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'. Also included is the 'Final Report' and 'Conclusions and Recommendations' from the Review.

Pakistan - 2nd Session - 2008
8th May, 2.30pm to 5.30pm

National Report

Pakistan is state party to the following international human rights related instruments:
- ILO Convention 138 on Minimum Age for Employment.
- ILO Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour.

Pakistan is signatory to the following human rights related instruments:
- Optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on Children in armed conflict.

Numerous laws and administrative measures exist to directly or indirectly give effect to various provisions of Pakistan's Constitution on the International Conventions that Pakistan is party to. These include:
- The Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929 prohibits marriage of minors and prescribes punishments for anyone, including a parent or guardian, for conducting a child marriage.
- Under the Pakistan Penal Code, 1860, (PPC) severe penalties are prescribed for the offences of kidnapping or abduction of girls/women under Sections 361, 363, 364A & 369, procurement of a girl (Section 366A-PPC) or her importation from abroad (Section 366B-PPC).

Amended laws:
- Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2004 removing certain lacunae in the law to facilitate prosecution of the so-called "honour killings".
- Pakistan Citizenship Act 1951 was amended to give children of Pakistani women married to foreigners the right to Pakistani nationality.

Pakistan is a State Party to the Convention on Rights of the Child and has been reporting on the implementation of its obligations under the Convention. Our last report was submitted to the Committee in 2007.

Pakistan signed the "SAARC Convention on Prevention and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution". Cross-country trafficking can be addressed effectively through its operationalisation.

The Government of Pakistan has adopted a number of measures to give effect to the implementation of the CRC: These include (a) The introduction of the second National Plan of Action for the well-being of Children; and (b) Changes in different laws related to children; includes increase in the age for criminal liability.

Amendments have been made in the Hadood Ordinance through the Prevention of Anti-Women Practices (Criminal Law) Amendment Act, 2006, for greater child protection.

Pakistan has made progress towards achieving MDGs- Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) has increased from 72 per cent in the year 2000-01 to 87 per cent in the year 2005-06. Net Enrolment Rate (NER) has also shown an upward trend. Pakistan has made progress in NER at primary school level. Infant mortality rate at 70 and under-five mortality rate at 100 are showing exponential decline. The Ministry of Education launched the National Plan of Action for Education for All in April 2003, for achieving universal primary education by 2015.

Gender disparities are being narrowed through mixed primary schools, compensatory programs, focusing on missing facilities in girls' schools and appointment of female teachers. According to EFA goals and targets, by 2015, all children, with special emphasis on girls
The Child Support Program was launched from 2006-07 for Food Support Programme beneficiaries at the rate of Rs.200 per month to seeing inclusive education as fundamental right of every child and a means of meeting the Millennium Development Goals. Assistance of Sight Saver UK, World Bank and Braille Norway. The main purpose of this program is to shift from a focus on disability to inclusive education. The equipment provided to 14 selected primary schools each for boys and girls includes Braille Machines, Audiovisual, hearing aids, wheelchairs, crutches, other education equipment and furniture items.

The Directorate General of Special Education in collaboration with Ministry of Education and provincial departments of education is working on a Pilot Project for Integrated Education of Children with Disabilities. To attain the goal of mainstreaming, 14 regular schools working on a Pilot Project for Integrated Education of Children with Disabilities. To attain the goal of mainstreaming, 14 regular schools were established to provide shelter, education, health and referral services to neglected children.

Challenges facing implementation of the JJSO include limited resources i.e. funds for legal assistance, establishment of new borstal institutions and establishment of a juvenile justice system in Federally Administered Areas and the establishment of the Exclusive Juvenile Courts.

