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Committee on the Rights of the Child

Concluding observations on the report submitted by Pakistan under article 12 (1) of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography*

I. Introduction

1. The Committee considered the report of Pakistan¹ at its 2914th and 2915th meetings,² held on 15 and 16 January 2026, and adopted the present concluding observations at its 2936th meeting, held on 30 January 2026.
2. The Committee welcomes the submission of the report of the State party and the written replies to the list of issues³. The Committee expresses appreciation for the constructive dialogue held with the high-level delegation of the State party.
3. The Committee reminds the State party that the present concluding observations should be read in conjunction with the concluding observations on the combined sixth and sevenths periodic reports submitted by the State party under the Convention⁴, adopted on 30 January 2026.

II. General observations

Positive aspects

4. The Committee notes with appreciation the State party's accession to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime on 4 November 2022.
5. The Committee further welcomes the various measures taken by the State party in areas relevant to the implementation of the Optional Protocol, including the legislative

* Adopted by the Committee at its hundred's session (12 – 30 January 2026).

¹ CRC/C/OPSC/PAK/1

² CRC/C/SR.2891.

³ CRC/C/OPSC/PAK/Q/1/Add.1

⁴ CRC/C/PAK/CO/6-7

measures such as the enactment of Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2016 that amended Pakistan Penal Code (PPC), 1860 and Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898 addressing offences under the Optional Protocol.

6. The Committee further notes with appreciation the progress achieved in the creation of institutions and the adoption of national plans and programmes that facilitate the implementation of the Optional Protocol, including the National Coordination Committee on Trafficking in Persons established in 2022.

III. Data

Data collection

7. The Committee notes the State party's information that it established the Child Protection Information Management Systems. However, it regrets the lack of information on whether the systems include disaggregated data on all areas covered under the Optional Protocol and if and where such data is available.

8. **The Committee recommends that the State party develop a comprehensive, coordinated and effective system of data collection, analysis, monitoring and impact assessment relating to all areas covered under the Optional Protocol, including the sale of children, child sexual exploitation in prostitution and child sexual abuse material. The data should be disaggregated by, inter alia, sex, age, nationality, religious and ethnic origin and socioeconomic status, with particular attention paid to children who are at risk of becoming victims of crimes covered under the Optional Protocol. The Committee also recommends that the State party establish a system of common indicators when collecting data for its provinces and territories.**

IV. General measures of implementation

Legislation

9. The Committee notes that the national legislation prohibits some of the offences covered under the Optional Protocol, but it is concerned that it does not explicitly address all offences listed under article 3 of the Optional Protocol. It is also concerned about the absence of legislation explicitly defining and criminalizing all cases of the sale of children, a concept similar, but not identical, to trafficking in children, and that other manifestations of the sale of children are thus overlooked.

10. **The Committee recommends that the State party ensure that all acts and activities referred to in the Optional Protocol are fully covered under its criminal law, including all forms of sale of children as a separate crime.**

Comprehensive policy and strategy

11. **With reference to its concluding observations on the combined sixth and seventh periodic report of Pakistan,⁵ the Committee recommends that the State**

⁵ CRC/C/PAK/CO/6-7, para 7.

party's comprehensive policy on children specifically address all issues covered under this Optional Protocol.

Coordination and evaluation

12. With reference to its concluding observations on the combined sixth and seventh periodic reports of Pakistan,⁶ the Committee recommends that the State party ensure that the interministerial coordinating body responsible for coordinating activities and implementing children's rights be responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of activities under the Optional Protocol at the cross-sectoral, federal, provincial and territorial levels.

Dissemination and awareness-raising

13. The Committee notes the information provided by the State party on training and awareness raising activities for professionals working with and for children on some aspects of the issues covered under the Optional protocol in different provinces. It is concerned, however, that the dissemination and awareness raising activities are not systematic and remain insufficient.

14. The Committee recommends that the State party take measures to strengthen its training and dissemination activities. In that regard, the State party should ensure that such activities are systematic and multidisciplinary, cover all areas under the Optional Protocol and are provided to all relevant professionals working with and for children, including judges, law enforcement officers, prosecutors, health professionals, social workers, psychologists, investigators and immigration officials, and should ensure that the Optional Protocol is widely disseminated among children.

Allocation of resources

15. The Committee is concerned about the absence of information regarding the funds allocated to combating the sale of children, child sexual exploitation and child sexual abuse material, including to preventing offences under the Optional Protocol and caring for, rehabilitating and reintegrating child victims.

16. The Committee recommends that the State party ensure the adequate allocation of resources for combating and preventing offences under the Optional Protocol and providing appropriate support services for the recovery and reintegration of child victims.

