



**ACERWC**  
African Committee of Experts on  
the Rights and Welfare of the Child

Comité Africain d'Experts sur les  
Droits et le Bien-être de l'Enfant

Comité Africano dos Direitos e  
Bem-Estar da Crianças

اللجنة الأفريقية المعنية بحقوق الطفل ورفاهه

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**REPORT OF THE ACERWC ON THE FOLLOW-UP MISSION CONDUCTED TO  
MONITOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ITS CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS AND  
RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE KINGDOM OF LESOTHO**

**14-17 JUNE 2021**

**June 2021**

- 1. Purpose of the Mission:** The purpose of the Mission is to monitor the level of implementation of the concluding observations and recommendations issued by the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC/the Committee) to the Government of Lesotho following the consideration of the latter's initial report on the implementation of the African Children's Charter in 2015.
- 2. Objectives of the ACERWC in this Mission:** The Mission aimed at undertaking a constructive dialogue with representatives of the Government of Lesotho to learn about the progress achieved, challenges faced, and opportunities present in the implementation of its concluding observations and recommendations. The Committee also intended to bring stakeholders together to boost collaboration between the Government, UN agencies, CSOs, and other stakeholders. Moreover, the Committee sought to enhance and accelerate the implementation of its recommendations and to ensure that the reporting cycle is maintained.
- 3. Output of the Mission:** The Mission provided an opportunity for the Government of Lesotho to appreciate its progress in implementing the recommendations and thereby learn best practices that can be used by the Committer in its further engagement with other State Parties. Moreover, the Mission created an opportunity for the Government to identify and address its challenges in implementing the recommendations of the Committee. Additionally, the Mission created an opportunity to sensitize various organs of the Government as well as other stakeholders about the Charter, the Committee and Agenda 2040. Finally, the Mission also enhanced the continued commitment from the Government of Lesotho to implement the recommendations and the provisions of the Charter as well as to submit its periodic report in a foreseeable future.
- 4. Delegation:** The Delegation of the ACERWC was composed of Hon. Moushira Khattab, head of Delegation and Country Rapporteur to Lesotho, Hon Robert Nanima, Member of the ACERWC, Mr Ayalew Getachew Assefa, Senior Child Protection Officer; Ms Manal Anadjib, Program Officer, Mr Philippe Sekone, Child Rights Officer, Ms Adiam Zemenfes Tsighe, Legal Researcher, and Ms Opal Sibanda, Legal Researcher at the Secretariat of the Committee.
- 5. Methodology:** The Mission engaged in constructive discussions and bilateral meetings with representatives of the Government, UN Agencies, CSOs and children's representatives; as well as a consultative workshop in the presence of all stakeholders including representatives of the Government, UN Agencies, CSOs and children's representatives.

## **6. Mission activities**

### **6.1. Courtesy Calls**

The Delegation paid courtesy calls to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Relations, H.E. Matsepo Ramakoae and Minister of Social Development, H.E. Matebatso Doti on 14 June 2021. During its engagement with the Ministers, the Committee explained the reason for its visit and also the activities it intended to carry out. Moreover, it requested the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Relations to support the mandate of the Committee in her capacity at the level of the Executive Council of the African Union. Moreover, the Committee submitted its kind request to the two ministers to facilitate the transfer of the title deed of the plot of land that has been identified by the Government of Lesotho for the construction of the permanent Headquarters of the Secretariat of the Committee. Both Ministers expressed their sincere willingness to support the mandate of the Committee as well as smoothen the relocation of the Secretariat of the Committee.

