



Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

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Committee against Torture

Concluding observations on the third periodic report of the Philippines*

1. The Committee against Torture considered the third periodic report of the Philippines (CAT/C/PHL/3) at its 1408th and 1411th meetings (see CAT/C/SR.1408 and 1411), held on 27 and 28 April 2016, and adopted the present concluding observations at its 1426th meeting, held on 11 May 2016.

A. Introduction

2. The Committee appreciates the third periodic report submitted by the State party under the simplified reporting procedure. The Committee welcomes the dialogue with the State party's delegation and the replies provided to the concerns raised by the Committee.

B. Positive aspects

3. The Committee welcomes the ratification of or accession to the following international instruments by the State party:

(a) The Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, on 17 April 2012;

(b) The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, on 30 August 2011;

(c) The 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, on 22 September 2011.

4. The Committee also welcomes the State party's initiatives to revise its legislation in areas of relevance to the Convention, including:

(a) The enactment of the Anti-Torture Act of 2009 (Republic Act No. 9745), in November 2009;

(b) The amendment of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003 (Republic Act No. 9208) by the adoption of the Expanded Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10364), on 23 July 2012;

* Adopted by the Committee at its fifty-seventh session (18 April-13 May 2016).



(c) The enactment of the Magna Carta of Women (Republic Act No. 9710), in August 2009;

(d) The enactment of the Anti-Enforced or Involuntary Disappearance Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10353), in December 2012;

(e) The enactment of the Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10354), in December 2012;

(f) The enactment of the Recognizance Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10389), which institutionalized recognizance as a mode of granting the release of an indigent person in custody as an accused in a criminal case, in 2012;

(g) The amendment of the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act of 2006 (Republic Act No. 9344) by the adoption of Republic Act No. 10630, in October 2013.

5. The Committee further welcomes the initiatives of the State party to amend its policies, programmes and administrative measures to give effect to the Convention, including through:

(a) The approval by the Supreme Court of the Revised Rule on Children in Conflict with the Law, in December 2009;

(b) The adoption of the Philippine Human Rights Action Plan for 2012-2017;

(c) The adoption of the 2012-2016 plan for implementing the Magna Carta of Women, entitled “Women’s empowerment and development towards gender equality”;

(d) The issuance by the President of the implementing rules and regulations of the Anti-Torture Act, on 10 December 2010;

(e) The establishment of the Human Rights Affairs Office, under the Directorate for Inmate Welfare and Development, and of a human rights desk staffed by a designated official in every jail, by memorandums of the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology dated 27 September 2010 and 21 February 2011;

(f) The issuance by the President of Administrative Order No. 35, creating the Inter-Agency Committee on Extra-Legal Killings, Enforced Disappearances, Torture and other Grave Violations of the Right to Life, Liberty and Security of Persons, on 22 November 2012;

(g) The issuance by the Department of Health of an order, inspired by the Manual on the Effective Investigation and Documentation of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (the Istanbul Protocol), instructing government doctors to perform their role in line with the Anti-Torture Act;

(h) The passage of Republic Act No. 10398 declaring 23 November National Consciousness Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and Children, in March 2013;

(i) The issuance by the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology of a memorandum banning the use and ordering the confiscation and destruction of sticks, paddles, belts and similar devices that could be used in jails for the corporal punishment of inmates, in August 2013;

(j) The issuance by the President of Executive Order No. 138 amending Executive Order No. 56 (S. 2001) adopting the Comprehensive Program Framework for Children in Armed Conflict, Strengthening the Council for the Welfare of Children and for other Purposes, on 2 August 2013;

(k) The Committee commends the services provided by foreign service personnel to Filipinos overseas, including migrant workers and victims of trafficking.

C. Principal subjects of concern and recommendations

Pending follow-up issues from the previous reporting cycle

6. While noting with appreciation the information provided on 5 November 2010 by the State party under the follow-up procedure (CAT/C/PHL/CO/2/Add.1) on the implementation of the recommendations contained in paragraphs 7, 15, 16, 18 and 19 of the Committee's previous concluding observations, the Committee regrets the absence of the additional information requested by the rapporteur on follow-up in his letter dated 1 December 2011.

