Committee on the Rights of the Child

Concluding observations on the combined third and fourth periodic reports of Suriname*

II. Follow-up measures taken and progress achieved by the State party

4. The Committee also welcomes the adoption of legislative measures to strengthen the protection of the human rights of children, in particular regarding nationality, care institutions, sexual abuse and exploitation, domestic violence, and judicial and administrative procedures.

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

Best interests of the child

15. In the light of its general comment No. 14 (2013) on the right of the child to have his or her best interests taken as a primary consideration, the Committee recommends that the State party strengthen its efforts to ensure that this right is appropriately integrated and consistently applied in all legislation, administrative and judicial proceedings and decisions — for example, the placement of children in alternative care and adoption —, and in all policies, programmes and projects that are relevant to and have an impact on children, including children with disabilities. In this regard, the Committee encourages the State party to develop procedures and criteria to provide guidance to all relevant persons in authority for determining the best interests of the child in every area and for giving those interests due weight as a primary consideration.

* Adopted by the Committee at its seventy-third session (13-30 September 2016).
E. Violence against children (arts. 19, 24 (3), 28 (2), 34, 37 (a) and 39)

Corporal punishment

18. While noting the progress in prohibiting corporal punishment in schools through a ministerial decree, the Committee, in line with its general comments No. 8 (2006) on the right of the child to protection from corporal punishment and other cruel or degrading forms of punishment and No. 13 (2011) on the right of the child to freedom from all forms of violence, reiterates its previous recommendations (see CRC/C/SUR/CO/2, para. 37) that the State party:

(a) Amend its legislation to explicitly prohibit corporal punishment in all settings, including in the family, day care and afterschool care facilities, schools, alternative care settings, residential care and penal institutions;

F. Family environment and alternative care (arts. 5, 9-11, 18 (1) and (2), 20, 21, 25 and 27 (4))

Family environment

23. The Committee recommends that the State party further strengthen its efforts to render appropriate assistance to parents and legal guardians in the performance of their child-rearing responsibilities, in particular those in situations of poverty and especially female-headed households and families caring for children suffering from HIV/AIDS, including by strengthening the system of family benefits and child allowances, and other services, including affordable day care. The Committee also recommends that the State party expand family counselling, parenting education programmes and other programmes, including the Family Coaching Project.

Children deprived of a family environment

24. While welcoming the approval of the bill on Care Institutions, in 2014, and the establishment of the monitoring system for Children in Need of Special Protection, the Committee draws the State party’s attention to the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children (see General Assembly resolution 64/142, annex) and emphasizes that financial and material poverty should never be the sole justification for removing a child
from parental care, placing a child into alternative care or preventing a child’s social reintegration. In this regard, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Support and facilitate family-based care for children, including children in single-parent families, wherever possible, and strengthen the foster care system for children who cannot stay with their families, including by adopting and implementing the Foster Child bill, with a view to reducing the institutionalization of children;

(b) Ensure adequate safeguards and clear criteria, based on the needs and best interests of the child, for determining whether a child should be placed in alternative care;

(c) Further strengthen the Bureau for Care Institutions established under the Ministry of Social Affairs to ensure adequate government oversight, including the periodic review of the placement of children in foster care and institutions, monitor the quality of care therein, in particular by providing accessible channels for reporting, monitoring and remedying maltreatment of children, and fully implement the Framework Act for alternative care settings;

(d) Ensure that adequate human, technical and financial resources are allocated to alternative care centres and relevant child protection services, as well as adopt and implement the bill on Protection of Children in Residential and Day Care Institutions and the bill on Care Institutions to ensure that proper certification requirements and standards of care are respected by all such care facilities;

(e) Ensure that staff dealing with children in alternative care are provided with ongoing training, including by the development and dissemination of relevant tools relating to child abuse prevention in residential care facilities.

Adoption

25. The Committee recommends that, as part of the ongoing revision of the Civil Code, the State party ensure that the provisions on adoption are in line with the Convention. It also recommends that the State party consider ratifying the Hague Convention on the Protection of Children and Cooperation in respect of Intercountry Adoption, as previously recommended (see CRC/C/SUR/CO/2, para. 45).
G. Disability, basic health and welfare (arts. 6, 18 (3), 23, 24, 26, 27 (1-3) and 33)

Children with disabilities

26. The Committee is seriously concerned that:

(a) Insufficient support is given to caregivers of children with disabilities;

(b) Children with disabilities continue to face discrimination and are not effectively integrated into all areas of social life, including the education system, in particular in the interior areas of the State party;

(c) Inadequate care is provided in residential care institutions, and abuse and violence, including sexual abuse, by service providers and family members persist;

(d) Insufficient training is provided to teachers who work with children with disabilities;

(e) Facilities for children with disabilities, including schools, sports and leisure facilities and residential facilities, are insufficient and inadequate.

27. In the light of its general comment No. 9 (2006) on the rights of children with disabilities, the Committee urges the State party to adopt a human rights-based approach to disability and to devise a comprehensive strategy for the inclusion of children with disabilities. It specifically recommends that the State party:

(b) Strengthen support to caregivers of children with disabilities, including by increasing social benefits and other services;

(d) Periodically review the placement of children with disabilities in alternative care settings and monitor the quality of care therein, including by providing accessible channels for reporting, monitoring and remedying maltreatment of children;

28. In the light of its general comment No. 15 (2013) on the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health and taking note of targets 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee recommends that the State party:
(d) Develop policies and programmes to strengthen the capacity of families and the community to provide care and support for children living with HIV/AIDS, and continue activities aimed at reducing stigma and discrimination relating to HIV/AIDS, including awareness-raising on human rights within the context of HIV/AIDS;

Sale, trafficking and abduction
40. The Committee urges the State party to:

(e) Ensure that child trafficking victims receive appropriate social services and shelter and are not placed in juvenile detention facilities;

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**Acronyms and Abbreviations:**

- CEDAW: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
- CRC: Convention on the Rights of the Child/Committee on the Rights of the Child
- CRPD: Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- ICCPR: International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- ICESCR: International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- OPAC to CRC: Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict
- UN: United Nations
- UPR: Universal Periodic Review