### **6.2. Consultation with Various Ministries and other stakeholders**

On 14 and 15 June 2021, the Committee had meetings with representatives of various Ministries and partners organizations, including:

- i. Ministry of Social Development;
- ii. Ministry of Justice, Human Rights, and Correctional Services;
- iii. Ministry of Health;
- iv. Ministry of Law and Justice;
- v. Ministry of Home Affairs;
- vi. UNICEF Lesotho;
- vii. Letsema Child Rights Network of Lesotho; and
- viii. Representatives of the Child Parliament;

### **6.3. Workshop on the situation of children in Lesotho**

One of the activities of the Mission was a consultative workshop on the implementation of its concluding observations and recommendations and the situation of children's rights in Lesotho organized by the Committee. The Workshop brought together representatives from a wide range of Government Ministries, and other stakeholders including a pool of CSOs to assess the implementation of the concluding observations and recommendations and identify gaps that can be improved through coordinated efforts. During the opening of the workshop, keynote speeches were delivered by the

UNICEF Deputy Representative, Head of the Delegation of the ACERWC, and Child Representative. The Workshop was officially opened by the Minister of Social Development of the Kingdom of Lesotho. The Workshop included presentations from the Secretariat about the Charter and the mandate of the Committee as well as the main aspects of the recommendations of the Committee to the Kingdom of Lesotho on its initial report. Moreover, there were presentations made by both the Government of Lesotho and the CSOs about the implementation of the recommendations of the Committee. A wide range of discussions and reflections were made by participants following the presentations.

## **7. MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE MISSION**

Based on the above-mentioned activities carried out during the Mission, the Delegation of the ACERWC identifies the following main findings on the status of the implementation of its recommendations in particular and the implementation of the Charter in general:

### **7.1. On General Measures of Implementation**

- i. Domestication and dissemination of the Charter-** The Committee notes that the Charter has not been translated to local languages and is not widely disseminated. The Government informed the Committee that it intends to translate the Charter with the Children's Protection and Welfare Act (CPWA) after the revision of the same is finalized. Furthermore, the Committee notes that the Charter is not self-executory and not justiciable in the national courts.
- ii. Reporting on the implementation of the African Children Charter (Submission of Periodic Report)-** The Committee is informed by the Ministry of social development that the periodic report is being developed and that it will be submitted before the end of 2021. This information was further confirmed by UNICEF as it has supported the process of the development of the report.
- iii. Legislative Measures:** The Committee is informed that the current Children's Protection and Welfare Act (CPWA) is under review to make it in line with the Charter and other international instruments. However, the Committee noted that some of the aspects of its recommendations that could have been taken by ongoing revision are not being considered. The Committee has recommended to the Government of Lesotho to review its minimum age of criminal responsibility which stands at 10 years currently. Nevertheless, the Committee learned that these aspects are not being reconsidered in the current revision of the CPWA.

**iv. Institutional measures and coordination:** Children's rights issues are mainly dealt with by the Directorate of Children's Services. However, the Committee from its various consultations noted that the Directorate of Children's Services lacks the technical and financial resources to undertake coordination activities on the implementation of CPWA. The Committee also observed that the Directorate of Children's Services does not have a stand-alone budget that it can use to monitor and coordinate the implementation of the CPWA by other Government organs. The Committee notes that coordination meetings are technically and financially supported by UNICEF. Moreover, the Committee did not observe any development in terms of according legal standing, capacity strengthening and adequate budgetary allocation for the District Child Protection Teams (DCPTs) and the National Orphans and Vulnerable Children Coordinating Committee (NOCC).

Despite the recommendation of the Committee on the initial report, the Committee notes that the National Human Rights Commission is still not established.

**v. Child Friendly Budgeting:** The Committee observed that children's issues are not prioritized in the budgeting process and budget allocation and children's issues are limited.

**vi. Collaboration with CSOs:** Whilst the Committee was informed that the Government collaborates with multi-sectorial structures such as the NOCC and the DCPTs, there were no indications on how the Government collaborates with CSOs in the child protection sector in the State Party. The Committee however notes that development partners have been complementing government efforts in the realization of children's rights.

## **7.2. On the Definition of the child and other age-related requirements**

The Committee is informed that the Government of Lesotho is not considering raising the minimum age of criminal responsibility as it finds 10-year-old children being self-aware in the crimes they commit and because the Government does not have any other way to deal with children below the minimum age of criminal responsibility in event that they engage in wrongdoings.

