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Committee on the Rights of the Child**Concluding observations on the seventh periodic report of Norway*****I. Introduction**

1. The Committee considered the seventh periodic report of Norway at its 2878th and 2879th meetings, held on 12 and 13 May 2025, and adopted the present concluding observations at its 2906th meeting, held on 30 May 2025.
2. The Committee welcomes the submission of the seventh periodic report of the State Party under the simplified reporting procedure, which allowed for a better understanding of the situation of children's rights in the State Party. The Committee expresses its appreciation for the constructive dialogue held with the high-level and multisectoral delegation of the State Party.

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

3. The Committee welcomes the State Party's long-standing commitment in taking various legislative, institutional and policy measures to implement the Convention. In particular, the Committee welcomes the new Child Welfare Act, the new Education Act, and the adoption of legislation to prohibit child marriage.

III. Main areas of concern and recommendations

4. 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: abuse, neglect, sexual abuse and exploitation (para. 19), children deprived of a family environment (para. 24), children with disabilities (para. 27), education (para. 34), asylum-seeking, refugee and migrant children (para. 38) and administration of child justice (para. 42).
5. 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

* Adopted by the Committee at its ninety-ninth session (12 – 30 May 2025).

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

6. The Committee welcomes the new policy framework with the aim of ensuring a best interests assessment in the process of law-making as well as guaranteeing children's involvement in the process, and the reforms included in the new Children's Act which will be enacted later this year. However, the Committee deeply regrets that the Parliament decided to vote against the ratification of the third Optional Protocol on communication procedures and urges the State Party to consider the matter as soon as possible with the support of the Committee. The Committee recommends that measures are taken to ensure that children's rights are explicitly incorporated into all legislation, including the Public Administration Act, the Social Service Act, the Integration Act and the appropriate health related laws designed to ensure the well-being of the population.

Comprehensive policy, strategy and coordination

7. The Committee regrets that the State Party has not formulated a clear and comprehensive National Plan of Action for implementing the Convention on different levels and recommends that the State Party:

(a) Adopt a comprehensive National Plan of action that encompasses national, regional and central governments as well as the different sectors of services and that the Concluding Observations of the Committee are thoroughly debated in the national parliament (Storting);

(b) Design the National Plan of Action in collaboration inter alia with local and regional authorities, professionals from different sectors, civil society organizations, in particular children's organizations, the Ombudsperson for Children and the National Human Rights Institution with the aim of ensuring a comprehensive, multisectoral and child rights based approach;

(c) Strengthen multiagency and integrated service delivery in line with the 2022 legal reforms, by addressing obstacles such as inadequate resources, structural barriers and unclear responsibilities.

Allocation of resources

8. 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) Strengthen its budgeting process to include clear allocations to children, specific indicators and a tracking system to monitor and evaluate the adequacy, efficacy and equitability of the distribution of resources dedicated to the implementation of the Convention;

(b) Allocate sufficient budgetary resources for the implementation of children's rights, on the basis of a comprehensive assessment of the needs of children, in particular those in disadvantaged situations;

(c) Establish a mechanism to follow-up municipalities facing considerable challenges, eliminate regional disparities in service provision and ensure that all municipalities meet all their statutory requirements;

(d) Systematically involve and consult children in the processes of local and national budgeting, including ensuring the participation of children in vulnerable situations.

Data collection

9. Recalling its general comment No. 5 (2003) on general measures of implementation and the previous recommendations of the Committee and other treaty bodies, the Committee recommends that the State Party:

(a) Expeditiously improve its data collection system and ensure that disaggregated data collected on children's rights covers all areas of the Convention and the Optional Protocols thereto, particularly with regard to ethnicity or indigenous origin, and systematize data on the fulfilment of children's rights;

(b) Take measures to ensure sufficient analysis of the situation of children exposed to intersecting forms of discrimination, including with regard to the rights of Sami children in the care of child welfare services;

(c) Design and introduce data protection safeguards to prevent the abuse of official statistics.

