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**Committee on the Rights of the Child****Concluding observations on the combined sixth and seventh periodic reports of Colombia\*****I. Introduction**

1. The Committee considered the sixth and seventh periodic reports of Colombia<sup>1</sup> at its 2920th and 2921st meetings,<sup>2</sup> held on 20 and 21 January 2026, and adopted the present concluding observations at its 2930th meeting, held on 30 January 2026. In the present document, the Committee uses the term "child" to refer to a person who is under 18 years of age.

2. The Committee welcomes the submission of the combined sixth and seventh periodic reports of the State Party and the written replies to the list of issues,<sup>3</sup> which allowed for a better understanding of the situation of children's rights in the State Party.<sup>4</sup> The Committee expresses its appreciation for the constructive dialogue held with the multisectoral delegation of the State Party.

**II. Follow-up measures taken and progress achieved by the State Party**

3. The Committee welcomes the progress achieved by the State Party in various areas, especially the reduction in child mortality. In particular, it welcomes the various legislative, institutional and policy measures taken by the State Party to implement the Convention, including the adoption of:

(a) The National Pedagogical and Prevention Strategy against Corporal Punishment and Cruel, Humiliating or Degrading Treatment (2022-2030);

(b) The Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Safe Schools Declaration (2022-2026);

(c) The National Development Plan 2022-2026.

\* Adopted by the Committee at its one-hundredth session (12 January – 30 January 2026).

<sup>1</sup> CRC/C/COL/6-7.

<sup>2</sup> See CRC/C/SR. 2920 and 2921.

<sup>3</sup> CRC/C/COL/RQ/6-7.

### **III. Factors and difficulties impeding the implementation of the Convention**

4. The Committee notes the particularly severe effect of the decades-long internal armed conflict on the population, in particular on peasants, Indigenous peoples and Afro-descendants' communities and their children. It also notes that the territorial expansion of the non-State armed groups and criminal organizations that are in direct conflict with the government and between them, and the significant influx of migrants from the neighbouring countries have generated increasing violence, disruption and humanitarian emergencies impeding the full implementation of the rights enshrined in the Convention and its Protocols. The Committee reminds the State Party of the continuity of international human rights obligations and that the rights of the Convention apply to all children at all times.

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

5. The Committee reminds the State Party of the indivisibility and interdependence of all the rights enshrined in the Convention and emphasizes the importance of all the recommendations contained in the present concluding observations. The Committee would like to draw the State Party's attention to the recommendations concerning the following areas, in respect of which urgent measures must be taken: the right to life, survival and development (para. 17); abuse, neglect, sexual abuse and exploitation (para. 25), children with disabilities (para. 36), adolescent health (para. 40), children's rights and the environment (para. 44) and children in armed conflict (para. 56).

6. **The Committee recommends that the State Party ensure the realization of children's rights in accordance with the Convention and the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict and the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography throughout the process of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It urges the State Party to ensure the meaningful participation of children in the design and implementation of policies and programmes aimed at achieving all 17 Sustainable Development Goals as far as they concern children.**

#### **A. General measures of implementation (arts. 1, 4, 42 and 44 (6))**

##### **Legislation**

7. **The Committee recommends that the State Party continue its efforts for the full harmonization of its legislation with the Convention and its Optional protocols and ensure the effective implementation of the 2006 Children and Adolescents Code, Law 2089 of 2026, by establishing a system of guarantees and comprehensive protection for the rights of children and ensuring sufficient human, technical and financial resources across the country.**

##### **Coordination**

8. **The Committee urges the State Party to establish an appropriate coordination mechanism at a high interministerial level with a clear mandate and sufficient authority to coordinate all activities related to the implementation of the Convention at cross-sectoral, national, departmental and municipal levels. The State party should ensure that said coordinating body is provided with the necessary human, technical and financial resources for its effective operation.**

##### **Allocation of resources**

9. **Recalling its general comment No. 19 (2016) on public budgeting for the realization of children's rights, the Committee recommends that the State Party:**

(a) Continue to increase the budget allocated to social sectors and address disparities by consolidating information systems, data analysis and budgetary monitoring related to the realization of children's rights;

(b) Ensure transparent, participatory and accountable budgeting by strengthening the budgetary tracker, and effective spending at the municipal level;

(c) Define budgetary lines for all children, with special attention to those in disadvantaged or vulnerable situations that may require affirmative measures and protect these budgetary lines in situations of economic crisis, natural disasters or other emergencies;

(d) Strengthen institutional capacities to effectively detect, investigate and prosecute cases of corruption.

#### Data collection

10. Taking note of the Integrated System of Information on Children under the Family Welfare Institute, the Committee recalls its general comment No. 5 (2003) on general measures of implementation and recommends that the State Party continues to improve its data collection system.

#### Access to justice and remedy

11. The Committee recommends that the State Party:

(a) Develop public policies that specifically ensure that all children have access to: (i) confidential, child-friendly and independent complaint mechanisms in schools, foster care systems, alternative care settings and places of detention for reporting all forms of violence, abuse, discrimination and other violations of their rights; and (ii) legal support and age-appropriate information on access to counselling and remedies, including compensation and rehabilitation;

(b) Effectively and comprehensively implement Law 2205 of 2022 to strengthen the Prosecutor's General's Office's unit for children and adolescents;

(c) Continue to raise awareness among children of their right to file a complaint under existing mechanisms;

(d) Ensure systematic and mandatory training for all relevant professionals working with and for children on child-friendly procedures and remedies, children's rights.