Moreover, the Committee notes from the discussions that the 1974 Marriage Act of the State Party still contains a provision which allows girls as young as 16 to marry if authorities allow such marriage in writing.

Taking into consideration the recommendations of the Committee, the current revision of the CPWA will rectify the low minimum age of employment that exists in the current Act.

## **7.3. General Principles**

- i. **Non-discrimination:** The Committee was informed during the mission the Government of Lesotho has taken steps to prevent the expulsion of pregnant girls from schools. The State Party has also stressed on encouraging girls to stay in schools by providing sanitary pads to girls in schools.

With regards to the provision of services, the Committee observes that there is still a disparity in terms of the availability and provision of services between urban and rural areas.

- ii. **Right to life survival and development:** The Committee was informed that the Government of Lesotho developed and adopted a National Nutrition Policy in 2016 and a five-year National Nutrition Strategic Plan in 2017. The Committee learned that both the policy and strategic plan focuses on food, value chain, Social protection, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), micro-nutrients supplementation, infant and young child feeding (IYCF) which include exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life, maternal nutrition and food and nutrition education. The Committee further learned that Social assistance programmes also contribute to improved nutrition of poverty-stricken households. The Ministry of Health implements a strategy called Reach all Districts (RED) with support from the Global Alliance for Vaccine Initiative (GAVI) in five (5) of the least-performing districts of the country. The essential services offered through RED include immunizations of under-fives and pregnant women, growth monitoring of under-fives and pregnant women and provision of food supplements to both under-fives and pregnant women as well as provision of other maternal and child health services.

The Committee notes that despite the high prevalence of HIV and AIDS in the State Party, tremendous efforts have been made regarding ARV treatment. The Committee was informed that children have less access to treatment than adults and there are no child friendly counselling services for children.

- iii. **Participation of the child:** The Committee observes that there are children's parliaments that are decentralized at the community level. However, the Committee notes that the children's parliaments are not fully owned by the Government and most of the technical and financial support as well as organization of their meetings, is carried out by CSOs.

The Committee notes that the Ministry of Social Development coordinates and facilitates community dialogues, children's forums and children's parliament sessions where children express their opinions. The Ministry also supports children with radio and TV Slots where children air their views on public platforms during the commemoration of international days marked for children. However, the Committee was informed that children do not fully take part in decision

making on issues affecting them for instance in the budgeting process and in all levels of implementing free and compulsory education among others.

#### 7.4. Civil Rights and Freedoms

- i. **Birth registration:** The Ministry of Home Affairs has implemented the Universal Coverage Principle and works in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Local Government to achieve increased and universal birth registration. The Committee notes that there are civil registration offices at the District level as well as in villages and health centers. Moreover, the Committee learned that the Ministry works with Chiefs to ensure the registration of children born out of health facilities, particularly in rural areas. The Committee notes that children are required to have a birth certificate to enroll in schools and hence the service becomes critical. The Committee notes that although birth registration is free for all citizens, there is payment required for late registration of children, the justification being that this penalty encourages parents and caregivers to register births promptly. Moreover, the Committee notes that on-job training is provided for staff of the civil registry.

The Committee is informed that children born out of wedlock can be registered by one parent without the requirement to bring the father. Furthermore, children born from non-Lesotho parents but whose parents are registered in Lesotho are provided with a birth certificate. This includes children whose parents are refugees. However, if the parents are not registered, the children will only get proof of registration, other than a birth certificate.

The Committee was further informed that the Registration of Births and Deaths Act of 1973 prohibits registration of births of children with derogatory names. The CPWA (s7) also provides that every child has a right from birth to decent names. However, during its consultations, the Committee noted that there are no indications of sensitization of communities and societies to desist from giving derogatory names to children born out of wedlock.

