

been adopted under the Strategic Educational Reform Plan (Paraguay 2020) to address the problems faced by Guaraní-speaking children in basic education. The Committee also welcomed: the priority being given to health, in particular health care for children, including efforts to reduce child mortality, facilitate breastfeeding, support nutrition programmes and increase access to clean drinking water as well as the steps that have been taken to reinforce the independence of the judiciary and the judicial apparatus which is concerned with legal issues related to children and juveniles.

Among the factors hindering implementation of the Convention, the Committee noted: Paraguay is still going through a period of transition to democracy; the legacy of certain authoritarian attitudes which hampers the effective implementation of the rights of the child; the fact that government inherited a public infrastructure which did not give priority to education, health or social welfare institutions; and, the existing inadequacies of the public service and the high rate of population growth.

The principal subjects of concern identified by the Committee were: the fact that, despite efforts since 1991, a new Juvenile Code has not been adopted; failure to devote sufficient attention to the development of a coordinating mechanism to monitor the implementation of the rights of the child and the extent to which the bodies established to consider the situation of children are provided with the support and resources they will need to fulfil their designated functions; the need to strengthen the government's limited capacity to collect and process data, as well as to monitor specific indicators to evaluate progress achieved and to assess the impact of existing policies on children, in particular the most vulnerable children; the fact that present approaches to the implementation of the rights of the child do not sufficiently encourage and strengthen popular participation and public scrutiny of government policies; the lack of sufficient knowledge about the Convention and other relevant international instruments among professionals working with and for children; the fact that national and local-level budgets have allocated insufficient funds to the social sector, especially with regard to the ability to respond effectively to the situation of the most vulnerable children; the lack of sufficient sensitivity in some sectors of society with regard to the needs and situation of girls; the persistence of discrimination against minority and indigenous children; that fact that there are still under-age juveniles coerced or pressured into military service; the inadequate measures to ensure registration of births, especially among the indigenous population; the fact that children are not systematically provided with the necessary birth certificates and other documents to protect and preserve their identity; the large number of children who are not acknowledged by their fathers and the inadequate measures taken to force fathers to be responsible for the welfare of their children; the failure to pass a law on intercountry adoptions; the fact that the social and economic disadvantages faced by children, in particular those living in rural and certain urban areas, have led to various forms of exploitation of those children, including their placement as domestic servants in wealthier families, thereby exposing them to ill-treatment and abuse, including sexual abuse in some cases; the high rates of infant and child mortality, malnutrition and infectious diseases, as well as the unresolved difficulties in providing

country-wide maternal and child health services; the absence of large-scale public campaigns for the prevention of unwanted pregnancies, STDs and HIV/AIDS, especially for children and adolescents; the lack of sufficient reproductive health information and services for adolescents; the failure to take adequate measures to guarantee fully in practice the right of indigenous students to education in their native language, Guaraní; the phenomenon of children working and/or living on the street, and at the inadequate measures to tackle this issue; the prevalence of prostitution among children and adolescents; the absence of a clear strategy to combat the abuse and sexual exploitation of children; and, the administration of juvenile justice, including alleged ill-treatment of children in detention centres, the fact that a significant percentage of juveniles are deprived of their liberty for extended periods without being charged or brought to trial and that in at least one major detention centre, persons who have been convicted and those awaiting trial are not housed separately.

The Committee recommended that the government:

- ▶ finalize and adopt the new Juvenile Code in the near future;
- ▶ strengthen coordination between the various governmental bodies and mechanisms involved in children's rights at both the national and local levels with a view to developing a comprehensive policy on children and ensuring effective evaluation of implementation of the Convention;
- ▶ strengthen the institutional framework designed to promote and protect human rights in general and the rights of the child in particular;
- ▶ give priority attention to the development of a system of data collection and to the identification of appropriate disaggregated indicators with a view to addressing all areas of the Convention and all groups of children in society;
- ▶ launch a systematic information campaign, for both children and adults, on the Convention; consider incorporating the Convention in the curricula of all educational institutions; and take appropriate measures to facilitate access by children to information on their rights;
- ▶ direct further efforts towards providing comprehensive training programmes for professional groups working with and for children;
- ▶ give priority in budget allocations to the realization of the economic, social and cultural rights of children, with particular emphasis on health and education, and on the enjoyment of these rights by all children including the most disadvantaged;
- ▶ enforce rigorously legislation on the minimum age for recruitment into the military;
- ▶ undertake all appropriate measures, including information campaigns, to prevent and combat all prevailing forms of discrimination against girls and minority or indigenous children, especially those living in rural areas, with a view, *inter alia*, to promoting their access to basic services;
- ▶ take all appropriate measures to ensure registration of birth, especially in minority and indigenous communities,