



**Convention on the
Rights of the Child**

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**CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES
UNDER ARTICLE 44 OF THE CONVENTION**

Second periodic reports of States parties due in 2003

SAUDI ARABIA*

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[12 November 2004]

* For the initial report submitted by the Government of Saudi Arabia, see CRC/C/61/Add.2, for its consideration by the Committee, see document CRC/C/SR.687-688 and CRC/C/15/Add.148.

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Introduction

1. Islam advocates concern for the welfare of the family as the basic unit of society and pledges to provide it with all appropriate means to enable it to lead a decent life and to fully play its role in nurturing children and preparing them for life. Islam emphasizes the need to safeguard and protect children and their right to life, preserving an environment conducive to their sound development, protecting them from infectious diseases, and establishing comprehensive systems of education based on freedom and independence. Parents have a duty to provide for their children's welfare and education and to instil in them a love of a decent life. Islam shows particular concern for children's personal hygiene and environment and the development of children's minds and bodies.
2. Islam also shows concern for the rights of children with special needs, including orphans, disabled children, children of unknown parentage and juvenile delinquents. It prohibits the torture and ill-treatment of children.
3. Children are valued and appreciated in Islam. Almighty God said: "Nay! I swear by this city. You are a dweller in this city. And the begetter and whom he begot". He made them human: "O Zacchary! We bring thee tidings of a son whose name shall be John. We have given the same name to none before him", a pleasure to behold: "O Lord! Make our wives and children the apple of our eye", and an adornment to the world: "Wealth and children are an adornment to the life of the world".
4. It clearly follows that Islamic law guarantees human rights in general and the rights of the child in particular, especially the child's right to care and to the consideration of his or her best interests.
5. As confirmation of its faith in human dignity and its support for the human rights recognized in Islam, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has ratified the Declaration of Human Rights in Islam (the Cairo Declaration), which was adopted by the Organization of the Islamic Conference on 5 August 1990 (13/4 A.H. 1411).
6. In the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, children are the focus and the main beneficiaries of the development process. The State provides a full range of services (educational, health, social etc.) to guarantee every child the opportunity to exercise his or her fundamental rights and to receive a proper upbringing within the family and society.
7. In the Kingdom, governmental and private institutions play a major role in various fields of child welfare, offering educational, health, social and leisure services, developing children's aptitudes and skills and fulfilling their other needs.
8. The National Commission for Child Welfare was established to liaise between the competent government institutions and private organizations which work for children and to promote projects and programmes which cater for children and guarantee their rights.

9. In that connection, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia acceded to the Convention on the Rights of the Child pursuant to Royal Decree No. M/7 of 16/4 A.H. 1416 (11 September 1995). The instrument of the Kingdom's accession to the Convention was deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations on 6/9 A.H. 1416 (26 January 1996) and the Convention entered into force on 7/10 A.H. 1416 (25 February 1996).

10. In accordance with article 44, paragraph 1, of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, concerning the reports to be submitted by States parties on the measures adopted to give effect to the provisions of the Convention, within two years of the entry into force of the Convention and thereafter every five years, the Cabinet decided, on 28/3 A.H. 1417 (12 August 1996), to entrust the National Commission for Child Welfare with the preparation, in conjunction with government bodies and private organizations involved in various children's issues, of the Kingdom's report on the measures adopted and the mechanisms established to give effect to the rights established in the Convention and on the progress made in the enjoyment of those rights.

11. The Kingdom's initial report was submitted to the Committee on the Rights of the Child and discussed at a session held at the Committee's headquarters in Geneva on 24/1 A.H. 1421 (28 April 2000) in the presence of a Saudi delegation comprising representatives of different child-welfare organizations.

12. In accordance with article 44 of the Convention, the Saudi National Commission for Child Welfare and a number of governmental and private organizations jointly drafted the Kingdom's second periodic report on the implementation of the Convention, incorporating into it replies and clarifications responding to the questions and recommendations which the Committee on the Rights of the Child had produced following its consideration of the Kingdom's initial report.

13. In acceding to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and diligently preparing its reports thereon, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is driven by its commitment to international cooperation and its desire to draw the maximum benefit domestically from international conventions concerned with a variety of subject areas. This point is illustrated by the Kingdom's financial contribution (US\$ 50,000) to the Plan of Action to strengthen the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its hosting of a training course to be held as part of the activities of the Plan. The Kingdom also contributed a further US\$ 50,000 to the fund established under the initiative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to review the implementation of the goals of the World Summit for Children.

I. GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

Location

14. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia lies at the south-western end of the continent of Asia. It is bordered to the west by the Red Sea, to the east by the Arabian Gulf, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar, to the north by Kuwait, Iraq and Jordan, and to the south by Yemen and the Sultanate of Oman.

Surface area

15. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia occupies four fifths of the Arabian Peninsula and has a surface area of more than 2,250,000 km² (868,730 square miles).

Population

16. In 2000, the population of Saudi Arabia was of 20,846,884; this figure can be broken down as follows:

- The number of Saudi citizens was 15,588,805, accounting for 74.8 per cent of the Kingdom's total population;
- The number of Saudi males was 7,800,051, accounting for 50.04 per cent of the total Saudi population;
- The number of Saudi females was 7,788,754, accounting for 49.96 per cent of the total Saudi population.

II. GENERAL MEASURES OF IMPLEMENTATION**A. Coordination**

17. The Saudi National Commission for Child Welfare coordinates the work of governmental and private organizations involved in children's issues as part of the follow up on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Coordination is effected through a number of mechanisms, including:

1. The Supreme Council for Childhood

18. The Council is chaired by the Minister of Education and its members represent the governmental and private organizations which work on child-welfare issues. The Council undertakes to:

- Formulate national child-welfare strategy with a view to helping the competent authorities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to deliver the types of welfare services which children need;
- Coordinate the efforts of governmental and private organizations involved in the field of child welfare in order to ensure complementarity, avoid duplication and recommend the action that each organization can take in its respective field of competence;
- Propose and recommend child-welfare programmes and projects for implementation by the governmental bodies and private institutes and associations concerned;

- Encourage research and study centres at universities and elsewhere to contribute to areas of relevance to child welfare;
- Monitor activities of international and regional child-welfare organizations which might be of interest to the Kingdom.

2. The Planning and Follow-Up Committee

19. The Committee is chaired by the Deputy Minister of Education for Cultural Affairs and its members represent all the institutions in the Kingdom that are involved in children's issues (the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Culture and Information, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the General Presidency of Youth Welfare), together with a number of private institutions and associations. Its tasks are:

- To study the minutes of the Supreme Council's meetings and follow up on the implementation of the Council's recommendations;
- To draw up proposals for new programmes and projects and submit them to the Supreme Council;
- To review any matters referred to it by the Supreme Council and conduct studies and research on relevant topics.

3. The secretariat of the Saudi National Commission for Children

20. The secretariat has its offices in the Cultural Affairs Department of the Ministry of Education and employs a number of specialists in children's affairs, as well as administrative staff who handle administrative matters. Its tasks are to:

- Liaise between the government bodies and domestic organizations and institutions involved in child welfare in the Kingdom;
- Prepare meetings of the Supreme Council and the Planning and Follow-Up Committee;
- Supply information and data on child welfare, which it shares with all relevant organizations;
- Draft periodic reports on the Commission's activities and the implementation of the recommendations and decisions of the Supreme Council and the Planning and Follow-Up Committee;
- Monitor activities of regional and international child-welfare institutions which might be of interest to the Kingdom;

- Arrange meetings with persons involved in children's rights, including university professors, directors of government departments, and private associations;
- Organize children's meetings and seminars which are attended by senior officials and encourage children to express their views and state their needs as they see them.

21. The Saudi National Commission for Child Welfare designs and oversees projects aimed at the more effective implementation of the Convention, including:

- A regional workshop on the quality of education, which was held in conjunction with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Bureau in the Arab Gulf States, from 1 to 5 Dhi al-Qa`dah A.H. 1423 (4-8 January 2003). Attended by experts from Toronto University and Saudi Arabia, as well as Saudi officials and representatives of the Arab Gulf States, the workshop also considered general comment No. 1 (2001) of the Committee on the Rights of the Child concerning the aims of education;
- A national awareness campaign on the importance and particular characteristics of childhood, as well as the rights which children must be guaranteed;
- An analytical study of the state of child welfare in the Kingdom today, jointly conducted with UNICEF and designed to determine how far children are receiving the care which they need and to devise plans and programmes to improve existing services and remedy any shortcomings;
- An informational seminar entitled "Early childhood: characteristics and needs", which was held in order to:
 - Disseminate information about the special characteristics of childhood;
 - Define the needs associated with this stage of development;
 - Raise awareness among social groups and institutions about the importance of early childhood;
 - Disseminate information about the rights of the child in Islam;
 - Disseminate information about the Convention on the Rights of the Child;
 - Highlight the importance of the family's role in raising children;
 - Disseminate information about the contributions of government and private institutions to areas relating to early childhood;
 - Draw on the experiences of other countries in catering for the welfare of young children;
 - Establish a national child data centre in collaboration with UNICEF;

- Participation in a number of international and regional conferences on children, including the Conference on Children and the City held in Jordan from 5 to 7 Shawwal A.H. 1423 (9-11 September 2002). Sponsored by the Arab Institute for Urban Development, the World Bank and the Amman Treasury, the conference threw light on the problems confronting children and young persons in Arab cities and discussed immediate steps for addressing those problems through the formulation of national and regional strategies for planning Arab cities in a way that takes account of children's needs.

B. Measures taken to make the principles and provisions of the Convention widely known

22. There is considerable national interest in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. A number of steps and measures have been taken to make its principles and provisions widely known in accordance with article 42 of the Convention. The most important of these measures are as follows:

- The Kingdom's accession to the Convention on the Rights of the Child was announced in all the media;
- The text of the Convention was circulated among all government bodies and private organizations concerned with children in order to boost their child-welfare programmes, monitor indicators on their achievements, and restructure programmes to take account of the Convention, thus making it easier to evaluate their success in achieving targets in the educational, cultural, health, social and security domains. Each organization has distributed the text of the Convention among all the persons and organizations with which it has links. The text of the Convention was distributed to the relevant departments of the Ministry of the Interior pursuant to circular No. 35/90407, issued by His Royal Highness the Minister for Internal Affairs on 27/11 A.H. 1416 (15 April 1996);
- Children's events are held throughout the Kingdom and consist of students' sports, cultural and theatrical activities and scouting activities in schools. These events are used to disseminate knowledge about the Convention;
- A number of literary and cultural clubs have been set up to discuss, promote awareness of, and encourage children to write about, the Convention with a view to creating a cultural climate which encourages all social groups to cooperate on the implementation of the Convention;
- A television programme in the form of a debate between guest experts and specialists in children's affairs has been created to encourage discussion of the Convention;
- Local newspapers have special children's pages which deal with children's rights and accept contributions from children, mothers, intellectuals and child-welfare professionals.

23. The Saudi National Commission for Child Welfare, which is part of the Ministry of Education, is responsible for following up on the implementation of, and raising awareness about, the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Commission has designed programmes and activities to help make the Convention widely known, in particular:

- It has organized a variety of cultural events, such as the Children’s Cultural Fair, which was launched in A.H. 1421 (2000) and repeated in A.H. 1423 (2002). This event was used to disseminate knowledge of the Convention. Information and leaflets were handed out to visitors at the Fair and the programme was designed to give children complete freedom to choose the activities that they wanted to do;
- The text of the Convention on the Rights of the Child has been reproduced on large posters which have been distributed to all schools in the Kingdom, as well as to primary health-care centres and all child welfare organizations;
- Seminars on the topics covered by the Convention on the Rights of the Child have been run for groups which work with children. A number of working papers and studies have been produced on children’s issues, including the subject of child abuse. A seminar on child abuse was held at the Armed Forces Hospital in Riyadh on 14/7 A.H. 1422 (1 October 2001); a seminar on the diagnosis and management of child abuse in the Kingdom was held at the King Faisal Hospital for Specialized Medicine and the Riyadh Research Centre from 22 to 23/11 A.H. 1422 (5-6 February 2002); and a scientific seminar entitled “Child abuse and how to prevent it” was held during the month of Rabi` I A.H. 1424 (May-June 2003), in order to develop a mechanism for the eradication of this phenomenon. The session was attended by a number of Saudi experts from governmental and private organizations (educational, medical, psychological and social), together with representatives from the UNICEF Bureau in Riyadh and the Arab Gulf Programme for United Nations Development Organizations.

24. A programme has been set up to raise awareness of the adverse effects of child abuse and is now being introduced in governmental and private further education colleges with a view to including all academic stages.

C. Legislation

25. All regulations and legislation in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are based on the teachings of Islam, the religion on which the State was founded and which it professes. Since Islamic teachings show great concern for the welfare, education and protection of children from harm, the Kingdom has enacted laws, including specific laws on children and general laws which pay special attention to all issues affecting children, which are consistent with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This is also true of the recent administrative, legal and procedural regulations and orders as follows:

- Royal Decree No. 12 of 16/4 A.H. 1418 (19 August 1997), concerning the Kingdom’s accession to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination;

- Royal Decree No. 21 of 20/5 A.H. 1421 (20 August 2000), approving the Code of Shariah Procedures;
- Royal Decree No. 25 of 28/5 of A.H. 1421 (28 August 2000), concerning the Kingdom's accession to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;
- The statutes of the Bar Association, approved by Cabinet Decision No. 199 of 14/7 A.H. 1422 (27 January 2001);
- The Code of Criminal Procedures promulgated in Royal Decree No. 39 of 28/7 A.H. 1422 (14 October 2001);
- Deputy Prime Ministerial Order No. 964 of 1/11 A.H. 1422 (14 January 2002), approving the safety regulations for the organization of camel and horse races;
- Royal Decree No. 5 of 4/1 A.H. 1423 (18 March 2002), concerning the health regulations applicable to all Saudis wishing to marry;
- Royal Order No. A/2 of 10/1 A.H. 1423 (24 March 2002), providing for the incorporation of the General Presidency for the Education of Girls into the Ministry of Education;
- Royal Approval No. 7/B/5388 of 3/3 A.H. 1423 (15 May 2002), making the kindergarten stage (including its physical infrastructure) an autonomous and independent stage of education;
- Royal Decree No. 11 of 23/3 A.H. 1423 (4 June 2002), concerning the Health Act and its implementing regulation;
- Royal Order No. A/66 of 27/4 A.H. 1423 (7 July 2002), concerning the appointment of His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz, Crown Prince, Deputy Prime Minister and Commander of the National Guard, as Chairman of the Higher Council for Disabled Affairs;
- Royal Order No. A/2 of 28/4 A.H. 1424 (29 April 2003), changing the name of the Ministry of Education.

26. The laws on children cover all aspects of children's welfare, including health, education, the right to survival and family welfare, and take account of the best interests of the child in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

27. Among the projects which are a matter of priority for the Saudi National Commission for Child Welfare is the preparation of a comprehensive guide to all the Kingdom's statutes and legislation on children, which takes account of the extent to which they comply with the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

D. Preparation of the report

28. After the Committee on the Rights of the Child had completed its consideration of the Kingdom's initial report, the Saudi National Commission for Child Welfare circulated the Committee's recommendations and observations among all the organizations and individuals involved in children's welfare and asked each of them to take steps to implement the pertinent recommendations and observations contained in the report of the Committee on the Rights of the Child and to inform the Commission secretariat about the actions they had taken towards that end.

