Committee on the Rights of the Child
Eighty-second session

Summary record of the 2417th meeting
Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Thursday, 19 September 2019, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Mr. Pedernera Reyna

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Consideration of reports of States parties (continued)

Combining fifth and sixth periodic reports of the Republic of Korea (continued)
(CRC/C/KOR/5-6; CRC/C/KOR/Q/5-6 and CRC/C/KOR/Q/5-6/Add.1)

1. At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of the Republic of Korea took places at the Committee table.

2. Ms. Aldoseri (Coordinator, Country Task Force) said that she wished to know what remedies were available for girls who had been sexually harassed by their teachers. In that connection, a briefing on the report produced in the wake of the campaign conducted under the hashtag #SchoolMeToo would be helpful. She also wished to know whether Korean children, who spent inordinate amounts of time studying, had opportunities to enjoy leisure activities and simply to play.

3. Ms. Winter (Country Task Force) said that she wondered why nearly all the violations of the provisions of the Labour Standards Act concerning child labour had led to nothing but corrective orders. She also wondered why the asylum application of a family whose members, including four children under 10 years old, had been stranded in the transit zone of the international airport in Incheon for roughly 200 days had not been considered more expeditiously. In addition, noting that only slightly more than 15 per cent of juvenile prisoners in the State party were held in its only correctional institution for minors, namely, Gimcheon Juvenile Correctional Institution, she asked where the other 85 per cent were held. It appeared that hundreds of that institution’s inmates were actually adults. What had happened to the separation of children and adults in the detention facilities of the Republic of Korea?

4. Ms. Khazova said that she was concerned by the existence of drop-off baby boxes set up by religious organizations and would welcome information on the measures being taken to prevent newborns being abandoned in the first place. It would be interesting to know, for example, whether at-risk pregnant women were provided with psychological or financial support. She would also welcome more information on the bill that, if adopted, would allow women to give birth anonymously.

5. Ms. Cho Soyoun (Republic of Korea) said that the conscription of persons under the age of 18 was forbidden by law. Minors could not participate in hostilities. Although 18-year-olds registered for military service, they were evaluated only when they turned 19 and did not begin serving until they were 20. The provisions of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the involvement of children in armed conflict had been incorporated into domestic law.

6. Mr. Ko Deuk Yung (Republic of Korea) said that the Child Welfare Act had been amended to establish a legal basis for child policy impact assessments and that since March 2019 all major policies formulated by the central Government and local authorities had undergone such assessments. The National Centre for the Rights of the Child had been set up in July 2019 in part to improve the effectiveness of the assessments. Pilot projects were under way, including one related to safety policies for consumer goods, and a handbook on child policy impact assessments was under development.

7. Ms. Pang Seon Ok (Republic of Korea) said that there was a new system for registering births online. With the consent of the parents, hospitals sent birth information to the Health Insurance Review and Assessment Service, which transmitted the information to the Supreme Court. Parents then accessed the Court’s electronic registration system, filled out the registration form and submitted it to the relevant authorities. After the information they submitted had been checked against the details provided by the hospital, the necessary vital records were issued. The participation of hospitals in the online registration system was voluntary; 92 hospitals had begun using it to date. From May 2018, when the system had been adopted, to September 2019, the registration of some 9,500 births, representing roughly 2.2 per cent of all births registered to nationals of the Republic of Korea, had been processed online. No separate family relations register was compiled for children born to foreign residents.
8. **Ms. Yoo** Won Jeong (Republic of Korea) said that it was impossible to know the number of Korean children whose births had not been registered. Since 2016, prosecutors and heads of local governments had also had the authority to register births, including births that had initially gone unregistered.

9. In 2018, a government survey had estimated that there were between 5,200 and 13,000 foreign children living in the country without residence permits. A bill on registering the births of those children was currently before the National Assembly but had not garnered the approval of the Ministry of Justice.

10. The birth notification system, which required health-care providers to report births to a national institution, was under review. Proposals to improve the system would be collected in the coming weeks. The Government was aware of the need to ensure that all non-Korean children had birth certificates. Accordingly, it had been organizing seminars on universal birth registration since late 2018 and an advisory group had been convened to review the bill to introduce a registration system for those children. Consultations would be held with a view to developing a system, and efforts to raise awareness of the need would continue.