Impunity as a result of the ineffective implementation of legislation

7. While welcoming the adoption of national legislation criminalizing torture, the Committee is concerned that obstacles continue to exist for the effective implementation of the Anti-Torture Act. The Committee is concerned that impunity for acts of torture continues to prevail, as illustrated by the fact that although the number of cases of torture reported to the Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines has risen since the adoption of the Act, only one person has been convicted to date in 2016, more than six years since the Act was adopted. The Committee is also concerned that the committee created under section 20 of the Anti-Torture Act to oversee the implementation of the Act has not yet done so (arts. 2, 4, 12 and 13).

8. The State party should:

(a) **Put an end to the de facto situation of impunity that prevails in the country;**

(b) **Issue a public statement at the highest level affirming unambiguously that torture will not be tolerated and ensure that investigations will be carried out promptly in all cases and that prosecutions will be initiated against direct perpetrators of torture, including those with command responsibility;**

(c) **Establish an independent body to receive and investigate complaints regarding torture and ill-treatment by law enforcement officials and make this complaints mechanism publicly known;**

(d) **Make it possible for the oversight committee to convene immediately and to meet at regular intervals. The oversight committee should keep a database for systematically collecting information on the implementation of the Anti-Torture Act, including on investigations, prosecutions, access to medical evaluations, acts of intimidation and reprisals, and the implementation of the rehabilitation programme, and keep an inventory of detention centres and facilities under the jurisdiction of the Philippine National Police and the armed forces of the Philippines;**

(e) **Ensure that the oversight committee regularly publishes updates on cases under consideration, including those pending preliminary investigation at the prosecutor level and those filed in court, document and report on reasons for delays and non-reporting, and provide assessments of possible systemic errors identified in the implementation of the Anti-Torture Act.**

Fundamental legal safeguards

9. The Committee is concerned that detained persons, including minors, do not enjoy, in practice, all the fundamental legal safeguards from the very outset of their deprivation of liberty, in particular after arrest by police, and that registers are not kept at all stages of detention (arts. 2, 12, 13 and 16).

10. **The State party should take effective measures to guarantee that all detained persons, including minors, are afforded in practice all the fundamental legal safeguards from the outset of their deprivation of liberty, in accordance with international standards, including:**

(a) **To be informed about the charges against them and about their rights, both orally and in writing, in a language that they understand, and to sign a paper confirming that they have understood the information provided to them;**

(b) **To have their detention recorded in a register;**

(c) **To have prompt access to a lawyer from the very outset of the deprivation of liberty and, if necessary, to legal aid, including during the initial interrogation;**

(d) **To have immediate access to an independent medical examination, free of charge and not in the presence of police officers;**

(e) **To notify a family member or any other person of their own choice of their detention immediately after apprehension and not only after seeing a judge;**

(f) **To be brought before a judge within the time frame prescribed by law.**

Arrests without warrants

11. The Committee is concerned that arrests are being carried out without warrants by police, military personnel and ordinary citizens. It is also concerned at concurring reports that some arrests are made by police officers in civilian clothes and that many detained suspects have reportedly been subjected to torture and ill-treatment with impunity. Arrests without warrants have reportedly also involved children (arts. 2, 11 and 16).

12. **The State part should:**

(a) **Take all measures necessary to put an immediate end to arrests without a warrant and immediately register all arrested persons;**

(b) **Hold criminally, civilly and administratively liable and bring to justice all officials who arrest persons without a legal basis;**

(c) **Ensure that all officials who have committed acts of torture against arrested persons incur individual and command criminal responsibility for such acts;**

(d) **Provide redress and compensation to those who have been subjected to ill-treatment while in detention;**

(e) **Better frame in law and in practice citizens arrests without a warrant.**

Pretrial detention and overcrowding

13. The Committee is concerned at the excessive length of pretrial detention, which sometimes exceeds the maximum penalty for the offence and can be as long as 16 years. It is also concerned that persons in pretrial detention may account for at some 85-90 per cent of detainees, a situation resulting largely from the strict application the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002 (Republic Act No. 9165), which has resulted in

overcrowding. The Committee is concerned at the huge backlog of cases in the judiciary and at the preponderant role of the Department of the Interior and its impact on the independence of the judiciary, whose role appears reduced as a result. It is also concerned at the insufficient number of judges (arts. 2 and 11).