29. The secretariat of the Saudi National Commission for Child Welfare began preparing the second periodic report of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on the steps taken to implement the Convention, as follows:

- It circulated a decision of the Supreme Council of the Commission providing for the establishment of a drafting committee consisting of governmental and private organizations involved in children's rights;
- The drafting committee held consultations with the directors of the relevant organizations and distributed the observations and recommendations which the Committee on the Rights of the Child had made on the Kingdom's initial report in order to verify what steps had been taken in response thereto;
- The drafting committee asked organizations involved in any area of children's affairs to prepare a report on any new laws, measures or projects of relevance to them and to update the statistical and other information which they had contributed to the Kingdom's initial report;
- A number of associations and civil society organizations took part in the numerous meetings and consultations that were held on the preparation of the report.

30. The present report responds to some of the questions which the Committee on the Rights of the Child has raised and outlines the actions that have been taken in response to the Committee's recommendations regarding the initial report.

E. Budgetary allocations (art. 4)

31. Children's programmes and projects are accorded special attention. The State's general budget earmarks funds for their implementation as part of the general allocations for child-welfare organizations. Details of the allocations for children are indicated below.

32. The total allocations for children disbursed by State sectors over the past five years amount to 5,782,454,000 Saudi riyals (SRIs). This figure can be broken down as follows:

Annual budget for family and children's radio programmes**Riyadh and Jeddah**

Children's programmes	1 407 120 SRIs
Family programmes	1 150 000 SRIs
Total	2 557 120 SRIs

Annual budget for family and children's television programmes

Family and children's programmes	1 200 000 SRIs
One million and two hundred thousand riyals	

Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs	7 519 031 000 SRIs
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Description	Amount (SRIs)
Gardens and leisure parks	2 253 824 000
Social services (medical, disabled persons)	1 356 961 000
Educational and medical services, the Royal Commission for Jubail and Yanbu	1 228 000 000
Educational expenditure for the Saudi Academy and other schools abroad; other educational expenditure by government agencies	943 669 000
Total	5 782 454 000

Statistical indicators**Evolution of State budgetary allocations for social services**

(A.H. 1412/13-1421/22 (1991-2002))

Years	Millions of SRIs	Increase 1405/06=100
1412/14	49814.4	101.8
1413/14	53887.8	110.1
1414/15	47925.0	97.9
1415/16	44330.7	90.6
1416/17	44979.3	91.9
1417/18	63918	130.6
1418/19	70861.1	144.8
1419/20	65986.0	134.8
1420/21	73707.6	180.6
1421/22	80455.2	164.4

State budgetary allocations for the Ministry of Health and Red Crescent Society

(A.H. 1411/12-1420/21 (1991-2002))

Years	Thousands of SRIs	Change 1405/06=100
1411/12	9 901 100	110.5
1412/13	9 052 032	101.1
1413/14	10 109 612	101.1
1414/15	8 267 946	92.3
1415/16	7 503 020	83.3
1416/17	10 950 419	122.3
1417/18	10 950 419	122.3
1418/19	12 435 62	138.9
1419/20	11 545 076	128.9
1420/21	13 288 600	148.4
1422/23	13 857 430	

Evolution of State budgetary allocations for education

(A.H. 1412/13-1421/22 (1991-2002))

Years	Millions of SRIs	Change 1405/06=100
1412/13	29594.0	128.5
1413/14	30342.4	131.7
1414/15	27822.4	120.8
1415/16	25623.9	111.3
1416/17	27536.2	119.6
1417/18	40067.9	174
1418/19	43867.2	190.5
1419/20	41274.8	179.2
1420/21	47601.9	206.7
1421/22	51170.8	222.2
1422/23	45.785.960	

III. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

A. Definition of the child

33. The Convention on the Rights of the Child defines the child as every human being below the age of 18 unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.

34. This is consistent with the laws and regulations in force in the Kingdom, where a juvenile is defined under the Detention Regulation and the Juvenile Homes' Regulation of A.H. 1395 (1975) as every human being below the age of 18. The age of legal capacity and legal responsibility is raised to 20 when it comes to the application, subject to particular conditions, of disciplinary measures against drug users.

35. The laws and regulations applicable to children below the age of 18 are explained hereunder:

- From birth until the age of 7 children have no responsibilities or obligations of any kind. At this stage, the parents or legal guardians have the primary responsibility for educating and guiding their children, instilling in them a sense of right and wrong and inculcating fundamental principles that will prepare them for the next stage of life;
- From the ages of 7 to 10 the child is regarded as being capable of discretion and begins to learn how to perform religious observances and to deal with others. The child also acquires certain obligations and responsibilities but does not incur corresponding penalties;
- From the ages of 10 to 15 children bear some responsibility for their actions. The legal guardian must provide guidance and administer discipline without harming the child and the child is made to answer, in a special place, in the presence of his or her legal guardian, and in accordance with an appropriate procedure, for any offences or wrongdoing of which he or she is guilty. The legal guardian must make amends for any wrongdoing by the child and must undertake to watch over the child. Any penalties imposed on the child take the form of guidance, a reprimand or placement in a supervised residential institution. Discipline must be administered in such a way as to correct the child's behaviour without harming him or her in any way;
- From the ages of 15 to 18 children are regarded as having entered the phase of independence and reason. They must answer for any crimes or wrongdoing which they commit, in an appropriate place and in a manner that protects their physical and emotional integrity, takes due account of their best interests, and represents an extension of their educational care. In order to protect children and others, any punishment that proves necessary will take the form of disciplinary measures, education and guidance. If need be, the child may be placed, for an appropriate period of time, in a supervised residential institution which will serve as an alternative environment and help to improve and reform the child's behaviour.

36. The regulations in force in the Kingdom stipulate that minors may not be detained in a public prison, but must be placed in supervised residential institutions.

37. With regard to social status, the law does not define a specific minimum age for marriage; the Islamic Shariah regulates discrepancies relating to capacity for marriage and promotes marriage in a manner that ensures the happiness of both spouses and averts the countless social dangers inherent in the deferment of marriage. This flexibility of the Islamic Shariah helps to satisfy the disparate needs of men and women and serves the interests of both parties.

38. With regard to the minimum age for admission to employment, article 163 of the Labour Code promulgated in Royal Decree No. M/21 of 6/9 A.H. 1389 (15 November 1969) prohibits the employment of children below the age of 13, while article 160 prohibits their employment in hazardous or harmful work, occupations involving power-driven machinery, mining, quarrying and the like.

39. The Kingdom's Labour Code is consistent with International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No. 138 concerning the minimum age for admission to employment.
40. In A.H. 1398 (1978), the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia ratified ILO Convention No. 29 of 1930 concerning forced labour, and ILO Convention No. 105 of 1957 concerning the abolition of forced labour. The provisions of both conventions have force of law in the Kingdom. The Labour Code devotes an entire chapter (chapter 10) to the prohibition of the employment of children and women in work that is likely to be hazardous or harmful to their health.
41. Article 161 of the Labour Code prohibits the employment of children in night work, while article 162 limits their working hours to six hours per day. Children are not permitted to do overtime work (art. 152). Article 147 of the Code stipulates that, during working hours, children must be given breaks of not less than half an hour for rest, prayer and meals. Children may not work for more than five hours consecutively (art. 148). The Kingdom has acceded to ILO Convention No. 182 concerning the worst forms of child labour.
42. A child over the age of 15 is entitled to plead before a court, to seek medical or legal advice, and to be issued with an identity card, in accordance with the Civil Status Act.
43. The religious establishment and the State prohibit the consumption of alcohol by any person, regardless of that person's gender or age. As for the minimum age for sexual consent, the Kingdom's laws are derived from the Islamic religion, which forbids sexual relations outside of marriage.
44. With regard to compulsory education, the eighth strategic basis of the seventh development plan (A.H. 1420-1425 (2000-2005)) stipulates that primary education is compulsory for both boys and girls.

B. Non-discrimination (art. 2)

45. Article 2 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child provides that: "States Parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind" and that "States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that the child is protected against all forms of discrimination or punishment on the basis of the status, activities, expressed opinions or beliefs of the child's parents, legal guardians or family members."
46. In the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia full equality is guaranteed to all and everyone is protected by laws which ensure that they receive equal treatment in accordance with two important Islamic principles, namely:
- Justice, equality and non-discrimination on any grounds; for, as Almighty God has said: "God commands justice, the doing of good ...";
 - The applicability of Islamic law to everyone: equal rights are guaranteed to all without regard to race, sex or other considerations. The law applies to everyone without distinction and all the Kingdom's judicial, social and cultural systems are founded on this principle.

47. The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Fahd Bin Abdul Aziz, explained these principles during his presentation of the Basic Law of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. He said: "There is no difference between the ruler and the ruled. Everyone is equal before God's law and everyone has an equal love for the nation and concern for its safety, unity, prestige and advancement. The ruler has rights and obligations and the relationship between the ruler and the ruled is governed first and last by God's law."

48. The articles of the Basic Law clarify those principles in detail. Article 8 states that: "The system of Government in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is based on justice, *shura* (consultation) and equality in accordance with Islamic law." Article 47 recognizes that: "Citizens and foreign residents in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia have an equal right to seek judicial remedies."

49. The penal, judicial and administrative laws, including those dealing with children, confirm this state of affairs in everyday practice. Minors who commit an offence are dealt with in a manner that takes account of their age and social circumstances at the time of the commission of the offence, and there is no discrimination between juvenile offenders. Children are disciplined in accordance with the laws in force, due regard being had for their age and situation, the place in which the offence was committed, and the extent of the damage done, but without regard to their nationality or origin. This is consistent with article 2 of the Convention.

50. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia acceded to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination pursuant to Royal Decree M/12 of 16/4 A.H. 1418 (19 August 1997). The text of the Convention was circulated among the relevant government departments in circular No. 233/8 issued by the Office of the Prime Minister on 20/4 A.H. 1418 (23 August 1997) and was publicized by the Ministry of the Interior in circular No. 35/1308/2 dated 30/5 A.H. 1418 (30 September 1997).

51. The Kingdom acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women pursuant to Royal Decree M/25 of 28/5 A.H. 1421 (28 August 2000).

52. In the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, children of all nationalities are treated on the same footing as Saudi children as regards access to educational, health and leisure services and freedom of movement. They have their own schools, which make no distinction between foreign and Saudi children.

Children born out of wedlock

53. Social welfare institutions provide suitable care for children of unknown parentage and children deprived of proper care in the family or community. This care is provided without any discrimination on any grounds.

Disabled children

54. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia pays considerable attention to this category of children. The fact that His Royal Highness Crown Prince Abdullah Abd al-Aziz was appointed Chairman of the Higher Council for Disabled Affairs, pursuant to Royal Order No. A/66 of 27/4 A.H. 1423 (7 July 2002), is evidence of the extreme importance attached to this group's welfare.

55. Paragraph 3 of the eighth strategic basis of the sixth development plan calls for greater efforts to be devoted to persons with disabilities and for the introduction of national programmes to ensure their rehabilitation and welfare and facilitate their access to employment.

56. The State does not allow any form of discrimination against children with disabilities, nor is there any pattern or tradition of discrimination against them in society. Programmes have been designed to integrate children with disabilities into the education system and various fields of employment.

Girls

57. All children in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, both boys and girls alike, have equal rights and duties and equal access to all the forms of educational, health, social and family welfare that are provided by the State.

58. The Kingdom acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women pursuant to Royal Decree M/25 of 28/5 A.H. 1421 (28 August 2000) and the General Presidency for the Education of Girls was incorporated into the Ministry of Education pursuant to Royal Decree No. A/2 of 10/1 A.H. 1423 (24 March 2002).

59. Saudi society professes Islam, which advocates justice and equality and therefore rejects all forms of discrimination on the basis of sex. Girls enjoy all the rights guaranteed to them by the Islamic Shariah and receive exactly the same treatment as boys in respect of education and employment. Everyone has equal rights and duties, unless otherwise dictated by the nature of a particular academic discipline or as regards maternity leave and leave for the purpose of raising children.

60. There are no minorities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and there is no discrimination between Saudi citizens. Foreign residents in the Kingdom enjoy the same welfare and protection as Saudi citizens; their children have the same rights as Saudi children and are entitled to equal treatment before the law.

C. The best interests of the child (art. 3)

61. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia shows the utmost concern for the best interests of the child. The child's best interests are the primary consideration when it comes to the selection of a marriage partner. Parents must respect the child's rights with regard to breastfeeding, custody, guardianship and maintenance, and all Saudis proposing to marry must comply with the health regulations laid down in Royal Decree No. 5 of 4/1 A.H. 1423 (18 March 2002), which are designed to eradicate hereditary diseases and protect children from disabilities.

62. The Basic Law guarantees the welfare and protection of the family and the rising generation, underscoring the vital need for family cohesion and the protection of family members. The Basic Law demonstrates particular concern for the best interests of the child by

defining the minimum age for admission to employment, prohibiting the employment of children at an early age, in heavy or hazardous work or occupations, or at night, stipulating maximum working hours, and requiring employers to provide an appropriate working environment with every facility for relaxation, rest and peace and quiet.

63. The juvenile laws in force in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia take account of the best interests of the child. They consider the child's age and social situation, protect children from exploitation and danger, define the age (from 7 to 18) at which children are liable for their actions and provide for the establishment of juvenile courts presided over by special judges to hear cases, administer justice and fully safeguard children's rights in accordance with the Juvenile Justice Act of A.H. 1395 (1975). The Act provides that judicial proceedings against children must be conducted in an atmosphere that takes account of the child's feelings and is far removed from the atmosphere prevailing in adult courts. Children's trials must be concluded expeditiously after their social situation has been thoroughly investigated and all other possible reform measures have been exhausted. Such proceedings must be held in camera and may not be made public. The Act promulgated in A.H. 1389 (1969) encourages the juvenile courts to settle cases without placing children in supervised facilities and to limit penalties to admonishment, guidance, counselling or a reprimand, coupled with delivery into the custody of the child's guardian for ongoing supervision and correction.

64. The Act stipulates that no previous convictions may be entered in the child's record, regardless of the number of repeated offences, and that placement in an institution shall be used only as a last resort and for the shortest possible period of time. When such placement is ordered, the child must be allowed to freely pursue his or her studies in a comfortable atmosphere which offers all kinds of entertainment such as television, radio, a library, newspapers and magazines. The child must be allowed to receive visits, to practise sports, to take part in cultural excursions and competitions, to practise hobbies and to voluntarily learn crafts of his or her own choosing. Several schemes and activities have been designed to teach young people to rely on themselves, to make their own decisions without any external interference and to make the best use of their free time. All their nutritional, protection, health and safety needs are catered for and these schemes are supervised by senior social workers who visit the children from time to time and listen to their views and suggestions.

65. The law prohibits the use of coercion or intimidation during the examination of children or the hearing of their statements. Account is taken of children's feelings and investigators must wear civilian clothing and must not handcuff children. Children must be transported in civilian vehicles and must be treated in the most humane manner. Special judges are appointed to hear children's cases, the purpose of which is to reform and reintegrate children into family life in full dignity.

66. The law offers scope for the reduction of penalties, empowering judges often to reduce the period of time which children spend in supervised institutions, if they memorize the Holy Koran or improve their behaviour. Children are also allowed to sit examinations while in detention. If more than half the sentence has been served, the remainder may be commuted and the child may benefit from the Royal Amnesty which is proclaimed every year before the Id al-Fitr holiday, allowing him or her to celebrate the holiday with his or her family.

D. The right to life, survival and development (art. 6)

67. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia guarantees the right to life, survival and development of all children in the country without any discrimination among them. It prohibits the killing of human beings in general and of children, in particular. As God says: "Kill not your children on a plea of want. We provide sustenance for you and for them" and "Take not life, which God hath made sacred, except by way of justice and law."

68. The Islamic Shariah applicable in the Kingdom never imposes capital punishment on persons who have not attained their majority, regardless of whether the offence they committed was a *qisas* offence [for which the penalty is retaliation], a *hadd* offence [for which the prescribed penalty is mandatory] or a *ta`zir* offence [for which the penalty is left to the judge's discretion]. Subject to the relevant conditions, children in detention are allowed to pay three-day visits to their families and to take part in celebrations such as relatives' weddings or sad occasions such as funerals, in order to preserve their ties with their family.