11. **Mr. Shin** Duchel (Republic of Korea) said that alternative meals were available in school cafeterias to students who, for religious or health reasons, did not eat certain foods. Cafeteria menus were provided in advance to parents and children, thereby enabling them to choose whether they wished to sign up for school meals. The Ministry of Education could nonetheless work more closely with city and provincial authorities to improve arrangements.

12. **Mr. Ko** Deuk Yung (Republic of Korea) said that the development of the Master Plan for Child Policy 2015–2019 had involved public hearings and consultations with children. Public policy continued to be informed by children’s views and the participation of children was one of the components of the child policy impact assessments. In addition, starting in 2019, the Child Policy Coordination Committee would give official consideration to decisions made at the Korean General Assembly on Children.

13. The National Election Commission had found that the possibility of lowering the voting age from 19 years to 18 years should be given due consideration. A bill to amend the Public Official Election Act to that effect was before the National Assembly.

14. **Ms. Yoo** Won Jeong (Republic of Korea) said that amendments to the Act on the Implementation of the Hague Child Abduction Convention had been drafted that, once adopted, would ensure that a parent or other person could be prevented from taking a child out of the country without permission. Preparations to submit the bill containing those amendments to the National Assembly were under way.

15. **Ms. Kim** Jiyun (Republic of Korea) said that measures to prevent violence in schools had been in place since 2005. As a result, levels of violence, particularly in its physical forms, had fallen. In August 2019, the Act on the Prevention of Violence in Schools had been amended to provide for counselling and guidance – a permanent record of which was not necessarily kept – to be extended to students responsible for school violence and for minor disputes to be resolved directly by school principals. A programme to prevent cyberbullying and other increasingly common forms of verbal violence had been expanded.

16. In 2018, 71 per cent of special education students had been enrolled in mainstream schools. Special education institutions were being expanded, and additional support for integrated education was being provided. The fifth Five-Year Plan for Special Education Development had been in place since 2018. The number of integrated education teachers had increased, and centres had been set up to provide specialized support to teachers who had students with disabilities in their classrooms. The budget for special education had increased considerably in recent years. All students learned about disabilities in school and were encouraged to behave courteously to and make friends with classmates with disabilities.

17. **Ms. Jhang** Hyunjoo (Republic of Korea) said that children without residence permits could exercise their right to education through to the upper secondary level. Upon
graduation, they could apply for a residence permit or visa that allowed them to remain in the country.

18. **Ms. Kim** Jiyun (Republic of Korea) said that although the Framework Act on Education stated that only Korean nationals were entitled to free education, the Act’s implementing decree was applied in such a way as to safeguard the right of undocumented children to free education. Principals could not deny undocumented students access to high school without due reason. Korean language and culture classes were offered to newly arrived children in many schools and an outreach programme was available to new arrivals who attended schools that did not offer such classes. The Government had launched multicultural sensitivity programmes to promote tolerance among students and prospective teachers underwent preparatory training that encouraged them to make schools more welcoming places for students from a broad range of backgrounds.

19. **Ms. Jhang** Hyunjoo (Republic of Korea) said that the Immigration Act had been amended in April 2019 to ensure that child victims of abuse and their guardians were entitled to special protection and could apply to have their permits extended until the completion of any procedures for claiming damages. Undocumented child migrants were granted a Miscellaneous G-1 visa and were allowed to apply for a residence permit.

20. In line with the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, the third National Action Plan for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights would include measures to strengthen corporate social responsibility policies. In cases of human rights violations by companies, the Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises issued by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development would be applied. Complaints relating to such cases could be submitted to the national contact point in the Republic of Korea. The Government was continuing its efforts to shape appropriate policies to allow victims of human rights violations resulting from illegal acts committed overseas by companies registered in the Republic of Korea to seek damages.

21. **Mr. Ko Deuk Yung** (Republic of Korea) said that since 2018 it had been mandatory to adopt due measures to protect child migrants who had been subjected to abuse. Although children who were not nationals of the Republic of Korea were not legally entitled to assistance from the National Basic Livelihood Security system, the Ministry of Health and Welfare had issued guidelines to ensure that child migrants who had suffered abuse were granted admission to child welfare facilities and received the financial support they required.

