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, or multiple abuse). It has received 58 girl children who have been subjected to abuse, and 31 boys.

175. Dar al-Aman provides basic care services, and it also provides educational services to children of school age. In the case of children who are too young to be attending school, time at the centre is devoted to instructional activities, in an effort to prepare them for their future studies. The centre also provides cultural and recreational services, and also psychological rehabilitation services aimed at treating the children for the adverse effects of the abuse that they have suffered, in an attempt to reconstruct their personal adaptability and support their individual capacities.

176. Dar al-Aman also works with the families of children placed in its care in an effort to straighten out their lives. It provides various forms of treatment for them, depending on the particular situation, in the hope that it will be feasible to return the children to their families and reintegrate them in a climate conducive to security and trust.

177. There is a special section of Dar al-Aman that receives consultation cases who do not need to be admitted. Some 130 such cases have been handled by the section in all. It provides psycho-social treatment services for the children concerned and their families. The section has developed specialized programmes for some cases, with the gratifying result that the children in question have been able to achieve a satisfactory level of stability. In addition, it has continued to provide rehabilitation programmes for cases requiring immediate follow-up.

4. Jordanian Women's Union

178. The Jordanian Women's Union is a non-governmental organization that was founded in 1954. It administers three programmes. One of these is the Women's Shelter, which during the period 2000-2003 received approximately 290 cases of girls under 18 years of age who had suffered physical, sexual or psychological abuse and had been referred to the Shelter by the Family Protection Department. They stay at the Shelter for a limited period of time, where they receive basic services and some social support services as well. The JWU's second programme is its "Family Helpline" telephone service, which was established in 1996. As of mid-2004, the helpline had received approximately 3000 calls from children ranging in age from 7 to 18, all of whom were given appropriate advice. The third programme is the Children's Shelter and Family Counselling Centre, which has dealt with some 1500 children from broken homes, of whom approximately 1000 were referred by the courts. The children can receive visits from their parents in a relaxed family atmosphere, resulting in less stress for all concerned. The Centre serves as an alternative to the courts or Public Security Centres. The family counselling service, for its part, has reconciled approximately 130 families.

5. Family Counselling and Awareness Centre

179. The Family Counselling and Awareness Centre in the city of Zarqa has received approximately 100 cases of abuse, which it referred to the Family Protection Department. Some 1600 residents of Zarqa, including caregivers and child care workers, have benefited from the Centre's programmes and activities, which are designed to teach persons in those categories about sound ways of dealing with children, especially abused children and children at risk. The Centre also seeks to shed light on the reasons for juvenile delinquency and the problems that may be affecting young offenders. As for the children themselves, the Centre has reached out to some 240 of the children of Zarqa through activities aimed at promoting their awareness of social life, family relations, and effective dialogue with fathers and mothers. A further 50 children have participated in a programme aimed at teaching them engraving on wood, stone or glass in an effort to correct some mistaken ideas about those materials, which may have been used in acts of violence committed against them. The Centre also organizes training courses in taekwondo, swimming and karate. In addition, it has organized a number of national meetings on the challenge of dealing with the issue of child abuse. It is noteworthy that in 2003 and 2004, some 300 people used the Centre's telephone helpline service for various reasons (66 seeking personal advice, 100 seeking legal advice, 80 social cases, 40 seeking advice on other problems, family-related or emotional, and 20 seeking advice on difficulties with their school work).

6. Family Protection Project

180. Over the three-year period 2000-2003, a family protection project was implemented as a cooperative initiative involving the Government of Jordan and the Government of the United Kingdom. The aim of the project, which was managed by the British Council in Amman, was to build the capacities of institutions working in various ways to deal with domestic violence and child abuse. Various Government agencies and non-governmental organizations participated in it, including the Ministry of Social Development, the Public Security Directorate, the Judicial Council, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Awqaf, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Information, the National Council on Family Affairs, the Family Counselling and Awareness Centre, the Jordanian Women's Union and the Jordan River Foundation. This pioneering national project was implemented with the participation of specialists and experts in many of the training programmes that were offered to members of organizations confronted with the task of dealing with the problem of domestic violence in Jordan. The Family Protection Project won the praise of the international community, as represented by the United Nations, in 2003 when its management team was awarded the UN Human Rights Prize, which is awarded every five years to an organization working in the field of human rights. The Family Protection Project is in effect an arm of the National Council on Family Affairs specializing in the area of family protection. It is led by a national team representing a number of ministries and NGOs concerned with domestic violence issues.

7. Public information and education campaigns on the rights of the child

181. Various organizations in Jordan have prepared training manuals and specialized programmes dealing with the protection of children, as will be seen from the table below.

Public information and education campaigns on the rights of the child

| Training manual | Institution | Number of activities | Number of beneficiaries |
|---|--|--|---|
| Sound developmental practices, birth-4 age group | Jordan River Foundation UNICEF | 3 training courses for mothers and child care workers | 55 participants (men and women) |
| Sound developmental practices, 15-18 age group | Jordan River Foundation UNICEF | 2 training courses for youth workers and mothers | 40 participants (men and women) |
| Concepts of child abuse prevention | Jordan River Foundation UNICEF | 12 training courses 117 talks | 240 trainees (men and women) 6 200 participants (men and women) |
| Abuse issues for counsellors in schools for the 8-12 age group | British Council | | |
| Art project on the protection of children | Jordan River Foundation | 13 workshops in schools in the various governorates (trial period) | 600 children |
| Learning about your rights and teaching others about them | Jordanian Human Rights Association | | |
| Women's and children's human rights | Jordanian National Forum for Women's Rights | | |
| "Nur" training and guidance manual for trainers in the area of juvenile criminal justice | Ministry of Social Development in cooperation with UNICEF and Penal Reform International, with the participation of various other governmental and non-governmental bodies | | Training provided for 310 participants (men and women) from Public Security, the judicial system and NGOs |
| Training kit on the rights of the child | International Institute for Women's Solidarity | | |
| Training manual for mosque preachers on the concepts of early childhood | UNICEF in cooperation with the British Council | | Training provided for 600 mosque preachers |
| Guidebook for youth workers on youth development, participation and health | Youth project (for young people 10-18 years of age) UNICEF | 275 workshops | 6 875 service providers (men and women) |
| Basic life skills for young people, 2003 | Youth project (for young people 10-18 years of age) UNICEF | 417 workshops | 14 110 participants (men and women) |
| "Salhuf" puppet project | Jordan River Foundation with support from the Save the Children Foundation | 4 experimental activities | |
| "A Little House" (television programme) | Jordan River Foundation | 13 episodes Phase 1 | |
| Educational guide for young people on reproductive health and infection with the AIDS virus | Youth project (for young people 10-18) UNICEF | | |
| "Ajjāluna" media campaign | Jordan River Foundation | | |

182. Jordan is striving to pursue its unremitting effort to protect children from abuse through the combined efforts of its government agencies and non-governmental organizations working in the field of child protection. The relevant NGOs aspire to achieve more child protection through the implementation of the proposals outlined below:

- Establishment of a mandatory reporting system, as set forth in article 17(c) of the Children’s Rights Act: professional groups working with children would be required to report cases of abuse, pursuant to articles 25 and 26 of the Code of Criminal Procedure and article 207, paragraphs 1, 2 and 3, of the Penal Code;
- Extension of Family Protection Department services to all the governorates of Jordan;
- Establishment of a family court specializing in domestic violence cases;
- Promulgation and enforcement of Jordan’s Children’s Rights Act;
- Completion of the work of building a Family and Child Development Centre as a Jordan River Foundation project. The Centre will deliver programmes on early childhood and the initiation of effective dialogue among family members.

F. Basic health and welfare (articles 6, 18, 23, 24, 26 and 27)

1. Children with disabilities (article 23)

183. The Government of Jordan provides services to children with disabilities through the Ministry of Social Development, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Labour, and other State institutions; in addition, services are provided by benevolent associations and the private sector. The services in question include training, rehabilitation, treatment, information and counselling for disabled children and their families, as well as social rehabilitation through day (outpatient) institutions and residential (inpatient) institutions. The Government also allows tariff exemptions for families and institutions that provide care for disabled children, including exemption from the fees ordinarily charged for a permit to bring in a non-Jordanian worker where the person concerned is being recruited for the purpose of providing care for disabled children.

184. The Ministry of Social Development and other agencies concentrate on institutional care and social rehabilitation services, whereas the services provided by the Ministry of Health to disabled children focus on early detection of disabilities, health insurance free of charge, and transfer to the competent centres.

185. In the matter of early detection, we may note that between early 1990 and late 2003, the Centre for Early Diagnosis of Disabilities, which is an arm of the Ministry of Health, identified approximately 24 000 cases of disabilities. The children concerned were directed to special education centres or integrated into the community. It is clear from statistical data on the numbers of new cases identified by the Centre that the incidence of disability remained stable during the five-year period 2000-2005, i.e. approximately 1.5% of all live births, which averaged some 150 000 yearly.

186. We may note at this point that the Centre seeks first and foremost to give practical expression to disabled children's right to health care, as provided under article 3 of the Welfare of the Disabled Act (law No. 12 of 1993), and thereby to enhance their quality of life. The Centre receives some 2500 new cases of disabilities of various kinds every year. It accepts children from birth through the age of 18. In so far as possible, the Centre arranges without delay for the disabled child to receive services or to be enrolled in a special education centre, or for his or her family to receive a monthly national assistance payment or to benefit from an exemption from the fees ordinarily charged for a foreign caregiver in cases of severe disability. The Centre's future plans include a project for the establishment of disability diagnosis centres in the northern and southern regions of the country, action to monitor the enforcement of the law requiring premarital examinations, and screening of newborn infants to detect certain hereditary disorders.

- **Services available to disabled persons in Jordan**

187. Educational services designed for disabled persons are available in Jordan to members of all age groups and for every type and degree of disability. These services are delivered through 144 centres and institutions in all parts of Jordan that are run by the government, community volunteers, the private sector and international agencies. The total number of recipients is approximately 26 000.

188. Special education centres fall into a number of different categories: care and rehabilitation centres administered by the Ministry of Social Development or run by community volunteers, private centres, special education centres and schools administered by the Ministry of Education, and UNRWA centres, in addition to social rehabilitation programmes. These various centres are distributed on the basis of type of disability, administrative category, and differential population densities in the country's governorates. A brief description of the centres in each category will be found in the paragraphs below:

- Centres administered by the Ministry of Social Development: there are 14 of these, and they offer educational, rehabilitation, treatment, nursing, inpatient and family counselling services to disabled persons and their families. The recipients of these services include mildly, moderately and severely mentally disabled persons, persons with multiple disabilities, hearing-impaired persons and persons with motor disabilities. Vocational rehabilitation is also available. Beneficiaries range in age from 4 to 40, and are of both sexes. There are 1030 beneficiaries in all, male and female, including 800 children;
- Schools administered by the Ministry of Education: there are 12 of these schools, providing educational services for disabled children of both sexes from kindergarten to the end of grade 7. Approximately 900 children attend these schools;
- Privately owned centres: there are 31 of these, offering educational services, rehabilitation, inpatient care and treatment for mentally disabled and autistic persons. They are attended by some 1320 persons in all, of whom 1051 are children;

- Centres run by members of voluntary community associations: there are 62 centres of this type, providing educational and rehabilitation services for a total of 5080 mildly, moderately and severely mentally disabled persons, including 2830 children;
- Centres administered by international institutions: there are 13 of these, offering services to mentally disabled persons and persons with hearing, motor and visual disabilities. Approximately 2540 persons make use of their services, including 2830 [*sic*] children;
- Centres providing diagnostic services to determine the type and degree of disability, speech therapy and rehabilitation assistance. Some of these are Government-run, while others are operated by voluntary organizations. There are 12 of them in all, providing services to 15 130 persons, including 14 700 children.

189. With respect to the Committee's remarks concerning the need to determine the scope of the problem of children with disabilities, the following comments are in order:

(a) There are still divergent views as to the number of children with disabilities in Jordan, with different estimates from different sources. While some organizations, especially international organizations, rely on World Health Organization estimates (10 per cent), most government agencies and community-based organizations in Jordan itself consider that those estimates do not reflect the actual situation. Research studies have shown that between 1 per cent and 4.9 per cent of the total population is affected by some form of disability;

(b) Furthermore, in October 2004 the Department of Statistics conducted a general census and housing survey. The results will be published early in July of the current year. The survey included questions expressly designed to provide information about the extent of disability in Jordan;

(c) Despite impressive accomplishments and considerable progress in the matter of services available to disabled persons, there are no comprehensive, accurate statistics on the extent and categories of disability in Jordan. Accordingly, the National Council for the Welfare of Persons with Disabilities (which is headed by the Minister of Social Development) decided to establish a Committee on the National Register of Disabled Persons, chaired by the Lord Chamberlain, His Highness Prince Raad bin Zeid. Working in cooperation with the ministries and institutions identified in the Welfare of the Disabled Act (Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Royal Medical Services, High-Level Committee for the Administration of Programmes and Projects for Persons with Special Needs, and the Association of the South for Special Education), the Committee has conducted a survey of disabled persons in a number of the country's governorates. The findings of the survey indicate that no more than 1 per cent of Jordan's population suffers from disabilities. A total of 3764 children have been identified as having some type of disability. Mental deficiency is the most common form of disability, followed by motor disabilities, multiple disabilities, and hearing, sight and speech disorders. The survey will be extended to the remaining governorates in due course.

190. In response to the Committee's remarks on promoting education for disabled persons, the following remarks are in order:

(a) The percentage of children with learning difficulties and problems of various kinds and various degrees of seriousness is estimated at between 12 and 18 per cent of the total school population;

(b) Approximately 10 per cent of all children with mild mental disability are enrolled at regular schools, private or government-run. This is deemed to be an acceptable rate at the present early stage in the experimental integration of children with disabilities. A national integration plan is undoubtedly needed to overcome the difficulties and obstacles confronting the task of integrating as many such children as possible in the regular school system;

(c) One feature of the Ministry of Social Development's strategy for 2004-2006 is the establishment of mobile units providing services for children with disabilities, to ensure that those services will be available in remote and disadvantaged regions. The Ministry has entered into partnerships with a number of voluntary organizations working in the field of special education in various parts of the country to create a broader service base and encourage the associations concerned to integrate children with disabilities with their non-disabled peers. To that end, the Ministry provides the associations with financial assistance and expert guidance and support. Some 315 children are currently benefiting from the financial and material support provided by the Ministry;

(d) The Ministry of Education has begun to apply a programme of resource rooms in its schools to provide support and enrichment services to children with special needs. To date, some 300 such resource rooms have been established, distributed among all Ministry of Education directorates in the country. Appropriate skills upgrading and training programmes for teachers of both sexes who work in resource rooms have been implemented within the advanced diploma programme for teachers of children with learning difficulties, in cooperation with the Princess Tharwat College. However, they require specialized professional and educational supervision. It is also essential to address the existing deficiencies in the services offered by the education system at subsequent stages, after the child has completed his or her course of study in the resource rooms and has been transferred to a regular class: at present there is no mechanism to ensure that the transition will be made safely and naturally.

191. Turning to the issue of health care for disabled children enrolled in special education centres, most of these children are covered by some form of health insurance, and this enables them to receive the necessary care. However, more nursing staff, physiotherapists and occupational therapists are needed in inpatient centres for the severely disabled and rehabilitation and physiotherapy centres for other disabled persons. We may note here that the most important shortfall in this field is that the Ministry of Health's initiative focuses primarily on medical principles exclusively—preventive, curative and rehabilitative—and consequently do not incorporate psychological rehabilitation and counselling services or family support services into programme planning. Another aspect is that more early disability detection centres are needed: at present, there are only two in all Jordan, one in Amman and the other in Kerak. Lastly, the task of selecting the appropriate centre for a particular child represents a daunting challenge for

families and, to a lesser extent, practitioners in cases of children with multiple disabilities; it can be difficult to decide which centre is the best prepared to provide the child with appropriate services.

192. Since the submission of Jordan's previous report to the Committee, the Ministry of Education has realized substantial accomplishments in the area of services to children with disabilities. These are summarized below:

- Licensing of 24 community-based centres for intellectually challenged persons;
- Licensing of 17 private centres for intellectually challenged persons;
- Opening of three government-run centres for intellectually challenged persons;
- Graduation of 427 trainees from vocational rehabilitation centres after they had completed their training in trades appropriate to their levels of disability and job market needs;
- As of 2004, a total of 640 persons with various types of disability were Government employees, working in a number of institutions and ministries; of that number, 487 suffered from motor disabilities, 49 were hearing-impaired, 102 were visually impaired, and two were intellectually challenged;
- Pursuant to the Welfare of the Disabled Act and in accordance with the principle of integration and equality of opportunity, 17 education centres for hearing-impaired and visually impaired persons and persons with motor disabilities were transferred from the Ministry of Social Development to the Ministry of Education. The total number of students enrolled at these centres was 904.

193. When Jordan adopted its Welfare of the Disabled Act in 1993, it was one of the first Arab States to enact legislation of that kind, and the first Arab State to pass legislation establishing a national register of disabled persons in 1996. In addition, a National Register Unit was established by the National Council for the Welfare of Persons with Disabilities for the purpose of determining the prevalence of the phenomenon of disability in Jordan. A specialized diagnostic team was formed, with members from various agencies concerned with medical, educational, psychological, rehabilitative and social aspects, including the Ministry of Social Development, the Ministry of Health, the High-Level Committee for the Administration of Programmes and Projects for Persons with Special Needs, and the Association of the South for Special Education. The team conducted a field survey of persons with disabilities of various kinds and degrees of severity in various age groups in the governorates listed below:

- Aqaba Governorate: 583 cases of disability (0.7 per cent of the total population);
- Maan Governorate: 661 cases of disability (0.7 per cent of the total population);
- Al-Tafila Governorate: 469 cases of disability (0.6 per cent of the total population);

- Mafrq Governorate: 1725 cases of disability (0.7 per cent of the total population);
- Southern Mizar district in Kerak Governorate: 202 cases of disability (0.36 per cent of the total population);
- Jerash Governorate: 1456 cases of disability (0.9 per cent of the total population);
- Northern Aghwar district in Irbid Governorate: 694 cases of disability (0.72 per cent of the total population);
- Ajlun Governorate: 1113 cases of disability (0.9 per cent of the total population);
- Khazma district/Deir Ala district: 108 cases of disability (1.9 per cent of the total population).

