Child Rights References in the Universal Periodic Review

Summary:
A compilation of extracts featuring child-rights issues from the reports submitted to the first Universal Periodic Review. There are extracts from the 'National Report', the 'Compilation of UN Information' and the 'Summary of Stakeholder's Information'.

Bangladesh - 4th Session - 2009
Review Date: Tuesday 3rd February - 3pm to 6pm

National Report

5. In its strive to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Bangladesh has been successful in attaining a significantly high net enrolment rate of children in primary school and secondary school, and in removing gender disparity in enrolment. Child immunisation programmes have extended their reach to 87.2 per cent of the population in 2006. Maternal, infant and under-five children mortality rates have reduced significantly, and there is an upward trend in average life expectancy. Bangladesh is also on track in achieving the other MDGs.

27. One of the early signatories to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Bangladesh is committed to fulfil the objectives of the Convention and the global plan of action that is explicitly linked with the MDGs endorsed at the United Nations Special Session on Children in 1992.

28. Commendable progress has been made in the context of primary, secondary and non-formal education, immunisation, nutrition, primary healthcare, water and sanitation. Emphasis is put on narrowing gender gaps in all areas of child development. There is a separate Ministry that co-ordinates targeted interventions for children’s rights and welfare, including providing vocational training and credit to youth. National Children’s Council is the highest policy-level body to monitor enforcement of child related laws and rights. The Inter-Ministerial CRC Committee co-ordinates implementation of CRC and other plans of action on children. Bangladesh Shishu Academy (Bangladesh Children’s Academy) develops and implements projects on cultural and psychological development of children.

61. Universal free primary education has been the centre-piece of Bangladesh’s efforts towards social development and education. Some 15 per cent of development budget is allocated for the education sector of which 64 per cent is earmarked for primary education. The net enrolment rate in primary education stood at 91.7 percent in 2007, and the ratio of girls to boys in primary education was 50:50. While current trends demonstrate a narrowing of existing gender disparities in nearly all social MDG indicators in general, it is more marked in the education sector.

72. Changes have been brought to the Prevention of Oppression against Women and Children Act in 2003 in order to: (a) revise the definition of a child by raising its age to under 16 years as opposed to under 14 years; (b) include the persons committing dowry-related violence and seeking dowry in the Act; (c) make the act of instigating suicide by a woman punishable, (d) ensure maintenance by the State, as opposed to the rapist, of a child born following rape; and (e) taking the consent of a girl by the Court before placing her in safe custody.

84. The government has undertaken steps for promoting children’s rights, and for creating a congenial environment in which they would be able to grow to their full potential. The government adopted several National Plans of Action on Children (the most recent one spans 2005-2010) for targeted interventions in key areas of children’s protection and development. One of the greatest achievements of the NPA process has been the internalisation of the Plan of Action on Children in the national planning mechanism and preparatory consultations with stakeholders including children. The process has raised awareness of children’s rights as the document is extensively used in lobbying and advocacy for mainstreaming child rights issues into development programmes.

85. Inclusion of children’s issue in government’s Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper is another indicator of State commitment to children’s cause. Besides, arrangements for subsistence allowance have been made under various programmes targeting the rehabilitation of orphaned children, in particular child victims of natural disasters.

86. The government has been placing high priority on sexual abuse and exploitation of children, deprivation of liberty, early marriage and
lack of birth registration. In an attempt to address some of these concerns, the government has adopted a National Plan of Action against Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children including Trafficking in 2002. An Implementation and Monitoring Committee was set up to ensure coordination and monitoring of this Plan of Action.

87. Harmonising national laws on juvenile justice with the CRC, the government drafted the National Social Policy on Alternative Models of Care and Protection for Children in Contact with the Law. An inter-ministerial committee monitors protection of children who come into contact with the law.

88. Pursuant to its commitment to eradicate child labour, the government is in the process of finalising National Child Labour Policy. It has embarked on a Time Bound Programme (TBP), which is primarily a plan of action for eliminating the worst forms of child labour within a prescribed time frame, addressing the root causes of child labour, promoting basic education and linking national development efforts to action against child labour. This programme is essentially a follow-up action to the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labour.

