



Convention on the Rights of the Child

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Committee on the Rights of the Child

Combined sixth and seventh periodic reports submitted by Mexico under article 44 of the Convention, due in 2020^{*}, ^{**}

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* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

** The annexes to the present report may be accessed from the web page of the Committee.



Introduction

1. Mexico ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child on 21 September 1990. On the basis of that ratification, the General Act on the Rights of Children and Adolescents was enacted in 2014, which recognizes children and adolescents as rights holders, establishes measures to protect those rights and restore them when they are violated, and requires all those involved in upholding them to coordinate and cooperate by integrating protection systems at all levels of government.
2. Progress has since been made in coordinating a national policy for the comprehensive protection of the rights of more than 40 million children and adolescents, through institution-building, systemic coordination, the development of programmes and public policies, regulatory change, judicial decisions, capacity-building, information-gathering, disseminating information on rights and heightening the visibility of this agenda in Mexico.
3. In accordance with article 44 of the Convention, the country has submitted and defended five periodic reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. It has also presented and defended its initial reports on the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.
4. Pursuant to the Treaty-specific guidelines regarding the form and content of periodic reports to be submitted by States parties under article 44, paragraph 1 (b), of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted by the Committee at its sixty-fifth session (CRC/C/58/Rev.3), the combined sixth and seventh reports of Mexico regarding the implementation of the Convention cover the progress made by Mexico between 2015 and 2020.
5. The eleven sections of the present report highlight strategies, activities, measures and programmes that have been implemented to give effect to the Convention and the Committee's recommendations. The report was prepared by the Commission for Follow-up of the Recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, which was established for this purpose as part of the National System for the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents. Federal and state authorities¹ participate in its preparation, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs provides coordination and the Executive Secretariat of the National System performs the technical work. The report also contains information from the equivalent state-level commissions established for the same purpose.
6. Thanks to the participation of the state-level systems in the preparation of the present report, a national perspective can be provided on the status of respect for the rights of this population group for the first time. Notably, consultations were undertaken with civil society organizations, academia and international organizations, as well as with 2,752 adolescents from organized groups in 29 federative entities² and 271 children and adolescents from specific highly vulnerable groups, such as those in alternative care settings, Indigenous persons with disabilities, and victims of violence. Their opinions have been included at the beginning of each section to highlight the progress and challenges they identified.
7. Supplementary information is provided by the following: (1) statistical annex with updated information; (2) annex on the measures taken by the states; (3) annex on the consultations undertaken with children and adolescents for the preparation of the present report; (4) annex on the consultations undertaken with civil society organizations, academia and international organizations; and (5) annex on training. Lastly, in response to the prolonged health emergency resulting from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic,

¹ Thirty-six agencies from the federal administration, the legislative branch, the judicial branch and the executive secretariats of the 32 state-level systems for the comprehensive protection of children and adolescents, and civil society organizations.

² Throughout the report, the terms "states" and "federative entities" are used to refer to the 32 members of the federal State.

there is a sixth annex on measures taken to protect the rights of children and adolescents in the context of the pandemic.

I. General measures of implementation (arts. 4, 42 and 44 of the Convention)

A. Measures taken to bring domestic legislation and practice fully into line with the Convention and its Optional Protocols

8. One year after the publication of the General Act on the Rights of Children and Adolescents, 31 state laws on the rights of children and adolescents were published and entered into force.³ Implementing regulations for the Act were adopted and published in December 2015. The 32 sets of implementing regulations for the state laws were also published. In addition, the National System for the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents adopted legal instruments at the administrative level to establish its operation.⁴

9. In order to work towards harmonizing the Mexican legal framework with the General Act, over the past five years the federal and state legislatures⁵ have published several laws and made amendments that help uphold the rights of children and adolescents.

10. Some of the most significant legislative advances that address the Committee's recommendations are the amendments of May 2019 to articles 3, 31 and 73 of the Constitution. These amendments recognize early childhood education as part of basic education, require the development and implementation of a national strategy on early childhood and a national strategy on inclusive education, and require the publication of a new General Education Act.⁶

11. In December 2020, work began on an amendment to articles 4 and 73 of the Constitution, which requires the creation of a national care system. Once completed, it will promote organizational development that will benefit children and adolescents, their parents and their caregivers.

12. With regard to criminal matters, the National Act on the Comprehensive Criminal Justice System for Adolescents was published in June 2016, which replaces the tutelary and inquisitorial system with an adversarial system that protects the rights of children and adolescents.

13. In the area of migration, based on the General Act on the Rights of Children and Adolescents, the Migration Act and the Refugees, Complementary Protection and Political Asylum Act were amended in November 2020 to provide that child and adolescent migrants and asylum-seekers may not be detained in migrant holding centres, and that immediate action must be taken by offices for the protection of children and adolescents as soon as their entry into Mexico is detected.

14. In accordance with the Committee's numerous recommendations, child marriage was completely banned throughout the country; all remaining administrative or judicial dispensations and exceptions were abolished, as well as the provisions relating to emancipation.

15. In November 2019, amendments and additions to the General Health Act were published, which covered the areas of overweight, obesity and warning labels on food and non-alcoholic beverages. As a result, work has begun on amending state laws to prohibit the

³ The state of Coahuila already had a law in place prior to the entry into force of the General Act on the Rights of Children and Adolescents.

⁴ See <https://www.gob.mx/sipinna#1964>.

⁵ The main legislative developments at the state level are set out in annex 2.

⁶ Published on 30 September 2019.

sale of unhealthy products to children and adolescents, and the impact of these prohibitions on their progressive autonomy is being analysed.

16. The national legal framework continues to be harmonized with the General Act on the Rights of Children and Adolescents, with the aim of achieving its implementation in all areas.

B. Whether a comprehensive national strategy and corresponding plan or plans of action for children have been adopted

17. Mexico, as required by the General Act on the Rights of Children and Adolescents, designed and implemented the National Programme for the Protection of Children and Adolescents. This is a federal programme that coordinates institutional efforts and public policy to ensure that the human rights of children and adolescents are fully exercised, upheld, protected and promoted. The Programme is based on the Convention and on the Committee's recommendations, and children, adolescents and representatives of the public, private and social sectors participated in its design.

18. In the context of implementation of the National Programme for the Protection of Children and Adolescents for the period 2016–2018,⁷ 35 agencies coordinated different federal offices and progress was achieved in 88 per cent of the Programme's lines of action and in the indicators relating to upholding the right to a life free of violence, by reducing the percentage of hospital admissions due to injuries, by prohibiting child marriage and by criminalizing grooming, and in the indicator relating to the participation of children and adolescents, by institutionalizing governmental mechanisms through which they can express their views and make suggestions for the design of public policies. The recommendations issued by the National Council for the Evaluation of Social Development Policy in its evaluation were taken up during the preparation of the National Programme for the Protection of Children and Adolescents for the period 2020–2024,⁸ based on the four pillars set out in the Convention.

19. There are 17 state programmes for the protection of children and adolescents published and in force, and 154 municipal programmes, which take up the strategies and priority lines of action of the National Programme for the Protection of Children and Adolescents for the periods 2016–2018 and 2020–2024. Progress is therefore being made in mainstreaming children's and adolescents' rights in all action taken by state and municipal authorities.

20. In addition to the national and state plans, the National Early Childhood Strategy was published in March 2020 with the aim of developing a national policy for children under 6 years of age. Its guiding framework, the comprehensive care pathway, provides for a package of public services and care for comprehensive early childhood development. It is coordinated by the Early Childhood Commission of the National System for the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents. A number of programmatic, budgetary and management tools are provided for its implementation. Of particular note are the implementation measures adopted in states such as Jalisco, Chihuahua and Sinaloa.⁹

21. Consistent with its commitment to the fulfilment of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Government of Mexico approved an instrument setting out 25 national goals on the rights of children and adolescents, with targets to be achieved by 2025. The instrument coordinates the measures taken by institutions to fulfil those rights, based on indicators and targets that are aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals and are also found in the National Strategy for the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

⁷ See http://www.dof.gob.mx/nota_detalle.php?codigo=5494057&fecha=16/08/2017.

⁸ To be published.

⁹ Annex 2.

C. The government authority with overall responsibility for coordinating implementation of the Convention and its Optional Protocols

22. In compliance with the General Act on the Rights of Children and Adolescents, the National System for the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents was established in December 2015 as the basis for designing and coordinating the comprehensive national policy on the rights of children and adolescents, as it is a forum for dialogue between agencies at the national level. The System is the highest-level collegiate body for decision-making on policies in this area and coordinates the respective state systems for the comprehensive protection of children and adolescents, and through them the equivalent municipal systems. It is responsible for analysing, defining and coordinating public policies, standards, institutions, actors and actions at the three levels of government. The System is chaired by the President of the Republic¹⁰ and is composed of nine Ministries, 32 state governors, three autonomous constitutional bodies and eight representatives of civil society organizations.

23. In October 2015, the Executive Secretariat of the National System for the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents was established, which is an administrative body of the Ministry of the Interior and is responsible for operational coordination of the National System. The same year, 32 state laws on the subject were passed, leading to the creation of 32 state systems for the comprehensive protection of children and adolescents and their respective executive secretariats in 2016. A total of 1,874 municipal systems for the comprehensive protection of children and adolescents were subsequently established, which are coordinated by the equivalent system at the state level. Their budget, staffing and institutional structure vary and are decided by the state government.¹¹

24. In order to advance in the determination of public policies, the National System for the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents approved the establishment of 10 working committees on specific issues,¹² which are coordinated by the authorities responsible for these issues and are composed of federal authorities, state authorities in some cases, and representatives of civil society organizations. At the state level, a further 190 working committees and groups have been set up.

25. In order to coordinate the different levels of government and national policy, mechanisms were created such as the Commission of Executive Secretariats for the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents of the National and State Systems (Commission of Executive Secretariats) of the National System for the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents and the Commission for the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents of the National Conference of State Governors, made up of the heads of the executive branch – the Governors – of the states. In addition, commissions were created to coordinate between the executive secretariats of the state and municipal systems.

26. Coordinated strategies have also been designed and implemented to strengthen the municipal systems, which make the first contact with children and adolescents, in coordination with the federative entities, by establishing actions and regulatory, institutional and programmatic goals to address priority issues such as services offering comprehensive care, support and response; budget management; and driving change in relation to their rights.

27. Concerning special protection, pursuant to the General Act on the Rights of Children and Adolescents, the Federal Office for the Protection of Children and Adolescents and 32 offices at the state level are in operation. In most states, municipal offices for the protection of children and adolescents, ombudsperson's offices or regional branches of the state offices

¹⁰ Or their alternate, the head of the Ministry of the Interior.

¹¹ Annex 1.

¹² The committees deal with the following areas: (1) follow-up of the Committee's recommendations; (2) early childhood; (3) substantive equality; (4) ending violence against children and adolescents; (5) executive secretariats of the systems for the comprehensive protection of children and adolescents; (6) special protection; (7) migration; (8) information technologies; (9) evaluation and budget; and (10) information and analysis.

were also established, most of which are first-contact authorities. The Government is working to strengthen them and provide them with sufficient resources.

28. In 2020, essential measures for the care and protection of children and adolescents during the COVID-19 pandemic were approved and subsequently expanded. The measures were implemented by the federal and state institutions making up the systems for the comprehensive protection of children and adolescents, with the aim of ensuring their access to services such as health, education, prevention and response to violence, protection and participation, thereby safeguarding their integrity and minimizing the health risks and side effects of COVID-19.¹³

Data collection

29. The Specialized Technical Committee on Information on the Comprehensive Protection of the Rights of Children and Adolescents was established under the National Institute of Statistics and Geography, an autonomous agency, and serves as an inter-agency body coordinating the collection, integration, production, processing, systematization and dissemination of data on the status of children and adolescents' rights. It has 236 indicators, which are being validated and which were used to launch the establishment of a national children and adolescents information system, as required by the General Act on the Rights of Children and Adolescents. In cooperation with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the infospinna.org platform was developed, which currently holds information on 144 indicators.

30. A total of 17 states have begun to set up their own information systems, in coordination with the national children and adolescents information system.

