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STATE PARTY EXAMINATION OF PORTUGAL'S THIRD AND FOURTH PERIODIC REPORT

65TH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

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Portugal ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) on 21 September 1990. On 22 January 2014, the Committee on the Rights of the Child (the Committee) examined the third and fourth periodic report of Portugal. It was last examined on 1 October 2001.

Opening Comments

The delegation of Portugal was led by Mr. Pedro Nuno Bartolo, the Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva. He was supported by a delegation consisting of representatives of the Public Prosecutor Office, the National Commission for the Protection of Children and Young People at Risk, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of National Defence etc. and the Permanent Mission in Geneva.

Mr. Pedro Nuno Bartolo expressed respect to the crucial role of the United Nations in protecting children, including to the Committee, the UN Special Representative on Violence Against Children, the UN Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict and the UN Special Representative on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography. He stated that the government was committed to be guided by the principle of the best interests of the child, particularly in the context of financial and social crisis.

Mr. Pedro Nuno Bartolo regretted the delay in submitting the third and fourth periodic report, due to lack of coordination between public departments responsible for the implementation of the CRC, OPAC and OPSC. On this point, he explained that coordination had been improved

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through the creation of a National Human Rights Institution (CNDA) in compliance with the Paris Principles as well as an inter-ministerial human rights body, including the Ombudsman and the Attorney General.

Mr. Pedro Nuno Bartolo highlighted that considerable progress had been made in harmonising domestic legislations with the CRC. At an international level, the State Party ratified the Council of Europe Convention on Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse as well as the Optional Protocol to the CRC on a Communications Procedure. At a national level, plans and strategies had been developed to protect vulnerable children, including migrant children and children with disabilities. In this regard, inclusive education had been promoted and strategies for reducing inequalities were established.

Although social benefits had been reduced after the financial crisis, situations involving children and requiring an urgent social response had been identified and necessary resources and tools mobilized in order to reduce the social impact of austerity measures. These efforts had enabled to increase by 10 per cent social benefits to low-income single parents with dependent children

Mr. Pedro Nuno Bartolo also stated that the latest infant mortality rates which were among the lowest in Europe demonstrated the State Party's long-term dedication to full realization of children's rights.

Mr. Bernard Gastaud and Mr. Wanderlino Nogueira Neto, the Country Rapporteurs, welcomed the State delegation. They commended the State Party for many positive changes implemented since the last examination in 2001, including for having introduced legislation to reduce discrimination and protect children and youth at risk. They noted however, that the social and economic crisis hampered the achieved progress and negatively impacted the rights of the child. Subsidies for various child related sectors, including education and health had been reduced and redistributed. Eventually, they stated that it was important to discuss measures taken to redress and mitigate the effects of the financial crisis on children.

General Measures of Implementation

Legislation

The Committee took notice of significant progress in adopting legislation furthering the implementation of the CRC. It commended the State Party for the adoption of the law on the Protection of Children and Young People at Risk (law 147/99 of 14 September 2006), for the Joint Order by the Ministers of Internal Affairs, Justice and Health number 27808/2009 of 31 December on the Statistics and Definition of Deadly Victims of Accidents as well as for Article 69 of the State Party's Constitution, enshrining the right of children to protection by society and the State. The Committee acknowledged that the State Party was pressed by the economic crisis and inquired about the outlook beyond 2014.

The delegation highlighted that there were several improvements in legislation. It emphasized the milestone Decree No 67/2004 of 25th March 2004 which created a national register of foreign minors remaining illegally in the national territory. According to its Article 3 (3), registered children had the same rights as children in a regular situation, including free education and access to health care. As far as to the outlook beyond 2014, the delegation explained that the aim was to move beyond social assistance and emergency measures. After

the adoption of the EU Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020, the State Party committed to undertake additional efforts in the area of youth unemployment and research.

Dissemination and training

The Committee asked how the CRC was disseminated and whether General Comments were translated into Portuguese and made available. The Committee commended the State Party for its training programmes on the CRC for police officers and judges and asked about potential cutbacks in this regard due to the financial crisis. It also asked for more information about measures taken to disseminate information about the CRC in schools. The delegation stated that the List of Issues and the Summary Records of the UN Treaty Bodies were made public and available on the website of the Office for Documentation and Comparative Law of the Prosecutor General. Regarding General Comments, some of them had been translated into Portuguese and likewise posted on the Prosecutor General website.

