



# Convention on the Rights of the Child

Distr.: General  
4 October 2013

Original: English

**ADVANCE UNEDITED  
VERSION**

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## Committee on the Rights of the Child

### **Concluding observations on the combined third and fourth periodic reports of Lithuania, adopted by the Committee at its sixty-fourth session (16 September – 4 October 2013)**

1. The Committee considered the consolidated third and fourth periodic reports of Lithuania (CRC/C/LTU/3-4) at its 1826<sup>th</sup> and 1827<sup>th</sup> meetings (see CRC/C/SR.1826 and 1827), held on 23 September 2013, and adopted, at its 1845<sup>th</sup> meeting, held on 4 October 2013, the following concluding observations.

#### **I. Introduction**

2. The Committee welcomes the submission of the consolidated third and fourth periodic reports of Lithuania (CRC/C/LTU/3-4) and the written replies to its list of issues (CRC/Q/LTU/3-4/Add.1), which allowed for a better understanding of the situation of children's rights in the State party. The Committee expresses appreciation for the constructive dialogue held with the high-level and multi-sectoral delegation of the State party.

#### **II. Follow-up measures undertaken and progress achieved by the State party**

3. The Committee welcomes the adoption of the following legislative measures:
- (a) The amendments to the Criminal Code on 30 June 2012, expanding the definition of trafficking in human beings;
  - (b) The Law on Protection against Domestic Violence on 26 May 2011;
  - (c) The amendments to the Criminal Code on 2 July 2010, raising the age for sexual consent to 16 years;
  - (d) The Law on Minimum and Medium Supervision of the Child on 28 June 2007;
  - (e) The Resolution of the Government on the Procedure on Temporary Departure of a Child to Foreign States on 16 July 2008, making the consent of one of the parents obligatory when a child travels outside the Schengen area;
  - (f) The Law on Social Services on 1 July 2006, providing access to social services to vulnerable groups, including children; and

(g) The Law on Social Assistance for Pupils on 13 June 2006, aimed at reducing social exclusion of families with children and providing adequate nutrition and other assistance at schools.

4. The Committee also welcomes the ratification of and/or accession to the:

(a) International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol in August 2010;

(b) The Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse in November 2012,

(c) The Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings in September 2006; and

(d) Additional protocol to the Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime on criminalization of acts of racist and xenophobic nature committed through computer systems in October 2006.

5. The Committee also welcomes the following policy measures:

(a) The Child's Welfare Programme for 2013-2018;

(b) The National Programme for Social Integration of the Disabled for 2013-2019;

(c) The National Education Strategy for 2013-2022;

(d) The National Programme for Drug Control and Prevention of Drug Abuse for 2009-2016;

(e) The National programme for the Prevention of Violence against Children and for Assistance to Children for 2008-2012; and

(f) The Programme for Pre-School and Pre-Primary Education Development for 2007-2012.

## **A. Main areas of concern and recommendations**

### **The Committee's previous recommendations**

6. While welcoming the State party's efforts to implement the Committee's concluding observations of 17 March 2006 on the State party's second periodic report (CRC/C/83/Add.14), as well as of 16 October 2008 on its initial report under the Optional Protocol on sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (CRC/C/OPSC/LTU/1) and of 6 December 2007 on its initial report under the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict (CRC/C/OPAC/LTU/1), the Committee notes with regret that some of the recommendations contained therein have not been sufficiently addressed.