Access to justice and remedy

10. The Committee takes note of the State Party's decision to strengthen children's opportunities to make complaints and appeal decisions in matters concerning them as well as to improve information to children about their right to appeal. In the light of the fact that the Ombudsperson for Children and the National Human Rights Institution are not mandated to receive individual complaints and that the Storting has instructed the Government to strengthen the national complaints mechanism, the Committee recommends that the State Party:

(a) Ensure that all children have access to: (i) child-friendly and independent complaint mechanisms in all areas of law, and in schools, foster care systems, alternative care settings and detention for reporting all forms of violence, abuse, discrimination and other violations of their rights; (ii) strengthened legal capacity also by recognising the right to independent representation and available resources for legal aid initiatives, including in education, health and care services; and (iii) age-appropriate information on access to counselling and remedies, including compensation and rehabilitation;

(b) Raise awareness among children of their right to file a complaint under existing mechanisms;

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

Dissemination of the Convention and awareness-raising

11. Recalling the Committee's recommendation to increase awareness of children's rights in policymaking bodies and municipal administrations, the Committee is concerned about the lack of awareness and training among policymakers and professionals, in particular local policy-making bodies and municipal administration. The Committee recommends that the State Party take measures to:

(a) Provide systematic awareness raising and training to all municipal policy makers and local and regional administrations on the legal status of the Convention and its core implementation tools;

(b) Strengthen the role and the resources of the County Governors to disseminate the Convention and the Concluding Observations of the Committee and monitor and supervise training to local policy makers and administration by allocating sufficient human and financial resources;

(c) Strengthen the responsibility of the Directorate for Children, Youth and Family to raise awareness and provide training on implementing the Convention and how it can be used to strengthen children's participation in different sectors and levels of administration.

Children's rights and the business sector

12. While welcoming the Transparency Act, the Committee is concerned that due diligence duties on environmental issues are excluded from the definition of human rights topics to be covered under the Act. 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, the Committee recommends that the State Party expands the Act to include environmental impacts in the future.

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

Non-discrimination

13. Welcoming the action plan on gender and sexual diversity (2023-2026), the Committee recommends that the State Party:

(a) Strengthen measures, both online and offline, including awareness-raising campaigns, to combat and prevent expressions of racism, hate speech, and discrimination against Sami children and children belonging to minority groups, including Roma and Romani/Tater children, and against LGBTI+ children and encourage the reporting of hate crimes against children, punish perpetrators with commensurate sanctions and provide adequate compensation to victims;

(b) Accelerate the implementation of the action plan to combat discrimination against Sami people;

(c) Improve awareness about racism and discrimination among children with minority backgrounds;

(d) Continue to address discrimination faced in particular by asylum-seeking and migrant children, children with disabilities and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender children.

Best interests of the child

14. Welcoming that the best interests of the child is part of the State Party's Constitution and are a primary consideration in the adoption of all policies, legislation and by-laws, but concerned that in different situations they are not given adequate weight, recalling its general comment No. 14 (2013), the Committee recommends that the State Party:

(a) Develop national criteria and guidelines for determining the best interests of the child to be followed by all authorities that make decisions affecting children in a consistent way;

(b) Strengthen measures to ensure that the right of children to have their best interests taken as a primary consideration is appropriately integrated into and consistently applied in all legislative, administrative and judicial proceedings and decisions and in all policies, programmes and international cooperation relevant to and having an impact on children, including in decisions concerning placement of children in foster care, exposing children to unsafe contact with their biological parents; child justice system, asylum seeking, refugees, children on the move, immigration and family reunification.