V. Prevention of the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography ((art. 9 (1) and (2))

Measures adopted to prevent offences prohibited under the Protocol

17. The Committee welcomes the efforts undertaken by the State party aimed at preventing offences covered under the Optional Protocol, such as the website of the

⁶ CRC/C/PAK/CO/6-7, para 8

national police aimed at preventing child sexual abuse images. However, the Committee is concerned about:

(a) Limited targeted measures to prevent offences covered under the Optional Protocol, and lack of measures to identify the root causes and the extent of such offences;

(b) The absence of information on measures taken to prevent children in disadvantaged and marginalized situations, such as children living in poverty, children in street situations, children engaged in informal labour and asylum-seeking and refugee children, in particular unaccompanied children, from falling victims of offences covered under the Optional Protocol;

(c) Insufficient measures taken by the State party to protect boys from sexual abuse and exploitation.

18. The Committee urges the State party:

(a) **To strengthen its efforts to identify and detect children at risk of becoming victims of offences covered under the Optional Protocol, in particular children in disadvantaged and marginalized situations, including through mechanisms for the collection of data on victims of such offences;**

(b) **To take comprehensive measures to address the root causes of children becoming victims of offences covered under the Optional Protocol and screen professionals in regular contact with children in all areas of their lives for past convictions of sexual exploitation and abuse of children;**

(c) **Strengthen its social protection measures and mechanisms targeting children, including boys, at risk of falling victim to such offences.**

Sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism

19. The Committee is seriously concerned about the reports that children, especially boys, are regularly subjected to sexual exploitation in touristic and religious sites, hotels and bus stops and insufficient measures taken by the State party and little engagement by the travel and tourism sector to put an end to such practices.

20. The Committee urges the State party:

(a) **To take urgent measures to identify children who are especially at risk of becoming victims of sexual exploitation in travel and tourism, including boys affected by poverty, to assess the scope of the phenomenon and to link those measures to inform time-bound child protection programmes, poverty reduction strategies and awareness-raising activities;**

(b) **To strengthen its knowledge, screening and monitoring of the flow of foreign nationals and its surveillance of unregistered tourist accommodation;**

(c) **To regulate and engage with the private sector, particularly the tourism industry, in the prevention, monitoring and reporting of cases of sexual exploitation of children, including through regular monitoring of the compliance of tourist accommodation-, travel- and tour agencies as well as operators with child protection policies;**

(d) **To encourage the reporting of cases of sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism, effectively prosecute the perpetrators and ensure that perpetrators are punished with penalties commensurate with the gravity of the offences;**

(e) To widely disseminate the World Trade Organization Global Code of Ethics for Tourism among travel agents and tourism agencies and to encourage those enterprises to become signatories to the Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism.

Measures to prevent and address online child sexual exploitation and abuse

21. The Committee welcomes the campaigns such as “Safe Children Online” and the National Cyber Security Policy and the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act, 2016 aimed, among others, at protection of children from harmful and unsuitable material. However, it is seriously concerned about the reports that online sexual violence against children in the State party is alarmingly high. It is also concerned about the information that the large amounts of child sexual abuse material is reportedly accessed, shared or uploaded in the State party and the State party lacks effective measures to address online child sexual exploitation and abuse.

22. 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 a national policy to prevent and respond to online child sexual exploitation and abuse through an appropriate legal framework, a dedicated coordination and oversight entity and specific analysis, research and monitoring capabilities;
- (b) Strengthen the National Cybercrime Investigation Agency in order to ensure effective investigations on child online sexual abuse and exploitation, including through allocation of sufficient human, material and financial resources;
- (c) Raise awareness of the wider public on online child sexual exploitation and abuse offences and how to report them;
- (d) Train relevant professionals and ensure that Internet service providers are required by law to promptly block and remove online child sexual exploitation and abuse material, to report incidents to law enforcement authorities and to develop innovative solutions.

VI. Prohibition of the sale of children, child pornography and child prostitution and related matters (arts. 3, 4 (2) and (3) and 5-7)

Criminal or penal laws and regulations in force

23. The Committee notes the information provided by the State party with regard to the criminalization of offences under the Optional protocol. However, it is concerned that the criminal law in the State party does not define and criminalize all forms of offences covered by the Optional Protocol. It is concerned in particular that:

- (a) The sale of children, which is similar but not identical to trafficking in children, is not criminalized as a separate crime;
- (b) The Penal Code does not cover the sale of children through illegal adoption;
- (c) Buying of children for sexual purposes is prohibited only when involving girls under 18, leaving boys outside protection against sexual exploitation by law;

(d) The Penal Code does not criminalize child sexual abuse material in audio and written format;

(e) There are no provisions that define or criminalise forms of online child sexual exploitation such as live streaming of sexual abuse material, online sexual extortion or unsolicited sexting.

24. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Define and criminalize the sale of children, in conformity with articles 2 and 3 of the Optional Protocol, and ensure that it does not limit the definition to cases of trafficking in children;

(b) Ensure that the definition and criminalization include the sale of children through illegal adoption;

(c) Amend the Penal Code to ensure that the crime of buying a child for sexual purposes includes boys as well;

(d) Define and criminalize not only video format of child sexual abuse material, but also the audio and written material;

(e) Define and criminalise all forms of online child sexual exploitation such as live streaming of sexual abuse material, online sexual extortion or unsolicited sexting.

(f) Develop and strengthen awareness-raising programmes for children on risks related to the use of information and communications technologies.

Impunity

25. The Committee is seriously concerned about the reports of widespread impunity for perpetrators of offences under the Optional Protocol. It is also concerned that despite the high numbers of reported cases, there is little information regarding the number of cases that are duly investigated and the number of perpetrators who are prosecuted, convicted and the sentences handed down.

26. The Committee urges the State party to take all measures necessary to ensure that all reports of offences under the Optional Protocol are investigated effectively and that perpetrators are prosecuted and punished with appropriate sanctions commensurate with the gravity of their crimes, including by combatting corruption and abuse of personal connections among relevant officials.

Liability of legal persons

27. The Committee regrets the limited information provided concerning the liability of legal persons and recommends that the State party take active measures to ensure that legal persons who are either complicit or participate in offences covered under the Optional Protocol are duly prosecuted and punished.

Extraterritorial jurisdiction and extradition

28. The Committee is concerned that the State party lacks initiatives to investigate and prosecute offences under the Optional Protocol in transnational cases where perpetrators or the digital content involving children are located outside the State party. It also regrets the lack of information on the enforcement of its extraterritorial jurisdiction over offences

prohibited under the Optional Protocol and that not all offences under the Optional Protocol can be used as a basis for extradition.

29. **The Committee recommends that the State party take active measures to exercise extraterritorial jurisdiction for all offences under the Optional Protocol. It also recommends that the State Party include those offences in all future extradition treaties and may consider using the Optional Protocol as a basis for extradition in the absence of any extradition treaty.**

VII. Protection of the rights of child victims (arts. 8 and 9 (3) and (4))

Measures adopted to protect the rights and interests of child victims of offences prohibited under the Optional Protocol

30. The Committee notes the information provided by the State party concerning the measures taken to protect child victims and witnesses of crimes under the Optional Protocol, such as child safeguarding procedures in some provinces. The Committee is however concerned that under the State party's legislation there is no duty to report crimes relating to child sexual abuse and exploitation or violations against the rights of children in general. It is also concerned that:

- (a) The existing telephone helplines are not child specific;
- (b) The legislation providing for the protection of child victims of violations is limited to some provinces of the State party;
- (c) The child victims of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation suffer from stigma and discrimination;
- (d) The limited number of child care institutions and shelters that are available are not specialised in victims of sexual abuse and exploitation;
- (e) There is limited information concerning the compensation provided to child victims of offences under the Optional Protocol.

31. **In the light of article 9 (3) of the Optional Protocol, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

- (a) **Establish mechanisms and procedures for the early identification of child victims of offences under the Optional Protocol and ensure that those responsible for such identification, including law enforcement officers, border and immigration authorities, judges, prosecutors, social workers, psychologists and medical staff, are trained in children's rights, child protection and child-friendly interviewing skills;**
- (b) **Expand the legislation providing for protection of child victims of offences under the Optional Protocol to the entire territory of the State party;**
- (c) **Ensure access to child protection institutions and child friendly centers for all victims of offences under the Optional Protocol and ensure that the staff are specialized and trained in handling sexual abuse and exploitation cases against children;**
- (d) **Provide all children with free legal aid and the support of child psychologists and social workers, and ensure they have access to child- and gender-**

sensitive complaint mechanisms and appropriate procedures for seeking, without discrimination, compensation and redress.

VIII. International assistance and cooperation (art. 10)

Multilateral, bilateral and regional agreements

32. In the light of article 10 (1) of the Optional Protocol, the Committee encourages the State party to continue to strengthen international cooperation through multilateral, regional and bilateral arrangements, especially with neighbouring countries, including by strengthening procedures and mechanisms for coordinating the implementation of such arrangements, with a view to making progress in respect of the prevention of offences covered under the Optional Protocol and the detection, investigation, prosecution and punishment of those responsible for any such offences.

IX. Implementation and reporting

A. Follow-up and dissemination

33. 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, including by transmitting them to relevant Ministries and government entities in federal, provincial and territorial level for appropriate consideration and further action.

34. The Committee recommends that the report and the written replies to the list of issues submitted by the State party and the present concluding observations be made widely available, including through the Internet, to the public at large, civil society organizations, youth groups, professional groups and children, in order to generate debate on and awareness of the Optional Protocol and its implementation and monitoring.

B. Next periodic report

35. In accordance with article 12 (2) of the Optional Protocol, the Committee requests the State party to include further information on the implementation of the Optional Protocol and the present concluding observations in its next periodic report to be submitted in accordance with article 44 of the Convention.