14. The State party should:

- (a) Urgently release those persons whose pretrial detention exceeds the maximum penalty for the offence;**
- (b) Review the legality of the pretrial detention of all persons thus detained;**
- (c) Urgently deal with the backlog of cases in the courts;**
- (d) Amend legislation and take all measures necessary to shorten the duration of pretrial detention, which should be used as an exception and for limited periods of time;**
- (e) Ensure that pretrial detention is regulated clearly and is subject to judicial supervision at all times in order to guarantee fundamental legal and procedural safeguards;**
- (f) Strengthen the independence of the judiciary, ensure that vacancies are filled as a matter of urgency, strengthen the capacity of the judicial system and ensure that it clears the backlog of existing cases;**
- (g) Ensure that all pretrial detainees are brought before a judge without delay and expedite the cases of persons held under the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act;**
- (h) Consider replacing pretrial detention with non-custodial measures, in accordance with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for Non-custodial Measures (the Tokyo Rules);**
- (i) Ensure that redress and compensation are provided to victims of unjustified prolonged pretrial detention.**

Torture and ill-treatment

15. The Committee is concerned at the continued reports of widespread torture and ill-treatment of suspects by law enforcement, security, penitentiary and military personnel. The Committee is alarmed at reports that the overwhelming majority of reported cases of torture take place in police stations, in order to extract confessions or information to be used in criminal proceedings. It is also concerned that the Internal Affairs Service of the Philippine National Police is supervised by the Office of the Chief of Police (arts. 2 and 16).

16. The State party should:

- (a) Acknowledge publicly the occurrence of torture and ill-treatment and unequivocally condemn all such acts;**
- (b) Ensure that investigations are systematically carried out, that perpetrators are prosecuted and convicted in accordance with the gravity of their acts, in keeping with article 4 of the Convention, and that victims are afforded appropriate redress;**
- (c) Establish an independent mechanism to exercise oversight over the Internal Affairs Service of the Philippine National Police so that there is no institutional or hierarchical connection between the investigators and the alleged perpetrators, and ensure that all persons under investigation for having committed**

acts of torture or ill-treatment are immediately suspended from their duties and remain so throughout the investigation, while ensuring that the principle of presumption of innocence is observed;

(d) **Establish a database on the number of investigations, prosecutions, convictions, sanctions and compensation granted to victims of torture and members of their families, and report these figures to the Committee in its next report.**

Coerced confessions

17. While noting that the Anti-Torture Act provides for the inadmissibility of any confession, admission or statement obtained as a result of torture, the Committee is concerned at numerous reports of confessions extracted under torture and ill-treatment by law enforcement officers. It is also concerned at the reported shortage of police officers and the lack of capabilities to conduct investigations (art. 15).

18. **The State party should:**

(a) **Take immediate and effective measures to guarantee that coerced confessions or statements are inadmissible in any proceedings, except when invoked against a person accused of torture;**

(b) **Review cases of convictions based solely on confessions, since many of these may have been based on evidence obtained through torture or ill-treatment and, as appropriate, provide prompt and impartial investigations and take appropriate remedial measures;**

(c) **Ensure that persons convicted on the basis of coerced evidence or as a result of torture and ill-treatment are afforded a new trial and adequate redress;**

(d) **Ensure that law enforcement officials, army personnel, judges, prosecutors and lawyers receive training on how to detect and investigate cases in which confessions are obtained under torture;**

(e) **Ensure that officials who extract such confessions, including persons liable under the principle of command responsibility, are brought to justice, prosecuted and punished accordingly;**

(f) **Provide the Committee with information on any cases in which confessions were deemed inadmissible on the grounds that they were obtained through torture and indicate whether any officials have been prosecuted and punished for extracting such confessions.**

Blindfolding

19. The Committee is concerned at reports that persons detained by security forces are blindfolded. It is also concerned at the reported insistence of public prosecutors on positive visual identification, which prevents victims of torture who were blindfolded from identifying the perpetrators, even if their allegations are consistent with physical and psychological symptoms of torture and visible or permanent physical injury (arts. 2, 11 and 16).

20. **The State party should:**

(a) **Increase awareness among the security forces about the prohibition of blindfolding under section 4 (b) (1) of the Anti-Torture Act;**

(b) **Sanction all instances of blindfolding;**

(c) Consider amending the rules of evidence evaluation to increase the possibility of identifying perpetrators in the prosecution of cases of torture and ill-treatment through means other than visual verification and consider adopting a non-restrictive approach that also allows for voice identification in cases where blindfolding was used;

(d) Make it mandatory for prosecutors to carry out a full investigation of possible command responsibility in cases where the identification of primary perpetrators is impaired by the use of blindfolds.