#### Cooperation with civil society

12. The Committee urges the State Party:

(a) To strengthen its policies and measures to protect child human rights defenders, in particular those involved in environmental protection;

(b) To ensure prompt, thorough and independent investigation of all reported instances of killings, intimidation and harassment against them.

#### Children's rights and the business sector

13. Recalling its general comment No. 16 (2013) on State obligations regarding the impact of the business sector on children's rights and to the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, endorsed by the Human Rights Council in 2011, the Committee reiterates its previous recommendations<sup>5</sup> and further recommend that the State Party:

<sup>5</sup> CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5, para. 18.

(a) **Develop a public policy on business and children's rights that complies with children's rights and ensures meaningful child participation in its elaboration, implementation and evaluation;**

(b) **Adopt legislative, administrative and other measures to require companies operating digital platforms, including social media, to carry out rigorous and ongoing human rights due diligence processes with a strengthened focus on children's rights;**

(c) **Expediently address the situation of the communities in El Hatillo by immediately proceeding with their resettlement by providing adequate compensations to those affected as children by the impact of the extraction of carbon by transnational companies.**

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

### **Non-discrimination**

14. **The Committee reiterates its previous recommendations<sup>6</sup> and further recommends that the State Party significantly increase its efforts to eliminate structural discrimination, such as race, disability, sex, age, sexual orientation, gender identity and any other prohibited grounds, by addressing its intersectoral manifestations, in particular against Indigenous, Afro-Colombians and peasant children.**

### **Best interests of the child**

15. **Recalling 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 reiterates its previous recommendation<sup>7</sup> and recommends that the State Party ensure that the right of children to have their best interests taken as a primary consideration is appropriately integrated and consistently interpreted and applied in all legislative, administrative and judicial proceedings and decisions, in particular in the National Public Policy on Care and the Public Care System, the Statute for the Guarantee of Equality and the Rights of Girls and Women and the Family Justice System.**

### **Right to life, survival and development**

16. **The Committee is seriously concerned about:**

(a) **Remaining cases of infant child mortality and the rise of death caused by malnutrition, primarily affecting Indigenous children, preventable diseases and limited coverage of vaccination;**

(b) **The high number of homicides of children, particularly in Quibdó;**

(c) **The large number of enforced disappearances of children.**

17. **The Committee urges the State Party to:**

(a) **Enhance its efforts to further reduce infant and child mortality, by addressing child malnutrition and limited vaccination coverage;**

(b) **Increase sanitation services and promote hygiene practices to prevent infant mortality due to diarrheal diseases and acute respiratory infections;**

(c) **Take urgent and culturally sensitive measures to prevent further death of Indigenous children due to acute malnutrition, particularly among Wayuu, Emberá, Sikuani, Emberá Katio and Kogui Indigenous Peoples;**

(d) **Provide emergency support to Afro-Colombian, peasant and migrant children and those living in urban areas who suffer from acute malnutrition;**

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<sup>6</sup> CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5, para. 18.

<sup>7</sup> CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5, para. 22.

- (e) **Adopt measures against corruption that prevent Indigenous children to access food and water and causing death by malnutrition;**
- (f) **Expediently implement judgment T-302 of the Constitutional Court of 2017;**
- (g) **Urgently adopt measures to prevent children's homicide, particularly in areas affected by armed conflict and organized crime;**
- (h) **Set up a monitoring system to prevent and control the access of children to firearms;**
- (i) **Effectively implement the Arms Trade Treaty and adopt measures to combat the illegal traffic of arms;**
- (j) **Systematically and promptly investigate, prosecute and sanction cases of killing of children, including those committed by the police and armed forces;**
- (k) **Strengthen the Urgent Search Mechanism, to ensure that all the cases of children who have gone missing are addressed effectively and without delay.**

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

18. **The Committee recalls its general comment No. 12 (2009) on the right of the child to be heard and recommends that the State Party:**

- (a) **Continue to promote meaningful and empowered participation of all children within the family, communities and schools;**
- (b) **Ensure that children's proposals are given due weight in decision-making processes;**
- (c) **Maintain and expand child participatory mechanisms in all departments and municipalities;**
- (d) **Ensure meaningful participation of children into peace processes and related institutions, such as the Unit for the Attention and Integral Reparation to Victims.**

### **C. Civil and political rights (arts. 7–8 and 13–17)**

#### **Birth registration**

19. **The Committee strongly urges the State Party to:**

- (a) **Adopt urgent measures to ensure birth registration and the issuance of identification documentation of all children living in remote areas, particularly Indigenous and Afro-Colombian children;**
- (b) **Strengthen the use of Mobile Units and ensure compliance with the recognition of indigenous birth certification;**
- (c) **Ensure that civil registry offices are established, operational and accessible across the country and expand the registration units in public hospitals.**

#### **Nationality**

20. **Taking note of resolution 8617 of 2021 and its extension, the Committee recommends the State Party to prevent statelessness of children whose parents are unable to confer their nationality, notably by expanding the Children First initiative.**