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A Child Protection Bill is under parliamentary consideration. A Child Protection Policy is also being formulated. The objective is to have a formal policy to protect children from harm and abuse. An assessment of the child protection monitoring and data collection system has been made in 2007 and a child Protection Monitoring and Data collection system is being developed. This will help in coordination among concerned Ministries and Provincial Governments. The draft Child Protection Policy makes legal provisions for:

a. Definition of a child as under 18 years of age.
b. Definition of child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation with penalties.
c. Revising minimum age of criminal responsibility from 7 to 12 years.
d. Definition of internal trafficking of children with penalties.
e. Eliminating Child domestic work.
f. Abolishing Corporal Punishment.
g. Rules and regulations for provision of protective services for children, including minimum standards of care, "kafala" of children orphaned or without parental care; and social protection of the children in economically disadvantaged families.

Also the following are in the process of formulation/implementation:

i. National Policy for the Protection of Orphans and Vulnerable Children is being prepared for earthquake affected areas,
ii. The Employment of Children Act 1991 has already been reviewed and changes have been made. Child labour is prohibited in 4 occupations and 34 processes,
iii. To prevent trafficking in general and child trafficking in particular, the "Prevention and Control of Human Trafficking Ordinance, 2002" has been promulgated. This provides protection to victims by imposing harsh penalties of up to 14 years imprisonment and fine. Rules under this Ordinance called Prevention and Control of Human Trafficking Rules 2004 provide guidelines to law enforcing agencies on victim rehabilitation and compensation and rehabilitation for reintegration and prevent child trafficking,
iv. Punjab Destitute and Neglected Children Act 2004 was promulgated by the Punjab Government under which Child Protection and Welfare Bureau were established to provide shelter, education, health and referral services to neglected children,
v. Children Protection, Monitoring and Data collection System is being set up by National Commission for Child Welfare and Development in collaboration with UNICEF with the objective of assessing situation of child rights in the country,
vi. The Juvenile Justice Ordinance 2000 (JJSO) Recognises the special requirements of children. In implementation of JJSO the following measures are being taken:
- Death penalty for individuals under 18 years of age has been prohibited.
- All juveniles that the court cannot release on bail because of various reasons: "should be placed under the custody of a Probation Officer or suitable person or institution dealing with the welfare of the children if parent or guardian of the child is not present, but shall not under any circumstances be kept in a police station or jail in such cases".
- Brochures and posters have been published about the role of Probation Officers and significance of the probation system. As a result, the number of juvenile probationers has risen during the reporting period. JJSO 2000 guarantees that a child accused of or victim of, an offence, has the right to legal assistance at the expense of the State. High Courts of all the Provinces have directed District and Sessions Judges to establish panels of lawyers to extend legal assistance to juveniles at the expense of the State. Civil Society Organisations are also extending free legal assistance to under trial juvenile inmates.
- Juvenile Courts with exclusive jurisdiction to try cases in which a child is accused of committing an offence are being established.
- A child arrested for a non-bailable offence must be produced before the Juvenile Court in less than 24 hours.
- A child arrested for a bailable offence should be released by the court on bail. A child should not be kept in a police station.
- Children cannot be sent to ordinary prisons but to a Borstal Institutions. Since Borstal Institutions are limited in number, juvenile inmates are kept in separate sections of prisons. Efforts are being made to improve prison conditions for juvenile inmates.
- The training curriculum in the Federal Judicial Academy for judges includes the Juvenile justice system.
- Special emphasis is placed on sensitizing police officers on human rights issues. Violence against women and children has been included in a one week module for police officers in National Police Academy.

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family with one child and Rs 350 per month to families with two or more 5-12 years old conditional on sending their children to school.

The Government's Education Policy (1998-2010) and the Education Sector Reforms (ESR) Action Plan 2002-2006 recognises the fact that quality of education is an important factor in national development. The monitoring of learning achievements of students is, therefore, one of the key components to assess and to improve the quality of education. National Education Assessment System (NEAS) is one of the key programs under the Education Policy to improve the quality of education at elementary level. The program aims to develop national capacity for monitoring the learning achievements of elementary level students in order to improve the quality of services (curriculum, textual material, teachers' delivery, policy formulation, etc) in the education sector.