Secret places of detention

21. The Committee is deeply concerned at reports of the existence of secret places of detention where persons have routinely been subjected to torture. It is particularly concerned at reports of the existence of secret security facilities, including where children are abused, harassed and exploited, such as the one in Laguna Province, where torture was committed routinely, including through the a so-called “wheel of torture”, used to determine the type of torture to inflict on the detainees (arts. 2, 11 and 16).

22. **The State party should:**

(a) **Immediately close all secret places of detention;**

(b) **As a matter of priority, ensure the application throughout the country of section 2 (c) of the Anti-Torture Act, which stipulates that “secret detention places, solitary, incommunicado or other similar forms of detention, where torture may be carried out with impunity, are prohibited”;**

(c) **Conduct investigations and prosecute all persons responsible for committing acts of torture in secret places of detention.**

Extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances

23. While noting the adoption of legislation and other efforts made by the State party, the Committee remains concerned that extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances implicating police and military personnel, as well as armed militias, have continued to take place (arts. 2, 12 and 13).

24. **The State party should:**

(a) **Take effective measures to enforce relevant legislation and prevent extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances;**

(b) **Ensure the regular functioning of the special team of investigators and prosecutors under the Inter-Agency Committee to effectively help law enforcement agencies conduct fact-finding investigations for prosecution of cases of enforced disappearances and extrajudicial executions with a view to resolving them;**

(c) **Ensure that all alleged perpetrators of these crimes are effectively and promptly investigated, prosecuted and, if convicted, punished with appropriate sanctions;**

(d) **Ensure that the families of victims of these crimes receive adequate compensation;**

(e) **Consider ratifying the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.**

Reporting acts of torture and witness protection

25. The Committee is concerned that victims of and witnesses to torture have been reluctant to report cases because of a lack of adequate information regarding their rights under various laws and the options available to them to lodge a complaint; out of fear of harassment and reprisals from the perpetrators; and lack of protection. The Committee is also concerned about reports of inadequate witness protection and the reluctance of government doctors who examine the victims to indicate findings of torture on their medical certificate for fear of intimidation or reprisals (arts. 2, 12-14 and 16).

26. The State party should:

(a) **Provide comprehensive information to victims of torture and their families regarding the laws and options available to them to lodge a complaint, and provide ample protection to victims of torture, their families and witnesses, with due consideration to the urgency of the need for protection from threats to their lives and security;**

(b) **Strengthen the witness protection programme through amendments to the Witness Protection, Security and Benefit Act (Republic Act No. 6981), by according high priority to the funding of the programme and providing expanded rights and benefits to prospective witnesses, including secure housing and financial or livelihood assistance, to help the authorities prosecute cases of torture, and provide effective protection against reprisals and other forms of harassment to all witnesses of torture and ill-treatment;**

(c) **Ensure adequate protection of health professionals documenting torture and ill-treatment from intimidation and other forms of reprisals, including by ensuring that they are not hierarchically subordinated to the head of the detention facility or other security organs;**

(d) **Ensure that health professionals are able to examine victims independently and to maintain the confidentiality of medical records.**

Conditions of detention

27. The Committee is concerned at the persistence of appalling conditions of detention prevailing in the State party, both in police lock-up cells and the jails and detention facilities run by the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology, which do not meet minimum international standards and may constitute ill-treatment or torture. It is particularly concerned at the persistence of critical and chronic overcrowding in all detention facilities, some of which may be operating at 380 per cent of capacity. Conditions in all places of deprivation of liberty include dilapidated and small cells, in some of which detainees are forced to sleep while sitting or standing, unsanitary conditions, inadequate amounts of food, poor nutrition, insufficient natural and artificial lighting and poor ventilation, which cause inter-prisoner violence and the spread of infectious diseases such as tuberculosis, the incidence of which is extremely high. The Committee is particularly alarmed at information that tuberculosis eradication programmes were not a priority in the past because they were seen as irrelevant to the maintenance of security. The Committee is concerned about sexual violence against detained persons and about the treatment of detainees belonging to minorities (arts. 2, 11 and 16).

