

ADVANCE UNEDITED VERSIONDistr.: General
30 September 2016

Original: English

Committee on the Rights of the Child**Concluding observations on the combined third to fifth periodic reports of Sierra Leone*****I. Introduction**

1. The Committee considered the combined third, fourth and fifth periodic reports of Sierra Leone (CRC/C/SLE/3-5) at its 2136th and 2137th meetings (see CRC/C/SR.2136 and 2137), held on 14 and 15 September 2016, and adopted the present concluding observations at its 2160th meeting, held on 30 September 2016.

2. The Committee welcomes the submission of the combined third, fourth and fifth periodic reports of the State party, which allowed for a better understanding of the situation of children's rights in the State party and notes the written replies to the list of issues (CRC/C/SLE/Q/3-5/Add.1), received the day before the dialogue. The Committee expresses appreciation for the constructive dialogue held with the high-level and multisectoral delegation of the State party.

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

3. The Committee welcomes the progress achieved by the State party in various areas, including the ratification of or accession to international human rights instruments, as well as the enactment of the Child Rights Act (2007), the adoption of the Registration of Customary Marriage and Divorce Act, Adoption Bill and Sexual Offences Act and the adoption of several child-relevant policies, in particular the National Child Justice Strategy (2013) and the Child Welfare Policy (2013).

III. Factors and difficulties impeding the implementation of the Convention

4. The Committee notes the effects of the Ebola virus disease in the State party that caused tremendous hardship and had a negative effect on the implementation of the rights enshrined in the Convention.

* Adopted by the Committee at its seventy-third session (13 – 30 September 2016).

IV. Main areas of concern and recommendations

5. The Committee reminds the State party of the indivisibility and interdependence of all rights under the Convention and emphasises the importance of all recommendations contained in the present concluding observations. The Committee would like to draw the State party's attention to the following recommendations that require the adoption of urgent measures: abuse and neglect (para. 19); sexual exploitation and abuse (para. 21); harmful practices (para. 23); children with disabilities (para. 28); adolescent health (para. 32) and education (para. 35).

A. General measures of implementation (arts. 4, 42 and 44 (6))

Legislation

6. **The Committee urges the State party to continue harmonising all domestic legislation relating to children with the Convention, including by reviewing the Child Rights Act and ensuring that it has precedence over all other laws and that all the gaps that have been identified in other laws that concern children, such as trafficking, child marriage, child labour and other issues, are adequately addressed.**

Comprehensive policy and strategy

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

(a) **Provide support to the National Children's Commission (NCC) to develop a comprehensive policy and strategy on addressing and monitoring child rights and protection issues;**

(b) **Develop strategies to implement child related policies supported by sufficient human, technical and financial resources without relying mainly on donor funding.**

Allocation of resources

8. **In the light of its general comment No. 19 (2016) on public budgeting for the realization of children's rights (art. 4), the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Allocate adequate budgetary resources, in accordance with article 4 of the Convention, for the implementation of children's rights and, in particular, increase the budget allocated to the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs (MSWGCA);**

(b) **Strengthen efforts to ensure that all line ministries adopt a child centred budgeting approach;**

(c) **Taking note of target 16.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals on substantially reducing corruption and bribery in all their forms, take immediate measures to combat corruption and strengthen institutional capacities to effectively detect, investigate and prosecute corruption also by putting in place the Public Expenditure Tracking Survey System in order to avoid diverting resources from the implementation of the Convention.**

Data collection

9. **In the light of its general comment No. 5 (2003) on general measures of implementation, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) Allocate necessary human and financial resources to the MSWGCA for the maintenance and operationalization of the Child-Protection Information Management System (CPIMS);

(b) Collect data on all areas of the Convention, disaggregated by age, sex, disability, geographic location, ethnic origin and socioeconomic background in order to facilitate analysis on the situation of all children, particularly those in situations of vulnerability;

(c) Take into account the conceptual and methodological framework set out in the report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) entitled *Human rights indicators: a guide to measurement and implementation* when defining, collecting and disseminating statistical information.