Education in general and primary education in particular is on the concurrent list of the Constitution. After nationwide devolution in 2001 education up to grade 12 is a district subject. All implementation lies at district and provincial level. However, three of the four provinces, Federally Administered Areas and the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) have compulsory primary education laws. Primary education was made compulsory in the provinces.

The lack of physical infrastructure is becoming one of the major causes for low enrolment and high drop out rates in the country. Rs. 1.05 billion has been earmarked for 2006-07 for the provision of missing facilities to the government schools under the Education Sector Reforms. This would be spent on provision of water, toilets, science and computer labs and other facilities. The program would continue until infrastructure and facilities in all schools are upgraded.

An Education for All (EFA) National Plan of Action (NPA) has been developed through broad-based consultations with principal actors of EFA and other stakeholders. The Ten Year Perspective Development Plan 2001-2011 links education with other social sectors and views EFA as the centrepiece of human capital formation. Emphasis is placed on three priority areas, with targets to be reached by 2015, namely:

- Universal primary education and quality EFA.
- Raising the net participation rate of early childhood education to 50 per cent.
- Adult literacy rate rose to 86 per cent.

The Ministry of Education launched the National Plan of Action for Education for All on 3rd April 2003, for achieving universal primary education by 2015. Gender disparities are being narrowed through mixed primary schools, compensatory programs (nutrition, stipends) targeted towards girls at the primary, middle and matric levels, and appointment of female teachers.

In Pakistan, education is provided by public and private sector at 65:35 per cent ratios. Most non-state providers or private sector charge fees. However, some philanthropic providers provide free or virtually free of cost education such as the Citizen's Foundation, as well as the Provincial Education Foundations through its Financially Assisted Schools (FAS) program is ensuring that education is provided free of cost @ Rs. 300 per child in non-elite private schools. Education Foundations being quasi government institutions are acting on behalf of the government to buy places for children in the private sector up to secondary level to provide choice and quality. The National Education Foundation and the Sindh Education Foundation also subscribe to highly subsidised community based schools for the disadvantaged. The overall reach of these programs is about .5 million children.

Overall gender gap in the GER has been considerably reduced. This can be attributed to increase in female enrolment rate during the same period. There are areas in which significant progress has been made and indicators point to a steady though slow improvement in the ratio of girls to boys at all levels of education, the ratio of literate females to males, share of women in urban employment (as proxy indicator for share of women in wage employment in non-agricultural sector) has improved marginally and improvement in participation of women in national decision making process.

There are several explanations for this persistent gap in literacy. A recent World Bank Country Gender Assessment Report 2005 highlights the two most important constraining factors that impede female access to education. Distance from school and physical costs of attending schools for girls affect their enrolment. The latest PRHS-2 2004-05 also indicate lack of access of girls.

To encourage regular attendance at schools and to reduce drop out rates many positive measures have been taken. Extensive compensatory support programs are in place to offset costs of education and reduce household burden. In the far flung areas of Pakistan there are large initiatives of World Food Program and Tawana or School Nutrition Program to support students and their families. The latter program in progress across 25 poorest districts in the country was reviewed and revamped from providing hot cooked meals on the premises to high nutrition milk and biscuits and scaled up to 55 districts. However, this is restricted to government schools targeting girls and mixed schools. Provincial Governments have waived user charges and are providing free books up to matric level, to attract students who cannot continue their studies due to poverty. Scholarships are being provided, particularly to female students to increase enrolment.

The reforms program for Madrassahs (seminaries) has been termed "mainstreaming of Madrassahs", providing insertion of additional subjects offered in regular schools, teachers support, training and maximum perks to teachers and improving the quality of education. More than 95 per cent of the country's estimated 13,000 Madrassahs had been registered. Madrassahs students constituted 4.5 per cent of the enrolled students in the country. Pakistan Studies, English, Mathematics and computer science has been incorporated in the curricula of Madrassahs.

