



Convention on the Rights of the Child

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Committee on the Rights of the Child

Concluding observations on the seventh periodic report of Ecuador*

I. Introduction

1. The Committee considered the seventh periodic report of Ecuador¹ at its 2864th and 2866th meetings,² held on 23 and 24 January 2025, and adopted the present concluding observations at its 2876th meeting, held on 31 January 2025.

2. The Committee welcomes the submission of the seventh periodic report of the State party, under the simplified reporting procedure,³ 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 various legislative, institutional and policy measures taken by the State party to implement the Convention, including the ratification of the Convention on the International Recovery of Child Support and Other Forms of Family Maintenance and the Protocol on the Law Applicable to Maintenance Obligations, both on 2 March 2022, and the adoption of the Intersectoral Policy for the Prevention of Pregnancy in Girls and Adolescents (2018–2025) and the National Strategic Plan on Afro-Ecuadorian Ethno-Education (2020–2025).

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: non-discrimination (para. 17), abuse, neglect, sexual abuse and exploitation (para. 26), gang violence (para. 32), adolescent health (para. 41), standard of living (para. 45) and the impact of environmental harm and climate change on children's rights (para. 47).

* Adopted by the Committee at its ninety-eighth session (13–31 January 2025).

¹ [CRC/C/ECU/7](#).

² See [CRC/C/SR.2864](#) and [CRC/C/SR.2866](#).

³ See [CRC/C/ECU/QPR/7](#).



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

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

Legislation

6. Noting with concern the delay in approving the update of the Code on Children and Adolescents, and the various legislative initiatives contrary to the Convention, in particular those related to juvenile justice, the Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Expedite the process of adoption of legislation to update the Code on Children and Adolescents and ensure that its content is in full compliance with the Convention and the Optional Protocols thereto;
- (b) Harmonize all other legislation on the rights of the child accordingly;
- (c) Undertake a child rights impact assessment of any proposed policy, whether legislative, regulatory, budgetary or international cooperation-related, or any administrative decision that affects children's rights.

Comprehensive policy and strategy

7. The Committee recalls its previous concluding observations⁴ and recommends that the State party complete and adopt a national plan for the protection of children and adolescents for the period up to 2030, ensuring that it encompasses all areas covered by the Convention and that sufficient human, technical and financial resources are provided for its effective implementation.

Coordination

8. The Committee urges the State party to establish an appropriate body at a high interministerial level with a clear mandate and sufficient authority to coordinate all activities related to the implementation of the Convention and the Optional Protocols thereto, at the cross-sectoral, national, regional and local levels. The State party should ensure that it is provided with the necessary human, technical and financial resources for its effective operation.

Allocation of resources

9. Recalling its general comment No. 19 (2016) on public budgeting for the realization of children's rights and its previous recommendations,⁵ the Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Increase the allocation of resources for ensuring children's rights, in particular the rights of those who are in a specific situation of vulnerability, such as Indigenous, Afro-Ecuadorian and Montubio children;
- (b) Define budgetary lines that encompass all children, with particular attention paid to those who may require special protection measures, making sure that those budgetary lines are protected from austerity or regressive measures and that the

⁴ CRC/C/ECU/CO/5-6, para. 7.

⁵ Ibid., para. 10.

budget execution is carried out effectively in accordance with the principle of absolute priority for children's rights.

Data collection

10. Recalling its general comment No. 5 (2003) on general measures of implementation of the Convention, the Committee recommends that, with a view to facilitating analysis of the situation of children, the State party strengthen its data-collection system and ensure that it encompasses all the rights covered by the Convention and the Optional Protocols thereto and that the data are disaggregated by age, sex, disability, geographical location, socioeconomic background and national or ethnic origin, inter alia, with particular attention paid to Indigenous, Afro-Ecuadorian and Montubio children and children who are victims of any kind of violence.

Access to justice and remedies

11. The Committee recommends that the State party:

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

(b) Take measures to ensure the effective implementation of the Ecuadorian Protocol for Forensic Interviewing through Specialized Listening to Child and Adolescent Victims of Sexual Violence;

(c) Ensure systematic and mandatory training on children's rights for police officers, prosecutors, judges and prison staff.

Independent monitoring

12. While welcoming the establishment of a mechanism for the promotion and protection of children's rights within the Office of the Ombudsperson, the Committee recommends that the State party strengthen its capacities, with sufficient human, technical and financial resources, to receive, investigate and address complaints from children in a child-sensitive manner.