194. The results show that disabled persons account for no more than 1 per cent of the population of the governorates in which the survey was conducted. The survey will be extended to the country's remaining governorates in due course; it is hoped that the work will be completed by the end of 2005. It is noteworthy that the National Register committee works in close coordination with the Ministry of Social Development and the voluntary community sector to supply the needs and requirements of persons with disabilities whose disabilities have been diagnosed.

195. We may note at this point that while the National Council for the Welfare of Persons with Disabilities has many outstanding accomplishments to its credit, it has not yet developed an integrated national plan to focus on the requirements of children with disabilities based on the programmes delivered by the Ministries of Social Development, Health and Education on the one hand, and by non-governmental organizations on the other. It is noteworthy that the Government has taken note of this and intends to take action to address the situation.

196. The Committee recommended that community-based rehabilitation projects should be expanded and strengthened. We should like to comment as follows:

- In line with the Ministry of Social Development's Strategic Plan for 2004-2006, the Ministry has developed a plan to activate the community rehabilitation programme to serve severely mentally retarded persons and persons with multiple disabilities in their homes and local communities. The programme relies first and foremost on the local community. The recipients are given special education services, physiotherapy and family counselling. The community-based rehabilitation programme seeks to train family members (caregivers) so that they, in turn, can train their children. Institutions can provide temporary services, but they are not a substitute for the person's natural family;
- This service is provided through qualified volunteers from the local community working under the supervision of subcommittees and a coordinating committee on problems made up of members of the governmental and voluntary sectors;

- A total of 153 persons in the northern, central and southern regions of the country have benefited from this Ministry of Social Development programme. These persons have received the necessary mobility aids, and environmental improvements have been introduced to help them get around. Services of this kind are provided by various sectors in Jordan.

Enhancement of community awareness in the area of special education and disability

197. The Ministry of Social Development has established a high-level advisory committee with members drawn from all agencies concerned with the care and rehabilitation of disabled persons. That committee, in turn, has set up media advisory committees to undertake community awareness work in the area of special education with a view to informing and educating individuals and groups in society about the issues of the training and rehabilitation of disabled persons and the importance of integrating them into the community. This initiative is pursuant to article 4, paragraph 5 of the Welfare of the Disabled Act (law No. 12 of 1993), which refers to the role of the media in drawing attention to the importance of caring for disabled persons and integrating them into the community.

198. The community awareness programme is aimed primarily at informing individuals and society at large about the causes of disabilities, means of prevention, and ways of dealing with them, and changing negative attitudes toward disabled persons and their capacities and potential. A survey of Jordanian youth conducted jointly by the Department of Statistics and UNICEF showed that 97 per cent of the country's young people were prepared to help a disabled person in a public place, that 75.2 per cent of them were prepared to befriend a disabled person, and that 72 per cent of them were prepared to work with a disabled person; only 10 per cent of them, however, stated that they would be willing to marry person with a disability.

199. One noteworthy activity undertaken by the High-Level Media Advisory Committee has been a national education campaign on the welfare of disabled persons which was launched in the year 2000 under the watchword, "Every disabled person has a right to service in his family setting." The Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs participated in the campaign; among other things, the closing workshop, featuring the same watchword, was held under its auspices on 14 October 2003. In the course of the campaign, the Ministry distributed informational and educational materials focusing on the Islamic religion's view of disabled persons and their welfare and encouraging families to care for their disabled children.

200. NGOs working in the field of the rehabilitation of disabled persons in Jordan, for their part, tend to give priority to enforcement of the Welfare of the Disabled Act (law No. 12 of 1993), the propagation of awareness of its provisions, the role of the National Council for the Welfare of Persons with Disabilities, the exemption of all equipment and mobility aids for disabled individuals from import duties, and the creation of a "disabled-friendly society" by removing barriers to the mobility of disabled persons.

201. Other national accomplishments and innovations since 1998 include the following:
- Compulsory premarital medical examinations. Reception centres are currently being prepared and provided with laboratory equipment for this purpose, and personnel are being trained in the necessary techniques. It is worth noting here that an average of 40 000 marriages are celebrated in Jordan every year;
 - Preparations for a nation-wide newborn screening programme are under way with a view to early detection of thyroid deficiency and phenylketonuria. Both those conditions, if detected early, can be treated and the associated disabilities prevented. It is expected that at least 70 cases a year will be detected through this programme;
 - Modernization of forms for patients at maternal and child centres, thereby making it easier for the specially trained medical staff there to spot disabilities early and refer the person concerned to the Centre for Early Diagnosis of Disabilities for detailed diagnosis and evaluation;
 - Ratification by Jordan, in 2003, of ILO Convention No. 159 of 1983, concerning vocational rehabilitation and the employment of disabled persons;
 - A schedule of requirements applicable to buildings for disabled persons, issued pursuant to the Jordanian National Building Code (law No. 7 of 1993), which has been in force since 21 April 1993. Under the new schedule, the National Building Directorate for Persons with Special Needs has made alterations to a number of intersections and public buildings to make them accessible to persons with special needs. Examples include the Prince Hamza Sports Complex, the Al-Hussein Association for the Mobility-Impaired and the Al-Nureyn Mosque, besides a number of hotels in Amman, the King Hussein Park and the Princess Rahma College in Salt;
 - Continued provision of services in resource rooms, which are now available up to grade 12, and making compulsory education applicable to children with disabilities;
 - Increased numbers of free disability diagnostic centres to cover all geographic regions of Jordan, so that all citizens can be served;
 - Action to build bridges of cooperation between Jordanian universities and field services for the disabled in order to enhance the performance of those working in that field.

2. Right to health and access to health care services (article 24)

(a) Equal access to health services for children

202. The Committee recommended action to ensure that all groups of children would benefit from health services, including children living in rural and desert regions. In response to that recommendation, the following remarks are in order:

- The health and health care sector has been characterized by progress at all levels in recent years, with the result that by the year 2002 there had been a perceptible improvement in the situation of children in Jordan. Maternal and child care services, for example, are available free of charge during pregnancy, and once the child is born, he or she is entitled to free care up to the age of 5 years, regardless of whether the beneficiaries are of Jordanian or foreign nationality. The under-5 mortality rate declined from 39 per 1000 in 1990 to 27 per thousand in 2002, and the infant mortality rate declined from 34 per thousand to 22 per thousand over the same period. It is noteworthy that more than 70 per cent of all deaths among infants occurred during the first months after birth. This indicates the importance of upgrading perinatal maternal and child health care programmes;
- Maternal and child care services are available equally in rural, desert and urban areas. However, there are some disparities in infant and under-5 mortality rates, which are 30 per thousand and 36 per thousand respectively in rural areas. The Ministry of Health and other relevant agencies are taking this situation into account when formulating their programmes and plans, including the National Plan of Action for Children for the coming decade. The national immunization programme has been a success, with continued high numbers of vaccinated children. In 2002, 98 per cent of all Jordanian children were vaccinated against polio. Not a single case of that disease has been reported in Jordan since 1995. The Ministry of Health is working assiduously to add new vaccines to the national vaccination programme, subject to availability of the necessary resources;
- The Ministry of Health joined forces with the Primary Health Care Initiatives project to improve the quality of primary health care services, set up an information system, and develop indicators for the services provided, as an initial step toward surveillance and oversight. In addition, the record system has been overhauled and service delivery criteria established and published in an effort to ensure that they are uniformly applied in all centres. Furthermore, comprehensive essential obstetric care is now available in all hospitals;
- Studies on anaemia (2003) and iodine deficiency (2000) have been conducted, and in the light of the findings of those studies, iron is now added to flour, nutritious meals are served in some schools, and vitamin A capsules are distributed to school children. Recent research has shown that there is cause for concern about dietary deficiencies: 20 per cent of Jordanian children are anaemic, 15 per cent of them are vitamin-deficient, and 33 per cent of them are iodine-deficient (down from 38 per cent before iodine was added to table salt);
- The Maternal and Child Directorate, in cooperation with the birth control by breastfeeding (lactational amenorrhea method) project, encourages breastfeeding exclusively for the child's first six months of life. Personnel have been trained, instructional pamphlets distributed and media messages broadcast with a view to promoting breastfeeding, and as a result, 26.7 per cent of Jordanian mothers now feed their infants nothing but breast milk until they reach six months of age;

- Four hospitals have begun to apply the Baby-Friendly Hospitals Initiative, and a national code of marketing of breast-milk substitutes has been prepared, based on the International Code. Unfortunately, the code is not always applied in practice. At the present time, a plan to have 15 maternal and child centres and the Jerash and Sahab hospitals declared baby-friendly is being implemented. In addition, the Ministry is in the process of founding a national breastfeeding centre;
- The Better Parenting project, which was founded at the initiative of UNICEF in cooperation with local partners, is designed to respond to fathers' and mothers' need for knowledge, skills and guidance about early childhood and to provide them with support in raising their children, especially with respect to health, nutrition, and social and emotional development. The Better Parenting project seeks to cover all aspects of child care;
- The Maternal and Child Directorate, in cooperation with UNICEF, has introduced what it calls "children's files" and trained personnel how to use them. Every file contains a brief survey of the child's development and a record of his or her growth, for the purpose of detecting any disability or deviation from the normal course of growth and development at an early stage. The child's health is closely associated with that of the pregnant mother-to-be, and Jordan has seen a steady improvement in the level of maternal health and welfare, as is apparent from the maternal mortality rate, which declined from 48 per 100 000 live births in 1990 to 41 per 100 000 live births in 2002. Ninety-eight per cent of Jordanian women in all geographic regions now give birth under qualified medical supervision. However, the percentage of women who return to receive post-natal care is still low. A family health survey conducted by the Department of Statistics in 2002 showed that 65 per cent of all mothers do not return after their initial examination at the place where they give birth to receive the necessary post-natal care, as they consider it unnecessary. Many challenges remain in the field of maternal health, including the establishment of mechanisms for detecting and following up cases of high-risk pregnancy, the investigation of maternal mortality, improvement of the quality of services during pregnancy and after delivery, and reducing the incidence of anaemia in women of childbearing age. The Directorate has sought to address the issue of high-risk pregnancy by introducing what it calls "maternal files" and adopting a system of risk assessment during pregnancy, with a view to detecting and dealing with high-risk cases in an effort to reduce maternal mortality rates and deliver higher-quality services to pregnant women.

203. The Public Health Act has been amended to make premarital medical examinations mandatory. A special system has been developed expressly for that purpose and is currently being implemented. As a first step, examinations for thalassaemia are now conducted, and other disorders will be added progressively in due course. The amendment in question is one of a number of preventive measures taken by the Ministry of Health in an effort to eliminate disabilities. In addition, laboratory equipment and facilities are now available in a number of the country's governorates.

204. The Committee recommended that the Government should conduct public education activities in the field of reproductive health and the risks associated with pregnancy among adolescents. The low fertility and pregnancy rates among adolescent girls may be taken as evidence that the Government's efforts along these lines have been successful. Statistics show that in 2002, no more than 4 per cent of Jordanian girls had become pregnant while they were adolescents, down from 6 per cent in 1997. The statistics also show that only 2 per cent of Jordanian girls became pregnant at the age of 16, and none at all became pregnant at the age of 15.

205. According to the 2002 edition of the annual Communicable Diseases Report published by the Department of Disease Control, an arm of the Ministry of Health:

- There were no known outbreaks of communicable diseases in Jordan and no reports of persons affected by those diseases in 2002. The diseases included in this category are cholera, plague, yellow fever, tetanus, polio, diphtheria, relapsing fever, rabies and syphilis. Jordan has been free of polio since 1995. The Department of Disease Control tracks the status of all communicable diseases on a regular weekly basis;
- Three hundred and fifty-five cases of AIDS have been reported since 1986; of those cases, 136 were Jordanians. In 2003, 22 cases of men with the disease were reported, and 7 cases of women, making a total of 29 cases, only three of which were children in the 0-14 age group. This is a very low AIDS infection rate, especially in view of the fact that most of the cases were persons who were not native Jordanians or had contracted the infection through blood transfusions;
- Eighteen per cent of Jordanian women are not familiar with information about AIDS or how it is transmitted, while 33 per cent know of only one way of avoiding infection, and 39 per cent know of two or more ways of avoiding infection. Early in December 2004, the Ministry of Health launched an information campaign on AIDS targeting young persons intending to travel;
- Most cases of diarrhoea are caused by food poisoning and acute or occasionally chronic intestinal inflammation, resulting from low standards of living and health conditions.

(b) Raising awareness of maternal health and family planning

206. Efforts to raise awareness of maternal health and family planning are summarized in the paragraphs below:

- Women field counsellors in the field of reproductive health have been trained to raise women's awareness and direct them to the services available in a number of the country's governorates to enable them to benefit from those services;
- Primary health care services have been extended: by 2003 there were a total of 52 comprehensive health care centres and 340 primary health care centres, as well as 259 sub-centres and 353 maternal and child care centres. The total number of comprehensive and primary health care centres was 389. In addition, worker training in the fields of primary and reproductive health care has continued;

- Reproductive health has been added to curricula, together with various activities and measures designed to improve their comprehensiveness by incorporating aspects of the National Reproductive Health Strategy.

(c) School children and school health

207. In 2001-2002, a total of 343 857 school children, both boys and girls, underwent medical examinations. This figure represents 99 per cent of the target population. The corresponding figures for 1997 and 1993 were 304 575 and 289 767 respectively, representing 97 per cent of the target population.

208. Of the children who underwent medical examinations, 92.5 per cent were found to be in good health. This figure has been increasing steadily, reflecting the tangible improvement in school children's health and the quality of the medical services and follow-up services provided for them.

209. A total of 13 370 cases of illness, including both boys and girls, were treated in schools in the 2001-2002 school year, compared to 19 290 in 1993 and 17 779 in 1997. It is noteworthy that these figures display a steady downward trend. This is attributable to the children's enhanced health and resistance to illness resulting from their improved diet, and to greater health awareness among the children themselves, their families, and teachers; all concerned are now better informed about disease and disease prevention. The school environment, including school buildings, has improved in recent years.

210. A total of 285 225 school children, both boys and girls, were vaccinated under the national immunization programme in 2001-2002, compared to 254 684 in 1993.

211. The health education programme continues to be implemented in all schools, with a view to raising pupils' health awareness by means of talks, films, the distribution of leaflets dealing with health, and posters. Student health committees participated in a variety of health education activities.

212. Development of the project to provide school children attending State-run primary schools with free eyeglasses has continued. Free treatment for needy children has also continued. These children are referred to health centres, where they receive whatever treatment they require.

213. The Ministry of Health has joined forces with the Ministry of Education to provide vaccines for school children at all levels in all the governorates of Jordan. The children are vaccinated against polio, measles, tetanus, mumps and diphtheria.

(d) The national expanded programme on immunization (EPI)

214. The Ministry of Health has continued to implement its expanded immunization programme. Immunization coverage is greater than 90 per cent in all governorates. This coverage is largely the cause of declining mortality rates from the diseases against which people are immunized. It is noteworthy that Jordan was one of the first countries in the Middle East to introduce vaccination as a means of protecting the country's children against childhood diseases.

215. Jordan's Ministry of Health has kept pace with the global trend as regards the introduction of new vaccines, as will be seen from the paragraphs below:

- Introduction of the hepatitis B vaccine and the measles booster shot in 1995;
- Introduction of the MMR triple vaccine, which provides protection against measles, mumps and rubella or German measles, replacing the measles booster shot in 2000;
- Introduction of the haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib) vaccine in 2001;
- Adoption by the Ministry, despite its limited resources, of multicomponent vaccines as a means of easing the burden of mothers, children and medical personnel by reducing the number of needles given at a single session, even though these compound vaccines are more costly. Jordan is one of the first States in the region to adopt this approach;
- Adoption of a policy of administering the BCG anti-tuberculosis vaccine to children under two months of age, whereas formerly it was administered to children in grade 1.

216. The national immunization programme is aimed basically at a continued high level of immunization (over 95 per cent), making the country measles-free, keeping it free of polio, eradicating infantile tetanus and controlling diphtheria. The main strategies being applied by the Ministry of Health to these ends are the provision of safe, effective vaccines for children free of charge, establishment of adequate cold-storage systems to ensure that vaccines remain safe and effective, and continued monitoring of the diseases which the vaccines are intended to control through ongoing surveillance and evaluation.