A project titled "Madrassahs Reforms" was launched in 2002-03 with the directive of the President for a period of 5 years at a capital cost of Rs. 5759.4 million. The main objective of this program is to provide financial assistance to 8000 Deeni Madaris (religious seminaries) to introduce formal subjects in their curricula. The progress made toward the goals of this reform program include, simplification of the process of registration of Madaris, the standard procedure prescribed by the Ministry of Interior to control funds has produced positive results, a large number of Madaris have applied to provincial/area governments for financial assistance under the project, Most of Madaris in AJ&K have been cleared for financial assistance and a great breakthrough by the FATA administration have
been made by distributing checks among registered Deeni Madaris.

Human Rights Education Curricula has been developed through consultative processes at the Curriculum Wing of the Ministry of Law, Justice and Human Rights 2001 with the support of the Norwegian and Canadian governments. This Ministry in cooperation with Norway (NORAD) and Government of Switzerland worked jointly with the Ministry of Education on a project "Human Rights Mass Awareness for Education". The most important step taken in this direction is the incorporation of the main concepts related to child rights into curriculum and teachers training materials. The materials produced have been incorporated in the relevant subjects taught at school levels. Textbooks contain messages of human rights together with articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In Sindh textbooks on human rights education, citizenship and conflict resolution education have been integrated in the government prescribed social studies textbooks of primary and elementary levels. The new National Curriculum has made efforts to include principles of human rights, upholding diversity and difference along with universal rights.

Child mortality rates have shown a steady decline. Pakistan is on track to accomplish the MDG target for child mortality, but challenges like inadequate access to health services, poor utilisation of PHC facilities and low health expenditure need to be addressed for timely achievement of the targets.

In relation to immunisation, the GoP is committed to the Extended Program for Immunisation (EPI), and has projected EPI coverage of more than 80 per cent in the near future. The incidence of diarrhoea has seen a steep decline. Emphasis on the treatment of diarrhoea dehydration through oral dehydration therapy (ORT) has helped to keep mortality due to diarrhoea in check, despite the stagnation in the rate of fall of the incidence of diarrhoea. There are marked intra-category variations, but no consistent trends can be seen between urban-rural data or over time.

The Government approved a National Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (MNCH) Program in November 2006. The program is based upon the recommendations of the Framework, which was a result of extensive consultative workshops at provincial and district levels, and which was endorsed by the Prime Minister of Pakistan and unanimously adopted by all provinces and AJK in the National Public Health Forum in April 2005. WHO and other partners were instrumental in supporting the Government efforts to establish this important program.

Government of Pakistan (GoP) is committed to improve maternal and child health through a number of interventions e.g. the Maternal and Newborn Child Health Program. The program provides an important strategic arm both for the National Health Policy (2001), Ten Year Perspective Development Plan, National Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, and Medium Term Planning Framework 2005-10. The overall vision is to ensure "health for all" with attention directed towards the primary and secondary levels of the health care system coupled with community outreach services through an integrated system-wide approaches.

The program aims to fill in the gaps in health service provision in the country with a view to reinstate the trust of the communities in the public sector health system and to provide them services that are of a high standard and are affordable. This program together with the provincial contribution will reorient the health system to be more consumer-friendly and rationalise the use of existing resources through coordination with other major health programs.

**Compilation of UN Information**

CRC recommended the ratification of CRC-OPSC and CRC-OPAC and that Pakistan consider ratifying the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, its 1967 Protocol and the ILO Minimum Age Convention (No. 138).

In 2003, CRC noted the ombudspersons institution but recommended the State to establish an independent monitoring mechanism in accordance with the Paris Principles. CRC recommended the State to ensure that the National Commission for the Welfare and Protection of the Rights of the Child is provided with adequate resources and that coordination mechanisms be strengthened between all authorities involved.