Dissemination of the Convention and awareness-raising

13. The Committee recommends that the State party strengthen its awareness-raising programmes, including campaigns, in cooperation with civil society organizations, to ensure that the Convention and the Optional Protocols thereto are widely known by the general public, including children, families, caregivers, public servants, media professionals and all people working with and for children.

Cooperation with civil society

14. The Committee urges the State party:

(a) To adopt concrete measures for the protection of human rights and environmental defenders, including human rights defenders working on children's rights;

(b) To condemn the stigmatization of and threats and attacks against human rights and environmental defenders, with priority given to acts occurring in the coastal region, and ensure the prosecution of these acts in a timely and efficient manner.

Children's rights and the business sector

15. Recalling its general comment No. 16 (2013) on State obligations regarding the impact of the business sector on children's rights, the Guiding Principles on Business

and Human Rights, endorsed by the Human Rights Council in 2011, and its previous recommendations, the Committee further recommends that the State party:

(a) Establish and implement a regulatory framework to ensure that industries and businesses operating in or managed from the State party respect international and national standards for the protection of children's rights, such that their activities do not negatively affect children or endanger environmental, health, labour or other human rights-related legislation;

(b) Require companies to undertake assessments of and consultations on the impact of their business activities on children's rights, in particular the rights of Indigenous children, and to disclose publicly and completely the results and their plans to address these results.

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

Non-discrimination

16. The Committee is deeply concerned about the pervasive structural discrimination against children based on their ethnic origin or gender and in particular:

(a) Unequal access to basic services for Indigenous, Afro-Ecuadorian and Montubio children, especially those living in rural and border areas;

(b) Girls being subjected to sexual abuse without access to justice and remedies;

(c) The stigmatization of and hate speech against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children.

17. The Committee recalls its previous concluding observations⁶ and urges the State party:

(a) To adopt special measures aimed at eliminating the disparities in children's access to food, education and health services, in particular those affecting Indigenous, Afro-Ecuadorian and Montubio children, children with disabilities, children from vulnerable families and migrant children from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela;

(b) To adopt policies and measures to end historical and structural discrimination against Indigenous, Afro-Ecuadorian and Montubio children, by addressing the root causes thereof;

(c) To implement measures aimed at modifying gender stereotypes to prevent and eliminate structural discrimination against girls and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children in all areas of life.

Best interests of the child

18. Recalling its general comment No. 14 (2013) on the right of the child to have his or her best interests taken as a primary consideration, and recalling its previous concluding observations,⁷ the Committee recommends that the State party ensure that the right of children to have their best interests taken as a primary consideration is appropriately integrated into and consistently interpreted and applied in all legislative, administrative and judicial proceedings and decisions and all policies, programmes and projects that are relevant to, and have an impact on, children.

Right to life, survival and development

19. The Committee is seriously concerned about the increasing rates of violent homicides of children and child disappearances and urges the State party:

⁶ Ibid., para. 13.

⁷ Ibid., para. 17.

(a) To address deaths of children, in particular in areas of military operations, ensure that those accountable are properly investigated, prosecuted and brought to justice and take measures to prevent such occurrences;

(b) To strengthen its mechanisms to track down and identify children who have gone missing, and to take immediate and effective measures to prevent children from going missing, addressing the root causes of such occurrences;

(c) To investigate all allegations of violations of children's rights committed by the police or military forces, such as the killing of four Afro-Ecuadorian children in the Las Malvinas area of the city of Guayaquil in December 2024, to prosecute and convict the perpetrators and impose on them punishments commensurate with the gravity of the crimes committed, and to adopt measures to guarantee non-repetition and effective remedies and adequate reparations for the victims.

Respect for the views of the child

20. Recalling its general comment No. 12 (2009) on the right of the child to be heard, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Explicitly codify the right of children to be heard in all legal and administrative proceedings that affect them, and ensure the effective implementation of existing protocols for this purpose and of mandatory training for professionals working with and for children;

(b) Promote the meaningful participation of all children in matters affecting them in all regions and provinces of the country, with particular attention paid to girls and Indigenous, Afro-Ecuadorian and Montubio children;

(c) Strengthen and expand the coverage of the National Consultative Council for Children and Adolescents and the cantonal consultative councils for children and adolescents, ensuring the provision of adequate human, technical and financial resources;

(d) Take the measures necessary to facilitate children's effective engagement with national legislative processes on issues that affect them, such as the updating of the Code on Children and Adolescents.

