

offences and the minimum age of access to employment; the appearance of a wide range of age cutoffs which do not appear to be necessarily consistent under legislation administered by various government entities for eligibility for different types of government support; the extensive delegation to non-governmental organizations of delivery of certain support services to children and their families, noting that the ultimate responsibility for the quality of such government supported services rests with the government and the need for careful monitoring and evaluation; the fact that the public funding of such non-governmental organizations may raise questions as to their independence; the insufficient measures adopted to ensure effective coordination between different governmental departments competent in areas covered by the Convention as well as between the central and local authorities; the insufficiency of measures to collect disaggregated statistical data, including in relation to the registration of complaints from children, and other information on the situation of children, especially those belonging to the most vulnerable groups; the effect of the extensive economic reform process undertaken since the mid-1980s on the availability of budgetary resources for support services for children and their families; the failure to undertake all necessary measures to ensure the enjoyment by children of their economic, social and cultural rights to the maximum extent of the state's resources; and, the rise in the number of single-parent families and the lack of a concerted strategy to address the needs of children affected by this trend.

The Committee also expressed concern over: the authorization provided by Section 59 of the Crimes Act to use physical force against children as punishment within the family, provided that the force is reasonable in the circumstances; the insufficient measures taken to address the issue of ill-treatment and abuse, including sexual abuse, within the family, as well as the issues of physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of child victims of such ill-treatment or abuse; the high rate of youth suicide in New Zealand; the fact that the Maori population lags significantly behind the non-Maori population in most statistics of well-being, reflecting that insufficient measures have been taken to protect and promote the enjoyment of the rights of the Maori and, in particular, Maori children; the absence of a comprehensive policy to deal with the issue of child labour and a basic minimum age of admission to employment, or range of minimum ages for different types of work and working conditions; and, the fact that government support services to refugees and asylum seekers, including children, appear to be differentiated according to whether people are admitted as refugees under agreement with the UNHCR or are present in the country as the result of an individual's application for asylum.

The Committee recommended that the government:

- ▶ withdraw reservations to the Convention and extend the application of the Convention to the territory of Tokelau;
- ▶ prepare and adopt a comprehensive policy statement with respect to the rights of the child, incorporating the principles and provisions of the Convention, to provide guidance to all those involved in support services delivered or funded by the government;
- ▶ continue the process of bringing existing legislation into line with the principles and provisions of the Convention;

- ▶ review as a matter of priority the minimum age for being charged with very serious criminal offences and for access to employment;
- ▶ conduct a specific review on all aspects of government policy, administrative practice and legislation having an impact on children;
- ▶ strengthen the office of Commissioner for Children and consider further measures which would give the office increased independence and make it accountable directly to Parliament;
- ▶ conduct a further review of the system of data collection, giving priority attention to the identification of appropriate disaggregated indicators, including in the field of complaints' registration, with a view to addressing all areas covered by the Convention and all groups of children, particularly the most disadvantaged;
- ▶ allocate budgetary resources and give priority to the realization of the economic, social and cultural rights of children, and pay particular attention to children belonging to the most disadvantaged groups;
- ▶ undertake a study on the impact on children and their families of the economic reform process that has been ongoing during the last several years in terms of its impact on government budgetary resources available for support services, as well as on the impact of unemployment and changed conditions of employment on children, young persons and their families;
- ▶ conduct a study on the projected needs of single-parent families in light of this increasing trend, and take measures to supplement those already in place to avoid potential negative consequences for these children and their parents in the future;
- ▶ continue to give priority to studying the possible causes of youth suicide and the characteristics of those who appear to be most at risk and take steps as soon as practicable to put in place additional support and intervention programmes, be it in the fields of mental health, education, employment or another;
- ▶ review legislation with regard to corporal punishment of children within the family in order to put in place an effective ban on all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse;
- ▶ establish appropriate mechanisms to ensure the physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of child victims of such ill-treatment and abuse;
- ▶ pursue and strengthen programmes and activities in the areas of health, education and welfare with regard to the Maori population;
- ▶ review the policy and law in relation to child labour and consider ratifying ILO Convention No. 138 on minimum age for admission to employment; and,
- ▶ provide to all refugee children, including asylum-seekers coming to New Zealand outside UNHCR organized schemes, the benefit of introduction assistance and government-delivered or funded support services.