**UN Compilation**

3. CRC remained concerned that domestic legislation and customary law were not fully compatible with all the principles and provisions of the Convention and that laws implementing the Convention were frequently not applied, particularly in rural areas. 17 In 2003, the Special Rapporteur on the right to food was concerned that Bangladesh had still failed to pass enabling legislation that would accord ICESCR the force of law. 18 CEDAW in 2004 raised similar concerns 19 and called upon Bangladesh to incorporate without delay the provisions of the CEDAW Convention into its domestic law. 20 UNHCR in 2008 also recommended that Bangladesh take steps towards the drafting and adoption of national refugee legislation. 21

4. CRC in 2003 welcomed the information from the delegation concerning the intention to establish a national human rights commission and an ombudsman and recommended, inter-alia, that Bangladesh expedite the process to establish an independent and effective mechanism in accordance with the Paris Principles, including with a mandate to monitor the implementation of the Convention. 22 The Special Rapporteur on the right to food in 2003 also called for the establishment of an institution with a strong mandate to monitor and promote the realization of economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to food. 23 and the Special Rapporteur on religious intolerance in 2000 called for the establishment of a national commission for human rights with a membership that includes not only women, but also non-Muslims. 24

5. CRC welcomed the formulation of a revised National Plan of Action for Children, the adoption of the National Policy for Safe Water Supply and Sanitation, and the 2002 National Plan of Action to combat sexual abuse and exploitation, including trafficking. 25

14. CRC was concerned about discrimination against, inter alia, children with disabilities, street children, child victims of sexual abuse and exploitation and other vulnerable groups. 55 CRC recommended that Bangladesh, inter alia, undertake an awareness-raising campaign to sensitize the public to the rights and special needs of children with disabilities and ensure that they are registered at birth. 56

19. CRC expressed concern at reports of ill-treatment and violence against children in State institutions, including by law enforcement agents, as well as at the solitary confinement of juvenile and child prisoners; 70 and reported violence against children living or working on the streets, including sexual abuse and physical brutality, directed at these children by police officers. 71 CRC expressed its profound concern at the prevalence of corporal punishment in schools, and at the fact that corporal punishment was still legal and widely practised within the legal system, in educational and other institutions and in the family. 72

20. CRC was also concerned at the high incidence of abuse, including sexual abuse and at the lack of effective measures to combat this phenomenon. 73 Despite measures taken to prevent trafficking in women and children, CRC in 2007 and CEDAW in 2004 raised concerns about the serious problem of commercial sexual exploitation of women and children. An ILO Committee of Experts in 2008 encouraged the Government to redouble its efforts to eliminate the trafficking of children under 18 years for labour and sexual exploitation. 74

21. CRC in 2003 also remained deeply concerned at the high prevalence of child labour in Bangladesh. 75

25. CRC recommended that Bangladesh urgently take measures to increase alternative care opportunities for children and take effective measures to prevent abandonment of children. 81

38. In 2004, CRC expressed concern about the narrow content of the education in the “madrasas”, 120 and in 2006, CRC also expressed concern about the possible military training that children in unregistered madrasas, also known as “qaumi madrasas”, undergo from a very young age. 121 CRC recommended, inter alia, that Bangladesh continue to streamline the education in the madrasas in order to ensure more compatibility with formal public education. 122 The Special Rapporteur on religious intolerance also recommended that the State take the necessary measures to protect the mosques and madrasahs from all efforts at indoctrination on the part of extremists. 123
26. The Forum stated that, under applicable laws the age bar for prohibition of child labour varies from 14 to 18 years and is not effectively enforced. In practice, one in every eight children in the country is a working child. Nearly one-fifth of children from slum and tribal areas are engaged as child labour to earn a livelihood for themselves and their families. A quarter of children engaged in child labour do not attend schools. Between the ages of 5 and 14 years approximately 6.6 million children are engaged in labour force in the country.

**Final Report**

12. The delegation stressed that economic and social rights were of paramount importance: eradication of poverty was the Government’s top priority and more than half the budget had been allocated for poverty-reduction activities. As a result of these and other efforts, poverty declined significantly. Bangladesh was often cited for its best practices of social safety net programmes and the Government had plans to further widen the social safety-net, particularly to combat the impact of the global financial crisis. The Government’s emphasis on education was also highlighted: the education sector received the single largest share, about 15 per cent, of the annual budget.