D. Budget allocated for the implementation of the Convention and its Optional Protocols

31. Pursuant to Mexican legislation, the resources for the care of children and adolescents must be established in annex 18 to the federal budget, which is cross-cutting in nature and is approved annually by the Chamber of Deputies. The General Act on the Rights of Children and Adolescents stipulates that all authorities must include in their budget proposals the resources needed to carry out the measures established in the Act. At the state level, for the first time, the 2020 budgets included 28 cross-cutting annexes for children and adolescents, which will help to identify the percentage of the budget that is allocated to this population group, although detailed information is still lacking.

32. Since 2018, based on a proposal by the inter-agency working group for evaluation and budgeting in the area of comprehensive protection of children and adolescents of the National System for the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents, annex 18¹⁴ has contained a classification of budget programmes disaggregated by age group and consistent with the categories of rights (development, participation, protection and survival). Annex 18 increased from 706.115 billion pesos in 2015 to 764.552 billion pesos in 2020, representing a nominal increase of 12.1 per cent. However, the resources allocated to children and adolescents decreased from 15.04 per cent of the federal budget in 2015 to 12.57 per cent for the 2021 fiscal year, owing to a restructuring of various public programmes.

33. A specific budget for early childhood was included in the federal budget for 2020 and 2021, when an allocation was made for coordination of the National Early Childhood Strategy. The amount allocated to early childhood (0–5 years of age) increased from 61.127 billion pesos in 2018 to 90.884 billion pesos in 2021; the amount allocated to childhood (6–11 years old) increased from 484.178 billion pesos to 533.845 billion pesos; and the amount allocated to adolescence (12–17 years old) increased from 161.338 billion pesos to 166.942 billion pesos.

¹³ See annex 6.

¹⁴ See https://www.transparenciapresupuestaria.gob.mx/es/PTP/Datos_Abiertos.

34. In order to determine the resources needed for the functions performed by the Federal Office for the Protection of Children and Adolescents, an extended analysis was undertaken of budget programme E041 on protection and restoration of the rights of children and adolescents. With technical assistance from UNICEF, a report on the costing of the state offices for the protection of children and adolescents was produced in 2018, which analyses the financial, material and human needs based on their powers and duties.

35. The Committee also recommended that Mexico strengthen its anti-corruption measures. In that regard, through the Ministry of the Civil Service, greater internal control mechanisms have been established within the federal administration in addition to greater coordination mechanisms in the states, in accordance with the constitutional amendment that established the national anti-corruption system.

E. International assistance and development aid

36. Mexico has signed cooperation agreements with UNICEF to work with authorities such as the Ministry of the Interior on civil registration and promotion of the rights of children and adolescents, in collaboration with the Executive Secretariat of the National System for the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents, and to work with the National System for the Comprehensive Development of the Family in such areas as food, health and education. Mexico collaborates with organizations such as UNICEF, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations to strengthen the institutional framework established at the three levels of government to protect children and adolescents.

37. Mexico has also collaborated with the Inter-American Development Bank, the World Bank and the Organization of Ibero-American States for Education, Science and Culture in the preparation of studies and exchanges on early childhood, and has received international technical assistance from the European Union in the areas of migration, adolescent pregnancy, violence and institution-building. Mexico collaborates with the Governments of Canada and Sweden on juvenile justice and on addressing violence against children and adolescents.

38. With respect to the Committee's recommendation concerning cooperation with regional bodies, the Government of Mexico maintains a permanent link with the Rapporteurship on the Rights of the Child of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights through country visits and participation in forums for dialogue and collaboration on combating violence. Mexico is also a member of the Directing Council of the Inter-American Children's Institute of the Organization of American States.

39. Mexico has played a proactive role in promoting regional dialogue between systems for the protection and promotion of children and adolescents. It organized the first inter-American forum of national systems for the comprehensive protection of children and adolescents in 2017 and provided technical assistance for and participated in the second and third forums, respectively.

F. Whether an independent national human rights institution for monitoring implementation of the Convention and its Optional Protocols has been established

40. Mexico does not have an independent ad hoc institution that monitors compliance with the Convention, but the National Human Rights Commission,¹⁵ an autonomous

¹⁵ A national human rights institution accredited with A status based on the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles).

constitutional body, contributes to this. Since children and adolescents can file complaints without the involvement of an adult, training and awareness-raising activities have been conducted for the staff of that institution on the rights of children and adolescents. The Commission responds to the cases it receives with the support of the Federal Office for the Protection of Children and Adolescents. If necessary, the appropriate precautionary measures are issued. Dissemination material, such as a guide to filing complaints, has been prepared. Since 2015, 7,483 files have been opened for complaints about alleged rights violations involving children and adolescents.

41. The Mexican Federation of Public Human Rights Organizations, which is composed of the 32 local institutions and the national institution, created a working group on the rights of children and adolescents. Of these institutions, 28 have dedicated services in this area.

G. Measures taken to make the principles and provisions of the Convention and its Optional Protocols widely known through dissemination, training and integration into school curricula

42. On the basis of the constitutional amendment on human rights of 2011, training and dissemination has been strengthened in this area, and in the last five years, responsibility has been assumed for implementing systematic and ongoing training and advice on the rights of children and adolescents within the agencies.¹⁶ To that end, Mexico has worked to strengthen key skills and knowledge in relation to the institutional tasks of the federal, state and municipal governments. The components of the systems for the comprehensive protection of children and adolescents benefited from 190 advisory sessions between 2017 and 2020 that strengthened the rights-based approach for children and adolescents and its incorporation into the design and implementation of public policies.

43. Ongoing training is provided to specialists through courses and diplomas offered by, inter alia, the National Council for the Prevention of Discrimination, the National Human Rights Commission and public and private universities. A number of diploma courses and a master's degree project are being organized by civil society organizations and the Executive Secretariat of the National System for the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents, with students from all over the country.

44. Many public agencies at the three levels of government have implemented communication strategies to disseminate information on the rights of children and adolescents and promote their respect. One such strategy is that designed by the Executive Secretariat of the National System for the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents, which covers various topics,¹⁷ has been replicated in the states and targets the general public using digital and traditional media and social networks. Hundreds of round tables, conferences, interviews and shareables, among other dissemination tools, were organized with the secretariats of the state systems for the comprehensive protection of children and adolescents. During the COVID-19 pandemic, dozens of online discussions were viewed by more than 3.5 million people.

45. Although the translation of human rights instruments such as the Convention into the 68 Indigenous languages spoken in Mexico remains a challenge, efforts have been made to inform the country's Indigenous communities about the rights of children and adolescents through the Indigenous Cultural Radio Network of the National Institute of Indigenous Peoples, which broadcasts messages in 35 languages. A permanent timeslot will be set up on the 22 Indigenous radio stations to discuss these rights. Digital materials, videos, posters and forums on the rights of Indigenous and Afro-Mexican children have also been developed.

¹⁶ Annex 6.

¹⁷ Positive parenting, corporal punishment, prohibition of child marriage, cybersecurity for children, prevention of sexual abuse, adoption and foster families, breastfeeding, migrant children and child labour, among others.

H. Efforts undertaken to make reports and concluding observations available

46. The Commission of the National System for the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents was established to follow up on the Committee's recommendations, in addition to 32 commissions at the state level that promote and coordinate the dissemination of information on the Convention and compliance with the Committee's recommendations. The Commission analysed the recommendations relating to the rights of children and adolescents, both those issued by the Committee and those issued by other human rights treaty bodies, in order to use them as inputs for the development of national, sectoral, special and state programmatic human rights instruments.

I. Cooperation with civil society organizations and children's and youth groups

47. The National System for the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents has eight civil society members, which have the right to speak and vote on the System's decisions, propose strategies for its strengthening and analyse the action that can be taken by this sector. The System also has an advisory council composed of 20 members and representatives of the public, social and private sectors, who form an advisory and support body and, among other activities, participate in the Commissions and issue cooperation requests and positions. The rules governing its membership, organization, functioning and the role of its members are contained in guidelines approved in December 2017. As at 2020, 15 states had set up a local advisory council and civil society organizations were represented in 25 state systems for the comprehensive protection of children and adolescents.

48. Regarding cooperation with children and adolescents, mechanisms have been designed to incorporate them into the creation of public policies such as the National Programme for the Protection of Children and Adolescents and the National Development Plan for the period 2018–2024. They participate in the sessions of the National System for the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents, through activities such as the dialogue between 20 children and adolescents and the President of the Republic in 2017. In addition, organized groups of adolescents and youth associations participate in face-to-face and online consultations, and in intergenerational dialogues with various local authorities.

II. Definition of the child (art. 1 of the Convention)

49. Pursuant to article 5 of the General Act on the Rights of Children and Adolescents, a child is understood to be any person under the age of 12 and an adolescent is understood to be any person aged from 12 years to under 18 years. In the context of international treaties and the age of legal majority, a child is any person under the age of 18. When there is doubt as to whether a person is over the age of 18, they will be presumed to be an adolescent. When there is doubt as to whether a person is over or under the age of 12, they will be presumed to be a child.

50. On the basis of recent legislative amendments passed between 2016 and 2020 concerning the minimum age for marriage, under the Federal Civil Code, an individual must, without exception, have reached 18 years of age, as is also established in the laws of the 32 states.

III. General principles (arts. 2, 3, 6 and 12 of the Convention)

A. Non-discrimination (art. 2)

51. Children and adolescents said that they experience discrimination on a daily basis in places such as schools and public places because of their skin colour, ethnic group, disability status, nationality, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation and age. They suggest that

curricula should cover the right to non-discrimination, and include communication campaigns.

52. In order to define public policies for equality and non-discrimination in relation to children and adolescents, the Commission for Substantive Equality among Children and Adolescents was established within the National System for the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents. Through the Commission, documents and strategies have been jointly prepared that aim to help ensure that children and adolescents receive equal treatment and have equal opportunities for their rights to be recognized, enjoyed and exercised. One example is the guidelines for mainstreaming the rights of children and adolescents with a gender perspective.

53. Of particular note are the key decisions made by the Supreme Court that combat discrimination against children and adolescents, such as recognition of the obligation to make education inclusive and to extend the coverage of childcare centres to the children of working parents, a right that previously only applied to working mothers.¹⁸

54. In July 2019, article 2 of the Constitution was amended, giving recognition to the Afro-Mexican population. That group was also included for the first time in the 2020 population and housing census. In January 2021, the actual number of Afro-Mexican children and adolescents will be known.

55. In fulfilment of the General Act on the Rights of Children and Adolescents, the National Council for the Prevention of Discrimination is responsible for recording the equalizing, inclusion and affirmative action measures focused on children and adolescents reported by federal and local authorities and autonomous constitutional bodies. This entity also receives complaints for alleged discriminatory acts, omissions or social practices, which may be filed by children and adolescents. Over the last five years, 401 complaint files were opened for discriminatory acts relating to this population group. The National Information System on Discrimination is already in place.

56. In response to the Committee's recommendation to accord the utmost priority to the elimination of patriarchal attitudes and gender stereotypes, awareness-raising campaigns have been run on equality between women and men, such as the "Seeking Equality" campaign broadcast during ad breaks and disseminated through social networks. Textbooks were revised to ensure cultural and linguistic relevance and thus avoid perpetuating such stereotypes. In addition, the subjects on the curriculum promote awareness of the topic.

B. Best interests of the child (art. 3)

57. Children and adolescents reported that more and more institutions are guided by the principle of the best interests of the child. However, they consider it necessary to enhance and deepen the awareness of municipal authorities and remote communities so that they know what it is, uphold it and implement it in their action.

58. Based on the General Act on the Rights of Children and Adolescents, increased efforts have been made to make the principle of the best interests of the child the criterion that guides the action taken by all authorities. To that end, judicial and administrative decisions have been taken, tools for public policy design have been developed, and ongoing advice and training has been provided for public officials¹⁹ at the three levels of government, thereby making progress in addressing the challenge posed by the continued adult-centric societal perspectives.

59. In proceedings for special protection and restoration of the rights of children and adolescents, the Federal Office for the Protection of Children and Adolescents and the respective state offices may act as the legal representation of children and adolescents and make determinations of the best interests of the child²⁰ in order to issue measures that uphold

¹⁸ Amendment to the Social Security Act, October 2020.

¹⁹ Annex 5.

²⁰ To make this determination, the child or adolescent is seen as a subject of rights and their rights are considered in their entirety, the consequences of the decisions are taken into account and the opinion

their rights. The Federal Office for the Protection of Children and Adolescents, in collaboration with UNICEF, developed a practical guide to the protection and restoration of children's rights as a methodological tool to help to make determinations regarding this principle in each action and decision.

