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I. Background

1. The present report was prepared pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 5/1 and 16/21, taking into consideration the outcome of the previous review.¹ It is a compilation of information contained in relevant United Nations documents, presented in a summarized manner owing to word-limit constraints.

II. Scope of international obligations and cooperation with human rights mechanisms

2. The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination encouraged Finland to ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169) of the International Labour Organization (ILO).²

3. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) recommended that Finland continue to regularly submit comprehensive national reports for the periodic consultations on the UNESCO education-related standard-setting instruments, in particular on the Convention against Discrimination in Education.³

4. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) stressed that Finland maintained a number of reservations to the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, namely a general reservation on more favourable treatment for nationals of the other Nordic countries and reservations to articles 7 (2), 8, 12 (1), 24 (1), 25 and 28. UNHCR recommended that Finland review the reservations to that Convention, with a view to lifting them.⁴

5. UNHCR recommended that Finland introduce a full-fledged dedicated statelessness determination procedure.⁵

6. The Human Rights Committee noted that Finland maintained its reservations to articles 10 (2) (b) and (3), 14 (7) and 20 (1) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.⁶



III. National human rights framework

1. Constitutional and legislative framework

7. UNESCO encouraged Finland to introduce legal protection for the right to education of pregnant and parenting women.⁷

8. UNCHR observed that, in 2016, Finland had introduced amendments to the Aliens Act and related legislation through which significant reductions in access to legal aid in the first instance had entered into force. UNHCR noted with appreciation the legislative amendments of 2021, which had repealed the 2016 restrictions, and made State-sponsored legal aid at first instance accessible again to all asylum-seekers. Furthermore, pursuant to those amendments, lawyers' fees were calculated on an hourly rather than a fixed rate, enhancing the quality of legal aid available to applicants.⁸

9. The Human Rights Committee regretted that chapter 20 of the Criminal Code, on sexual offences, had not been amended to ensure that lack of consent became the core element of the definition of rape, and that forced marriage had not been explicitly criminalized. It recommended that Finland speed up the legislative reforms to effectively prevent and combat all forms of violence against women, including by amending the definition of rape to include lack of consent as a core feature, explicitly criminalizing forced marriage and reviewing the legislation on restraining orders.⁹

10. The same Committee noted the legislative and policy measures taken by Finland to prevent and combat discrimination and promote gender equality. It remained concerned, however, that the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman could bring cases of discrimination before the National Non-Discrimination and Equality Tribunal only with the consent of all aggrieved parties and that victims could not seek compensation before the Tribunal, but only through lengthy judicial proceedings in a court of law.¹⁰

2. Institutional infrastructure and policy measures

11. The Human Rights Committee recommended that Finland: (a) take all necessary steps to review and amend the Non-Discrimination Act and other relevant anti-discrimination laws to improve the effectiveness of the legal and institutional framework to combat discrimination; (b) review the mandate of the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman, with a view to removing obstacles to effectively bringing all cases of discrimination before the National Non-Discrimination and Equality Tribunal; (c) consider enabling the National Non-Discrimination and Equality Tribunal to provide compensation directly to victims so that victims had timely access to effective remedies; (d) raise awareness among the public about anti-discrimination legislation and legal remedies available for victims of discrimination, including about the mandates of the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman, the Ombudsman for Equality and the National Non-Discrimination and Equality Tribunal; and (e) enhance its efforts to increase women's participation in the public and private sectors and their representation at the highest level, especially for women with disabilities or ethnic minority backgrounds, and improve its data collection in that regard.¹¹

IV. Promotion and protection of human rights

A. Implementation of international human rights obligations, taking into account applicable international humanitarian law

1. Equality and non-discrimination

12. The Human Rights Committee took note of the measures taken by Finland to combat hate speech and hate crimes, including the adoption of the national action plan for the prevention of violent radicalization and extremism and the introduction of "Internet cops" in police departments. The Committee remained concerned, however, about the persistence of intolerance, prejudice, hate speech and hate crimes against vulnerable and minority groups, including women, African descendants, Muslims, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender

persons, and Roma and Jewish communities, in particular in the media and on social networks. In that regard, the Committee regretted the lack of specific information about the impact and effectiveness of policy and awareness-raising measures on reducing incidents of hate speech and hate crimes and the insufficient data collection. The Committee recommended that Finland redouble its efforts to combat discrimination, hate speech and incitement to discrimination or violence on the grounds of, inter alia, race, ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation and gender identity. The Committee also recommended that Finland improve relevant data collection and take effective measures to prevent both online and offline hate speech, firmly and publicly condemn such speech and intensify efforts aimed at addressing online hate speech.¹²