The delegation further explained that numerous trainings were delivered, targeting police officers, magistrates, prosecutors and teachers. A private information network for magistrates only had been established providing information on the CRC under a specific section dedicated to children. Additionally, two types of human rights training curricula (short-term and long-term) for magistrates had been developed. The delegation noted that human rights publications, including on the CRC, as well as human rights handbooks had been developed and distributed in educational institutions. It concluded that the CNDA was also distributing information regarding the CRC and disseminating the Concluding Observations to Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).

Monitoring and coordination

The Committee enquired whether a special department had been created for the implementation of the CRC and whether the CNDA was acting as a coordinating mechanism for the rights of the child. The delegation responded that the CNDA was not focused on the rights of the child exclusively, but that it was indeed responsible for the internal implementation of the CRC and for issuing recommendations to other organisms dealing with the rights of the child. The CNDA was also made responsible for the preparation of the State Report and for bringing Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) into the drafting process.

The role of civil society and non-governmental organizations

The Committee noted that with regards to the State Report, the cooperation between the State Party and CSOs seemed to be limited to the area of social emergency and welfare. It asked whether there had been any cooperation with CSOs in relation to State macro-policy and how did the State choose its partners. Eventually, it asked whether CSOs had been encouraged to follow-up the activity of the government in an independent manner.

The delegation explained that partnerships with CSOs in regard to public policy were encouraged. As a matter of example, it mentioned the consultation body which had been created by the government in 1998. This was composed of CSOs and, since then, had been providing recommendations to the government on public policies. Moreover public policy instruments, such as national plans and strategies had been opened for consultation on internet.

General Principles

Non-discrimination

The Committee asked for more information on measures taken to eradicate discrimination against minorities, such as children with disabilities, immigrant children, undocumented children, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender individuals, linguistic minority and gypsy community.

The delegation stated that the State Party had a very inclusive policy towards minorities and had been effective in integrating all groups in the multicultural society as well as in ensuring the full enjoyment of their rights. In relation to children of immigrants, the delegation answered that concerned children were covered by protection mechanisms and had access to health and education, regardless of their legal status. The delegation stated that there was no discrimination against undocumented migrants due to the extensive efforts made by the State Party to protect migrant's rights, including in remote areas of the country. To illustrate the effectiveness of affirmative action policies, the delegation explained that within the framework of the Choices Programme (2013-2015), 9.776 children and youngsters, previously in the NEET situation (not in education, employment or training) had been reintegrated and the overall rate of academic success for participants was 86.7 per cent in 2011-2012. The delegation concluded that 936 partnerships regarding reintegration and protection of minorities had been established with the CSOs.

Best interest of the Child

The Committee explained that the legal principle of the best interest of the child should not be considered as a procedural rule only, but rather as a right of every child. It noted that the best interest of the child had been incorporated in the law and asked for further information about actions taken in order to ensure compliance with this principle on the ground. The delegation explained that its major concern was to take the principle into account as a primary consideration in all public actions and decisions. For this purpose a new understanding of children as rights holders had been developed and academic research on this topic had been increased. Moreover over 300 centres for children and youth, protecting their rights and interest had been established in all municipalities in order to support and disseminate the new vision of the child as a subject of law.

Respect for the views of the child

The Committee asked the delegation to comment on the application of children's rights to have their views taken into account and to participate in legal and administrative proceedings. The delegation answered that the right of the child to be heard was respected. It further explained that the Commission for the Protection of Children and Young at Risk encouraged the consideration of the view of the child during court proceedings. The law number 174/99 stipulated that a child or a young person who is at least 12 years old could intervene in court proceedings and her/his views would be taken into considerations, unless it constituted a danger for the child. The opinion of children under the age of 12 was also to be considered, in accordance with their maturity and understanding of the full situation. The delegation concluded that the presence of the public prosecutor was mandatory when children's interests were at stake.

Civil Rights and Freedoms

Corporal punishment

The Committee was concerned about the practice of corporal punishment, despite its

prohibition and criminalization by the penal code. In this regard, the Committee asked about measures taken to combat corporal punishment and particularly about the existence of trainings for teachers and parents as well as about support services at home. It also asked whether offenders committing the crime of ill-treatment or violence against children could be sentenced to home detention with electronic surveillance.