Respect for the views of the child

15. Welcoming that the child's right to be heard has been incorporated in several laws in recent years, recalling its general comment No. 12 (2009), the Committee recommends that the State Party:

(a) Develop strategies, action plans and common national guidelines on how and when the right to be heard must be guaranteed for all children and ensure that children's views and opinions are given due consideration in decisions concerning child welfare, asylum, expulsion, family reunification and in time of crises;

- (b) Ensure the right to be heard of children in disadvantaged situations, including children with disabilities and children of a younger age;
- (c) Promote the meaningful participation of children within the family, community, at school and in the realm of local and national policymaking and decision-making affecting children;
- (d) Strengthen children's and youth councils and ensure that their outcomes and of other types of participative bodies systematically inform public decision-making;
- (e) Secure guidance and collect and disseminate data on participation;
- (f) Guarantee that children can speak to services without parental consent, and that they can receive information and express their views before information about them is shared, unless it affects their best interests.

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

Nationality

16. Concerned that stateless children born in the State Party are not automatically granted Norwegian nationality, recalling its previous recommendations, the Committee urges the State Party to:

- (a) Adopt a statutory legal definition of statelessness in line with international standards and establish safeguards to facilitate the acquisition of nationality for children who would otherwise be stateless and a statelessness determination procedure;
- (b) Review and amend the Norwegian Citizenship Act with a view to providing automatic acquisition of Norwegian nationality for stateless children born in the State Party.

Children in the digital environment and the right to privacy and access to appropriate information

17. Noting recent regulation on restriction of the use of mobile phones in primary and junior schools, recalling its general comment No. 25 (2021) on children's rights in relation to the digital environment, the Committee recommends that the State Party:

- (a) Develop regulations and a national safeguarding policy to protect the rights, privacy and safety of children in the digital environment and to protect them from the harmful effects of excessive screen use, harmful content, online risks and targeted or age-inappropriate harmful advertising including in the context of AI;
- (b) Strengthen measures to protect the right to privacy of children in the digital environment, and the remedies available for children whose right to privacy has been violated.

E. 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

18. Welcoming the new Child Welfare Act (2023), the Escalation plan against violence and abuse of children and violence in close relationship (2024-2028) and the national strategy for coordinated efforts against online abuse of children, the Committee is however concerned about the:

- (a) Increased risk of children becoming victims of online sexual exploitation and abuse and increased number of incidents of sexual extortion online and grooming and of physical violence against children on social media;

(b) Higher risk faced by unaccompanied migrant children, LGBTQ children and children belonging to minorities and Sami indigenous groups of becoming a victim of sexual exploitation;

(c) Major differences in how municipalities work on preventing and following up on violence and sexual abuse against children;

(d) Sharp increase in sexual violence, including rape against and between children, despite various national action and escalation plans and measures.

19. Recalling its general comment No. 13 (2011) on the right of the child to freedom from all forms of violence, the Committee recommends that the State Party:

(a) **Ensure the implementation of the proposals made in the Government Report: “Safe Childhood, secure future” by allocating sufficient financial and human resources;**

(b) **Strengthen the child’s position in child welfare cases, by ensuring that the child is heard, including by appointing a child representative scheme (BRO) and guidance on the “best interest assessment” principle and by strengthening competence requirement of the work force;**

(c) **Ensure the implementation of the recommendation in the Evaluation report on Statens Barnehus, in particular by strengthening the medical component, strengthen collaboration with the local child protection services and the follow up recovery services;**

(d) **Ensure a systematic response to bullying in all its forms and provide the adequate human, technical and financial resources for its implementation;**

(e) **Strengthen protection of, prevention, support and redress to children who are particularly vulnerable and exposed to violence, sexual abuse and exploitation, including unaccompanied children, children with disabilities, children who break with gender and sexuality norms, Roma and Sami children;**

(f) **Establish a statutory duty for municipalities to have action plans to combat violence against children and violence in close relationships;**