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

Birth registration

21. While noting the establishment of mobile units to ensure birth registration, the Committee urges the State party:

(a) To adopt an action plan to achieve universal birth registration in rural, coastal and border areas, with an emphasis on the Provinces of Guayas, Manabí and Esmeraldas;

(b) To conduct a thorough assessment of the impact of the mobile units with a view to improving their services and expanding their territorial coverage to areas in which there have been persistent gaps, and provide sufficient human, technical and financial resources for their activities;

(c) To adopt measures to retroactively issue birth certificates in cases of late birth registration or loss of an original birth certificate.

Right to identity

22. Recalling its previous recommendation,⁸ the Committee urges the State party to prevent arbitrary modification of children's names.

⁸ Ibid., para. 20 (c).

Freedom of expression and freedom of association and peaceful assembly

23. **Recalling its previous recommendations,⁹ the Committee urges the State party:**

(a) **To prevent the arbitrary restrictions of the freedom of peaceful assembly, and disproportionate use of force, including by ensuring the expeditious adoption of the National Police instructions on the situation of children and adolescents in the context of demonstrations, and to establish training and awareness-raising programmes for police officers in this area, including in the context of the state of emergency;**

(b) **To investigate the facts reported by the Special Commission for Truth and Justice concerning violations of the personal integrity of children and adolescents during the protests of 2019 and 2022, including the allegations of extrajudicial executions, and ensure that those accountable are properly investigated, prosecuted and brought to justice;**

(c) **To adopt measures to prevent discriminatory and racist attitudes against Indigenous children, including awareness-raising campaigns, and establish simple and accessible complaint mechanisms to combat hate speech, especially in the context of social protests;**

(d) **To address the anti-human rights discourse and the threats against and stigmatization of human rights defenders, including those working on children's rights, by strengthening measures to protect them and establishing a positive environment for their work.**

Access to appropriate information

24. **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) **Adopt legislative measures that provide relevant administrative entities with sufficient human, technical and financial resources for the protection of children from violence and harmful information and products in the digital environment, including by granting them the authority to adopt measures without prior judicial authorization;**

(b) **Promote and strengthen programmes and policies that expand Internet access, especially among rural households and Indigenous, Afro-Ecuadorian and Montubio households, and increase the budget for financing such programmes and policies, in order to reduce existing digital divides, and implement initiatives to reduce digital illiteracy through training and digital literacy programmes.**

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

Abuse, neglect, sexual abuse and exploitation

25. While noting the National Plan for the Prevention of Violence against Children and Adolescents and the Promotion of Positive Parenting of 2018, the National Policy on Coexistence at School of 2021 and the amended Organic Act on Intercultural Education, the Committee remains seriously concerned about:

(a) The lack of effective implementation of relevant plans and policies, which fuels feelings of lack of safety for children in their neighbourhoods, streets and schools, as expressed by children themselves;

(b) The incidence of gender-based violence in the social, educational and family spheres, which is higher among adolescents than in other age groups, and the insufficient remedies for children orphaned by femicide, the rate of which is increasing;

⁹ Ibid., para. 21.

(c) The high rate of underreporting of cases of the sexual abuse of children by professionals and alarming rates of impunity that create a lack of trust in institutions and a normalization of violence;

(d) The complete lack of measures adopted to implement the 2020 judgment issued by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in the case of *Guzmán Albarracín et al. v. Ecuador*;

(e) The lack of measures to address the non-cooperation of the Catholic Church with investigations of the sexual abuse of children by Catholic clergy;

(f) The lack of appropriate remedies and services for children who are victims of sexual abuse;

(g) The lack of public campaigns to raise awareness among families and the public of the harm caused by sexual abuse of children.