14. The delegation noted the Government’s intention to institute comprehensive police reform. Steps were being taken to update and improve the Police Act of 1961. A draft ordinance developed through consultations with all stakeholders stipulated codes of conduct for the police, with a particular focus on upholding human rights in the discharge of duties and on gender guidelines for the treatment of women and children. The process of setting up a victim support centre and a criminal intelligence analysis unit was under way.

17. The delegation provided information on recent amendments to the Citizenship Act. According to the Bangladesh Citizenship (Amendment) Ordinance 2008, children born of a Bangladeshi woman married to a non-Bangladeshi were now entitled to Bangladeshi citizenship. The delegation also referred to special measures taken to address feminization of poverty, including the Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) Programme with nationwide outreach covering nearly 750,000 poor rural women.

18. Concerning children, reference was made to the National Plan of Action against Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children, including Trafficking, and to the National Social Policy on Alternative Models of Care and Protection for Children, which would harmonize national laws on juvenile justice with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Bangladesh had eliminated child labour from the readymade garments sector, and this remained a noted case for global replication.

22. Bangladesh acknowledged that the contribution of civil society and NGOs to national socio-economic development and to the promotion and protection of human rights had been praiseworthy. Government-NGO partnership was a hallmark of Bangladesh’s development scene. Coordinated activities took place in areas such as agriculture and rural development, physical infrastructure, healthcare and family planning, primary and secondary schooling and environmental protection.

27. A number of delegations welcomed the significant advances in the field of primary education, being mandatory and free of charge. Schoolbooks are free of charge. Annual allocations for education amounted to 15 per cent of the general budget, with impressive gains in the high net enrolment rate and the positive enrolment ratio of girls to boys. Bangladesh was commended for achieving the MDG related to gender parity in primary and secondary education, and for the decrease in girls’ school drop-out rates.

30. United Arab Emirates commended the efforts made by Bangladesh to provide the necessary legislative framework to protect human rights, enshrined in the constitution and national laws, by giving full regard to international instruments. They also praised the steps taken to promote the right to education and requested clarifications about the initiative of non formal education.

31. Cuba stressed the serious commitment of Bangladesh to human rights, and the huge efforts made to combat hunger and poverty and guarantee basic needs, particularly in the areas of food, housing, education and health, especially in times of financial crisis. Cuba highlighted the priority given to the rights of women, particularly regarding their participation to economic, political and social life, and the importance given to the rights of the child. It recommended that Bangladesh pursue (a) its positive efforts to promote and protect the right to education, including the education of girls, and (b) its positive efforts for the promotion and protection of the rights of women.

32. Saudi Arabia commended the new government’s numerous initiatives to reform the Constitution and review national laws to bring them in line with international instruments. Vaccination campaigns had been successfully carried out, reducing child and infant mortality rates. It recommended that Bangladesh (a) continue its strategic plan adopted in 2005 for eliminating social and economic disparities in order to reduce poverty, in particular in isolated regions, and (b) continue while working with concerned parties, its comprehensive national strategy to improve the health situation, in particular to promote women’s health during pregnancy and post natal care.

36. Singapore indicated that the new Government is committed to continuing the promotion of human rights. Singapore recognized the recent enactment and/or amendment of relevant domestic legislation. Bangladesh had been right to focus on poverty alleviation and eradication, on women's empowerment and the rights of children. Singapore recommended that the Government continued to place emphasis on these areas. It commended the valuable role played by many NGOs and innovative social enterprises in contributing to improving the lives of millions of people.

