



Reflections and Concluding
Observations of the 63rd session of the
UN Committee of Experts on State's
Review of the 3rd and 4th Periodic
Reports on the UNCRC and its 2 OPs.

3 July 2013

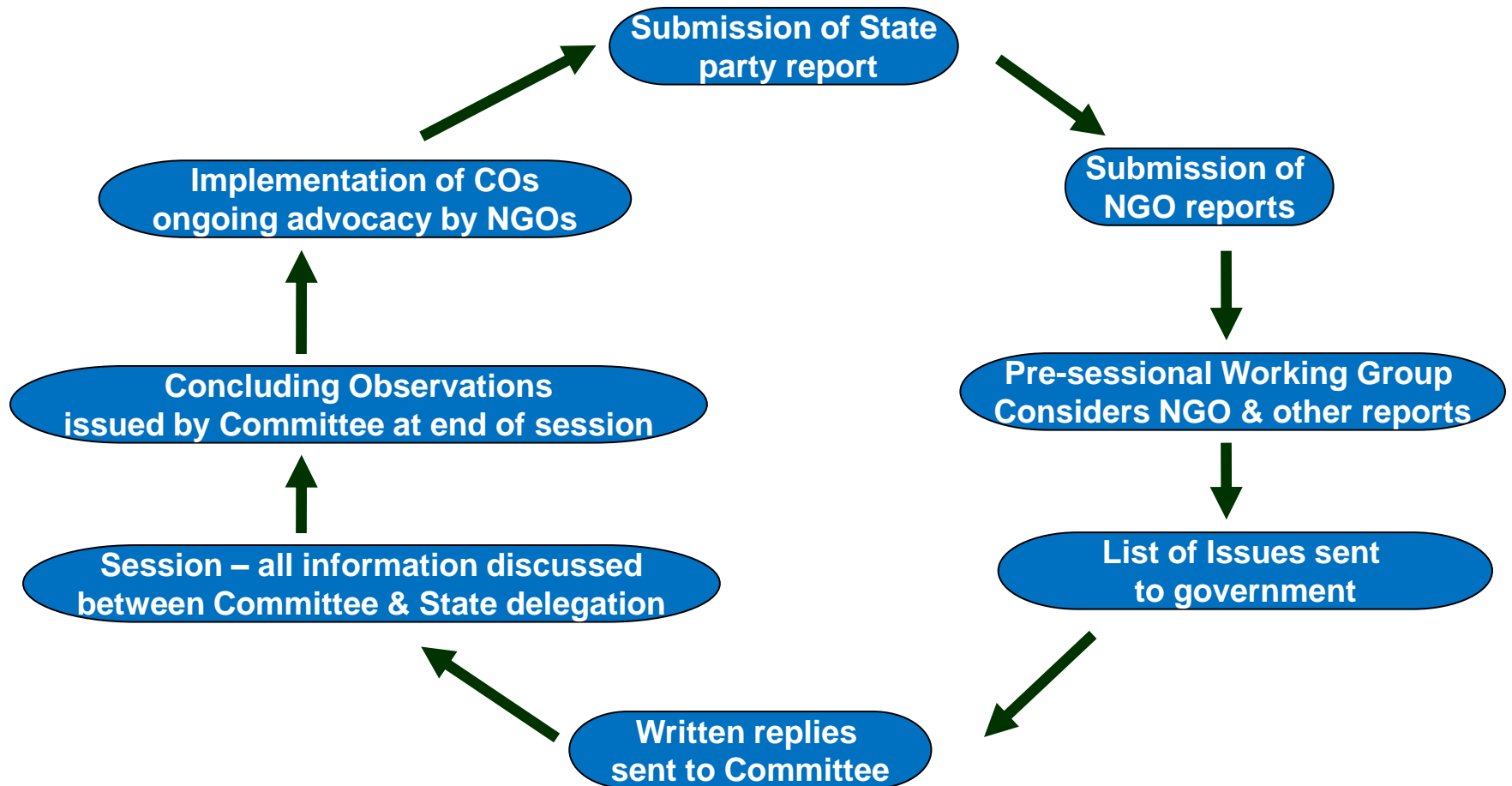
Promoting child rights
to end child poverty

The State party initial and periodic reports

- Rwanda **ratified** the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) on 24 January 1991.
- The **initial report** of Rwanda, which was due 22 Feb 1993, was received on 30 Sept 1993 and considered by the Committee on the Rights of the Child on 05 Oct 1993.
- The **second periodic report**, due 22 Feb 1998, was submitted on 27 June 2002 examined by the 36th session of the Committee on 21 May 2004
- The **third and fourth periodic reports** of Rwanda, consolidated in one document, due 22 Feb 2008 were submitted on 21 Jan 2011 and examined by the Committee on 30-31 May 2013.
- The State party shall submit its next combined **fifth and sixth periodic reports** by 22 February 2018 and shall include in it information on the implementation of the 63rd session's concluding observations.