The delegation stated that corporal punishment was criminalized according to the penal code. Preventive actions, such as awareness raising campaigns, had been carried out in order to change public attitudes towards corporal punishment. The delegation stated that the rights of the child must be respected and violence should never be used as a mean of education in families. For this purpose, parental trainings had been encouraged in order to change cultural and educational thinking of parents. In the area of health, children subjected to ill-treatment and violence had been moved to the health and mental care system which was conducting home based interventions and providing guidance to families in difficult situations.

In order to prevent violence against children, the delegation said that individuals having committed crimes related to domestic violence were not sentenced during penal nor alternative proceedings to home detention. Monitoring electronic bracelets were used to prevent the offender to get close to the victim.

Concerning corporal punishment in schools, the delegation explained that it had been criminalized and criminal proceedings had taken place whenever corporal punishment cases were identified. Awareness-raising campaigns in schools had been carried out in order to detect cases of corporal punishment and ill-treatment.

Children helplines

The Committee was concerned about the number of children helplines available throughout the State Party. It noted that the fact of having 5 helplines could be confusing for children at risk. The delegation noted that the State Party had 3 national social emergency hotlines available 24/7. It added that all were operated by social workers and trained psychologists who provided information to vulnerable children and made referrals to local social workers. The Ombudsman's Office had also established a specific children's hotline. Moreover, the State Party had implemented the European number for missing children through a protocol between the Ministry of Internal Affairs and an NGO.

In order to familiarize children with these helplines, the State Party organized awareness raising campaigns in media, schools and publicized these numbers on non-governmental and governmental websites.

Family Environment and Alternative Care

Family environment

The Committee asked whether the State Party was successfully allocating resources to low income families. It also enquired whether it was possible to place a child out of his/her family for economic reasons only. The delegation answered that social programmes to combat social and economic deprivation in families had been established in order to mitigate the negative impact of the financial crisis and assist parents in their responsibilities. The four-year Social Emergency Programme (PES) established in October 2011, offered tailor-made solutions to families in difficult situations. The aim of this programme was to identify situations requiring an urgent response, such as facilitating access to the network of child care services. The delegation explained that social services had been developed in cooperation between the

government, NGOs and the private sector in order to ensure availability and responsiveness in emergency situations. Regarding concrete measures, every district had the opportunity to choose its partners, based on the budget available.

Adoption

The Committee was concerned about the lengthy adoption process and, in particular, the long period of time between the selection of a candidate and the placement of the child in a new family. It asked whether it was possible to make the adoption procedure more effective and less time-consuming. It also asked whether a contact was possible between the adopted child and her/his biological parents. Regarding unsuccessful adoptions, the Committee asked what happened to children and whether there were any provisions that regulated the return the children. Eventually, the Committee asked whether the Permanent Adoption Observatory, created in 2006, was still functioning.

The delegation stated that the legislative which were adopted in 2003 had brought the adoption process in line with the CRC and international standards. Regarding lengthy adoption procedures, the delegation explained that this was not due to procedure difficulties, but rather due to difficulty in finding foster parents. The delegation recognised that the matching system was not effective and there was a discrepancy between children and the criteria set by the candidate foster parents. The preference was to adopt children below the age of 6.

Regarding unsuccessful adoptions, the delegation explained that strict legal provisions had been regulating this issue and allowed adoptive parents to return the child to institutional care within 6 month period, if the process of adoption did not work. In order to prevent this situation, post-adoptive services were provided to adoptive families.

Further on, the delegation explained that, once the court had stated that the child was ready for adoption, there were no more contacts between the child and her/his biological parents.

As to the Permanent Adoption Observatory, the delegation noted that it continued to monitor and assess the performance of national institutions working for children and young people deprived of their right to grow up in biological family.

De-institutionalization

The Committee was concerned about the high rates of institutionalized children, including of vulnerable children under the age of 3. It recalled that the excessive placement of children in institutions was against the best interest of the child. It also asked whether a prevention mechanism had been established in order to increase the support to families in difficult situations so that children could stay with their biological parents. It also enquired whether the State Party planned to legislate on the prohibition of placing vulnerable children under the age of 3 into care institutions, in line with the UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children and the EU Guidelines the Transition from Institutional to Community-based Care.

