

state party rank as law and may be invoked before any national court. The report acknowledges that there remain serious obstacles to the practical application of international standards which prevent the benefits of the Constitution from being fully and generally enjoyed by all citizens. These obstacles are mainly attributable to structural poverty, cultural differences and the continuing slow process of democratization. Specific problems are identified in the report as, *inter alia*: shortcomings in the administration of justice, including delays in settling disputes, corruption, excessive judicial workload, shortage of defence counsel, and lack of access to justice for economic reasons or because of marginalization and ethno-cultural domination; the incompatibility between provisions in the Constitution and special legislation to combat drug trafficking; and, interference in the administration of justice by the international community through drug interdiction and drug eradication programmes. The report cites a number of laws intended to strengthen the promotion and protections of human rights, including but not limited to the Minors' Code 1992, the Judicial Organization Act 1993 and the Environmental Act 1992. The report also notes the establishment, under the Minors' Act, of the National Organization for Children, Women and Family.

Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Acceded: 12 August 1982.

Bolivia's initial and second periodic reports were due 30 June 1990 and 1995 respectively.

Civil and Political Rights

Acceded: 12 August 1982.

Bolivia's third periodic report is due 31 December 1999.

Optional Protocol: Acceded: 12 August 1982.

Racial Discrimination

Signed: 7 June 1966; ratified: 22 September 1970.

Bolivia's 14th periodic report was due 21 October 1997.

Discrimination against Women

Signed: 30 May 1980; ratified: 8 June 1990.

Bolivia's second periodic report was due 8 July 1995.

Torture

Signed: 4 February 1985.

Rights of the Child

Signed: 8 March 1990; ratified: 26 June 1990

Bolivia's second periodic report (CRC/C/65/Add.1) was considered at the Committee's September 1998 session; the third periodic report is due 2 September 2002.

REPORTS TO TREATY BODIES

Committee on the Rights of the Child

Bolivia's second periodic report (CRC/C/65/Add.1, August 1997; CRC/C/Q/BOL.2) was considered by the Committee at its September 1998 session. According to

the government of Bolivia, the report reflects an effort to go beyond a limited vision of government administration and to give an objective account of the realities of the situation of Bolivian children and adolescents, the progress made since consideration of the initial report, and the challenges which remain before the Convention can become a genuine reality. Within that framework, the report provides information on, *inter alia*: the socio-economic context and the continuing problem of poverty; the mandate and functions of the Inter-institutional Commission for Childhood and Adolescence, established in 1997; the Ten-Year Plan of Action for Women and Children, introduced in 1992, as well as other sectoral national plans; education and obstacles to implementation of national policy; reorientation of the health care system; Strategic Action and Human Development Programme (PAE – Social), approved in 1996; the Juvenile Code 1992, and the harmonization of domestic legislation with provisions of the Convention; and programmes and continuing problems related to infant mortality, under-nourishment, maternal mortality, water and sanitation, access to education, children in difficult circumstances (e.g., street children, working children). Information is also provided on: the mandate and functions of the National Organization for Children, Women and the Family (ONAMFA); links to, and cooperation with, civil society (NGOs) working on behalf of children; the definition of the child and minimum age levels; legislative measures to implement the principle of non-discrimination; measures taken in support of the best interests of the child; civil rights and freedoms; family environment and alternative care; abuse and neglect, the Law against Family or Domestic Violence, the establishment of the National Committee Against the Maltreatment of Children; basic health and welfare, children with disabilities; the administration of juvenile justice and protection against exploitation; the situation of children belonging to minority groups; and the draft Children and Adolescents Code.

The Committee's concluding observations and comments (CRC/C/15/Add.95) welcomed, *inter alia*: the establishment of a Vice-Ministry for Human Rights and of the Office of the Human Rights' Ombudsperson (Defensor del Pueblo); the enactment of the Popular Participation Act (1994), establishing the principle of equal distribution per inhabitant of the joint resources from taxation allocated and transferred to regions, and seeking to correct the historical disparities between urban and rural areas; the establishment, within the decentralization programme, of the municipal defence system for children; the process of reform of the Code of Minors; the adoption of the National Mother and Child Insurance (1996), providing free health care for all mothers and children up to five years of age; the enactment of the Educational Reform Act (1994); and accession to the ILO Convention No. 138 regarding the minimum age for access to work.

Factors that continue to hinder implementation of the Convention were noted as including the persistence of large disparities in income distribution, long term hardcore poverty, and severe economic constraints, due in