#### **Right to identity**

21. **The Committee recommends that the State Party;**

- (a) **Undertake a comprehensive study on the current practice of surrogacy;**

(b) **Raise awareness about the rights of children born by the means of assisted reproduction technologies and surrogate mothers;**

(c) **Ensure that children born through assisted reproduction technologies, particularly surrogacy, have access to information about their origins with appropriate counselling and support;**

(d) **Recognize the right to identity of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children, and put in place measures to ensure that all adolescents enjoy their freedom of expression and respect for their physical and psychological integrity, gender identity and emerging autonomy.**

#### **Freedom of association and peaceful assembly**

22. **The Committee recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Adopt legislative measures to strengthen freedom of association and peaceful assembly of children;**

(b) **Strengthen awareness-raising activities about children's freedom of association and peaceful assembly, including in the context of social protests;**

(c) **Conduct thorough and independent investigations on allegations of violations of children's rights in the exercise of their right to freedom of association and peaceful assembly, such as those related to the social protests of April 2021;**

(d) **Ensure that law enforcement officials, particularly Mobile Anti-Riot Squads of the National Police, are trained on children's rights, including the right to freedom of association and peaceful manifestation.**

#### **Access to appropriate information**

23. **Recalling its general comment No. 25 (2021) on children's rights in relation to the digital environment and the 2026 Joint statement on Artificial Intelligence and the Rights of the Child, the Committee recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Ensure that draft laws on access to information and the digital environment adequately protect children from harmful content and materials and online risks, and provide for mechanisms to prosecute violations;**

(b) **Continue to improve digital inclusion for children in disadvantaged situations and those living in remote areas, including by means of accessible and affordable online services and connectivity, while ensuring that public services remain accessible to children who do not use or have access to digital technologies;**

(c) **Adopt legal, administrative, judicial measures to protect the rights of children in the use of artificial intelligence.**

### **D. Violence against children (arts. 19, 24 (3), 28 (2), 34, 35, 37 (a), and 39 of the Convention and the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography)**

#### **Abuse, neglect, sexual abuse and exploitation**

24. **The Committee is deeply concerned about:**

(a) **The widespread sexual abuse and exploitation against children, disproportionately affecting girls, children with disabilities, children from indigenous and Afro-descendant communities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children, migrant and displaced children, and those living in rural or conflict-affected areas;**

(b) **The insufficient recognition that sexual violence and sexual exploitation of children constitute serious crimes and that all children subjected to such acts are victims;**

(c) The limited impact of public policies and programmes aimed at eliminating sexual abuse and exploitation, including in the tourism and extractive sectors, and the inadequate regulation and oversight of private sector actors;

(d) The limited capacity to ensure prompt, thorough and independent investigations into cases of sexual abuse and exploitation;

(e) The lack of investigation into sexual abuse committed by religious personnel of the Catholic Church and the absence of comprehensive reparation for victims;

(f) Reports of violence, abuse and neglect in alternative care settings, schools, police custody and centres of deprivation of liberty;

(g) The absence of a comprehensive, integrated and disaggregated national system for data collection on all forms of violence against children.

**25. Recalling its general comment No. 13 (2011) on the right of the child to freedom from all forms of violence, the Committee urges the State Party to prioritize the elimination of all forms of violence against children, and in particular to:**

**(a) Strengthen efforts to ensure the effective implementation of the National Alliance on Violence against Children and of the pledges made at the 2024 Ministerial Conference to End Violence against Children;**

**(b) Establish a comprehensive and integrated national database on all forms of violence against children, ensuring disaggregation by age, sex, disability, ethnicity, geographic location, socioeconomic status and other relevant factors, and reinforce early warning systems;**

**(c) Strengthen preventive measures including community-based interventions and awareness-raising campaigns targeting families, schools, religious institutions and private sector actors and ensure these measures reach all children, notably by strengthening the municipal Territorial Development Plans through improved planning, monitoring and sufficient human, technical and financial resources;**

**(d) Strengthen the child protection system by establishing effective coordination mechanisms between the Institute of Family Welfare and all institutions responsible for child protection ensuring timely and adequate responses;**

**(e) Establish Family Commissioner's Offices and shelters in all departments and municipalities, equipped with highly qualified multi-disciplinary teams and provided with sufficient human, technical and financial resources;**

**(f) Strengthen the National Policy for the Prevention and Eradication of the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (2018-2028) in the tourism and extractive sectors, including through mandatory due diligence for private companies;**

**(g) Establish mechanisms, procedures and guidelines to ensure mandatory reporting, multiagency intervention, investigation and prosecution of all cases of sexual exploitation and abuse of children, including those committed by religious personnel of the Catholic Church, to prevent their re-victimisation;**

**(h) Amend legislation to ensure that all children subject to any form of sexual exploitation are treated as victims and are never subject to criminal sanctions;**

**(i) Conduct awareness-raising activities to combat the stigmatization of child victims of sexual exploitation and abuse;**

**(j) Ensure that victims receive appropriate remedies, including compensation, rehabilitation, long-term psychosocial support and guarantees of non-repetition;**

**(k) Ensure without delay the effective implementation of Law 2489 of 2025 on the protection of children against violence in the digital environment;**

(l) Further strengthen the allocation of resources of the Ombudsman's Office to monitor all forms of violence against children, including in alternative care and detention settings;

(m) Guarantee the meaningful participation of children, including survivors, in the design, implementation and evaluation of policies and programmes to prevent and address violence.