**7. The Committee urges the State party to take all necessary measures to address those recommendations from the concluding observations (CRC/C/LTU/CO/2) that have not been implemented or sufficiently implemented, and in particular, it recommends that the State party:**

(a) **In light of the extensive data provided by the State party, ensure that all data are disaggregated, inter alia, by age, gender, ethnicity, social-economic background, urban and rural areas, and by those groups of children who are in need of special protection, in order to allow detailed analysis on the situation of all children;**

(b) **Strengthen its support to the Office of the Ombudsman for Children, including by providing sufficient human and financial resources to the Office to enable it to effectively carry out its mandate and monitor the fulfilment of children's rights under the Convention; and**

(c) **Continue its efforts to provide adequate and systematic training and/or sensitization on children's rights to professional groups working with and for children such as judges, lawyers, law enforcement officials, civil servants, local government officials, teachers, social workers, health personnel and especially children themselves.**

### **Legislation**

8. The Committee notes the draft Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child which, according to the State party's information, contains many provisions that are in compliance with the Convention. However, it regrets the delay in the finalization and adoption of the draft law. The Committee is also concerned that the proposed draft law contains provisions that are in conflict with the principles established by the Convention, inter alia, as it does not fully consider the child as rights holder.

9. **The Committee recommends that the State party revise its draft Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child in order to better reflect the principles and provisions of the Convention that establish the child as rights holder. It also recommends that the State party accelerate the adoption of the revised draft law and other legislative proposals in the area of children's rights to make the legislation in full conformity with the Convention, and urges the State party to ensure that the laws are fully and effectively implemented and establish enforcement mechanisms.**

### **Comprehensive policy and strategy**

10. The Committee notes that the State party has adopted numerous programmes and plans of action in many areas covered by the Convention. However, it regrets that the State party lacks a comprehensive policy or strategy that would cover all issues related to the implementation of children's rights.

11. **The Committee recommends that the State party take measures to formulate a comprehensive policy on child rights, and provide relevant bodies with the necessary human, technical and financial resources, to guide the development of programmes and projects and establish systems for their monitoring and evaluation with clear indication of the roles and responsibilities of the relevant bodies at national, municipal and local levels.**

### **Coordination**

12. The Committee notes that the State Child Protection and Adoption Service is responsible for the inter-agency coordination on children's rights. However, it is concerned that this body lacks the necessary authority to perform its duties properly and that its activities are limited to methodological counselling only.

13. **The Committee recommends that the State party take the necessary measures to strengthen the State Child Protection and Adoption Service and provide it with sufficient authority and adequate human, technical and financial resources in order to ensure effective coordination of activities on children's rights across all sectors and at national, municipal and local levels.**

**Allocation of resources**

14. The Committee notes the State party's information that despite the economic crisis the allocations of resources to areas concerning children's rights have not been affected. The Committee, however, is concerned that the budget allocations to children remain inadequate and inefficiently managed.

15. **In the light of its Day of General Discussion on "Resources for the Rights of the Child – Responsibility of States" in 2007 and with emphasis on articles 2, 3, 4 and 6 of the Convention, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

- (a) **Increase its budget allocations to the implementation of children's rights;**
- (b) **Earmark specific budgetary resources for the implementation of the rights of children in marginalized and disadvantaged situations; and**
- (c) **Establish an effective system of tracking, monitoring and evaluation of the allocation and use of resources for children by all relevant sectors throughout the budget, thus providing visibility to the investments on children.**

**B. General principles (arts. 2, 3, 6 and 12 of the Convention)****Non-discrimination**

16. The Committee is concerned about the gaps in implementation of the Law on Equal Opportunities of 1998, and continuous discrimination against all children, and, inter alia, children in marginalized and disadvantaged situations, including children with disabilities, Roma children, children living in poverty, children living in care institutions and children in conflict with the law.

17. **The Committee urges the State party to enforce its legislation against discrimination and take urgent measures to prevent discrimination against, inter alia, children in marginalized and disadvantaged situations, including children with disabilities, Roma children, children living in poverty, children living in care institutions and children in conflict with the law. The Committee further recommends that the State party include information in its next periodic report on measures and programmes relevant to the Convention and undertaken by the State party in follow-up to the Declaration and Programme of Action adopted at the 2001 World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, as well as the outcome document adopted at the 2009 Durban Review Conference.**

**Best interests of the child**

18. The Committee notes that under the Civil Code of the State party the legal regulation of family relations shall be based on the priority of protecting and safeguarding the rights and interests of children, but is concerned that the "best interests of the child" is not fully incorporated into national law as the "interests" or "legitimate interests" of the child are not equivalent to the best interests of the child, and, therefore, this right does not seem to be properly understood and consistently applied.