26. With reference to its general comment No. 13 (2011) on the right of the child to freedom from all forms of violence, the Committee urges the State party:

(a) To reinforce the implementation of policies and plans for the prevention and combating of all forms of violence against children, addressing their root causes and adopting mechanisms for intersectoral coordination with other systems, such as the judicial system and the Decentralized National System for the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents, and at the local level with the autonomous decentralized governments;

(b) To establish a national unified information system on children who are victims of violence, including sexual abuse, disaggregated by age, gender and ethnic self-identification, inter alia;

(c) To reinforce the implementation of the Comprehensive National System for the Prevention and Eradication of Violence against Women with regard to girls and speedily adopt and implement the public policy on comprehensive reparation for girls who are victims of violence, including domestic violence and femicide;

(d) To strengthen accessible reporting and assistance mechanisms for children who are victims of violence, especially in rural areas and for groups in situations of vulnerability;

(e) To ensure the accountability of medical personnel, teachers and other school staff for non-reporting of sexual abuse of children;

(f) To speedily implement the 2020 judgment issued by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in the case of *Guzmán Albarracín et al. v. Ecuador* and develop training modules for prosecutors and judges to address the alarming levels of impunity in similar cases;

(g) To implement comprehensive measures to prevent and address peer violence in educational settings, including school coexistence programmes, a culture of peace, teacher training, psychosocial care, rehabilitation and health services, including mental health services, and complaint, redress and counselling mechanisms for students;

(h) To establish an independent truth commission to thoroughly investigate cases of sexual abuse perpetrated by clergy of the Catholic Church;

(i) To ensure that all cases of the abuse of children, including sexual abuse and online sexual abuse, are promptly reported and investigated, applying a child-friendly, multisectoral approach, with the aim of avoiding the revictimization of the child, prosecuting and duly sanctioning perpetrators and ensuring that the victims receive adequate reparation, as appropriate;

(j) To allocate sufficient resources to provide child-friendly and comprehensive trauma support services to children who are victims of abuse;

(k) To promote awareness-raising and training measures in order to eradicate the normalization of violence against children and adolescents.

Corporal punishment

27. Recalling its previous recommendations and its general comment No. 8 (2006) on the right of the child to protection from corporal punishment and other cruel or degrading forms of punishment, the Committee urges the State party:

(a) To ensure that, once adopted, the updated Code on Children and Adolescents prohibits corporal punishment in all settings, including in the home, schools, childcare institutions, alternative care settings and penal institutions;

(b) To develop awareness-raising campaigns aimed at eradicating corporal punishment in a manner that responds to cultural specificities.

Harmful practices

28. While noting the information provided by the State party about the amendment in 2015 of article 83 of the Civil Code, setting the minimum age for marriage at 18 years, and article 222 of the Civil Code, which requires unmarried persons living in unions to be at least 18 years old, the Committee is concerned about the high number of girls entering unions. 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:

(a) Adopt a nationwide comprehensive strategy and plan of action to end child marriage, with a focus on addressing cultural, social and economic risk factors;

(b) Develop awareness-raising campaigns and programmes on the harmful effects of child marriage and unions on the physical and mental health and well-being of girls, targeting households, local authorities, judges and prosecutors;

(c) Establish protection schemes for victims of child and forced marriage and provide legal, psychological and social support to victims.

Torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment

29. Concerned about allegations of arbitrary detention, torture, ill-treatment and enforced disappearance in the context of the declaration of the state of emergency recognizing the existence of an “internal armed conflict”, and 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) Enforce the prohibition of torture and ensure that all allegations of arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance and torture committed by the security forces or the military, including those related to the Las Malvinas case and including those that occur in institutions where children are deprived of liberty, are duly investigated and punished and that children who are victims receive effective remedies;

(b) Ensure the adequate and regular monitoring of rehabilitation centres for children deprived of liberty by independent observers and the National Mechanism for the Prevention of Torture of the Office of the Ombudsperson.

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

30. The Committee regrets the lack of information on the implementation of its concluding observations on the initial report of the State party submitted under article 12 of the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.¹⁰ Recalling its 2019 guidelines regarding the implementation of the Optional Protocol,¹¹ and its concluding observations on the initial report of the State party submitted under article 12 of the Optional Protocol, the Committee urges the

¹⁰ CRC/C/OPSC/ECU/CO/1.

¹¹ CRC/C/156.