Independent monitoring

10. In the light of its general comment No. 2 (2002) on the role of independent human rights institutions, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Enforce the 2004 Act establishing the Human Rights Commission to monitor the implementation of the Convention and effectively address children's rights violations;

(b) Ensure that the new mechanism for monitoring children's rights is able to receive, investigate and address complaints by children in a child-sensitive manner.

Dissemination, awareness-raising and training

11. The Committee recommends that the State party continue strengthening its awareness raising programmes, including campaigns on children's rights through the existing community based structures. It further recommends that the State party continue its efforts to translate the Convention into local languages. It also recommends the systematic training of all professionals working with and for children and that human rights education be included in the official curriculum at all levels of education.

Cooperation with civil society

12. The Committee recommends that the State party strengthen the capacity of local NGOs and systematically involve civil society, including NGOs and children's associations, in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, plans and programmes related to children's rights at the local level.

B. General principles (arts. 2, 3, 6 and 12)

Non-discrimination

13. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Finalise the review process of the Constitution and ensure that its provisions on non-discrimination are in full compliance with the Convention;

(b) Intensify its efforts to eliminate discrimination against groups of children in the most vulnerable situations, such as girls, children with disabilities, children living with HIV/AIDS, children orphaned due to Ebola and children in rural areas;

(c) Cooperate with the widest range of stakeholders, in particular through its community-based structures such as Village Development Committees and Child Welfare Committees, including children, community and traditional leaders, and all sectors of society, to promote social and cultural change and create an enabling environment that promotes equality among children.

Best interests of the child

14. In the light of its general comment No 14 (2013) on the right of the child to have his or her best interests taken as a primary consideration, the Committee recommends that the State party strengthen its efforts to ensure that this right is appropriately integrated and consistently interpreted and applied in all legislative, administrative and judicial proceedings and decisions as well as in all policies, programmes and projects that are relevant to and have an impact on children. 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 for giving it due weight as a primary consideration. The State party is encouraged to put in place the strategies for monitoring the decisions taken.

Respect for the views of the child

15. In the light of its general comment No. 12 (2009) on the right of the child to be heard, the Committee encourages the State party to ensure that children's views are given due consideration, in accordance with article 12 of the Convention, particularly at the community level, through established networks such as Village Development Committees and other community-based structures, as well as in the family, at schools, and in judicial and relevant administrative procedures concerning them.

D. Civil rights and freedoms (arts. 7, 8, and 13-17)

Birth registration / Name and nationality

16. Taking note of target 16.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals on providing legal identity for all, including birth registration, the Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Continue its efforts to register all children, especially those in rural areas;
- (b) Ensure the integration of birth registration into the general civil registration reform programme.

E. Violence against children (arts. 19, 24 (3), 28 (2), 34, 37 (a) and 39)

Corporal punishment

17. In the light of its general comment No. 8 (2006) on corporal punishment, the Committee urges the State party to explicitly implement the prohibition of corporal punishment in all settings, as recommended by the Code of Conduct for Teachers and other Education Personnel (2009), especially at home, schools, alternative care and detention institutions. The Committee also recommends that the State party strengthen its awareness raising programmes, including campaigns among parents and relevant professional groups on alternative methods of discipline, raise awareness of parents and children on the Code and strengthen and enforce sanctions to make teachers, and all personnel working with children accountable for violating the Code.

Abuse and neglect

18. The Committee welcomes the number of measure undertaken by the State party to address child neglect and abuse, particularly through the adoption of relevant legislation, training support and by setting up a helpline and Family Support Units (FSUs). However, the Committee is seriously concerned at the:

- (a) Limited capacities of the FSUs at the village level;
- (b) Limited access to services for abused children and lack of early abuse detection and prevention systems at community level;
- (c) High level of impunity enjoyed by the perpetrators;
- (d) Lack of comprehensive data on children suffering from ill-treatment, abuse and neglect, domestic violence and sexual abuse.