(g) **Further implement measures to enhance awareness, including campaigns with the involvement of children, of child sexual abuse and exploitation and respond to all its manifestations, in particular online, including by strengthening the professional capacity and software tools to detect and investigate such abuse, promoting training for parents and teachers about risks online and the risks associated with sexting, and in order to combat the stigmatization of victims of sexual exploitation and abuse;**

(h) **Ensure the mandatory reporting of all forms of violence against children by promoting awareness among parents, professionals and children on the importance of reporting and on early intervention in cases of child abuse and violence.**

Harmful practices

20. Welcoming the introduction of an absolute minimum age of 18 years for entering into marriage and the adoption of Statutory provisions that marriages entered into with children under foreign law shall not, as a general rule, be recognised in the State Party, 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 recommends that the State Party ensure support for children who are at risk of or have been subjected to honour-related criminal offences, forced marriage and female genital mutilation and take active measures to put an end to these harmful practices.

Torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment

21. Recalling its general comment No. 13 (2011) on the right of the child to freedom from all forms of violence, the Committee is concerned about the recent legislation

enacted by the Storting to expand the mandate of teachers and caretakers to apply force in schools and institutions and recommends that the State Party:

- (a) Respond to the rising number of violent and aggressive behaviours amongst children in schools and institutions by prioritizing preventive measures, including by designing response plans in partnership with children and by training staff;
- (b) Ensure that guidelines and practice only allow the use of physical force against children as a last resort measure in mental health care, schools, child welfare institutions, and police custody;
- (c) Strengthen measures to ensure that children in police custody, in welfare and in mental health institutions are not subjected to ill-treatment, including disproportionate use of force, isolation, restraint and coercion;
- (d) Ensure that coercion measures such as surveillance, isolation and confinement in educational, child welfare and the health sectors are always documented and subjected to review;
- (e) Ensure that the use of stop-and-search checks against children must be justified, necessary, and conducted in a child-sensitive manner.

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

Family environment

22. The Committee welcomes the draft Children's Act which aims at stronger guarantees for children's best interest assessments and their right to express their views and be actively involved in decisions affecting them, especially in custody and visitation cases. It also welcomes measures to reduce conflict between parents during separation, including promoting mediation and co-parenting agreements. The Committee recommends that the State Party ensure legal safeguards for children at risk of harm in situations of parental conflicts, including by ensuring thorough individual assessments of the child's best interests based on interdisciplinarity expertise.

Children deprived of a family environment

23. While welcoming the proposals on institutional reforms in the "Government Report: With the child all the way – child welfare institution that have the child's trust", the Committee is concerned about the:

- (a) Removal and separation of children from minority communities, migrant background, and of African descent from their families;
- (b) Higher percentage of Romani and Tater children that are placed in foster care with restricted parental visitation;
- (c) Geographical disparities of the level of family service delivery and access to parenting support in the upbringing of their children;
- (d) The shortage of foster families, the lack of in-service support for foster parents and in particular the insufficient effort to give due weight to children's view in decisions that may imply drastic changes in their life, such as being moved away from their foster family;
- (e) The lack of access to appropriate services for children with complex behavioural challenges and substance abuse problems such as residential care treatment, including emergency placements;
- (f) Insufficient access to appropriate health care service for children placed in residential care institutions;
- (g) The insufficient monitoring of residential care institutions including by regular interviews with the children on their lived experience.

24. Drawing the State Party's attention to the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children, the Committee recommends that the State Party:

- (a) Ensure that children are placed in alternative care only as a measure of last resort, that such decisions are based on the needs and best interests of the child, are subject to adequate safeguards and clear criteria, and to judicial review, and ensure that siblings are not separated unless it is in their best interests;
- (b) 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;
- (c) Address disparities among regions regarding children subjected to alternative care measures and emergency placements, and the disproportionate frequency of placements of migrant children and children belonging to minority groups, including Roma and Romani/Tater children;
- (d) Improve the availability and quality of foster care for children, and prevent frequent transfers of children in foster care, in line with the strategy launched in 2022;
- (e) Consider the bonds developed between children and foster families and give due weight to children's views in life changing decision such as being removed from their foster homes and grant children and foster families procedural rights to participate in legal decisions affecting the child;
- (f) Ensure that the needs of children with challenging and complex behavioural and substance abuse problems for appropriate institutional support and services are met without undue delay, including emergency placement;
- (g) Ensure greater capacity and more flexible services in the health sector to secure the right to necessary healthcare in child welfare institutions;
- (h) Prevent and protect children against physical or mental violence and sexual abuse in institutions including by staff by regularly eliciting children's narratives about their adverse experiences and intervene when appropriate.

Adoption

25. Welcoming the establishment on an independent committee to investigate historical intercountry adoptions but concerned about reports on illegal intercountry adoption, the Committee recommends that the State Party:

- (a) Strengthen measures taken to prevent intercountry adoption and illegal international adoptions;
- (b) Provide remedies, reparations and support for victims;
- (c) Ensure that all international adoptions are monitored and comply with the Convention.

G. Children with disabilities (art. 23)

26. While welcoming the Government's strategy (2020-2030) and action plan (2020-2025) for equality for people with disabilities and the efforts to integrate children with disabilities into the education system and to provide necessary healthcare services, the Committee is concerned about:

- (a) Lack of equal services, municipal disparities, inadequate adaptations, universal design of schools and recreational areas, insufficient accessible teaching aids and equal training, as well as prejudice, attitudes and inadequate knowledge about children with disabilities;

- (b) Unequal access to treatment, care and other opportunities for children with disabilities with migrant or refugee parents, with a Sami background, or belonging to national minorities, including the Roma and Tater or Romani communities;
- (c) Insufficient specialized healthcare for children with disabilities, particularly in remote areas;
- (d) Long waiting periods to obtain the necessary accommodations in schools;
- (e) Schools in rural areas that continue to be insufficiently equipped to meet the needs of children with disabilities;
- (f) Bullying experienced by children with disabilities;
- (g) Institutionalisation of children with disabilities;
- (h) Insufficient resources to ensure monitoring of residential care for children with disabilities.

27. 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 and:

- (a) Develop an action plan containing specific measures that prevent and protect children with disabilities from systematic discrimination, especially towards children with intellectual disabilities, with a particular focus on participation, involvement and knowledge;**
- (b) Eliminate disparities among municipalities in the provision of health and support services for children with disabilities, and ensure access to such services for all children with disabilities, including children belonging to ethnic minority groups;**
- (c) Improve healthcare services for children with disabilities, including specialized mental health services for children with psychosocial disabilities and those in child welfare institutions;**
- (d) Provide necessary resources for children with disabilities in rural areas;**
- (e) Launch awareness campaigns aimed at eliminating bullying practices against children with disabilities;**
- (f) Prevent the institutionalization of children with disabilities and ensure their access to family and community-based services, including respite-care services;**
- (g) Strengthen the monitoring of residential facilities for children with disabilities by ensuring sufficient resources;**
- (h) Undertake awareness-raising campaigns aimed at government officials, the public and families to combat the stigmatization of, and prejudice against, children with disabilities and promote a positive image of children with disabilities as rights-holders.**

H. Health (arts. 6, 24 and 33)

Health, health services and mental health

28. Concerned that children without a residence permit are not considered eligible to be placed on general practitioners' patient lists, being only entitled to emergency healthcare, and concerned with the high incidence of mental illness among unaccompanied asylum-seeking children living in reception centres, and that mental healthcare is not uniformly accessible and developed in the different regions, 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) Provide *de facto* access to asylum-seeking children and children without residence permits to primary and mental health services, and ensure that undocumented children have access to a family doctor;**

(b) Allocate more and earmarked resources to ensure that children in all municipalities receive the same level of health care and specialist health services.