- ii. **Protection from abuse:** The Committee notes that the State Party has abolished corporal punishment in the school setting. The Committee further notes that the CPWA does not explicitly ban corporal punishment but protects children from torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, including cultural practices. Moreover, the Committee learned that caregivers and teachers receive training on positive parenting from NGOs.

The Committee was informed that the Government developed guidelines and standards of care that regulate the operation of care facilities for victims of abuse. Social Workers from the Ministry of Development conduct quarterly supervisory visits to the facilities to provide technical backstopping. Further, the Government identifies knowledge gaps and conducts refresher training for the staff in the care facilities where required.

Despite the Committee's recommendation on the initial report, the Committee notes that a care facility has not yet been established in Thaba Tseka.

The Committee further notes that there is a Child Helpline in the State Party but it is not accessible at schools hence children are not able to report cases.

#### **7.5. Family environment and alternative care**

The Committee learned that the Government has established a strong grant scheme for children which initially started as a support for orphans and vulnerable children but later extended to other children in need of support. However, the issue of child-headed families remains to be a challenge in the State Party.

In addressing the root causes of vulnerability, the Committee was informed that the Government of Lesotho undertakes capacity building of families and communities to address poverty through Community Development initiatives. As a result, the Ministry of Social Development's Community Development Department has so far supported the establishment of 65 income-generating projects across the 10 districts of Lesotho. Moreover, the Committee is informed that in 2019, the Government adopted an HIV Policy and the Government has been availing Anti-Retroviral Therapy (ART) and Voluntary Testing and Counselling in public and private health facilities.

Following its recommendation on the initial report, the Committee notes that two facilities have been established in Qasha's Nek for children separated from their parents. However, a facility has not been established in Thaba-Tseka. The Government provides financial support to the care facilities and carries out inspection.

The Committee notes that the State Party has developed standards of care for residential care facilities. While children in such facilities are supposed to stay there only for 2 years after which they are supposed to be placed in a family environment, the Committee notes that children stay for a long time in institutional care facilities, sometimes until adulthood. This occurs despite the adoption of the family preservation concept included in the CPWA Amendment Bill of 2018 and the 2014 National Policy on Social Development which makes family reunification a priority.

#### **7.6. Health and welfare**

The Committee notes that the State Party has been making efforts to improve the accessibility of health care facilities. The Ministry of Health has erected 30 village health posts in community councils and 8 of these health posts are used as outreach centers.

The Committee notes that the data available for most health indicators for children is from 2014 as the Government did not conduct Demographic Health Survey (DHS) after 2014 as the budget allocated for the DHS was shifted for the data collected on HIV. Based on data from 2014, the Committee notes that there is a high rate of under-five mortality. The Government is now focused on community-based prevention by working with community health workers who train communities about early identification of illnesses, supervise mothers, and refer cases to district level. There is also a proper reference system from health posts to health facilities where doctors are available. The



Committee observes the nutrition services are now extended to children above the age of 5 also. However, there is a high rate of stunting in the State Party.

The Committee was informed that new infections were discovered and teenage pregnancy increased during the Covid-19 lockdown. The Committee observes that the State Party showed effort in ensuring the provision of ARV treatment despite lockdowns including by sending reminder SMS at the individual level during the time for collection of ARV treatment. Using the Covid-19 Guidelines, the State Party embarked on providing ARV treatment by avoiding physical contact to reduce risk.

The Committee was informed that the Government has established Adolescent Health Corners in hospitals where children are educated on sexual reproductive health. The Committee notes that such Adolescent Health Corners have not been established at the community level hence they remain inaccessible to some children.

Concerning immunization, the Committee notes that the State Party is currently providing a daily immunization service in the Health Posts while previously it was provided in the form of outreach only.

The Committee learned that the Ministry of Health is showing efforts to ensure the provision of running water and toilets in all schools. The Committee further learned that the State Party has been allocating funds from the budget to the Department of Rural Water Supply for the supply of clean drinking water and sanitation in the rural and remote parts of the country.