60. Regarding the application of this principle in administrative procedures, one good practice is the efforts made by the Ministry of Finance and Public Credit to ensure that, since 2018, it has been explicitly stated in the federal budget decree that programmes subject to operating rules must consider the best interests of the child, and that priority must be given in the budget allocation to measures for the care of children and adolescents.

61. The Supreme Court issued several rulings and decisions, consistent with the Committee's general comment No. 14, in which it prioritized this principle in matters such as international return and the right to family life. Notably, it established that the best interests of the child take precedence and they cannot be overridden by an interpretation of the uses and customs of the Indigenous communities that restrict human rights.²¹ In addition, the protocol of action for those who impart justice in cases involving children and adolescents is being updated. Furthermore, the direct participation of children and adolescents in the judicial proceedings and in the assessment of the principle by the high courts of the states is encouraged.

C. Right to life, survival and development (art. 6)

62. Mexico has taken various measures to prevent violent deaths, femicides and disappearances among children and adolescents, by addressing the causes mentioned by the Committee. Although the rate of murders of children and adolescents has decreased in recent years, from a daily average of 8.2 to 6.5 between 2017 and 2020,²² and the number of children and adolescents admitted to the hospital for injuries caused by violence decreased from a daily average of 65.8 to 48.9 between 2016 and 2020,²³ these figures are still unacceptably and painfully high, as is the increase in femicides of girls and adolescent girls.

63. Femicide is criminalized in the penal codes of all 32 states. Although the definition has not yet been standardized, a legal amendment is being drafted that will aid in harmonization. There are also 29 state protocols for the investigation of femicide or gender-based crimes. Recently, in August 2020, Mexico submitted information to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.²⁴

64. Twenty-one gender-based violence alerts have been declared in 18 states. The alerts immediately set in motion a series of actions to combat femicidal violence. In 2019 the budget was 260 million pesos. Support has also been provided by the United Nations Spotlight Initiative, which aims to strengthen, complement and support mechanisms that combat violence against women and girls.

65. In 2020, a national strategy for the comprehensive protection of women, children, adolescents and older persons who experience gender-based violence (Violet Strategy) was designed and put into operation. The strategy coordinates the response of organizations such as shelters, the police, health-care providers, women's institutes, women's justice centres and offices for the protection of children and adolescents with the aim of providing immediate assistance to victims of violence. A public online platform is available to help locate these services.

66. Technical committees on access to justice for women and girls in cases of violent deaths were set up as forums for inter-agency coordination in order to bring investigations to

of the child or adolescent is included through their understanding of and participation in such decisions.

²¹ Direct *amparo* appeal judgments No. 5465/2014 and No. 5008/2016.

²² Source: Victims of Crime, Executive Secretariat of the National Public Security Programme.

²³ Based on data from the Ministry of Health, General Directorate of Health Information, injuries and violence subsystem.

²⁴ Information received from Mexico on follow-up to the concluding observations on its ninth periodic report, 30 September 2020 (CEDAW/C/MEX/FCO/9).

a successful conclusion. As a result, a registry of children and adolescents orphaned by femicide was created and 796 cases were identified, and in July 2020 a draft national protocol for the comprehensive care of children and adolescents orphaned by femicide was prepared, which aims to ensure access to justice through differentiated and specialized services that provide immediate assistance.

67. In response to the Committee's recommendation, in January 2018 the General Act on Enforced Disappearance of Persons, Disappearance Perpetrated by Individuals and the National Missing Persons System entered into force, which contains a specific chapter on missing children and adolescents. The National Search Commission, the 32 equivalent commissions at the state level, the National Register of Missing and Disappeared Persons and the National Missing Persons System were established. Progress has been made in standardizing the crimes and penalties for such offences, since 16 states have brought their laws into line with the General Act.

68. In October 2020, the Standardized Protocol for the Search for Missing and Disappeared Persons was published, which sets out a differentiated approach for children and adolescents. In addition, the specific protocol for the search of children and adolescents mandated by the General Act has recently begun to be developed, which must be harmonized with the Alba Protocol and the Amber Alert.

69. The Amber Alert Mexico programme operates throughout the country; over the past five years, it has been activated 806 times by the National Coordination of the Programme and 529 children and adolescents were located as a result.²⁵ In addition, 20 states have the Alba Protocol, the aim of which is to conduct an immediate search for women and girls through coordinated action. Despite all these efforts, as at November 2020, 13,178 children and adolescents were missing,²⁶ making this one of the main concerns of the Government of Mexico.

70. The National Programme for the Social Prevention of Violence and Crime 2019–2024 was designed²⁷ and training was carried out for the National Guard to strengthen the capacities of the security forces in their interactions with children and adolescents, through the Ministry of Security and Citizen Protection.

71. With regard to designing measures to prevent traffic accidents, as recommended by the Committee, 26 states have programmes of this nature, including the "Drive without alcohol" programme in Mexico City, the accident prevention and road safety programme in the state of Mexico and the road safety and culture fairs held in Veracruz.

D. Respect for the views of children and adolescents

72. Children and adolescents emphasized the need to feel that adults are listening to their interests and concerns, especially their caregivers, teachers and social workers, through mechanisms that gather their opinions and take them into consideration.

73. In order to promote and incorporate their participation into decision-making processes that affect them, pursuant to the Operation and Organization Manual of the National System for the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents, mechanisms for consultation and listening are mandatory. Guidelines for the participation of children and adolescents have therefore been approved, which are also used by the state systems for the comprehensive protection of children and adolescents.

74. Ongoing and systematic consultation mechanisms have been set up to seek the opinions of children and adolescents on the exercise of their rights and to obtain ideas for public policy solutions. Such mechanisms include the OpiNNA surveys, in which 947,134 children and adolescents have participated. Their opinions have been incorporated into various planning instruments at the national and state levels, such as the National Development Plan for the period 2019–2024 and the state development plans of, inter alia,

²⁵ 382 girls and 147 boys.

²⁶ Source: National Register of Missing and Disappeared Persons.

²⁷ To be published.

Tamaulipas, Mexico City and Coahuila. The commissions and working groups of the National System for the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents also have mechanisms for the participation of children and adolescents.

75. The listening mechanisms set up by the agencies include the following: Ciudad de los Niños (Children’s City) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; working groups for children and adolescents for the Urban Improvement Programme of the Ministry for Agrarian, Territorial and Urban Development; the consultation processes of the Ministry of Education, as well as “La Escuela es Nuestra” (School Belongs to Us); the National Network of Voluntary Youth Promoters and Youth Brigaders in Indigenous Areas of the Ministry of Health; the Network of DIFusores of the National System for the Comprehensive Development of the Family; as well as inter-agency forums such as the Children’s Parliament of Mexico,²⁸ and the 2015 and 2018 children and youth consultations undertaken by the National Electoral Institute.²⁹

76. For the purposes of the present report, in addition to gathering the results of previous consultations, a consultation was carried out to seek the opinion of children and adolescents regarding the realization of their rights, in which organized groups of adolescents and children and adolescents from specific, highly vulnerable populations participated. Their opinions are summarized at the beginning of each section of the present report, and in annex 3.

77. During the pandemic, the following activities were organized: 55 intergenerational dialogues with adolescents from all over the country, consultations using 850 audiovisual media and online surveys to learn about their feelings, needs and suggestions in the areas of health, education and violence prevention and thus be able to address them.

IV. Civil rights and freedoms

A. Birth registration

78. From 2015 to 2020, more than 11 million children obtained a birth certificate, of the more than 13.1 million children who were born during that period; in other words, 83.8 per cent of the total births projected for the period.³⁰ There is a single format for the certification of birth records and work is under way on the preparation of a general law to harmonize and standardize civil registries. Birth registration and the issuance of the first certified copy of a birth certificate are free of charge.

79. Campaigns were run on timely birth registration in municipalities with higher levels of under-registration and significant marginalization, and a procedure for the online issuance of birth certificates was launched in coordination with the 32 state civil registries. Mexico continued with its binational strategy entitled “I am Mexico, Birth Registration of the Mexican-American Population”, through which children and adolescents of Mexican descent born in the United States are given legal identity and their dual nationality is recognized. This has benefited over 94,000 children and adolescents.

80. Mexico promoted the development of a national registration and identity system, with the aim of establishing a standardized and interconnected registry. To date, this has been set up in 12 states and is in process in 2 other states.

81. In response to the Committee’s recommendation calling for the establishment of civil registry offices or mobile units at key points, 374 registration units are available in hospitals, and campaigns have been run in states that are home to the main points of transit for migrants³¹ and communities with traditional midwives.³² Similarly, several states have taken steps to bring these administrative procedures to Indigenous communities free of charge, in conjunction with the National Institute of Indigenous Peoples, through the Indigenous Rights

²⁸ In which 600 children participated.

²⁹ A total of 5,425,573 children and adolescents participated, with ballots in Braille and translated into Indigenous languages.

³⁰ Projection based on figures from the National Population Council.

³¹ Baja California and Nuevo León.

³² Chiapas.

Programme, into which Afro-Mexican peoples and communities were incorporated as part of the target population in 2019.

B. Preservation of the identity of children and adolescents

82. In line with article 4 of the Constitution, the General Act on the Rights of Children and Adolescents provides for the right of children and adolescents to their identity. That entails the right to a first name and last names, the right to immediate and free birth registration, to a nationality and the right to know their parentage and origins in accordance with their best interests and thus to preserve their identity. That includes their name, nationality, cultural background and family relationships.

83. In 2018, the temporary unique population registry code for foreigners began to be issued to uphold the right to identity and thus the exercise of all rights of child and adolescent migrants, asylum-seekers, refugees and beneficiaries of complementary protection who are in possession of an entry document issued by the migration authorities.

84. The single digital identity document is in development, which will make it possible to prove the identity of all individuals in a simple and secure manner. This great advance in terms of guaranteeing the right to identity and identification will be made possible by the General Population Act, which is in the process of being adopted and gives priority to children and adolescents.

C. Freedom of expression and the right to seek, receive and impart information

85. The General Act on the Rights of Children and Adolescents recognizes the right of children and adolescents to free expression, to seek, receive and impart information of any kind and by any means, and the right to protect their interests with respect to the risks arising from access to means of communication and use of information systems that affect their development. The Federal Telecommunications and Broadcasting Act establishes that the programming broadcast through subscription-based radio or television and audio services, in the context of such rights, must promote the harmonious development of children.

86. The National Institute for Transparency, Access to Information and Personal Data Protection organizes recreational activities such as fairs, drawing contests, cartoons, apps and microsites to promote these rights among children and adolescents.

D. Freedom of thought, conscience and religion

87. In line with the Convention and the Constitution, the General Act on the Rights of Children and Adolescents stipulates that the authorities must uphold the right of children and adolescents to freedom of ethical convictions, thought, conscience, religion and culture, in other words, their freedom to profess any religion or belief without discrimination of any kind.

88. To that end, the Ministry of the Interior cooperates with the country's various faith communities on training that promotes a culture of peace for a life free of violence and positive parenting in the religions professed by children and adolescents.

E. Freedom of association and of peaceful assembly

89. Children and adolescents said that more forums must be set up that are dedicated to bringing them together to discuss issues of collective importance and to promote proactive and education-focused parenting.

90. The General Act on the Rights of Children and Adolescents provides that children and adolescents have the right to associate and assemble, and when necessary, those exercising parental authority, guardianship or custody shall represent them in their right of association.

91. In addition to the Network of DIFusores of the National System for the Comprehensive Development of the Family, the Network of Youth Promoters of the Ministry of Health and the Network of Adolescents of Chihuahua,³³ at least 50 groups of children and adolescents supported by civil society organizations have been identified, which have various aims. Some of them are self-managed, meaning that they do not have an adult who supports them, such as Chaviza Revolucionaria Coahuila and Niñas en Resistencia de Chihuahua. Others have national representation, such as the Scouts Association.

F. Protection of the privacy and protection of the image of children and adolescents

92. The General Act on the Rights of Children and Adolescents recognizes children and adolescents' right to privacy and personal data protection. Consequently, the internal regulations of the Ministry of the Interior incorporate the obligation of the media to ensure such protection. The Executive Secretariat of the National System for the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents has developed communication advisory services for institutions and media in order to raise awareness of the right of children and adolescents to privacy and to protection of their personal integrity. The media have an obligation not to disseminate personal data, images or texts that violate this right, and an obligation to disseminate content that is truthful and non-discriminatory and that promotes and supports their integrity and appropriate development at all times.