28. The State party should make public the findings and implement scrupulously the recommendations of the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment arising from its visit to the country in 2015.

Children in conflict with the law and holding centres

29. The Committee is deeply concerned at the situation of children in conflict with the law, in particular in the Metro Manila and Mindanao regions, who are detained in holding centres or “houses of hope”, where there is often no separation between girls and boys. These children, some of whom have not even committed crimes, are held in preventive detention for long periods without access to a lawyer, in overcrowded cells with poor lighting and ventilation that do not meet minimum international standards. It is also concerned that child offenders are kept in regular prisons and are not separated from adult detainees (arts. 2, 11 and 16).

30. The State party should:

(a) **Ensure that children are detained as a measure of last resort and that children who are detained have access to a lawyer and are not held in pretrial detention for long periods;**

(b) **Ensure that children are held separately from adults and that girls are separated from boys;**

(c) **Investigate all reports of torture and ill-treatment of children in conflict with the law;**

(d) **Ensure that juvenile justice and the conditions of detention of children meet international standards;**

(e) **Turn over children in conflict with the law to the custody of the Department of Social Welfare and Development and provide appropriate training to social workers, judges and all personnel in contact with the children.**

National preventive mechanism

31. The Committee is concerned that, more than four years since its ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention, the State party has not yet established a national preventive mechanism (art. 2).

32. **The State party should expedite, without delay, the creation of a national preventive mechanism based on a legislative act. It should ensure that the mechanism has all the resources necessary to fully carry out its mandate independently and effectively, in conformity with the provisions of the Optional Protocol to the Convention. Furthermore, the Committee recommends that the State party ensure regular monitoring of places of detention by non-governmental organizations, to complement the monitoring undertaken by the national preventive mechanism.**

National human rights institution

33. The Committee is concerned that the Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines does not have sufficient human and financial resources to allow for the full and effective implementation of its wide-ranging mandate, including the carrying out of regular and unannounced visits to all places of deprivation of liberty in all regions of the country. It is also concerned at the delays in the adoption of the charter of the Commission on Human Rights (art. 2).

34. The State party should:

(a) **Provide the Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines with full functional, structural and financial support so that it can carry out its mandate effectively, in compliance with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles);**

- (b) **Expedite the adoption of the charter of the Commission on Human Rights.**

Training

35. The Committee is concerned that public officials involved in the implementation of the Anti-Torture Act lack adequate training and information regarding the prohibition of torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment in accordance with section 21 of the Act. It is also concerned that most government doctors lack specific training on the Istanbul Protocol). The Committee regrets the absence of specific methodologies to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the training provided (art. 10).

36. **The State party should:**

(a) **In coordination with medical and legal professional associations and individual experts, ensure that all municipal doctors and public prosecutors receive training on how to identify signs of torture and ill-treatment, to document alleged torture cases and to establish evidence that can be used in legal or administrative proceedings against those responsible for acts of torture through the use of the Istanbul Protocol;**

(b) **Ensure that all personnel involved in the implementation of the rehabilitation programme receive adequate training in the provision of specialized rehabilitation services for victims of torture;**

(c) **Ensure that all training is implemented as part of a comprehensive government plan for further building the capacity of public officials involved in the implementation of the Anti-Torture Act and that the outcomes of the trainings are measured on the basis of indicators, which shall include improved performance of public officials in their respective roles in implementing the Anti-Torture Act;**

(d) **Develop and implement specific methodologies to monitor and assess the effectiveness and impact of such training on the reduction in the number of cases of torture, violence and ill-treatment.**

Redress and rehabilitation

37. The Committee is concerned at the absence of implementation of section 18 of the Anti-Torture Act, which provides for compensation to victims of torture, and section 19, which provides for the formulation of a rehabilitation programme for victims of torture. It is also concerned at the complexity of the existing agencies and processes with overlapping jurisdictions, which makes it difficult for victims to know to where to apply. The Committee remains concerned at the situation of children who are subjected to abduction and military recruitment by armed groups (art. 14).

