

- ▶ include in its next report information on complaints received and judgements issued in cases of racial discrimination;
- ▶ take all appropriate measures to disseminate the Convention widely and to translate it into appropriate languages for indigenous groups;
- ▶ continue the improvement of training of law enforcement officials;
- ▶ take appropriate measures to allow full enjoyment by different groups of society, such as indigenous people or members of the black and Asian minorities, of the rights set out in the Convention, particularly the rights to housing, public health, medical care, social security, social services, education and training;
- ▶ actively pursue its current efforts to implement fully the right of indigenous people to own property and land and investigate and monitor the impact of the work of mining companies, including foreign ones, as well as the impact of the current development of tourism, on the enjoyment of basic rights by indigenous peoples;
- ▶ explain more precisely in its next report the legal status of the *comarcas*, in comparison to the status of the provinces;
- ▶ take appropriate measures to enable indigenous persons to participate in elections and to provide them with equal access to employment in the public service;
- ▶ include in its next report disaggregated data including information and socio-economic indicators on the demographic composition of its population;
- ▶ with regard to the special status of the Canal Zone, take appropriate measures to ensure that the rights enumerated by the Convention, especially article 5 (equality before the law, security of person, civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights) are enjoyed equally by all residents and workers in that specific area; and,
- ▶ consider ratifying ILO Convention No. 169 (indigenous and tribal peoples).

Discrimination against Women

Signed: 26 June 1980; ratified: 29 October 1981.

Panama's second and third periodic reports (CEDAW/C/PAN/2-3) have been submitted as one document which is pending for consideration at the Committee's July 1998 session; the fourth periodic report was due 28 November 1994.

Torture

Signed: 22 February 1985; ratified: 24 August 1987.

Panama's third periodic report (CAT/C/34/Add.9) is scheduled for consideration at the Committee's May 1998 session; the fourth periodic report is due 27 September 2000.

Reservations and Declarations: Paragraph 1 of article 30.

Rights of the Child

Signed: 26 January 1990; ratified: 12 December 1990.

Panama's second periodic report was due 10 January 1998.

Panama's initial report (CRC/C/8/Add.28) was considered at the Committee's January 1997 session. The report prepared by the government provides detail on the constitutional and legal provisions to protect the rights of the child as

well as administrative measures related to implementation of the Convention. The report clusters information under general main headings addressing, *inter alia*: civil rights and freedoms; family environment and alternative care; basic health and welfare; education, leisure and cultural activities; and special protection measures. Annexes to the report provide the texts of relevant articles in the Civil Code and Constitution, Act No. 24 of 1951 establishing the Juvenile Court and various tables providing statistics on, for example, child care in subsidized institutions, Child Guidance Centres, enrolment in the education system and teaching staff in the education system.

The Committee's concluding observations (CRC/C/15/Add.68) noted that the Convention is directly applicable at the national level and can be invoked before the law courts or administrative authorities. The Committee welcomed: the efforts made by the government in the area of law reform and the initiatives undertaken to further the protection of the family and children; the adoption of the new Family Code, in force since January 1995; the promulgation of the Education Law which guarantees inter-cultural bilingual education for indigenous children and adults; the recent establishment of a "People's Defender" which will monitor the enjoyment of human rights in Panama, including children's rights; the adoption of a Pact for children, in collaboration with UNICEF and a large number of NGOs, to promote children's rights; the establishment of the project on "Education for Tolerance, Education for Democracy, Human Rights, Development and Peace" set up in 1995 by the Ministry of Education in collaboration with UNESCO; the establishment of the Women's Department in the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare; and, the establishment of the Panamanian Institute for Special Rehabilitation which aims at assisting disabled children.

The Committee acknowledged factors and difficulties that have impeded implementation of the Convention, including the fact that Panama is emerging from a period of social and political upheaval, and the associated negative economic repercussions, and the long-existing disparities in distribution of wealth between different groups of the population which affects the most vulnerable groups and hampers the enjoyment of children's rights.

The principal subjects of concern identified by the Committee were: the insufficiency of measures taken to harmonize national legislation with the principles and provisions of the Convention; failure in the Family Code to address adequately the rights recognized by the Convention; provisions in national legislation establishing a different minimum age for marriage between boys and girls and authorizing the marriage of girls as young as 14; provisions establishing 12 years as the minimum age for employment in agriculture and domestic services; and, the insufficiency of measures to protect children against sexual abuse and exploitation.

The Committee also expressed concern over: inadequate measures to ensure an 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 and other information on the situation of children, especially those belonging to the most vulnerable groups; the lack of disaggregated statistical data with respect