19. **The Committee draws the State party's attention to its General Comment No 14 (2013) and urges the State party to amend its legislation to expressly mention the "best interests of the child" in national law and better reflect the right of the child to have his or her best interests taken as a primary consideration as established by the Convention. It also recommends that the State party strengthen its efforts to ensure that this right is appropriately integrated and consistently applied in all legislative,**

administrative and judicial proceedings as well as in all policies, programmes and projects relevant to and with an impact on children at central and local levels. In this regard, the State party is encouraged to develop procedures and criteria to provide guidance to all relevant persons in authority for determining the best interests of the child in every area, and to disseminate these to the public, courts of law, administrative authorities and legislative bodies.

#### **Respect for the views of the child**

20. The Committee notes that the right to be heard is included in a number of laws of the State party, but is concerned about the gaps in implementation of these laws and that the right of the child to express his or her opinion is often considered to be just a formality.

21. The Committee draws the State party's attention to its General Comment No. 12 (2009) on the right of the child to be heard and recommends that it take measures to strengthen this right in accordance with article 12 of the Convention. It recommends that, in doing so, the State party take necessary measures in order to implement its legislation and promote and facilitate the respect for the views of the child in all settings on all matters affecting him or her.

### **C. Civil Rights and Freedoms (arts.7,8,13-17, 19 and 37 (a) of the Convention)**

#### **Right to identity**

22. The Committee is concerned about the existence and proliferation of "baby boxes", allowing anonymous abandonment of children, which is in violation of, inter alia, articles 7, 8, 9 and 19 of the Convention.

23. The Committee strongly urges the State party to undertake all measures necessary to end the practice of anonymous abandonment and expeditiously strengthen and promote alternatives. The Committee also urges the State party to increase its efforts to study and address the root causes which lead to the abandonment of infants. The response should include the provision of family planning, reproductive health as well as adequate counselling and social support for unplanned pregnancies and the prevention of risk pregnancies, and support for families in need, while making the possibility of anonymous births at hospitals as a measure of last resort to avoid abandonment and/or death of the child. In that respect, the State party should keep a confidential record of the parents to which the child could access at a later stage, taking into account the duty to fully comply with all provisions of the Convention.

### **D. Violence against children (articles 19, 37 (a) and 39 of the Convention)**

#### **Corporal punishment**

24. The Committee notes that according to the State party's information the full prohibition of corporal punishment is foreseen in the proposed draft Law on Child Protection. Nevertheless, the Committee is concerned that currently corporal punishment is lawful at home and in alternative care settings. Although the current legislation prescribes avoiding any acts including physical and mental torture and other cruel behaviour at home, the Committee is concerned that such provision is not interpreted as prohibiting corporal punishment and that there is a widespread acceptance of the corporal punishment as a parenting technique.

25. The Committee draws the attention of the State party to its General Comment No 8 (2006) on the right of the child to protection from corporal punishment and other cruel or degrading forms of punishment and urges the State party to ensure that the new legislation prohibit the use of all forms of corporal punishment in all settings, in particular in the home and alternative care institutions and provide for enforcement mechanisms under its legislation, including appropriate sanctions in cases of violation. It further recommends that the State party strengthen and expand awareness-raising and education programmes and campaigns, in order to promote positive, non-violent and participatory forms of child rearing and discipline.

#### **Freedom of the child from all forms of violence**

26. Recalling the recommendations of the United Nations study on violence against children of 2006 (A/61/299), the Committee recommends that the State party prioritize the elimination of all forms of violence against children. The Committee further recommends that the State party take into account General Comment No. 13 (CRC/C/GC/13, 2011), and in particular:

(a) Develop a comprehensive national strategy to prevent and address all forms of violence against children;

(b) Adopt a national coordinating framework to address all forms of violence against children;

(c) Adopt legislation to explicitly prohibit all forms of violence against children in all settings;

(d) Pay particular attention to the gender dimension of violence; and

(e) Cooperate with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on violence against children and other relevant United Nations institutions.