Adolescent health

29. 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) Strengthen measures taken to prevent substance abuse among adolescents and ensure that adolescents have access to appropriate health and support services, including accessible and youth-friendly treatment for drug and alcohol dependence;

(b) Strengthen comprehensive sexual and reproductive health education in schools.

Intersex children

30. While welcoming the State Party's commitment to protect intersex children from violence and harmful practices, concerned about persisting cases of medically unnecessary and irreversible surgery and other treatment on intersex children without their informed consent, and the lack of redress and compensation in such cases, the Committee recommends that the State Party:

(a) Explicitly prohibit and adequately sanction the performance of involuntary, deferrable medical or surgical treatment on intersex children, and provide reparations for children who received unnecessary treatment, including by extending the statute of limitations;

(b) Provide social, medical and psychological services, as well as adequate counselling, peer support and reparations, to families with intersex children;

(c) Systematically collect data with a view to understanding the extent of these harmful practices so that children at risk can be more easily identified and their abuse prevented.

I. Standard of living (arts. 18 (3), 26 and 27 (1)–(3))

31. Noting with concern the continued increase in income inequality and in poverty, particularly among children with immigrant background, and the living conditions of children in municipal housing, the Committee recommends that the State Party:

(a) Ensure the application of a child rights-based approach, including the principle of the best interests of the child and the right to participation, in the development and implementation of policies and programmes to combat poverty;

(b) Make statutory local action plans for combating poverty and conduct a child rights impact assessment of all restrictive measures that impact asylum-seeking families with children;

(c) Strengthen the implementation of concrete measures to prevent growing inequality and poverty and ensure that children and their families living in poverty receive adequate financial support and free, accessible services without discrimination and introduce automatic adjustment of child benefit in relation to inflation and wages.

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

32. Noting with concern the State Party's ongoing and expanding oil and gas exploration, extract and export and with current climate targets misaligned with the Paris agreement, 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) **Reduce greenhouse gas emissions in line with the State Party's international commitments and consider the impact of climate change on children's rights in the State Party's energy policy, including in relation to plans to expand oil and gas extraction;**

(b) **Ensure that national policies related to the granting of new licenses by the State Party for the exploration and production of fossil fuels is in full compliance with the rights enshrined in the Convention;**

(c) **Urgently set out a detailed plan for fossil fuels phase out and revise its climate and energy policies, in order to achieve a 55 percent emissions reduction by 2030 as per its commitments and net-zero emissions by 2050;**

(d) **Ensure that children are heard and that their vulnerabilities, needs and best interests are taken into account in the development and implementation of national policies and programmes on disaster risk management, climate change and alternative energy, including national policies related to the granting of new licenses and decisions concerning new fossil fuel extraction.**

K. Education, leisure and cultural activities (arts. 28–31)

Education: aims and coverage

33. While welcoming the enshrining in the law of the best interests of the child as a fundamental consideration in all actions and decisions concerning children in kindergartens and that children have the right to participate in all education matters that concern them, the Committee is concerned about:

(a) Education in Sami languages not being fully guaranteed;

(b) Persisting regional disparities in the quality of education and the academic performance of students;

(c) Increase of bullying, school absenteeism and school-related mental health issues;

(d) Children being subject to violence in schools, including cyberbullying, discrimination and physical force and coercion by school staff.

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

(a) **Ensure equal educational opportunities for all, especially those belonging to vulnerable groups, including children with a migration background, refugees and asylum seeking children, and children from Indigenous and ethnic minorities;**

(b) **Continue to strengthen measures to improve the quality of Sami-language education and adopt measures to improve teacher competence regarding the Sámi and national minorities;**

(c) **Improve learning outcomes and reduce rising school dropout rates, particularly among migrant children, children belonging to minority groups, such as Roma and Sami children, and children in alternative care;**

(d) **Reduce school absenteeism or “school refusal” among children who have been subjected to bullying and harassment, children with disabilities and children with mental health issues, and ensure that such children are supported to finish their education;**