CRC was concerned at the persistence of discriminatory social attitudes and discrimination against minority children and girls.

In 2006, the Special Rapporteur on extra-judicial, summary or arbitrary executions wrote regarding alleged indiscriminate attacks and killings by security forces in Balochistan, resulting in the death of 84 individuals, including women and children.

In 2003, CRC was deeply concerned at the high prevalence of violence, abuse, including sexual abuse, and neglect of children, and at the lack of effective measures to combat this problem. CRC was particularly concerned at the absence of legislation clearly prohibiting child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation, the lack of a clear definition of the term, as well as the lack of legislation that clearly defines sexual consent. In addition, although the State is undertaking training of relevant authorities to promote respect for children’s rights, CRC was deeply concerned at numerous reports of torture, serious ill-treatment and sexual abuse of children, including children belonging to religious or other minority groups, by police officers in detention facilities and other State institutions. CRC also emphasised the lack of State intervention to address harmful traditional practices, such as dowry-related violence. The Committee recommended Pakistan to, inter alia, properly investigate cases of violence, to include a definition of torture in the Constitution and ratify the CAT.

CRC was very concerned about reports of violence and sexual abuse within madrasas, that such schools were involved in recruiting children, including forcibly, to participate in armed conflicts, and of reported recruitment more generally despite prohibitive legislation.
In 2003, CRC was deeply concerned that the Penal Code permits corporal punishment as a disciplinary measure in schools and that it is widely practised. UNICEF informed that the draft “Protection of Children Bill-2006” prohibits corporal punishment and harmful traditional practices, such as early marriages. CRC was concerned that, despite the 1996 Abolition of the Punishment of Whipping Act, whipping is still used as a sentence for Hudood crimes.

While noting the State’s acknowledgement that economic exploitation of children is a very serious concern, CRC remained deeply concerned about the extremely high prevalence of child labour, that it is widely accepted in society; that the minimum age for admission to employment is low and varies between different laws; and that notably children working as domestic servants are very vulnerable to abuse, including sexual abuse, and completely lack protection. In 2003, CRC expressed its concern at the increasing number of street children, their vulnerability to violence, torture, sexual abuse and exploitation, the lack of a strategy in this regard, and the very poor registration of missing children by the police.

CEDAW remained concerned that Pakistan is a country of origin, transit and destination for trafficked women and girls, and while CRC welcomed the Prevention and Control of Human Trafficking Ordinance (2002) in 2003, CEDAW noted that it does not adequately address the needs of victims of trafficking, nor does it shield them from prosecution for illegal migration. While noting the serious efforts undertaken to prevent child trafficking, CRC was deeply concerned, also highlighted by UNHCR, at the very high incidence of trafficking in children for the purposes of sexual exploitation, bonded labour and use as camel jockeys. In a case sent by the Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, 5 children from Pakistan had allegedly been trafficked into another state to be used as camel jockeys. The State informed that two of the children had been returned to their parents, but that the others could not be traced. A 2007 UNODC report noted that Pakistan also faced challenges of organised crime, including trafficking of human beings. A communication sent by the Special Rapporteurs on trafficking and on the human rights of migrants related to the alleged complicity of a Minister in the trafficking of 58 young men into another State for forced labour. Pakistan informed that it had taken immediate measures to repatriate them and to ensure that they obtained redress.

CRC welcomed the Juvenile Justice System Ordinance (2000), but was concerned at its poor implementation. CRC was also deeply concerned at the high number of children in prisons who are detained in poor conditions, often together with adults, and about reports of juvenile offenders being sentenced to death and executed, which occurred even after the promulgation of the Ordinance. UNICEF informed that the draft Protection of Children-Bill-2006 increased the minimum age for criminal liability from 7 to 12 years.

CRC was concerned about the legislative inconsistency concerning the definition of a child, in particular, like CEDAW, at the difference between the minimum legal age for marriage of boys and girls, and at the definition of a child contained in the Zina and Hudood Ordinances.