State party to take the measures necessary for the implementation of its recommendations, in particular:

- (a) To strengthen tools for the collection of data on victims of crimes under the Optional Protocol;**
- (b) To conduct public awareness campaigns to increase the visibility of the crimes under the Optional Protocol, in particular the sale of children in the context of child marriage, and promote the reporting of such crimes;**
- (c) To ensure that perpetrators are brought to justice and that victims have access to remedies, including appropriate compensation and gender-sensitive recovery and reintegration.**

Gang violence

31. The Committee is deeply concerned about:

- (a) The increasing deterioration in security, the worsening climate of fear, and increased threats and violence linked to gang violence;**
- (b) The increase in homicides of children;**
- (c) The impact on children's rights, in particular the rights of Indigenous, Afro-Ecuadorian and Montubio children, of the declaration of the state of emergency and the use of military forces to ensure public security.**

32. **Recalling its general comment No. 24 (2019) on children's rights in the child justice system, the Committee urges the State party:**

- (a) To implement a comprehensive plan for prevention of the recruitment and use of children and adolescents by gangs and organized crime groups, addressing risk factors such as poverty, lack of opportunities, violence in the child's environment and family disintegration;**
- (b) To prioritize early intervention measures and strengthen protection and security mechanisms in schools, guaranteeing safe environments for the learning and development of students, without militarizing educational spaces, in particular in coastal and northern regions and in detention centres;**
- (c) To amend the Comprehensive Organic Criminal Code to establish the recruitment or use of children by gangs or organized crime groups as a separate crime from trafficking;**
- (d) To establish effective programmes to provide children who are gang members with a safe way to exit them and be reintegrated into society;**
- (e) To ensure that security policies, such as the "Phoenix Plan", are evaluated, updated and implemented in full compliance with the Convention and the Optional Protocols thereto.**

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

Family environment

33. The Committee recommends that the State party strengthen its policies and investments to actively promote co-responsible and positive parenting skills for parents, caregivers, families and communities, with a gender, intercultural and intersectional approach and with a focus on the evolving capacities of children and non-violent and participatory forms of child-rearing and discipline.

Children deprived of a family environment

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

(a) Phase out institutionalization and adopt, without delay, a strategy and action plan for the deinstitutionalization and social reintegration of children deprived of a family environment;

(b) Ensure the effective implementation of current legal provisions relating to family support, family custody and foster care, notably by securing sufficient human, technical and financial resources and expanding the coverage of alternative care modalities;

(c) Strengthen the capacity of professionals working with families and children, in particular family judges, law enforcement personnel, social workers and other providers of services to children, to ensure family-based alternative care responses and to enhance their awareness of the rights and needs of children deprived of a family environment.

Adoption

35. The Committee recommends that the State party take measures to accelerate the adoption process, notably by increasing the number of family judges and ensuring adequately trained professionals in foster care facilities.

F. Children with disabilities (art. 23)

36. The Committee recalls its general comment No. 9 (2006) on the rights of children with disabilities and urges the State party to adopt a human rights-based approach to disability and set up a comprehensive strategy for the inclusion of children with disabilities. It further recommends that the State party:

(a) Take urgent measures to provide sufficient human, technical and financial resources to ensure the effective implementation of the Organic Act on Disabilities, including specific measures to guarantee access to healthcare for those living in rural and border areas;

(b) Strengthen the collection of data on children with disabilities to establish an efficient and harmonized system for disability assessment, in order to facilitate access by all children with disabilities to all services that they may require.

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

Health and health services

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

(a) Adopt a comprehensive strategy to ensure equal access to essential health services, in particular with regard to children living in marginalized situations;

(b) Maintain and strengthen measures to achieve universal vaccination coverage, such as the 2023 national vaccination campaign to eradicate polio, measles and rubella;

(c) Maintain and strengthen the “Ecuador Grows without Child Malnutrition” strategy, including by providing nutrition support and counselling for breastfeeding mothers;

(d) Strengthen measures to prevent and treat anaemia, diarrhoea and respiratory diseases in children under 5 years of age in areas of high prevalence.

Breastfeeding

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

(a) **Fully implement the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes, develop a national programme for the protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding through comprehensive campaigns and adopt all measures necessary for promoting exclusive breastfeeding for at least six months, with appropriate guidance and support for mothers;**

(b) **Provide appropriate support to mothers through counselling teams in hospitals, clinics and the community and implement the baby-friendly hospital initiative throughout the country.**

Mental health

39. **The Committee recommends that the State party complete and adopt, as a matter of urgency, the national mental health policy and the national suicide prevention strategy under development, and provide sufficient human, technical and financial resources for their effective implementation.**

Adolescent health

40. The Committee is deeply concerned about existing gaps in equal access to health services despite the efforts made by the State party, in particular regarding the persistently high rates of pregnancy in girls and adolescents.