The delegation stated that the institutionalization rate had remained stable since 2008, despite several deinstitutionalization policies. It also explained that most of vulnerable children in difficult situation remained in institutional care. In order to prevent further institutionalization, since 2008 the State Party had been investing in Centres for Family Support and Parental Guidance, which provided interventions, guidance on parental responsibilities and trainings for parents.

Regarding vulnerable children in institutions, the Dom Plan for Children's and Young People's Homes adopted in April 2008 had improved the quality of children's and young people's homes through the promotion of education, deinstitutionalization and support to children's life projects. The delegation explained that the Dom Plan reinforced Technical Teams in Homes through hiring of more than 3.000 medical staff and experts. Within the same framework, training courses on care institution management, including board of directors and auxiliary staff were provided and standardization of instruments was ensured.

As to the institutionalization of vulnerable children under the age of 3, the delegation explained that under the Home Plan, revision regarding the placement of concerned children had been revised in order to ensure a better environment for the development of children. A specific legal committee was established to deal with the issue and its objective was to revisit the State Party's model of placement of children in institutions.

Basic Health and Welfare

Children with disabilities

The Committee commended the State Party for progress made in relation to the rights of children with disabilities. It nevertheless expressed concern about the impact of austerity measures on children with disabilities. According to the European Foundation Centre's 2012 report on *Assessing the impact of European Governments' austerity plans on the rights of people with disabilities*, in the State Party 25 per cent of persons with disabilities were at greater risk of poverty than persons without disabilities. The report further stated that providers of early intervention services for children with disabilities saw their monthly State allowances reduced from EUR 240 to EUR 160 per child and that substantial budget cuts – up to 37 per cent between 2010 and 2012 - had been made with regard to specialised personnel and special technologies. Moreover reimbursement for medicine and medical health care services had been likewise affected, as well as subsidies for support workers, which were reduced to EUR 100. The Committee was concerned about the fact that this situation had led to an increase in the number of institutionalised children with disabilities. Faced with such reality, the Committee asked the delegation to elaborate on the impact of austerity measures on the lives of children with disabilities and their families. It further asked more detailed information about budget allocations to early interventions and whether inclusive education for children with disabilities was promoted.

The delegation explained that despite the financial crisis, the government had adopted laws and policies aiming at supporting children with disabilities and ensuring their social inclusion through affirmative action and inclusive education. In relation to the reduction of resources for children with special needs, the delegation responded that the budget had increased between 2008 and 2012 but needed to be reviewed. Moreover, although the government had raised user fees for a number of healthcare services through the Decree-law number 113/2011 of 29 November, persons with certain disabilities and an incapacity degree of 60 per cent or over were exempted from those fees.

Moreover, the delegation explained that Measure 44 of the National Strategy on Disability 2011-2013 (ENDEF) established the National System for Early Intervention with the participation of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Solidarity, and Education. It further clarified that the mechanism provided a multi-disciplinary approach to assist children with special needs, including through support in inclusive education and family support.

Eventually, the delegation explained that Measure 46 under the ENDEF strengthened the support to students with multiple disabilities, such as autism, deafness and blindness.

Health services

The Committee asked about the impact of austerity measures on health services. The delegation stated that in 2011 resources for the Ministry of Health had been reallocated in order to guarantee access to health services in accordance with the Constitution. In 2011, differentiating access to primary health care was established, taking into account the economic and social conditions of beneficiaries. System of exemptions from fees and rationalized costs had to be reorganized after the financial crisis. Persons exempted from fees, especially in cases of ongoing treatment in public health services included pregnant women, children up to age of 12, children with disabilities and an incapacity degree of 60 per cent, including their family members. The delegation further explained that family planning consultations were guaranteed to all and contraceptive methods were provided free of charge in public hospitals. It also specified that oral health and hygiene, including regular dentist checks were provided to children under the age of 15 free of charge.