Reporting Cycle



The 63rd Session of the Committee on the Rights of the Child

- The session opened on the 27th of May and closed on the 14th of June.
- The **public review of Rwanda** took place on the **30th and 31st of May 2013** and covered the CRC, OPAC and OPSC State reports.
- The delegation of Rwanda was led by the Executive Secretary of the National Commission for Children in Rwanda.
- She was supported by a small delegation of representatives from the Ministry of Justice and the Chargé d'Affaires at the Permanent Mission of Rwanda to the United Nations in Geneva.

Concluding Observations/Education

- While welcoming the State party's various initiatives to improve educational outcomes for children, including the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) 2010-2015, a five-year (2008-2013) campaign, titled 'Making a difference for girls' and increased budgetary allocations, the Committee is concerned about the following:
- (a) The **inadequate quality** of education and unequal educational outcomes, including disparities between urban and rural areas, and **limited access** to education for children with disabilities, historically marginalized children and girls, especially at the upper secondary school;

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- (b) **Hidden education fees** that prevent children from accessing education, especially children living in poverty and children in vulnerable situations;
- (c) The remaining challenges to implementing the change in language of instruction policy from French to English, including the **urgent need to develop teachers' capacities and training** in both the English language and teaching methodology; and
- (d) The **lack of disaggregated data** on enrolment and retention rates of children in vulnerable situations, such as children living in poverty, children with disabilities, orphans, adolescent girls, as well as the decrease in the enrolment rate for boys.

The Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Increase spending on quality education, including the number of well-trained teachers, school infrastructure, and children's access to school materials;
- (b) Take further measures to eradicate regional disparities and closely monitor the implementation and outcomes of the ESSP and campaign for girls' education as well as school enrolment and retention for boys and children in vulnerable situations, particularly Batwa children, children with disabilities and children living in poverty;
- (c) Take immediate measures to eliminate all types of hidden educational costs in the school system to ensure unhindered and equal access to education for all children;

- (d) Intensify its efforts to develop the capacity of teachers through English language and pedagogical training at all levels of the educational system, and monitor the impact of the language policy on learning outcomes;
- (e) Undertake studies to identify the root causes and extent of dropouts from school, especially of boys and implement effective measures to address the issues identified; and
- (f) Strengthen the collection and analysis of disaggregated data on the participation in education by the most vulnerable children, including rural children, adolescent girls, children with disabilities, of orphans, children living with HIV/AIDS and children living in poverty, and ensure that these children are fully integrated in educational settings in order to prevent segregation and discrimination.

Early Childhood Care and Education

- The Committee is concerned about the weak implementation of the Early Childhood Development (ECD) Policy and Strategic Plan of 2011 and the limited coverage of children with ECD services.
- The Committee is also concerned that there is inadequate funding for the improvement and implementation of early childhood development and that programmes and services for children between the ages of 0-6 are not harmonized and integrated among the various ministries and agencies.

Referring to its general comment No. 7 (2005), the Committee recommends that the State party further improve the quality and coverage of its early childhood care and education, and in particular:



- (a) Scale up the investment and implementation of the Early Childhood Development Policy and Strategic Plan, and ensure that ECD is provided in a holistic manner that includes overall child development, nutrition, health care, stimulation and early learning and the strengthening of parental capacity and participation; and
- (b) Strengthen effective coordination among all Ministries to ensure that early childhood development programmes and services are integrated and harmonised, and that such services meet quality standards, are affordable and accessible for all children, including children in vulnerable situations.

Inclusive education

In the light of Article 23 of the Convention and in light of its general comment No. 9 (2006), the Committee urges the State party to:

- Increase budget allocations, including for the implementation of the **2007 Special Needs Education Policy** with a view to achieving **inclusive education** as far as possible for all concerned Rwandan children, and the elimination of all barriers that lead to educational disparities for children with disability;
- Finalize the revision of the Special Needs Education Policy of 2007 in collaboration with other stakeholders, detailing implementation strategies, activities and resources to realize the rights of **children with disabilities**, including children with mental disabilities;



Human rights and peace in school curricula

- The Committee regrets that human rights, tolerance, and peace education, as well as knowledge on the Optional Protocol, is not specifically incorporated as a mandatory part of the primary and secondary school curricula and in the teachers' training programme.
- The Committee recommends that the State party include human rights, tolerance and peace education in the curricula of all schools and teacher training programmes with special reference to the Optional Protocol.

Education of refugee children

- The committee is concerned that refugee and asylum-seeking children lack access to basic services, such as birth registration and basic and upper secondary education; and
- Recommends the State party to ensure the provision of adequate protection measures for unaccompanied asylum-seeking and refugee children, including by providing them free birth registration through expeditious and effective registration procedures and equitable access to free primary education, secondary education, health and social services at the community level.