#### Gang violence

26. The Committee urges the State party to:

(a) Strengthen existing measures to protect children and adolescents from gang violence, including "Safe Childhood and Adolescence" and "Dreamcatcher", and ensure their effective implementation in all departments and municipalities, with particular attention to communities at heightened risk;

(b) Establish comprehensive programmes providing children associated with gangs assistance to disengage safely and reintegrate into society, ensuring access to psychosocial support, education, vocational training, family-based interventions and measures to prevent stigmatization;

(c) Scale up efforts and adopt urgent, context-specific child-protection measures to address gang-related violence in Quibdó, including through strengthened community-based prevention, early identification of children at risk of recruitment, and rapid response mechanisms;

(d) Strengthen coordination among child protection services, law enforcement, the justice system, health and education sectors to ensure integrated, timely and child-centered responses to gang-related violence;

(e) Ensure prompt, thorough and independent investigations into the recruitment, use, exploitation and abuse of children by gangs and criminal groups, including their possible connection with the armed conflict, and ensure that perpetrators are held accountable while guaranteeing the protection of child victims and witnesses;

(f) Establish or strengthen early warning systems and data collection mechanisms to monitor patterns of gang-related violence, recruitment and exploitation of children, ensuring disaggregation by age, sex, ethnicity, disability, geographic location and other relevant factors.

#### Corporal punishment

27. The Committee recalls its general comment No. 8 (2006) on corporal punishment and urges the State Party to adopt concrete measures for the effective implementation of the Law 2089 of 2021 and in particular to:

(a) Ensure that the explicit prohibition of corporal punishment in all settings is widely disseminated and accompanied by clear regulations and guidance for implementation;

(b) Provide mandatory, continuous training for teachers, health professionals, child protection personnel, law enforcement officials and other professionals working with and for children on positive, non-violent forms of child-rearing and discipline;

(c) Establish accessible, confidential and child-friendly reporting mechanisms for children to safely report corporal punishment and other forms of degrading treatment, and ensure protection against reprisals;

(d) Conduct sustained public awareness campaigns to promote positive parenting and shift social norms that condone corporal punishment, including through community-based and family-focused interventions;



(e) Strengthen monitoring and inspection mechanisms in schools, alternative care settings and detention facilities to ensure compliance with the prohibition of corporal punishment;

(f) Collect and analyse data on the prevalence, contexts and characteristics of corporal punishment, and regularly evaluate the implementation and impact of the the National Pedagogical and Prevention Strategy against Corporal Punishment and Cruel, Humiliating or Degrading Treatment (2022-2030).

#### Harmful practices

28. Recalling joint general recommendation No. 31 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women/general comment No. 18 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (2019) on harmful practices, the Committee welcomes the adoption of Law 2447 of 2025 that prohibits marriage under 18 years of age and recommends that the State Party:

(a) Implement Law 2447 of 2025 and adopt a national action plan;

(b) Effectively implement the National Comprehensive Program for Children's and Adolescent's Life Projects;

(c) Strengthen measures taken to prevent and eliminate female genital mutilation where it is practiced, including adoption of the relevant legislation, and ensure psychological and medical support to the victims.

#### Torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment

29. Recalling its general comment No. 13 (2011) on the right of the child to freedom from all forms of violence and while commending the State Party for its ratification of the Optional Protocol to the United Nations Convention against Torture, the Committee recommends that the State Party:

(a) Enforce the prohibition of torture and ensure that allegations of torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment of children committed by law enforcement and non-State armed group are duly investigated, that perpetrators are prosecuted and punished in a manner commensurate with the gravity of their acts and that children who are victims receive adequate remedies;

(b) When established, secure that the National Preventive Mechanism has the capacity to address cases of children deprived of liberty and in alternative care settings.

#### Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography

30. Recalling its previous concluding observations on the report of the State party submitted under article 12 of the Optional Protocol,<sup>8</sup>and recalling its 2019 guidelines on the implementation of the Optional Protocol,<sup>9</sup>the Committee urges the State party:

(a) To adopt concrete measures without delay to implement its previous recommendations, in particular regarding the revision of its legislation;

(b) To adequately address the provisions on the sale of children, a concept which is similar to trafficking but not identical;

(c) To adopt a national plan of action that covers all areas of the Optional Protocol;

(d) To revise the Penal Code to bring it in full compliance with article 3 of the Optional Protocol.

<sup>8</sup> CRC/C/OPSC/COL/CO/1.

<sup>9</sup> CRC/C/156.

### Recovery and reintegration of child victims

31. The Committee recommends that the State Party continue and strengthen the administrative process for the restoration of rights in order to ensure the provision of a comprehensive and child appropriate support, including trauma-informed and care therapy, to child victims, particularly of sexual violence, and avoid placing them in centres that accommodate adults with diverse needs.

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

### Family environment

32. While taking into consideration the efforts of the State party, the Committee recommends that the State Party significantly step up its efforts to prevent separation of children from their families, particularly by strengthening the National Policy to Support and Strengthen Families with increased human, technical and financial resources and by creating positive parenting programmes.