69. The Kingdom protects the right of all children to life, survival and development by providing a full range of security, nutritional and health services. It is striving to ensure that solidarity and love in all families and communities form the core of such protection. It advocates wise and understanding treatment between individuals, rejects enmity and hatred, and strives to achieve justice and equality without discriminating between males and females or Saudi citizens and foreign residents. The State looks after children requiring alternative care through the General Department for the Welfare of Orphans, which caters for children of unknown parentage, children born out of wedlock, of whom there are very few, and children deprived of the care of one or both parents or relatives owing to death, divorce, the ill-health of the mother or any other circumstance.

70. Conditions have been established to regulate the fostering of such children so as to ensure their full protection and welfare. After an appropriate name has been chosen for them, children of unknown parentage are entrusted to the care of a foster family, consisting of a husband and wife or a healthy woman, who must be free of disease and socially, physically and psychologically fit and willing to look after the child.

71. Regulations have been established to ensure that children deprived of a family environment are cared for either in welfare institutions or alternative families. From birth until the age of six these children receive social, educational, psychological and health care in welfare homes. They are then transferred to social education homes and model education institutions. A special system known as the *kafalah* of Islamic law (guardianship) has been established to provide children with alternative family care. This system guarantees the children being cared for all the rights and duties of any other citizen.

72. The State provides financial aid and establishes educational programmes overseen by social workers in order to supervise, monitor and advise all institutions and families entrusted with the guardianship of orphans and children in a similar situation. It also earmarks an annual budget to subsidize these programmes.

73. The State provides fully for the welfare of minors in a manner consistent with their health and social status and regardless of their sex, colour, religion or ethnic origin. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs oversees a number of residential institutions throughout the country which provide children with social, health, educational, psychological and vocational services. These institutions offer children an alternative family environment, board and lodging and every comfort, including a monthly allowance and opportunities to pursue a hobby and learn useful crafts that will allow them to become productive members of society.

74. Other important programmes include social education centres for boys and girls; vocational, social and health rehabilitation services for children with disabilities; programmes of care for children with palsy; and the day care and welfare programmes for normal and disabled children which are run by charities and social services' centres, of which the Kingdom has 246. Child welfare services are delivered through kindergarten programmes, day-care centres and children's clubs which cater for normal children and through centres for disabled boys and girls, residential welfare centres, orphan guardianship schemes and assistance programmes for the families of children with disabilities and abnormalities.

75. The Ministry of Justice works through its representatives in the juvenile courts and liaises with trained social workers to guarantee children the full enjoyment of their rights in a manner consistent with their best interests. The Board of Investigation and Public Prosecution studies and investigates children's circumstances and makes sure that due account is taken of human rights during criminal proceedings. The State budget earmarks funds to support the implementation of these programmes.

76. The Saudi media pay the family the attention it deserves in its capacity as the basic building block of society, the first school in which children receive knowledge and instruction and the environment in which children's personalities are shaped and their behaviour is regulated. The family is consistently provided with everything it needs to carry out its tasks and ensure its cohesion.

77. A large share of the audio-visual and print media's attention goes to children: special departments have been set up and staffed with women professionals to produce useful and informative television and radio programmes tailored to the needs of children and families and educational material is designed for the audio-visual and print media in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Kingdom's own media policy.

78. The laws and regulations prohibit violence against children. A number of seminars and workshops have been held on the subject of child abuse in order to raise public awareness of this problem. In addition, a national committee, consisting of child-welfare organizations, is being established to formulate a comprehensive national strategy for the suppression of all forms of violence. Every year, the Ministry of Health takes part in the celebrations to mark World Mental Health Day, endeavouring to raise public awareness about mental health issues as they relate to children of all ages and adolescents, women and older persons. The theme for the 2002 World Mental Health Day was the impact of psychological trauma and violence on children and adolescents. The Ministry of Health, in conjunction with the other organizations involved in this area, distributed leaflets and publications, held workshops and organized a number of educational talks for communities all over the Kingdom.

79. Children have property rights if a relative from whom they are entitled to inherit dies before they are born. The law guarantees live-born children the right to inherit from the time of birth.

1. Promotion of breastfeeding

80. Almighty God says: “Mothers shall suckle their children for two full years.” The healthy-child programmes run by the Ministry of Health use follow-up and public awareness activities to promote breastfeeding. More than 95 per cent of mothers in most parts of the country breastfeed their children during the first four months of life.

2. The Prohibition of Abortion Act

81. Article 24 of the Code of Medical and Dental Practice promulgated in Royal Decree No. M/3 of 21/2 A.H. 1409 (2 October 1988) stipulates that a pregnant woman cannot have an abortion unless it is necessary to save her life. Any physician who breaches this provision is liable to punishment in accordance with article 29 of the same Code.

E. Respect for the views of the child (art. 12)

82. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia respects the views of children on all matters relating to their lives and gives them due weight in accordance with the child’s age and maturity. Since children have the right to be heard in judicial proceedings, juvenile courts have been established and are required to hold trial proceedings in camera, creating an appropriate environment in which children can talk without fear or anxiety. Trials, which must be held in the presence of a social worker, are conducted in supervised welfare homes and everything is done to help the child not to feel anxious, afraid or insecure. The law allows the child to have his or her own defence lawyer.

83. The law allows children to express themselves through the print and audio-visual media and television programmes without offending the dignity of others or public morals (article 39 of the Basic Law).

84. Children are also entitled to participate in scientific discussions on matters affecting their lives. A variety of cultural, theatrical, poetry, public-speaking and story-telling events are organized to allow children the freedom to express their views in schools, colleges, sports, cultural and literary clubs, associations and the print and audio-visual media operating in schools and elsewhere.

85. Account is taken of children’s views on their basic and other day-to-day needs. Children freely participate in cultural clubs and sporting activities and in the identification of competitions and areas of participation suited to children of different ages. The newspapers have special sections to which children can make contributions which freely express their views. Numerous magazines accept articles from children which demonstrate their talents and discuss their needs. Children take part in a variety of television and radio programmes which speak to children and those responsible for their care in a language that children can understand. Children also take part in cultural life by joining children’s associations, science clubs and youth and students’ clubs.

86. Children are asked for their views when research is carried out on children's issues, including about the care that they receive, any shortcomings which they have identified, and suggestions for improvements. Children have the freedom to choose whether or not to remain with an alternative family and children in social institutions are involved in designing appropriate institutional-care programmes based on their own assessments.

87. Cultural clubs offer children a forum in which to discuss their problems and find comfort and relief. The Ministry of Education involves children in the evaluation of school curricula and school activities' programmes so as to tailor them to children's expectations without detracting from the programmes' basic aims.

IV. CIVIL RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS

A. Name and nationality (art. 7)

88. Article 7 of the Saudi Nationality Act adopted pursuant to Cabinet Resolution No. 4 of 25/1 A.H. 1374 (23 September 1954) stipulates that: "A Saudi national is a person born in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia or abroad to a Saudi father or a Saudi mother and a stateless father or a father of unknown nationality or a person of unknown parentage born in the Kingdom. A foundling is deemed to have been born in the Kingdom unless there is evidence to the contrary."

89. Article 67 of the Civil Status Act No. M/7 of 21/4 A.H. 1407 (21 December 1986) provides that every Saudi citizen who has reached the age of 15 must apply to a civil status office for an identity card.

B. Registration of births (art. 7)

90. Article 32 of the Civil Status Code provides that all births which take place in the Kingdom and all Saudi births abroad must be reported within the prescribed time limits.

91. Ministerial Ordinance No. 386 of 1/9 A.H. 1408 (17 April 1988) lays down the conditions for the selection, and the number of names to be given to a child. Article 6 of the Ordinance stipulates that the name, comprising a minimum of four and a maximum of six elements with the words "son of" between the first name and the name of the child's father and between the father's and the grandfather's name etc., must be recorded in the Civil Register. Article 11 of the Ordinance prohibits the registration of names which are contrary to Islamic law, inconsistent with human dignity or not recommended. The State requires civil records to be treated as confidential.

92. The Saudi Nationality Act considers a child of unknown parentage to be a Saudi national by virtue of being born in Saudi territory. Such children are entitled to the same rights and privileges as Saudi citizens. They are registered at birth or, in the case of foundlings, on discovery. A birth certificate is issued and each child is given a four-part name. The date of birth and name of the mother, if known, or a pseudonym, are entered in the birth certificate. When the child reaches the age of 15, he or she will be issued with a Saudi registration card, a

birth certificate, a passport and an identity card. In order to preserve the dignity and rights of the child and the foster family, the child must not be named after the foster family. Anyone who attempts to deprive a child of his or her identity or who abandons a child for no good reason is liable to the penalties prescribed by law (article 7 of the Nationality Act, as amended by Royal Decree No. 20 of 12/11 A.H. 1379).

C. Preservation of identity (art. 8)

93. The laws in force in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia respect the child's right to preserve his or her identity, including his or her nationality, name and family ties. The State protects human rights in accordance with the Shariah and article 26 of the Basic Law. Article 13 of the Saudi Nationality Act No. 4 of 25/1 A.H. 1374 (22 September 1954) stipulates that no Saudi citizen may be stripped of his or her nationality unless for compelling reasons and in accordance with a royal decree. The Basic Law insists on the importance of the family, the welfare of its members, the strengthening of family bonds and respect for the values which form the pillars of Saudi society (arts. 9-13).

D. Freedom of expression (art. 13)

94. The State shows great concern for children's upbringing and education and for their acquisition of appropriate skills to ensure their effective participation in the integrated development of Saudi society. Children are trained from the first day of school to exercise their right to freely express their views and to engage in dialogue as an important basic educational tool for developing their capacities in accordance with modern educational and pedagogical principles. Expression is a core subject which is taught at all schools during the first few years of education to help children learn how to express themselves freely.

95. Education officials hold meetings and discussions with children in all stages of education and listen to and discuss their freely-expressed views and opinions about school curricula and teaching methods. Cultural, social, sporting, artistic and scouting activities are also used to help students to develop their participatory and decision-making capacities and to give them opportunities for relaxation. Children are involved in the planning of daily school programmes and performance evaluation methods. Children and young persons are given numerous opportunities to express their views on social, cultural and scientific development. They are encouraged to repudiate discord and violence and to embrace harmony, cohesion and mutual respect in accordance with the provisions of the Islamic Shariah and articles 9 to 13 of the Basic Law. Schools and colleges, sporting, cultural and professional clubs, private cooperatives, playgrounds, parks, summer and vocational centres, etc. are used to develop children's skills, including their ability to express themselves freely. Children are consulted and help make decisions about children's programmes so as to satisfy their needs and realize their aspirations. Article 39 of the Basic Law defines the parameters for their participation in the media.

E. Freedom of thought, conscience and religion (art. 14)

96. Article 1 of the Basic Law stipulates that: “The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a fully sovereign Arab Islamic State. Its religion is Islam. Its Constitution is the Holy Koran and the Sunnah of the Prophet (the Prophet’s sayings) and its language is Arabic.” Children normally follow the religion of their parents, who have the primary responsibility for safeguarding the welfare and development of children, in view of their physical and mental immaturity.

97. According to article 7 (b) of the Cairo Declaration of Human Rights in Islam: “Parents or legal guardians have the right to choose the type of education they desire for their children, provided that they take into consideration their children’s best interests and future in accordance with ethical values and the precepts of the Islamic Shariah.”

98. Although all Saudi citizens are Muslims, the State nevertheless respects the right of non-Muslim residents to their religious beliefs.

99. In the intellectual sphere, the State promotes science, the arts and culture and encourages scientific research and contributions to Arab, Islamic and human civilization.

F. Freedom of association and freedom of peaceful assembly (art. 15)

100. The State encourages the establishment of charitable associations in accordance with the Charitable Associations and Institutions Act No. 107 of 25/6 A.H. 1410 (22 January 1990). It has enacted laws to regulate their objects and statutes so as to guarantee the realization of their aims and the furtherance of the public interest. Indeed, the State subsidizes these associations and institutions in accordance with Cabinet Resolution No. 610 of 12/5 A.H. 1395 (25 May 1975), providing them with monetary, technical, material and emergency assistance for the implementation of their programmes.

101. These associations, which are non-profit making bodies, are devoted to the furtherance of sociocultural interests and the realization of humanitarian goals. Membership in these associations is voluntary. There are also a number of children’s associations which involve children in the organization of meetings, work planning and the election of members and chairpersons.

102. The child welfare activities of these associations can be divided into two categories: one for children with disabilities and one for children without. Some associations run kindergarten programmes, day-care centres and children’s clubs for normal children. Others cater for children with disabilities through services’ centres for disabled boys and girls, welfare homes, orphanages, and programmes of assistance for the families of disabled children.

103. These associations have a number of youth programmes and help to develop young persons’ skills by setting up social development and services’ centres and organizing vocational training courses in areas such as language learning, sewing, computing, typing, etc. Men and women from all sections of urban and rural society participate in these associations.

G. Protection of privacy (art. 16)

104. Article 40 of the Basic Law stipulates that: “Telegraphic, postal, telephone and other means of communication are confidential. They shall not be confiscated, delayed, inspected or intercepted other than in the circumstances specified by law.” Article 37 states that: “Homes are inviolable. They shall not be entered without the permission of the owner and they shall not be searched other than in the circumstances specified by law.”

105. Other laws guarantee individuals the right to privacy and personal liberty without any interference, provided that the exercise of this right does not harm others or society, form the subject of a complaint, or lead to depravity.

106. The Safety of Camel-Racing Regulation No. C/966 of 1/11 A.H. 1422 (14/1 2002) contains the following provisions:

(a) An apprentice jockey shall be not less than 16 and not more than 23 years of age and shall be placed under the supervision of a senior trainer. Upon reaching the age of 24, he shall be licensed as a professional jockey;

(b) He shall be medically fit to pursue this profession, as attested by the results of a complete medical check-up to be carried out at the beginning of each racing season;

(c) Evidence that he has undergone an adequate period of training and knows how to control the camel shall be provided in a certificate that has been duly signed by trainers licensed by the racing organization. The trainers shall bear responsibility for the consequences of the jockey’s failure or inability to control his camel and for preventing him from causing any accidents to others;

(d) The jockey shall sign a declaration, endorsed by the racing organization and accompanied by an attestation from his father or legal guardian, stating that he is aware of the dangers of racing and exonerating any other part of responsibility for the consequences of his participation therein;

(e) A minimum weight (e.g. 52 kilos) such as applies in horse racing shall be established for camel jockeys in order to prevent the employment of minors as jockeys;

(f) Jockeys shall wear protective clothing such as protective jackets and headgear;

(g) The body supervising and organizing the races shall ensure that jockeys comply with these and other conditions which form part of the racing rules;

(h) Before issuing racing permits, the authorities and governorates which directly oversee the safety of races shall conduct regular checks to ensure compliance with all aspects of these procedures.

107. It is not permissible to force children into criminal activity or delinquency. The law punishes anyone who does so or who exploits, incites or helps a child to engage in crime or delinquency. The laws emphasize the importance of protecting children’s dignity and feelings and of safeguarding children against exploitation. Parents have a duty to protect their children’s

physical and emotional well-being. The laws on special care for children and children's social welfare homes are all based on the principles of protecting the child's physical integrity, respecting his or her feelings, and safeguarding his or her dignity as a person entitled to protection, affection, care and guidance without threat of torture or exploitation.