41. **Recalling its general comment No. 4 (2003) on adolescent health and development in the context of the Convention and general comment No. 20 (2016) on the implementation of the rights of the child during adolescence, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Adopt a comprehensive sexual and reproductive health policy for adolescents and, in that framework, evaluate and, on the basis of the evaluation, renew the National Sexual and Reproductive Health Plan (2017–2021);**

(b) **Ensure that sexual and reproductive health education is part of the mandatory school curriculum and targeted at adolescents, with special attention paid to preventing early pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections;**

(c) **Expand the Intersectoral Policy for the Prevention of Pregnancy in Girls and Adolescents (2018–2025) to ensure that all children and adolescents receive confidential, child-friendly and culturally sensitive sexual and reproductive health information and services, including access to contraceptives;**

(d) **Revise the Organic Act on the Voluntary Termination of Pregnancy for Girls, Adolescents and Women in Cases of Rape adopted in 2022, to decriminalize abortion in all circumstances and ensure access to safe abortion and post-abortion care services for adolescent girls, making sure that their views are always heard and given due consideration as part of the decision-making process.**

Drug and other substance abuse

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

(a) **Strengthen the implementation of the National Plan for the Comprehensive Prevention and Control of the Socioeconomic Issue of Drugs (2023–2025), notably by recognizing the incidence of drug use by children and adolescents as a public health issue;**

(b) **Provide children and adolescents with accurate and objective information and life skills education on preventing substance abuse, including tobacco and alcohol abuse, and implement accessible and youth-friendly drug dependence treatment, free of charge when necessary.**

HIV/AIDS

43. **Recalling its general comment No. 3 (2003) on HIV/AIDS and the rights of the child, the Committee recommends that the State party evaluate and renew the National Multisectoral Strategic Plan on HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections (2018–2022) and adopt measures:**

(a) **To improve follow-up treatment for mothers living with HIV/AIDS and their infants to ensure early diagnosis and early initiation of treatment;**

(b) **To review and harmonize laws and policies on HIV/AIDS with those on sexual and reproductive health for adolescents, with a view to ensuring that adolescents have access to confidential HIV testing and counselling services without the need for parental consent, and that professionals providing such services fully respect the rights of adolescents to privacy and non-discrimination;**

(c) **To improve access to and coverage of antiretroviral therapy and prophylaxis for pregnant women living with HIV.**

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

44. The Committee is deeply concerned about the structural and pervasive poverty disproportionately affecting children, in particular Indigenous, Afro-Ecuadorian and Montubio children and those living in rural areas, and in particular about the lack of access to water, sanitation and social protection.

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

(a) **Prioritize the provision of drinking water and environmental sanitation as well as access to and the availability and affordability of food and housing for children living in Indigenous, Afro-Ecuadorian, Montubio and rural households, as well as in poor urban areas;**

(b) **Ensure that children and their families living in poverty receive adequate financial support and free, accessible services without discrimination, notably by strengthening and expanding the coverage of the Social Registry, with periodic updates;**

(c) **Consider holding targeted consultations on child poverty with civil society organizations working on issues relating to families, children and children's rights.**

I. Children's rights and the environment (arts. 2, 3, 6, 12, 13, 15, 17, 19, 24 and 26–31)**Impact of environmental harm and climate change on children's rights**

46. While noting the constitutional recognition of the right to a healthy environment and of the rights of nature as a means to prevent environmental and climate harm to children's rights, the Committee remains deeply concerned about the negative effects of environmental deterioration on children's health. The Committee is also concerned about the negative impact on children of pollution caused by extractive industries, illegal mining and the irregular diversion of water channels, as practised notably by shrimp and palm oil companies in the coastal region.

47. **Recalling its general comment No. 26 (2023) on children's rights and the environment, with a special focus on climate change, and taking note of the environmental protection legislation of the State party, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Conduct a comprehensive assessment of the effects of polluted air, water and soil and electromagnetic pollution on children's health as a basic requirement for designing a well-resourced strategy to remedy the situation, and regulate the maximum permissible concentrations of air and water pollutants;**