22. While child migrants were entitled to use childcare facilities, child support payments and benefits were provided only to nationals of the Republic of Korea and to children with refugee status. Child support payments were discontinued if the recipient spent more than 90 days outside the Republic of Korea. Child migrants were able to obtain health care at public health clinics and were provided with temporary reference numbers to enable them to receive vaccinations free of charge. The national health insurance system and the medical care system for low-income individuals were available only to nationals of the Republic of Korea and to non-nationals with a valid residency permit. In 2019, approximately W3 billion had been allocated to subsidize medical care for undocumented migrants, including children.

23. **Ms. Kim** Hye Rin (Republic of Korea) said that the third Basic Plan for International Development Cooperation, which was due to be adopted in the first half of 2020, would ensure that the rights of children were upheld. Children’s rights were taken into account in the evaluation of country-specific portfolios and other international development assistance projects.

24. Companies participating in bidding processes run by the Korea International Cooperation Agency were obliged to implement the standard international contract and submit a human rights management declaration. Entities involved in the implementation of the Agency’s projects were required to use a checklist to ensure respect for human rights, including children’s rights. As part of the business risk management screening process, a technical assistance group reviewed any potential negative effects on the human rights of vulnerable groups, including children. The Agency planned to establish a system for addressing large-scale human rights violations in 2019.
25. **Ms. Yoo Won Jeong** (Republic of Korea) said that in court cases challenging marriage applications for children who were not nationals of the Republic of Korea, the legislation in force in the child’s country of origin would be applied. Although in principle the application might therefore be valid, in practice the legal provisions of other countries were not applied in the Republic of Korea if doing so would run counter to moral and social norms.

26. **Mr. Ko Deuk Yung** (Republic of Korea) said that the number of group care homes for children had increased from 448 in 2015 to 482 in 2019. The subsidies provided for foster carers would rise gradually in the coming years. Pilot foster-care projects were operating in three provinces and would eventually be rolled out nationwide. The budget for the self-sufficiency subsidy granted to young people leaving group care homes would increase to ₩5 million in 2019 to address the disparities in the level of financial assistance provided in different provinces.

27. The Government had signed the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in respect of Intercountry Adoption in 2013 and was continuing its efforts to formulate a bill to ratify the instrument. In a bid to reduce the number of adoptions that ended in dissolution, adoption agencies were required to run pre-adoption courses for prospective parents. If adoptive parents were found to have abused or abandoned their children, the adoption could be dissolved by judicial decision and new adoptive parents would be sought for the children.

28. In 2017 and 2018, the Government had conducted nationwide awareness-raising campaigns to encourage people to report cases of child abuse. As a result, the number of incidents reported had risen from 29,000 in 2016 to 36,000 in 2018. A child abuse prevention forum had also been held to examine ways in which parents could discipline their children more effectively.

29. **Mr. Shin Duchel** (Republic of Korea) said that corporal punishment in schools was prohibited under national and provincial legislation. However, responsibility for the application of the regulations was delegated to municipal and provincial education authorities, which sometimes led to discrepancies in how cases of corporal punishment were handled. The Government was making efforts to ensure that such discrepancies were eliminated.

30. **Ms. Aldoseri** said that she would like to know whether reports of female students being sexually harassed by teachers had been investigated; whether sanctions had been imposed on the perpetrators; and whether the victims had received reparation.

31. **Ms. Winter** asked whether the recruitment or use of persons aged under 18 years for the purposes of armed conflict or hostilities was a criminal offence in the State party.

32. **Ms. Aho Assouma** said that it was unclear whether children who were not nationals of the State party and whose birth had not been registered were able to use the online civil registration system. She would like to know whether unregistered children could obtain access to education and basic health care and why single fathers were not permitted to register their children. She would welcome further details of the investigations carried out and prosecutions achieved in cases of harassment in schools.

33. It would be useful to learn about any programmes in place to provide treatment for tuberculosis, particularly for children in places of detention, and to ensure suitable nutrition for children with diabetes.

34. **Mr. Rodríguez Reyes** said that he would appreciate clarification of the State party’s understanding of the terms “special education” and “integrated education” in the context of schooling for children with disabilities. He would also welcome details of the State party’s policies for the promotion of breastfeeding, as well as of any plans to increase the number of hospitals that had received certification under the baby-friendly hospital initiative operated by the United Nations Children’s Fund.

35. **Mr. Lumina** (Country Task Force) asked whether the Government envisaged revising legislation to extend childcare assistance and benefits to migrant children and, if so, what timeline had been set for that process; when the bill on a universal birth
registration system would be passed; and when the Korea International Cooperation Agency would implement the system for addressing violations committed in the context of overseas projects that it supported.