93. There is thus a prohibition on publicizing or publishing any information that could expose adolescents who have been accused of or declared responsible for committing a crime, in order to avoid stigmatization and prejudging the outcome of trials.

94. As at December 2020, 26 states had issued guidelines on information and dissemination material on children and adolescents, which were consistent with those of the National System for the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents.

G. Access to information from a diversity of sources and protection from material harmful to a child's well-being

95. Children and adolescents learn and access information through information and communications technology, radio and television, and adopt social practices and values from these media. The Federal Telecommunications Institute has analysed the content consumed by children and adolescents in Mexico,³⁴ and monitors and oversees content and advertising aimed at children. It has the power to order the preventive suspension of programmes or advertising that violates audience rights and the rights of children and adolescents. It also shares apps designed to ensure a safe digital environment.

96. In 2020, the guidelines for classifying the audiovisual content of broadcasts and subscription-based television and audio services were amended. The criteria for classifying content were enhanced, and an obligation was established to issue warning notices and parental guidance to avoid exposing children and adolescents to programmes that are not suitable for them. However, scheduling must be adjusted so that inappropriate content is broadcast later in the day. The general guidelines of the Mexican system of equivalences for the classification of video game content were also published, and a guide for parents is being prepared on supervising and supporting children and adolescents in surfing the Web safely in the digital era.

97. With the aim of coordinating, promoting, fostering and monitoring action to benefit children and adolescents in the area of information technologies, in 2017 a commission on information technologies and audiovisual content aimed at children and adolescents was established within the National System for the Comprehensive Protection of Children and

³³ Supported by the executive secretariat of the system for the comprehensive protection of children and adolescents of Chihuahua.

³⁴ See <http://www.ift.org.mx/medios-y-contenidos-audiovisuales/estudios-y-reportes-de-analisis-de-medios-y-contenidos-audiovisuales>.

Adolescents. The commission has developed new codes of ethics to benefit children and adolescents through coordination mechanisms, the promotion of audiovisual content, the promotion of access and better use of information and communication technology.

98. In addition, public media were encouraged to produce content that promotes access to culture and knowledge and fosters the harmonious development of children and adolescents. The Executive Secretariat of the National System for the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents provides advisory services to federal and state officials who regulate and oversee television and radio content, and to publishing and journalism professionals from print, electronic and digital media, on the production of electronic and digital content for children and adolescents with a child and gender perspective.

V. Violence against children (arts. 19, 24 (3), 28 (2), 34, 37 (a) and 39 of the Convention)

99. Children and adolescents recognize that there are laws and programmes to prevent the forms of violence that affect them that cover detection and reporting, especially in the school and family environments. However, they believe that the various types of violence are normalized and consider that psychological support is not provided when cases are reported. Consequently, public servants must be trained.

100. Although children and adolescents are victims of violence in different environments, 75 per cent of cases occur in the home; 53.6 per cent of children and adolescents were subjected to a form of psychological or physical punishment.³⁵ In all types of violence, girls and adolescent women are the most affected. In response to the Committee's recommendation on comprehensive policies to prevent and punish all forms of violence, Mexico joined the United Nations Global Partnership to End Violence against Children and established the Commission to End All Forms of Violence against Children of the National System for the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents, which coordinates prevention and response actions by involving different sectors.

101. The 2017–2018 Action Plan was implemented and the 2019–2024 Plan is being implemented, both based on the INSPIRE strategy, to carry out comprehensive measures related to legislation, the reinforcement of values, support for parents and caregivers, effective institutional responses, data production and education to uphold the right of children and adolescents to live a life free of violence.

102. The National System for the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents adopted a protocol on inter-agency coordination to protect child and adolescent victims of violence, which was designed by a large number of jointly responsible institutions and which sets out the general procedure for the immediate response to a case of violence, from detection to the restoration of children's rights.³⁶ In addition, the protocol on comprehensive care for child and adolescent victims of crime and in conditions of vulnerability, prepared by the National System for the Comprehensive Development of the Family, was published.

103. In the area of security, the telephone services for obtaining emergency assistance and reporting cases established to assist children and adolescents have been strengthened, such as 9-1-1 for an immediate police response to any type of violence, psychological helplines, medical emergency services, first-contact authorities and the cyberpolice that deal with crimes against young people, especially sexual exploitation and trafficking in persons.

104. In the educational environment, in 2019 the Ministry of Education produced a document on safe school environments, to serve as a guide for the prevention, detection, attention and referral of cases of violence, which complements the National School Coexistence Programme. For its part, the health sector has strengthened services to respond

³⁵ 2018 national health and nutrition survey.

³⁶ The Executive Secretariat of the National System for the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents, the Prosecutor General's Office, the Ministry of Security and Citizen Protection, the Federal Office for the Protection of Children and Adolescents, the National Guard, 9-1-1 and the Ministry of Health participated in its preparation.

to and detect violence from early childhood onwards and in particular in relation to girls and adolescents, including pregnancy.

105. During the pandemic, all prosecutorial, administrative and judicial services that tackle forms of violence against children and adolescents were declared to be essential to ensure their continued operation.

106. In relation to the Committee's recommendation on ensuring that children and adolescents do not receive training in bullfighting and on protecting them as spectators, the Ministry of Labour and Social Security prepared a technical labour analysis on the consequences for children and adolescents of working in this field, which was distributed within the Interministerial Commission for the Prevention and Elimination of Child Labour and the Protection of Working Adolescents of Legal Working Age in Mexico. As at 2020, bullfighting is expressly prohibited in six states because it is considered a violent spectacle.

A. Child marriage

107. Children and adolescents consider that, despite the fact that child marriage has already been prohibited, it still happens because it is seen as something natural and therefore is not reported. In some rural areas, greater efforts must be made, mainly to combat common-law marriages.

108. In June 2019, an amendment to the Federal Civil Code prohibiting exceptions or dispensations that authorize the marriage of persons under 18 years of age was published. The ban was fully implemented in all 32 states thanks to coordination between the National System for the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents, the Inter-Agency Group for the Prevention of Adolescent Pregnancy, United Nations agencies and civil society organizations.

109. In this regard, in a decision on an application for constitutional review,³⁷ the Supreme Court considered the prohibition to be constitutional, because it is in accordance with the free development of personality and the rights of children and adolescents.

110. Actions to raise awareness of the negative effects of child marriage include the support provided by the National Institute of Indigenous Peoples to strengthen the exercise of the rights of Indigenous and Afro-Mexican women. The Institute provides support for training in subjects related to women's rights and the prevention of forms of violence, including raising awareness of the consequences of child marriage.

B. Sexual violence

111. Children and adolescents say that adequate recovery requires therapy, play, support from school, affection, friendships, family and feeling protected from the person who assaulted them. In addition, improvements to the legal processes, which they describe as lengthy, are necessary and they report not feeling listened to in the coexistence centres or in the courts.

112. In the areas of health, education, security, law enforcement and the judiciary, actions are carried out to prevent and respond to sexual violence against children and adolescents, which mainly affects female children and adolescents. In 2018, Mexican Official Standard NOM-046-SSA2-2005 was amended to provide them with emergency contraception and legal abortion services in the event of rape.

113. In order to improve the action and coordination of the authorities, the decision was taken to develop an inter-agency road map on sexual violence against children and adolescents for each state, consisting of the coordination and strengthening of services for detection, referral, response and restoration of rights, including the establishment of referral and counter-referral networks. This was done through the Commission of Executive

³⁷ Application for constitutional review No. 22/2016 and *amparo* appeal No. 1364/2017.

Secretariats of the National System for the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents.

114. The subgroup of the Inter-Agency Group for the Prevention of Adolescent Pregnancy, formed to address pregnancies and births in girls under 15 years of age, focuses on, *inter alia*, responding to and preventing sexual violence, through actions related to participation, awareness-raising, training, legislative harmonization and coordination of services.

115. The National System for the Comprehensive Development of the Family produced a protocol on preventing the sexual abuse of children and adolescents for the personnel of the offices for the protection of children and adolescents and similar services provided by states, municipalities and civil society organizations.

116. Regarding sexual abuse by ministers of worship, in accordance with the Committee's recommendations, in 2019 the Ministry of the Interior held workshops to advise religious associations, so that they are aware of and put into practice the obligation to immediately report to the corresponding authority alleged crimes committed during worship activities, social action or on their premises.

117. To address the Committee's recommendation on training in caring for victims of sexual violence, especially in relation to gender stereotypes, courses have been given to the staff of the Prosecutor General's Office and state prosecutors' offices on the gender perspective in the work of experts and on strategies for dealing with and approaching child and adolescent victims of sexual violence.

C. Online violence

118. The Committee recommended that Mexico address violence against children on the Internet. The National Guard, through the National Cyberincident Response Centre, in addition to applying a process of professionalization, promotes the consolidation of a network of cyberpolice in the states to deal with crimes against children and adolescents in cyberspace and carries out periodic dissemination activities to prevent risks through the National Cybersecurity Campaign. The Ministry of Education prepared general guidelines for the responsible and safe use of information, communication, knowledge and digital learning technologies in the education system.³⁸

D. The right not to be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, including corporal punishment

119. On 26 June 2017, the Act on the Prevention, Investigation and Punishment of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment was published. In addition to establishing competencies among the authorities, it defines these crimes and adds an aggravating factor to penalties when victims are children or adolescents. Fifteen states indicated that they had harmonized their laws with the Act.

120. At the federal level, the Office of the Special Prosecutor for the Investigation of Torture was established in the Prosecutor General's Office, and there is a harmonized protocol on the investigation of the crime of torture, which indicates that any expert examination of children and adolescents must be carried out by medical personnel specialized in the treatment of young people. In terms of access to justice, 2019 saw the establishment of the Technical Secretariat to Combat Torture of the Federal Public Defender Service, which has detected 12 cases of possible acts of torture or ill-treatment against adolescents, 3 of which were reported to the corresponding prosecutor's office.

121. Following up on the Committee's recommendation regarding the regular monitoring of shelters, in addition to the records kept by the National System for the Comprehensive Development of the Family, the National Mechanism for the Prevention of Torture of the National Human Rights Commission has conducted 55 inspections of social welfare centres

³⁸ Soon to be approved.

and children and adolescents' homes or shelters, as well as 55 inspections of detention centres for adolescents in conflict with the law, which resulted in the issuance of 43 recommendations by this human rights protection body.

Prohibition of corporal punishment

122. Children and adolescents recognize that progress has been made because beating is no longer part of education at home and at school. However, they believe that, since it continues to happen frequently, it is necessary to promote more media campaigns and to establish courses for parents to teach them how to bring up their children without violence in a responsible manner.

123. In December 2020, amendments to the Federal Civil Code and the General Act on the Rights of Children and Adolescents were adopted to prohibit corporal and humiliating punishment as a corrective or disciplinary method for children and adolescents in all settings. In addition, the Civil Codes and Family Codes of 21 states explicitly provide for the prohibition of corporal punishment, referring to the right to correct, guide, educate or raise children and adolescents.

124. The 2019–2024 Action Plan on Violence of Mexico includes a line of action to promote legal prohibition and to disseminate and coordinate measures aimed at promoting positive and violence-free child-rearing. Regional workshops and forums are held, in conjunction with international organizations, for federal and state authorities, to define strategies to make progress in legislation and public policy.

125. Examples of actions to promote positive child-rearing practices include consultations with children and adolescents³⁹ and the preparation of guidelines on the subject by the education and health sectors. In addition, there are campaigns and programmes broadcast on television, radio and social media developed by different agencies, such as the National Human Rights Commission and the executive secretariats of the state systems for the comprehensive protection of children and adolescents, which promote positive and caring ways of relating to children and adolescents.⁴⁰

E. Measures to promote physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of child victims

126. In relation to the comprehensive reparation of harm suffered by child and adolescent victims of crime, the 2017 amendment to the Victims Act includes the National Model of Comprehensive Care for Victims, whose objective is to guarantee access to truth, justice and comprehensive reparation, through multidisciplinary and psychological care, social work, medical services and legal advice, for their rehabilitation and reintegration into society. Substantive changes were made to the structure of the Executive Commission for Victim Support to improve its operation. Since 2015, 156 decisions have been issued in the area of comprehensive reparation of harm and/or compensation, benefiting 173 direct child and adolescent victims.