#### **Abuse and neglect**

27. The Committee is concerned about the increase in child abuse cases, in particular in families with parents who are unemployed, abuse alcohol or live in poverty, as well as in care institutions. It is particularly concerned about the high level of tolerance for a violent behaviour towards children in the society and the lack of mechanisms for children, especially for those living in care institutions, to report the cases of abuse and violence against them.

28. The Committee recommends that the State party take measures to prevent abuse and violence against children in all settings by ensuring effective investigation of reports of abuse and violence against children as well as prosecuting and punishing perpetrators accordingly. It also recommends that the State party establish easily accessible mechanisms for children to report cases of abuse and violence against them, as well as ensure the necessary protection for such victims and assistance for their recovery and rehabilitation.

#### **Sexual exploitation and abuse**

29. The Committee is concerned about the reports that:

(a) The cases of sexual abuse and exploitation of children remain unreported due to fear of reprisals and stigmatization of child victims of such crimes;

(b) The lack of psycho-therapeutic services leads child victims of sexual abuse to suicide especially when their case is made public; and

(c) Investigations, prosecutions and appropriate punishment of perpetrators of sexual exploitation and abuse of children are lacking.

30. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Take measures to identify and detect child victims of sexual abuse, exploitation and trafficking, by raising awareness of the public, in particular of children and training professionals working with children, to detect signs;**

(b) **Ensure effective psycho-therapeutic assistance to children who are victims of sexual exploitation and abuse and take measures to keep the identity of child victims hidden from the public; and**

(c) **Step up its efforts to investigate the cases of sexual exploitation and abuse and prosecute and punish perpetrators with punishment commensurate to the gravity of the crime.**

#### **E. Family environment and alternative care (arts. 5, 18 (paras. 1-2), 9-11, 19-21, 25, 27 (para. 4) and 39 of the Convention)**

##### **Family environment**

31. The Committee is concerned at the increasing number of children being placed out of their homes or in the custody of temporary guardians, especially when parents travel to other countries for work or study.

32. **The Committee recommends that the State party increase the quality and availability of family support, including community-based services and employment opportunities to families facing economic constraints, and, at the same time, strengthen their parenting skills to enable them to take care of their children. With reference to Article 27, paragraph 4, of the Convention, the Committee also urges the State Party to take all appropriate measures to secure the recovery of maintenance for the child from the parents or other persons having financial responsibility for the child, both within the State Party and from abroad, including through the accession to, or the conclusion of, international agreements for such purposes.**

##### **Children deprived of a family environment**

33. The Committee welcomes the adoption of the Strategic Guidelines for Deinstitutionalization of Social Care Homes, including for children without parental custody and children with disabilities, for 2010-2020 and the Strategy for Reorganization of Child Care for 2008-2012. The Committee, however, is concerned about:

(a) The large number of cases of deprivation of parental rights and placement of children, in particular children under the age of 3, in care institutions;

(b) Lack of clear guidelines on separation of children from their families;

(c) Very low number of foster families and inadequate support provided to them;

(d) Poor living conditions and limited space in care institutions; and

(e) Lack of monitoring system of non-governmental children's homes which often fail to comply with the legal requirements for hygiene, quality of services and space.

34. **Recalling the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children annexed to the United Nations General Assembly resolution 64/142 of 20 December 2009, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

- (a) Ensure sufficient alternative family and community based care options for children deprived of family environment;
- (b) Ensure that placement in institutional care is used only as a last resort and that adequate safeguards and clear needs-based and best interests of the child criteria are used for determining whether a child should be placed in institutional care;
- (c) Establish clear guidelines and criteria on deprivation of parental rights and carry out review and regular monitoring of all placements in care institutions;
- (d) Establish a rigorous system of monitoring the services provided by care institutions, especially by nongovernmental care institutions; and
- (e) Take into consideration the Common European Guidelines on the Transition from Institutional to Community Based Care and the quality standards and utilise EU funding to strengthen the implementation of its legal provisions.