37. France welcomed the lifting of the state of emergency and the constructive reforms undertaken. It asked (a) when Bangladesh intended acceding to and implementing the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (b) what measures were envisaged to effectively implement legal instruments on women’s rights, in particular laws relating to prevention of violence, under-age marriages and the practice of dowries; and (c) what measures were being taken to abolish child labour and to implement the related national plan of action. France (a) invited Bangladesh to ratify OP-CAT; (b) strongly encouraged it to abolish the death penalty, and while awaiting such decision, to adopt a moratorium on executions; and (c) recommended the withdrawal of all reservations to the CEDAW.
38. Brazil recognized the important initiatives to protect children and women and affirmative actions to guarantee access of ethnic minorities to higher education and to government recruitment. Poverty alleviation has been a priority of Bangladesh. Brazil requested information about the adoption of a comprehensive approach to address violence against women and about measures to guarantee the security of minorities and ethnic communities. Brazil recommended (a) bearing in mind Human Rights Council resolution 9/12, entitled “Human rights goals”, the ratification of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees; (b) bearing in mind General Assembly resolution 62/149, the establishment of a moratorium on executions, with a view to abolishing the death penalty; (c) taking into account the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the taking of further measures to prohibit all forms of violence against children, including corporal punishment, and the raising of the minimum age of criminal responsibility; (d) positive consideration of the request to visit by the Special Rapporteur on summary executions.

39. Malaysia noted the reform of the Election Commission, the separation of the judiciary from the executive and the important progress in the realization of the right to food and to the fight against poverty. Malaysia (a) recommended that Bangladesh share its experience and best practices in this area with other developing countries. Malaysia applauded the efforts to achieve economic growth and social progress, and was encouraged by the serious efforts made to combat violence against women and children. It (b) recommended that Bangladesh redouble efforts and allocate more resources in this area, in particular through increasing women’s empowerment, public awareness, education and training, as well as increase vigilance and monitoring by the relevant authorities.

41. Chile welcomed the efforts by Bangladesh to promote human rights. Bangladesh has not ratified OP-ICCPR 1 and OP-ICCPR 2, OP-CAT, CED and ICRMW. Chile (a) recommended that it consider doing so. Chile asked about follow-up to CEDAW’s call for the adoption of a comprehensive approach to combat and eradicate violence against women. Chile noted that Committee on the Rights of the Child was concerned about the sentencing to life imprisonment of children from the age of 7 years and to the death penalty of children from the age of 16 years. It recommended that Bangladesh (b) adopt a moratorium on the death penalty, as a primary step towards its abolition; and (c) consider abolishing article 377 of the Penal Code, which criminalizes sexuality against the “order of nature”.

42. Indonesia appreciated the strategies to achieve democratic goals and to cooperate with international human rights mechanisms. It noted initiatives undertaken in the fields of education and health care, and encouraging results in reducing infant and maternal mortality. It asked Bangladesh about strategies to meet its MDGs. Indonesia recommended that Bangladesh continue its efforts to further the enforcement of child rights and laws. It hoped that the international community would support Bangladesh in its efforts.

43. Bahrain mentioned that national plans and projects had been developed to combat poverty and increase per capita income. The 2000 national policy aimed at providing basic health care without discrimination. A national strategy had been adopted to provide maternal and child care and to reduce mortality rates. Bahrain commended the adoption of a national food policy and recommended that Bangladesh (a) continue efforts to draw up a national plan to provide health care to all without discrimination and (b) create job opportunities and provide social services to face development challenges and combat poverty.

47. Thailand welcomed the special emphasis placed on poverty alleviation; concrete steps taken to attain the MDGs; measures taken to address feminization of poverty and initiatives empowering women such as the Vulnerable Group Development Programme. Thailand urged Bangladesh to ensure the full and effective implementation of existing laws and policies relating to the rights of women and children, in order to protect these rights and eliminate all forms of discrimination.

49. Turkey welcomed the announced plan to introduce a “bribery-free court management”. It encouraged Bangladesh to pursue the reform agenda to strengthen the independence of the judiciary, combat impunity and address basic needs in over-crowded prisons. Treaty bodies and ILO expressed concern at the prevalence of child labour and incidences of sexual exploitation of children. Turkey recommended that Bangladesh (a) ensure an effective monitoring mechanism to oversee the implementation of the National Child Labour Policy, which it welcomed; and (b) continue to take measures towards the effective implementation of the National Plan of Action against Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children including Trafficking. Turkey welcomed the significant progress to reduce poverty, highlighting the focus placed on disadvantaged groups and the establishment of social safety nets.