127. The 32 centres for the comprehensive care of victims have teams of legal advisers who provide specialized support. In addition, the 2020–2024 Comprehensive Victim Support Programme⁴¹ aims, inter alia, to mainstream care that is based on a differentiated and gender-sensitive, child-oriented, intercultural and non-discriminatory approach, considering the best interests of children and adolescents; progress has therefore been made in the specialized training of staff in the rights of children and adolescents. The National Register of Victims includes children and adolescents.

³⁹ Such as the “OpiNNA: Tell me how you are treated” campaign, in which 54,888 children and adolescents participated.

⁴⁰ 19 states are implementing activities regarding positive child-rearing.

⁴¹ To be published.

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

A. Family environment and parental guidance

128. The National System for the Comprehensive Development of the Family has a strategy on the promotion of proper treatment in families to prevent risk behaviours associated with family and social violence and abuse of children and adolescents, through which the skills and capacities of adults in rearing children and adolescents under their care, including the multidisciplinary team in social welfare centres, are strengthened.

129. In addition, the 2020–2024 National Programme for Equality between Women and Men⁴² aims, inter alia, to generate the conditions to recognize and reduce domestic and care work and redistribute it between families, the State, the community and the private sector, in order to contribute to improving relations in households.

130. This is reinforced by the recent adoption of the constitutional reform bill, awaiting adoption by the National Congress, which recognizes the human right to care and to one's own time, and which establishes the obligation to develop a law that will support the establishment of a national care system, based on the principle of shared responsibility and with priority for children and adolescents,⁴³ which will be significant for the protection of their rights.

B. Parents' common responsibilities, assistance to parents and provision of childcare services

131. Regarding the obligations of fathers, mothers and caregivers, the Supreme Court ruled that, although children and adolescents have the right to live in a family, they also have the right to have the custody and guardianship regime modified if it presents risks⁴⁴ and the right for the suitability of a caregiver to be evaluated on the basis of their ability to provide the necessary care and regardless of gender. In addition, it has ruled on the need to guarantee the right of children and adolescents to visits and to live with their parents, even when one of them refuses, considering the circumstances of the case, the opinion of the person affected and the possible risks.⁴⁵

132. It was considered unconstitutional for parental alienation to be an offence punishable by deprivation of liberty and the loss of parental authority and related rights, because it is a disproportionate penalty that prejudices the right of children and adolescents to live in a family and maintain affective relationships with both parents.⁴⁶

133. Regarding childcare services, the Comprehensive Programme of Supervision, Support, Monitoring and Evaluation of the Operation of Childcare Centres, coordinated by the National Council on Services for the Support, Care and Comprehensive Development of Children, in 2019 carried out 1,357 inspections and provided 1,106 training courses for the different educational agents throughout the country.

134. To strengthen and monitor the service offered by childcare centres, the National System for the Comprehensive Development of the Family is working on a national register of childcare centres and will establish a georeferencing platform that will make it possible to locate every childcare centre in the 32 states of the country.

⁴² To be published.

⁴³ Bill adopted by the Chamber of Deputies, 18 November 2020.

⁴⁴ Judgment in direct *amparo* appeal No. 2710/2017.

⁴⁵ Direct *amparo* appeal judgment No. 2965/2018.

⁴⁶ Judgment in application for constitutional review No. 111/2016.

C. Separation from parents

135. Children and adolescents point out the importance of working with families to avoid family disintegration or to allow for reintegration, which is sometimes impossible owing to the economic conditions of families.

136. The Government of Mexico helps families to meet their financial responsibilities through the cash transfer programmes mentioned throughout the present report. In addition, the General Act on the Rights of Children and Adolescents enshrines the right of children and adolescents to live in a family and establishes that a lack of resources cannot be considered sufficient grounds to separate them from their family of origin or from the relatives with whom they live, nor motive for the loss of parental authority, as set out in several judicial decisions.

137. The National System for the Comprehensive Development of the Family has a mandate to take measures to protect children and adolescents and can separate them from their family group. As a result, when issuing protection measures the Federal Office for the Protection of Children and Adolescents takes into account the principle of family unity and separation should be considered as a last resort, with priority always being given to the best interests of the child.

D. Family reunification

138. In accordance with the General Act on the Rights of Children and Adolescents, when a Mexican or foreign child is found to be unaccompanied, the Federal Office for the Protection of Children and Adolescents carries out an initial intervention following the guidelines on the restoration of rights and measures for the protection of children and adolescents, in order to ascertain any rights that have been violated or restricted, identify their family support networks and manage family reunifications. While the family is being traced, children and adolescents have the right to temporary alternative care arrangements.

139. In the case of migrant children and adolescents, if the family or extended family is in Mexico, reunification is paramount while the administrative migration procedure is being conducted, as long as it is in the best interest of the child. In addition, if family reunification in a third country is being considered, a thorough assessment of the family situation is necessary.

140. The procedures that the National Institute of Migration carries out to guarantee the right to live as a family include granting visas, changes in the status of stay and regularization of the immigration status of the family unit. For its part, the Commission on Assistance for Refugees has authorized the parents of children and adolescents who are in Mexico to enter the country with derivative refugee status.

141. From 2015 to 2020, 308 family reunifications were conducted to restore the right to live in a family.

E. Recovery of maintenance for the child

142. The General Act on the Rights of Children and Adolescents refers to the rights of children and adolescents to maintenance, which include meeting needs related to food and nutrition, housing, education, clothing, preventive medical and psychological health care, medical assistance and recreation. In this regard, the Federal Civil Code establishes the obligation of parents or other ascendants, on the father's and mother's side, to provide maintenance to their children. There is an initiative to amend the Act in order to establish a national register of maintenance obligations that is being examined in the Chamber of Deputies.

F. Children deprived of a family environment

143. In Mexico, children and adolescents without parental or family care receive alternative care or residential foster care on a temporary basis in social welfare centres, which are managed by public or private institutions or associations and are responsible for ensuring comprehensive care, as well as the physical and psychological health of the children and adolescents in their custody.

144. The commitment of the Government of Mexico to the adoption of a deinstitutionalization strategy has been bolstered through the implementation of the national foster care programme of the National System for the Comprehensive Development of the Family, which seeks to restore the right of children and adolescents to live in a family and community, while their legal, immigration or family situation is resolved, and to reduce admissions of children and adolescents into residential or institutional care. The programme covers the education and training of the personnel involved in the process, as well as the families interested in providing foster care. States such as Chihuahua, Aguascalientes, Guanajuato, Mexico City and Sonora operate foster family models in conjunction with the Latin American Foster Care Network.

145. Through comprehensive protection measures and in accordance with the initial multidisciplinary intervention, attempts are made to locate the family support networks of children and adolescents in order to avoid their institutionalization, including those living with disabilities.

G. Periodic review of placement

146. The Federal Office for the Protection of Children and Adolescents establishes the requirements for the authorization, registration, certification and supervision of public and private social welfare centres. As part of the regulatory process, as mandated by the General Act on the Rights of Children and Adolescents, in 2017 the registration of social welfare centres began, in order to have detailed information on those that have been authorized by the Federal Office for the Protection of Children and Adolescents or the state offices for the protection of children and adolescents. The registry has information on the type of services offered, the number of children and adolescents served and their ages and profiles, staff, location and persons in charge, which allows for greater control over the operation of such facilities.

147. Campaigns have also been carried out to disseminate regulations, such as protocols on how to document acts of mistreatment or torture in social welfare centres. Regarding the supervision of institutions where children and adolescents with disabilities live, there are agreements between civil society organizations and the National System for the Comprehensive Development of the Family on quarterly inspections of the institutions and verification of the care provided to institutionalized children.

H. Adoption (national and intercountry)

148. Children and adolescents living with their adoptive families mention the need to prioritize previous cohabitation arrangements and express their concern about the efficiency and speed of adoption or family reintegration processes.

149. In accordance with the General Act on the Rights of Children and Adolescents, the Federal Office for the Protection of Children and Adolescents prepared adoption guidelines for the National System for the Comprehensive Development of the Family and set up the Technical Committee on Adoption, which evaluates adoption applicants, assigns children and adolescents eligible for adoption and authorizes or denies the issuance of certificates of suitability, required to proceed with an adoption. To this end, the opinions of children and adolescents are heard and the conditions in the foster family are taken into account.

150. A total of 248 adoptions have been finalized since 2016. As regards international adoption, between 2019 and 2020, 19 certificates were issued for the same number of Mexican children and adolescents.

151. Through the Commission for the Special Protection of Children and Adolescents of the National System for the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents, work is being done on the preliminary draft of an amendment to article 73 of the Constitution so that the National Congress can enact a national law on adoption to standardize legislation in this field. At the state level, for example, Coahuila explicitly prohibits private adoptions, pursuant to article 30 bis 2 of the General Act on the Rights of Children and Adolescents, as amended in June 2019.

152. In addition, measures have been implemented to raise awareness surrounding adoption and to promote the standardization of procedures, aimed at state and municipal public servants of the state systems for the comprehensive protection of children and adolescents, the state offices for the protection of children and adolescents, civil society organizations, state human rights commissions, mothers and fathers of adopted children, representatives of state congresses, academia and foster homes in the private sector.

I. Illicit transfer and non-return

153. The Government of Mexico has mechanisms to combat the illicit transfer and illegal holding of children and adolescents abroad. Although the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the central authority in this field, compliance requires the intervention of judicial and law enforcement authorities. To protect the rights of children and adolescents, the goal is to return them to their legal guardian and custodian; consequently, they are given information on the implications of the processes involved and they are asked for their opinion.

154. From 2015 to 2020, 1,409 international return cases involving 1,966 children and adolescents were handled. As at June 2020, there are 418 active cases involving 596 children and adolescents.

155. It should be noted that the penal codes of the states criminalize the abduction and holding or concealment of children and adolescents. To allow for investigations to take place, precautionary measures may be issued and the Amber Alert may be activated.

J. Children living in prison with their mothers

156. As at October 2019, 362 children under 3 years of age were living with their mothers in Mexican detention centres. That age limit was modified when the National Act on the Enforcement of Criminal Penalties came into effect in 2016. To cover such cases, the Commission for Substantive Equality among Children and Adolescents prepared a strategy to coordinate actions to protect the children of women deprived of liberty, promoted by the National Conference of State Governors and the Commission of Executive Secretariats, which is designed to enhance their comprehensive protection.

157. In accordance with the General Act on the Rights of Children and Adolescents, the National Conference of Prison Services organized working groups to analyse and adapt the protocols on the entry, stay and temporary or definitive release of children living in prison with mothers deprived of liberty.

158. In addition, in 2020 the Decentralized Administrative Body for Prevention and Social Readaptation prepared and revised the questionnaire to identify needs for the establishment and strengthening of family ties, given as a pilot diagnostic instrument to 785 women deprived of liberty.⁴⁷ The needs identified will be met through the state systems for the comprehensive protection of children and adolescents and are used to design protection measures, such as workshops for mothers on care, early learning for children, strengthening

⁴⁷ Pilot conducted at Federal Social Rehabilitation Centre No. 16 in the State of Morelos.

of family ties and healthy diet, and the assignment of technical personnel to attend to the needs of children on a daily basis.

159. Regarding the Committee's recommendation to provide alternatives to the imprisonment of mothers with children, the conditions for access to alternatives are established in article 144 of the National Act on the Enforcement of Criminal Penalties, whose goals include the protection of children under 12 years of age, provided that having the detained person stay with the child does not represent an objective risk for them.

VII. Disability, basic health and welfare (arts. 6, 18 (3), 23, 24, 26, 27 (1)–(3) and 33 of the Convention)

A. Children with disabilities

160. Children and adolescents said that, although some schools already have ramps, there is still a need for more infrastructure, public transportation, materials and teaching staff trained to deal with disabilities, as well as medical personnel.

161. Through the National Council for the Development and Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities, the Government of Mexico implements the National Programme for the Development and Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities, which includes lines of action to promote affirmative actions to prevent and respond to violence and to promote inclusive educational models. Organizations representing children and adolescents with disabilities participated in its design.