19. **In the light of its general comment No. 13 (2011) on the right of the child to freedom from all forms of violence and taking note of target 16.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals on ending abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children, the Committee urges the State party to:**

- (a) Strengthen the technical and operational capacities of the FSUs to increase their outreach at the village level;**
- (b) Take necessary measures to ensure that child victims of violence receive psychological and recovery support and encourage them to report cases of abuse, violence and neglect;**
- (c) Establish early detection and prevention mechanisms of child abuse at the community level, by, inter alia, strengthening the capacity of the existing local councils, child welfare committees and other community-based child protection mechanisms;**
- (d) Ensure that criminal legal procedures are systematically opened against the perpetrators of violence against children to eliminate impunity and raise awareness and sensitization of families and community leaders on the negative consequences of the culture of impunity; and**
- (e) Establish a national database on all cases of violence against children, including ill-treatment, sexual abuse, child abuse and neglect and domestic violence.**

Sexual exploitation and abuse

20. The Committee notes that the State party passed the Sexual Offences Act (2012) and the establishment of the National Referral Protocol on Gender Based Violence. However, it reiterates its concern (CRC/C/SLE/CO/2, para. 72) and expresses its grave concern at the:

- (a) Widespread incidents of sexual violence, including rape and defilement in all settings, including in the family and schools;
- (b) Low rate of reporting of sexual abuse and exploitation, especially due to Reluctance of families and the general public to report these cases and the practice of parents accepting payments instead of reporting the case;
- (c) Lack of medical treatment, free examination and compensation for child victims of sexual violence as guaranteed by the Sexual Offences Act and the National Referral protocol;
- (d) Low rate of convictions for reported incidents of rape and defilement.

21. Raising attention to target 5.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals on eliminating all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including sexual and other types of exploitation, the Committee urges the State party to:

(a) Prioritize and ensure adequate resources for the implementation of the Sexual Offences Act and other relevant legislation and adopt comprehensive measures to address such violence;

(b) Ensure the effectiveness of mechanisms, procedures and guidelines for mandatory reporting of cases of sexual abuse and exploitation and ensure accessible, child-friendly and effective reporting channels for such violations;

(c) Ensure that all child victims receive psychosocial, medical support and access to post-rape health services;

(d) Take all necessary measures to investigate and prosecute reported cases, and punish the perpetrators without any exception, including by not accepting any out-of-court settlements in such cases;

(e) Conduct awareness raising activities and combat stigmatisation of child victims of sexual violence, including incest.

Harmful practices

22. Despite the huge success of the Government's efforts to include female genital mutilation (FGM) practitioners in the fight against submitting children to FGM, the Committee is seriously concerned that:

(a) FGM is still practiced even if explicitly prohibited in law for children;

(b) Although the minimum age for marriage is set at 18 years, the Registration of Customary Marriage and Divorce Act of 2007 allows for exceptions and child marriage, especially of girls, remains highly prevalent in the State party.

23. In the light of its general comment No. 18 on harmful practices (2014), adopted jointly with the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the Committee urges the State party to:

(a) Continue its fight with the assistance of former female FGM practitioners to eradicate the practice of female genital mutilation on children country wide;

(b) Accelerate efforts and programmes to sensitize and assist practitioners of FGM to find alternative sources of income and encourage them to abandon the practice;

(c) Take concrete and consistent measures, including the harmonisation of laws, to prevent and eliminate child marriage and undertake comprehensive awareness-raising campaigns on the negative consequences of child marriage on girls.

F. Family environment and alternative care (arts. 5, 9-11, 18 (1) and (2), 20-21, 25 and 27 (4))

Family environment

24. The Committee recommends that the State party ensure the effectiveness of the Trust Fund for child welfare by providing it with adequate human, technical and financial resources, as well as the implementation of the MSWGCA's strategic plan

(2013-2017). It further recommends that the State party disseminate the Child Welfare Policy through training of all key stakeholders and recruit additional social workers to increase the coverage at the community level.