(e) Adolescent health

217. The Committee recommended a comprehensive study on adolescent health issues. In this connection, it is noteworthy that there have been a number of reports, studies and surveys on those issues. These are outlined in the paragraphs below:

- The first Jordanian Human Development Report, issued in 2003, documents progress achieved by the Kingdom since the final decade of the past century in the matter of life expectancy and the provision of health and education services and water to people of all social groups;
- In 1998 the UNICEF office in Jordan conducted a survey of 300 young people to investigate their knowledge, attitudes and practices in the matter of basic life skills. The survey looked at discrimination on the basis of sex and physical and verbal abuse. The investigators found that young men were more at risk of physical abuse than young women, and that physical abuse of young women occurred primarily in the home, whereas in the case of young men it occurred mainly at school;
- A survey entitled "Jordanian youth: knowledge, attitudes and practices on reproductive health and life planning" was conducted in 2000 by the National Population Commission in cooperation with Johns Hopkins University's Population

Information Program and the Department of Statistics. The survey showed that the young men and young women between 15 and 19 years of age who were interviewed for purposes of the survey were equally well educated, and that both groups were characterized by a large measure of ignorance about reproductive health and family planning. It is also noteworthy that in the 1995-2000 period, 9 per cent of Jordanian women under 19 years of age were married;

- A national survey of Jordanian youth entitled “Jordanian Youth: Their Lives and Views” was conducted between July and October 2001 by the Department of Statistics in cooperation with UNICEF and with support from the United Nations Foundation (UNF). The objective of this survey was to create, for the first time, a comprehensive national data base on the situation of Jordanian youth between the ages of 10 and 24. The resulting data are considered representative of young people in terms of sex, age group (10-14, 15-19, 20-24), social status and geographic distribution (the northern, central and southern regions of the country, besides the governorates of Amman, Zarqa and Irbid. In accordance with the recommendation of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the findings of the national youth survey and other studies will be used to develop programmes and policies aimed at improving the health of young people and adolescents in Jordan;
- The report on the national youth survey contains eight chapters: “The situation of youth education in Jordan”, “Youth and employment”, “The health of young people in Jordan”, “Young Jordanians’ leisure time”, “Access to information and mobility”, “Young Jordanians’ participation and social relationships”, “Young Jordanians’ self-perception and general attitudes”, “Human rights and legal awareness among Jordanian youth”, and “Parents’ views on major life issues of young Jordanians and their correlations with youth attitudes”. The findings of the survey and how they shed light on the nature and context of the health problems of young people and adolescents will be discussed in the paragraphs below:
 - General view of health: a majority of Jordanian young people consider themselves to be in good health;
 - Most frequently mentioned health-related complaints: half the young people surveyed stated that they had not suffered from any health problems during the previous six months. Respiratory ailments were found to be the most widespread among them, and one out of every six young people complained of vision problems;
 - Weight problems: one out of two Jordanian young people would like to lose or gain some weight. Young women were more concerned about their weight than young men;
 - Dental hygiene: one out of every seven Jordanian young people never brushed their teeth. Young women were more careful about regular dental hygiene than their male counterparts. Dental hygiene was particularly neglected in Zarqa Governorate. Furthermore, dental hygiene was a function of the socio-economic status of the families of the young people surveyed;

- Good health habits: nine out of ten Jordanian young people paid attention to their health, mainly by eating good food, engaging in sports, and being careful about personal hygiene;
 - Awareness of and exposure to health hazards: Jordanian young people were aware of the fact that smoking is a health hazard. Despite this, seven out of ten young people knew smokers among their peers, and one out of ten had at least one peer who consumed alcohol;
 - Awareness of reproductive health: Jordanian youth displayed little understanding of reproductive health compared to their knowledge of the physiological changes that occur in boys and girls at puberty. In general, they were more aware of those changes in themselves than they were in those of the opposite sex;
 - Attitudes toward marriage: Generally speaking, young people believed that women should marry at a younger age than men. Young women were more in favour of delaying marriage than young men. Young men stated that intellectual and physical maturity in a woman, as shown by her completion of her education, and her ability to manage the affairs of the household were two preconditions of marriage, while young women considered that intellectual maturity, having a job, and the ability to manage the family's financial affairs were preconditions of marriage for men;
 - Medical services: Nine Jordanian young persons out of 10 consult medical services when they are seriously ill. Hospitals and Government-run health centres are regarded as the major medical service providers, whereas access to private-sector medical services depends on the family's socio-economic resources;
- The results of the national youth survey showed that approximately half the young people constituting the sample did not suffer from any continuing health problems. Respiratory complaints headed the list of disorders that were mentioned, followed by gastro-intestinal upsets, dental problems and headache. The young men listed slightly more complaints than the young women, especially in the matters of respiratory ailments, dental problems, and musculoskeletal disorders, while the young women complained more of headache than their male counterparts. (The report "Jordanian Youth: Their Lives and Views, 2003", published by UNICEF in its Jordan Library series, is appended as an annex to this report.)

(f) Environmental pollution and its damaging effects on children

218. The Committee recommended that measures should be taken to combat the damaging effects of environmental pollution on children. Under paragraph 18 of Jordan's National Covenant, "A clean environment in a state of equilibrium is a human right, and the task of safeguarding Jordan's environment and protecting it from pollution for present and future generations is a national responsibility requiring close cooperation and coordination among specialized Government agencies and social organizations, action to promote citizens' awareness in order to create an informed public opinion on the environment, a high level of public

participation and concern with environmental issues and the dangers of the various types of pollution, and the adoption of policies designed to strike a balance between environmental protection and development, having regard to the importance of avoiding negative impacts that degrade the natural environment.”

219. The Committee expressed concern about access to clean drinking water and adequate sanitary facilities. In response to the Committee’s remarks, the following comments are in order:

- Statistics show that 96 per cent of the people of Jordan have access to safe, clean drinking water. In urban areas, the figure is 98 per cent, while the corresponding figure for rural areas is 85 per cent. Statistics also show that sanitary facilities are available to 99 per cent of the urban population and to 97 per cent of the rural population. However, Jordan’s sources of water are inadequate. The country’s water deficiency is 95 million cubic metres annually, and in view of the rapidly growing population, it is expected to increase to 1 200 million cubic metres annually by 2005;
- A survey of living standards in Jordan conducted in 1997 showed that 20 per cent of households did not have regular supplies of water, that 20 per cent of the country’s population were concerned about pollution in general, and that 55 per cent were dissatisfied with water quality and air pollution.

220. The Committee recommended inspection measures and action to combat the damaging effects of environmental pollution and contamination of water supplies. In response to the Committee’s concerns, the following remarks are in order:

- By law, the Ministry of Water and Irrigation is the agency responsible for the supply and distribution of water that meets Jordanian standards, which are derived from World Health Organization standards and international standards;
- Under the Public Health Act (law No. 21 of 1971), the Ministry of Health is the agency responsible for ensuring the safety of drinking water. However, the task of monitoring water quality is shared among a number of Government agencies, namely the Ministry of Water and Irrigation, the Ministry of Health, and the General Institution for Environmental Protection, which is an arm of the Ministry of Municipal, Rural and Environmental Affairs. The monitoring consists of field and laboratory analyses conducted by the Laboratory and Control Division of the Ministry of Water and Irrigation and by Environmental Protection’s Basic and Public Health Division;
- The monthly reports produced by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Water and Irrigation indicate that over 95 per cent of the samples taken from water sources and the distribution system meet the applicable microbiological standards in terms of coliform bacteria levels;
- In developing water quality policies and standards, Jordan follows international standards or the guidelines developed by the World Health Organization, the United States Environmental Protection Agency and other organizations. At times,

however, those standards may be excessively stringent and unsuited to local conditions, or may entail excessive costs in some cases. Comprehensive quality assessment of the drinking water in the distribution system, for example, would represent an excessive burden for the State in the light of the logistic capacities at its disposal. Accordingly, Jordan will have to seek assistance from international bodies specializing in this area;

- A number of measures have been taken to combat environmental pollution and contamination of water supplies. One such measure was the launch of the National Network for a Healthy Environment for Children initiative in the city of Irbid in July 2003. The Queen Rania Al-Abdullah Centre for Environmental Science and Technology at the Jordanian University of Science and Technology is the core of the network, and the launching ceremony was held there. The objectives of the National Network may be summarized as follows: construction of a data base of environmental studies and projects with a bearing on the preservation of an environment fit for children, identification of the environmental hazards confronting children in Jordan and the region, action to change misguided attitudes, concepts and patterns of behaviour in order to improve the environment in which children live, coordination with institutions and initiatives that are concerned with the environmental situation of children, and action to facilitate communication and cooperation between institutions and individuals concerned with a healthy environment for children through an effective, state-of-the-art computer system. The Network also aspires to become, with the support of the World Health Organization, a recognized centre for cooperation and development in the environmental field. The Network will be open to all institutions and individuals with an interest in a healthy environment for children.

3. Right to an adequate standard of living (article 27)

221. The Committee expressed concern about the large numbers of children living and/or working in the streets. In response to the Committee's observations, the following remarks are in order:

- In Jordan, there are no children who live in the streets in the sense in which the phenomenon of street children is commonly understood. Children on the streets in Jordan cannot be considered homeless, as is the case with street children in other parts of the world: they are traffic-light vendors or beggars as a result of having dropped out of school, or because of poverty, family breakup or internal migration; they have families and a place to go home to. The Ministry of Social Development's definition of the concept of vulnerable street children is as follows: first, they may be abandoned children who have spent a minimum of four hours in the streets before being found by a passer-by and turned over to a children's home (the number of such children was 33 in 2003 and 22 in 2004); second, they may be child beggars (of whom there were 650 in 2004); or, third, they may be working children, and the numbers of these have been variously estimated in different studies;

- The National Council on Family Affairs, in cooperation with other relevant agencies, has embarked on the task of protecting children in difficult circumstances by preparing a study on the situation of most-disadvantaged children, a category that includes child workers, abused children, children with special needs, refugee children and orphans. The study analyses the current situation of these most-disadvantaged children and reviews programmes and policies aimed at improving their living conditions. The report concludes with general strategic recommendations applicable to all most-disadvantaged children and specific recommendations relating to each group;
- The Ministry of Social Development implements institutional care programmes aimed at the rehabilitation and social reintegration of young people with a view to providing them with the knowledge and skills required to enable them to refurbish their personalities, preparing them to make their way in life, and reintegrating them into society. Those programmes include a literacy programme, a spiritual and religious education programme, a social education programme, a health education programme, and an intellectual development programme. Under the amended Juveniles Act (law No. 52 of 2002), the definition of child beggars has been changed: they are no longer referred to as vagrants, but as children in need of protection and care. The relevant Government agencies have joined forces with a number of NGOs and international organizations concerned with children's issues in an effort to develop mechanisms for eliminating the phenomenon of street children. The issue of vulnerable street children is at the top of the Government of Jordan's agenda;
- Estimates of the numbers of children working or begging in the streets are based on the numbers apprehended by Ministry of Social Development officers who are responsible for combating begging and vagrancy. The child beggars themselves are repeat offenders in the majority of cases. Their numbers are estimated at between 200 and 250 yearly, in addition to children who are arrested for the first time in the summer (during the school vacation) and whose presence in the streets is temporary in nature;
- Most children who are apprehended are returned to their families after an assessment of their situation has been carried out, and assistance is provided to those who are found to be seriously in need of it. Their families are required to give assurances that the children will not go back to begging or hawking;
- A total of 4539 number of children were apprehended by begging control committees between 1998 and the end of 2004, making an average of 650 children per year. The establishment of these begging control committees is noteworthy here: their functions include investigating the socio-economic and cultural situations of children found begging and their families, and attempting to improve those conditions with a view to returning the children to their families. The committees also follow up cases and provide the children's families with guidance and counselling;
- The table below summarizes numbers of child beggars apprehended in each of Jordan's governorates in nation-wide begging control campaigns in 2004.

**Numbers of children apprehended in begging control campaigns
throughout Jordan, January 2004 to 30 September 2004**

| Region | Total | Adults | | Total | Juveniles | | Total | Sex | | Total | No. of campaigns |
|----------|-------|--------|-----|-------|-----------|----|-------|-------|----|-------|------------------|
| | | M | F | | M | F | | M | F | | |
| Amman | 815 | 225 | 205 | 430 | 340 | 45 | 385 | 785 | 30 | 815 | 115 |
| Irbid | 196 | 50 | 56 | 106 | 85 | 5 | 90 | 196 | - | 196 | 150 |
| Zarqa | 89 | 29 | 25 | 54 | 30 | 5 | 35 | 89 | - | 89 | 50 |
| Kerak | 74 | 9 | 40 | 49 | 6 | 19 | 25 | 74 | - | 74 | 40 |
| Aqaba | 71 | 10 | 45 | 55 | 7 | 9 | 16 | 65 | 6 | 71 | 45 |
| Salt | 9 | - | 6 | 6 | - | 3 | 2 | 9 | - | 9 | 8 |
| Mafraq | 9 | - | 2 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 7 | 9 | - | 9 | 5 |
| Deir Ala | 7 | - | - | - | 7 | - | 7 | 7 | - | 7 | 4 |
| Total | 1 270 | 323 | 379 | 702 | 477 | 91 | 568 | 1 234 | 36 | 1 270 | 1 017 |

Source: Ministry of Social Development, September 2004.

222. A study conducted by the Ministry of Social Development on a cross-sectional sample of 182 beggars showed that most of the beggars were healthy adult males who lived in densely populated governorates. They were capable of working, but did not look for work.

223. In response to the Committee's recommendation that vulnerable street children (i.e. beggars and street workers) should be provided with identity documents, it should be noted that, as stated above, there are no street children in Jordan in the usual sense of the term. There are children who beg in the streets, but they belong to families, and they all have identity papers.

224. In August 2003, the Ministry of Social Development sought to promote public awareness of the phenomenon of begging as a violation of children's rights by organizing a seminar on begging under the title "Begging is the road to delinquency". The aim of the seminar was to help people realize the damaging personal and social impact of begging upon children. In July 2004, the Ministry launched an information campaign on the theme "A secure society, a working society". This theme was given wide publicity through the various media.

225. The Committee recommended that vulnerable street children should be provided with services for reconciliation with their families. In response to the Committee's observation, the following remarks may be in order:

- Draft Family Shelter Regulations were promulgated as law No. 48 of 2004. These regulations were prepared jointly by the Ministry of Social Development and a number of Government agencies and NGOs. The Regulations have been officially adopted and were published in No. 4651 of the Official Gazette on 1 April 2004. A building has been leased and is currently being renovated for use as a shelter. A committee consisting of representatives from a number of governmental and non-governmental organizations has been established for the purpose of drafting operating instructions for the shelter and the training of the staff who will work there. (A copy of the Family Shelter Regulations is appended to this report.);

- Social, educational, recreational and basic services are made available to vulnerable street children through temporary accommodation in homes that provide them with care and protection pending an investigation of their family situation and action to solve their problems in preparation for their return to their family environment. They are not placed in juvenile correctional and rehabilitation institutions, as those are for children who have come into conflict with the law;
- Street children spend this waiting period in the Child Beggars Reception Centre, which opened in Amman in 2003. It takes children between the ages of 7 and 18, both boys and girls. When a child's parents have been identified, or when it has been determined from the investigation that he/she is a student, he/she is released in the custody of his parents, and action is initiated with a view to his/her return to school. The juvenile court and the offices of the Ministry of Social Development are located in the same building, and this facilitates the task of dealing with children in conflict with the law, since arrest and trial procedures and the process of returning them to their families can all take place under the same roof;
- By law, care and protection institutions are required to provide children with basic services, including food, clothing, shelter and health care while they are being held after having been apprehended in the streets. They also receive educational and recreational services and personal and social counselling. Under article 36.4 of the Juveniles Act (law No. 24 of 1968 and amendments thereto), juvenile court judges are required to visit these institutions periodically to monitor their performance. The average cost of maintaining a child in one of the Ministry of Social Development's institutions is approximately 216 dinars per month.

226. The Committee recommended repeal of the legal provisions criminalizing begging. In response to this recommendation, the following remarks may be in order:

- It is essential to distinguish between the legal provisions applicable to the misdemeanour of begging when the offender is an adult and those that are applicable to child beggars. Begging by an adult is an offence under article 389 of the Penal Code (law No. 16 of 1960 and amendments thereto), which provides that every vagrant or person found begging in a public place in an effort to collect alms or charitable donations by means of false pretences or for an unlawful purpose shall be liable to a term of imprisonment. However, the article states clearly that it applies only to adults, and not to children;
- The issue of child beggars is addressed in article 31 of the Juveniles Act (law No. 24 of 1968 as amended by interim law No. 52 of 2002), which states, "Every person who falls into one of the categories listed below shall be deemed to be in need of protection and care:
 - "Every person who has no stable employment or habitually spends the night in the streets" (article 31.3);
 - "Every person who engages in begging, even though he conceals the fact by any means" (article 31.7);

- Articles 31, 32, 33 and 34 of the Juveniles Act refer to cases of children who are deemed to be in need of protection and care and the social and legal measures required in order to deal with them. If a juvenile court judge decided that a child is in need of care and protection, the child will be placed in a shelter for children of his age group. This is a protection measure, not a form of punishment. This type of action is taken only where the child's family is unfit to look after and care for him/her;
- Under article 31, a juvenile is not “the accused”, but “a person in need of care and protection”, and the measures to which he is subjected are caring and protective measures, not punitive measures. Accordingly, children found begging in the streets are held for purposes of protection, and the persons who deal with them are civilian Government employees, supervisory personnel who are authorized to take appropriate measures to protect these children. Pending their appearance before a juvenile court judge, they are placed in centres administered by the Ministry of Social Development where the atmosphere is social and reminiscent of a family.

227. A field study conducted by the Ministry of Social Development in 2004 indicates that a majority of children who beg in the streets come from normal families. They are in the streets to hawk small items at traffic lights, such as chewing gum or small toys. These findings are consistent with the average situation of children placed in the Child Beggars Reception Centre, of whom there are no more than ten.

228. The Committee expressed concern about detention and court proceedings in respect of children who work or beg in the streets, and recommended legal aid for vulnerable street children (in need of protection) and children in conflict with the law. It is noteworthy in this connection that under the Juveniles Act currently in force, juvenile offenders and children in need of care and protection may not be detained in correctional and rehabilitation centres, but must be placed in institutions designed to care for young persons pending their reintegration into the community. This is considered a measure aimed at the protection of children placed in homes where they are properly looked after, not as detention. Where it is clear that a child's family is unfit to meet his/her social, educational and psychological needs, he/she is placed in one of the institutions administered by the Ministry of Social Development.

- **Children in conflict with the law**

229. Ministry of Social Development records indicate that 56 per cent of all children who come into conflict with the law and are arrested are enrolled at schools, while 44 per cent of them are not. It is noteworthy that in the case of 49 per cent of these juveniles in the country's judicial districts, it is ignorance of the legal consequences of their actions that has led them into delinquency; other factors are the influence of their peers (26 per cent), upbringing (13 per cent) and poverty (6 per cent).

230. Ministry of Social Development sources indicate that a majority of the misdemeanours committed by children in conflict with the law are thefts, assault and brawling. Ninety-six per cent of all juveniles arrested are boys, with girls accounting for a mere 4 per cent.

The percentage distribution of children in conflict with the law shows large disparities among the country's various governorates. The explanation of this is that most of these children live in the governorates of Amman, Irbid and Zarqa, which together account for 72 per cent of Jordan's total population.