52. The Netherlands noted that the creation and strengthening of key institutions are important achievements. Efforts to tackle impunity and corruption are commendable, but much remains to be done. The Netherlands recommended that the government (a) ratify the optional protocol to the convention against torture, take measures to protect human rights defenders, including journalists, address the problems of extrajudicial killings and torture by security forces and improve prison situations; (b) take steps to further strengthen the National Human Rights Commission and the Anti-corruption Commission to ensure that they will be able to operate independently and effectively; (c) ensure that women’s rights are protected, through effective implementation of existing laws, the development of a comprehensive national action plan to combat violence against women and the adoption of a family code complying with CEDAW’s provisions; and (d) eradicate child labour starting with taking steps to finalize the National child labour policy and to implement the plan of action to eliminate the worst forms of child labour.

53. Australia welcomed the improvement of human rights trends under the Caretaker Government and plans to further implement human rights treaties. Australia recommended that Bangladesh (a) take measures to protect human rights defenders, including journalists; (b) take measures to ensure women’s rights are protected through implementing existing laws such as the Early marriage Act and the Dowry Act; (c) take steps to eradicate child labour such as finalizing the National Child Labour Policy and implementing the plan of action to eliminate the worst forms of child labour. It encouraged Bangladesh to (d) take steps to protect the social, economic and cultural rights of minorities, refugees and displaced persons and recommended that Bangladesh: (e) take steps to implement the Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord; (f) take steps to address the culture of impunity for human rights violations by law enforcement agencies. While welcoming efforts to separate the judiciary from the executive, Australia recommended that the government (g) now take measures to ensure the independence of the judiciary, the NHRC and the Anti-Corruption Commission.
54. Viet Nam noted with appreciation the legislative and enforcement reforms in such areas as health, food security, poverty alleviation, rights of women, children and other vulnerable groups. Viet Nam commended Bangladesh for its active role as a member of the HRC and recommended that Bangladesh continue its efforts to ensure the right to food for the citizens. It called on the international community to respond favourably to Bangladesh’s request for capacity building and technical assistance to overcome the difficulties and challenges it faces.

59. The Minister drew attention to the national report that elaborated on Bangladesh’s commitment and the measures taken to curb violence against women and children. She stated that in compliance with its national and international obligations, Bangladesh would continue working on this very important issue in partnership with NGOs and civil society organisations referring to several laws that address violence against women and children in Bangladesh. She also noted the existence of a separate tribunal for trying cases of violence against women and children. Moreover, she stated that Bangladesh would give full effort for strict implementation of existing laws and initiatives to promote and protect the human rights of women and children.

60. The Minister informed that Bangladesh was addressing the issue of child labour involving children in a comprehensive manner. She noted Government actions on children, including elimination of child labour and ensuring for the rights to health, nutrition, education, water and sanitation. She noted the Bangladesh’s successful elimination of child labour from garment sector and the progress being made in other sectors. Bangladesh was trying to counter child labour in informal sectors through provision of free primary and secondary education and through cash for education programmes. She stated that Bangladesh was also committed to implementing the objectives of the global plan of action of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

61. The Minister referred to a number of governmental measures aimed at promoting development of the minority groups, noting different welfare trusts for people belonging to the Hindu, the Buddhist, and the Christian religion. She further referred to a council for inter-faith harmony, where religious leaders from all communities work collectively for development issues like prevention of HIV/AIDS, reproductive health, and primary education. She further noted the government efforts to ensure representation of religious and ethnic minorities at all levels of government service, parliament and public life.

64. Czech Republic recommended that Bangladesh (a) adopt further measures to fight impunity for human rights violations, including by law enforcement officials; (b) accede to OP-CAT and (c) the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. It asked whether and in which time frame pending visits from special procedures could take place, and recommended that Bangladesh (d) issue and implement a standing invitation to all special procedures. It further recommended that Bangladesh (e) review its domestic legislation and practice to bring them both in compliance with its international obligations in the area of the rights of the child, in particular regarding (i) protection against kidnapping and trafficking, and (ii) the juvenile justice system, including through providing adequate separate facilities of corresponding capacity for juveniles in detention or prison and adopting specific measures for the protection of their human rights. Asking whether women in mixed marriages can transfer their citizenship to their children, it recommended that Bangladesh: (f) amend the relevant legal provision; (g) provide human rights training to law enforcement and judicial officers, with a specific focus on the protection of the rights of women, children and persons of minority sexual orientation or gender identity, (h) adopt further measures to ensure protection of these persons against violence and abuse and (i) decriminalize same sex activity between consenting adults and adopt further measures to promote tolerance in this regard.