Children deprived of a family environment

25. Drawing the State party's attention to the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children (see General Assembly resolution 64/142, annex), the Committee emphasizes that financial and material poverty — or conditions directly and uniquely attributable to such poverty — should never be the sole justification for removing a child from parental care, for receiving a child into alternative care or for preventing a child's social reintegration. In this regard, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Ensure that all possible assistance is given to Ebola orphans, including awareness raising campaigns concerning their stigmatisation;

(b) Fully implement the National Alternative Care Policy for Children, particularly with regards to establishing and implementing minimum standards for the operation of residential care homes and regulating the informal care (*menpikin*);

(c) Ensure adequate safeguards and clear criteria, based on the needs as well as the best interests of the child, for determining whether a child should be placed in alternative care;

(d) Ensure periodic review of the placement of children in foster care and institutions, and monitor the quality of care therein, including by providing accessible channels for reporting, monitoring and remedying maltreatment of children;

(e) Ensure the registration of existing alternative care centres for children and ensure that they operate in accordance with the minimum standards;

(f) Ensure that adequate human, technical and financial resources are allocated to alternative care centres and relevant child protection services, in order to facilitate the rehabilitation and social reintegration of children resident therein to the greatest extent possible.

Adoption

26. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Expeditiously amend and adopt the legislation on adoption, raise awareness on the adoption procedures and regulations and promote and encourage formal domestic adoption;

(b) Implement the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry on the HANCI-MAPS Adoption;

(c) Consider ratifying the 1993 Hague Convention No. 33 on Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect of Inter-country Adoption.

G. Disability, basic health and welfare (arts. 6, 18 (3), 23, 24, 26, 27 (1)-(3) and 33)

Children with disabilities

27. The Committee welcomes the adoption of the Persons with Disabilities Act (2011) and the establishment of the National Commission for Persons with Disabilities. However, the Committee is seriously concerned at the:

(a) Lack of information on the adoption of the National Policy for the Protection of Persons with Disabilities and on the funding for the National Development Fund for Persons with Disabilities and on how these instruments support children with disabilities;

(b) Insufficient measures in place to ensure that children with disabilities fully enjoy their rights, in particular with reference to health and education;

(c) Inadequate numbers of specialised teachers and limited number of school facilities and materials adapted to these children, as well as services and infrastructure available in order to ensure that education becomes really inclusive;

(d) Lack of comprehensive data on children with disabilities.

28. **In the light of its general comment No. 9 (2006) on the rights of children with disabilities, the Committee urges that the State party:**

(a) **Adopt the National Policy for the Protection of Persons with Disabilities;**

(b) **Set up a comprehensive strategy for the inclusion of children with disabilities;**

(c) **Ensure sufficient funding for the National Development Fund for Persons with Disabilities, in particular for support to children with disabilities;**

(d) **Support communities, Local Councils and NGO partners to build capacity for family and community-based care and support to children with disabilities;**

(e) **Ensure that children with disabilities have access to inclusive early childhood care and education, early development programmes, health care and other services, and ensure such services receive adequate human, technical and financial resources;**

(f) **Adopt measures towards fully inclusive education; and**

(g) **Collect and analyse data on the situation of all children with disabilities, disaggregated by, among others, age, sex, type of disability, ethnic and national origin and geographic location.**

Health and health services

29. **In the light of its general comment No. 15 (2013) on the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health and taking note of target 3.1 of the Sustainable Development Goals on reducing maternal mortality, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Strengthen its efforts to reduce maternal and under five mortality rates, especially by focusing on preventive measures and treatment, improved nutrition and sanitary conditions and the management of preventable diseases, such as cholera, and malaria;**

- (b) **Strengthen its efforts to allocate appropriate human, technical and financial resources to health care for mothers and children;**
- (c) **Provide adequate human and financial resources for special services for child Ebola survivors;**
- (d) **Strengthen its programmes and policies that promote exclusive breastfeeding for six months and information about progressive introduction of a safe and appropriate infant diet thereafter;**
- (e) **Strengthen its efforts to improve access to basic health-care services with trained health workers for children and pregnant women, especially in rural areas.**

Mental health

30. **The Committee recommends that the State party strengthen its efforts to ensure accessible mental health and counselling services available in the country that are sensitive to children and adolescents. It also recommends that orphans and child survivors of Ebola are provided with psychosocial counselling and support for reintegration into communities without any stigma and discrimination.**

Adolescent health

31. While noting that the State party has developed the National Standards for Adolescent and Youth Friendly Health Services (2011), launched the National Strategy for the Reduction of Teenage Pregnancy (2013) and established a National Secretariat on Teenage Pregnancy, the Committee regrets that the report does not provide details on the implementation of these instruments. The Committee is also seriously concerned at the:

- (a) High number of teenage pregnancies;
- (b) High number of unsafe and illegal abortions;
- (c) Lack of adolescent-sensitive and confidential counselling services, including contraceptive services, and post-rape services;
- (d) Difficult access of adolescents to reproductive health care and information, including on the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, especially for boys;
- (e) Stigmatisation and discrimination of teenage pregnancy;
- (f) Absence of laws prohibiting sale of alcohol and drugs to children.