162. The National System for the Comprehensive Development of the Family develops and operates the Persons with Disabilities Programme, which provides subsidies to public and private institutions, promoting community participation in the prevention and monitoring of the causes and factors affecting disability. It has 21 rehabilitation centres providing comprehensive non-hospital care for children and adolescents with disabilities, with programmes for multiple early stimulation;⁴⁸ the educational inclusion of persons with disabilities in the school environment;⁴⁹ courses for families with children with disabilities; and the early detection of disabling conditions.⁵⁰

163. Regarding this population group's access to education, the recent amendment to article 3 of the Constitution, establishing the national strategy on inclusive education, is worthy of mention. Further information in this regard is provided in the section on the right to education. During the 2017–2018 school year, a total of 1,963 students with disabilities were supported by the community services of the National Council for the Promotion of Education. In addition, the Ministry of Education, through the services provided by the Care Centre for Persons with Disabilities, has enabled young persons with disabilities to initiate, continue or complete their high school studies by supporting home-based education. Between 2012 and 2018, the number of these centres, which are found throughout the country, increased from 46 to 291. In the last school year, enrolment grew to 30,514 students.

164. The programme relating to the welfare allowance for persons with permanent disabilities, recognized at the constitutional level, supports children and adolescents with permanent disabilities through direct bimonthly cash transfers, to promote the effective enforcement and unrestricted observance of the rights of this population group, acknowledging the high rates of discrimination and marginalization they face. In addition, a life insurance programme for women heads of households is in place, supporting 2,830 children with disabilities whose mothers have died. An allowance is provided to 292,840 children with disabilities.

165. Regarding the Committee's recommendation to ensure access to justice for children and adolescents with disabilities, the Federal Public Defender Service established the

⁴⁸ During the last five years, 83,004 children have received attention.

⁴⁹ As at 2020, 9,081 children and adolescents have been included in the national education system.

⁵⁰ In the last five years, 146,223 screenings of the population at large were carried out.

position of legal adviser specialized in assisting persons with disabilities. As at 2020, advisory services have been provided to 74 children and adolescents with disabilities.

166. Regarding the recommendation on ensuring that children and adolescents with disabilities are portrayed as rights holders and not as objects of charity by private entities, various authorities collaborated with the Teletón Foundation to implement actions, promote initiatives and carry out projects aimed at strengthening a rights-based and community-centred approach. The Foundation is conducting a campaign entitled “Know your rights and act”, aimed at promoting the rights of persons with disabilities, and has served as a member of the consultative assembly of the National Council for the Development and Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities since 2017.

B. Health and health services and primary health care

167. Children and adolescents recognized that efforts have been made to reduce malnutrition and obesity. However, they feel that health services should be improved through more personnel and greater availability of medicines, and extended to people in rural areas, as well as through specialists in the health care of children and adolescents.

168. In accordance with the Committee’s recommendation on the availability and accessibility of health services, the establishment of the Health for Well-Being Institute ensures the provision of universal health care and free medicines to more than 26 million children and adolescents, particularly those who do not have social security.

169. The National Centre for Child and Adolescent Health establishes, implements and oversees public health and vaccination policies through the child and adolescent health and universal vaccination programmes, through which more than 30 million doses of vaccines have been administered to children and adolescents since 2005.

170. In addition, the Mexican Social Security Institute’s Bienestar programme provides comprehensive health services to 1,999,205 children under 10 years of age and 2,905,825 adolescents in 4,071 medical establishments,⁵¹ in the form of promotion services, specific prevention of communicable diseases, early detection of diseases and medical care. This includes members of Indigenous Peoples who live in very remote areas where there are no health services, for whom, from 2014 to 2019,⁵² agreements were signed for the construction and equipping of basic infrastructure to avoid long journeys.

171. The National Breastfeeding Strategy was implemented by the Ministry of Health to increase the number of children who are breastfed, under a number of strategic areas in which the states also participated, such as the designation of hospitals and units as baby and child-friendly, the establishment of human milk banks and the monitoring of compliance with the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes, with training as a cross-cutting element.

172. In the area of food, the Comprehensive Strategy for Social Food Assistance and Community Development of the National System for the Comprehensive Development of the Family promotes self-managed and organized communities, as well as the consumption of nutritious, sufficient and quality food, through the school breakfasts programme that is open to children and adolescents in vulnerable conditions who attend schools in areas of high and very high levels of marginalization, and the programme of social food assistance in the first 1,000 days of life, through the provision of nutritious food rations, promoting nutritional education, breastfeeding and adequate care, hygiene and early learning practices to ensure proper development.

173. A nutrition module was established under the control system of the Indigenous Education Support Programme of the National Institute of Indigenous Peoples that has made it possible to define the planning and characteristics of the menus followed for the food in shelters and canteens for Indigenous children.

⁵¹ Of those, 3,991 are first-tier medical units and 80 are rural hospitals.

⁵² Except 2017.

174. As regards regulations concerning restrictions on the advertising, sale and availability of junk food, in November 2019 amendments were made to the General Health Act, making it obligatory for the authorities to promote actions to ensure a nutritious diet through physical activity and the introduction of front-of-pack warning labels regarding nutritional content, set forth in Mexican Official Standard NOM-051-SCFI/SSA1–2010, which includes warning labels and cautionary wording aimed at children and adolescents for products whose contents are not recommended for young people.

C. Reproductive health rights of adolescents and measures to promote a healthy lifestyle

175. Children and adolescents recognized that, although there is more discussion of sexual and reproductive health issues, there is still a difference in the dissemination of information by gender. Adequate information on sexual and reproductive rights should be provided from an early age, and to mothers, fathers and teachers, and legal abortions should be available to adolescent women without stigmatizing them.

176. The Inter-Agency Group for the Prevention of Adolescent Pregnancy, which operates through three sub-working groups on indicators for monitoring and follow-up, was formed to implement the National Strategy for the Prevention of Adolescent Pregnancy in order to eradicate pregnancies and births in girls and adolescents under 15 years of age; and to provide support to the 32 State Groups for the Prevention of Adolescent Pregnancy.⁵³ In addition to a road map for the care and protection of girl and adolescent mothers and/or pregnant girls and adolescents under 15 years of age, communication strategies for prevention, mechanisms for protection against sexual violence and policies to expand development opportunities, promote comprehensive sexuality education and provide adolescent-friendly services throughout the country have been designed.

177. Although five years after its launch the National Strategy for the Prevention of Adolescent Pregnancy faces challenges in terms of achieving its objectives, the important progress it has achieved includes a reduction in the adolescent fertility rate from 74.3 in 2015 to 68.5 in 2020.⁵⁴ In the case of adolescent female speakers of Indigenous languages, between 2014 and 2018 the rate decreased by 3.6 per cent. Although the birth rate dropped from 102.7 births in 2014 to 99.0 births per 1,000 adolescents in 2018, it is recognized that the figure remains high at the state level.⁵⁵

178. The Ministry of Health, which administers 2,870 local clinics, provides sexual and reproductive health services to adolescents, including care, information, guidance, counselling and the provision of contraceptives on the basis of WHO recommendations and criteria. The Mexican Social Security Institute preventive health strategy for schools and universities made preventive health services available to young men and women students at their educational institutions and to young people in rural areas, through the Bienestar programme's rural care centres for adolescents.

179. Under the Mexico City legal abortion programme, 5.61 per cent of terminations were performed for girls and adolescents. At the state level, work is being undertaken with medical and health personnel on emergency contraception and abortion in the cases allowed by state laws. In addition, in October 2019 the Government of the State of Oaxaca published a decree decriminalizing abortion. Furthermore, the Supreme Court has determined that the State is obliged to provide abortions to girls or adolescents who are victims of rape, making refusing the procedure a violation of their human rights.⁵⁶

⁵³ See <https://www.gob.mx/conapo/documentos/3-grupo-estatal-para-la-prevencion-del-embarazo-en-adolescentes-gepea>.

⁵⁴ According to National Population Council estimates, based on 2016–2050 national and state population projections.

⁵⁵ Among adolescents who do not speak an Indigenous language, the rate fell by 8.6 per cent, from 75.8 to 69.2 births per 1,000 adolescent girls during the same period.

⁵⁶ *Amparo* appeals No. 601/2017 and No. 1170/2017.

180. In response to the Committee's recommendation, the Institute of Social Security and Social Services for State Employees provides preferential care, as a vulnerable group, for pregnant adolescents, who receive comprehensive medical care. After delivery, metabolic neonatal screening is performed on all newborns in the appropriate medical units, in order to prevent developmental disabilities. To reduce maternal and perinatal morbidity and mortality, a taxonomic tool for the analysis of adverse obstetric events has been developed to improve the quality of care provided to pregnant women and newborns.

D. Measures to protect children from substance abuse

181. The Government of Mexico launched the "Together for Peace" National Addiction Prevention Strategy to prevent and reduce the use of psychoactive substances among children and adolescents, applying a gender-sensitive approach. One component of the strategy was a diagnosis of the drug situation in Mexico, on the basis of which steps to reduce the consumption of alcohol, tobacco and illicit drugs have been diversified and implemented through the 341 specialized medical units in primary addiction care centres. Also, the National Strategy for the Prevention of Underage Drinking is being implemented. Under that strategy, there have been 684 inspections of commercial establishments selling alcoholic beverages.

182. Through the Mental Health and Addictions Programme, care is provided, virtually or in person, to persons who require it and health professionals are trained. In addition, access is ensured to tools to promote healthy habits. The National Suicide Prevention Programme provides for actions geared towards children and adolescents.

183. From 1 December 2018 to 30 June 2019, the psychiatric services of the Mexican Social Security Institute provided 79,480 consultations to people under 19 years of age. In addition, 14,444 mental health and psychological support consultations were provided in medical units.

184. The actions taken in response to the COVID-19 pandemic included prioritizing the mental health care of the adolescent population, for which various institutions, in a coordinated manner, implement the Youth Contact programme.

E. Social security and childcare services and facilities

185. In Mexico there are other types of centres that provide public care services, linked to formal employment conditions. For example, as at March 2020, 223,834 children were cared for in Mexican Social Security Institute day-care centres.

186. Regarding the availability and accessibility of health services in early childhood, as recommended by the Committee, the Twenty-first Century Medical Insurance Programme was implemented. This is a public universal health insurance scheme for the care of children under 5 years of age that covers the main health problems that occur in the first years of life. To 2018, 169,843 interventions had been financed. The Healthy Child Monitoring Programme currently serves children under 5 years of age and operates in Mexican Social Security Institute Family Medicine Units. It implements activities to monitor nutrition, growth and early childhood development. In addition, Mexican Social Security Institute day-care centres carry out periodic and mandatory monitoring of weight and height and promptly identify developmental disorders. They also apply the vaccination schedule.

F. Standard of living and measures to reduce poverty and inequality (art. 27 (1)–(3))

187. According to the last six multidimensional poverty assessments of the National Council for the Evaluation of Social Development Policies and studies conducted together with UNICEF, children and adolescents have higher percentages of poverty than adults, in particular in early childhood. As a result, the Government of Mexico focuses its social policy

strategies and programmes on groups that have historically suffered discrimination and that are the furthest behind in order to have a positive impact on poverty levels.

188. In this regard, programmes have been implemented that benefit children and adolescents and their families, such as the Programme for the Welfare of the Children of Working Mothers, which at the close of 2019 had supported 220,735 children through cash transfers to 210,305 mothers, fathers or guardians.⁵⁷ In addition, by the end of 2019 the life insurance programme for women heads of households had served 33,867 children and adolescents of up to 12 years of age.

189. Among the comprehensive welfare programmes that have been implemented, priority has been given to Indigenous children and adolescents experiencing high levels of marginalization and high rates of violence, through the Benito Juárez Well-Being Grants Programme and the Writing the Future Programme, aimed at students. In addition, as mentioned above, the programme relating to the welfare allowance for persons with permanent disabilities supported 68,104 girls and 99,333 boys with disabilities from 0 to 11 years of age.

190. To benefit families, there is the Programme on Development of the Social Economy, which assists children indirectly, through social groups, with support for productive projects, giving priority to those located in the more marginalized municipalities, in those with a larger Indigenous and Afro-Mexican population and in those with high rates of violence, as well as populations that are in situations of national emergency. In 2019, 1,563 social groups were supported with a productive project, benefiting 5,379 people.

191. Emergency support for family survival is also being implemented, aimed at Indigenous and Afro-Mexican women in situations of forced internal displacement, to provide immediate support and assistance in the form of in-kind support (clothing, personal hygiene products, etc.), food for a period of two months and health management and referral, depending on the needs of each group.

G. Environmental health

192. Children and adolescents recognize that there is greater dissemination of information on caring for the environment and the separation of waste and recycling but the regulation of air pollution and its effects on health is not clear and transparent. They suggest that private enterprises should care for the environment.