(e) **Strengthen measures to combat violence in schools, including bullying, cyberbullying and online violence, and discrimination on the grounds of race, migration status, sexual orientation or gender identity in the school context.**

Inclusive education

35. Welcoming the programme “Boosting competencies in special education and inclusive practice”, concerned that many children with disabilities continue being

disproportionately vulnerable to bullying and violence in schools, the Committee recommends that the State Party:

(a) Strengthen measures to ensure that all children with disabilities benefit from inclusive education in mainstream schools, including through the provision of specialized staff and individual support, reasonable accommodation, teaching materials adapted to the educational needs of children with disabilities, and educational psychological counselling;

(b) Ensure that municipalities have sufficient resources to ensure equal education to all students with disabilities.

Rest, play, leisure, recreation and cultural and artistic activities

36. Recalling its general comment No 17 (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 strengthen measures taken to guarantee the right of children with disabilities, children from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds and children belonging to ethnic and religious minority groups to engage in age-appropriate and accessible recreational activities, sports, cultural life and the arts.

L. 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

37. Welcoming the launching of new programs aimed at improving conditions in asylum centres and enhancing the quality of health services for children, the Committee is however concerned about:

(a) The significant disparity in care for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children aged 15–18, who remain under the immigration authority and receive lower-standard support than those under 15 cared for by Child Welfare Services, in violation of the principles of non-discrimination and children's right to special protection;

(b) Children not being adequately or sufficiently heard in expulsion cases that affect them and may not be heard in appeal cases;

(c) Introduction of many restrictive and costly changes for family reunification;

(d) Issuance of temporary residence permits for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children aged 16–18;

(e) Age assessment procedure not being in line with the principle of the presumption of minority;

(f) Detention of children in connection with immigration cases;

(g) Large number of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children who had disappeared from the reception centres and whose whereabouts remain unknown;

(h) Asylum-seeking children arriving with an adult without parental responsibility not receiving good quality of care in reception centres.

38. Recalling its previous recommendations, and recalling the joint general comments No. 3 and No. 4 of the CMW/No. 22 and No. 23 of the CRC (2017) on the human rights of children in the context of international migration, the Committee recommends that the State Party:

(a) Adopt legislation ensuring that adequate reception and care arrangements are available for all children, regardless of age, seeking to benefit from international protection;

(b) Allocate more resources to reception centres where unaccompanied children live and strengthen the inspection system;

(c) Transfer responsibility for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children aged 15-18 to the child welfare service in order to ensure that these children receive as good care provision as other children;

(d) Ensure a child-friendly asylum process, including safeguarding the right of every child to be heard and that the best interests of the child are specifically assessed and given weight in expulsion cases, ensuring that children are not returned in breach of the *non-refoulment* principle;

(e) Eliminate temporary residence permits for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children aged 16-18 and provide an interim measure until the asylum process is decided upon;

(f) Ensure that the age assessment procedure is in line with the principle of the presumption of minority and give the person concerned the opportunity to challenge the outcome through a judicial procedure, and further ensure that age assessment procedures are undertaken only in cases of doubt about the age of the person concerned, are subject to the informed assent of the child, are conducted in a safe, child and gender-sensitive manner, and are undertaken by an independent, multi-disciplinary team with appropriate expertise. While the procedure is under way, the State Party should ensure that the person concerned is treated as a child and remains within the child protection system;

(g) Prohibit the detention of children in connection with immigration cases;

(h) Take immediate administrative measures to prevent and detect the disappearance of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and improve its investigation;

(i) Ensure that asylum-seeking children arriving with an adult without parental responsibility in reception centres receive the quality of care they are entitled to under the Convention.