32. **In the light of its general comment No. 4 (2003) on adolescent health, the Committee urges the State party to:**

- (a) **Allocate adequate human, technical and financial resources to the National Secretariat on Teenage Pregnancy and the related strategy for its implementation;**
- (b) **Improve adolescent girls' access to reproductive health-care and related services, increase support to reproductive health and family planning services and access to affordable contraceptive methods;**
- (c) **Decriminalize abortions in all circumstances and review its legislation with a view to ensuring children's access to safe abortion and post-abortion care services and ensure that the views of the child are always heard and respected in abortion decisions;**
- (d) **Take measures to raise awareness of and foster responsible sexual behaviour, with particular attention to boys and men;**

(e) Ensure that sexual and reproductive health education is part of the mandatory school curriculum and targeted at adolescent girls and boys, with special attention on preventing early pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections, particularly HIV/AIDS, and ensure access to confidential counselling;

(f) Protect pregnant girls and adolescent mothers and their children against discrimination;

(g) Address the incidence of drug use by children and adolescents by, *inter alia*, providing children and adolescents with accurate and objective information as well as life skills education on preventing substance abuse — including tobacco and alcohol —, and develop accessible and youth-friendly drug-dependence treatment and harm reduction services.

HIV/AIDS

33. In the light of its general comment No. 3 (2003) on HIV/AIDS and the rights of the child, the Committee recommends that the State party step up its efforts to ensure the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS, early diagnosis and early initiation of treatment, proper coverage for HIV testing and ARV provision, improve access to quality, age-appropriate HIV/AIDS, sexual and reproductive health services and step up activities to prevent discrimination and stigmatisation against children with HIV/AIDS. The State party should seek technical assistance from, *inter alia*, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and UNICEF.

H. Education, leisure and cultural activities (arts. 28, 29, 30 and 31)

Education, including vocational training and guidance

34. The Committee reiterates its previous concerns (CRC/C/SLE/CO/2, para. 64). It also expresses its serious concern at the Ministry of Education's discriminatory policy (instituted in March 2015) of barring "visibly pregnant girls" from attending schools and sitting their Basic Education Certificate examinations.

35. In the light of its general comment No. 1 (2001) on the aims of education and taking note of target 4.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals on eliminating gender disparities in education, the Committee urges that the State party:

(a) Ensure that primary school is genuinely free and remove all other additional costs that are barriers to access in order to ensure the participation of all children;

(b) Immediately lift the discriminatory ban on pregnant girls attending mainstream school and sitting exams;

(c) Ensure that pregnant girls and adolescent mothers are supported and assisted in continuing their education in mainstream schools;

(d) Take appropriate measures to address charges of sexual abuse in schools and prosecute perpetrators;

(e) Taking note of target 4.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals on ensuring that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education, allocate sufficient financial resources for the development and expansion of such services, based on a comprehensive and holistic policy of early childhood care and development.

I. Special protection measures (arts. 22, 30, 32-33, 35-36, 37 (b)-(d), 38, 39 and 40)

Economic exploitation, including child labour

36. The Committee welcomes the adoption of ILO Conventions 138 and 182 and recommends that the State party:

(a) Take steps to implement the results of the National Action Plan for Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labour (2013-2016);

(b) Implement the by-laws developed at community level on various forms of child labour that are traditionally practiced;

(c) Allocate sufficient human, technical and financial resources to the labour inspection to fully, regularly and effectively implement the child laws and policies, including on occupational health and safety, and prosecute any violations related to child labour.