38. **The State party should:**

(a) **Ensure that victims of torture obtain redress and rehabilitation and have an enforceable right to fair and adequate compensation, including the means for as full a rehabilitation as possible, by formulating a detailed rehabilitation programme. The Committee draws the attention of the State party to general comment No. 3 (2012) on the implementation of article 14 of the Convention, in which the Committee explains the content and scope of the obligations of States parties to provide full redress to victims of torture and recommends amending the domestic legislation accordingly;**

(b) **Designate a specific lead coordinating agency at the country level for the implementation of the rehabilitation programme and make clear and adequate budgetary provisions for the programme to function as a specialized service;**

(c) **Ensure that the programme offers specialized rehabilitation services that are appropriate, available and promptly accessible, in accordance with general comment No. 3, and ensure that access is not conditional on the filing of formal administrative or criminal complaints;**

(d) **Establish a programme for monitoring and evaluating the impact of the rehabilitation programme that includes a system of data collection in order to identify the number of victims and their specific rehabilitation needs;**

(e) **Take the steps necessary to prevent, in a comprehensive manner and to the extent possible, the abduction and military recruitment of children by armed groups, to facilitate their reintegration into society and to provide them with as a rehabilitation that is as full as possible and that is specifically designed for their needs.**

Reproductive health rights and family planning services

39. The Committee is concerned at the continuous absolute ban on abortions without exceptions and at incidents of ill-treatment of women seeking post-abortion or post-pregnancy treatment. It is also concerned at the inadequate access to sexual and reproductive health services, including misinformation about modern methods of contraception, in particular in Manila, as a result of the implementation of Executive Orders No. 003 and No. 030 issued by the Manila City Council, the implementation of which has resulted in a significant number of maternal deaths, fostered domestic violence and caused damage to women's mental and physical health (arts. 2 and 16).

40. **The State party should:**

(a) **Officially revoke, without delay, Executive Orders No. 003 and No. 030;**

(b) **Review its legislation in order to allow for legal exceptions to the prohibition of abortions in specific circumstances such as when the pregnancy endangers the life or health of the woman, when it is the result of rape or incest and in cases of foetal impairment;**

(c) **Provide universal access to a full range of the safest and most technologically advanced methods of contraception, ensure rights-based counselling and information on reproductive health services to all women and adolescents and restore access to emergency contraceptives for victims of sexual violence;**

(d) **Develop a confidential complaints mechanism for women subjected to discrimination, harassment or ill-treatment while seeking post-abortion or post-pregnancy treatment or other reproductive health services;**

(e) **Investigate, prevent and punish all incidents of ill-treatment of women seeking post-pregnancy care in government hospitals and provide effective legal remedies to victims.**

Corporal punishment of children

41. The Committee is concerned that the corporal punishment of children in the home remains lawful in the State party. The Committee is also concerned at the tabling of Bill No. 922 in Congress, as the Bill aims to lower the age of criminal responsibility from 15 to 9 years (arts. 2 and 16).

42. **The State party should:**

(a) **Expedite the adoption by the Senate of the Anti-Corporal Punishment Bill (No. 2182) to prohibit the corporal punishment of children in all settings, including in the home;**

(b) **Immediately withdraw Bill No. 922 from Congress, with a view to maintaining the age of criminal responsibility as it currently stands.**

Follow-up procedure

43. **The Committee requests the State party to provide, by 13 May 2017, information on follow-up to the Committee's recommendations on pretrial detention and overcrowding, the measures taken with regard to torture and ill-treatment and steps taken to close all secret places of detention (see paras. 14, 16 and 22 above). In that context, the State party is invited to inform the Committee about its plans for implementing, within the coming reporting period, some or all of the remaining recommendations in the concluding observations.**

Other issues

44. **The Committee reiterates its recommendation that the State party consider making the declarations under articles 21 and 22 of the Convention recognizing the competence of the Committee to receive and consider communications from individuals subject to its jurisdiction.**

45. **The Committee invites the State party to consider ratifying the core United Nations human rights treaties to which it is not yet party.**

46. **The State party is requested to disseminate widely the report submitted to the Committee and the present concluding observations, in appropriate languages, through official websites, the media and non-governmental organizations.**

47. **The State party is invited to submit its fourth periodic report by 13 May 2020. For that purpose, and in view of the fact that the State party has agreed to report to the Committee under the simplified reporting procedure, the Committee will, in due course, transmit to the State party a list of issues prior to reporting. The State party's replies to that list of issues will constitute its fourth periodic report under article 19 of the Convention. The State party is also invited to submit its common core document in accordance with the requirements contained in the harmonized guidelines on reporting under the international human rights treaties (HRI/GEN.2/Rev.6).**