Breastfeeding

The Committee was concerned by the lack of data on breastfeeding and the low proportion of mothers practicing exclusively breastfeeding, in accordance with the World Health Organization's infant feeding recommendations. The delegation explained that the Directorate for Health, in cooperation with NGOs, had established a register to monitor breastfeeding. Moreover, it had analysed the reasons why mother abandoned breastfeeding at an early stage. Regarding breastfeeding in public hospitals, paediatric services had been mobilized to promote breastfeeding immediately after birth. Health professionals had been specifically trained to provide mothers with information on exclusive breastfeeding, once they left hospital. The delegation noted that in 2006, the State Party joined the Celebration of the World Breastfeeding Week.

Education, Leisure and Cultural Activities Education

Education

The Committee commended the State Party for having extended compulsory schooling to the age of 18 and noted that this had increased the number of children and youngsters in schools. However, despite these measures, the Committee noted that drop-out rates seemed to be substantial. It asked the State Party what measures had been taken to ensure that children stayed or returned to schools. Regarding the financial crisis, the Committee asked what measures had been taken to mitigate the impact of the austerity measures and expenditure cuts on educational sectors. The delegation stated that expenditures cuts after the crisis had not affected inclusive education or financial incentives and subsidies for children in the area of education. In fact, since 2010-2011 the number of children benefiting from social support had tripled, including primary and secondary pupils. The delegation explained that these measures had been fundamental to social inclusion as well as to the prevention of early school drop-outs. Further on, the delegation explained that in the area of education, primarily expenditure cuts impacted teachers' salaries by 14 per cent. Before the adoption of austerity measures, civil servants were entitled to 12 monthly payments and 2 additional bonuses in June and November. In fact, instead of receiving 14 monthly payments, 2 months of bonuses had been cut off for teachers.

Incorporation of human rights education and citizenship

The Committee inquired whether citizenship and human rights education had been incorporated into school curricula and whether teachers received specific training in human rights. The delegation stated that most of schools and universities had special trainings on citizenship education and future teachers and educational staff had been systematically trained on human rights and citizenship. Moreover awareness raising campaign had been organized on citizenship within the Safe School Programme Framework and the State Party participated in the Council of Europe project on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights.

Further on, the delegation explained the civic education reform, which took place in 2012. The official school curriculum had been divided into two parts: the national compulsory curricula and the second personalized curricula, which schools developed according to their programmes of study. The delegation noted that civic education had been moved under the second personalized curricula, in order to ensure a cross-cutting approach. Indicative guidelines had been established, but civic education ceased to be an independent subject. The delegation explained that schools were given the possibility to decide on how to teach civic education, including through development of projects and activities. More precisely, 15 thematic areas for citizenship had been established, such as intercultural education, human rights education, gender equality education, road safety, media education, financial education.

Participation of children and young people in school governance

The Committee was concerned about the lack of participation of children in school governance. The delegation stated that participatory spaces had been created through the activities of the General Council in which pupil representatives were involved and had the right to vote.

Inclusive education

The Committee asked what had been done in order to promote inclusive education, particularly among vulnerable children, including Roma children, immigrant children or undocumented children. The delegation stated that, according to the State Party's Constitution, access to education was universal and inclusive. In order to comply with this principle, various programmes had been implemented in order to ensure access to education for vulnerable children and promote intercultural dialogue and safety in schools. The delegation explained that children from immigrant and Roma communities were provided special incentives and supplies in the area of education.

Child and tauromachy (bullfighting)

The Committee was concerned about the possibility that children attending bullfighting schools took part in bullfights. The Committee asked whether the government planned to take appropriate legislative and administrative measures to ensure that children did not participate in tauromachy events and did not attend or receive lessons in bullfighting schools. The Committee noted that the National Commission for the Protection of Children and Young People at Risk had stated that animals used in bullfighting, irrespective of their weight and size, could endanger children and young people. The Committee asked why the Inspectorate General of Cultural Activities continued to allow young children to take part in festivities involving bullfighting and children over 12 to take part in the bullfighting itself.

The delegation answered that child participation in tauromachy events had been prohibited, by Article 2, paragraph 2, of Act No. 105/2009 of 14 September 2009. However, the

Inspectorate General of Cultural Activities could authorize the participation of children above the age of 12 in cultural shows, including in bullfighting events. The delegation explained that this formal authorization required several approvals, such parental authorization upon presentation of a medical certificate, as well as guarantees on child's safety, health and well-being. It added that the Inspectorate General of Cultural Activities also took into account the right of the child to be heard.