Children in street situations

37. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Collect data on children in street situations and identify and address root causes;

(b) Increase and disburse in time the budget allocations to the MSWGCA responsible for providing the support to children in street situations and their families;

(c) Develop a strategy and take all necessary measures to ensure that children in street situations are provided with adequate food, clothing, housing, health care and educational opportunities;

(d) Provide these children with preventative recovery and reintegration services;

(e) Give a legal warning of the legal consequences related to child labour to parents who send their children to work in the streets before and after school.

Sale, trafficking and abduction

38. The Committee recommends that the State party collect data on trafficking of children and identify and address its root causes, revise the Anti-Human Trafficking Act of 2005, provide adequate human, technical and financial support to the Police's Anti-Human Trafficking Unit, concerned with trafficking cases, ensure effective investigation of cases of sale, trafficking and abduction of children and the prosecution and sanctioning of the perpetrators.

Administration of juvenile justice

39. In the light of its general comment No. 10 (2007) on children's rights in juvenile justice, the Committee reiterates its previous concluding observations (CRC/C/SLE/CO/2, para. 77) and recommends that the State party bring its juvenile justice system fully in line with the Convention and other relevant standards. In particular, the Committee urges the State party to:

- (a) Fully implement the National Child Justice Strategy (2013-2017) by integrating child justice issues in the justice sector and promoting diversion and alternatives to detention;
- (b) Operationalise the Age Assessment Guidelines and make sure that all the relevant actors working with children receive training and copies of the guidelines;
- (c) Step up the efforts to establish the Family Courts across the country;
- (d) Ensure that pre-trial detention is used as a last resort and for the shortest possible period of time with a set maximum time not exceeding six months and that it is reviewed on a regular basis with a view to withdrawing it;
- (e) In cases where detention is not avoidable, ensure that children are not detained together with adults and that detention conditions are compliant with international standards, including with regard to access to education and health services;
- (f) Ensure the provision of qualified and independent legal aid to children in conflict with the law at an early stage of the procedure and throughout the legal proceedings.

Child victims and witnesses of crimes

40. The Committee recommends that the State party provide adequate and child-sensitive medical, counselling and legal services for child victims and witnesses. It also recommends that cases involving child victims and witnesses are heard within the shortest possible period of time.

J. Ratification of the Optional Protocol on a communications procedure

41. The Committee recommends that the State party, in order to further strengthen the fulfilment of children's rights, ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure.

K. Ratification of international human rights instruments

42. The Committee recommends that the State party, in order to further strengthen the fulfilment of children's rights, consider ratifying the core human rights instruments to which it is not yet a party, namely International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty, Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

L. Cooperation with regional bodies

43. The Committee recommends that the State party cooperate with the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of Children of the African Union on

the implementation of the Convention and other human rights instruments, both in the State party and in other African Union member States.

V. Implementation and reporting

A. Follow-up and dissemination

44. The Committee recommends that the State party take all appropriate measures to ensure that the recommendations contained in the present concluding observations are fully implemented. The Committee also recommends that the combined third, fourth and fifth periodic reports, the written replies to the list of issues and the present concluding observations be made widely available in the languages of the country.

B. Next report

45. The Committee invites the State party to submit its combined sixth to seventh periodic reports by 1 September 2022 and to include therein information on the follow-up to the present concluding observations. The report should be in compliance with the Committee's harmonized treaty-specific reporting guidelines adopted on 31 January 2014 (CRC/C/58/Rev.3) and should not exceed 21,200 words (see General Assembly resolution 68/268, para. 16). In the event that a report exceeding the established word limit is submitted, the State party will be asked to shorten the report in accordance with the above-mentioned resolution. If the State party is not in a position to review and resubmit the report, translation thereof for the purposes of consideration by the treaty body cannot be guaranteed.

46. The Committee also invites the State party to submit an updated core document, not exceeding 42,400 words, in accordance with the requirements for the common core document contained in the harmonized guidelines on reporting under the international human rights treaties, including guidelines on a common core document and treaty-specific documents (see HRI/GEN/2/Rev.6, chap. I) and paragraph 16 of General Assembly resolution 68/268.