36. Mr. Mezmur (Country Task Force) asked when the Government envisaged enacting the new adoption-related legislation; whether it had any plans to increase the international development assistance it disbursed, particularly children’s rights-related assistance; and how it ensured that its development contributions were not associated with child rights violations.


38. Mr. Jaffé said that he would like examples of good practice for child participation in the development and implementation of policies at the local and national level. He would also like to know what specialized and advanced training for handling cases of child protection and sexual abuse was available to police officers and investigators; how the judicial authorities ensured that children’s voices were heard during proceedings related to sexual abuse; and whether integrated teams of specialized police officers and social workers had been established across the provinces to handle those cases.

39. Ms. Marshall-Harris asked whether a full system of juvenile courts had been established and what the minimum age of criminal responsibility was.

The meeting was suspended at 11.30 a.m. and resumed at 11.45 a.m.

40. Mr. Kim Gang Lip (Republic of Korea) said that information on timelines for legislative amendments was not available. However, the Government was working to raise public awareness of the issues involved and the Committee’s concerns would be communicated to parliament to facilitate progress.

41. Ms. Kim Young Joo (Republic of Korea) said that a bill to establish a birth registration system for foreign children in the country was currently being drafted and would be finalized shortly. It would then be subject to inter-ministerial consultation and amendment. The Government was making every effort to expedite the process but it was not possible to predict a timeline for enactment.

42. Ms. Kim Jiyun (Republic of Korea) said that, following the adoption of the Act on the Prevention of Violence in Schools, surveys were conducted twice a year among students in primary and secondary schools with a view to taking relevant action to combat school violence. The results of the surveys were made public. The first 2019 survey had revealed a slight decline in levels of school violence and sexual harassment compared with 2017 levels.

43. Ms. Kim Hye Rin (Republic of Korea) said that under the second Basic Plan for International Development Cooperation 2016–2020, the Government was seeking to increase its official development assistance to 0.3 per cent of its gross domestic product (GDP) by 2030 and that at the G20 Summit in 2019 it had pledged to extend its contributions. Furthermore, at the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda, the Government had committed to increasing the official development assistance donations it allocated specifically for children’s health and education. The Korea International Cooperation Agency, in cooperation with other stakeholders including civil society, would have established a task force to develop remedies for human rights violations committed in the context of projects under its responsibility by the end of 2020.

44. Ms. Cho Soyoungh (Republic of Korea), confirming that persons under 18 years old were not subject to compulsory recruitment to participate in hostilities, said that, in addition, under a directive on the rules of war, soldiers were required to respect all relevant duly ratified treaties as well as the norms of international law.

45. Ms. Kim Young Joo (Republic of Korea) said that pursuant to an amendment to the Act on the Registration of Family Relationships made in 2015, biological fathers were able
to register their children’s birth subject to the confirmation of a family court that the mother’s personal information could not be verified. In all other cases, the mother was required to register the child. Although the law stipulated that children born out of wedlock should be registered by their mother, in very exceptional circumstances registrations could be carried out by the biological father.

46. The Government was considering lowering the age of criminal responsibility, in keeping with the evolving maturity levels of children, and bills to that end were currently before the National Assembly.

47. Mr. Ko Deuk Yung (Republic of Korea) said that although the baby box system had not been officially recognized as it constituted a form of child abandonment, the Government provided immediate protection for all babies left in baby boxes and monitored their subsequent progress. The birth registration system was being reviewed in order to ensure that all children were registered. The Government assisted single mothers and other low-income families by providing housing support and allowances to cover childcare and other expenses and it would continue to review and extend the benefits available.

48. Mr. Shin Duchel (Republic of Korea) said that the Government was fully aware of the academic stress that excessive competition continued to cause students despite the adoption of the Special Act on the Promotion of Public Education Normalization and the Regulation of Pre-Curriculum Learning in 2014. The Special Act prohibited exams and tests that went beyond the scope of the regular curriculum for students in any given grade. Teacher training was provided to ensure respect for the new provisions and a review board had been set up to monitor compliance and impose corrective measures where necessary.

49. An exam-free semester system had been in place in middle schools since 2016 in order to provide students with respite from academic stress and to foster their creativity. During the exam-free semester pupils were encouraged to participate in arts and sports activities and career exploration opportunities. In 2019, almost 70 per cent of middle schools had implemented the initiative, with some of them even offering two exam-free semesters.