231. NGOs and individuals working in the field of child welfare have joined forces with the Government to prepare the necessary legal amendments to ensure that emphasis will be placed on reform, rehabilitation and reintegration into the community by such means as the use of alternatives to detention in correctional and rehabilitation centres, a requirement that a social-work specialist from the Ministry of Social Development must be present when a juvenile is being interrogated, the establishment of police and judicial units expressly to deal with cases involving children, and the establishment of a system of dedicated juvenile courts. These organizations are also seeking to have the Juveniles Act amended to raise the age of criminal liability raised to 12 years instead of 7. It is noteworthy in this connection that under article 20(a)(i) of the draft Children's Rights Act of 2004, the age of criminal liability is set at 10 years.

232. The table below presents the causes of children's being in conflict with the law. The data are from the Ministry of Social Development.

Causes of juveniles' being in conflict with the law, 2003

| No. | Offence | Males | Females | Percentage of total |
|-----|--------------------------------|-------|---------|---------------------|
| 1. | Theft | 1 745 | 35 | 29 |
| 2. | Brawling | 2 091 | 53 | 35 |
| 3. | Inappropriate behaviour | 651 | 25 | 11 |
| 4. | General infractions | 158 | 10 | 3 |
| 5. | Traffic infractions | 211 | 2 | 5 |
| 6. | Destruction of property | 270 | 7 | 4 |
| 7. | Vagrancy | 213 | 46 | 0.03 |
| 8. | Causing death | 2 | - | 3 |
| 9. | Sexual assault | 176 | 3 | 1 |
| 10. | Attempted homicide | 46 | - | 0.02 |
| 11. | Homicide | 13 | - | 0.02 |
| 12. | Narcotics | 10 | - | 0.2 |
| 13. | Pocket-picking | 1 | - | 0.02 |
| 14. | Perjury | - | 67 | 0.8 |
| 15. | In need of care and protection | 180 | 248 | 4 |
| 16. | Total | 5 878 | 248 | 100 |
| 17. | Percentage | 96% | 4% | 100 |

Source: Ministry of Social Development.

233. In response to the committee's comments on rehabilitation services and programmes, the following remarks are in order. The Government of Jordan, through the Ministry of Social Development, offers a variety of rehabilitation programmes. The Ministry delivers rehabilitation programmes for juveniles who are in need of care and protections through its basic centres. These are as follows:

- Dar al-Khansa for girls: this centre accommodates girls between 12 and 18 years of age. It is located in the city of Zarqa;
- Anas ibn Malik Child Protection and Care Centre: this centre accommodates boys between 7 and 12 years of age. It is located in the city of Amman;
- The Martyr Wasfi al-Tell Child Protection and Care Centre: this centre accommodates boys between 12 and 18 years of age. It is located in the city of Madaba.

234. A number of experimental rehabilitation and social reintegration initiatives have been implemented. Some of these are described in the following paragraphs:

1. Preparation of the “Nur” training manual: this is a training and guidance manual for trainers and persons who work with children in conflict with the law. It was prepared as part of a project on the care and protection of children in the field of criminal justice. Collaborators in the project included UNICEF, the Royal Commission on Human Rights, the Ministry of Social Development, the Ministry of Justice, the Public Security Directorate, Mizan (the Law for Human Rights Group), the Victims of Violence Association and Penal Reform International.
2. Project on the care and protection of children in the field of criminal justice: the aims of this project are to provide counselling and legal assistance to a number of juveniles being held in institutions on various charges and their families, to provide educational and rehabilitative activities for juveniles being held in institutions and centres, to keep pace with the modernization of Jordanian law in that field, and to train specialists in various relevant fields such as law, social science, medicine and psychiatry, in accordance with international rules and standards relating to the care and protection of children in the field of criminal justice. The target group includes judges, Ministry of Social Development officials, law enforcement officers, and NGO activists.
3. The “Nur” programme of legal aid and counselling for children accused of breaking the law and their families: this programme is implemented by Mizan (the Law for Human Rights Group) in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme. Its aim is to provide free legal advice to juveniles in conflict with the law, their parents, and those who work with them. The advice is provided through various means of communication: telephone, letters, personal interviews, field visits and e-mail. Assistance is made available in the form of qualified, trained lawyers who represent the child and defend him/her before the courts and competent official agencies. In addition, the child is given social, psychological and educational counselling to ensure that his/her rights are respected and that he/she returns to school, and also that he/she is reintegrated into the community. The target group of prospective beneficiaries of services under the “Nur” programme comprises juveniles under 18 years of age, both boys and girls, children receiving education and care in institutions and centres, and adults who work with them, including members of their families.

4. Al-Khansa Centre for girls: the Ministry of Social Development supervises this programme, which is viewed as a pioneering experiment in the field of efforts to bring about the rehabilitation and social reintegration of girls in need of care and protection as a result of family breakup or abuse. Residents are between 12 and 18 years of age, and they may stay at the Centre for anywhere from one year to five years. Under an agreement with the Education Directorate in the region, residents who have shown interest in an opportunity of pursuing their education may enroll for the 2003-2004 school year. The school reports of these girls indicate that the experiment has been a success: not only has their academic performance improved, their behaviour has also improved. This has encouraged the Centre's administration to consider the possibility of allowing the remaining girls to enroll in the regular school system as well.

G. Right to education, leisure and cultural activities (articles 28, 29 and 31)

1. Right of the child to education (article 28)

235. In response to the Committee's concluding observations on education, leisure and cultural activities, the following remarks are in order:

- The Government of Jordan has taken action to guarantee every child's right to education by establishing two ministries for that purpose: the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education. The Ministry of Education has jurisdiction over all stages of education from kindergarten to the secondary level, both academic and vocational, while the Ministry of Higher Education oversees Jordan's community colleges and universities;
- The Education Act (law No. 3 of 1994) regulates matters relating to education in eight chapters, as described in detail in Jordan's previous report to the Committee. Chapter 3 of the Act deals with the successive stages in the education system and their objectives. Under article 7, there are three levels of educational institutions: kindergartens, primary schools and secondary schools.

2. Early childhood care

236. The Committee recommended promotion of the importance of early childhood care. In response to this recommendation, the following remarks are in order:

- There are many Jordanian agencies that are concerned with the stage of early childhood, depending on the type of services involved, including services relating to education, health care, information, social welfare, the environment, care for special groups, and others.
- The Ministry of Education is responsible for educational affairs at the kindergarten level (4-6 age group) and the lower primary stage (6-9 age group). The Ministry of Social Development is responsible for infant day care (0-4 age group) and services to groups with social problems such as disabilities, family breakup, delinquency and loss of parents.

- Infant day care establishments are viewed as institutions providing temporary care for children ranging in age from one day to under four years. They are cared for and provided with recreational services until they return to their families. Infant day care establishments are also deemed to be a kind of temporary substitute family in that they socialize the children entrusted to them. The number of infant day care establishments in Jordan has increased as progressively larger numbers of women have taken gainful employment in the course of the past two decades. Day care thus provides a service both to the children and to working mothers. As of the end of 2004, a total of 795 infant day care establishments were registered with the Ministry of Social Development. Moreover, in October of that year, the Ministry produced draft regulations governing the licensing and establishment of infant day care establishments. It is expected that the regulations will be adopted in 2005.

Distribution of infant day care facilities by governorate, 2004

| No. | Governorate | Private | Institutional | Associations | Total |
|-----|----------------|---------|---------------|--------------|-------|
| 1. | Capital | 183 | 173 | 8 | 364 |
| 2. | Balqa | 18 | 20 | 6 | 44 |
| 3. | Zarqa | 13 | 46 | 1 | 60 |
| 4. | Madaba | 15 | 7 | 1 | 23 |
| 5. | Irbid | 48 | 84 | 4 | 136 |
| 6. | Mafraq | 6 | 24 | 5 | 35 |
| 7. | Jerash | 6 | 4 | 3 | 13 |
| 8. | Ajlun | 2 | 9 | 5 | 16 |
| 9. | Kerak | 13 | 8 | 9 | 30 |
| 10. | Maan | 2 | 19 | 5 | 26 |
| 11. | Aqaba | 4 | 23 | 2 | 29 |
| 12. | Tafila | - | 14 | 3 | 17 |
| 13. | Al-Muwaqqar | - | 1 | - | 1 |
| 14. | Southern Shuna | 1 | - | - | 1 |
| 15. | Grand total | 311 | 432 | 52 | 795 |

- As regards the issue of health care, the Ministry of Health, the Royal Medical Services in the armed forces and the private sector are responsible for providing various health care services throughout the early childhood stage. The private sector and community organizations (both voluntary and for-profit) play a substantial role in the establishment and management of institutions relating to early childhood, especially day care centres and kindergartens. In addition, various other relevant ministries and agencies are concerned with aspects of early childhood welfare, such as the Ministry of Culture, the media, local community institutions and the like.
- Under the law, the Ministry of Education licences the establishment of private kindergartens and establishes Government-run kindergartens to the extent that its resources and circumstances permit. In this connection, the Ministry has some impressive achievements to its credit:

- Creation of 15 kindergartens in nine selected school districts in the school year 1999-2000 as an experiment in schools for girls. Three hundred and seventy-five pupils enrolled, and were supervised by 15 women educators;
 - Creation of 58 kindergartens in the 2000-2001 school year, with an enrolment of 1304 pupils distributed among 60 classes, with 60 women educators to supervise them. The Ministry has supplied the educators, distributed instruction manuals and contributed to the cost of obtaining the necessary furniture for school districts that were unable to provide their own;
 - Expansion of the numbers of State-run kindergartens in the school year 2003-2004, with 203 new classes in various governorates. The Ministry has supplied computers, audio-visual equipment, indoor and outdoor games, instructional materials and furniture.
- There is a difficulty confronting the Ministry of Education as it expands the network of kindergartens, establishing new ones and providing support and equipment: it is short of funds. This is an obstacle to the extension of the network to all public schools. However, the Ministry is seeking to overcome that obstacle through the “Education reform for the knowledge economy” (ERfKE) initiative.
 - The kindergarten stage of education is one that has attracted the attention of investors and private business. Kindergartens are being established in every governorate in the country, and some of them are applying the world’s most up-to-date methods and educational approaches in developing the children’s capacities and faculties. In the 2003-2004 school year, there were a total of 1205 private kindergartens in all governorates. It is fair to say, however, that in the field of early childhood education, there is a need to develop the necessary institutional capacities and to promote coordination and integration among the various bodies concerned. This means that those bodies must turn parent awareness and family education projects to account and take advantage of the ERfKE initiative.

237. The Committee emphasized the importance of promoting early childhood care, especially among low-income households. Since the submission of Jordan’s second periodic report, a number of innovative strategies and plans have been developed in the area of early childhood care. Some of the most important of these are outlined below.

(i) Early childhood development strategy for the year 2000

- The Early Childhood Development Team prepared the National Early Childhood Development Strategy in partnership with a broad range of governmental agencies and also with relevant civil society institutions. It was clearly understood that a comprehensive early childhood development strategy should be established as a working reference framework for future efforts in that connection. The Strategy emerged from the characteristics, needs and requirements distinguishing the age-groups comprising the early childhood stage, and from the characteristics of Jordanian society and its Islamic culture.

- The Strategy takes into account the various Jordanian strategies used in the areas of the advancement of women, population, human resource development, the National Plan of Action for Children, and socio-economic development plans. The definition of early childhood used in the Strategy includes the period extending from pregnancy to the end of the eighth year. The Strategy comprises 14 main lines of action covering various issues and aspects of the early childhood stage: planning and management, legislation, prenatal health care, infant care, preschool education, primary education in grades 1-3, family upbringing and the local community, children with special needs, curricula and programmes, health care services, the culture of the child, the role of the media in early childhood development, human resources, and social security.
- The general objectives of the Early Childhood Development Strategy may be summed up as to achieve the comprehensive, balanced development of children in the target age groups, to contribute to the organization and coordination of efforts of the various agencies working in the field of early childhood development, and to endeavour to make families and society more aware of the issues of childhood and the importance of the early childhood stage.

(ii) Plan of Action for Early Childhood Development

- An offshoot of the National Early Childhood Development Strategy has been the preparation of the Plan of Action for Early Childhood Development, 2003-2007. The National Council on Family Affairs, in cooperation with relevant Government agencies and NGOs and with the support of UNICEF, drew up nine objectives for implementation of the Strategy, all of them closely interrelated and mutually complementary, so that none of them can be dealt with in isolation from the others. These objectives are:
 1. Enactment of comprehensive legislation on early childhood development and development of the necessary Government policies for its application;
 2. Decentralized coordination among the relevant sectors and reciprocal support for the planning and implementation of early childhood development programmes and services;
 3. Preparation of early childhood development plans and definition of their objectives, supported by hard factual data;
 4. Preparation of high-quality materials for an educational methodology including the collective care of children and classrooms for early childhood development;
 5. Development of a national organizational framework for all early childhood institutions;

6. Development of a national training system offering formal qualification and certification for persons working in the field of early childhood development;
 7. Development of training and monitoring systems for the upgrading of early childhood development programmes;
 8. Expansion of the scope of support available under early childhood development programmes to include disadvantaged children and children who have not been reached by those programmes;
 9. A higher level of support for early childhood development and more investment in it.
- It will be feasible to attain these objectives only if all sectors are mutually supportive at Government level and in partnership with civil society institutions at all stages of the Plan of Action, in a context of concern for children in their families and in society.

(iii) National early childhood development standards

- The National Council on Family Affairs and UNICEF, with technical support from Columbia University and with the participation of many experts and specialists in the field of early children development, have embarked on the task of preparing early childhood development standards for Jordan. These standards cover a number of aspects: language development, social and emotional development, motor development, development of logic and reasoning skills, development of structured learning methods, provision of health care, and physical growth.
- The aim of the project is to evaluate every child's progress. The standards will give families, teachers and other caregivers a good idea of what to expect as the child develops, enabling them to evaluate children's strengths and interests and identify their weaknesses, and thereby promote their development on a basis of sound information. The project is also aimed at spearheading the process of developing curricula for the kindergarten and primary stages, developing teaching activities for families and children alike, evaluating the effectiveness of programmes, and providing opportunities for the forging of a consensus among all stakeholders in early childhood development. In addition, it seeks to organize the process of collecting national data for strategic planning purposes. The early childhood development standards will be launched in September 2005 after field trials.

(iv) Preparation of a national interactive curriculum for kindergartens

- The Jordanian national interactive curriculum for kindergartens grew out of the fundamental vision of an early childhood development strategy. The key idea behind the development of the curriculum was the need to create a unified approach for

Jordanian kindergarten workers that would function as an educational framework, meeting the needs of teachers, supervisors and administrators, enhancing functional efficiency and upgrading the educational concept generally.

- The National Council on Family Affairs took charge of the coordination side of the preparation of the national interactive curriculum, recruiting a national team of specialists in early childhood education and development and entrusting it with responsibility for preparing a curriculum the content of which would reflect Jordanian culture and would correct the perceptible existing shortfall in education at that sensitive stage of childhood. The team began its work late in 2002, and by the latter part of the 2003-2004 school year, the task had been completed and the new curriculum had been made available to State-run kindergartens. (Copies of the Early Childhood Development Strategy, the Jordanian Plan of Action for Early Childhood Development, 2003-2007, the National Interactive Curriculum for Kindergartens, 2003-2004 and the Strategy prepared by the Ministry of Social Development are appended to this report.)

(v) Training for teachers working in Government-run kindergartens

- In view of the small numbers of qualified women teachers in the field of early childhood education, the Ministry of Education, in cooperation with the National Council on Family Affairs, held a series of training courses for kindergarten teachers based on a University of Wisconsin programme and the National Interactive Curriculum for Kindergartens. In 2003, 100 male and female teachers and supervisors working in Government-run kindergartens took these courses, and the remainder of the country's kindergarten-level teaching and supervisory personnel followed suit the next year. The Ministry of Education intends to provide training for teachers employed in kindergartens run by NGOs in the context of the Education Reform for the Knowledge Economy (ERfKE) project.

(vi) Training for teachers working in Government-run kindergartens

- The National Council on Family Affairs has joined forces with the Ministry of Education to develop draft directives for the establishment and licensing of kindergartens. The draft directives will be officially submitted to the Ministry for approval in January 2005.

3. Raising enrolment rates

238. The Committee urged Jordan to improve school enrolment rates. In response to this recommendation, the following remarks are in order:

- Under article 10, paragraph (a) of the Education Act, “basic education is compulsory and free in public schools”. This means that children enjoy the right to free education up to the age of 16 years.

- The report entitled “Jordan in figures, 2003”, issued by the Department of Statistics, indicates that in that year, a total of 1 190 595 pupils were enrolled at the basic education level, with the number of girls being 96.1 per cent of the number of boys. There were 49 732 basic-level teachers in all. The overall basic-level school enrolment rate (number of pupils enrolled over total population in the 6-15 age group x 100) was 88.4 per cent. The net enrolment rate for the basic education level was approximately 97 per cent (97.3 per cent for boys and 97 per cent for girls). (A copy of “Jordan in figures, 2003” is appended to this report.)
- Article 3, paragraph (a) of the Act, which provides that education is free of charge, is applicable only to public schools. However, this does not mean that there are no expenses at all: pupils are subject to what are known as “school contributions”, an expression denoting a small sum of money that every pupil is required to pay once only. Pupils are also required to defray the cost of their school uniforms, supplies and schoolbags.
- Under the draft Children’s Rights Act, compulsory school attendance has implications for pupils’ families as well as for pupils themselves: article 13(b) provides that every family that encourages its children to drop out of school shall be liable to penalties. Some NGOs are monitoring the enforcement of the Act, and administrative officials in the various regions of the country are working in cooperation and coordination with the Ministry of Education to keep track of parents or guardians who do not enrol their children in school. This is one of various measures taken to enforce statutory provisions making education compulsory.
- Under the Juveniles Act (law No. 24 of 1968 and amendments thereto), a child who is being detained in or has been sentenced to a term in an institution for the education, care and rehabilitation of juveniles has a right to education outside the institution. Children who are enrolled in schools may leave the institution to attend their academic or vocational training courses, subject to the condition that they must return there when the courses are over for the day.