The Committee notes that health facilities are mostly accessible to children with disabilities, however, there is a challenge concerning children with hearing impairments as health workers are not trained with sign language.

The Committee notes that the budget allocation for the health sector is high compared to other African Countries. However, the budget allocation for 2021 has decreased compared to the previous year.

## **7.7. Education and leisure**

The Committee notes that the education sector had a lot of challenges in the previous years mainly due to teachers' strikes in 2019 followed by the lockdowns in 2020. The Committee also found that education is not entirely free even though it is subsidized by the Government. While the Education Act provides for free and compulsory education, there are examination fees that affects children from economically disadvantaged families and who are not in the scholarship program of the Government. While there is progress in the enrollment rate in primary education, there are poor learning outcomes due to the lack of quality education. At the level of secondary education, the Committee observes that there is a low enrolment of boys compared to girls due to herding. The Committee learned that the Government has embarked on school feeding to ensure high enrolment and the low dropout rate of children.

The Committee notes that the school curriculum was changed and Life Skills was introduced. The Committee was informed that challenges are being faced as some teachers are hesitant to teach Life Skills and only want to teach examinable subjects. The Committee also notes that there is no sexual reproductive health education in schools.

The Committee was informed by the Government of Lesotho that the Ministry of Education has developed and approved standards and policy for Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) and the strategic plan is under review. Further, the Ministry of Education developed the ECCD Skills Training Manual for ECCD teachers and caregivers. While the Standards for nursery/Day Care Centers have been developed, they are not yet approved. The Committee was further informed by the Government that MOET National Field Trainers conduct visits to the ECCD centers to monitor compliance with the standards.

The Committee notes that the Persons with Disability Act 2021 addresses the challenges of infrastructure for children with disabilities. The Committee further notes that the State Party has taken some steps in terms of providing inclusive education while still maintaining special schools. The Committee was informed that all schools are accessible to children with a physical disability. The Committee was further informed that the Government provides assistive devices to enhance learning for children with disabilities. The Government further provides bursaries for post-primary vulnerable children, whilst for children with disabilities, the bursary is provided at the primary level. The Committee, however, found out that schools are not equipped with trained teachers that can respond to the needs of children with all kinds of disabilities and there is still stigma against children with disabilities in schools.

#### **7.8. Special measures of protection**

- i. **Refugee/asylum-seeking children:** The Committee was informed that children related to refugees are registered and those that are over the age of sixteen are given Identity Cards. Further, in some instances, refugee children are given passports to enable them to travel. The Committee notes that the State Party has not established more centers to accommodate refugee and displaced children.
- ii. **Children in conflict with the law:** The Committee notes that the State Party has established children's benches in all the ten districts and a second children's court has been established at Tsifa-Li Mali Court Complex in Leribe. The Committee observes that the State Party has a restorative justice system but not to a larger extent. There is one juvenile training center in Maseru which provides services for all children in the Country. The Committee noted that despite its previous recommendation, girls in conflict with the law are still accommodated in the adult correction complex. The Committee was informed that there is already approval to build a separate accommodation for children, however, there is no implementation so far. The Committee was also informed that the Ministry of Justice has approved the construction of two probation hostels for children in

conflict with the law. The Committee observes that while children juvenile training centers are provided with education based on the national curriculum, there is not rehabilitation service provided for them. The Government is collaborating with UNICEF to commence rehabilitation service in the Juvenile Training Center. The Committee was informed that more than 80% of the children in the Center are detained due to sexual offence crimes committed and hence rehabilitation is key. The Committee was informed that detention of children is used as a last resort and this is evidenced by the low number of detentions which stood at 32 children at the time of this mission.

The Committee observed that capacity development of personnel in courts has not been conducted as it was informed that the Ministry of Justice plans to develop an induction manual to be used to orient all new staff and train all other personnel in the administration of justice for children. Further, the Ministry of Justice is in the process of developing a training manual for law enforcement officials on child protection issues.