### Children deprived of a family environment

33. Drawing the State Party's attention to the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children adopted by the General Assembly resolution 64/142,<sup>10</sup> the Committee recommends that the State Party:

(a) Strengthen efforts to phase out institutionalization and adopt, without delay, a strategy and action plan for deinstitutionalization that is provided with adequate human, technical and financial resources;

(b) Ensure that policies and practices are guided by the principle 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 entrusting a child into alternative care or for preventing a child's family reintegration;

(c) Ensure sufficient alternative family-based and community-based care options, including foster care in rural areas, ensuring they are culturally sensitive, for children who cannot stay with their families and regularly review placement measures and facilitate the reunification of children with their families when in their best interests;

(d) 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 and ensure that decisions on child removal are subject to judicial review;

(e) Strengthen measures of rehabilitation and social reintegration of children to the greatest extent possible;

(f) Further strengthen the capacity of professionals working with families and children;

(g) Adopt the measures necessary for the effective implementation of the Law 2530 of 2025 on the protection of children, whose mothers or custodians were victim of femicide.

### Adoption

34. The Committee reiterates its previous recommendations and further recommends that the State Party:

<sup>10</sup> General Assembly resolution 64/142, annex.

(a) Confirm the mandate of the Family Welfare Institute to ensure the administration of national and international adoption and provide the necessary human, technical and financial resources to this end;

(b) Prohibit adoption through private adoption house and institutions where there is a risk of improper financial and other gain;

(c) Strengthen the efforts and measures to prioritize national adoptions, notably by effectively applying the principle of subsidiarity.

#### Children of incarcerated parents

35. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Take all measures necessary for guaranteeing the rights of children accompanying their incarcerated mothers, taking into account their best interests and their right to development;

(b) Consider, when possible, weighing non-custodial alternatives to the detention of mothers for cases involving children at a young age.

### F. Children with disabilities (art. 23)

36. Recalling its general comment No. 9 (2006) on the rights of children with disabilities, the Committee urges the State Party to adopt a human rights-based approach to disability, set up a comprehensive strategy for the inclusion of children with disabilities and:

(a) Continue to adopt measures to harmonize national legislation with the human rights model of disability and adopt all pending regulations without delay;

(b) Organize the collection of data on children with disabilities, and strengthen the overall system for diagnosing disability and certifying their situation;

(c) Adopt measures at the national level to prevent and address discrimination and exploitation of children with disabilities both in everyday life and in the context of armed conflict;

(d) Undertake awareness-raising campaigns to combat the stigmatization of, and prejudice against, children with disabilities and promote a positive image of them as rights-holders;

(e) Fully implement the Constitutional Courts order (T-199 of 2025) to monitor and track surgical contraception or sterilization procedures on persons with disabilities;

(f) Implement fully the 2015 guidance on comprehensive health care for children with autism spectrum disorders (Protocolo clínico para el diagnóstico, tratamiento y ruta de atención integral).

### G. Health (arts. 6, 24 and 33)

#### Health and health services

37. Recalling its general comment No. 15 (2013) on the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health, the Committee recommends that the State Party:

(a) Ensure the effective implementation of the Policy for the Comprehensive Development of Early Childhood;

(b) Adopt concrete measures to ensure the availability and accessibility of health services at the local level to all children, including those living in remote regions and urban marginalized areas;

(c) **Ensure the effective implementation of the 2025 Indigenous and Intercultural Health System(Sistema Indígena de Salud Propio e Intercultural), with the participation of Indigenous children;**

(d) **Maintain and strengthen its efforts to eliminate mother-to-child transmission of HIV.**

#### **Mental health**

38. **The Committee recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Ensure the effective implementation of the 2025 National Policy on Mental Health, including by setting up a monitoring and evaluation system and ensuring child participation;**

(b) **Ensure the adoption and effective implementation of the National Strategy on the Prevention of Suicidal Conduct, prioritizing those most at risk;**

(c) **Strengthen and expand the territorial coverage of culturally appropriate mental health and psychosocial support services;**

(d) **Increase the number of psychologists and psychiatrists in hospitals, health centres and throughout the system of child protection;**

(e) **Urgently adopt culturally sensitive measures to address the long-term consequences caused by violence on the mental health of Indigenous, Afro-Colombian and peasant children;**

(f) **Ensure specific healthcare and programmes for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children, including appropriate psychological support;**

(g) **Ensure nationwide availability and public awareness about emergency helplines for psychological support, such as line 106, and increase their funding and staffing.**

#### **Adolescent health**

39. **The Committee is deeply concerned about:**

(a) **Limited awareness about sexual and reproductive health;**

(b) **Significant number of early pregnancies;**

(c) **Obstacles to obtain safe abortion services provided with appropriate counselling and psychological support;**

(d) **The discrimination and negative stereotypes against pregnant adolescents;**

(e) **The number of children consuming tobacco, including an increase of the use of e-cigarettes, and widespread consumption of alcohol, drugs and other psychoactive substances.**

40. **Recalling its general comment No. 4 (2003) on adolescent health and general comment No. 20 (2016) on the implementation of the rights of the child during adolescence, the Committee recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Adopt a comprehensive sexual and reproductive health policy for adolescents and ensure that age-appropriate sexual and reproductive health education is made compulsory and part of the mandatory school curriculum, with special attention on preventing early pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections;**

