

5th and 6th periodic report of Portugal on the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Comments from the Portuguese Committee for UNICEF

The Portuguese Committee for UNICEF welcomes the opportunity to comment on Portugal's Fifth and Sixth draft Periodic Report on the state of implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

1. Positive Outcomes

During the period 2014 – 2017, the Portuguese Committee for UNICEF recognises that many initiatives were implemented, including relevant and quality services and programmes to address children's rights, such as the revision of the adoption regime, the adoption of measures to eradicate child poverty through support for low-income families and the provision of access to a range of extended services for children (i.e. early care and education services).

In these four years, two important milestones can be highlighted: the legal revision of the National Commission for the Promotion of the Rights and Protection of Children and Young People and the elaboration of the National Strategy for the Rights of the Child.

2. Comments and clarifications

Notwithstanding, and recognising the need of the Government to take urgent action in adopting and implementing the National Strategy for the Rights of the Child:

- Further information on the elaboration process and on the implementation phases should be introduced to ensure the best possible understanding of the characteristics of the Strategy – namely, how children's opinion were collected and taken into account and when it is foreseen the beginning of the execution of the project plan;
- It is referred that the Strategy "will allow for a profound reform of the data collection system on children" (p. 7). How this strategy will include the collection of disaggregated information on all aspects of children's lives, guided by the best interests of the child and covering the entire and specific period of childhood up to age 18 (as recommended by the Committee in 2001 and in 2014), should be clarified.

To better understand some of the measures and activities undertaken and referred in the Report, further information could also be provided:

- Following the Recommendation §22 "Incorporate child right issues into all curricula of different levels of education", it is not clear how the provisions and principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child are included in the formal learning environment, including in the curricula and training of professionals working directly with children;
- As per the Recommendation §34 on corporal punishment, the Report makes reference to a decrease in "social tolerance towards corporal punishment". More

information on how the decrease has been measured and clarification on the term “social tolerance” would be crucial to understand the changes and its impact on children’s wellbeing;

- The “Local Commissions for the Protection of Children and Young People”, as part of the NCPNPCY, play a crucial role in responding to the situation of children living in vulnerable circumstances. It is not fully explained, however, their role in ensuring the respect and promotion of children’s rights.