#### **Adoption**

35. The Committee is concerned that the process of adoption in the State party can be lengthy and that prospective adoptive parents face significant administrative burdens due to the frequent negative assessment of adoptions by care institutions. It is also concerned that children do not receive appropriate information and support during the adoption process.

36. **The Committee recommends that the State party establish effective mechanisms aimed at facilitating the adoption process by removing unnecessary barriers, but at the same time ensuring proper screening of prospective adoptive parents. It furthermore recommends that depending on age and maturity, children are informed, consulted and supported throughout the adoption process.**

#### **F. Disability, basic health and welfare (arts. 6, 18 (para. 3), 23, 24, 26, 27 (paras. 1-3) of the Convention)**

##### **Children with disabilities**

37. The Committee notes the merging of the Law on Special Education and the Law on General Education which has enabled the State party to implement inclusive education for children with disabilities to some extent. However, the Committee remains concerned about the information that integration has not been effective due to the lack of training of teachers, the lack of tools and due to the negative attitude of teachers and the public in general especially towards children with mental disabilities. The Committee is particularly concerned about maltreatment of children with mental disabilities in care institutions, namely in the “Venta” nursing home.

38. **In light of its General Comment No. 9 (2006) on the rights of children with disabilities, the Committee urges the State party to ensure the conformity of its legislation, policies and practices with, inter alia, articles 23 and 27 of the Convention in order to effectively address the needs of children with disabilities in a non-discriminatory manner. Furthermore, the Committee recommends that the State party take all necessary measures to implement its legal provisions on inclusive education by training teachers, providing schools with necessary equipment and sensitizing the school personnel, children and public in general on the rights of children with disabilities, with special attention to children with mental disabilities. The Committee further recommends that the State party take prompt and effective measures to investigate all allegations of abuse and maltreatment of children with**



mental disabilities and prosecute and punish perpetrators as well as provide assistance for the recovery and rehabilitation of victims.

#### Health and health services

39. The Committee welcomes the Children's Health Promotion Programme for 2008-2012, but is concerned that the budget allocations to maternal and child health care programmes are continuously decreasing, making such programmes less accessible. The Committee is also concerned that women who choose to deliver at home do not receive necessary assistance or care during the delivery and post-partum.

**40. The Committee draws the State party's attention to its General Comment No. 15 (2013) on the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health, and recommends that the State party take measures to increase its budget allocations for maternal and child health programs. The Committee also recommends that the State party ensure maternal care for women who choose to deliver at home by providing access to emergency obstetric care, trained care at delivery, and post partum care.**

#### Adolescent health

41. The Committee is concerned about the lack of sexual and reproductive health information and child friendly services to adolescents in the country as well as the inaccessibility of contraception, confidential STI tests and treatments. The Committee is also concerned about the high rates of substance abuse and the lack of measures to assist children who are addicted to tobacco, alcohol and drugs or children who are at risk and face stigma. Furthermore, the Committee remains concerned about the continuous high rates of suicides among adolescents.

**42. The Committee recommends that the State party introduce the mandatory subject on sexual and reproductive health in school curriculum and provide easy access to contraceptives, confidential tests and treatments to its adolescents. It also recommends that children are provided with information about negative consequences of drug, alcohol and substance abuse and provided with confidential consultations and treatment for addictions. The Committee reiterates its previous recommendation that the State party intensify its measures to raise awareness about and prevent suicide among adolescents and continue to improve the quality and capacity of mental health services.**

#### Standard of living

43. The Committee regrets that the child poverty rate has increased due to the economic crisis, which has affected many areas, including health and education. The Committee is particularly concerned about the lack of support to families with children living in poverty.