(b) **Ensure that all children and adolescents, including those who are out of school and those in rural areas, receive confidential, age appropriate and child-friendly sexual and reproductive health information and services, including access to contraceptives;**

(c) **Remove all obstacles to ensure access to safe abortion and post-abortion care services for adolescent girls, providing medical and psychological support making**

sure that their views are always heard and given due consideration as a part of the decision-making process;

(d) Develop and implement a policy to protect the rights of pregnant adolescents and their children and combat discrimination against them, notably by strengthening and expanding the Family Welfare Institute's training program on the promotion of sexual and reproductive rights;

(e) Ensure the effective implementation of the Comprehensive Policy for the Prevention and Treatment of Psychoactive Substance Use and strengthen concrete measures addressing the prevalence of drug use as well as tobacco and smoking-related emerging products, by children and adolescents and promoting social and emotional education.

#### **Nutrition**

41. The Committee recommends that the State Party:

(a) Systematically collect data on food security and nutrition for children, notably by carrying out and without delay the National Survey on the Nutritional Situation;

(b) Strengthen early prevention of child and adolescent malnutrition, by adopting mandatory guidelines for the identification and treatment, including community-based treatment;

(c) Strengthen the nutrition rehabilitation centres and the emergency nutritional committees, by increasing their human, technical and financial resources;

(d) Implement the Law 2361 of 2024 on breastfeeding and adopt a national policy on breastfeeding in line with the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes;

(e) Ensure the effective implementation of the Baby-friendly Hospital Initiative throughout the country;

(f) Strengthen the School Feeding Program with the allocation of sufficient human, technical and financial resources, ensuring year-long continuity, adopting a nutrition approach, expanding its coverage and prioritizing locally produced food;

(g) Strengthen the regulatory framework on ultra-processed food to prevent child overweight and obesity.

#### **H. Standard of living (arts. 18 (3), 26 and 27 (1)–(3))**

42. Taking into consideration the efforts of the State party, the Committee recommends that the State Party:

(a) Ensure the assessment of the National Development Plan 2022-2026 and that the adoption of a new plan is undertaken with the effective participation of children;

(b) Adopt the necessary measures for a significant reduction in child poverty;

(c) Adopt measures to eliminate disparities in children's access to food, education and health, focusing on Indigenous, Afro-Colombian and migrant children;

(d) Strengthen the universal and adaptative social protection system, notably by improving the coordination and integration of social policies;

(e) Scale up the measures taken to ensure children's universal access to water and sanitation in all settings, including in remote areas or marginalized urban areas.

## **I. Children's rights and the environment (arts. 2-3, 6, 12-13, 15, 17, 19, 24, 26-31)**

### **Impact of climate change and environmental degradation on the rights of the child**

43. The Committee is seriously concerned by the negative effects of climate change and environmental change on children's rights. It is also concerned that despite established forums and participatory mechanisms, the environmental and climate policies do not fully reflect children's views.

44. **Recalling its general comment No. 26 (2023) on children's rights and the environment with a special focus on climate change, the Committee recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Ensure that children's special vulnerabilities, needs and views are taken into account in developing environmental and climate policies, such as in the application of the Escazu Agreement and the implementation of the third Nationally Determined Contribution;**

(b) **Implement adaptation measures to protect children's rights to education, health, food, housing, water and sanitation, social protection and humanitarian response;**

(c) **Increase children's awareness and preparedness for climate change and natural disasters, as part of school curriculum and teachers' training programmes;**

(d) **Update the National Policy on Environmental Education, with a focus on early childhood education.**

## **J. Education, leisure and cultural activities (arts. 28–31)**

### **Education: aims and coverage**

45. **The Committee recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Strengthen the measures taken to increase the coverage and accessibility of early childhood education;**

(b) **Ensure the quality of education and provide quality training for teachers, particularly in remote and rural areas;**

(c) **Address obstacles to access education, particularly long distances in rural and remote areas, absence of transport subsidies, unaffordable school materials and lack of adequate water and sanitation, including for menstrual hygiene;**

(d) **Ensure that pregnant teenagers and adolescent mothers are supported and assisted in continuing their education in mainstream schools;**

(e) **Strengthen measures to prevent school dropouts, such as the Rural Early Education and the Enrolment, Well-being and Retention Strategy;**

(f) **Strengthen the security of schools and their surroundings and the schools' response to emergency situations.**

### **Quality of education**

46. **The Committee recommends that the State Party ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning, enabling them to acquire the necessary skills.**

### **Inclusive education**

47. **The Committee recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Ensure that all children with disabilities have adequate access to inclusive education in mainstream schools;**

(b) Effectively implement the Indigenous and Afro-Colombian education system and programmes, with the allocation of sufficient human, technical and financial resources.

#### Rest, leisure, play, recreational activities, cultural life and arts

48. Recalling its general comment 7 (2013) on the right of the child to rest, leisure, play, recreational activities, cultural life and the arts, the Committee recommends that the State party guarantee access to cultural and recreational activities, including art for peace and reconciliation, for all children, including peasant, Indigenous, Afro-Colombian and migrant children and children with disabilities.