UNICEF informed that pro-poor spending considerably increased during 2000-2005. In 2003, CRC was very concerned at the high number of children living in poverty, the shortage of adequate housing, clean water, adequate sanitation and sewage and the problem of air pollution.

CRC noted efforts in the area of basic health and welfare and welcomed the Protection of Breastfeeding and Young Child Nutrition Ordinance (2002). CRC was nevertheless extremely concerned at the very poor health situation of children and the unavailability of health-care services for them.

CEDAW was concerned about the high illiteracy rate of women, the low enrolment of girls in schools and their high dropout rate, especially in rural areas. CEDAW was further concerned at the persistence of gender-based segregation in educational fields and of stereotypes in school curricula and textbooks. UNESCO informed that the State has not been able to offer all children equal access to basic education, in terms of physical facilities, curriculum, teaching staff, etc. CRC welcomed measures to increase the attendance of girls at schools and the national “Compulsory Primary Education Ordinance” (2002). UNICEF informed that provincial governments are introducing initiatives to improve the education system including providing free education up to matriculation, free textbooks, and stipends to girls. While being aware of the 49 special education centres and disabled-friendly cities initiatives, CRC remained concerned at the limited integration of children with disabilities in schools.

In 2003, CRC was very concerned about the narrow content of education provided within madrasas and appreciated initiatives to streamline such education to make it more compatible with regular public education. UNESCO informed that since religious education is free, poor parents often send their children to these schools where Math or Science are not taught.

While noting the many efforts to promote timely birth registration, CRC was concerned that a significant number of children are not registered at birth, especially children belonging to a religious or other minority group and children living in rural areas.

While noting some progress in this field, such as introducing birth registration in refugee camps in May 2002, CRC in 2003, also highlighted by UNHCR, remained concerned at the very harsh conditions in Afghan refugee camps, the scarcity of food and water and the lack of shelter and medical care. CRC was also concerned at reports of ill-treatment of refugees by the police.

CRC recognised the difficulties faced by the State, namely serious economic challenges, catastrophic drought conditions hampering the economy, the armed conflict in some regions, the high number of refugees, as well as a high population growth rate. UNICEF informed that the 8 October 2005 earthquake, also termed as the ‘children’s tragedy’, was the worst natural calamity to hit Pakistan in recorded history.

Summary of Stakeholders' Information

HRW noted that violence against women and girls, including domestic violence, rape, “honour killings,” acid attacks, and forced marriages, remain serious problems in Pakistan. Precise figures on gender-based violence are difficult to obtain, but estimates range
Turkey noted the Child Protection Bill and the Child Protection Policy, including provisions for abolishing harmful traditional practice, the Child protection policy being formulated, which it hopes will soon be adopted.

violence against women and promote the rights children, regarding which it notes the pending Child Protection Bill in Parliament and against trafficking and pornography, as well as its national policy for the decent living of the disabled.

Qatar noted the important measures taken to grant protection to minorities, women and children, noting in particular measures taken against trafficking and pornography, as well as its national policy for the decent living of the disabled.

The Philippines encouraged Pakistan to ratify the treaties and protocols that have not yet been ratified and to continue to combat violence against women and promote the rights children, regarding which it notes the pending Child Protection Bill in Parliament and the Child protection policy being formulated, which it hopes will soon be adopted.

Turkey noted the Child Protection Bill and the Child Protection Policy, including provisions for abolishing harmful traditional practice,
revising the definition of the child and amending the minimum age of criminal responsibility. Turkey encouraged Pakistan to pursue these reforms and asked for an update on these initiatives.

- The Russian Federation asked how the draft law on the protection of children which will prohibit corporal punishment will fit with the provisions of the Criminal Code which allow corporal punishment in schools.

- Switzerland encouraged Pakistan to implement the draft law on the protection of children rapidly and to speed up the implementation of the 2000 edict for justice for minors.