65. Palestine noticed that the government works to protect specific vulnerable groups. Palestine encouraged Bangladesh to proceed with adequate measures to eliminate gender disparities, attain equality through sustainable development, support actively the refugees and adopt a plan of action for eliminating child labor by promoting basic education. Palestine recommended that Bangladesh pursue its efforts in incorporating sustainable environmental development into its policies, considering the impact of natural disaster and degradation of natural resources on human rights despite all existing challenges.

69. Liechtenstein welcomed measures taken to increase girls and women’s literacy rates. Recalling concerns expressed by CEDAW and CRC about the existence of harmful traditional practices, Liechtenstein (a) recommended that Bangladesh intensify its efforts to protect children from early and forced marriages. Stressing CEDAW’s concern at the persistence of violence against women, including domestic violence, rape, acid throwing, dowry-related violence, fatwa- instigated violence and sexual harassment in the workplace, Liechtenstein recommended that Bangladesh (b) adopt a comprehensive strategy to combat all forms of violence against women and girls. It also recommended (c) acceding to OP-CAT.

73. Germany asked about measures envisaged to address the problem of food insecurity. It noted the serious concerns expressed by CRC, including on ill-treatment and violence against children, juvenile justice, and child labour. Germany asked about the measures taken to protect children, plans to increase the number of birth registrations and whether Bangladesh is considering withdrawing its reservations to the CRC. It recommended that Bangladesh (a) continue combating discrimination and violence against women and girls by enacting effective laws and implementing them effectively, (b) adopt without delay a uniform Family Code that fully complies with the provisions of CEDAW, and (c) fight impunity and holds all officers and persons acting on their behalf accountable for acts of torture and harassment of civilians.

74. Nigeria noted the efforts made regarding women’s rights and empowerment as well as progress made in children’s rights and welfare, education and primary healthcare. It called on the international community to provide support to Bangladesh to fulfil its human rights obligations and attain its overall MDGs. Nigeria congratulated and encouraged Bangladesh to continue to improve its policies and programs towards advancing the status of women, girls, children, including those with disabilities and the overall human rights situation, both in the enjoyment of civil and political rights as well as social, economic and cultural rights.

75. Holy See noted positive measures against human rights violations, including the establishment of institutions addressing violence against women and children. It noted a number of cases where people suffered from violence and discrimination, especially women of
minority religions, including Hinduism and Christianity. It recommended that Bangladesh investigate complaints concerning discrimination against members of minority religions, while developing educational and awareness programmes addressing these human rights violations. It asked about measures envisaged to confront the plight of indigenous peoples.

76. Italy recommended that Bangladesh (a) as a first step, consider amending their legislation on the death penalty in order to restrict its scope and adjust it to the international minimum standards on the death penalty, and (b) in light of the increasing awareness of the international community on the matter, as reflected in General Assembly resolutions approved in 2007 and 2008, consider the establishment of a moratorium on the use of the death penalty with a view to abolition. Italy indicated that the special rapporteur on religious freedom noticed in 2000, some restrictions on religious freedom, in particular on the activities of the Ahmadis community and that the situation has not changed yet. It recommended that Bangladesh (c) consider enhancing raising campaigns. Italy expressed concern about children’s rights and asked about measures taken, including in particular on protecting girls from early and forced marriages. It recommended to Bangladesh to (d) intensify its efforts to implement without delay existing laws concerning the protection of the rights of the child, including the births and deaths registration Act of 2004.

79. United Kingdom welcomed reforms, including towards the separation of lower judiciary and the executive and the re-constitution of the Anti-Corruption and Election Commissions. Bangladesh retains reservations to some treaties. Extra-judicial killings, custodial deaths and torture are reported. Prisons are overcrowded and domestic violence remains commonplace. The prohibition of child labour is not always enforced in the informal sector and a high proportion of children with disabilities do not have access to mainstream primary education. It recommended (a) that Bangladesh take steps to devise a national strategy for delivering justice, to include the police, the judiciary, civil society and government; (b) the NHRC be given powers to effectively protect human rights in accordance with the Paris principles; (c) that Bangladesh take further steps to address discrimination against vulnerable groups; and (d) the full involvement of civil society in the follow-up to this review.