**44. The Committee urges the State party to continue and strengthen its efforts to combat poverty and to provide families with children living in poverty with necessary support and assistance by designing public policies aimed particularly at addressing, both in the short-term and in a sustained manner, the problem of increasing child poverty. These policies must be capable of effectively coordinating actions at the national, municipal and local levels, and actions in different areas, particularly in the areas of health care and education, that are particularly relevant to children, and must include the participation of children in its development.**

## **G. Education, leisure and cultural activities (arts. 28, 29 and 31 of the Convention)**

### **Education, including vocational training and guidance**

45. The Committee notes that under the State party's Constitution and Law on Education, children below the age of 16 years are entitled to free primary and basic education. Nevertheless, the Committee remains concerned about:

- (a) The lack of reliable data concerning drop-out rates of children from schools and the absence of such data for children above 16 years of age;
- (b) The lack of free textbooks in some municipalities, which obliges parents to buy textbooks;
- (c) The inadequate education in care institutions and penitentiary institutions with fewer hours and combined classes; and
- (d) The widespread bullying in schools.

46. **Taking into account its General Comment No. 1 on the Aims of Education (CRC/GC/2001/1), the Committee recommends that the State party:**

- (a) Establish a system of data collection on the drop-out rate from schools for all children up to the age of 18 years and carry out studies on root causes of such drop outs;**
- (b) Ensure that free education and textbooks are provided to all children in all parts of the country;**
- (c) Ensure that children in care institutions and penitentiary institutions are provided with the same number of hours and classes as children in regular schools in compliance with the laws; and**
- (d) Take measures to combat all forms of bullying and harassment by improving the capacity of teachers and all those working in schools and students to accept diversity at school and improve their conflict resolution skills.**

## **H. Other special protection measures (arts. 22, 30, 38, 39, 40, 37 (b)-(d), 32-36 of the Convention)**

### **Follow up to the Committee's previous concluding observations and recommendations on the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography**

47. The Committee regrets the lack of information on the implementation of its concluding observations of 16 October 2008 on the State party's initial report under the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (CRC/C/OPSC/LTU/1). It regrets, in particular, that no information has been submitted in relation to the implementation of its recommendations to:

- (a) Incorporate the definition of child prostitution and child pornography in the Criminal Code;
- (b) Reconsider the limitation period for offences covered under the Optional Protocol; and
- (c) Extend its universal jurisdiction to all offences covered under the Optional Protocol and abolish the requirement of double criminality.

48. Furthermore, the Committee remains concerned that children above the age of 16 years who are engaged in prostitution or victims of trafficking are not considered as victims, are often subjected to fines and do not receive support and assistance during court proceedings.

49. **The Committee recommends that the State party take all necessary measures to implement the Committee's recommendations contained in its concluding observations under the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (CRC/C/OPSC/LTU/CO/1), in particular with regard to the recommendations mentioned above and provide in its next report information on such measures and their outcomes. The Committee also recommends that the State party train its law enforcement officials and judiciary to treat the child victims of offences under the Optional Protocol as victims and provide such victims with the necessary support and assistance during court proceedings. The Committee further recommends that the State party amend its legislation in order to not subject child victims of offences under the Optional Protocol below the age of 18 years to any sanctions, including fines.**

#### **Administration of juvenile justice**

50. 48. The Committee notes the information provided by the State party that under the ongoing process of court reform the judges will be specialized on juvenile justice. The Committee also notes that prosecutors are already specialised in juvenile justice and attend trainings and seminars on this issue. However, the Committee is concerned that

(a) There is no holistic juvenile justice system, including juvenile courts and comprehensive law on juvenile justice, with provisions for diversion mechanisms and efficient alternatives to the formal justice system;

(b) The trainings and seminars are focused on prosecutors only and do not seem to cover other important stakeholders in criminal proceedings such as judges and lawyers; and

(c) The quality of assistance provided to children by public lawyers is poor.

