

Discussion of State Reviews

Summary by Berthe De Vos

Review of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, which includes the Netherlands, Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten: specific questions are asked about the reunification policies, the nationality and statelessness as well as the situation of children in conflict situations. Moreover, the repatriation of Dutch children involved in armed conflict e.g. in the Syrian camps.

The delegation explained that the wording “nationality unknown” in Dutch not the same meaning has as “stateless,” or without rights. Children with an “unknown” status are mostly children with a nationality but without the necessary prove of their nationality. In reality the Dutch government doesn’t make any distinction between children whether they are Dutch or stateless; all have access to the same facilities.

In relation to physical and mental issues the delegation admitted that some children remain in a vulnerable situation, especially due to the impact of the pandemic, but they are working on a solution.

Concerning the youth engagement in national politics the Dutch government promised to increase its interaction with the Youth Think Tank Corona of the National Social and Economic Council during multiple events.

Finally, the Dutch delegation proudly presented the UNICEF report which mentioned that the Dutch children were qualified as the “happiest” across the globe.

Review of Republic of Madagascar: issues concerning the World Bank project of the digitisation of the birth register, the existing problem of child marriages, education issues, especially children with disabilities, the discrimination between children based on tradition (boys versus girls, a single baby versus twins and albinism), the lack of alternative care and the illegal adaption. Furthermore, the experts had questions around violence against and abduction of children, sexual abuse and prostitution, drugs prevention, corporal punishment, assistance for children and rehabilitation. Also, questions concerning the lack of nationality, drug addiction and children’s healthcare (chronic malnutrition, lack of vaccination and high mortality of children under five).

The delegation explained their current action plans to improve the children’s right, inclusive education for all children (via the UN Children’s Fund) and the need to raise awareness on family planning, sexual exploitation and malice tradition. Adaptation of laws concerning abductions, underage marriage (note: underage marriage is only allowed in case of “serious grounds”, meaning pregnancy), sexual and violence abuse, child labor and the juvenile justice.

In addition, the government started with the education of teachers, law enforcement and social workers to assist children and offer psychologic support as well as the creation of a National Child Protection Committee.

Concerning the health issues, the delegation stated that campaigns as well as short and long-term measures have been created to convince mothers on breast feeding, raise awareness of the danger on transmitting of AIDS and the danger of malaria.

The Committee pointed out the lack of effective involvement of the Republic of Madagascar on climate change and being proactive; huge problems remain, which required a suitable budget and involvement of the government.