Regarding bullfighting schools, the delegation had no record of injury of children. The delegation concluded that Spanish legislation had been studied in order to provide for further regulations in the area of tauromachy.

Special Protection Measures

Juvenile justice

The Committee asked whether the State Party took notice and translated into Portuguese the Council of Europe Guidelines on Child-Friendly Justice and the UN Guidelines on Justice in Matters Involving Child Victims. The Committee further enquired about protection measures under the law and in practice during criminal proceedings involving child victims, witnesses and children in conflict with the law. It also asked what had been the role of social workers and other professionals as part of the procedure. It enquired whether a professional psychological support was provided to child victims and witnesses before, during and after the interaction with judges, public prosecutors and police authorities. Moreover, the Committee asked whether specific trainings on effective communication with children had been delivered to judges and police authorities. Eventually, the Committee asked whether amicable and alternative settings had been promoted and if these mediations had been affected by the austerity measures.

The delegation reiterated its humanistic perspective on juvenile justice and stated that incarceration of children in conflict with law had been considered as a last resort solution. The delegation explained that the minimum age for criminal responsibility had been set at the age of 16. Children under the age of 12 committing a criminal offence were not legally responsible for their action and a proactive system on social reintegration had been established, preventing stigmatization of children and promoting basic and democratic values. The delegation explained that, even if children between the ages of 12 and 15 had already developed a sense of responsibility, they were not legally responsible for criminal offenses. Specific social reinsertion programmes had been developed for children falling under this category. Regarding children in conflict with law between the ages of 16 and 21, a special juvenile justice mechanism had been established, based on the consideration that prisons and severe sentences increased the risk of recidivism.

The delegation provided information on juvenile justice offenders sentenced to incarceration. In 2013, there were 63 incarcerated young people between 16 and 18 years old, whereas in 2012 the number was 60 and in 2011 there were 73 incarcerated children. The delegation noted that juvenile offenders were completely separated from adults in regular prisons and that 3 special prisons for juvenile offenders had been established, providing several programmes on social reintegration, social passages generation and promotion of pro-social style of life. It further explained that specific trainings for social workers, psychologists and legal authorities dealing with young offenders were delivered. Education guides and online training courses were organized for medical personnel involved in the juvenile justice system. Amicable and alternative settings had also been promoted.

Solitary confinement

The Committee referred to the Concluding Observations of the Committee Against Torture addressed to the State Party on the 8 November 2013 and asked whether measures had been taken to prohibit solitary confinement for juvenile offenders.

The delegation stated that solitary confinement was a disciplinary measure applicable to incarcerated juvenile offenders between the ages of 16 to 18. It clarified that such measures occurred exclusively in situations when there was a serious conflict between the juvenile offender and the environment. The law under the penal code on measures regarding deprivation of liberty stated that the maximum time for solitary confinement was 30 days. In practice, the delegation noted that the maximum time of solitary confinement imposed on juvenile offenders had been 13 days. The delegation added that decisions on solitary confinement could be always reviewed and controlled by the public prosecutor. Moreover, during the solitary confinement, juvenile offenders were assisted by specially trained medical personnel and psychologists.

Concluding Remarks

Mr. Bernard Gastaud and Mr. Wanderlino Nogueira Neto thanked the delegation for the constructive dialogue and noted that elements from the discussion would be taken into considerations for the Committee's Concluding Observations. They highlighted that absolute priority was to be given to the upholding of the rights of the child, despite the economic crisis. A real macro-political action was needed for the most disadvantaged, the poorest as well as for children and adolescents at risk, in order to mitigate negative impacts of the austerity measures. Inclusive laws and policies targeting children with disabilities, migrant children and children from Roma communities should also be developed and synergies with CSOs, the European Union, the European Central Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank should be strengthened.

Mr. Pedro Nuno Bartolo and Mr. José Santos Pais thanked the Committee for its remarks and recommendations. They reiterated their respect to the work of the Committee and the State Party's commitment to implement the provisions under the CRC and its Optional Protocols. They explained that public discussions on austerity measures aimed to ensure positive developments in the area of children's rights. Mr. Pedro Nuno Bartolo and Mr. José Santos Pais concluded that lessons would be drawn from the dialogue, as well as from the Committee's Concluding Observations.