- (b) **Implement environmental health standards, indicators and definitions set by the World Health Organization;**
- (c) **Develop a national plan to monitor children's rights in the context of environmental harm and deterioration, conduct an assessment of risks, and develop and implement measures to address the most urgent concerns, such as the need for timely clean-up of contaminated sites;**
- (d) **Ensure that health professionals receive training in the diagnosis and treatment of health impacts related to environmental harm;**
- (e) **Ensure that children's special needs and views are identified and duly taken into account in developing and monitoring scientific evidence-based policies and programmes to address climate change and disaster risk management;**
- (f) **Ensure that child rights impact assessments are conducted to inform the development and implementation of policies and programmes to address climate change, including in the context of the country's second nationally determined contribution under the Paris Agreement;**
- (g) **Develop a comprehensive strategy for capacity-building at the national, provincial and local levels to ensure the meaningful participation of children in policies to prevent environmental and climate change-related harm;**
- (h) **Increase children's awareness and preparedness for climate change and natural disasters by incorporating the topic into the school curriculum and teacher training programmes.**

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

Aims and coverage of education

48. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**
- (a) **Ensure that all children have access to free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education, leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes;**
 - (b) **Ensure that pregnant adolescents and adolescent mothers are, without exception, supported and assisted in continuing their education in mainstream schools;**
 - (c) **Allocate sufficient financial resources for the development and expansion of early childhood education, based on a comprehensive policy of early childhood care and development.**

Quality of education

49. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**
- (a) **Strengthen the quality of education, ensuring the availability of qualified teachers and providing high-quality pre-service and in-service training;**
 - (b) **Ensure that schools are fully and safely accessible to all, free from all forms of discrimination and violence against children;**
 - (c) **Ensure that all schools are equipped with modern and adequate infrastructure and educational technologies;**
 - (d) **Allocate sufficient financial resources for the development and expansion of early childhood education, based on a comprehensive and holistic policy of early childhood care and development that encompasses all children.**

Human rights education

50. **The Committee recommends that the State party ensure that human rights education and the principles of the Convention are integrated into the mandatory curricula for primary, secondary and tertiary education and vocational training, and**

into training programmes for teachers and education professionals, taking into account the framework of the World Programme for Human Rights Education.

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

51. 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 its efforts to guarantee the right of the child to rest and leisure and to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age and the culture of the child, including by adopting and implementing play and leisure legislation and policies with sufficient and sustainable resources.

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

Asylum-seeking, refugee and migrant children

52. Recalling joint general comments No. 3 and No. 4 of the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families/No. 22 and No. 23 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (2017) on the human rights of children in the context of international migration and its general comment No. 6 (2005) on the treatment of unaccompanied and separated children outside their country of origin, the Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Take immediate measures for the effective implementation throughout the national territory of the protocol for the comprehensive care of non-national children and adolescents in a situation of human mobility;
- (b) Ensure the implementation of the technical standard on providing assistance to children in emergency situations;
- (c) Strengthen interministerial coordination with sufficient human, technical and financial resources to enable the effective functioning of the local protection boards and the care services established in a number of cities;
- (d) Process cases involving unaccompanied asylum-seeking and refugee children, in particular children from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, in a positive, humane and expeditious manner as a means of identifying durable solutions, including the facilitation of regularization processes, in line with article 10 (1) of the Convention, in particular for children of single-parent families;
- (e) Redouble its efforts to combat and prevent discrimination and xenophobic speech and acts against migrant and refugee children, particularly from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, and to promote the integration and protection of children in host communities.

Indigenous, Afro-Ecuadorian and Montubio children

53. Recalling its general comment No. 11 (2009) on Indigenous children and their rights under the Convention, the Committee urges the State party:

- (a) To put in place measures for early detection and timely interventions in cases of conflict in areas traditionally owned or currently inhabited by Indigenous Peoples, adversely affecting Indigenous children's rights, through peaceful dispute resolution measures and other measures to this end;
- (b) To consult and cooperate in good faith with the Indigenous Peoples concerned, including Indigenous children, to systematically obtain their free, prior and informed consent before adopting and implementing legislative or administrative measures that may affect them and to provide effective remedies in cases of violation of their rights;

(c) To ensure that all Indigenous, Afro-Ecuadorian and Montubio children have access to culturally sensitive health services, bilingual intercultural education and ethnic education, including by ensuring the effective implementation of the National Strategic Plan on Afro-Ecuadorian Ethno-Education 2020–2025 and its renewal.

Children in street situations

54. The Committee is concerned about the lack of adequate measures to promote and protect the rights of children who are in street situations, including as a result of abuse and violence by law enforcement officials and gangs and other non-State groups. Drawing attention to its general comment No. 21 (2017) on children in street situations, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Conduct a census of children living and/or working on the streets, update studies on the root causes of their situations and promptly adopt medium- and long-term measures to address them;

(b) Adopt urgent measures to prevent the institutionalization, criminalization and harassment of children in street situations and their recruitment by non-State armed groups, including gangs;

(c) Adopt measures to reintegrate children in street situations with their families or place them in alternative care, ensuring full respect for children's best interests and giving due weight to their views in accordance with their age and maturity;

(d) Investigate and address violations of the rights of children in street situations by law enforcement officials and gangs and other non-State groups.