193. In the case of polluting enterprises, the National Environmental Auditing Programme promotes the self-regulation of the country's productive and service sectors where pollution is concerned, along with the verification of high-risk activities, for which since 2019 1,740 inspection and verification visits were made to 1,530 industrial, commercial and service enterprises under federal jurisdiction, resulting in fines being imposed for a total of 73.81 million pesos.

194. Among the actions to prevent the contamination of bodies of water and the overexploitation of aquifers, 1,769 inspections have been made and 703 administrative proceedings have been initiated for non-compliance with the National Waters Act. The National Water Commission also implements the Drinking Water, Drainage and Sanitation Programme, which promotes activities to expand services to ensure the provision of quality water. Those programmes have been supported by awareness-raising activities such as the Water Guardians Project, which seeks to raise real awareness among children and adolescents regarding caring for and conserving water in nine states.

195. To address the Committee's recommendations, the Government of Mexico, through the National Institute of Indigenous Peoples, collaborated with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations to analyse the consequences of pesticide use in Indigenous communities. In addition, the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources participates in the Committee Specialized in the Identification and Investigation of Adverse

⁵⁷ Of these, 3,558 have a disability.

Effects of Highly Hazardous Pesticides headed by the Federal Commission for Protection against Health Risks.

VIII. Education, leisure and cultural activities (arts. 28–31 of the Convention)

A. Right to education including vocational training and guidance

196. Children and adolescents pointed out that there has been an increase in the number of full-time schools, school meals programmes and scholarships and better gender equality in access to school. However, they believe it is necessary to have more scholarships at all levels, educational infrastructure, availability of digital services and teacher training (virtual classes) and to prevent and address cases of violence in schools.

197. Up to June 2020, the national education system served 36.5 million students, employing 2.1 million teachers in 262,805 schools.⁵⁸ Although less than 10 per cent of children under 3 years of age attend an early education service, 50 per cent of children of 3 years of age and almost 100 per cent of children from 6 to 12 years old attend school, and nearly 80 per cent of adolescents of 14 years of age are enrolled.

198. To reduce school dropout caused by the inequality gaps still existing in the country, the Ministry of Education implemented an early warning system to detect children and adolescents at risk of dropping out of school, and the Government of Mexico has deployed tools to address the structural conditions that maintain that inequality, through cash transfer programmes such as the Benito Juárez Well-Being Grants Programme, aimed at children and adolescents in extreme poverty, primarily in Indigenous or highly marginalized areas, which has benefited 6.8 million students in basic education up to 2020, accounting for a budget of 13.066 billion pesos. Support was also provided to more than 3.5 million students in upper secondary education. Of all scholarship recipients, 14.7 per cent live in municipalities with high and very high marginalization.

199. In order to guarantee education from early childhood to higher education, as recommended by the Committee, the 2019 constitutional amendment, which provides for early education, established the National Early Childhood Strategy, whose guiding principle is the right to education and care. Child-care service providers include early education and preschool education in their model of care.

200. The National Strategy on the Movement to Combat School Dropout has been implemented in the area of upper secondary education. In addition, thanks to the implementation of new educational modalities such as the Ministry of Education's online upper secondary education and community distance upper secondary education, there was an increase in educational enrolment. The National Institute of Indigenous Peoples grants scholarships for higher education and master's degrees and provides support for the finalization of degree processes for Indigenous and Afro-Mexican students at these levels, helping them to continue and complete their studies.

201. Also in response to the Committee's recommendations, from 2017 to 2018, 12,379 basic education support grants for young mothers and pregnant adolescents were awarded in order for them to have access to, remain in and complete basic education.

202. During lockdown owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, the National Council for the Promotion of Education provided on-site early childhood education guidance services to the 1.2 million families living in the worst poverty in the country. For children and adolescents in basic and higher education, the Ministry of Education has implemented the "Learn at Home" strategy.

⁵⁸ Of these schools, 85.5 per cent were public and 14.5 per cent were private.

B. Aims of education with reference also to the quality of education

203. In accordance with the aforementioned 2019 constitutional amendment, education in Mexico aims to develop all abilities of the human person. It will foster respect for all rights and freedoms and the culture of peace, and promote values and the continuous improvement of the teaching/learning process. The best interests of children and adolescents will be prioritized in access to and attendance and participation in educational services.

204. In addition, to follow up on the educational reform, the National System for the Continuous Improvement of Education was established, through which the Technical School Councils implement continuous school improvement programmes. Similarly, curricula must have a gender perspective and a comprehensive orientation, in addition to incorporating subjects related to ethics, civics, culture, arts, Indigenous languages, sports, promotion of healthy lifestyles, sexual and reproductive education and environmental care.

205. The reform also aimed at recognizing the inclusive nature of education and takes into account the diverse abilities, circumstances and needs of learners. As a result, it establishes the obligation to make reasonable accommodations and implement specific measures to eliminate barriers to learning and participation, based on the principle of accessibility. To meet that goal, the reform mandated the establishment of a national strategy on inclusive education. Accordingly, different agencies⁵⁹ collaborated in the design and preparation of the document entitled “National Strategy on Inclusive Education. National Educational Agreement”, which sets out the obligations and means to ensure educational inclusion in its broadest form, with the coordinated efforts of the different actors in the education sector. Work is currently proceeding on the model for its implementation and operation.

C. Cultural rights of children and adolescents belonging to Indigenous groups

206. As at 2019, through the Inclusion and Equity in Education Programme, 199,261 children in 4,522 schools and 9,272 teachers received assistance for Indigenous and migrant education in 30 states. Through the Programme for Attention to Diversity in Indigenous Education, 22 curricula have been developed in Indigenous languages and more than 2 million textbooks have been distributed. In addition, the Ministry of Education, in coordination with the National Council for the Promotion of Education, delivers educational materials to marginalized communities, reaching more than 22,000 localities.

207. The Government of Mexico has an Indigenous Education Support Programme that helps to ensure access to and continuation in school for Indigenous students by strengthening interculturality, reducing health risks and improving the nutrition of Indigenous and Afro-Mexican children and adolescents. Its assistance includes such forms as homes and canteens for Indigenous children, schoolchildren and university students. Food, lodging, scholarships and complementary activities are provided, prioritizing those young people who do not have educational options in their communities.

208. The lines of action of the National Institute of Indigenous Peoples include support for cultural projects for the rescue, preservation, dissemination and strengthening of the expressions of Indigenous and Afro-Mexican cultural heritage, in which children and adolescents participate. Of particular note are the materials in different formats developed by the Indigenous Cultural Radio Network to encourage the participation of children and adolescents in the educational or school environment through the dissemination of topics such as traditional language, values or knowledge.

⁵⁹ Ministry of Education, Executive Secretariat of the National System for the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents, National Council for the Prevention of Discrimination, among others.

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

209. Children and adolescents recognized that there are areas where they can play but said that there are not many of them and that they are unsafe. They referred to the lack of leisure and free-time activities; adolescents in particular pointed out that there were no places to meet with their friends. They recommend offering recreational, sports, artistic, cultural and technological activities that are inclusive.

210. The Wings and Roots Programme of the Ministry of Culture, whose goal is to uphold the cultural rights of children and adolescents, develops websites and applications and promotes and organizes artistic performances, films, contests, readings, workshops and creative laboratories, and produces publications. Through the 32 state Wings and Roots Programmes, the enjoyment of artistic and cultural manifestations and activities is promoted throughout the country, including municipalities with limited access to cultural goods and services. The Programme offers play areas for the cultural, creative and affective development of young children in the company of their mothers, fathers, grandparents or caregivers, reinforcing community and collective identities where babies are at the centre of the interrelationship.

211. Since 2019, the “Mi México Late” (“My Mexico’s Pulse”) Urban Improvement Programme has been implemented, which seeks to improve the living conditions of low-income communities and neighbourhoods that are the furthest behind and experience the highest levels of violence, by rehabilitating public spaces and housing and creating community development centres, cultural and recreational centres, libraries, sports units and modules, stadiums and baseball fields, schools, health centres, markets and mobility and connectivity projects.

212. The National Commission of Physical Culture and Sports promotes physical culture and sports to detect sporting ability in children and adolescents and encourages inclusive sports initiation and training to contribute to their comprehensive development. The beneficiaries include 93,492 children and adolescents nationwide, 76 per cent of whom are male and 24 per cent are female.

IX. Special protection measures (arts. 22, 30, 32, 33, 35, 36, 37 (b)–(d) and 38–40 of the Convention)

A. Children and adolescents outside their country of origin seeking refugee protection, unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, internally displaced children, migrant children and children affected by migration

213. Migrant and asylum-seeking children and adolescents identify as successes the provision of spaces that provide them with shelter and cover basic needs and the increased recognition of the asylum application. However, in most cases they return to their countries. Although they consider Mexico to be safer than their country of origin, they perceive a high level of insecurity. In addition, they said that, among the needs identified, family reunification and the safety of their relatives were very important.

214. The Government of Mexico, through the National Institute of Migration, assisted and referred 186,966 foreign migrant children and adolescents from 2015 to August 2020; 70,787 were traveling unaccompanied and 116,179 were accompanied by an adult. For its part, since 2015, the Commission on Assistance for Refugees has received 41,270 applications for refugee status from children and adolescents, of which 10,926 have been recognized; in addition, 2,199 children and adolescents have been granted complementary protection.

215. Given the increase in the flow of children and adolescent migrants, in order to coordinate the actions of the agencies involved, in 2019 the Commission for the Comprehensive Protection of Migrant and Asylum-seeking Children and Adolescents of the National System for the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents was established, in which 15 federal authorities, UNICEF, IOM, OHCHR and UNHCR

participated in the development of the Road Map for the Comprehensive Protection of the Rights of Migrant Children and Adolescents.

216. This Road Map establishes the responsibilities of the authorities at the three levels of government, in particular regarding the guarantee of decent housing in the different alternative care schemes; the guarantee, comprehensive protection and restoration of rights; and the observance of the principle of the best interests of the child. That mechanism is coordinated by the Executive Secretariats of the National System for the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents, through regional and state discussions in which the responsibilities of each authority are reviewed and inter-agency coordination procedures are refined.⁶⁰ The Road Map has enabled a better coordination of government actions for the care of children and adolescents, access to education and health, protection of the right to identity and a regular migration status while the migratory process is resolved.

217. As a result of the aforementioned amendments to immigration laws, the role of the state offices for the protection of children and adolescents was brought into line with the General Act on the Rights of Children and Adolescents with respect to the special protection of migrant children and adolescents, for which an assessment of each child is prepared and a plan for the restoration of rights is established, applying the principle of the best interests of the child, in which measures are implemented to ensure the protection of all rights and information is provided on the options to regularize the migration status, taking children's opinions into account in the decisions that are made. In addition to the legal representation of children and adolescents provided by the offices for the protection of children and adolescents, the Federal Public Defender Service provides free advice and representation.

218. Both the General Act on the Rights of Children and Adolescents and its regulations and the Migration Act mandate the non-detention of migrant children and adolescents, for which the National System for the Comprehensive Development of the Family and the Federal Office for the Protection of Children and Adolescents conduct a continuous mapping of available public and private shelters so that children and adolescents, regardless of whether or not they are travelling in the company of an adult, are never housed in migrant holding centres and are immediately referred to National System for the Comprehensive Development of the Family social welfare centres or civil society organization shelters. Mexico has 203 social welfare centres in 29 states that care for unaccompanied migrant children and adolescents.

219. The Commission on Assistance for Refugees has strengthened procedures to detect foreign migrant children and adolescents in need of international protection, ensuring that they have immediate access to the refugee status application procedure. It also requests the immigration authority to safeguard the principle of non-refoulement.

220. Regarding the right to education and health, the Ministry of Education modified its internal regulations to allow immediate access to educational services with or without academic or identity documents and created the Programme of Educational Services for Migrant Students. In addition, in June 2019, the Mexican Social Security Institute Bienestar Programme implemented a strategy to provide migrants with medical, preventive and medical and preventive care. In nine months, 46,147 medical consultations were provided at medical centres in Chiapas, Chihuahua and Baja California.

221. The working group of the abovementioned Commission of the National System for the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents has provided specialized courses and is working on certification courses to train state and municipal authorities on their responsibilities and the rights of children and adolescents. In addition, the National Institute of Migration, with the support of various national and international institutions, gives training to the 311 child protection officers on human rights, assertive communication and the best interests of the child, to ensure it has specialized agents.