H. Access to appropriate information (art. 17)

108. Considerable care is taken to provide children with access to appropriate sources of information through the audio-visual and print media. Libraries have been installed in every school and turned into learning resource centres offering a full range of information tools, including books, computers and the Internet. Departments specializing in the production of children's and family radio and television programmes have been set up and staffed with women professionals in order to deliver informative programmes tailored to the needs of children and families. The material presented by the audio-visual and print media is designed in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Kingdom's media policy.

109. Some 23 per cent of all television programmes and 19.6 per cent of all radio programmes are geared towards young persons, children and families and provide them with information that is useful and entertaining.

110. Domestic newspapers and magazines give wide coverage to children's and family issues, satisfying children's need for access to appropriate information. Some children and young persons contribute articles on cultural topics, while others manage many pages of these publications.

I. The right not to be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (art. 37 (a))

111. Article 36 of the Basic Law stipulates: "The State shall ensure the security of all citizens and foreign residents in its territory. No citizen shall have his freedom of action curtailed or shall be detained or imprisoned except as provided by law." The Kingdom acceded to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, pursuant to Decree M/11 of 4/4 A.H. 1418 (7 August 1997). The Convention was circulated to the competent authorities in accordance with Order No. 16/20294 of 16-17/5 A.H. 1422 (5 August 2001), signed by His Royal Highness the Minister for Internal Affairs.

112. Articles 2 and 13 of the Code of Criminal Procedure promulgated in Royal Decree No. M/39 of 28 July A.H. 1422 (15 October 2001) prohibit torture or degrading treatment and stipulate that young men and women must be examined and tried in accordance with the applicable regulations and ordinances.

113. Article 5 of the Detention and Imprisonment Act No. M/21 of 12/6 A.H. 1398 (19 May 1978) stipulates that all prisons and places of detention must undergo judicial, administrative, health and social inspections in accordance with the provisions of the implementing regulation.

114. In order fully to guarantee humane treatment of convicted persons, article 13 of the Detention and Imprisonment Act provides that a pregnant prisoner or detainee must receive special care from the first signs of pregnancy until 40 days after delivery, in accordance with the provisions of the relevant implementing regulations. In order to protect the health of such prisoners and detainees and the children they are carrying, article 14 of the same Act further stipulates that a pregnant prisoner or detainee must be transferred to a hospital when the time of delivery approaches and must stay there until the physician allows her to be discharged.

115. The Act grants prisoners the freedom to perform religious observances and provides that every prison and detention centre must have its own psychologist and social workers, in addition to educational, cultural and recreational facilities.

116. Article 28 of the Act stipulates that no prisoner or detainee may be subjected to any kind of assault and that any official who assaults a prisoner or detainee shall be liable to punishment.

117. The Kingdom operates on the principle that a person is presumed innocent until proved guilty by a competent court in proceedings that have afforded him the right to a defence at all stages. If this applies to adults, then children in the Kingdom obviously enjoy even more humane and indulgent care and protection, as confirmed in the Juvenile Justice Act, which provides for the appointment of juvenile judges. The full rights of children are guaranteed during all stages of proceedings in accordance with the Act which passed into law in A.H. 1395 (1975) and juvenile trials must be held in special places (supervised homes) in accordance with the Act promulgated in A.H. 1389 (1969).

118. The law states that the social circumstances of juveniles must be examined before reform measures are imposed on them, in complete confidentiality, and that no details or photographs of children's trials may be published. The law also provides that juveniles must be placed in reformatories only after solutions such as guidance, admonishment, reprimand or parental pledges have failed. Moreover, no previous convictions may be entered in a juvenile's record, regardless of the number of repeat offences. Consistent efforts are made to reduce custodial sentences to the minimum and juveniles are encouraged to amend their behaviour and to do well in their studies with a view to their release if their behaviour improves. The law prohibits the use of coercion in order to extract a confession from a minor. Minors must be questioned without pressure of any kind and in the presence of a social worker.

119. Minors must be transported in unmarked vehicles accompanied by a civilian escort. They must not be handcuffed. Verdicts handed down against them are subject to judicial review and minors enjoy all their social rights, including the right to receive visits from relatives. Minors are provided with recreational, leisure and educational services and vocational training in order to help them to reform and to develop their self-reliance.

120. The Islamic Shariah in force in the Kingdom never imposes capital punishment on persons who have not attained their majority.

121. The law favours the release and pardon of juvenile delinquents, if they improve their behaviour, on the occasion of Islamic feast days, or if they memorize the Holy Koran. A judge can order a young person's release if he deems it appropriate.

122. The Ministry of Education issues regular circulars prohibiting the beating or ill-treatment of school children during all stages of general education and prescribing penalties designed to deter teachers from committing such acts.

V. FAMILY ENVIRONMENT AND ALTERNATIVE CARE

123. Article 9 of the Basic Law stipulates: “The family is the nucleus of Saudi society and its members shall be brought up in the Islamic faith, which teaches loyalty and obedience to God, His Messenger, and legal guardians, respect for the law, and love of, and pride in, the homeland and its glorious history.”

124. Article 10 of the Basic Law stipulates: “The State shall strengthen family ties, preserve Arab and Islamic values, care for all family members and create conditions conducive to the development of their potential and capacities.”

A. Parental guidance (art. 5)

125. The law holds parents responsible for protecting the lives, welfare, and development of their children and for providing them with a sound upbringing and guidance without overburdening them. Paragraph 5 of chapter 11 of the sixth development plan, which outlines the objectives of the social, political and media services’ sector, stipulates that the sector must strive to: “Strengthen family ties, focusing in particular on caring for, educating and raising children in accordance with sound principles.”

126. Chapter 12 of the seventh development plan outlines the policies of the social, youth and media services sectors as follows:

“To achieve further development in the social welfare domain by building more social welfare homes, centres and institutions, encouraging systems of alternative and foster family care for child orphans and children with special circumstances, and supporting the programme of assistance for persons with disabilities and voluntary social work.”

127. Articles 9 to 13 of the Basic Law emphasize the importance of this care and of providing parents with everything they need, including jobs, free preventive and therapeutic health services and free educational and recreational services, to enable them to meet their responsibilities for raising children.

B. Parental responsibilities (art. 18)

128. According to the laws of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, parents and guardians are responsible for children and must not curtail their rights, including their right to maintenance, filiation, breastfeeding, parental care and education. This is a duty of care entrusted to parents, who will have to answer to God for their actions. In the words of the Prophet (May blessings and peace be upon him!): “Each of you is a shepherd and is responsible for his flock. The father is a shepherd of his household and is responsible for his flock. The woman is the shepherdess of her husband’s home and is responsible for her flock, etc.”

129. There are two types of guardianship: guardianship of person and guardianship of property. Guardianship of person is the more important of the two, since young children need someone to care for them and to provide them with sound guidance. No legal guardian can deny a ward this right. Indeed, guardians are held responsible for the education and guidance of their wards and for dealing with all matters that affect them. They also face prosecution by the State if they abuse correctional or disciplinary methods in such a way as to endanger the physical or mental health or survival of their wards. This type of guardianship comes to an end when the child reaches his or her majority.

130. The law requires parents or guardians to protect and endeavour to enhance the property rights of children until they reach their majority. God says: “And come not nigh to the orphan’s property, except to improve it, until he attain the age of full strength.”

131. Articles 26 to 34 of the Basic Law define the rights and obligations of individuals and the State with respect to the creation of a social environment that allows the family to play its role and meet its obligations for securing the happiness of its children.

132. The law protects children from parental exploitation and from moral, physical or spiritual neglect. The State endeavours to strengthen family ties and the role of the mother, creating numerous sociocultural and health programmes to help mothers to discharge their responsibilities in meeting their children’s educational and practical needs. These endeavours extend to the creation of opportunities for cooperation between families, schools, cultural and sports clubs, charitable associations, and social and health centres with a view to providing integrated care.

133. The mass media are endeavouring to educate parents about the vital role they play in their children’s cultural, social, health and educational development and about their other duties.

134. The following development programmes have helped to make families and parents aware of their children’s rights:

- The provision of free education at all stages, including university and vocational education;
- The delivery of free health care for citizens and foreign residents through primary health centres and government hospitals;
- The provision of housing for low-income families in need;
- The provision of different types of social services for poor families, persons with disabilities, orphans, and children deprived of family care, through government and private social development and social services’ centres and welfare homes (offering educational, health and social care).

C. Separation from parents (art. 9)

135. The family is the natural environment for children from birth until they reach the age of majority. However, in spite of the efforts made to strengthen family ties, the family may lose one its basic components, making it an unfit environment for child-rearing. In such cases,

a child may have to be separated from the family in his or her own best interests or guardianship may be withdrawn from the parents owing to illness, a protracted period of imprisonment, the lack of fitness of a guardian or testamentary executor to raise children, or where there is evidence that the guardian is exploiting the child. In these cases, the State assumes guardianship of a child aged between 7 and 18 in accordance with Decree No. 611 of 13/5 A.H. 1395 (24 May 1975) and places him or her in a government or charitable social welfare institution. As for children below the age of 7, State welfare homes were established under the terms of Decree No. 156 of 8/2 A.H. 1395 (20 February 1975) as an adjunct to the homes run by charitable associations.

136. The law endeavours to keep children with their families, even when they break the law, provided that the offence is not sufficiently grave to warrant placement in a reformatory and separation from the family in the child's best interests, or the child's behaviour has proved impervious to reform through simple disciplinary measures such as guidance, a reprimand, delivery into the custody of the family in exchange for a pledge of reform and guidance or placement in a public sanatorium in the event of illness.

137. Children are sometimes placed in the custody of the guardian. If the guardian is unable to reform the child owing to illness or incapacity, the child may be entrusted to a relative or any other trustworthy person of good repute who is willing and able to raise and educate the child.

138. The Shariah also allows for the withdrawal of guardianship from one or both parents or the legal guardian, if the person concerned has been convicted of rape or indecent assault, has been sentenced to a long term of imprisonment, has ill-treated the child or has endangered his or her health, safety or moral integrity. In such cases, a judge may assign guardianship to a relative who meets the prescribed criteria or may place the child in a social welfare institution until a relative or similar person is found to care for him or her or the child reaches the age of 20.

139. The social welfare homes' regulation provides for the care of children below the age of 7 who need to be separated from their families in the child's best interests. The regulations governing social welfare homes and prisons allow a child to stay with his or her mother if this is in his or her best interests. A child in custody is allowed to receive family visits lasting for an appropriate length of time and is provided with every facility for his or her reform, rehabilitation, education, safety and return to normal life. Such children enjoy all the rights granted to their peers and previous convictions are not entered in their record, no matter how many times they have offended.

140. The managers of reformatories and welfare homes take measures to maintain links between children and their families. Children are separated from their families or guardians if the latter are shown to be negligent in their duties.

D. Family reunification (art. 10)

141. Articles 9 to 13 of the Basic Law emphasize the necessity of strengthening family ties and of providing health, education, security, food, water and other vital services throughout all urban and rural areas of the Kingdom without compelling anyone to live in a specific place. Citizens have the right to travel and to leave and return to the country whenever they want, while foreign residents can do so in accordance with the Immigration and Travel Act, which guarantees

their security, safety, vital requirements and relations with others. Foreign residents also have the right to bring in their families in accordance with specific regulations designed to guarantee them an appropriate family environment.

142. The State ensures to all citizens in the country and abroad the exercise of all the rights to which they are entitled by virtue of holding Saudi nationality. The law provides for the reunification of families in order to allow parents and children to fulfil their obligations towards one another.

E. Illicit transfer and non-return of children abroad (art. 11)

143. The State protects and strives to ensure the safety of children during travel. Custody of expatriate children is regulated in accordance with Shariah-based regulations which are designed to protect the best interests of the child.

F. Recovery of maintenance for the child (art. 27, para. 4)

144. The law requires the head of the family in his capacity as the main breadwinner to maintain his wife and children and imposes penalties on breadwinners who are able to pay maintenance but fail to do so.

145. The Social Welfare Homes' Regulation promulgated in Decree No. 185 of 2/5 A.H. 1387 (8 August 1967) endeavours to prevent juvenile delinquency by establishing conditions for the maintenance of orphaned and other children who are no longer maintained by their guardian because the guardian has committed a crime, is ill or fails to pay maintenance. The State also provides social assistance to needy families through social security programmes or the application of the regulations governing the *kafalah* of orphans and minors, depending on the circumstances of the minor requiring assistance. Moreover, at the request of an incapacitated guardian, children can be placed in social welfare homes or included in social security or *kafalah* schemes, if such be in their best interests. The State provides children in social welfare homes with board and lodging, clothing, education and every facility for recreation, sports and rehabilitation until they reach the age of 20, are able to rely on themselves or find a relative or other person who meets the relevant criteria and is willing to maintain them.

G. Children deprived of a family environment (art. 20)

146. The State cares for children deprived of a family environment through a variety of welfare programmes, including orphan welfare programmes, social welfare centres, social security programmes and the *kafalah* system. Each of these programmes has its own set of regulations. The best interests of children are taken into account when enrolling them in programmes that have been selected to meet their particular needs. A number of charitable associations offer children a range of health, social, residential, educational and cultural programmes, including full guardianship in accordance with the conditions laid down in the regulation on guardianship of orphans.

147. Centres for children with disabilities provide a full package of care tailored to the situation of each child, including accommodation, assistance, rehabilitation, treatment, education, guardianship, day care, etc., which takes account of the best interests and the health and social needs of each child.

148. In addition, social welfare homes take in children below the age of seven who have been deprived of a family environment, including them in other guardianship, welfare, educational and protection programmes, depending on their personal needs.

H. Adoption (art. 21)

149. The State applies the system of *kafalah*, which guarantees the child's right to live in conditions of greater freedom and dignity, enabling him or her to realize his or her potential.

150. The State lays down a number of conditions regulating *kafalah* and alternative family arrangements in accordance with the Islamic Shariah and the best interests of the child. These stipulate, inter alia, that a family or a woman wishing to assume *kafalah* must be of sound character and health and must be of good social and financial standing. The State earmarks assistance for alternative families in need and has set up follow-up programmes to ensure that alternative families carry out their obligations and do not abuse the children placed in their care under the *kafalah* system. Paragraph 4, subparagraph 1, of the policies set out in the sixth development plan advocates the establishment of alternative and foster families and the provision of assistance to enable them to care for orphaned children and children with special needs.

I. Periodic review of placement of children in institutions (art. 25)

151. Article 8, paragraph 7, of Cabinet Decision No. 185 of 2/5 A.H. 1387 (8 August 1967) stipulates that social welfare homes for boys and girls shall organize day and residential care for children at these homes and ensure that religious observances are performed at the correct times.

152. Article 23 of the regulation on the statutes of social welfare homes stipulates that, in addition to making visits in order to check up on children's health, the visiting doctor must also perform other duties such as:

- Verifying compliance with hygiene regulations in the home;
- Inspecting kitchens, kitchen equipment, raw ingredients for meals, and methods of food preparation;
- Inspecting dormitories and their contents.

153. The welfare institution must submit a regular report on the general state of each child's health once every six months, or if necessary, every month. The welfare authority may send one of its own specialists to visit and report on a child living in one of its institutions.

J. Abuse and neglect (art. 19) and physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of the child (art. 39)

154. The State has enacted laws to protect society, particularly children, from exploitation, neglect and inhuman treatment. The implementing regulation on welfare institutions for children with paralysis and other beneficiaries stipulates, in paragraph 3, article 5, of its chapter III entitled “Social and Psychological Welfare”, that welfare institutions shall endeavour to create an appropriate social and psychological environment to compensate, as far as possible, for the homesickness which children feel when they are apart from their families, teaching them to adapt to the group and encouraging them to participate in the in-house programmes and activities which each institution runs in order to explore their interests, goals and patterns of behaviour with a view to providing them with a proper education. These institutions also organize family visits and teach families sound methods for raising children in the family environment.