4. School retention/drop-out prevention programmes

239. The Committee recommended the establishment of retention programmes and vocational training for school drop-outs. Ministry of Education records indicate that school drop-out rates in Jordan are comparatively low at the lower primary level, but rise gradually beyond the age of 11. The incidence of the drop-out phenomenon is higher at the secondary level. Sociologists believe that that phenomenon is linked to the fact that at that age, children increasingly become involved in family work. The table below shows drop-out rates for boys and girls in Jordan from grades 1 to 10 in the 2001-2002 school year.

Drop-out rates in Jordan, 2001-2002

| Basic education level | Girls (%) | Boys (%) | Total |
|-----------------------|-----------|----------|-------|
| | | 0.33 | 0.46 |
| First year | 0.11 | 0.12 | 0.12 |
| Second year | 0.6 | 0.12 | 0.09 |
| Third year | 0.06 | 0.09 | 0.07 |
| Fourth year | 0.14 | 0.21 | 0.18 |
| Fifth year | 0.17 | 0.31 | 0.24 |
| Sixth year | 0.26 | 0.45 | 0.36 |
| Seventh year | 0.43 | 0.67 | 0.57 |
| Eighth year | 0.59 | 0.87 | 0.73 |
| Ninth year | 0.80 | 1.15 | 0.98 |
| Tenth year | 0.92 | 0.89 | 0.90 |
| Eleventh year | 0.46 | 0.49 | 0.47 |
| Final year | 0.53 | 0.72 | 0.63 |
| Overall total | 0.35 | 0.48 | 0.41 |

Source: Ministry of Education, 2001-2002.

Drop-out rates, 2003-2004

| | | | |
|--------------|------|------------------------|------|
| Amman I | 0.49 | Ramtha | 1.00 |
| Amman II | 0.26 | Jerash | 0.27 |
| Amman III | 0.43 | Ajlun | 0.52 |
| Amman IV | 0.96 | Mafraq | 0.09 |
| Madaba | 0.15 | Northern desert region | 0.27 |
| Dhiban | 0.54 | Northern desert region | 0.07 |
| Zarqa | 0.14 | Kerak | 0.37 |
| Rusayfa | 0.94 | Southern Mizar | 0.25 |
| Salt | 0.12 | Qasr | 0.67 |
| Deir Ala | 1.5 | Southern Aghwar | 2.05 |
| Ayn al-Basha | 0.30 | Tafila | 0.28 |
| Irbid I | 0.22 | Maan | 0.75 |
| Irbid II | 1.8 | Petra | 0.44 |
| Kura | 0.17 | Shubak | 0.02 |
| Bani Kinana | 0.21 | Northern Aghwar | 1.00 |

Causes of the drop-out phenomenon

240. The Committee expressed concern at high drop-out rates due to such causes as lack of interest in school and poverty. In response to this observation, the following remarks are in order:

- Figures show that drop-out rates are in fact low. The Committee's concern is therefore unwarranted;
- A statistical summary on students in the basic education stage who dropped out of public schools in the 2002-2003 school year indicates that the combined drop-out rate (for both male and female students) at that level was 0.39 per cent, while the figure for male students alone was 0.46 per cent;
- As regards drop-out prevention efforts, the findings of a field survey of working juveniles undertaken by the Ministry of Labour in 2002 are noteworthy. The aim of the survey was to identify the causes of the school drop-out phenomenon, in the expectation that a knowledge of those causes would be a highly useful guide to decision-makers seeking to upgrade educational services and design drop-out prevention programmes. As will be seen from the table below, the two leading causes impelling students to leave school were found to be a desire to learn a trade and a concern to help their families financially, followed by poor academic performance.

Distribution of working juveniles according to their reasons for dropping out of school

| Reason given for dropping out of school | Number | % of total |
|--|--------|------------|
| Desire to provide family with financial assistance | 1 322 | 52.1 |
| Desire to learn a trade | 1 338 | 52.7 |
| Abuse by teachers or administrators | 70 | 2.8 |
| Low level of academic achievement | 911 | 35.9 |
| Family pressure | 38 | 1.5 |
| Lack of parental supervision | 8 | 0.3 |

Source: Field survey of working juveniles, Ministry of Labour, 2000.

Note: The total number is not the same as the total number of working juveniles because of the nature of the question, to which more than one answer could be indicated. The percentage figures are derived from the numbers of children who answered the question about their reasons for dropping out of school.

- Another survey of school drop-outs indicates that a majority of them are in the 15-16 age group, and that more of them are boys than girls.

241. Concerning juveniles' reasons for entering the job market and the link between those reasons and the school drop-out phenomenon, the following remarks are in order:

- The results of the above-mentioned field survey of working juveniles indicate that approximately half of all working children leave school in order to help their families attain a higher standard of living, as will be seen from the table below. The second most frequently given reason for taking a job was the individual's desire to learn a trade, while the third was that the individual in question had dropped out of school.

Distribution of reasons given by juveniles for entering the job market

| Reasons for taking a job | Frequency | % of total |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|------------|
| Dropped out of school | 215 | 7.7 |
| Wanted to help family financially | 1 387 | 49.6 |
| Wanted to learn a trade | 1 183 | 42.3 |
| Wanted to earn pocket money | 3 | 0.1 |
| Wanted to be self-supporting | 3 | 0.1 |
| Other reasons | 3 | 0.2 |
| Total | 2 794 | 100 |

Source: Field survey of working juveniles, Ministry of Labour, 2000.

Note: The "frequency" total for juveniles' reasons for taking a job is not the same as the total number of juveniles concerned, because respondents were allowed to indicate more than one reason.

242. The Ministry of Education has devoted a good deal of attention to the effort to prevent students at the basic education level from dropping out of school. Under article 10 of the Education Act (law No. 3 of 1994), basic education is compulsory and free at public schools, and a student may not leave school before he or she is 16 years of age, except where the student's state of health makes it necessary to do so, in which case the student is required to obtain a report from the competent committee. The Ministry has taken a variety of measures aimed at eliminating the drop-out phenomenon. Some of the most important of these are outlined below:

- Development of reinforcement programmes for students who are not doing well in their studies, and making more resource rooms available for students at the basic education level who are experiencing learning difficulties;
- Provision of summer study programmes in preparation for reinforcement programmes for students who have failed their year and have courses to make up, and enrichment courses for high achievers during the summer vacation;
- Professional development programmes for teachers aimed at providing them with training in modern teaching methods that are designed to accommodate individual differences between students, upgrading their competence generally, and helping

them keep pace with current developments in the field of computers and other innovations, with a view to enabling them to make the educational process rewarding for their students;

- Activation of the role of the educational guidance counsellor in schools to deal with problems that students may encounter and help them solve them in cooperation with the school administration, their teachers and their families if necessary;
- Provision of lunches for pupils in grades 1-4 in 13 school districts under the school meals programme, which may be extended to other regions in due course, expansion of the infrastructure of the programme by providing all schools that are currently participating or may participate in the future with refrigerators, and appointment of a nutritionist for all participating districts;
- Provision of a safe, attractive school environment for pupils through curriculum and evaluation point development and professional development for teachers to enable them to deal effectively with evolving curricula and their students;
- Action to provide students with life skills through youth projects implemented jointly with UNICEF which are aimed at helping students solve their own problems and learn to interact with the society around them;
- Action to bring students back to school and dissuade them from leaving to take jobs at an early age through a student employment programme;
- An educational programme targeting drop-outs, one that is designed to develop their life skills;
- A programme, delivered in cooperation with UNESCO's office in Amman, designed to ensure that students who enroll at community learning centres will acquire practical training which will enable them to earn a living and equip them with basic skills (reading, writing and arithmetic).

243. There are a number of programmes aimed at keeping students in school and dissuading them from dropping out due to such factors as poverty and lack of interest. Those programmes include the national assistance programme, the school meals project, the vitamin project, the school discipline guidelines, Red Crescent assistance, and school canteens.

(i) The school meals programme for children in disadvantaged regions

244. Low nutritional levels were only to be expected in the case of pupils from regions where unemployment is widespread (averaging 12.5 per cent in 2004) and poverty endemic (averaging 14.2 per cent in the same year). Studies indicated that iron and iodine deficiency and malnutrition were prevalent among school children, with a resultant impact on their academic performance, interest in learning and intellectual alertness, leading them to drop out of school in some instances, and also with adverse impacts on their mental faculties and health, such as weakening of the immune system, widespread nutritional disorders and general low health levels. The Jordanian Government, convinced as it was that children are the foundation-stone of any society, was in search of a way to upgrade their condition and enable them to achieve

comprehensive development and growth. To that end, in 1998 it launched a school meals programme for school children in disadvantaged region. This is only one of an array of programmes aimed at combating poverty and unemployment and helping the most disadvantaged groups achieve socio-economic equality.

245. The school meals project, which is supported by the Ministry of Planning as part of a social security package delivered in cooperation with the Ministry of Education (the executing authority), targets boys and girls in the first four grades and pupils attending public kindergartens in a number of regions, including Aqaba, Maan, Tafila, Qasr, Deir Ala, Southern Shuna, Southern Aghwar, the northeastern desert region, and Ruwayshid. The programme is delivered through school districts in each of the country's governorates. The programme provides daily lunches for pupils in those four grades (6-10 age group) in public schools in those regions, ranked in order of priority on the basis of need. It also provides meals for kindergarten pupils in some schools.

246. At every stage, the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation and the Ministry of Education sign an agreement on the school meals project for children attending public schools in disadvantaged regions. The agreement covers one school year, and its purpose is to ensure that the project is duly implemented and that its objectives are met. The first such agreement was signed on 24 January 1999. As of the time of preparation of this report, the programme had been renewed for three school years in succession, as will be seen from the tables below.

| First school year (1999-2000) Budget allocation: 773 000 dinars | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| Target group | Number of pupils covered | Region/governorate covered by the project | Content of meal |
| Basic education level (6-10 age group) | 10 000 pupils distributed throughout the various governorates | Qasr, Tafila, Maan, Aqaba, Deir Ala, northern desert region, Southern Shuna | - 200 ml flavoured pasteurized milk - 70 g high-protein biscuits - fresh fruit - vitamin A capsule |

| Second school year (2000-2001) Budget allocation: 773 000 dinars | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
| Target group | Number of pupils covered | Region/governorate covered by the project | Content of meal |
| Basic education level (6-10 age group) | 16 500 pupils distributed throughout the various governorates | Qasr, Tafila, Maan, Aqaba, Deir Ala, northern desert region, Southern Shuna, Ruwayshid | - 200 ml container of flavoured pasteurized milk - packet containing 70 g of flavoured high-protein biscuits fortified with vitamins A and D and iron - fresh fruit |

| Third school year (2002-2003) Budget allocation: 1 000 000 dinars | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| Target group | Number of pupils covered | Region/governorate covered by the project | Content of meal |
| Basic education level (6-9 age group) | 24 300 pupils distributed throughout the various governorates | Qasr, Tafila, Maan, Aqaba, Deir Ala, northern desert region, Southern Shuna | - 200 ml container of flavoured pasteurized milk - packet containing 70 g of flavoured high-protein biscuits fortified with vitamins A and D and iron - fresh fruit (beginning in second half or school year) |

247. Since the beginning of the 2004-2005 school year, the Ministry of Education has been applying a new school meals project for children attending public schools, in addition to the one described above. This new project covers 12 000 children, both boys and girls, in three new school districts, and its budget allocation is 150 000 dinars. It is being implemented in the governorates of Jerash, Ajlun and Northern Aghwar. As a result, the number of children benefiting from the school meals programme now totals 54 000 boys and girls.

248. The programme's administrators are looking ahead to what they hope will be expanded vertical and horizontal coverage and a greater degree of independence, in addition to an adequate functional staff and field infrastructure in the form of refrigerators for all participating schools and a professional nutritionist in every district.

249. To conclude, we may note that the military culture schools located in remote regions provide their pupils with three meals a day.

(ii) The vitamin project

250. Concerned as it was to deal with malnutrition among school children, in 2002 the Government established a committee of Jordanian experts from various relevant disciplines and mandated it to investigate the problem, identify the regions and age groups that were particularly affected, and determine what types of nutritional supplements were required. The committee concluded that it was essential to provide all school children with the necessary vitamins, i.e. vitamin A, to be administered to every child once every six months, and multivitamin capsules, one to be administered to every child daily. The capsules contain vitamin B₂, vitamin B₆, vitamin B₁₂, folic acid, vitamin C and vitamin D.

251. The group targeted by the vitamin project includes all children attending public schools, UNRWA schools and military culture schools, in addition to children enrolled in public kindergartens, as the table below shows.

| Group | Total |
|---|-----------|
| Children attending public schools | 1 062 429 |
| Children attending UNRWA schools | 138 663 |
| Children attending military culture schools | 11 932 |
| Overall total | 1 213 024 |

(iii) The academic acceleration programme

252. Educational philosophy, the recommendations of the Conference on Educational Development and world-wide trends concur in acknowledging the importance of encouraging high achievers and providing an environment that meets the needs of that group in order to produce promising leaders. The Planning Committee took the same view at its fourth session in 1997, held on 9 April of that year, when it adopted a resolution approving an academic acceleration programme for high-achieving students in grades 1 to 8 of the basic education level, pursuant to the terms of article 5, paragraph (f) of the Principles of Educational Policy. The academic acceleration programme was introduced in the second half of the 1997-1998 school year. The concept of academic acceleration is that high achievers should be allowed to climb the educational ladder at a pace commensurate with their intellectual capacities and exceptional ability, with no artificial age-based restrictions, so that they complete the prescribed curriculum in a shorter time than usual and at a younger age than usual.

253. In this connection, we may note that special guidelines for persons working with high achievers were issued in 2001 under the title "Guidelines for pioneering centres for high-achieving students, issue No. 7 of 2001".

(iv) School discipline guidelines

254. The official title of these guidelines is "Directives amending the school discipline guidelines, issue No. 1 of 1988", and they came into force on their date of publication in the Official Gazette. The guidelines are divided into five groups covering various preventive and remedial approaches to the task of altering students' behaviour along acceptable, positive lines at every stage of the education system. The aim of the guidelines is to ensure that students stay in school and do not drop out.

(v) Assistance made available from school canteen funds and the Jordanian Red Crescent

255. Other agencies, such as the Jordanian Red Crescent, also contribute to the effort to keep children in school and dissuade them from dropping out. They do this by providing assistance of various kinds: paying primary and general secondary fees for needy students, organizing winter assistance campaigns, providing clothing for pupils' use in physical education classes, providing needy students with workbooks and supplies, providing financial assistance, providing hearing aids, paying for eyeglasses for students who are not eligible to obtain them free of charge, i.e. after the tenth year of the basic education level, purchasing medicines for needy students, providing medical consultations free of charge, contributing to medical treatment in some cases, and establishing permanent Red Crescent centres in schools, which are fully equipped to provide first aid.

5. Improving educational quality

256. The Committee's observations included a reference to the need to focus on improving the quality of education. In response to this remark, we may note that the Ministry of Education has sought to improve educational quality in Jordan by promoting the development of various types of general secondary and vocational secondary education and modernizing curricula by introducing the latest teaching methods in accordance with developments and innovations in various fields, notably computer-managed instruction. There have been a number of noteworthy achievements in the areas of computerization, course development and training, and these are outlined in the following paragraphs.

(a) Computer-managed learning

257. By the year 2000, all secondary schools were fully computer-equipped, with a total of 20 000 computers, while 1800 primary schools were also computerized. A framework document on strategic action for electronic learning was prepared, and this gave rise to a comprehensive plan for all basic components of electronic learning, of which seven were identified. The computerization plan covers all schools, and there is now, on average, one computer for every eight students. Furthermore, all schools are now linked to their districts and to the Ministry by means of a broadband network, and they are also linked through the Ministry's Intranet system.

(b) Course development

258. Computers have been approved as an educational tool for teaching English to children in grades 1-4. The effectiveness of this method was tested on an experimental basis in four schools in the second semester of the 2003-2004 school year, and it is now being applied in all schools in Jordan. Two units of the physics course taught in the first year of the secondary level have also been computerized under a project being executed jointly by the Ministry of Education and JICA, the Japan International Cooperation Agency. The aim of the project is to build capacities within the Ministry in the field of the design and application of computer-managed learning in various subjects. All school textbooks have been entered into the Eduware system, and are accessible via an electronic portal at the Queen Rania Al-Abdullah Centre. In addition, a new field of specialization, "Computerized information processing management", has been introduced at the secondary level.

259. At the present time, the Ministry of Education, in cooperation with the Microsoft Corporation, is preparing to adopt a computer-managed approach for instruction in computer use in grades 1-3. A team from the Ministry has been formed, and a workshop was recently held, in cooperation with the private sector, to train the team members in the method. It is anticipated that this computer-managed learning application for grade 1 will be up and running by the beginning of the 2004-2005 school year.

260. Work is progressing on the introduction of computer-managed learning for science subjects in grades 1-12, in cooperation with the Fastlink Corporation. A committee consisting of a number of specialists has been established to track and develop the electronic science programme, and it is expected that technical and advisory subcommittees will shortly be formed to handle programme preparation, monitoring and delivery operations.

(c) Training

261. Accomplishments in this area have included:

- Training of 19 241 Ministry of Education teachers and administrators under the ICDL (International Computer Driving Licence) programme, which has become a “compulsory requirement” for all Ministry personnel;
- Training of some teachers and technicians through Internet training courses during the class period by means of various programmes such as Intel and Word Links;
- Training of all supervisors and teachers in computer-managed learning;
- Training of some teachers and technicians through training courses on the Internet by means of the SYSCO and Microsoft programme.