51. **The Committee urges the State party to establish a clear timeline for considering its draft Criminal Procedure Code, which provides for the establishment of a holistic juvenile justice system, and ensure its full compliance with the Convention, in particular articles 37, 39 and 40, and with other relevant standards, including the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (the Beijing Rules), the United Nations Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency (the Riyadh Guidelines), the Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty (the Havana Rules), the Guidelines for Action on Children in the Criminal Justice System, and the Committee's general comment No. 10 (2007). In particular, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Establish a holistic juvenile justice system, including juvenile courts, on the basis of a comprehensive legal framework, as well as diversion measures to prevent children in conflict with the law from entering the formal justice system and to develop more alternatives to trial, sentencing and execution of punishment such as community service and mediation between the victim and offender in order to avoid stigmatization and for their effective reintegration;**

(b) **Ensure that all stakeholders in criminal proceedings working with children are trained and informed about the specificities of juvenile justice system, including judges and lawyers;**

(c) Ensure that legal assistance provided by public lawyers are of a high quality.

In doing so, make use, if relevant, of the technical assistance tools developed by the United Nations Interagency Panel on Juvenile Justice and its members, including UNODC, UNICEF, OHCHR and NGOs, and seek technical assistance in the area of juvenile justice from members of the Panel.

#### **Child victims and witnesses of crimes**

52. The Committee is concerned that child victims and witnesses of crimes can be confronted with the suspect perpetrator without any preliminary assessment and that the participation of Municipal Child Rights Protection Services and psychologists is insufficient and inefficient.

53. The Committee recommends that the State party ensure, through adequate legal provisions and regulations, that all children victims and/or witnesses of crimes are provided with the protection required by the Convention and that the State party take fully into account the United Nations Guidelines on Justice in Matters Involving Child Victims and Witnesses of Crime (annexed to Economic and Social Council resolution 2005/20).

### **I. Ratification of international human rights instruments**

54. The Committee recommends that the State party, in order to further strengthen the fulfilment of children's rights, ratify the core human rights instruments to which it is not yet a party, in particular the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture.

### **J. Cooperation with regional and international bodies**

55. The Committee recommends that the State party cooperate with the Council of Europe (COE) towards the implementation of the Convention and other human rights instruments, both in the State party and in the other COE member States.

### **K. Follow-up and dissemination**

56. The Committee recommends that the State party take all appropriate measures to ensure that the present recommendations are fully implemented by, inter alia, transmitting them to the Head of State, Parliament, relevant ministries, the Supreme Court and local authorities for appropriate consideration and further action.

57. The Committee further recommends that the combined third to fourth periodic reports and the written replies by the State party and the related recommendations (concluding observations) be made widely available in Lithuanian and other languages of the country, including (but not exclusively) through the Internet, to the public at large, civil society organizations, media, youth groups, professional groups and children, in order to generate debate and awareness of the Convention and the Optional Protocols thereto and of their implementation and monitoring.

## L. Next report

58. The Committee invites the State party to submit its consolidated fifth and sixth periodic report by 28 February 2019 and to include in it information on the implementation of the present concluding observations. The Committee draws attention to its harmonized treaty-specific reporting guidelines adopted on 1 October 2010 (CRC/C/58/Rev.2 and Corr. 1) and reminds the State party that future reports should be in compliance with the guidelines and not exceed 60 pages. The Committee urges the State party to submit its report in accordance with the guidelines. In the event a report exceeding the page limitations is submitted, the State party will be asked to review and resubmit the report in accordance with the above-mentioned guidelines. The Committee reminds the State party that if it is not in a position to review and resubmit the report, translation of the report for purposes of examination of the treaty body cannot be guaranteed.

59. The Committee also invites the State party to submit an updated core document in accordance with the requirements of the common core document in the harmonized guidelines on reporting, approved at the fifth Inter-Committee Meeting of the human rights treaty bodies in June 2006 (HRI/MC/2006/3).

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