⁶⁰ Baja California, Campeche, Chiapas, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Jalisco, Nuevo León, Oaxaca, Quintana Roo, Sonora, Tabasco, Tamaulipas, Tlaxcala, Veracruz, Zacatecas and Yucatán have participated in the regional and state discussions.

B. Economic exploitation, including child labour

222. In 2019, 3.2 million children and adolescents performed child labour according to the 2019 national child labour survey prepared by the National Institute of Statistics and Geography. Although in the period from 2015 to 2019 the rate decreased from 12.4 per cent to 11.5 per cent, the Government of Mexico is promoting the work of the Commission for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labour and the National Network of Local Commissions for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labour, which coordinates public policy in this area.

223. In compliance with the Labour Inspection Protocol on the Eradication of Child Labour and Protection of Permitted Adolescent Labour, developed with the technical assistance of ILO, since 2016 the Ministry of Labour and Social Security has conducted 73,405 ordinary and 210,146 special inspections to verify compliance with obligations in labour matters, on general working conditions, training and occupational safety and health.

224. In order to recognize workplaces that promote decent work, there are mechanisms such as the responsible employment award,⁶¹ which will have a specialization focused on the eradication of forced labour and child labour for all sectors; the “no child labour in Mexico” award and the “agricultural enterprise free of child labour” award.

225. On 10 June 2015, the Government of Mexico registered the decree by which it ratified ILO Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) and on 3 July 2020 it registered the ratification of ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189). Following up on the Committee’s recommendation, the Ministry of Labour and Social Security collaborates with ILO, for example, on the development of the Child Labour Risk Identification Model (2017), as well as on the social communication campaign entitled “Your voice against child labour”.

C. Children in street situations

226. The National System for the Comprehensive Development of the Family implemented a specific strategy for prevention and care in relation to children and adolescents at risk of living on the street or already doing so, aimed at reducing the psychosocial risks faced by this group. Ninety-one prevention and assistance projects presented by 46 civil society organizations and 40 Municipal Schemes for the Comprehensive Development of the Family were financed, providing care for 13,138 children and adolescents at risk of living on the street or already doing so.

227. The Federal Office for the Protection of Children and Adolescents developed a protocol on restoring the violated right to an identity of children and adolescents in street situations, to strengthen coordination between the state offices for the protection of children and adolescents, to locate relatives, search for information or documents related to children and adolescents in street situations, to help to obtain universal identification registration and to restore their violated right to an identity and citizenship.

228. At the state level, important assessments and research have been carried out in relation to children and adolescents living in street situations, to obtain information that will have an impact on the development of public policies or programmes aimed at protecting their rights. One example is the Programme of Comprehensive Development for Working Children and Adolescents at Risk of Living on the Street or Already Doing So in Guanajuato, as well as the programme of the municipality of Pachuca, in the State of Hidalgo, which seeks to detect, prevent and provide comprehensive care for working children and adolescents in this situation or at risk.

⁶¹ To be implemented.

D. Children and adolescents in conflict with the law and child and adolescent victims and witnesses

229. Children and adolescents said that the change in the Juvenile Justice Act, making measures non-custodial, has been a step forward. Within the communities of adolescents in conflict with the law, manual activities that provide them with skills for the future are valued. The training of community personnel to treat adolescents and their relatives with respect and without discrimination is identified as a priority.

230. The 2016 National Act on the Comprehensive Criminal Justice System for Adolescents represents a breakthrough since it enshrines the principles of the best interests of the child and comprehensive protection. It also establishes institutions, procedures and specialized authorities; promotes alternative dispute resolution mechanisms; and emphasizes the application of precautionary measures and punishments of a socioeducational nature, whose purpose is to ensure social reintegration.

231. As a result, the protocols on the implementation of precautionary measures and the protocols on non-custodial measures; the protocol on detention as a precautionary measure and punishment; as well as the protocol on the use of force in custody, security, discipline and transfer are being reviewed and analysed. Human rights booklets were prepared for adolescents who broke the criminal law and who were deprived of their liberty.

232. Work is under way to create local bodies for the consolidation of the Act, which bring together the authorities of the adolescent justice system and the National System for the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents. At present, 29 subcommissions are in place.⁶² Advice and training on the justice system has been provided to more than 500 local authorities and discussions have been held with specialized authorities such as judges, prosecutors, administrative enforcement authorities and the offices for the protection of children and adolescents. At the state level, more than half of the authorities with direct responsibility have become specialized. The establishment of national guidelines for training is pending.

233. Regarding punishments, in 2017 the National Institute of Statistics and Geography found that there has been a reduction in the number of cases of individuals who are deprived of liberty and the majority obtain non-custodial measures. Since 2015, there were 11,744 adolescents with custodial measures and 33,834 with non-custodial measures. Through the Federal Public Defender Service, as at 2020 a total of 399 children and adolescents had been attended to and there were 246 specialized public defenders.

234. In 2020, in order to protect adolescents during the COVID-19 health emergency, special sessions of the subcommissions were held to promote the granting of early release and prevention and care programmes were implemented, in addition to measures to protect the right to communication with the family and support network.

E. Indigenous children and adolescents and children and adolescents of African descent

235. Indigenous and Afro-Mexican children and adolescents recognize that there are shelters, food pantries, schools and scholarships, but they need other services such as electricity, Internet, health centres, paved roads, transportation, parks and libraries.

236. Based on the recognition of Afro-Mexican peoples in the 2018 Constitution, the 2019–2024 Special Programme for Indigenous and Afro-Mexican Peoples⁶³ contains strategies aimed at protecting the recognition and full exercise of their rights, through the implementation of affirmative actions.

⁶² Subsidiary bodies of the state commissions for the consolidation of penal reform.

⁶³ To be published.

237. With regard to the Afro-Mexican population, it is estimated that there are 29.4 older adults of African descent for every 100 children and adolescents under 15 years of age.⁶⁴ In January 2020, up-to-date sociodemographic information on this population group and its conditions will be available. There were 4.6 million Indigenous children and adolescents.⁶⁵

238. As noted throughout the present report, the Government of Mexico has implemented actions to protect, inter alia, the cultural rights, identity, education and health of this group.

X. Monitoring compliance with the Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child

A. Follow-up to the final observations on the sale of children and adolescents, child prostitution and the use of children and adolescents in pornography

239. In legislative matters, the National Code of Criminal Procedure establishes the penalties for the offences set forth in the Optional Protocol.⁶⁶

240. In compliance with the provisions of the relevant General Act, the Interministerial Commission on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Human Trafficking Offences and on Victim Protection and Assistance adopted the corresponding 2019–2024 national programme. Through the actions of the Commission, 425 investigation files were opened for alleged human trafficking offences; 608 alleged perpetrators involved in trafficking have been identified and 57 judgments have been handed down. In collaboration with UNODC, a National Information System on Human Trafficking is being developed, which will allow for the registration, consultation, follow-up and analysis of information on these cases.

241. In terms of prevention, since 2014, classified advertisements published in any medium, whose content incites or promotes the commission of any offence related to human trafficking, have been monitored by the Ministry of the Interior pursuant to the guidelines for the surveillance and monitoring of classified advertisements. As at 2020, 1,606 classified advertisements had been detected in newspapers and 13 radio and television advertisements had been detected. They were reported to the Office of the Special Prosecutor for Violent Crimes against Women and Trafficking in Persons or state prosecutors' offices for the possible commission of a related offence.

242. Through the Office of the Special Prosecutor for Violent Crimes against Women and Trafficking in Persons, since 2015, 1,127 child and adolescent victims have received specialized care and comprehensive assistance, for which there is a support fund. In 2019 167 children and adolescents were received at a specialized shelter that is a highly secure facility established for the protection of their rights. In addition, training and awareness-raising activities have been implemented in this field.

243. Regional Guidelines for Special Protection in Cases of the Repatriation of Child Victims of Trafficking are being implemented and 11 states have protocols on the detention, identification and care of migrant victims and/or possible victims of trafficking in persons.

Commercial sexual exploitation of children

244. Within the framework of the 2019–2024 Action Plan, a working group was formed to promote a comprehensive national strategy against the commercial sexual exploitation of children and adolescents with the support of United Nations agencies and civil society

⁶⁴ See https://www.gob.mx/cms/uploads/attachment/file/122501/Infografia_poblacion_afrodescendiente_CONAPO.pdf.

⁶⁵ According to the results of the 2015 National Institute of Statistics and Geography Intercensal Survey, calculated under the Indigenous household criterion.

⁶⁶ According to the Council of the Federal Judiciary, as at 2019, 77 cases had been heard for such offences, including 17 for child pornography.

organizations, which includes inter-agency coordination, legislative harmonization, awareness-raising and services for reporting and victim care.

245. The Ministry of Tourism promotes the National Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children and Adolescents in the Travel and Tourism Sector to advise and support the private sector in preventing and combating the sexual and labour exploitation of children and adolescents and child labour itself, through awareness-raising, training, collaboration and action protocols; it is a member of the Regional Action Group of the Americas for the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents and designed a road map to prevent and combat those offences, with a view to supporting the 2030 agenda.

246. The National Guard collaborates with agencies, international organizations and Internet service providers to prevent and investigate criminal conduct committed using information and communication technologies and the Internet, such as the exploitation of children and adolescents in pornography and trafficking in persons.

247. In compliance with the Committee's recommendation, in January 2016, Chapter VI bis regarding assisted and surrogate pregnancy was added to the Civil Code of the State of Tabasco, to specify the requirements to be able to carry out such contracts, in accordance with the rights of women and the legal definition of adoption.

B. Follow-up to concluding observations on the involvement of children and adolescents in armed conflict

248. Mexico is not in a situation of armed conflict,⁶⁷ but, in view of the challenge of combating organized crime, the establishment of the National System for the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents has made it possible to coordinate actions to prevent risk factors associated with the recruitment of children and adolescents and their protection in cases of demobilization, such as dropping out of school and child and adolescent labour. The 2019–2024 Action Plan includes measures to train federal, state and municipal security forces; to detect and prevent the recruitment of children and adolescents into organized crime; to protect demobilized children and adolescents; and to prioritize searches in the event of disappearance.

249. Within that same framework, the Ministry of Security and Civil Protection launched a system to monitor forms of violence associated with the recruitment of children and adolescents to generate systematized information to strengthen policies to meet their needs. The commitments acquired by Mexico before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights in March 2020, which reflect recommendations made by the Committee, are being followed up on, including actions for comprehensive prevention, analysis of the specific legal description of the offence of recruitment, coordination with civil society organizations, linkage with the social reintegration of adolescents, protection of migrant children and adolescents through a transnational system and the development of a protocol on measures for the restoration of rights.

250. The Commission to Eradicate All Forms of Violence against Children and Adolescents of the National System for the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents adopted a strategy for the protection of children and adolescents from armed violence, which will be coordinated by the Ministry of the Interior and will promote priority actions for the protection of child and adolescent victims of armed violence; changes in the regulatory framework; inter-agency coordination; quantitative and qualitative information; and coordination between authorities, civil society organizations and experts, while providing reporting mechanisms and safe spaces for protection.

251. Challenges focus on continuing to make progress in the coordination of care and prevention actions, including the coordination of programmes to combat poverty, insecurity,

⁶⁷ In accordance with international humanitarian law and the relevant international instruments. Mexico informed the Committee of its position in this regard in its fourth and fifth periodic reports, submitted on 19 July 2012 (CRC/C/MEX/4-5, 25 July 2014, para. 296).

violence, low levels of education, school dropout rates, addictions and poorly paid work through concrete actions to prevent recruitment.

252. Regarding the Committee's recommendation to put an end to military service for children and adolescents, in July 2015 the Decree went into effect amending the Rules for the Recruitment of Personnel for the Mexican Army and Air Force, repealing article 17 and increasing the minimum recruitment age to 18.

XI. Ratification of international instruments

Ratification of international human rights instruments

253. The decree approving the declaration made by the Government of Mexico to recognize the competence of the Committee on Enforced Disappearances to receive and consider communications submitted by or on behalf of individuals under its jurisdiction was published in September 2020.

254. Regarding the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Government of Mexico is conducting inter-agency consultations in order to advance towards its ratification.

255. On 11 July 2014, the withdrawal of the reservation to article 32 of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol came into effect, approved by the Senate of the Republic pursuant to a decree published on 20 March 2014.

256. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is conducting inter-agency consultations in order to submit the Third Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child to the Senate of the Republic for ratification, in line with the commitments made by the Government of Mexico.