6. Vocational training programmes for school drop-outs

262. In response to the Committee’s recommendation concerning training programmes for drop-outs, the following remarks are in order:

- The Vocational Training Corporation (VTC) plays a role in preparing young people who drop out of school to enter the job market, but does not accept anyone who is not at least 16 years old. VTC was founded under an interim Act (law No. 35 of 1976), and currently operates by the authority of law No. 11 of 1985 (the Vocational Training Corporation Act and amendments thereto up to the year 2001) and law No. 27 of 1999 (the Regulation of Trades Act) to regulate work performed in the Jordanian labour market. VTC’s services are at the disposal of industrial firms and citizens’ associations. The Corporation has established a total of 35 vocational training institutes and centres;
- VTC’s mandate may be summed up as being to provide vocational training opportunities for the purpose of preparing a skilled labour force, to upgrade participants’ competence in various fields of specialization, to provide various levels of non-academic training, to diversify vocational training, including apprenticeship, so as to enable both young persons and adults to practise their skills on a systematic, long-term basis, and to provide guidance and support services on starting a small or mid-size business;
- VTC offers a wide range of vocational training programmes, grouped into six categories: training for persons with limited skill levels, training for more proficient persons, vocational training, applied secondary-level education, health and safety supervisor training, and competence upgrading. The last-named of these includes a technical skills upgrading programme, a trainer training programme, a supervisor training programme, a training programme in occupational health and safety, and a driver training programme. All these programmes are subject to the condition that trainees are at least 16 years of age or that they have completed the tenth year of the basic education level or the secondary level;

- The Jordanian Vocational Skills Preparation Project, which is directed and supported by His Majesty Abdullah II, is providing 500 men and women from all Jordan's governorates with vocational training in a number of specialized fields;
- The National Training Project is a cooperative venture involving VTC and the Jordanian armed forces and is being implemented in partnership with both the public and private sectors. Twelve thousand persons have taken vocational training through a variety of programmes offered under the Project, and a total of 13 245 had signed up by 2002. This brings the number of men and women who had received vocational training through VTC since its inception to a total of 198 811 as of the end of 2002.

263. New legislation with a bearing on vocational training that has been enacted since Jordan submitted its last periodic report to the Committee includes:

- Regulation of Trades Act (law No. 27 of 1999);
- Educational and Vocational and Technical Training Council Act (law No. 58 of 2001);
- Amendment to the Vocational Training Corporation Act (law No. 11 of 1985), made by law No. 50 of 2001;
- Structure of the Teaching Profession Act (law No. 61 of 2002), which is designed to encourage teachers to seek advancement and rise within their profession.

7. Curriculum reform

264. The Committee recommended that Jordan should undertake a process of curriculum reform stressing the importance of critical thinking and the development of problem-solving skills. In response to this recommendation, the following remarks are in order:

- The aim of basic and secondary education policy in Jordan is the preparation of citizens who are able to communicate with one another, understand one another and treat one another with tolerance, without resorting to violent methods;
- The objectives of basic and secondary education are stated in articles 9 and 11 of the Ministry of Education Act to “revolve around the student's personal development and talents and the development of his or her mental and physical capacities to the fullest possible extent”;
- Article 11 of the Education Act provides that the aim of secondary education is to produce citizens who are capable of using their minds in dialogue and mutual tolerance in their dealings with one another, without resorting to violent methods, and who are fully conversant with national and international issues. This article thus contributes to the task of preparing children for a responsible life in a free society characterized by mutual understanding, tolerance, equality between the sexes and friendship among all peoples;

- A comprehensive study prepared in 2003 under the supervision of UNICEF's Jordan country office showed that curricula and teaching methods in Jordanian schools aimed at fostering children's respect for their parents and family values and strengthening their regard for other human cultures. Other objectives are to inculcate respect for the children's cultural identity, language and national values. Accordingly, school curricula at all levels include information about these matters and seek to develop children's skills in the area of social relations and the resolution of conflicts by peaceful means. The above-mentioned study also found that the Ministry of Education was striving to eliminate discrimination between boys and girls through its curricula. However, most schools in Jordan follow a policy of separate classes for boys and girls;
- The same UNICEF study indicated that students were receiving information with a hearing on human rights in their various subjects, and that the rights of the child were not compartmentalized and taught as a separate subject;
- As regards action to promote awareness of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Jordan's 1998 report to the Committee included a reference to the incorporation of the rights as a child as a subject in school curricula at the basic education level. Furthermore, the Ministry of Education has prepared an integrated matrix on human-rights concepts, and this is to be incorporated into school curricula shortly;
- The matter of the inculcation of respect for the natural environment is addressed in article 9 of the Education Act, which states that one aim of the basic education level is to prepare students who are aware of their responsibilities toward their country, its environment and its society.

8. Attention to the quality of education

265. The Ministry of Education, in cooperation with Jordanian schools, applies international cooperation programmes that provide training for teachers and afford opportunities for them to familiarize themselves with technical and scientific data. The purpose of these programmes is to enable students at all levels to benefit from effective teaching. By way of example, in the context of one cooperation initiative that is currently under way, the Canadian Teachers' Federation is helping to implement a project on modern teaching methods, with electronic training as a key theme and the school viewed as a unit of development. Other examples of international cooperation include a project on English language teacher training that is being implemented in cooperation with the British Council, and a project on child abuse.

266. As regards a review of school policies and educational curricula, the 2003 UNICEF study that has been referred to earlier in this report indicated that the Ministry of Education had allocated an amount in its budget for the development and modernization of teaching in order to bring it into line with developments and innovations in various fields, including respect for the liberty of individuals and organizations to establish and direct educational institutions and found private schools, kindergartens, and schools for minorities.

267. In the matter of the requirement for private educational institutions to respect the objectives of education as stated in the Convention, we may note here that according to the above-mentioned comprehensive study, actual practice in the field of education, both in public schools and in private schools, is in need of closer monitoring to ensure that it complies with the provisions and principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The study found that despite inspection measures, the Convention was usually not discussed in schools. However, many schools in Jordan have begun to teach pupils about human rights concepts in recent years. Some important activities in this connection are outlined below:

- Organization of workshops for teachers and administrators on the teaching and learning of human rights concepts, in cooperation with community organizations working in the field of human rights;
- Analysis of Arabic language, religious education and social studies courses to highlight human rights concepts and enrich them through special activities, including a study conducted by the National Committee for the Teaching of Human Rights in 1998-1999;
- Use of an approach featuring the incorporation of human rights concepts into teaching and learning;
- Establishment of human rights committees and clubs in schools to organize practical activities supporting and strengthening a culture of human rights, in cooperation with a non-governmental organization. This experimental initiative will be discussed in the final part of the present report;
- A human rights teaching programme is in place in a very important educational sector in Jordan, namely the UNRWA schools, which serve 60 000 pupils.

9. Children with special needs

268. The functions of the Diagnostic Division of the Ministry of Education's Special Education Directorate include:

- Developing and applying appropriate diagnostic tests for outstanding pupils under the academic acceleration programme and for pupils with special needs of various kinds;
- Providing diagnostic services for students with special needs of various kinds;
- Conducting studies and research on special education for various categories of children (gifted children, children with disabilities, children with learning difficulties).

269. The Diagnostic Division is currently implementing a number of projects, which are outlined below:

- Development of diagnostic tests for children in grades 1-4 with learning disabilities in the following subjects: Arabic language, mathematics, science, vocational education, Islamic instruction and national and social education. The project was initiated in the 2002 school year;

- Development of diagnostic tests for children in grades 5 and 6 with learning disabilities in Arabic language, mathematics and science. The project was initiated in the 2000 school year;
- A comprehensive medical and educational survey of pupils with special needs, conducted in cooperation with the High-Level Committee on Projects Relating to Persons with Special Needs/the Office of His Royal Highness, Prince Raad. The survey was initiated in the schools of Wadi Araba, the Southern Mizar district, Tafila Governorate and the Northwestern Desert district in 2003.

270. Some noteworthy accomplishments to date in this area are outlined below:

1. Schools in various parts of Jordan have been equipped with resource rooms for pupils with learning difficulties. These facilities, of which there are 300 in all, are distributed among all Ministry of Education directorates.
2. A ten-year agreement was signed with Princess Tharwat College in 1993-1994 for the introduction of a training programme aimed at providing primary-school teachers in various educational specialities with the skills required to enable them to work effectively with children with special needs. Sixty men and women teachers complete the programme every year, earning an advanced diploma in special needs education.
3. A cooperation agreement has been signed between the Ministry of Education, as represented by its Remedial Instruction Division, and the National Institute for Social Rehabilitation/University of Muta for the provision of training courses in 2003-2004 for Ministry of Education teachers working in the field of special education.
4. The field of education of the blind has been technologically modernized with the purchase of special equipment in the 2003-2004 school year.
5. Surveys of pupils with special needs (hearing impairment, visual impairment, motor disabilities, speech disorders, language disorders and so on) are conducted annually, and the pupils concerned are provided with the equipment they require.
6. Directives regulating the establishment and licensing of special education institutions and centres were issued in 2002 (statutory instrument No. 4 of that year).

10. Right to rest and leisure and right to engage in play (article 31)

271. Article 31 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child is concerned with the child's right to rest and leisure and his or her right to engage in play. The Government of Jordan has devoted a good deal of attention to these rights, and many governmental and non-governmental bodies have noteworthy achievements to their credit in that area. Some of these are outlined below.

(a) Ministry of Culture

272. Part of the mandate of the Ministry of Culture is the development of integrated cultural policies for the care and instruction of children, complete with adequate funding, human resources and state-of-the-art technology to ensure that the policies in question are adequately implemented. The Ministry is also responsible for developing the capacities of governmental and popular institutions and individuals, not only in Jordan but throughout the Arab world, with a view to enabling them to foster the growth and flowering of children's literary, artistic, musical and dramatic abilities. The Ministry seeks to foster a spirit of emulation among persons active in that field and to provide them with opportunities of associating with their Arab peers by organizing and delivering cultural programmes.

273. A total of seven cultural organizations concerned with various aspects of the culture of children were registered with the Ministry of culture during the period 1999-2002. Each of those organizations receives financial support in the form of a yearly grant. The Ministry has also allocated funds for the establishment of a centre specializing in the culture of children in the city of Zarqa (the Princess Salma Centre).

274. Some of the most noteworthy yearly or periodic activities undertaken by the Ministry of Culture during the period 1998-2003 are outlined below:

1. The Jordanian Festival of Arab Children's Songs
2. The Children's Drama Festival
3. Publication of *Wissam* magazine, a monthly cultural publication for children
4. Purchase and publication of and support for children's books
5. Young people's creative expression competition, a local competition for young people between the ages of 16 and 23, held every year
6. The State Appreciation Prize, awarded in the field of children's literature
7. Training courses for children between the ages of 8 and 18 in the field of the fine arts
8. Arab and international events: national artistic creation competitions, creative expression competitions in the field of children's books, Arab and international exhibitions
9. Amman creativeness encounters: meetings of specialists from Arab countries on the culture of children.

(b) Greater Amman Municipality

275. The Greater Amman Municipality was founded on 1 January 1987, pursuant to the Act to Amend the Municipalities Act. A number of municipalities, municipal councils and villages surrounding the city of Amman were merged into what was designated the National Capital

Region. The Greater Amman Municipality began to provide the national capital with many services, such as road maintenance, the construction of bridges and tunnels, road system management, street cleaning, and cultural services such as the erection of libraries, the establishment of public parks and so on. The GAM also adopted draft bylaws on the protection of children.

276. From its inception, the various departments of the GAM have devoted particular attention to children's issues. Some noteworthy actions that have been taken in this connection are outlined below.

(a) *Zaha Cultural Centre for Children*

277. The GAM founded the Zaha Cultural Centre for Children in 1998 for the purpose of nurturing and supporting children's cultural, intellectual and scientific talents. The Centre comprises a well-stocked children's library containing more than 8000 books and 100 weekly and monthly periodicals in Arabic and English. It also has a computer centre with 17 computers linked to a network of educational and recreational programmes that can be accessed through the Internet. In addition, the Centre has a multipurpose hall that is used for talks, exhibitions, dramatic performances, film presentations and training courses. In addition, it has a cafeteria where children can buy food at nominal prices, and a number of outdoor facilities such as tennis courts, a playground, a space with fountains, and a park surrounding the building.

(b) *Children's libraries*

278. The GAM's public libraries are among the oldest and most visible cultural attractions in the city; the first of them was opened to the public in 1960. The GAM's Public Libraries Department plays an important role in propagating a knowledge-based culture and extending public library services to all districts of the National Capital Region. In recognition of the importance of reading skills and intellectual curiosity for child development, it considers that a children's library is an indispensable adjunct to the home and the school in the task of educating children and nurturing their talents. The Department has prepared a master plan to increase the numbers of children's libraries and diversify their contents. The GAM established the first children's library in Jordan, the Central Children's Library in downtown Amman, in 1964. Other children's libraries have since been founded throughout the city; at the present time, the municipality boasts a total of 32 libraries and information technology centres.

(c) *Department of Culture*

279. This department is concerned with developing the GAM's national cultural role. It contributes to children's cultural development through various activities, of which some of the most important are outlined below:

- Publication of the children's monthly magazine *Bara'im*, of which 50 issues have appeared to date;

- Purchase of a number of Jordanian plays for children and putting on free performances of them. Every year, the Department purchases the rights to three to five plays and presents three performances of each of them;
- Publication of books for children and adolescents; nine such books were published in 2003.

(d) *Queen Rania Park*

280. Queen Rania Park, located in the densely populated Quweismeh district in the eastern part of Amman, includes an area expressly reserved for children, with a health centre, a computer centre, a workshop where sewing and knitting are taught, and a recreation centre.

(e) *Children and the City Conference*

281. The Children and the City conference was organized by the Arab Urban Development Institute (AUDI), the World Bank and the GAM in Amman in December 2002. The Conference adopted the Amman Declaration, which called for the establishment of a regional fund for municipal and local projects designed to address issues of relevance to children in Arab cities. In response, AUDI and the Bank have devised the Middle East and North Africa Child Protection Initiative. The Initiative is aimed at upgrading the capacities and effectiveness of municipal and local administrations in improving the well-being of children, especially vulnerable and disadvantaged children in the cities of the region, and at developing effective policies and programmes for addressing the persistent issues confronting these children.

282. In December 2002, the Greater Amman Municipality, in cooperation with AUDI and the World Bank, organized a conference on Children and Youth in Urban Areas. The conference was held in response to the decision by the League of Arab State to declare 2002 the Year of the Child in the Arab world, and also in the context of the World Bank's preparation of a regional strategy on children. The conference focused in particular on disadvantaged children of both sexes, such as poor children, child workers, children living in areas of conflict and disabled children. The Middle East and North Africa region was taken as a case study. The main objective of the conference was to highlight the problems facing children and youth and the importance of addressing those problems through multi-sectoral strategies.

(f) *Jordan Radio and Television Corporation (JRTV)*

283. JRTV plays an important role in child development through its scientifically based educational programmes, features, serials and announcements, which contribute to the socialization of a generation that looks at life and interacts with it in a contemporary spirit. Almost all radio and television programmes have children in them, and this helps build children's capacities and make them viable components of the national fabric.

284. Monitoring of the programmes and serials aimed at children that were broadcast over JRTV between 1999 and 2003, including dedicated reports and variety shows, has shown that they promoted the best interests of the child.

(g) *El-Hassan Youth Award*

285. The El-Hassan Youth Award was launched in 1984 as a pilot project at the Amman Baccalaureate School. The purpose of the Award is to provide Jordanian young people between the ages of 14 and 25 with an opportunity of participating in four self-challenging, non-academic youth educational programmes aimed at achieving a balanced personality. These programmes include a social services programme, a skills programme, a physical recreation programme, and a discovery travel programme. During the period 1999-2002, a total of 6487 participants between the ages of 12 and 18, male and female, have participated in this project, and of these, 2237 have won the Award.

(h) *Haya Cultural Centre*

286. The regular activities offered by the Haya Cultural Centre include the following programmes:

1. From Child To Child, a programme organized in cooperation with UNICEF.
2. A training programme on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, organized in cooperation with UNICEF and UNESCO.
3. The National Environment Campaign, organized in cooperation with the GAM, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Agriculture under the slogan, "For a green and clean Jordan with children's help".
4. The crafts competition, which is a one-of-a-kind competition held annually in all the country's governorates in cooperation with a variety of Government agencies and community organizations.
5. The teaching aids competition, which is held annually in all the country's governorates in cooperation with a variety of Government agencies and community organizations and is aimed at the development of innovative teaching aids.
6. The Festival of Arab Children's Songs: members of the Centre participate in this annual festival through the Centre's ballet group.
7. Awareness programmes: the Centre, in cooperation with international organizations, Government agencies and community associations, offers awareness programmes on water consumption, smoking, narcotics, AIDS and other issues.
8. The popular games competition, held in cooperation with community organizations, Government agencies and UNESCO.
9. School visits: large numbers of primary-level and kindergarten pupils come to visit the Centre's various departments.

10. Summer clubs: large numbers of school children come from all parts of Jordan to visit the Centre during the summer vacation. The Centre's summer clubs offer cultural, scientific and recreational activities for their members.

(i) *Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development (JOHUD)*

287. Ever since its inception in 1977, JOHUD has devoted particular attention to child care and development programmes through its Princess Basma Resource Centre network. That network consists of 50 centres in all parts of Jordan offering a number of programmes, including:

- Early childhood stage (day care centres): the Fund has established 11 day care centres, including one in the Al-Hassan industrial city and another in the Sahab industrial city;
- Pre-school stage (kindergartens): between 1999 and 2002, JOHUD established 50 kindergartens accommodating 9987 children, both boys and girls. The “learning through play” approach is applied in these kindergartens, which offer a variety of indoor and outdoor play activities. Emphasis is placed on family involvement, and family members are enlisted as participants in various activities;
- Children's summer clubs: there are 50 of these clubs for children between the ages of 7 and 14. They offer a variety of cultural, athletic, artistic and social programmes. In addition, particular attention is devoted to awareness of children's rights: many educational workshops for the children who belong to the clubs and school children are held in cooperation with the Ministry of Education for the purpose of raising their awareness of children's rights, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Furthermore, a special training programme on the issue was held for club supervisors. Another event was a national competition on children's rights, entitled “The future in your hands”, which was organized in cooperation with the newspaper *Al-Ra'i* and the Haya Cultural Centre. The clubs also hold annual children's festivals in the various governorates to celebrate Arab Child Week;
- Early Childhood Development project (Better Parenting): this project is conducted in all JOHUD centres in cooperation with UNICEF. It aims to raise the level of parental awareness about all aspects of children's growth and development as well as child care practices from birth to the age of 7. A total of 265 training courses were held between 1999 and 2002, with 5665 participants, both men and women.