- Cuba noted the National Plan of Action for Education. It noted the efforts made regarding child labour and indicated that these could serve as best practice for countries with similar problems, and in this regard, it requested information on the Government’s strategy to eliminate child labour.

- Regarding the education sector, Pakistan highlighted that both primary and secondary education are free. It also noted that when the State came into being, the literacy rate was at 13 per cent and that it is currently at over 56 per cent; that it has instituted vocational training throughout the country, aiming to make young people as skilled as possible. It highlighted nonetheless its need to improve the teaching skills of teachers, while noting programmes for reorientation and updated curriculum assistance. It noted that any assistance by the international community in the field would be welcome.

- On the issue of child labour, Pakistan re-stated that it was aware of the problem, the reason for which lies mainly in poverty, and added that this problem exists mainly in the informal sector, its incidence in the formal sector being negligible. The Representative noted a number of measures taken to eliminate this issue, including its elimination from hazardous industries i.e. surgical, tanneries, football and carpets.

- Azerbaijan noted the National Plan of Action for Education for All, the Ten-Year Perspective Development Plan 2001-2011.

- Bahrain recognised the progress made in a number of areas, including health and education.

- Regarding gender equality and education, Bangladesh encouraged Pakistan to continue improving the situation of women through “pro-women” policies and inquired about the measures adopted to modernise the educational system of madrassas.

- Brazil enquired about the main steps and challenges to guarantee the rights of child.

- Noting concerns about the situation in prisons, particularly regarding facilities for female detainees and their children, and juveniles, Germany inquired about measures to protect prisoner rights.

- Morocco welcomed progress made in regard to education, health, employment and women’s protection, as well as efforts for other vulnerable groups, including children.

- Bhutan noted Pakistan’s progress towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals in the education and health sectors.

- The Syrian Arab Republic noted achievements such as the political empowerment of women, including the criminalizing of ‘honour killings’ and the provision of quality education.

- Finland highlighted the concern of the Committee on the Rights of the Child regarding low public expenditure on education and that international aid in this area has not been used in an adequate way. It asked whether Pakistan is still committed to increasing funding for education. It recommended taking urgent measures to ensure that adequate resources are allocated for education.

- Yemen commended Pakistan on efforts especially regarding and the rights of child.

- Iran encouraged the Government to increase its efforts and strengthen its policies in combating economic exploitation and sexual abuse of women and children, combating trafficking, especially of women and children, and requested further information in this regard.

- Italy recommended that Pakistan urgently adopt effective measures to address violation of children’s rights, in particular child labour, prostitution and trafficking and to consider increasing the legal age for criminal responsibility.

- While noting that Pakistan has achieved considerable progress in its efforts to eliminate child labour, Egypt requested information on any persisting challenges.

- Mauritius noted measures to uphold family values and to protect the rights of women and children, and highlighted investments in the field of education.

- Regarding Madrassa reforms Pakistan stated that there are 13,000-15,000 madrassas in the country, and it was wrong that this sector was ignored. The government is now very focused on them, the curriculum has been updated, and math, science, economics and history have been introduced. Pakistan indicated its hope that these reforms would have a positive impact on the students.
Conclusions and Recommendations

In the course of the discussion, the following recommendations were made to Pakistan:
- To more effectively address the issues of child abuse, child trafficking, sexual exploitation and involuntary servitude by strict enforcement of national legislation adopted in conformity with relevant international instruments, and through adoption and implementation of a comprehensive action plan to combat these issues, including awareness-raising and education of parents, law enforcement staff and members of the judiciary (Belgium);

- Continue to promote the rights of children, with the hope that the pending Child Protection Bill in Parliament and the Child protection policy being formulated will soon be adopted, (the Philippines), rapidly implement the draft law on the protection of children and speed up the implementation of the 2000 edict for justice for minors (Switzerland);

- To take urgent measures to ensure that adequate resources are allocated for education (Finland);