### K. Special protection measures (arts. 22, 30, 32–33, 35–36, 37 (b)–(d), and 38–40 of the Convention and the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict)

#### Asylum-seeking, refugee and migrant children

49. Recalling the joint general comments No. 3 and No. 4 of the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families/No. 22 and No. 23 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (2017) on the human rights of children in the context of international migration, the Committee urges the State party to:

(a) Ensure early identification of unaccompanied asylum-seeking, refugee and migrant children in a positive, humane and expeditious manner as a means of identifying durable solutions, in line with article 10 (1) of the Convention;

(b) Adopt strategies to facilitate the access of asylum-seeking, refugee and migrant children to basic services, including education, food, health and access to justice;

(c) Enhance coordination with neighbouring countries to ensure the protection of refugee and migrant children in transit, including in the context of the Darién region and the border with the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela;

(d) Develop campaigns to counter discrimination and stereotypes against asylum seekers, refugees and migrant, particularly children.

#### Forced displacement

50. The Committee urges the State party:

(a) To strengthen the measures to provide protection and support to children who are victims of forced displacement due to the armed conflict, such as the Durable Solutions Policy and the system of mobile units which aim to protect children;

(b) To adopt culturally sensitive and appropriate measures to protect Indigenous peoples and Afro-Colombian children who are forcibly displaced, such as in the Sierra Nevada, Nariño, Cauca and La Guajira.

#### Children belonging to Indigenous and Afro-Colombian peoples

51. Recalling its general comment No. 11 (2009) on indigenous children and their rights under the Convention, the Committee urges the State Party to:

(a) Prevent forced evictions and displacement of Indigenous peoples and Afro-Colombian and provide redress to those evicted or displaced from their lands, including the return to their traditionally inhabited territories;

(b) Put in place measures for early detection and timely interventions in cases of land-related conflict in areas inhabited by Indigenous peoples and Afro-Colombian communities, through peaceful dispute resolution measures;

(c) Systematically conduct consultation in order to obtain their free, prior and informed consent before adopting and implementing legislative or administrative measures that may affect them.

#### **Economic exploitation, including child labour**

52. Taking note of target 8.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee recommends that the State Party:

(a) Maintain and ensure the sustainability of the Integrated Information System for the Identification, Registration, and Classification of Child Labor and its Worst Forms;

(b) Strengthen its efforts to ensure that no child engages in hazardous work, including by strengthening Elite Inspection Teams against Child Labor;

(c) Raise awareness within communities to tackle gender stereotypes and prevent child labour in domestic environment.

#### **Trafficking**

53. The Committee recommends that the State Party adopt urgent and long-term measures for the prevention of, identification of, and comprehensive protection from trafficking of children as well as access to justice for child victims and for the guarantee of non-repetition and remedies. The Committee further recommends that the State Party:

(a) Develop and implement without delay a national strategy to prevent the trafficking of children, with priority given to high-risk departments, such as La Guajira, Norte de Santander, Chocó and the Tapón del Darién;

(b) Set up a national unified system of registration of victims of trafficking and adopt mandatory protocol on early identification of victims ;

(c) Establish a nationwide network of specialized shelters that ensure comprehensive care for children who are victims of trafficking, including specific culturally and gender sensitive psychosocial support programmes;

(d) Investigate all cases of trafficking of children and bring perpetrators to justice;

(e) Conduct culturally sensitive awareness-raising activities in order to make both parents and children, particularly of those at risk, aware of the dangers of trafficking.

#### **Administration of child justice**

54. Recalling its general comment No. 24 (2019) on children’s rights in the child justice system, the Committee urges the State Party to bring its child justice system fully into line with the Convention and other relevant standards. In particular, the Committee urges the State Party to:

(a) Ensure the effective implementation of the 2021 National Policy on Restorative Juvenile Justice, confirmed by the 2024 Statement of Cartagena “Hacia una Justicia Centrada en los Derechos de la Niñez en América Latina”, by continuous increase of human, technical and financial resources and availability of specialized professionals;

(b) Adopt specific measures to strengthen the juvenile criminal justice system, including the availability of training and vocational programs in accordance with adolescents’ expression of interests;

(c) Ensure the provision of free and specialised legal aid to children alleged as, accused of or recognized as having infringed criminal law at an early stage of the procedure and throughout the legal proceedings and strongly promote non-judicial measures, such as diversion and mediation for these children and, wherever possible,



**the use of non-custodial sentences for children, such as probation or community service, and ensure that health and psycho-social services are provided to such children;**

(d) **Ensure that detention is used as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time and is reviewed on a regular basis with a view to its withdrawal;**

(e) **For the few situations where deprivation of liberty is justified as a measure of last resort, ensure that the children are not detained together with adults and that detention conditions – including in the transitory centers, centers of specialized care and centres of judicial services for adolescents, are compliant with international standards;**

(f) **Ensure that reinsertion programs are available to all adolescents leaving the juvenile criminal justice system.**

**Children in armed conflict including implementation of the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict**

55. The Committee is deeply concerned about the increase of the severe impact of the armed conflict on children in the State Party. It is particularly concerned by:

(a) The increase of recruitment and use of children by non-State armed groups;

(b) The disproportionate rate of Indigenous and Afro-Colombian children and cases of migrant children who are victims of recruitment and use by non-State armed groups;

(c) The use of sexual violence against girls who are victims of recruitment and use by non-State armed groups;

(d) The adverse impact of armed conflict on the access to education;

(e) The recruitment or use of children by the police and the military to conduct their operations;

(f) The killing and the maiming of children recruited or used by non-State armed groups in the context of the armed conflict, including cases occurring during operations conducted by the military forces, among them bombardments that may have caused the death of children who were victims of recruitment and use;

(g) The lack of social recognition that children, who are recruited and used by non-State armed groups or by the police and the military, are victims and that their families are indirect victims;

(h) The persistence of the root causes placing children living in remote areas at increasing risk of being victims of recruitment and use;

(i) The increasing and systematic use of digital platforms and social media by non-State armed groups and criminal organizations for the recruitment, use and sexual exploitation;

(j) The weakness of the institutional response to protect children from recruitment and use, in particular in the area of prevention, search, care for the victims and access to justice.