(j) *Ministry of Social Development*

288. Many children benefit from the services offered by various departments of the Ministry of Social Development and non-governmental organizations. Recreational activities provided by these bodies include:

1. Yearly holiday camps;
2. Festival for children in institutions;

3. Yearly celebration of Arab Child Week;
4. Sports league for children in institutions;
5. Non-academic holiday programmes for children in institutions;
6. Exchange visits between institutions;
7. Ramadan tents;
8. Sports activities for disabled children;
9. Arab Family Day;
10. Disabled Child Week.

H. Special measures of protection (articles 22, 23, 33, 34, 36, 37, 38, 39 and 40)

1. Unaccompanied, asylum-seeking and refugee children

289. The Jordanian Government has devoted a great deal of attention to the issue of refugee children, providing them with all their basic needs. The Government continues to provide services to all refugee camps through a variety of development plans and projects, such as the social security package, which is a project under which over 26 million Jordanian dinars have been spent in the camps between 1999 and 2004. All camps have been provided with physical and socio-economic infrastructure, and the Government is leasing land from its owners for the use of the camps. The Government is also working in cooperation with local community institutions to implement many projects aimed at upgrading living standards and providing improved services in the camps.

290. In the field of education, many refugee children, both boys and girls, benefit from educational services provided by the Government at the primary and secondary levels, as UNRWA schools provide primary-level education only. Refugee children are also given access to higher education in Jordanian universities; they participate in the general nation-wide entrance competition, and in addition 300 university places have been set aside for students from refugee camps by royal grace and favour.

291. In the field of health care, large numbers of refugees are eligible for governmental health and insurance services. The Government also covers services that UNRWA does not cover, and provides essential medicines and vaccines.

292. The Government, in cooperation with international donor institutions, implements various projects aimed at improving the conditions of life in the camps. These projects have included the establishment of health care centres and other centres providing a variety of services for different population groups, with particular emphasis on children. By way of example, three public parks were opened in three camps between 2002 and 2004. The Government of Jordan has also established kindergartens, public libraries and children's libraries, and has implemented other projects designed for the benefit of children.

293. The Government is working with the refugees in general, and children in particular, in an effort to alleviate the unsatisfactory conditions that have resulted partly from their increasing numbers and growing needs, and partly from cuts in UNRWA's spending and services. UNRWA's annual budget is approximately US\$75 million, whereas the Jordanian Government has expended the equivalent of US\$423 121 161 on the various services that it provides. Accordingly, the Government is working with UNRWA and donor nations in an effort to alleviate the impact of these cuts on the refugee community, and is requesting immediate assistance for that purpose.

294. The Jordanian Government has signed two memorandums of understanding with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to deal with issues relating to non-Palestinian refugees. Under those MOUs, refugee children may attend public schools free of charge on the same basis as Jordanian children, regardless of whether they are accompanied by their parents. Under Jordanian law, refugees and their children have the right to litigate and to make use of the services of Government agencies; for example, birth certificates for newborn children, marriage certificates and other necessary documents are routinely issued for them. The Government has also signed an agreement with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) for the provision of health services, counselling and shelter for children unaccompanied by their parents, in addition to the other services made available by the Jordanian Red Crescent.

2. Children and capital punishment (article 37)

295. As mentioned in the previous reports, Jordanian law allows capital punishment for certain serious crimes, but this penalty may be applied only to adults. No one under the age of 18 may be sentenced to death. Furthermore, Jordan has had no cases of extralegal execution, execution without trial or arbitrary execution.

3. Children and armed conflicts

296. Jordan has ratified the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their two Additional Protocols, and it was one of the first States to ratify the Rome Statute for the Establishment of the International Criminal Court. Jordan has taken measures to foster awareness of these instruments and to provide training in their provisions for accused individuals and other concerned persons. For example, numerous training courses have been organized for students at the Police Academy and members of the armed forces by the Royal Human Rights Commission (now the National Centre for Human Rights) and a number of Jordanian NGOs, such as Mizan (the Law for Human Rights Group), the International Institute for Women's Solidarity, and the Jordan Institute of Diplomacy's Regional Human Security Centre. The last-named of these has organized a number of meetings on child soldiers, which have produced a number of recommendations for legal and administrative measures relating to such issues as the age of recruitment. In this connection, it is noteworthy that a number of NGOs and experts in the field of children's rights have called upon the Jordanian Government to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on Children in Armed Conflict.

4. Sexual exploitation and abuse

297. To protect children from abuse and exploitation is considered to be tantamount to protecting society as a whole, with all its various strata and sectors. Accordingly, Jordan has enacted legislation designed to protect children from all forms of violence and abuse, and has prescribed stiffer penalties for physical abuse of children, especially sexual abuse, regardless of whether it takes place within the family or outside the family setting, and with or without the child's consent.

298. Jordan's initial report to the Committee, submitted in 1993, and its second report, submitted in 1998, contained details of the provisions of the Jordanian Penal Code relating to the sexual exploitation and abuse of children. Those provisions are outlined below:

- Stiffer penalties are now applicable for the sexual exploitation of children, especially fornication between ascendants and descendants, regardless of whether the latter are legitimate or illegitimate, and sexual intercourse with a girl under 18 years of age, with or without her consent;
- Jordanian law prohibits the exploitation of children for unlawful sexual activities, including rape or abduction, regardless of whether the children are boys or girls;
- Jordanian law also prescribes penalties for indecent assault against any child, boy or girl, and it also prohibits the use of children for purposes of pornography. In addition, it contains provisions relating to the protection of children who are sexually abused.

299. A number of measures relating to the protection of children from sexual exploitation have recently been enacted:

- By law, children in these situations are deemed to be in need of care and protection, as stated in article 31 of the Juveniles Act. The Act defines 10 such situations, as we have seen in part V of this report ("Family environment and alternative care"), specifically under section 6 ("Abuse and neglect, including physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration");
- The Family Protection Department was established in 1997 as an arm of the Public Security Directorate, with a mandate to monitor and deal with cases of all forms of violence and abuse in general, and cases of sexual abuse in particular. The Department's remit covers domestic violence against children, including physical abuse and neglect, and sexual abuse within the family or outside the family setting. In 2003, its reach was extended when Family Protection divisions were opened outside the capital region, in Zarqa, Balqa, Irbid and Aqaba. In addition, Departmental offices were opened in governorates where the Department has no divisions; these offices are attached to the local Public Security Directorate unit, and are viewed as the nucleus of future full-blown divisions that will be established in those governorates in due course. Two additional Family Protection divisions are currently being established in the cities of Madaba and Kerak;

- Children’s testimony and statements are now recorded by means of videotape or other state-of-the-art technologies so that they can be heard without subjecting the child victim concerned to the distress of repeating his or her statements. In addition, the relevant Government agencies and NGOs are looking forward to the establishment of specialized family courts to hear family protection cases.

300. The work of the Family Protection Department and its various divisions is supplemented by the interlocking efforts of various other partners.

(a) The Social Service Bureau

This is part of the administrative structure of the Ministry of Social Development. The Bureau is an adjunct to Family Protection divisions. It undertakes home visits to families at risk of violence, and it recommends measures aimed at protecting children from violence and abuse. The Social Service Bureau/Family Protection Department dealt with 1068 sexually abused children in 2003 and with 922 in 2004. As of 2004, the Social Service Bureau had five permanent offices and two part-time offices, for a total of seven functional service centres.

(b) Forensic medicine clinics

These clinics conduct forensic medical examinations of victims and offenders in an atmosphere of confidentiality and privacy, so that neither victim nor offender is exposed to public view or subjected to psychological distress by being transported to an ordinary examination centre.

(c) Psychiatric clinics

Psychiatrists provide diagnoses, treatment and counselling inside the clinic to ensure that child victims and their families are not subjected to distress that might adversely affect their emotional condition.

(d) Child Protection Programme

The Child Protection Programme was initiated in 1997 as one of the programmes of the Jordan River Foundation. As was discussed at greater length in part V above, the programme is delivered through two centres:

- Dar al-Aman, a centre for abused children. It was founded with support from the Ministry of Social Development, opening its doors in August 2000. Dar al-Aman receives child victims of various forms of sexual and physical abuse and neglect, providing them with psychological rehabilitation and social, health-related and educational follow-up services, besides other basic services;
- The Prevention Centre, which is also run by the Jordan River Foundation. It provides psychological counselling services through outpatient consultations, and also awareness services for all social sectors in the Jebel al-Nassr district and the surrounding area.

301. The Committee recommended training for personnel working with child victims of abuse. In response to that recommendations, the following remarks are in order:

- All persons who work in the Family Protection Department, including social workers, police officers, forensic physicians and psychiatrists, have taken training in how to interview child victims and interrogate abusers. In addition, the Department offers continuing training programmes through a set of integrated courses, and its personnel hold seminars and organize workshops to increase awareness of sexual abuse for all sectors of society;
- There are a number of voluntary organizations that also contribute to awareness-raising and provide services, including the Jordanian Women's Union, the Family Guidance and Awareness Centre in Zarqa, the Jordanian National Forum for Women's Rights, and others;
- The Ministry of Education also plays an important role in this field. There are currently a total of 1214 educational counsellors, of whom 1104 work in public schools and 110 in private schools. All these counsellors take training courses on child abuse and how cases should be reported; the courses are organized by the Ministry of Education in cooperation with other relevant agencies. In the 2002-2003 school year, five such training courses were held at Ministry Headquarters, while 33 field training workshops for educational counsellors were organized. In addition, two workshops were held for heads of counselling departments in the 2003-2004 school year. In the event that a counsellor should identify a case of family abuse among the school children, he or she is required to report it directly to the Family Protection Department/Public Security Directorate, which takes appropriate measures.

302. The statistics presented in the table below show the year-over-year distribution of child sexual abuse cases handled by the Family Protection Department between 1999 and 2003. As will be seen, there were a total of 1961 child victims during the period extending from 1 January 1999 to 30 June 2004, including 1060 boys and 901 girls.

Numbers of sexually abused children, 1999-30 June 2004

| Year | Child victims of sexual abuse | | Total |
|--------------|-------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| | Boys | Girls | |
| 1999 | 106 | 121 | 227 |
| 2000 | 152 | 148 | 300 |
| 2001 | 136 | 106 | 242 |
| 2002 | 165 | 173 | 338 |
| 2003 | 315 | 218 | 533 |
| 2004 | 420 | 340 | 760 |
| Total | 1 294 | 1 106 | 2 400 |

303. The Committee recommended that a national study on sexual exploitation should be conducted. In response to that recommendation, the following remarks are in order. The Jordanian Women's Union, in cooperation with the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), recently conducted a socio-legal study on family violence. The study was divided into two parts: the first dealt with the legal aspect and contained an analytical report about Court of Cassation rulings on sexual abuse cases involving children under 18 years of age, while the second part dealt with social issues and included a comprehensive survey of 14-year-olds attending public schools, private schools and UNRWA schools in the capital, Amman. The survey was based on a random sample consisting of 500 grade 9 students, both male and female. The aim of the study was to investigate the forms and consequences of family violence, and to determine where sexual abuse was most likely to occur. One of the study's findings was that not all victims of sexual or physical abuse had been able to report their experiences, either out of ignorance or because of fear of their families. The results of the study are summarized in the two tables below.

Types of abuse encountered by male and female students in the sample

| Type of abuse | Males (%) | Females (%) | Total (%) |
|---------------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|
| Psychological abuse | 27.6 | 52.0 | 79.6 |
| Physical abuse | 49.8 | 34.6 | 84.4 |
| Sexual abuse | 26.3 | 21.0 | 47.3 |

Types of sexual abuse encountered by male and female students in the sample

| Type of sexual abuse | Males (%) | Females (%) | Total (%) |
|----------------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|
| Harassment | 0.30 | 74.0 | 74.03 |
| Incest | - | 28.6 | 28.6 |
| Rape | - | 19.8 | 19.8 |
| Indecent advances | - | 51.6 | 51.6 |

5. Administration of juvenile justice

(a) Children in the juvenile justice system

304. The Committee recommended a comprehensive review of legislation on the matter of juvenile justice in the light of the Convention and international standards. In response to that recommendation, the following remarks are in order:

- There is an abundance of national legislation in the field of juvenile justice, including the Code of Criminal Procedure (law No. 9 of 1961 and amendments thereto), which regulates the form of trials, the powers of courts and trial and investigation procedures; the Jordanian Penal Code (law No. 16 of 1964 and amendments thereto), which defines offences and prescribes penalties; and the Juveniles Act (law No. 24 of 1968 and amendments thereto), which governs the confidentiality of proceedings in trials of juveniles;

- Jordanian law on the administration of juvenile justice seeks to promote greater sensitivity to the child’s sense of dignity and worth through a number of measures. For example, the juvenile cannot be handcuffed, courtroom proceedings are confidential, and the juvenile’s privacy is respected at all times. Under the Juveniles Act, juveniles are divided into four age groups, in accordance with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (the Beijing Rules);
- Jordanian law on the administration of juvenile justice is consistent with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, inasmuch as all individuals are deemed to be equal before the law, with no discrimination on the basis of sex, colour, ethnic origin or religion. This principle is affirmed in the Constitution, which states that all Jordanians are equal before the law. Under article 3 of the Penal Code, children are protected from prosecution for or being charged with an offence where the act in question was not prohibited by law at the time it was committed. Furthermore, the presumption of innocence is fundamental in Jordanian law. It follows that a juvenile is innocent in the eyes of the law until he or she has been found guilty, and the juvenile justice system treats him or her accordingly;
- The Juveniles Act (law No. 24 of 1968 as amended in 1983 and 2002) lays down rules and procedures for dealing with “children in conflict with the law” and “children in need of care and protection”. The Court of Conciliation, when sitting as a juvenile court, has jurisdiction to adjudicate offences committed by juveniles where the prescribed penalty is not more than a term of up to seven years’ imprisonment, with or without hard labour; the ordinary trial courts have jurisdiction to hear other criminal cases. There is still hope that a separate court will be established to hear juvenile cases exclusively, apart from the courts in Amman and Irbid that have been empowered by executive decision to deal with juvenile cases.

305. Beginning in 1998, the Ministry of Social Development, the Ministry of Justice and the Public Security Directorate, in cooperation with the National Centre for Human Rights, NGOs and a number of domestic and foreign organizations and with support from UNICEF, have been holding a series of training workshops on issues with a bearing on juvenile justice and the related procedures, including coordination among the various agencies concerned. The training covers matters of domestic juvenile law, social studies, methods of interrogating juveniles, and international conventions and other instruments relating to juvenile justice.

(b) Juveniles deprived of their liberty: rehabilitation and social reintegration

306. The Committee recommended that attention should be paid to measures of rehabilitation and social reintegration. In response to this recommendation, the following remarks are in order:

1. Jordanian law makes provision for a variety of measures that a court may take in juvenile cases to promote the rehabilitation of offenders. Where the offender is under 18 years of age, the court may release him in the custody of his parents or place him under the supervision of a probation officer. There are other measures at its disposal as well, such as foster care or requiring the young offender to give a personal undertaking for future good behaviour. Where the court decides that a

sentence of detention is necessary, the term imposed is one third of the term that would be imposed upon an adult (Juveniles Act, art. 18). A number of workshops have been held on justice reform and means of reducing reliance on detention in favour of community-based measures. The draft Children's Rights Act makes provision for alternative measures, such as penalties deemed appropriate for children.

2. Under the Juveniles Act, young offenders may not be held in correctional and rehabilitation centres, but only in social welfare institutions for juveniles. This promotes their social reintegration by preventing them from associating with adult offenders and thereby protecting them from possible abuse and exploitation (Juveniles Act, art. 4).
3. Under the Act, juveniles who are detained awaiting trial or who have been sentenced may be allowed to leave the institution for a period of not more than one week to visit their families for holidays or other occasions when necessary (Juveniles Act, art. 27.4).
4. The same Act provides that juveniles may leave the institution to attend academic or vocational training courses at any public or private institution, subject to the condition that they are required to return to the institution when the courses are over for the day.
5. Under Jordanian law, institutions for juveniles (providing education, rehabilitation or care) are required to take the children's best interests into consideration and provide a full range of basic educational and recreational services as well as psycho-social programmes aimed at enabling juveniles to readapt, expediting their reintegration into the social environment and promoting their development along sound lines.

(c) Legislative developments in the area of juvenile justice

307. In response to the Committee's remarks about new developments in the area of juvenile justice, we may note that there have been a number of developments since the submission of Jordan's second report. These are outlined in the following paragraphs:

1. A review of legislation enacted between 2000 and 2003 reveals that the competent bodies have made great strides indicative of a change in Jordanian legislators' approach to issues of crime and punishment, a change that has had both direct and indirect outcomes.
2. Direct outcomes include the two interim Juveniles Acts (laws Nos. 11 and 52 of 2002). These are characterized by a number of innovative features and guarantees, of which the most significant are outlined below:
 - (i) Under article 4 of the Act, only the judicial power can order the detention of a juvenile; other authorities do not have discretion to take action to deprive a juvenile of his liberty;

- (ii) Article 8 of the Act provided that a juvenile court, with exclusive jurisdiction to hear cases involving offences allegedly committed by juveniles, should be established within the premises of ordinary trial courts. The juvenile court might hold hearings during weekends, on holidays and in the evening where necessary and in the interests of the juvenile concerned. However, this article amending the Act was repealed for want of the necessary financial resources;
 - (iii) Establishment of a Social Defence Bureau in every courthouse, staffed with a team of experts in forensic medicine and psychological and social counseling (art. 9);
 - (iv) Significant new guarantees relating to the interrogation of juveniles: a juvenile may be interrogated only in the presence of a parent, guardian or other person responsible for his care, or his lawyer. Where none of the above is available, the probation officer shall attend the interrogation sessions (art. 15);
 - (v) A juvenile offender who turns 20 before having completed his or her sentence in a rehabilitation centre for juveniles may remain at the centre to complete the education and rehabilitation that he or she began there (art. 20);
 - (vi) The amended Juveniles Act provides for the release of an offender upon the recommendation of the Minister of Social Development after he or she has served one third of the term to which he or she was sentenced, where such release would be in the best interests of the child.
3. Indirect outcomes include amendments to the Code of Criminal Procedure as amended by law No. 16 of 2001, published on 18 April 2001 in No. 4480 of the Official Gazette (page 1294). The amended version of the Code includes guarantees that constitute a new contribution to the reinforcement of freedoms in general and to the improvement of the legal position of juveniles in particular. The most important of these guarantees are outlined in the paragraphs below:
- (i) New provisions relating to arrest, which is an important measure affecting an individual's freedom: a special report must be prepared, containing numerous details, and all conditions must be observed, failing which the arrest is deemed null and void (art. 100);
 - (ii) Restrictions on detention and the extension of detention, definition of applicable cases, and new provisions for release where the law so stipulates, or release on bail without reference to statutory authority (art. 114);
 - (iii) Reduction of the length of time a juvenile may be held at a public security centre or police station from 48 hours to 24 hours, and all reports and interrogation records must be kept on file (art. 110(b)).