Children belonging to Indigenous groups

39. Welcoming the national Sami centre for competence and the amicable resolution between Sor-Fosen and Fosen Vind DA, 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 evictions and displacement of Indigenous peoples, including children, and provide redress to those evicted or displaced from their lands;

(b) Put in place measures for early detection and timely interventions in cases of conflict in areas occupied by Indigenous peoples, through peaceful dispute resolution measures and addressing the root causes of these conflicts;

(c) Consult and cooperate in good faith with the Indigenous peoples concerned, including Indigenous children, in order to obtain their free, prior and informed consent before adopting and implementing legislative or administrative measures that may affect them, and provide effective remedies in cases of violation of their rights;

(d) Take effective measures to promote indigenous languages, including through the provision of bilingual education to Indigenous children in their own indigenous languages as well as in the official languages of the State Party.

Trafficking

40. Welcoming the setting up of the National Guidance Unit for Cases of Trafficking in Children, the Committee recommends that the State Party:

(a) Take further steps to improve child victims' identification and assistance, including by continuing to take actions for reducing the risk of children going missing from State care;

(b) **Harmonize the application of the definition of trafficking across all municipalities;**

(c) **Ensure the identification, referral and recovery of children who are victims of trafficking, including digital trafficking, and their access to support services, including interpretation services.**

Administration of child justice

41. Noting that the Storting adopted a number of amendments enacted in 2024 to introduce less punitive sanctions for juvenile offenders, the Committee is however concerned about:

(a) Children between 15 and 18 years old who can be treated as adult offenders;

(b) Lack of introduction of new alternatives to the detention of children;

(c) Legal possibility to sentence children to preventive detention with the possibility to prolong indefinitely, use of police detention cells for pretrial detention and increase in number of children placed in police custody;

(d) Current approach to the use of solitary confinement, restraints and force against children in custody;

(e) Excessive use of force against children, such as physical restraint and immobilising techniques to restrict movement;

(f) Forensic experts assessing the future risk of violence and psychiatric status not being required to have specialist competence in children's development.

42. **Recalling its previous recommendation and 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 international norms. In particular, the Committee urges the State Party to:**

(a) **Further strengthen legislative and administrative measures taken to ensure specialized justice for all children alleged as, accused of or recognized as having infringed criminal law, including through differentiated criminal proceedings, and accessible information on their rights;**

(b) **Prioritise local prevention and, in case a child is accused of having committed a crime, strengthen diversion measures;**

(c) **Abolish preventive sentencing orders for crimes committed before the perpetrator has reached the age of 18;**

(d) **Ensure that children are not held together with adults, such as in the Eidsberg Prison;**

(e) **Ensure that isolation is avoided to the greatest extent possible and that decisions regarding solitary confinement and the use of coercive measures against children explicitly state how the child's best interests and the requirement for the child to be heard have been addressed;**

(f) **Strengthen legal safeguards and ensure that forensic mental health assessments of children facing criminal charges are conducted by experts who have been trained on the particular needs and rights of children.**

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

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

(a) **Raise the minimum age for recruitment into the Home Guard Youth to eighteen;**

(b) End the return of children to countries where they are at risk of, or may have already suffered recruitment or involvement in armed conflict or where they had been involved as children in armed conflict;

(c) Provide appropriate physical and psychological recovery and rehabilitation arrangements to all children who may have been recruited or used in armed conflicts abroad and ensure their social reintegration.

M. Ratification of the Optional Protocol on a communications procedure

44. The Committee recommends that the State Party ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on a communications procedure.

N. Ratification of international human rights instruments

45. 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: International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

O. Cooperation with regional bodies

46. The Committee recommends that the State Party continue to cooperate with the Council of Europe on the implementation of the Convention and other human rights instruments, both in the State Party and in other States members of the Council of Europe.

IV. Implementation and reporting

A. Follow-up and dissemination

47. 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 seventh report, 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

48. The Committee will establish and communicate the due date of the eighth periodic report of the State Party in due course, in line with the envisaged predictable reporting calendar, 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 and should not exceed 21,200 words. 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.