50. The Government was also making efforts to ease the pressures associated with the college admission system and ensure equal education opportunities for all students. To that end, high school education had been free for all students from the third year as of 2019 and high school fees would be eliminated for all students from 2021. A presidential council on education had been established in 2017 to discuss long-term education policies and other pending issues and was due to set up a national education commission, composed of educational experts and civil society representatives, to examine the issues surrounding academic pressure and college entrance competition and propose relevant reforms. Most student council executives were elected directly by students. The Ministry of Education worked with city and provincial education offices to ensure that students were not subjected to unequal treatment based on their school grades.

51. There was now a good number of alternative schools providing students with less academic options. Under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, a small number of private alternative schools had been accredited and those deemed to offer an outstanding curriculum could receive financial support from their local education offices. The Government also supported the establishment of public alternative schools. With a view to preventing school dropouts, support measures for out-of-school juveniles had been introduced in 2015 that included establishing support centres, expanding the alternative school system and providing tailored career guidance.

52. Ms. Kim Jiyun (Republic of Korea) said that the national standards for sexual and reproductive health education adopted in 2015 stipulated that all students should receive 15 hours of sex education per year. However, those aspects of sex education that remained controversial among the general population had been excluded from the syllabus. Teaching materials that covered gender sensitivity and gender equality were due to be reviewed and disseminated.

53. Ms. Aldoseri said that it was still unclear whether the State party planned to include lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex issues in the school curriculum.
54. **Ms. Khazova** said that she would like to know how and under what conditions single fathers could officially be registered as such in the State party. It would be helpful to know whether, for example, a court order was required.

55. **Ms. Kim Jiyun** (Republic of Korea) said that the possibility of incorporating lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex issues in sex education had elicited divergent views from Korean society. Currently, therefore, no plans had been made to include such content in the curriculum.

56. **Ms. Kim Young Joo** (Republic of Korea) said that inducing or coercing a minor to engage in sex work and abusing power for such purposes were criminal offences under Korean law. A bill designed to ensure that all juvenile victims of sex trafficking received equal recognition and protection under the law, regardless of the tactics employed by the perpetrators, was pending before the National Assembly. The bill also provided for increased protection and support for young victims. The Ministry of Health and Welfare was currently engaged in discussions with the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family regarding a possible new act designed to prevent young people from being lured back into sex work.

57. **Ms. Choi Eunju** (Republic of Korea) said that juvenile targets of sex trafficking were offered counselling, education and individualized case management. However, uptake of such services was low. The Government was aware that offenders took advantage of children's fear of being placed in juvenile correctional facilities, using that fear as a means of blackmailing them into remaining in the sex trade. For that reason, the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family planned to establish a designated support centre for child and youth victims of sex trafficking. Seminars and round tables involving Government representatives and private sector stakeholders had been organized to gather views, and the relevant organizations would be kept abreast of developments.

58. Cases of online sex trafficking of children had been rapidly increasing in number. In response, the Government had introduced legislation that made an assessment of the potential to cause harm obligatory for all online chat applications. Age verification was required before certain applications could be downloaded in order to prevent minors from accessing them.

59. Although the legislation in force referred to youths “involved” in sex trafficking, under a proposed legislative amendment the wording would be changed to youths “victimized” by sex trafficking. Counselling, education, vocational training and other support for the child victims of online sex trafficking was set to be enhanced.

60. **Ms. Kim Young Joo** (Republic of Korea) said that female prisoners had the right to keep their infants with them until they reached 18 months of age. Permission was granted to all women who wished to exercise that right except in exceptional circumstances, such as in the presence of an infectious disease. The decision to grant permission rested with the authorities and was not at the prison warden’s discretion.

61. Thanks to a new family relations programme, thousands of inmates had been given the opportunity to meet with their loved ones. Since 2017, family visiting rooms in prison facilities had been renovated to improve their atmosphere and comfort. There were currently 25 such rooms, with 11 more planned to be operational by 2021.

62. **Mr. Song Kwan-Sung** (Republic of Korea) said that a study to investigate the health status, in terms of exposure to environmental pollution, of people residing near coal-fired power plants had been under way since 2017. The study took account of the fact that children were particularly vulnerable to environmental pollution. Special attention was also accorded to pregnant women and women of childbearing age and, by means of its birth cohort study, the Government continuously monitored the impact of air pollution on the health of young infants. Through comprehensive analysis of the survey findings, the Government would identify areas in which action was required to enhance protection for mothers and children and formulate the necessary remedial plans.