The Committee notes that there is a lack of financial and technical capacity of the Juvenile Training Center. For instance, there are currently only 10 probation officers for the entire country. The Committee also notes that the State Party is showing effort as it is now recruiting 8 more probation officers and mobilizing budget from other sources.

- iii. **Children in armed conflict, tension and strife:** While there is no active armed conflict in the State Party, the Committee noted that tension and strife affect children in Lesotho. During strikes and demonstrations as well as tensions in areas outside of the Capital, the Committee notes that children might be affected. As article 22 of the Charter does not only cover armed conflict but also includes tension and strife, the situation of children in such situations should be addressed both in the legislative and administrative measures undertaken.
- iv. **Children of incarcerated mothers/primary caregivers:** The Committee was informed that children of imprisoned mothers are detained with their mothers in the regular prison cells until they reach the age of 2 years. Regarding child friendly environments for children of incarcerated mothers and caregivers, the Committee was informed that there is an approved plan for the renovation of the female correctional center with a provision for building a crèche for the children. The Committee further notes that children staying with their mothers in prison are not provided with special meals which address their nutrition needs. There is no separate meal for such children. When they reach 2 years and, in the event, where no external support is available to take the child, the child will be sent to a residential care facility. The Committee notes that the issue of children of incarcerated mothers and caregivers is not being reconsidered in the revision of the CPWA. However, the Committee was informed that Correctional Services Act

Regulations have been developed and the regulations cater for the protection and welfare of children of incarcerated mothers or caregivers. The regulations have not yet been adopted.

- v. **Sexual abuse and exploitation:** The Committee notes that sexual abuse and exploitation of children increased during the lockdowns that were intended to prevent the outbreak of Covid-19. In terms of legislative measures in this regard, Victims Protection Act was developed and tabled before the cabinet, however it was not passed. The Committee notes that capacity strengthening has not been carried out in Child Protection Gender Units (CPGUs) as the State Party is still in the process of developing a training manual for law enforcement personnel including those in the CPGUs. The Committee notes that some CPGU officers have been trained on Play Therapy and Grief Counselling for children.
- vi. **Child labour:** The Committee was informed that the minimum age of employment in the CPWA and the Labor Code is 15 years. The Committee observes that the Ministry of Labor undertakes sensitization about the negative impact of child labour. Child herding by boys remains to be a challenge. The Committee notes that the State Party opts for sensitization of community and parents as it will not be practical to punish parents.
- vii. **Accidents affecting children:** The Committee was informed that children are affected by infrastructure development projects as there have been reports of children being hit by construction vehicles. Also, there have been reports of girls relocating to the construction sites which might result in them being abused. The Committee was informed that the government, through the Ministry of Social Development is making efforts to ensure that Social Workers assist the affected children.
- viii. **Harmful practices:** The Committee was informed that there is an Initiation Bill that addresses the issue of harmful cultural practices not only in relation to boys but to girls as well. The Committee notes that sensitization campaigns on child marriages are carried out by the Government and CSOs. However, sensitization is not done in some parts of the country that are hard to reach due to lack of resources.

## **7.9. Emerging/Current issues**

The Committee notes that Covid-19 has raised various concerns for the issue of children's rights and welfare. It has affected access to education and basic health services. Moreover, the lockdown measures introduced have led to many children being out of school and exposed children to sexual abuse as well as teenage pregnancy. The lockdown measures have further led to an increase in the number of children living in the streets. The Committee notes that psychosocial support has not been provided to parents, caregivers, teachers, and children. There is a National Response Strategy for

COVID-19 and the State Party is receiving technical and financial support from development partners in ensuring continued access to education and provision of health services and other services.

Another emerging issue the Committee observed is the political instability and frequent cabinet reshuffle that took place after the consideration of the initial report in the Kingdom of Lesotho. This reshuffle affects the effective and timely implementation of children's rights in various sectors. The Committee notes that General Elections will be held in 2022 and this might further affect child protection initiatives in the State Party.