56. **The Committee urges the State Party to:**

(a) **Ensure the effective implementation of policies addressing the structural causes of violence, such as the National Development Plan (2022-2026), the 2024 Action Plan on the Dismantling of Criminal Conducts and Organizations and the Policy on Public Security, Defense and existing policies (2022-2026);**

(b) **Systematically include in all peace negotiations and agreements the prohibition of and immediate halt of recruitment and use of children as well as the immediate liberation of children still associated with non-State armed groups;**

(c) **Adopt measures necessary for the effective implementation of the Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Safe Schools Declaration (2022-2026) and for its extension;**

(d) **Maintain and expand the development of territorial plans on the prevention of recruitment, use and sexual violence, including by ensuring sufficient human, technical and financial resources;**

(e) **Ensure the effectiveness of prevention and protection measures at the local level by adopting a community, gender and ethnic approach, in particular regarding Indigenous and Afro-Colombian authorities and communities;**

(f) **Maintain and strengthen the Intersectoral Commission for Preventing the Recruitment and Exploitation of, and Sexual Violence against, Children and Adolescents by Illegal Armed Groups (Comisión Intersectorial para la prevención del reclutamiento, la utilización y la violencia sexual contra niños, niñas y adolescentes por grupos armados al margen de la Ley y por grupos delictivos);**

(g) **Collect information on patterns of recruitment, control and exploitation of children through digital environments, including in contexts affected by armed conflict;**

(h) **Strengthen the measures to ensure the search, recuperation, and immediate protection of children who are victims of recruitment and use by armed groups, including in times of state of internal disturbance, including by expanding the territorial presence of Immediate Action Teams and ensuring the effective involvement of indigenous and communities' authorities;**

(i) **Strengthen the care and reintegration mechanisms for children and adolescents who have been released from non-State armed groups, with real guarantees of comprehensive reparation, differentiated pathways for indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples, and sustained psychosocial support;**

(j) **Strengthen gender culturally sensitive protection and care services to children, in particular girls, who have been victims of gender-based violence and sexual violence, including mental health and sexual and reproductive health services;**

(k) **Strengthen and scale up the emergency measures taken to protect children's rights, including from recruitment and use, in areas where the escalation of armed conflict caused severe impact on children, such as in the Catatumbo;**

(l) **Ensure that access to justice mechanisms are available to children who are victims of recruitment and use by non-State armed groups and that prompt, thorough and impartial investigations, prosecutions and sanctions are carried out against the perpetrators, always considering these children as victims;**

(m) **Immediately end the recruitment and use of children by the military and the police and ensure prompt and thorough investigations, prosecution and sanction against perpetrators of such acts;**

(n) **Ensure that military forces explicitly determine, during intelligence activities, the possible presence of children in the theatre of operations, so that in the design and execution of military operations all feasible precautions are adopted to protect and prevent the death of children who have been victims of recruitment by non-state armed groups;**

(o) **Ensure that all military operations are planned, authorized and conducted in strict compliance with the Convention and its Optional Protocols on the involvement of children in armed conflict.**

## **L. Ratification of the Optional Protocol on a communications procedure**

57. **The Committee recommends that the State Party ratify the Optional Protocol on a communications procedure.**

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

58. The Committee recommends that the State Party, in order to further strengthen the fulfilment of children's rights, consider ratifying the following core human rights instruments:

(a) The Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;

(b) The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

## **N. Cooperation with regional bodies**

59. The Committee recommends that the State Party cooperate with the Organization of American States (OAS) on the implementation of the Convention and other human rights instruments, both in the State Party and in other OAS member States.

# **IV. Implementation and reporting**

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

60. 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 and that a child-friendly version is disseminated to, and made widely accessible for, children, including those in the most disadvantaged situations. The Committee also recommends that the combined sixth and seventh 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**

61. The Committee will establish and communicate the due date of the combined eighth and ninth periodic reports of the State Party in due course, in line with the envisaged predictable reporting calendar based on an eight-year review cycle, and following the adoption of a list of issues and questions prior to reporting, if applicable, for the State Party. The report should be in compliance with the Committee's harmonized treaty-specific reporting guidelines<sup>11</sup> and should not exceed 21,200 words.<sup>12</sup> In the event that a report exceeding the established word limit is submitted, the State Party will be asked to shorten the report. If the State Party is not in a position to review and resubmit the report, translation thereof for the purposes of consideration by the Committee cannot be guaranteed.

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<sup>11</sup> General Assembly resolution 64/142, annex.

<sup>12</sup> General Assembly resolution 68/268, para. 16.