80. Republic of Korea noted with satisfaction the Government’s strong will to realize all human rights through democratic governance. It indicated that although Bangladesh adopted the prevention of women and children repression Act and the Acid Control Act, CEDAW and CRC expressed concern that violence against women and girls, including acid throwing continues to exist. It recommended to Bangladesh to adopt a comprehensive approach to address violence against women and girls and to take effective measures to protect them.

82. Slovenia recommended that Bangladesh reconsider its position on reservations to international human rights treaties and invited Bangladesh to accede to those international treaties to which it is not a party. Slovenia remained deeply concerned about reports of abuse and sexual molestation of girls and inaccessibility to school. It asked Bangladesh about the intended concrete steps to respond to the reports of CRC, CEDAW, UNICEF and others and to implement their recommendations on the issue of discrimination.

Conclusions and Recommendations

8. Continue to improve its policies and programmes towards advancing the status of women, girls, children, including those with disabilities and the overall human rights situation, both in the enjoyment of civil and political rights as well as social, economic and cultural rights (Nigeria).

13. Ensure the full and effective implementation of existing laws and policies relating to the rights of women and children, in order to protect these rights and eliminate all forms of discrimination (Thailand); Continue to place emphasis on poverty alleviation and eradication, on women’s empowerment and children’s rights (Singapore).

5. Take measures to ensure women’s rights are protected through implementing existing laws such as the Early Marriage Act and the Dowry Act (Australia); Continue combating discrimination and violence against women and girls by elaborating effective laws and implementing them effectively, and adopt without delay (Germany) a uniform Family Code that fully complies with the provisions of CEDAW (Norway); Ensure that women’s rights are protected, through effective implementation of existing laws, the development of a comprehensive national action plan to combat violence against women and the adoption of a family code complying with the provisions of CEDAW (Netherlands); Intensify its efforts to protect children from early and forced marriages (Liechtenstein); Amend, if necessary, the relevant discriminatory legal provision concerning the transfer of citizenship to children of women in mixed marriages (Czech Republic); Adopt a comprehensive action plan to address wage inequalities and make available maternity leave in all public and private employments (Norway).

16. Taking into account the provisions of the CRC, take further measures to prohibit all forms of violence against children, including corporal punishment and to raise the minimum age of criminal responsibility (Brazil); Review its domestic legislation and practice to bring them both in compliance with its international obligations in the area of the rights of the child, in particular regarding (i) protection against kidnapping and trafficking, and (ii) the juvenile justice system including through providing adequate separate facilities of corresponding capacity for juveniles in detention or prison and adopting specific measures for the protection of their human rights (Czech Republic); Continue its efforts to further the enforcement of child rights and laws (Indonesia); Intensify its efforts to implement without delay existing laws concerning the protection of the rights of the child, including the births and deaths registration Act of 2004 (Italy).

21. Redouble its efforts and allocate more resources to address the problem of violence against women and children in this area, in particular through increasing women’s empowerment, public awareness, education and training as well as increase vigilance and monitoring by the relevant authorities (Malaysia); Adopt a comprehensive strategy to combat all forms of violence against women and girls (Liechtenstein); Adopt a comprehensive approach to address violence against women and girls and to take effective measures to protect them (Republic of Korea).
22. Take steps to eradicate child labour such as finalizing the National Child Labour Policy and implementing the plan of action to eliminate the worst forms of child labour (Australia); Ensure an effective monitoring mechanism to oversee the implementation of the National Child Labour Policy (Turkey); Eradicate child labour starting with taking steps to finalize the National child labour policy and to implement the plan of action to eliminate the worst forms of child labour (Netherlands).

23. Continue to take measures towards the effective implementation of the National Plan of Action against Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children including Trafficking (Turkey).

33. Pursue its positive efforts to promote and protect the right to education, including the education of girls (Cuba); Continue to promote non-formal education in order to make greater progress in advancing people’s education level (China).