(d) Juveniles' right to survival and development

308. Jordanian law guarantees juveniles' right to survival and development to the maximum extent possible. Juveniles may not be sentenced to death or to hard labour.

309. The law defines juvenile institutions in the following terms:

(a) Reformatory: any public or private correctional institution accredited by the Minister for the arrest and detention of juveniles;

(b) Juvenile rehabilitation home: any public or private correctional institution accredited by the Minister for the educational and vocational rehabilitation of juveniles;

(c) Juvenile welfare home: any public or private institution accredited by the Minister for the care of juveniles.

310. Careful examination of these definition reveals that institutions treat juveniles on a basis of respect for their humanity and dignity, meet their needs, and provide them with basic services (food, clothing, shelter and health care) as well as educational and vocational training (both theoretical and practical) inside and outside the institutions. They also provide recreational and leisure services inside and outside the institutions (television, newspapers, sports, excursions, camping). Furthermore, the juveniles in their charge are allowed to keep in touch with their families: family members may visit the institution, and the juveniles may be issued passes that allow them to visit their families. They may also communicate with their families by telephone. Lastly, these institutions provide psycho-social counselling services.

311. Under article 36.4 of the Juveniles Act, judges are required to visit these institutions at least once every three months to make sure the juvenile inmates are being respected and that quality services are being made available to them.

312. Social welfare institutions do not provide their juvenile inmates with legal assistance. Such assistance can be obtained during the period of pre-trial detention through the juvenile's family, who can engage a lawyer, or after sentencing, when the lawyer can apply for a review of the court's ruling or bring an appeal. However, some civil society institutions provide judicial protection and legal advice through a special clinic that provided 720 juveniles with legal assistance between 2001 and 2004.

6. Drug abuse (article 33)

313. Drug abuse, as such, is not a problem in Jordan. Owing to the country's geographic location, however, it has become a connecting link between narcotics-producing countries and narcotics-consuming countries in the Middle East and North Africa region. Because of this, Jordan has begun to experience a problem with cargoes of narcotics transiting through its territory on their way to and from neighbouring countries. In addition, there are growing numbers of drug dealers of Jordanian nationality, and now there are some users in the country as well. In particular, there has been an increase in the numbers of heroin users in Jordan, as that substance is now making its way here as a result of the eradication of cannabis growing in Lebanon. This situation has made it necessary to adopt legislative, administrative and preventive measures to ward off the danger of drug abuse.

(a) Legislative and administrative measures

314. The Jordanian Government has been aware of the narcotics problem since the early 1950s. The Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances Act (law No. 11 of 1988) sought to take a balanced position. On the one hand, the legislation takes the advanced view that a drug addict is a sick person, and if he seeks treatment of his own accord he will not be prosecuted and will be eligible for treatment at a public clinic. On the other hand, a trafficker in narcotics is regarded as a dangerous individual who deserves a term of imprisonment of 15 years, and even the death penalty in some cases if he is a repeat offender or if the court is convinced that he is part of an international drug-trafficking organization. This balanced position between treatment for the addict and death for a persistent trafficker is also evident from the fact that the law penalizes the pusher and the possessor, and also the physician and pharmacist who abuse their respective professions for the sake of a quick profit and deal unlawfully in dangerous substances.

315. One of the most noteworthy features of the Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances Act is that it prescribes the death penalty for every person who employs a minor in the narcotics trade, even for a first offence (Narcotics Act, article 8(b)(iii)), inasmuch as the minor is not yet aware of the hazardous nature of the substance with which he is dealing, whereas his employer, in full awareness of the risks involved, has knowingly put the life of a child at risk to satisfy his desire for a quick profit.

316. Every person who supplies a minor with narcotics or psychotropic substances, prepares a place for the consumption of narcotic substances, provides any narcotic substances to any person in association with a minor or employs a minor in committing that offence, or where the person provided with the narcotic substance is a minor, shall be liable to the death penalty or to life imprisonment at hard labour (Narcotics Act, article 9(a)(iii)).

317. Every person who produces or manufactures any narcotic substance for the purpose of trafficking in it in situations other than those permitted by law is liable to not less than 15 years' imprisonment at hard labour (Narcotics Act, art. 8(a)). Every person who imports, purchases, produces, manufactures or possesses any narcotic substance for the purpose of unlawful consumption is liable to imprisonment for a term of not less than six months and not more than two years.

318. The language of the two above-mentioned articles is general in nature, i.e. the production of and trafficking in narcotics is prohibited, regardless of whether the offender is a minor or an adult.

319. The Ministry of Health, through its Drug Monitoring and Inspection Department, inspects pharmacies to make sure that they are complying with the Pharmaceutical Profession and Dangerous Drugs Act (law No. 43 of 1972), and, in particular, to determine whether pharmacists are dispensing dangerous drugs that may be sold only pursuant to an authorized medical prescription and in limited quantities.

320. Jordan has acceded to a number of international, bilateral and regional agreements on drug control, none of which includes provisions covering children exclusively; all of them are general, covering both minors and adults. Those agreements include:

- The 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, as amended by the 1972 Protocol;
- The 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances;
- The 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances;
- Memorandums of understanding with Turkey and Egypt.

(b) Preventive measures

321. The Anti-Narcotics Directorate hopes to continue working in coordination with the Ministry of Education, the High-Level Council for Youth, the High-Level Council for Information and the universities to organize seminars and lectures designed to promote awareness of the dangers of substance abuse in a positive way, one that will not lead young people to try narcotics or other substances out of curiosity or a desire to experiment. The Directorate and the Ministry have jointly organized a number of training workshops for counsellors employed by the Ministry with a view to developing their capacities and skills in dealing with this problem by means of prevention and treatment. They have also developed information programmes aimed at parents and guardians in an effort to raise their awareness of and warn them about the possibility that their children may try these substances.

322. The Anti-Narcotics Directorate has units and offices in all parts of Jordan that receive complaints and information about the phenomenon of narcotics use. All information is treated confidentially and transparently. The Directorate also runs an addiction treatment centre.

323. The National Centre for the Rehabilitation of Addicts (an arm of the Ministry of Health) and the private Al-Rasheed Hospital also treat some cases of addiction.

324. There is also the matter of substances that are not on the list of internationally banned, dangerous substances, such as volatile solvents and over-the-counter remedies available from pharmacies that may be abused. Here the role of the Anti-Narcotics Directorate is primarily preventive, although it does arrest persons who provide substances of this kind or alcohol to persons under 18 years of age. The Directorate acknowledges that there are some young people who use such substances, notably those who have been victimized by their families as a result of having been sent out to work at an early age, and especially those with jobs in paint shops, woodworking industries and metalworking industries, where they cannot avoid coming in contact with volatile substances such as solvents, nitre and benzene.

325. An organization known as Questscope for Social Development in the Middle East recently conducted two studies on child labour in Jordan, using a cross-sampling technique focussing on jobs in a number of industries and other sectors in the Sweileh district and the central vegetable market in Irbid. The results indicate that child labour is one of the causes of substance abuse: child workers learn to abuse substances that they frequently handle, such as nitre, benzene and solvents.

326. The table below shows the numbers of juveniles arrested for various drug-related cases in 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003 and 2004 (up to 31 August). All the juveniles were boys between 16 and 18 years of age.

**Juveniles arrested for dealing in narcotics,
2000-1 October 2004**

| Year | No. |
|------|-----|
| 2000 | 5 |
| 2001 | 10 |
| 2002 | 8 |
| 2003 | 13 |
| 2004 | 20 |

327. There are no recorded cases of children having been treated for addiction at the Anti-Narcotics Directorate's treatment centre or the National Centre for the Rehabilitation of Addicts. However, some child addicts have been treated at the private Al-Rasheed Hospital, as will be seen from the table below.

**Child narcotics addicts treated at Al-Rasheed Hospital,
1999-31 August 2004**

| Year | Nationality | | Sex | |
|-------|-------------|---------------|------|--------|
| | Jordanian | Non-Jordanian | Male | Female |
| 1999 | - | - | - | - |
| 2000 | 5 | 1 | 6 | - |
| 2001 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 1 |
| 2002 | 1 | - | - | 1 |
| 2003 | 1 | - | 1 | - |
| 2004 | 5 | 7 | 6 | 6 |
| Total | 15 | 9 | 16 | 8 |

(c) Legislative measures aimed at preventing alcohol and tobacco use among children

328. The Interim Juvenile Conduct Monitoring Act (law No. 51 of 2001) prohibits the use of alcohol and tobacco by juveniles. The main provisions of the Act are outlined below:

- It is unlawful for minors to purchase tobacco, spirits, narcotics, psychotropic substances or volatile substances (art. 31(a)(i));
- It is unlawful for minors to smoke tobacco, use a nargileh, consume alcoholic beverages, or use narcotics, psychotropic substances or volatile substances (art. 3(a)(ii));
- It is unlawful for any person to ask any minor to purchase tobacco or alcoholic beverages or to fill a medical prescription for narcotic or psychotropic substances for himself or for another person (art. 3(b));

- Every person who sells tobacco, alcoholic beverages or volatile substances to a minor or asks a minor to purchase any of the above or to fill a medical prescription for narcotic or psychotropic substances for him, or permits a minor to enter a night club or bar or offers a minor alcoholic beverages is liable to imprisonment for a term of not more than six months or a fine of not more than 500 dinars or both;
- Every minor who purchases or smokes tobacco, consumes alcoholic beverages or uses narcotics or volatile substances is liable to a fine of 20 dinars, the said fine to be doubled in the event the offence is repeated (art. 7(a));
- The competent administrative authority has jurisdiction to close any night club, bar or coffee shop the proprietor of which contravenes the provisions of the Juvenile Conduct Monitoring Act (art. 9).

329. Directives have been issued pursuant to the Juvenile Conduct Monitoring Act for the formation of juvenile conduct monitoring committees in every governorate. Every such committee is headed by the competent administrative authority, and its membership includes two representatives from all relevant agencies. These committees are mandated to undertake daily rounds to make sure that the provisions of the Act are being observed. In particular, they are empowered to post notices at all premises that are off limits to minors stating clearly that all persons under 18 years of age are prohibited from entering.

7. Traffic in children (article 35)

330. The Committee expressed concern about traffic in children and the fact that data on the commercial sexual exploitation of children in Jordan was insufficient. In response to this concern, the following remarks are in order. Traffic in children is unknown in Jordan, and it is an offence under Jordanian law. However, a number of judges, lawyers, members of NGOs and other specialists have argued that it is essential to enact legislation bringing Jordanian law into line with international instruments dealing with the issue. That view was taken into consideration in the preparation of the draft Children's Rights Act, a number of the articles of which expressly address the matter of traffic in children.

8. Economic exploitation of children, including child labour (article 32)

331. The Committee recommended that the Labour Code should be amended to ensure that children working in family enterprises, agricultural activities and as domestic labour are protected. In response to this recommendation, the following remarks are in order. Under an ordinance issued in 1997, based on article 74 of the Labour Code (law No. 8 of 1996 and amendments thereto), certain kinds of work are defined as hazardous, physically demanding or injurious to the health of juveniles, and the employment of juveniles in those kinds of work is prohibited. The full text of that ordinance was annexed to Jordan's second report to the Committee (see paragraph 145).

332. In 1999, the Ministry of Labour, with the support of the International Child Labour Programme, established a Child Labour Unit, the main functions of which are outlined in the following paragraphs:

1. Scientific research on the phenomenon of child labour in Jordan with a view to obtaining an accurate picture of the various aspects of the situation, and preparation of an initial national report on the subject containing statistical data that can be used for purposes of corrective and preventive policy planning and the development of solutions and appropriate approaches to solving the problem and eliminating child labour.
2. Creation of a data base on child labour. The data base, which has been periodically updated since mid-2001, is considered to be the most comprehensive, not only in Jordan, but in the entire Arab world.
3. Action to follow up the work of the Committee on Child Labour, which included representatives from all three economic sectors as well as relevant community organizations. The Committee's mandate was to formulate a strategy aimed at the elimination of the worst forms of child labour, one that would contain a number of educational and practical policies and would serve as the primary nucleus of a National Strategy for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour, 2003-2006, with the support of the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC).
4. Appointment of a legal committee under the supervision of the Unit, with representatives from all three economic sectors as well as community organizations. The legal committee's mandate was to review and study all legislation with a bearing on child labour.
5. Action to develop an awareness programme on children's rights and the importance of education; the programme was aimed at all segments of Jordanian society, but targeted school children in particular, who account for 34 per cent of the country's total population.
6. Organization of a competition for school children on the negative effects of dropping out of school. The competition, which was held in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, was open to pupils between the ages of 6 and 16, and its purpose was to give them an opportunity of expressing their views on the subject by writing stories or poems. Pupils from 120 schools in all parts of the country participated, and the winners received prizes.
7. Contributing to the experimental pre-launch stage of "Scream", which is a new educational programme launched by IPEC in 2002. The programme was tried out successfully in four countries, including Jordan, which served as a model for the Arab region. "Scream" stands for "supporting children's rights through education, the arts and the media". Its aim is to empower young people and arm them with knowledge in an effort to eliminate child labour.
8. Establishment of a documentation centre to support national, regional and international studies and research on child labour.

9. Production of a documentary film on child labour in Jordan, in cooperation with the University of Petra's Department of Journalism and the Media. The documentary was shown at the ILO's international conference in 2002, after the regular meetings.
 10. Participation in radio and television programmes on child labour and its negative impact on the health and safety of child workers.
 11. Use of a statistical model to measure the economic, social and educational aspects of the phenomenon of child labour in Jordan (a copy of the model is appended to this report).
333. Enforcement of minimum age standards:
- As noted in Jordan's second report to the Committee (paragraph 141), under article 73 of the Labour Code and amendments thereto (law No. 8 of 1996), the minimum age of employment is 16 years. Article 74 of the Code has been amended, and the minimum age for employment in occupations that are deemed to be hazardous, physically demanding or injurious to the health of young persons has now been raised from 17 years to 18 years. The amended text of that article reads as follows: "It is unlawful to employ a young person under 18 years of age in occupations that are hazardous, physically demanding or detrimental to health. These occupations shall be specified in ordinances issued by the Minister after consultation with the competent official agencies.";
 - Under article 10 of the Education Act (law No. 3 of 1994), education is compulsory up to the end of the basic stage, i.e. until the age of 16. The same age limit applies to vocational training;
 - With respect to the protection of children working in the agriculture sector, it is noteworthy that article 3, paragraph (d) of the Labour Code has been amended: the categories of agricultural workers to whom the provisions of the Code apply are now agricultural engineers, veterinarians, agricultural workers employed for daily wages in governmental and official institutions, technicians who work on agricultural equipment, persons who work in nurseries producing fruit tree seedlings, ornamental plants or vegetables, persons who propagate cuttings and produce seedlings by vegetative methods or grow them from seed, operators of poultry, cattle, sheep or goat production enterprises, artificial insemination enterprises and fish farms, and beekeepers;
 - The Labour Inspectors Regulations (statutory instrument No. 56 of 1996) provides that workplaces and working conditions for all workers, whether juveniles or adults, shall be inspected by persons possessing police powers in the performance of their duties.
334. In the matter of the protection of children from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development, it is noteworthy that Jordan has ratified

a number of international agreements relating to child labour, as previously stated in various passages of this report. Those agreements include ILO Convention No. 138 of 1973 concerning the minimum age for admission to employment, ILO Convention No. 182 of 1999 concerning the prohibition and immediate action for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour, and ILO Convention No. 124 of 1965 concerning the medical examination of young persons (underground work).

335. In the context of the ongoing effort gradually to eliminate the worst forms of child labour, in 2001 the Ministry of Labour prepared a report on the situation of child workers in Jordan. The report sheds light on various aspects of the lives of those children and their families, including their demographic situation (distribution of children by occupation, reasons for entering the job market, and income), their educational situation (level attained, reasons for dropping out of school, parents' educational background), their social situation (distribution of children by family's social status, father's and mother's occupations, number of working siblings), their health status (information about children's health and knowledge of occupational health and safety conditions), and their working conditions (distribution of children by workplace, working hours and weekly days off).

336. The findings of the report are summarized below:

- The nature of child labour in Jordan is substantially different in different parts of the country. The data indicate that more than half (57 per cent) of all child workers live in the capital, Amman, followed by Zarqa (21 per cent), Irbid (8 per cent) and Balqa (4 per cent). The study also showed that approximately 10 per cent of all child workers earned less than one dinar per day;
- Most child workers are employed in very small businesses: 88 per cent of all child workers are employed by enterprises with five workers or fewer, and 94 per cent of them are employed by enterprises with 10 workers or fewer;
- Most children work very long hours, in excess of the maximum permitted under the Jordanian Labour Code. The fact that 54 per cent of them work eight hours or fewer per day means that nearly half are working 9 hours a day or more;
- Fifty-three per cent of the child workers covered by the study said that they were working because they wanted to learn a trade, and 53 per cent said that they were working to help their families financially. It should be noted that respondents were allowed to indicate more than one reason why they had taken jobs.

A copy of the Ministry of Labour report on the situation of child workers in Jordan in the year 2001 is appended to this report.

Annexes

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Jordanian laws (see attached list).

Jordanian strategies (see attached list).