155. These programmes are designed to be flexible enough to adjust to the needs, age and state of health of each child. They also offer children opportunities for leisure in the form of organized trips, evening entertainment, film screenings, etc. In addition, the Labour Code promulgated in Decree No. M/21 of 6/9 A.H. 1389 (15 November 1969) provides for the protection of children in articles 160 to 163 of its chapter X entitled “Employment of Minors and Women”. Article 160 states: “Adolescents, minors and women may not be employed in hazardous or harmful work or occupations involving power-driven machinery or in mines, stone quarries and the like. The Minister of Labour shall issue a decision defining the occupations and types of work that are harmful to health or likely to pose particular risks to women, minors and adolescents and shall prohibit or impose special conditions on their employment in such work.” Article 161 stipulates: “Adolescents, minors and women shall not be employed at night during a period between sunset and sunrise lasting for not less than 11 hours, save in the circumstances specified in a decision of the Minister of Labour concerning non-industrial occupations and situations of force majeure.” Article 162 states: “Minors and adolescents may not work for more than six hours a day and shall not be covered by the exceptions provided for in articles 150 and 152 of this Code.” Article 163 stipulates: “Minors under the age of 13 shall not be admitted to employment or places of work. The Minister of Labour may decide to raise this age limit for particular industries or sectors.”

156. Before employing a minor, the employer must obtain the following documents from the minor and place them in a special file:

- A birth certificate or a certificate of the child’s estimated age issued by a competent physician and endorsed by the Ministry of Health;
- A medical fitness certificate issued by a competent physician and endorsed by the Ministry of Health;
- A consent form signed by the minor’s legal guardian.

157. Employers must notify the competent labour office about each minor whom they employ within one week from the date on which employment commences. In addition to the general records which employers are required to keep pursuant to article 10 of the Code, special files

must be kept in the work premises containing details of each minor's name, age and address and the full name of the legal guardian, together with the date on which the employment commenced.

158. Articles 7, 12 to 19, 21 and 28 of the Detention and Imprisonment Act promulgated in Decree No. M/31 of 21/6 A.H. 139 (28 May 1978) provide for the protection of children.

159. Article 7 states: "No one may be placed in a prison or detention centre or transferred or released other than pursuant to a written order issued by the competent authority. No prisoner or detainee shall be kept in a prison or detention centre beyond the date specified in the detention order. The implementing regulation shall define the procedures for recording prisoners' details in the proper logbooks." Article 12 states: "The implementing regulation shall lay down the rules concerning prisoners' and detainees' visits and correspondence. It shall also establish rules on the treatment of detainees, including their right to order and pay for their own food, to wear their own clothing and any other rights and privileges which they may be granted."

160. The Minister for Internal Affairs may grant all or some of the privileges accorded to persons who have been sentenced to up to one year in prison for lesser offences. Article 13 stipulates: "A prisoner or detainee who is pregnant shall be given special medical care from the first signs of pregnancy until 40 days after delivery, in accordance with the terms of the implementing regulation." Article 14 states: "A pregnant prisoner or detainee must be transferred to a hospital when the time of her delivery approaches and must stay there until the physician allows her to be discharged." Article 15 stipulates that: "The child shall remain with the prisoner or detainee until he or she reaches the age of 2. If the mother does not want to keep the child with her or once the child reaches the aforementioned age, the child shall be entrusted to the care of the father or the person after the mother who is legally entitled to custody."

161. If the child has no father or relatives, he or she shall be placed in a children's home. The mother must be told where the child is being kept and the implementing regulation will determine the procedure for allowing the mother to see the child on a regular basis.

162. Article 18 of the same Act stipulates: "The Ministry of the Interior and the authorities responsible for education and instruction shall jointly design the educational curricula to be used in prisons and detention centres."

163. The implementing regulation defines the rules and procedures for allowing prisoners and detainees to sit examinations at different stages of education. It provides for the establishment in each prison of a library of books on religious, scientific and moral topics in order to allow prisoners and detainees to make good use of their free time.

164. Prisoners and detainees are allowed to have books, newspapers or magazines brought in at their own expense in accordance with the terms of the implementing regulation. Article 19 of the Act stipulates: "The Ministry of the Interior and the competent authorities shall jointly establish social services programmes for prisons and detention centres and the families of prisoners and detainees." Article 21 stipulates: "No administrative procedure shall be allowed to delay the timely release of a prisoner or detainee." Article 28 states: "It is not permissible to subject prisoners or detainees to any form of assault."

165. Disciplinary proceedings are taken against any civilian or military official who assaults a prisoner or detainee without prejudice to any criminal penalties that may be inflicted if the assault constitutes a criminal offence.

VI. BASIC PUBLIC HEALTH AND SOCIAL WELFARE

A. Public health and health services (art. 24)

166. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia demonstrates considerable concern for the health of all its citizens, providing them with free health care. Article 31 of the Basic Law stipulates that: "The State shall protect public health and shall provide health care for every citizen." Article 27 of the Basic Law affirms: "The State shall guarantee the rights of citizens and their families in the event of an emergency, sickness, disability or old age. It shall support the social security system and encourage individuals and institutions to contribute to charitable works." Article 32 of the Basic Law stipulates that: "The State shall endeavour to conserve, protect and develop the environment and to prevent pollution." The general aims and policies of development plans accord high importance to public health and public services. They are geared, inter alia, at the expansion of different types of health centres, the reduction of morbidity and mortality rates, ongoing delivery of treatment and improvement of treatment standards, and the maintenance of the quality and efficiency of the health services provided to all sectors of society, including Saudi and foreign men and women.

Primary health and social welfare budgets

State budget allocations for the Ministry of Health and Red Crescent Society

(A.H. 1411/1412-1420/1421 (1991/2001))

Years	Thousands of SRIs	Charge 1405/1406 = 100
1411/1412	9 901 100	110.5
1412/1413	9 052 032	101.1
1413/1414	10 109 612	101.1
1414/1415	8 267 946	92.3
1415/1416	7 503 020	83.3
1416/1417	10 950 419	122.3
1417/1418	10 950 419	122.3
1418/1419	1 243 562	138.9
1419/1420	11 545 076	128.9
1420/1421	13 288 600	148.4
1423/1424	13 857 430	

Evolution of State budget allocations for social services

(A.H. 1412/1413-1421/1422 (1991/2002))

Years	Millions of SRIs	Evolution 1405/1406 = 100
1412/1413	49 814.4	101.8
1413/1414	53 887.8	110.1
1414/1415	47 925.0	97.9
1415/1416	44 330.7	90.6
1416/1417	44 979.3	91.9
1417/1418	63 918	130.6
1418/1419	70 861.1	144.8
1419/1420	65 986.0	134.8
1420/1421	73 707.6	180.6
1421/1422	80 455.2	164.4

167. The tenth basic strategy set out in the seventh development plan for the period A.H. 1420-1425 (2000-2004) illustrates the attention that is paid to the social welfare and health of Saudi society and to persons with welfare needs by:

- Focusing on caring for mothers and children in all spheres and at all levels, including through the development of maternal welfare programmes and maternal and child health-care services;
- Paying greater attention to persons with disabilities through the introduction of national rehabilitation and welfare programmes and the opening up of opportunities for their employment;
- Demonstrating concern for primary health care with an emphasis on health awareness and preventive medicine, improving the effectiveness of preventive and therapeutic health institutions, and expanding health programmes to cover all citizens.

168. As confirmation of the State's concern for family health, Royal Decree No. 5 of 4/1 A.H. 1423 (18 March 2002) concerning the application of health regulations to all citizens intending to marry was promulgated to prevent hereditary diseases and protect children from disabilities and genetic diseases by offering screening services free of charge.

169. The Ministry of Health, in partnership with a large number of governmental, non-governmental and private organizations, delivers therapeutic, preventive, rehabilitative and developmental health services and organizes training, research and educational activities in accordance with clear policies that are consistent with the State's plan for delivering health care to citizens, foreign residents and disabled persons without any discrimination among them.

170. According to the Ministry of Health figures for 2001, the Kingdom had a total of 324 hospitals and 46,662 hospital beds, in addition to 1,786 primary health centres.

171. The Ministry of Health is allocated 8 per cent of the gross national product (GNP), which in 2001, amounted to some 14 billion riyals. A separate budget, representing 35 per cent of the Ministry's total budget, is earmarked for primary health care with a focus on health awareness and health education for all segments of society and maternal health care.

172. The Health Act and its implementing regulation were recently promulgated in Royal Decree No. M/11 of 23/3 A.H. 1423 (4 June 2002). Article 3 of the Act stipulates that the State shall deliver health care and protect public health in order to enable people to live in a healthy environment. In particular, the State must guarantee:

- Access to safe drinking water;
- Safe and clean sanitation systems;
- The safety of food on the market;
- The safety of medicines, drugs and medical supplies, and their use;
- The protection of society from the effects of drugs and alcohol;
- The protection of the country from infectious diseases;
- The protection of the environment from the dangers of various types of pollution;
- The establishment of health regulations for public places;
- The promotion of public health awareness.

173. Article 4 of the Act requires the State to provide the following health services:

- Mother and child care;
- Vaccination programmes;
- Health care for persons with disabilities and older persons;
- Health care for students;
- Health care in the event of an accident, emergency or natural disaster;
- Prevention and eradication of infectious and contagious diseases;
- Treatment for complex conditions, including the excision of tumours, limb transplants and treatment of kidney failure;
- Psychiatric services.

174. Article 5 requires the Ministry of Health to prepare vital health statistics, to conduct, analyse and use the results of scientific studies and research, and establish protocols for the conduct of clinical and pharmaceuticals research and trials.

175. One of the critical indicators of the success that has been scored in the past two decades with regard to the elimination and prevention of infectious diseases is the reduction in the incidence of most infectious diseases. This reduction is particularly sharp among diseases targeted for immunization and is a result of the rise in vaccination coverage rates. The Kingdom achieved universal coverage in 1990, ahead of the 2000 deadline, thanks to the expansion of the primary health-care programme run by primary health-care centres throughout the Kingdom and to greater health awareness and compliance on the part of families with vaccination regulations. The incidence of diphtheria fell from 99.0 per 100,000 inhabitants in 1980 to zero in 2000. The incidence of whooping cough fell from 98.3 in 1980 to 1.0 in 2000, and the incidence of neonatal tetanus fell from 0.31 per 1,000 live births in 1980 to 0.03 in 2000.

176. In this connection, the Kingdom met its target for eliminating tetanus in 1986. It also succeeded in eliminating infant poliomyelitis during the second half of the last decade of the twentieth century, thanks to the national vaccination campaigns which were conducted between 1995 and 2000. As a result of the programme on the eradication of measles, German measles and mumps, which was launched in 1998, the incidence of those diseases fell from 461.9 per 100,000 in 1980 to 2.97 in 2000. The expanded immunization programme maintained its robust performance, attaining overall coverage rates of over 96.2 per cent for all vaccinations in 2001. This is reflected in the steady decline in the incidence of diseases targeted for immunization, as shown in the following table:

Disease	Incidence per 100,000 population		Vaccination coverage among infants	
	1999	2000	2001	2001
Diphtheria	0.0	0.0	0.0	96.8%
Pertussis (whooping cough)	0.04	0.10	0.17	96.8%
Neonatal tetanus	0.02	0.03	0.05	96.8%
Poliomyelitis	0.00	0.00	0.00	96.8%
Measles	14.03	2.97	0.74	94.4%
Mumps	11.41	6.69	4.51	96.3%
German measles	1.49	0.97	0.08	96.3%
Hepatitis B	15.32	16.19	18.54	95.4%

177. With the introduction in 2002 of the influenza vaccination for all children in the Kingdom, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia took its place alongside advanced nations in terms of basic vaccination coverage for children.

178. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has initiated studies on the implementation of the International Code of Marketing of Breast-Milk Substitutes with a view to promoting breastfeeding and baby-friendly hospitals that focus primarily on breastfeeding and educating mothers and health sector workers about the importance of breastfeeding.

179. Structural plans for the improvement of medical services include the establishment of a Saudi institute of specialized medicine to evaluate health personnel according to international criteria with a view to creating a pool of qualified personnel who can help to improve the quality of public service provision.

180. In order to protect society from infectious, indigenous or imported diseases, campaigns have been conducted to administer meningitis vaccinations through all primary health-care centres. These vaccinations are offered free of charge to anyone wishing to perform the Hajj (pilgrimage), in view of the large numbers of people who enter the country. They are also offered free to all citizens and foreign residents and to children, adolescents and adults of both sexes.

181. Social centres have been set up to provide women with advice about early childhood, motherhood and childcare and training. They operate through charitable and voluntary centres, as well as family medicine centres in large medical complexes and institutions. The centres also produce and distribute literature containing information and advice about antenatal and post-natal care to help women to improve their knowledge in this area. These services are well received throughout the country.

182. A national plan for early detection of food assimilation disorders and hereditary glandular disorders has been adopted in light of the success of the early screening programme for thyroid disorders, which is now being implemented. All newborns will be screened for 15 hereditary diseases so that specialists can intervene at an early stage if necessary.

183. A national project on the treatment of autism and developmental disorders has been set up and is in the process of being implemented. The Saudi Autism Association and three early-intervention centres for the treatment of autistic children have been given official approval.

B. General health-care indicators

184. Survey data and studies are of the utmost importance when drawing up preliminary indicators on levels of health care provision. Attention is drawn to the following indicators, which highlight the key features of health-care coverage:

Health indicators prepared and published by the Ministry of Health for the period A.H. 1420-1421 (2000/2001)

Description	%
Crude birth rate per 1,000	31.0
Crude mortality rate per 1,000	3.8
Population growth rate (%)	3.39
Life expectancy at birth	71.4
Infant mortality rate per 1,000	19.1
Under-five mortality rate per 1,000	30.0
Maternal mortality rate per 100,000 live births	17.6

Main indicators regarding the rate of vaccination coverage

Description	%
Triple vaccine and polio (3 doses)	96.8
Measles vaccine	94.4
Tuberculosis vaccine	94.4
Hepatitis B vaccine	95.4
Triple virus vaccine (MMR)	96.3

Table 3**Incidence of infectious diseases among under-5s
per 100,000 live births**

Description	%
Diphtheria	0.0
Pertussis (whooping cough)	0.17
Neonatal tetanus (per 1,000 live births)	0.05
Poliomyelitis	0.0
Measles	0.74
Tuberculosis (per 100,000)	16.4
Mumps	4.51
German measles (rubella)	0.08

185. Polio and diphtheria have been completely eradicated, while the morbidity rate for infectious diseases in the Kingdom is quite low. Likewise, child malnutrition has vanished, except for obesity disorders, which are now being dealt with through healthy-child clinics, maternal health education programmes, the media and psychotherapy institutions. Ninety-four per cent of pregnant women receive ante-natal care and the percentage of deliveries attended by a qualified birth attendant in a health institution rose from 92.2 per cent in 1996 to 94.8 per cent. According to the latest Ministry of Health figures, post-natal coverage now stands at 92 per cent.

186. The school health units run by the Ministry of Education deliver school health services in accordance with the principles of the right to life, survival and development enunciated in article 6 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. They also provide treatment in accordance with article 24 of the Convention and in coordination with Ministry of Health programmes in order to avoid duplication and protect the best interests of children from early childhood up to late adolescence.