#### **ix. Actions points**

Based on the abovementioned findings, the Committee recommends for the State Party to undertake the following measures to implement the concluding observations and recommendations of the Committee as well as the provisions of the Charter:

- a. Ensure that the Charter and the concluding observations and recommendations of the Committee are translated to local language and widely disseminated among various government organs, stakeholders, and children;
- b. Take legislative measures to ensure the full domestication of the Charter and also ensure that the children's rights and the provisions of the Charter are justiciable in domestic courts;
- c. Finalize the development of the periodic report of the State Party and submit it before the end of 2021 as indicated by the State Party;
- d. Ensure the revision of the CPWA is a comprehensive one and includes issues that were raised by the Committee in its concluding observations and recommendations and address the issue of the age of criminal responsibility of the Child, non-discrimination, children of incarcerated mothers, among others.
- e. Undertake institutional measures to establish an autonomous organ that is well resourced and is capable of coordinating child rights issues and the implementation of the CPWA among all sectors. The Committee further recommends that the State Party refers to its General Comment No 1 on General Measures of Implementation and Systems Strengthening as well as its Study on Harmonization of Laws to understand the elements required in setting-up an organ tasked with the coordination of children's rights;
- f. Carry out budget tracking to assess how much of the total budget of the State Party is invested in children's issues thereby informing improved budgeting and disbursement funds on children's issues;
- g. Ensure that the Marriage Act that gives room for child marriage is revised or explicitly repealed by the ongoing revision of the CPWA;
- h. Increase awareness about domestic adoption as well as provide incentives for kinship care to ensure the deinstitutionalization of children who are in residential care facilities;
- i. Establish a residential care facility for victims of abuse in Thaba Tseka and more centers for refugee and displaced children. The Committee encourages the State

- Party to ensure that these facilities are well resourced and children in those facilities have access to basic services;
- j. Take measures to ensure accessibility of the Child Helpline and make sure that it is also connected at schools to ensure reporting of cases by children;
  - k. Increase the budget allocated for the health sector and maintain the increased budget for the sector;
  - l. Establish adolescent health corners in communities to ensure accessibility. The Committee encourages the Government to train personnel in the health corners on child protection and dealing with children in a child friendly manner;
  - m. Develop new strategies and action plans in collaboration with other stakeholders to address malnutrition and stunting in the State Party;
  - n. Provide sexual and reproductive health and rights education and services for children to prevent teenage pregnancy. The Committee encourages the State Party to devise mechanisms where it can integrate such education in schools but also where it can reach out to school children. The Committee further recommends that the State Party trains its health workers on the provision of such services with no stigma and discrimination;
  - o. Address the issue of herding by boys by undertaking extensive sensitization among communities in collaboration with chiefs;
  - p. Conduct training for teachers and provide the necessary facilities in schools to improve the quality of education;
  - q. Establish separate residential centers for girls in conflict with the law; provide rehabilitation service in the Juvenile Training Center and consider decentralizing the Juvenile Training Center;
  - r. Conduct capacity strengthening for personnel in the justice system on child protection and procedures for dealing with cases involving children;
  - s. Ensure that primary caregivers are subjected to non-custodial sentences whenever possible and in the event where detention is mandatory ensure that children incarcerated with their caregivers are not detained in the regular prison cells. The State Party is recommended to establish separate cells for such children and provide them with nutrition and health services. The State Party is further encouraged to fast track the adoption of the Correctional Services Act Regulations to ensure the protection of the rights of children incarcerated with their caregivers;
  - t. Fast track the adoption of the Initiation Bill and allocate resources to combat child marriages;
  - u. Ensure that children have access to their rights during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Committee urges the State Party to continue referring to the Committee's Guiding Note on Children's Rights during COVID-19 and implement the guidelines.