63. **Ms. Jhang Hyunjoo** (Republic of Korea) said that migrant children subject to protective measures were not held in migrant detention centres provided that they had valid passports and immediate return to their country of origin was possible. When children had
no passports and no one to care for them during the departure preparations, they were allowed to stay with their parents in a special room. Measures to protect or detain minors were imposed in accordance with the law, as a last resort and for the shortest period possible.

64. **Mr. Lumina**, noting that the study into the harmful effects of coal-fired power plants had been initiated in 2017, asked whether it had now been completed and, if so, what steps had been taken to implement the resulting recommendations.

65. **Ms. Winter** said that the Committee required more information about the situation in detention centres in order to formulate its concluding observations. The delegation was welcome to provide that information in writing, within 48 hours. Its responses should clarify whether minors could still be held in solitary confinement and whether electric shocks and other forms of ill-treatment were used to control children or to obtain confessions.

66. **Mr. Song Kwan-Sung** (Republic of Korea) said that the survey initiated in 2017 to assess the effects of coal-fired power plants on public health would run until 2024 and, as yet, no significant conclusions had been drawn.

67. **Mr. Ko Deuk Yung** (Republic of Korea) said that fathers faced numerous challenges to taking parental leave. Because the father was usually the family’s main breadwinner, household income generally declined sharply when men took leave. In addition, the Republic of Korea had a strongly work-centred culture and deeply rooted corporate practices.

68. In order to reduce resistance, paternity leave allowances had been increased and a paternity leave bonus system had been introduced to supplement the benefits awarded to households when a second caregiver took leave. Information on raising children had been provided to men in a bid to increase the number of fathers taking parental leave and the percentage of male childcare leave-takers had risen from 16.9 per cent in the first half of 2018 to 20.7 per cent in the first half of 2019.

69. The importance of work-life balance had been recognized as one of the keys to overcoming the very low birth rate in the Republic of Korea. Research into how best to increase financial support and develop childcare services for families was ongoing. The fourth action plan to address the low birth rate and population ageing included measures to overhaul the parental leave system that would be implemented between 2021 and 2025.

70. **Ms. Kim Jiyun** (Republic of Korea) said that the #MeToo movement in Korea had brought to light many cases of sexual violence involving power relations. In order to encourage student victims to report incidents in confidence, an online reporting centre had been set up by the Ministry of Education in March 2018. So far a total of 292 instances of abuse had been reported through that channel. In May 2019, an anonymous reporting function had been added to the online service. The number of trained professionals providing counselling on sexual violence had also been increased.

71. Teachers employed in public schools who were found to have committed acts of sexual harassment or sexual violence were dismissed. In addition, as of February 2019, student victims had been able to request and receive a transfer to another school under new guidelines issued through the education offices. The Private School Act had been revised in April 2019 to strengthen the fairness and rigour of disciplinary action taken against educational staff working in private institutions.

72. **Ms. Winter** said that the Committee’s overarching goal was to support children in the process of becoming fully-fledged human beings, and was therefore somewhat different to the State party’s goal, which seemed to be to support children in the process of becoming the best functioning members of society possible. While it was commendable that the State party had spent a lot of money on education, she encouraged the Government to consider ways in which it could help children to think for themselves so that they would be better equipped to manage their futures. Times were changing, and the empowerment of children was now important for development. In many countries, children were no longer prepared to accept hierarchy and authority without good reason and expected to be included in
decision-making processes. For changes of that kind to be made in the State party, however, social consensus would need to be actively sought.

73. The Committee was pleased that plans to raise awareness of the need to tackle discrimination, xenophobia and exclusion were on the table. She hoped that the State party would consider ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure.

74. **Mr. Kim** Gang Lip (Republic of Korea) said that the Korean General Assembly on Children provided children with a channel through which to make their voices heard in decision-making processes. The Government would gratefully accept the Committee’s recommendations and continue with the improvements required to implement the principle of the best interests of the child.

75. **The Chair** said that the Committee expected a swift resolution to the asylum case that had left four children living at the airport until their fate was decided.

76. The State party’s work to promote the rights of the child was highly appreciated and the Committee would continue to support the Government as it moved forward with the implementation of the Convention.

*The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.*