187. School health services:

- Ensure the development of boys and girls of school age during all stages of education up to late adolescence;

- Control and prevent the spread of infectious and contagious diseases;
- Create a healthy school environment by sending in health unit teams to conduct school inspections and by monitoring playground injuries and children’s accidents;
- Control and protect the school environment to ensure that it is suitable for children;
- Provide full and free immunization coverage against infectious diseases;
- Provide first aid training and establish groups of trained personnel to deliver this service;
- Supervise students’ social, psychological and mental health programmes and expand psychological counselling units to cover all areas of education;
- Implement early screening programmes for hereditary diseases and visual and auditory disabilities, as well as dental hygiene programmes (comprehensive survey);
- Perform medical examinations on new students in all stages of education, as well as periodic check-ups on all students; compile medical records on all students; deliver appropriate treatment; and refer cases to hospital where necessary;
- Provide health education about worldwide diseases such as sexually-transmitted diseases and AIDS, as well as about oral and dental hygiene and the dangers of smoking and drugs;
- Emphasize the importance of proper nutrition by providing students with nourishing meals.

C. Disabled children (art. 23)

188. The Kingdom shows great concern for the welfare, education, rehabilitation and training of persons with disabilities, in accordance with article 27 of the Basic Law, which provides: “The State shall guarantee the rights of citizens and their families in the event of an emergency, sickness, disability or old age. It supports the social security system and encourages institutions and individuals to contribute to charitable works.” Paragraph 2 of the tenth strategic basis of the fifth development plan emphasizes the need to pay greater attention to the disabled and to introduce national programmes which provide for their rehabilitation and care and facilitate their admission to employment.

189. As confirmation of this concern, Prince Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz, Crown Prince, Deputy Prime Minister and Commander of the National Guard, was appointed to chair the Higher Council for Disabled Affairs pursuant to Royal Order No. O/66 of 27/4 A.H. 1423 (7 July 2002).

190. Numerous specialists manage the care of disabled children in educational and rehabilitation institutions run by the Government or private or charitable associations. Great emphasis is laid on developing the residual capacities of children with physical, mental or sensory disabilities through programmes, institutes and centres which offer medical, social, psychological and individual care, physiotherapy and medical rehabilitation services for children with multiple and severe disabilities who cannot be rehabilitated at home.

1. Welfare and rehabilitation services

191. Vocational rehabilitation programmes teach males and females vocational skills that are compatible with their mental, motor or psychological disabilities. These programmes are run by vocational rehabilitation centres and every trainee receives a monthly stipend.

192. Social rehabilitation programmes are run by social rehabilitation centres for severely disabled children. The centres provide board and lodging, clothing, physiotherapy and medical, social and psychological services. There are 24 such centres in various parts of the Kingdom.

193. Children with palsy receive care at specialized centres which have boarding and day-care sections delivering social, health, psychological, cultural and leisure services.

194. The country has a total of 34 day-care centres for severely disabled children who are returned to their families in the evening. The parents of disabled children receive regular benefits to help them care fully for their children. These benefits, which amount on average to SR 300,000,000 per year, cover the costs of wheelchairs, miscellaneous and assistive, hearing, visual and mechanical devices and medical supplies. The country has more than 20 medical rehabilitation and prosthetics centres which are run by government bodies and charitable associations.

195. Charitable and voluntary services are encouraged through the establishment of charitable associations throughout the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. These associations make an outstanding contribution to the welfare of disabled persons, providing them with accommodation, education, training, medical treatment, physiotherapy and transport services, and offering social assistance to their families. These associations receive major support from the State.

196. The National Committee for the Welfare of the Disabled, with members from relevant governmental, private and charitable institutions, was established to coordinate and support efforts to provide assistance for the disabled.

**Numbers and types of social welfare centres and institutions operating
in the year A.H. 1421/1422 (2001/2002)**

Type of institution		Number of centres and institutions
Social welfare, guidance and surveillance centres		20
Social education centres		14
Social, vocational and comprehensive rehabilitation centres		28
Social service centres and welfare institutions		29
Social development committees		114
Total		194
Charitable associations	Established by 2001/2002	246
	Projected by the end of the plan	259
Cooperative associations	Established by 2001/2002	156
	Projected by the end of the plan	167

2. Educational and pedagogical services

197. Special education institutions were introduced in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in A.H. 1378 (1959), when the first programme for the education of the blind was set up in Riyadh. Education for the disabled and other special categories continued to expand, the number of governmental and private institutes and programmes reaching 1,117 in A.H. 1423 (2002). These institutes and programmes are present throughout the Kingdom and are supervised by the Ministry of Education. They offer services for children with visual, auditory, mental, physical and multiple disabilities and autism, as well as other special categories such as children with learning difficulties, etc.

198. In addition to education, Ministry of Education institutes and programmes deliver other free services such as health, psychological and social care, and free board, lodging and clothing for children who are unable to enrol in programmes near their homes. These programmes are managed in a comprehensive way in order to provide children with an integrated package of care.

199. The institutes and programmes follow general education curricula, parts of which are modified to take account of the nature of each disability.

200. Male and female students receive a monthly stipend of between SR 300 to 450, depending on the educational stage, in order to encourage them to seek knowledge. These groups are provided with the following free complementary services:

- The talking library for the blind;
- Hearing and speech centres for the profoundly deaf and persons with auditory and speech impairments;
- Special education presses which print Braille;
- Special equipment, devices and aids for disabled children;
- Centres for the production of educational materials tailored to each type of disability;
- Cultural and awareness programmes such as:
 - Radio programmes (Al-Nur Institutes for the Blind and Al-Amal Institutes for the Deaf);
 - Printing in Braille of the Holy Koran and certain scientific and cultural publications and their distribution free of charge throughout the Kingdom and abroad;
 - Access to educational, scientific and other informational materials;
 - Magazines about disability and persons with disabilities.

201. Training for special education teachers has been organized as follows:

- A special education department has been set up at the King Saud University;
- Efforts have been made to recruit qualified teachers holding higher degrees in special education;
- Teachers are encouraged to attend specialized courses run in the Kingdom and abroad;
- Teachers participate in expert meetings, seminars and conferences held in the Kingdom and abroad;
- A number of national experts have been sent on postgraduate courses to specialize in various types of disabilities;
- Specialists in this field receive a monthly bonus equivalent to 30 per cent of their salary;
- The Prince Salman Centre for Disability Research was established within the framework of the projects run by the Handicapped Children's Society.

202. At present, attention is being focused on integrating disabled children with their peers into schools, cultural and sporting events, scouting and artistic camps and national celebrations at home and abroad. To this end, development programmes have been established to provide for the following:

- The introduction of methods designed to integrate disabled children with their non-disabled peers through classes attached to public schools and through resources room programmes and travelling teacher schemes, in order to create a less isolated educational environment, consistent with the type and severity of the disability;
- The introduction of special education programmes throughout all stages of education beginning at kindergarten, and the establishment of a flexible approach to the age of admission and promotion from one stage to another;
- Cooperation with regional and international organizations and specialized agencies with a view to exchanging experiences and improving services in this field;
- The development of vocational education curricula for deaf children in the secondary stage and the use of other programmes to teach vocational skills;
- Participation in special federations and organizations such as the World Blind Union and the World Federation of the Deaf.

3. Facilities and aids

203. The disabled are provided with facilities that enable them to live in greater dignity and comfort. For example:

- Disabled persons and their escorts receive a 50 per cent discount on all public transport by rail, sea and air;
- Assistive devices and audio-visual aids are provided free of charge;
- Disabled persons who gain vocational qualifications from a rehabilitation centre receive a grant of SR 50,000 to help them start up their own enterprise schemes;
- Disabled parking spaces are provided on public streets and close to public gardens, leisure parks, government buildings and airports to facilitate access for persons with disabilities;
- Paraplegics are given an allowance to convert their vehicles to manual control;
- Persons with disabilities are given the opportunity to participate in national and international sports and cultural competitions;
- A disabled sports' federation has been established and has training centres in 10 regions of the Kingdom;

- Committees have been established to coordinate welfare services for the disabled;
- Employment opportunities are provided by the Government and private sectors;
- Home care is provided;
- Equipment for disabled persons is exempt of customs duty;
- Disabled persons have access to special libraries such as talking libraries, and to audio books.

204. The needs of disabled persons are taken into account when designing, approving the design of or issuing permits for the construction of buildings, which must have disabled parking spaces, access routes for wheelchairs and doors that allow persons with disabilities to move easily around multi-purpose government and private buildings.

205. Persons with disabilities are given priority and administrative assistance when it comes to the allocation of housing. The following table shows the number of children with disabilities who were enrolled in institutes, centres and programmes in A.H. 1422-1423 (2000-2001):

Disabled children enrolled in Ministry of Education special education institutes and programmes in the A.H. 1422/1423 (2001/2002) academic year

Beneficiaries by group	Institutes and programmes	Students
1. Persons with auditory disabilities:		
(a) Profoundly deaf	136	5 308
(b) Hearing impaired	56	1 063
(c) Multiple disabilities	5	22
Total	197	6 393
2. Persons with visual disabilities:		
(a) Blind	61	1 154
(b) Visually impaired	1	2 000
(c) Multiple disabilities	6	32
Total	68	3 186
3. Persons with total disability:		
(a) Receptive to learning	267	8 396
(b) Multiple disability	12	102
Total	279	8 471
4. Persons with autism	19	146
5. Persons with learning difficulties	556	7 598
6. Persons with physical and motor disabilities	1	1 642
Total	1 120	27 436

Services offered to persons with disabilities through Ministry of Education institutes, programmes and special education centres for the academic year A.H. 1422/1423 (2001/2002)

Type of service	Beneficiaries by group	Nos. of institutes, programmes and centres
1. Residential institutes	Profoundly deaf	16
	Blind	8
	Mentally retarded (receptive to learning)	7
	Total	31
2. Day-care institutes	Profoundly deaf	16
	Blind	5
	Mentally retarded (receptive to learning)	14
	Total	35
3. Supplementary classes in special education institutes	Profoundly deaf adults (literacy, intermediate and secondary stages)	10
	Autistic	11
	Multiple disabilities	17
	Total	38
4. Supplementary classes in regular schools	Blind	4
	Profoundly deaf	90
	Profoundly deaf adults (literacy, intermediate and secondary stages)	4
	Hearing impaired	27
	Mentally retarded (receptive to learning)	246
	Autistic	9
	Multiple disabilities	5
	Total	385
Total for supplementary classes	423	
5. Programmes for resources rooms	Learning difficulties	547
	Blind	43
	Hearing impaired	10
	Total	600
6. Roving teacher programmes	Hearing impaired	4
	Total	4
7. Advisory teacher programmes	Hearing impaired	3
	Total	3
8. Special education programmes	Visually impaired	1
	Hearing impaired	1
	Total	2
9. Ancillary centres:	(a) Hearing and speech centres (mornings and evenings)	12
	(b) Centres for persons with learning difficulties (evenings)	9
	(c) Noor Centre for Educational Services (mornings)	1
	Total	22
	Grand total	1 120

VII. EDUCATION, TRAINING, LEISURE AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

A. Education

206. The education sector is a key sector of concern for the State, because of the importance of its role in developing human resources, increasing their productivity and keeping pace with scientific and technological innovations. This concern is reflected in article 30 of the Basic Law, which stipulates that the State must provide public education and undertake to eradicate illiteracy, and in article 29 of the Basic Law, which affirms that the State promotes science, the arts and culture, encourages scientific research, preserves the Arab and Islamic heritage and encourage contributions to Arab, Islamic and human civilization.

207. Development plans concentrate on the quality of public education and the development of students' intellectual capacities. The eighth strategic basis of the seventh development plan (A.H. 1420-1425 i.e. 2000-2004) states that educational outputs shall be improved in accordance with the Islamic Shariah, the changing needs of society and development requirements, through the following:

- The introduction of compulsory primary education for boys and girls;
- The updating and development of academic curricula and teaching methods, the improvement of teachers' skills, and the design of teaching tools to satisfy the real needs of society;
- Efforts to resolve the problem of students dropping out of school during all stages of education;
- Greater emphasis on sciences and applied sciences in universities and research centres;
- The organization of extra-curricular activities for all stages of education;
- Ensuring the integration and flexibility of streams and branches of education.

208. The strategy for the public education sector for the seventh development plan aims at achieving qualitative and quantitative improvements through the pursuance of the following objectives, policies and programmes:

Objectives

- To provide educational opportunities for all citizens of school age;
- To improve quantitative and qualitative standards in education;
- To improve operational and managerial standards;
- To develop national manpower;

- To focus more on providing vocational education and training for girls and on expanding vocational secondary schools;
- To eradicate illiteracy and expand adult education and adult literacy programmes;
- To promote cultural, scientific and extra-curricular activities;
- To improve educational programmes for students with special needs;
- To draw attention to the importance of services for gifted children and children with exceptional abilities;
- To establish educational schemes and facilities, improve existing schemes and facilities, and mobilize private sector funding for that purpose.

Policies

- To improve internal efficiency by introducing a system of automatic promotion in the first grades of the primary stage, while at the same time maintaining educational quality standards;
- To improve the quality of education by evaluating and developing school curricula and teaching methods in accordance with general development requirements, drawing on the expertise of research centres which specialize in this field and according priority to ongoing teacher training;
- To encourage the introduction of computer sciences in secondary education with a view to extending them to the primary and intermediate stages;
- To expand educational programmes for the nursery and kindergarten stages and encourage the private sector to contribute to the establishment and expansion of nurseries;
- To streamline educational spending by improving organizational capacity, increasing the efficiency of human resources, resolving internal difficulties, reducing the average number of academic years, increasing the use of modern educational technologies, and supporting private sector institutions;
- To improve and develop educational management through the selection of qualified personnel and the intensification of training;
- To boost the private sector's role in funding the construction of school buildings and educational facilities, and to supplement the regulations concerning the taking of gifts and donations;

- To utilize the resources of specialized research centres to conduct various kinds of educational research and evaluate educational programmes to see whether they are meeting their own targets;
- To develop students' awareness of, and encourage them to participate in, voluntary services, organizing training courses to improve their skills and capacities.

Programmes

209. The programmes in this sector focus on the development of educational management, employment, students' services, extra-curricular activities and facilities and the delivery of educational services to match the steady increase in the numbers of students in public education.

210. Public education is made available for all children. There are kindergarten, primary, intermediate and secondary schools (for boys and girls) all over the country, including in villages and hamlets. The figures for A.H. 1423/1424 (2002/2003) indicate that 4,831,310 pupils were enrolled in basic education in the Kingdom.

211. Article 10 of the Kingdom's educational policy is consistent with article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. All children have a right to education on the basis of equal opportunity. Articles 29, 53 and 63 of the educational policy emphasize the need for academic curricula to take account of the specific characteristics of children's development, ensuring their proper spiritual, mental, emotional and social development and cultivating their particular talents.

212. The Kingdom's educational policy is consistent with the Convention on the Rights of the Child from many points of view, including with regard to:

- The protection of the child from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous, to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. At all stages of education children receive academic and vocational advice in order to help them choose a suitable future profession (art. 32);
- The adoption of all appropriate measures, including legislative, administrative, social and educational measures, to protect children from the illicit use of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and from all forms of sexual exploitation (arts. 33 and 34).

213. Perhaps the most important administrative regulations to be issued in the educational domain were Royal Order No. O/2 of 10/1 A.H. 1423 (24 March 2002), incorporating the General Presidency for the Education of Girls into the Ministry of Education, Royal Approval No. 7/B/5388 of 3/3 A.H. 1423 (15 May 2002), making the kindergarten stage a separate stage of general education, and Royal Order No. O/2 of 28/2 A.H. 1424 (29 April 2003) changing the name of the Ministry of Education.

B. The Kingdom's education system

214. The education system is made up of the following stages:

The pre-primary stage, comprising:

(a) Nurseries

215. Nurseries are educational centres or units which take in children from 1 to 3 years of age. Children attending nurseries need special care. Nurseries are an extension of the home and endeavour to create a homey atmosphere.

216. Nursery classes have been set up in school complexes and large schools for girls so as to cater for young children and help mothers employed in the education sector to care for their children. In the academic year A.H. 1421/1422 (2000/2001), 199 schools had a total of 177 nursery classes catering for some 1,009 pupils.