Economic exploitation, including child labour

55. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Eliminate the worst forms of child labour, in particular where children are exposed to environmental risk factors, promote safer alternatives and ensure monitoring of the children affected;

(b) Adopt specific and culturally sensitive measures to address child labour among Indigenous Peoples, avoiding stigmatization and addressing its economic and social root causes;

(c) Continue to take actions to ensure that children who are victims of modern slavery, child labour and child exploitation, as in the Furukawa company case, obtain legal remedies and reparation.

Administration of child justice

56. Recalling its general comment No. 24 (2019) on children's rights in the child justice system, the Committee urges the State party to bring its child justice system fully into line with the Convention and other relevant international rules and principles. In particular, the Committee urges the State party:

(a) To expeditiously and fully implement Decision No. 152-2019 of the Council of the Judiciary to strengthen the specialized juvenile justice system, including by implementing specialized procedures and increasing the number of child court facilities, ensuring adequate human, technical and financial resources;

(b) To maintain the legal age of criminal responsibility at 14 years of age;

(c) To repeal any initiative aimed at making children liable on the same basis as adults for serious crimes, such as kidnapping for ransom, organized crime and terrorism;

(d) To ensure the provision of free and specialized legal aid for children alleged as, accused of or recognized as having infringed the criminal law at an early stage of the procedure and throughout the legal proceedings;

(e) To actively promote non-judicial measures, such as diversion and mediation, for children alleged as, accused of or recognized as having infringed the criminal law;

(f) To promote, wherever possible, the use of non-custodial sentences for children, such as probation or community service, or mechanisms of dejudicialization, and ensure that health and psychosocial services are provided to children in contact with the justice system;

(g) To ensure that detention is used as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time and is reviewed on a regular basis with a view to the child's release;

(h) To ensure, for the few situations where deprivation of liberty is justified as a measure of last resort, that children are not detained together with adults and that detention conditions are compliant with international standards, including with regard to access to education and health services.

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

57. Recalling its previous concluding observations on the initial report of the State party submitted under article 8 of the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict,¹² and noting the disaggregated data on migrant children seeking international protection coming from conflict areas where they were at risk of recruitment, the Committee recommends that the State party take all necessary measures, including the careful assessment of the situation of asylum-seeking children coming from conflict areas who may have been recruited or used in hostilities, the reinforcement of the legal advisory services available to them and the provision of immediate, culturally responsive, child- and gender-sensitive and multidisciplinary assistance, to ensure that such children are provided with physical and psychological recovery services and have access to rehabilitation and reintegration programmes.

58. The Committee takes note of Presidential Decree No. 111 of 9 January 2024 declaring a state of emergency because of the existence of an "internal armed conflict" in Ecuador and recommends that the State party ensure that the implementation of that and related decrees does not violate the rights of the child as recognized in the Convention and the Optional Protocols thereto.

L. Cooperation with regional bodies

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

IV. Implementation and reporting

A. Follow-up and dissemination

60. The Committee recommends that the State party take all appropriate measures to ensure that the recommendations contained in the present concluding observations are fully implemented and that a child-friendly version is disseminated to, and made widely accessible for, children, including those in the most disadvantaged situations. The Committee also recommends that the seventh periodic report and the present concluding observations be made widely available in the languages of the country.

¹² [CRC/C/OPAC/ECU/CO/1](#).

B. Next report

61. The Committee will establish and communicate the due date of the combined eighth and ninth periodic reports of the State party in due course, in line with the envisaged predictable reporting calendar, and following the adoption of a list of issues and questions prior to reporting, if applicable, for the State party. The reports should be in compliance with the Committee's harmonized treaty-specific reporting guidelines¹³ and should not exceed 21,200 words.¹⁴ In the event that reports exceeding the established word limit are submitted, the State party will be asked to shorten the reports. If the State party is not in a position to review and resubmit the reports, translation thereof for the purposes of consideration by the Committee cannot be guaranteed.

¹³ [CRC/C/58/Rev.3](#).

¹⁴ General Assembly resolution 68/268, para. 16.