

Country session: Cameroon

Date: 75th session – 30 May 2017

Background information

[OHCHR press release](#)

[Webcast](#)

[Audio file](#)

[Summary records](#)

Reporting

Reporting methodology

Regular reporting procedure

Simplified reporting procedure

Concluding Observations with urgent measures

State report:

Common core document	
Initial submission	13 April 2000
Second submission	22 May 2013
Annexes	

CRC		OPAC		OPSC	
No. of report	Third to fifth periodic reports	No. of report	Initial report	No. of report	Not ratified
Due date	31 January 2015	Due date	4 February 2015	Due date	-
Submission	6 December 2015	Submission	Not submitted yet	Submission	-

Written replies to LOIs	
Due date	23 February 2017
Submission	22 February 2017

Additional comments: The Committee noted that the last Concluding Observations to Cameroun were issued on 18 Feb 2010

Public reports from children's rights defenders:

	Alternative reports /Additional information
NGOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ECPAT - ASSEJA (Association, Enfants, Jeunes et Avenir) ▪ Center for the Promotion of Law ▪ Center for Family and Human Rights (C-Fam) ▪ Cultural Survival

- International Disability Alliance
- The Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion (the Institute)

State delegation

Large high level and Multisectoral delegation led by Ms. Marie-Therese Abena Ondo, Minister for the Promotion of the Woman and the Family. She was supported by delegates from the Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Women Empowerment and the Family (MINPROFF), the Senate and the Permanent Mission in Geneva.

Committee's Task Force members

Name & Last Name	Country
Jorge Cardona	Spain
Suzanne Aho Assouma	Togo

Dialogue description:

i. Character of the dialogue

The atmosphere during the session was cordial. The answers of the State to the Committee's questions were focused mainly on law development and policy making.

ii. General assessment made by the Committee

The Committee welcomed the OPAC ratification, the Penal Code amendments criminalizing several harmful practices and the efforts to integrate refugee, asylum seeking and IDP children to the education system. Nevertheless, it raised its concerns about the absence of an explicit legal ban for corporal punishment and the insufficient budget allocations for the implementation of strategies and plans on children's rights.

iii. Main issues discussed

- **Harmful practices:** The Committee was deeply concerned about the persistence of harmful practices in the country such as child marriage, FGM, breast ironing and ritual crimes against albino children. Committee members asked whether there were any plans or strategies to raise awareness on the effect of these practices with communities, especially with traditional and religious leaders, and whether the population was aware of the criminalization of such practices. The delegation recognized that, despite the law forbidding it, child marriage persisted, especially in the north, due to the difficult economic situation. As per the albino children, the delegation stressed that they did not face formal discrimination but there was a problem with the mentality of people towards these children. Awareness-raising campaigns were carried out within population about the rights of albino children.
- **Education:** The Committee pointed out the high rates of school drop-outs, especially among girls, due to sexual harassment and expressed its concerns about the low teaching rate and geographic disparity in access to education. Committee members asked about what was being done to eliminate the hidden costs of education and to increase the number of qualified teachers across the country. The delegation stated that

primary education was compulsory and free, and guidelines against sexual harassment in schools were adopted. Additionally, the delegation stressed that more schools were being built to avoid overcrowding, but acknowledged that there were still challenges to ensure qualified teachers across the whole country.

- **Administration of juvenile justice:** The Committee expressed its deep concerns about the very low age for criminal responsibility being at 10. Committee members pointed out that a lot still needed to be done to ensure the protection of children in conflict with the law, and asked about measures to ensure that specialized, staffed and trained juvenile courts were put in place. Moreover, the Committee requested more information on how the justice system dealt with children involved in armed conflict. The delegation replied that in cases where children were involved, the court hearings were conducted behind closed doors, and no recording or disclosure of the minor's information was allowed. A social worker had to be always with the child to ensure his/her best interest, and the priority was to avoid detention. As per the courts, the cases were followed by specialized judges and advisers trained in juvenile justice.

Recommendations of the Committee

In its [Concluding Observations](#), the Committee draw attention to the need of **urgent measures** concerning the following 6 areas:

- **Non-discrimination:** The Committee reiterated its previous recommendations and urged the State to adopt legislation and implement a comprehensive strategy to protect all children against discrimination, particularly girls, children born out of wedlock, children with disabilities, children with HIV/AIDS, children with albinism, indigenous children, children in street situations, children suspected of association with Boko Haram and refugee, asylum seeking and IDP children. The identity of LGBTI children should be recognized and they should be protected against all kinds of discrimination. Finally, the State should carry out awareness-raising campaigns and programs on elimination of discrimination against children.
- **Birth registration and nationality:** The State should ensure free birth registration processes and certificate insurances. The National Civil Status Office should be fully financed and staffed across the country and awareness-raising campaigns for parents on the importance of registration at birth should be carried out. Moreover, the State should derogate discriminatory provisions of the National code regarding the right to nationality of children born out of wedlock and the acquisition of nationality for children with disabilities.
- **Torture and other cruel degrading treatment or punishment:** The State should instruct the police on the right of children of freedom from all kind of violence, specifically torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. It should ensure thorough investigations, prosecutions and proper convictions for perpetrators, and provide child victims with compensation and rehabilitation measures.
- **Sexual exploitation and abuse:** The State should adopt specific legislation to eliminate all kinds of violence against girls and women in all settings. This to ensure prevention, protection and rehabilitation measures to victims and vulnerable groups, especially girls, children with disabilities and refugee, asylum seeking and IDP children. Mechanisms for reporting cases of sexual exploitation and abuse must be ensured, perpetrators must be brought to justice, and child victims should be provided with protection measures. Moreover, the State should also ensure training for judges and personnel working with/for children on child-friendly procedures when dealing with child victims. And awareness raising campaign to destigmatize child victims and promote complaint mechanisms must be carried out.
- **Education, including vocational training and guidance:** The State should increase budget allocations and improve transparency and accountability in public spending for the education sector. It should ensure free and quality education by training teachers and providing schools with adequate material and infrastructures, especially in regards to access to water facilities. Moreover, child marriage victims should be re-integrated into the school system with no stigma, and administrative barriers to education must be removed. The prosecution and conviction of teachers who abuse children must be guaranteed, and confidential reporting

mechanisms at schools must be set up. Finally, vocational education and training programs must be fostered among children who have dropped out from school, particularly among the ones in vulnerable situations.

- **Administration of juvenile justice:** The Committee reiterated its previous recommendations and urged the State to fully align its juvenile justice system with the Convention. The State should raise its minimum age of criminal responsibility to an international accepted standard, as well as prosecute police officers who have bribed children in detention for their release and legal aid lawyers for demanding fees. It should expedite the establishment of a financed, trained and staffed juvenile court, while ensuring qualified and independent legal aid for children in conflict with the law throughout their whole legal process.

Moreover, the State should prioritize alternative measures and ensure that detention is used as last resort and for a short period. In case detention is needed, children should be separated from adults and the conditions of detention must comply with international standards.

Sustainable Development Goals

Throughout its Concluding Observations the Committee referred to the following targets:

- 16.5 on reducing corruption and bribery in all their forms
- 16.9 on providing legal identity for all, including birth registration
- 16.2 on ending all forms of violence against children
- 3 on ensuring health and well-being for all, at every stage of life
- 4 on ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

Next State report

CRC	
No. of report	Sixth and seventh periodic reports
Due date	9 August 2022

Disclaimer: Child Rights Connect reports are all drafted in English. If the State report and/or the alternative reports were submitted in another UN language (Spanish, French, Arabic, Russian or Chinese) the report will be translated accordingly.