(b) Kindergartens

217. Kindergartens are social education institutions which look after children during the three years prior to admission to primary education. They focus on different aspects of a child's development, including linguistic, physical, social, psychological, cognitive, communicative and other forms of development, and endeavour to create the best possible conditions for sound and balanced growth in these areas, offering programmes comprising play, entertainment and study.

218. Because of the importance of this stage, Royal Approval No. 7/B/5388 of 3/3 A.H. 1423 (15 May 2002) made the kindergarten stage a basic stage of general education, and a plan and timetable were drawn up as part of the country's development plans to expand kindergartens throughout the Kingdom and enlist the private sector (private education) in this endeavour. Effective educational curricula for kindergartens have been designed to achieve the objectives of this stage.

219. Article 117 of the Kingdom's educational policy document states that the Ministry of Education shall establish kindergartens in accordance with the State's policy of encouraging nurseries and kindergartens and in order to raise educational standards as one aspect of caring for young children.

220. Other institutions which have contributed significantly to the expansion of kindergartens include the Ministry of Defence and Aviation, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Royal Commission for Jubail and Yanba`, the National Guard, and the private sector consisting of private education establishments monitored by the Ministry of Education.

221. The incorporation of all educational institutions into the Ministry of Education, pursuant to Royal Order No. O/2 of 28/2 A.H. 1424 (29 April 2003), helped to consolidate these endeavours. The State has made the following endeavours to support this stage:

- It has expanded the construction and fitting out of kindergartens and has also expanded the construction of special education schools to accommodate children with various disabilities within the framework of a programme to integrate disabled children with their peers;
- It cares for the health and welfare of children by organizing complete medical check-ups for children enrolling in school, providing children with health information, encouraging them to pay attention to personal hygiene and teaching them healthy habits;
- It has established cultural development centres and equipped them with appropriate educational tools, facilities for the pursuit of hobbies, libraries, and equipment for children's entertainment;
- It has set up children's libraries and children's sections in public libraries and supplies them with a steady flow of new children's books and magazines.

The following table contains some data about the kindergarten stage in the academic year A.H. 1422/23 (2002/2003).

Schools	Classes	Number of students	Teaching staff	Administrative staff
1 074	5 212	92 836	9 642	995

Public education, comprising:

(a) The primary stage

222. The primary stage prepares the rising generation for the coming stages of education. It is at this stage that children learn the fundamentals of the true faith and how to behave properly and acquire the knowledge, information and skills which they need for their lives. Every child of school age spends six years in primary education.

(b) Intermediate stage

223. The intermediate stage is a general cultural stage designed to provide the rising generation with a comprehensive religious, intellectual, physical and moral education that takes account of the development and changes which young persons go through. Like other stages, its aim is to achieve general educational objectives. It lasts for three years.

(c) Secondary stage

224. The secondary stage is special because of the students' age and development at that stage. It calls for different types of instruction and training and comprises various branches in which the holders of intermediate certificates can enrol in accordance with the regulations established by the institutions concerned. It comprises general secondary schools, scientific secondary colleges, vocational secondary colleges of different kinds (agriculture, industrial and commercial) and technical and sports colleges.

225. Like other stages, the secondary stage helps to achieve the general aims of education, in addition to its own particular aims. The period of study last three years.

The following table shows the evolution of general education over the last five years (A.H. 1418/1423 1997-2002).

		A.H. 1418/1419 1997/1998	A.H. 1419/1420 1998/1999	A.H. 1420/1421 1999/2000	A.H. 1421/1422 2000/2001	A.H. 1422/1423 2001/2002
Schools	Males	11 869	12 323	12 621	13 019	13 455
	Females	12 833	13 598	13 941	14 423	14 957
Classes	Males	94 596	97 386	98 015	101 587	103 795
	Females	91 891	97 577	99 361	101 379	102 378
Students	Males	2 102 547	2 171 130	2 228 397	2 266 660	2 310 171
	Females	2 053 432	2 223 382	2 296 220	2 348 552	2 383 151
Teachers	Males	150 759	157 148	161 712	172 704	180 776
	Females	183 420	200 303	199 740	205 736	213 223

The following table shows the total number of students enrolled in all stages of general education from A.H. 1418-1422 (1996-2002).

Academic year (A.H.)	Public spending	Total number of students	Expenditure per student
1417/18	41 264 000 000	3 756 257	10 985
1418/19	45 595 000 000	3 867 585	11 789
1419/20	42 889 000 000	3 999 778	10 723
1420/21	49 381 000 000	4 113 922	12 003
1421/22	533 000 000	4 168 574	12 731

C. Parallel education

226. Parallel education consists of other areas of education which operate in parallel to all stages of public school education. These include:

(a) Private education

227. Private education is education provided by individuals or private institutions under the supervision of the competent State authorities. A private school is any non-governmental school which offers any form of general, vocational or special education at the stage prior to higher education.

Private education in A.H. 1422 (2001)

Schools	2 270
Classes	17 547
Students	327 434
Teachers	32 324

(b) Foreign education

228. Foreign education provides other systems of education that are suitable for certain non-Saudi children. The first foreign schools were built in the Kingdom in A.H. 1394 (1974), in accordance with Cabinet Decision No. 2007 of 3/12 A.H. 1394 (16 December 1974), which provided for the establishment of the Saudi Arabian International School to offer an appropriate education to the sons and daughters of foreigners, particularly non-Muslims, living in the Kingdom. The school subsequently opened its doors to children of all nationalities and faiths.

229. A few years after the construction of the Saudi Arabian International School, the number of foreigners of different nationalities living in the Kingdom rose sharply. In order to satisfy the needs of foreign expatriate communities, more foreign schools, including the American School, the British School, the Indian and Pakistani schools, the Ethiopian School, the Ghanaian School, etc., were opened to provide each foreign community with its own school. The schools follow the set curricula and system of schooling used in the country of origin, making it easier for a foreign student to transfer from a school in his or her own country to his community's school in the Kingdom and back again without affecting his or her studies. There are presently 178 approved foreign schools in the Kingdom, catering for over 100,000 students of different nationalities.

(c) Special education

230. As confirmation of the State's determination to provide an education for all children, including those with special circumstances, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz, Deputy Prime Minister and Commander of the National Guard, was appointed Chairman of the Higher Council for Disabled Affairs pursuant to Royal Order No. O/66 of 27/4 A.H. 1423 (7 July 2002).

231. The Ministry of Education has begun to integrate children with disabilities into regular schools, helping to change society's attitudes towards persons with disabilities and enabling children with disabilities to acquire suitable life skills.

232. By A.H. 1423 (2002), the Secretariat for Special Education at the Ministry of Education had implemented 1,117 educational programmes for a total of 27,436 children with special needs throughout all regions and governorates of the Kingdom. In addition to integration programmes for children with disabilities, there are other welfare programmes for severely disabled children, who are offered health, psychological and social care, free board and lodging, and monthly stipends, depending on the educational stage, to encourage them to study and to pursue knowledge. This is in addition to the assistance that is given to their families.

D. Welfare of gifted children

233. In view of the considerable importance the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia attaches to education, it offers special care to gifted students in order to explore, develop and enhance their cognitive and intellectual capacities and place them in the service of the country. Accordingly, a pioneering programme has been introduced to identify gifted children from among students in all parts of the Kingdom. The establishment of the King Abdul Aziz and His Companions'

Foundation in A.H. 1420 (2000), under the Chairmanship of His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz, the beloved Crown Prince, underscores the importance of this programme.

234. The care which the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia offers to gifted children is based on a principle which has long been advocated in the country's educational policy. Chapter 9 of the Kingdom's educational policy document contains sections that accord the utmost importance to gifted children. Under this policy, efforts shall be made to test and care for gifted children, creating outlets and opportunities for them to develop their gifts in the framework of general and special programmes; the State shall endeavour to cater for exceptionally gifted children with a view to developing and channelling their gifts and creating opportunities to use them; the competent authorities shall design diagnostic tests, special study programmes and incentive schemes for gifted children; and scientific research shall be conducted to benefit from the capacities of exceptionally gifted children, who shall also be provided with Islamic instruction.

235. In this connection, coordination has been intensified among educational institutions that care for gifted children, and the Ministry of Education and King Abdul Aziz City for Science and Technology have stepped up their cooperation on the implementation of the project to test and care for gifted children. The private sector has also made tremendous efforts to support the welfare of gifted children.

E. National programme

236. Computer use has become a vital component of educational development and the linchpin of national development. The Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz and his Sons' School Computing Project targets all phases of general education. Its objectives are to develop students' skills, provide them with an effective education that is compatible with future needs, improve the capacity of teachers to use information in all educational activities, create an information environment with scientific inputs suited to the needs of students and teachers, and provide sources of direct learning in order to pave the way for the development of an advanced information technology industry in the Kingdom and disseminate information about technology among members of society.

237. The project's aims are to:

- Develop the skills of students, using educational information technology to provide them with a good grounding in accordance with future needs;
- Improve the capacity of teachers to use information technology for all educational activities;
- Create an information environment with a scientific content that meets the needs of students and teachers and provides them with sources of direct learning;
- Improve the educational process in order to produce a generation with a good grasp of information technology;

- Help to create the nucleus of an advanced information technology industry in the Kingdom;
- Raise general awareness of the importance of information technology in education and disseminate knowledge about information technology among society.

238. The following are some of the information technology services which the school network project will provide:

- The establishment of electronic links between students, teachers, parents and school managers;
- The creation of a distance-learning mechanism;
- The organization of online students' seminars and conferences;
- Remote participation in scientific and cultural competitions;
- Development of students' skills through their involvement in editing students' magazines;
- Dissemination of general information for students by means of a students' directory;
- Providing students with creative opportunities by involving them in student positions;
- Linking Saudi students abroad to the network.

Academic curricula

239. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia designs educational curricula that allow it to educate and train Saudi students and prepare them to make a positive contribution to life.

240. It develops and updates educational curricula, taking into account the factors that help to produce a qualitative shift in educational content and using many different kinds of teaching methods. Curriculum development programmes take account of the rights set out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Committee's general comment No. 1 (2001) on the aims of education.

241. The comprehensive curriculum development project is one of the most important measures that have been taken in this field. Its objectives are to completely revamp educational curricula to keep pace with local and international developments, serve the needs of individuals and society, create an effective tool for the integrated and effective realization of educational policy goals and provide a powerful impetus for the development of more advanced and effective curricula to realize these ambitions. This project has gone through a number of stages and will continue until the remaining stages (writing, piloting and dissemination) have been completed. It also aims at developing academic plans for all stages of education to keep pace with changing

realities and modern developments, including labour market demand and the needs of individuals and society. The higher committee involved in the design of curricula and programmes has approved a new plan for the introduction into secondary education of new subject areas such as vocational education, computer applications and information. A study on the extension of this approach to the intermediate stage will be carried out with a view to its development.

242. The project also develops strategies for continuous learning and education for life, focusing on the demand for skills and desirable behaviours, to be achieved through:

- Education which teaches children how to learn so that they can teach themselves in accordance with the principles of continuous learning;
- Education through work, which is designed to consolidate skills and learned behaviours;
- Education which prepares the learner for life as a positive and productive member of society who achieves his own objectives and those of society;
- The development of educational management techniques and revitalization of the role of management in the educational process;
- The development of methods for testing and teaching gifted children;
- The conduct of studies and analyses of educational indicators and statistics and their use in educational decision-making;
- Strengthening the capacity of children to communicate with other social groups, to engage in dialogue, and to be tolerant of others.

243. Furthermore, the comprehensive curriculum development project seeks to:

- Apply the concept of basic education by merging the primary and intermediate stages into a single stage of education;
- Apply the concept of compulsory education in order to stop young people from dropping out of school and eradicate illiteracy;
- Apply the concept of extramural education, using factories, museums and gardens to make students aware of the environment, develop their environmental knowledge, and guide their behaviour;
- Apply and develop vocational education at all stages;
- Develop physical education curricula to include the study of the mechanical, psychological and health aspects of the subject, as well as the acquisition of sporting skills;

- Develop art curricula, cultivate students' aesthetic taste, and teach students how to mix and match colours through the study of artistic concepts;
- Develop civic education to teach students behaviours and practices that foster their faith in God and religion, their loyalty to the King and the nation, and their pride in and willingness to defend the country and its assets;
- Focus on and improve the teaching of logic in order to facilitate the development of systematic scientific thought;
- Teach the social skills required for communication with others and prepare students to serve the society in which they grow up.

F. Online education

244. With a view to using advanced information and communications technology for educational purposes, the Ministry of Education has taken steps to replace the teacher-directed educational model which depends on books as the only source of knowledge with a learner-oriented model that relies on a multiplicity of sources, including information and communication technology and concepts of online education which are oriented towards change.

245. The purpose of online education is to:

- To use educational information technology to develop students' skills and provide children with a good grounding that takes account of future needs;
- Improve the skills of teachers in using information technology for all educational activities;
- Create an information environment with a scientific content that caters for the needs of students and teachers and provides them with sources of direct learning;
- Improve the educational process in order to produce a generation with a good grasp of information technology;
- Help to lay the foundations for the development of an advanced information technology industry in the Kingdom;
- Raise general awareness of the importance of information technology in education and disseminate knowledge about information technology among society;
- Disseminate knowledge about information technology among college professors.

G. International cooperation on education

246. Educational institutions and their counterparts in fraternal and friendly States continue to cooperate with one another on all educational matters. For example:

- Delegations from the ministries of education of a number of States exchange visits in order to benefit from their respective experiences in the sector;
- The Ministry participates in a number of bilateral committees in order to strengthen cooperation with other States;
- A number of teachers have been sent to teach in fraternal and friendly States and Saudi schools abroad;
- Annual study grants are awarded to students from friendly States;
- The Ministry participates in conferences, shows and cultural weeks in a number of fraternal and friendly States.

H. Technical education and vocational training

247. All types of technical education and vocational training are regarded as vital to the preparation, training and development of the national workforce and the improvement of its productivity. The importance of this sector is reflected in the priorities set out in the development plan, which aims at increasing the capacity of technical education and vocational training institutions in order to provide the national economy with the quantity and quality of skills it requires. It is also reflected in the financial allocations earmarked for the Public Institute for Technical Education and Vocational Training, amounting to SR 6.1 billion under the sixth development plan (A.H. 1415/1420 1995/2000).

248. The following table provides a statistical summary of the number of educational units running pre-university programmes in the academic year A.H. 1421/1422 (2000).

Programme type	Educational unit	No. of students
Industrial secondary colleges	10	11 006
Commercial secondary colleges	16	7 179
Agricultural secondary colleges	4	321
Secondary colleges for technical supervisors	5	2 693
Vocational training centres (morning courses)	30	10 436
Private vocational education and training	381	25 050
Total	446	32 635

249. The seventh development plan's strategies for the technical education and vocational training sector aim at achieving considerable qualitative and quantitative growth through the implementation of the following objectives, policies and programmes:

Objectives:

- To help improve the efficiency and competence of Saudi Arabia's human resources in order to satisfy the needs of the national economy;

- To improve the effectiveness and efficiency of training and develop various training tools;
- To improve the quality of training programmes, focusing on modern and advanced technologies;
- To improve and update academic curricula in response to labour market demand;
- To expand technical education both horizontally and vertically in order to achieve nationwide coverage;
- To ensure full coordination and cooperation between technical education institutions and relevant training bodies.

Policies:

- To respond to labour market demand in light of changing economic realities, to evaluate the skills of migrant workers and to make good use of training programmes based on an analysis of labour market demand;
- To expand induction training programmes as an integral part of Saudi Arabia's strategy, designing intensive programmes for that purpose and involving the private sector in their planning and implementation;
- To improve training outputs and introduce a policy of selection based on a system of advising, counselling and monitoring students at all levels;
- To make better use of the resources offered by different training facilities, using the time available to run short training courses and courses at different times of the day, introducing an industrial apprenticeship system, expanding cooperative education to cover all training programmes, and making the most of the training opportunities provided by the governmental and private sectors;
- To revitalize the social role of technical faculties through the organization of courses, seminars and lectures geared towards society's needs, the conduct of educational research and studies, and the delivery of educational services;
- To make better use of the resources of specialized research centres in order to carry out studies and research on the occupations which the labour market needs;
- To continuously improve the quality of training programmes and curricula with an emphasis on practical application at all levels and through the involvement of the private sector.

Programmes:

250. The technical education and vocational training programmes provided for in the seventh development plan are designed to develop and improve the quality of education and training.

They accord special attention to managerial development, community service, ongoing training and the creation of adequate infrastructure to increase capacity. They also aim at expanding studies and research into issues and problems in technical education and vocational training. According to the statistical overview for A.H. 1423 (2002), the country has 68 vocational training centres and vocational secondary colleges for girls, catering for a total of 5,480 students.

Vocational training

251. The Public Institute for Technical Education and Vocational Training manages 30 vocational training centres, one teacher training centre and three centres offering on-the-job training. Located in different parts of the country, around 12,300 trainees were enrolled in these centres in A.H. 1419/1420 (1999), as compared with 40,000 trainees and 28,000 graduates for the whole period of the sixth development plan.

252. Some 108,200 trainers taught at other vocational colleges (induction training, trainer training, private teaching and training institutes, and vocational training centres for persons with disabilities) during the sixth development plan and 61,600 students graduated from these colleges during the same period.

I. Leisure, recreation and cultural activities (art. 31)

253. Young persons represent a social group that has special needs to which the family and the State must both pay close attention. Since most young persons normally have long periods of leisure time, appropriate ways must be found of using this time to benefit young persons in particular and society in general.

254. The State offers all children without distinction a diverse range of free recreational, cultural and social activities and programmes adapted to their age, intellectual development and wishes, in order to help them make the most of their free time and talents.

255. Appropriate budgets are earmarked for school activity programmes, in which students are encouraged to participate. Food, transport and equipment are laid on for the implementation of these programmes and trainers and supervisors are paid stipends.

256. The State has built sports stadiums, scouting centres, students' homes, youth clubs, theatres, exhibition and festival halls, laboratories, art studios and workshops and picture galleries to ensure that these children's activity programmes are implemented in suitable surroundings. The State furthermore awards prizes and organizes competitions for different groups of children and young persons and encourages them to take part in the planning, implementation and evaluation of these programmes and activities.

257. Social activities consist of day camps; student trips; Red Crescent, first-aid and heritage-conservation teams; social competitions; summer camps; participation in public awareness programmes such as Tree Week, Traffic Week, Mosque Week, World Health Day, Anti-Drugs and Anti-Smoking Week and World Children's Day; summer activity centres; trips and exchange programmes; local school activity centres; weekly activity classes for all school grades; the Children's Fair, etc. There are 384 such programmes.

258. Within sporting activities, children are allowed to participate in all national and international individual and team sporting competitions with a view to developing their team spirit and sense of sportsmanship. School sports are organized through a variety of programmes, including weekly or bi-weekly classes, morning exercise sessions, the Children's Fair, sports days, school sports championships, sporting finals and the activities which the General Presidency for Youth Welfare runs through sports clubs countrywide.

259. Artistic activities are designed to encourage children's artistic, creative and inventive skills in drawing, painting, decoration and handicrafts; these activities include the organization of art shows and competitions, the programme of the Centre for Gifted Artists, the Open Studio, the World in the Eyes of our Children Competition, and international, Arab and Gulf drawing competitions.

260. Theatrical activities are carried out in the framework of numerous programmes and include a children's playwriting competition; participation by schoolchildren in theatrical productions; the awarding of prizes for participants and outstanding performers in such plays; annual children's theatre competitions (about 20 per year); the establishment of children's theatre troupes, of which there are now 150; and the organization of theatrical activities during the summer holidays.

261. Cultural activities consist of seminars and discussions between children, government ministers and senior officials; public speaking programmes; story and poetry writing; and school journalism and broadcasting. Students also take part in the activities organized for them by the Saudi Society for Culture and the Arts, literary clubs and the 153 sporting and cultural clubs countrywide which run cultural, leisure and sporting activities.

262. The General Presidency for Youth Welfare works through the General Department for the Administration of Cultural Activities, the General Department for Sports, the Department of the Folk Heritage and Folk Arts, the Saudi Arabian Youth Club Association and its own offices in the regions and governorates to include in its annual plan programmes and activities geared towards the welfare of children, the development of their cultural, social, sporting, artistic, scientific and creative talents and the employment of their leisure time in a manner consistent with the goals of the State, its five-year development plans, and our lofty Islamic principles and authentic Arab traditions and customs. The Presidency earmarks budgets for the implementation of diverse children's programmes and activities, providing programme tools, building sports stadiums, scouting centres, youth clubs, theatre, exhibition and festival halls, laboratories, art studios, workshops and picture galleries, awarding prizes, and creating programmes and competitions suited to different groups of children and young persons. These programmes include:

- The organization, in sports clubs and youth clubs, of activities designed to encourage individual hobbies and interests such as electronics, geology, photo-energy, astrology, etc.;
- The organization of local cultural exhibitions, including children's drawing and plastic arts' exhibitions;

- The creation in clubs throughout the Kingdom of children's leisure centres running all kinds of cultural and leisure activities;
- The use of public gardens equipped with all kinds of play areas to develop children's intellectual and physical capacities;
- Cooperation with private charities which run family and child programmes and festivals and children's toy libraries;
- The extension of these programmes to cover villages and hamlets, in accordance with the same quantity and quality standards applied in cities and towns, and the establishment of leisure and cultural activities accessible to children with disabilities;
- The use of private sector tourist complexes for children's leisure programmes and the use of computing and children's play centres to develop children's capacities.

263. Scouting activities consist of scouting camps and voluntary work camps set up to serve pilgrims; participation in social development programmes; the organization of scouting camps to accustom children to living out of doors; participation in development programmes and evening entertainment; the organization of summer camps, educational excursions and hiking trips; and the creation of youth clubs, merit badge programmes and handicraft schemes.

264. Scientific activities include the organization of science club competitions to encourage children to take an interest in science, science laboratories, geology, biology, physics and computing and involve them in children's scientific research.

265. Field trips are organized to museums in various towns in order to teach children about their heritage and history and introduce them to world civilizations.

266. The State encourages the private sector and governmental institutions to establish children's science clubs and centres in order to stimulate children's interest in science and technology. Physics, chemistry and computer science competitions offer opportunities to develop and showcase the scientific abilities and talents of children and young persons.

267. Among these centres are the Science Oasis in Riyadh and the Science and Technology Centre in Jeddah, which specialize in the development of children's perceptive and mechanical skills, computer use and applied physics, chemistry and mathematics. Club members have also undertaken foreign trips, including visits to space centres in the United States of America.

268. Hobby centres have been set up in youth clubs in Saudi Arabia to allow children to pursue hobbies such as electronics, geology, photography, astronomy, etc.

269. Children's leisure centres are overseen by the General Presidency of Youth Welfare and offer a range of cultural, recreational, sporting, artistic and creative activities. The General Presidency of Youth Welfare encourages the establishment of children's leisure centres throughout the country within the framework of its sports and leisure club programmes.

270. Children are also involved in a range of children's media activities, including the presentation of television and radio programmes and the production of numerous cultural and

social magazines which discuss and focus on resolving their problems. These activities aim at satisfying children by responding to their desires, catering for their interests, and enabling them to exercise their rights fairly and equitably.

271. There is a programme of cooperation with other Arab and friendly countries which organizes children's activities at the Gulf Cooperation Council, Arab and international levels, providing for exchange visits, youth camps, meetings between school scouts' leaders and teachers, and children's drawing, sports, cultural and science competitions.

**Evolution of State budget allocations for public education
(A.H. 1412/1413-1423/1421 (1991/2003))**

Years	Millions of SRIs	Change 1405/1406 = 100
1412/1413	29 594.0	128.5
1413/1414	30 342.4	131.7
1414/1415	27 822.4	120.8
1415/1416	25 623.9	111.3
1416/1417	27 536.2	119.6
1417/1418	40 067.9	174
1423/1424	45 785 960	

VIII. SPECIAL PROTECTION MEASURES

A. Children in situations of emergency

272. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia opposes the displacement of children due to wars. It works for peace among all peoples and solidarity and cooperation between Arab and Islamic States and endeavours to strengthen its ties with friendly States throughout the world. It guarantees the rights of its citizens and their families in situations of emergency and ensures the security of all citizens and foreign residents in its territory.

273. The Kingdom takes in children from other parts of the world who have been forced to leave their countries because of war, offering them comprehensive health, social and educational care and every facility and necessity, including schools and educational, health and social institutions. Until they return to their country, these children are treated like nationals of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. There is no discrimination against them.

274. The Kingdom also helps to alleviate the plight of peoples affected by wars and natural disasters by offering them medical, material and financial assistance.

B. Children in armed conflicts (art. 38)

275. The laws in force in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia provide for the protection of women and children in situations of emergency, prohibiting the shelling and bombardment of civilian populations in order to save lives, and outlawing the deployment of chemical and bacteriological weapons during military operations in accordance with the 1925 Geneva Protocol and the 1949 Geneva Conventions. The State condemns all forms of oppression and cruel and

inhuman treatment of children and women. It guarantees the rights of citizens and their families in the event of an emergency, sickness, disability or old age and prohibits the enlistment of any young person under the age of 18 in the armed forces.

C. Children in conflict with the law

276. Article 2 of the Code of Criminal Procedures promulgated in Royal Decree No. M/39 of 28/7 A.H. 1422 (4 October 2001) prohibits the infliction of physical or mental pain and the use of torture or degrading treatment against any child who has been arrested. Article 13 of the Code states that young boys and girls must be examined and tried in accordance with the relevant laws and regulations. These laws define the relevant procedures as follows:

- Minors below the age of 10 may not be detained under any circumstances, in order to protect them from the psychological effects that might otherwise arise from their detention, unless a judge issues a detention order in the child's best interest;
- Minors below the age of 15 may not be detained other than in situations of force majeure or by order of a court;
- Minors aged 15 and over may be detained for serious offences such as murder, robbery and immoral acts, provided that they are referred to the courts;
- Minors may not be detained other than pursuant to a juvenile court order. If the court rejects an application for a detention order, the child may be handed over to the legal guardian, who must give an undertaking to supervise the child and present him or her upon demand.

D. The administration of juvenile justice (art. 40)

277. The Ministry of Justice of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has set up a special court, known as the juvenile court, to hear children's cases. The court holds its sessions in children's reform homes in order to enable the judge to consult and listen to the views of social workers on the matters before him and out of a desire to protect children from the atmosphere of a trial and the sense of fear prevailing in ordinary courts, and from developing psychological complexes that could affect their thinking and behaviour.

278. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia acceded to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment pursuant to Decree M/11 of 4/4 A.H. 1418 (7 August 1997).

E. Physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration (art. 39)

279. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia organizes numerous humanitarian and health-care activities and programmes and the State forms partnerships with many charitable associations and institutions to offer young persons, disabled children and families a full package of social care within the framework of reintegration programmes which the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs oversees in collaboration with charities and governmental bodies, including, inter alia,

the General Presidency of Youth Welfare, the Ministry of Education, universities, and the General Anti-Drugs' Department. The State has established a Social Security Department with its own structure and budget.

280. Supervision centres provide medical treatment or psychological and social rehabilitation services for children who have been subjected to any form of cruel or inhuman treatment.

F. Economic exploitation, including child labour (art. 32)

281. The Labour Code promulgated in Royal Decree No. M/21 of 6/9 A.H. 1389 (16 November 1969) prohibits the employment of children under the age of 13 and protects them from exploitation in work that is hazardous or harmful to their health. Children are only allowed to work for six hours per day, which must be interspersed with rest breaks. Children are not allowed to work for more than five hours consecutively or at night or in heavy or hazardous work. Children's work is optional, not compulsory, and it must not interfere with their studies or damage their health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. The Labour Code prescribes penalties for the employment of a child below the age of 13. The Kingdom's Labour Code is consistent with ILO Convention No. 138 concerning the minimum age for admission to employment and the completion of education at the age of 18. The Civil Service Regulations likewise specify a minimum age (18 years) for admission to employment.

G. Illicit use of narcotic drugs (art. 33)

282. The State has enacted legislation to combat trafficking in, and the illicit use and production of, narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. The maximum penalty imposed on everyone who trafficks in and smuggles narcotic drugs, except children, is capital punishment. There are also penalties for possessing, buying, producing or processing narcotic drugs or substances for personal use or with a view to trafficking therein.

283. The State is exerting considerable endeavours to tackle the problem of narcotic drugs and has acceded to several international conventions, including the Arab Anti-Drugs Convention. The State provides addicts with all kinds of treatment and rehabilitation, and uses all the information media to disseminate advice and general information about the dangers of narcotic drugs and methods of prevention and treatment. The State has set up a number of prevention and awareness programmes and encourages individuals to contact the police and ask for help or treatment, exempting those that do from punishment and providing them with all forms of treatment and rehabilitation to facilitate their return to normal life.

H. Children and sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (art. 34)

284. The State prohibits all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children and inflicts appropriate penalties, in accordance with Islamic law, on anyone who engages in these practices. It provides children with care, guidance and Islamic enlightenment through schools, the mass media, educational activities, clubs, associations, etc., and encourages righteous behaviour.

I. Sale, trafficking, abduction and other forms of exploitation (arts. 34 to 36)

285. The law prohibits the sale and trafficking of children and takes appropriate measures to protect children from all other forms of exploitation, abduction and abuse. Anyone who abducts, traffics or exploits a child will be prosecuted under the Criminal Code, which is consistent with Islamic law. Islam prohibits injustice, murder, prostitution, coercion to engage in debauchery, and all forms of depravity, and indicates how the perpetrators of such offences should be dealt with. It shows how minors should be guided and protected, guarantees their welfare and rights, punishes anyone who harms a child, encourages people to love, care for, respect and bring children up well, accords them their rights without humiliating or harming them.

286. Schools, hospitals, universities, kindergartens and social welfare homes help to remedy and address such problems. Moreover, laws have been enacted, rights are guaranteed, and support is given to all international efforts, to preserve human dignity, ensure justice and equality and prohibit inhuman practices.

J. Children belonging to a minority or an indigenous group (art. 30)

287. There are no minorities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, since the Kingdom is a homogeneous society bound together by a common culture, religion and culture and foreign residents are entitled to the same welfare and protection as the Kingdom grants to Saudi citizens. Foreign children have the same rights and duties as Saudi children.

Annex

LIST OF REFERENCES

- The Holy Koran
- The Sunnah of the Prophet
- The Basic Law
- The Judicial Code of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
- The Code of Criminal Procedures of A.H. 1422 (2001)
- The Code of Shariah Procedures of A.H. 1421 (2000)
- The Lawyers' Code of A.H. 1422 (2002)
- Reports of government and private organizations
- The seventh development plan for A.H. 1420-1425 (2000-2004)
- The Saudi Arabian Nationality and Civil Status Act
- The Labour Code
- The Kingdom's educational policy
- The Kingdom's media policy
- The statistical yearbook issued by the Ministry of Planning and the Department of Statistics, issue No. 37, A.H. 1421-1422 (2001)
- Statistical indicators provided by the Ministry of Planning and the Department of Statistics for A.H. 1420-1422 (2001)
- The statistical yearbook issued by the Ministry of Health for A.H. 1420-1421 (2001)
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