13. While noting the prohibition of ethnic profiling stipulated in the Aliens Act and the provision of training for law enforcement officials in that respect, the Human Rights Committee remained concerned about reported incidents of ethnic profiling by the police. It called upon Finland to take necessary measures to ensure the prohibition of ethnic profiling, in law and in practice, by law enforcement officials, and prevent disparate treatment based on physical appearance, colour, or ethnic or national origin. The Committee recommended that Finland continue its efforts to provide all law enforcement officials with adequate training in order to effectively prevent ethnic profiling and to conduct regular assessments of the impact of such training.¹³

14. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights recommended that Finland allocate adequate resources for the implementation of the recommendations of the research project entitled “Breaking down the barriers: reasons for young people’s educational choices and ways of reducing gender segregation in educational and occupational fields (2017–2019)”.¹⁴

2. Human rights and counter-terrorism

15. The Human Rights Committee expressed concern about the vague definition of terrorist offences contained in the Criminal Code and the possible abuse of such a provision. It recommended that Finland ensure that its counter-terrorism legislation, especially its definitions and the powers and limits on their exercise, was in compliance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the principles of legality, certainty, predictability and proportionality, and that persons suspected of or charged with terrorist acts or related crimes were provided, in law and in practice, with all legal safeguards, in accordance with the Covenant.¹⁵

16. While noting the recent adoption of a relevant resolution and the intention of Finland to continue its efforts to repatriate children in armed conflict zones, the Human Rights Committee remained concerned about the number of children born to Finnish nationals still living under harsh conditions in such zones. The Committee recommended that Finland intensify its efforts to repatriate all Finnish nationals who were in armed conflict zones, and their children, through a clear and fair procedure with respect for the principle of the best interests of the child, and that it provide them with adequate access to rehabilitation services and care upon repatriation.¹⁶

3. Administration of justice, including impunity, and the rule of law

17. The Human Rights Committee recommended that Finland encourage the reporting of hate crimes and ensure that hate crimes were thoroughly investigated, perpetrators prosecuted and punished, and victims provided with effective remedies. It also recommended that Finland provide adequate training to central and local authorities, law enforcement officials, judges and prosecutors on addressing hate speech and hate crimes, and to media workers on promoting acceptance of diversity.¹⁷

18. The Human Rights Committee also recommended that Finland: (a) encourage the reporting of cases of violence against women and ensure the safety of women who came forward, including through enhancing the accessibility and effectiveness of restraining orders, and consider eliminating the fees for unsuccessful applications of restraining orders; (b) ensure that cases of violence against women were thoroughly investigated and perpetrators were prosecuted and, if convicted, punished with appropriate sanctions; (c)

provide victims, in particular those living in remote rural areas, with access to effective remedies and means of protection and assistance, including to accommodation or shelters in all parts of the country and to other support services; and (d) continue its efforts to provide law enforcement officials, prosecutors, judges and lawyers with appropriate training to effectively deal with cases of violence against women.¹⁸

19. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights recommended that Finland enhance training for judges, lawyers and public officials on the justiciability of the rights enshrined in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and conduct impact assessments on the Covenant rights, including on equal rights of men and women.¹⁹

4. Fundamental freedoms and the right to participate in public and political life

20. UNESCO noted that defamation was criminalized and punishable by a fine and that aggravated defamation (Criminal Code, art. 24 (10)) was defined as an act of defamation that caused considerable suffering or particularly significant damage. The penalty was a fine or imprisonment for up to two years. UNESCO recommended that Finland decriminalize defamation and place it within a civil code that was in accordance with international standards.²⁰

21. The Human Rights Committee recommended that Finland: (a) ensure that alternatives to military service were not punitive or discriminatory in terms of their nature or duration and remained of a civilian nature, outside military command; (b) halt all prosecutions of individuals who refused to perform military service on grounds of conscience and release those who were currently serving related prison sentences; and (c) intensify efforts to raise awareness among the public about the right to conscientious objection and the availability of alternatives to military service.²¹

22. Concerned about the fact that Finland maintained a vague and broadly worded criminal provision on the breach of the sanctity of religion (Criminal Code, chap. 17), which carried a penalty of up to six months' imprisonment, the Human Rights Committee recommended that Finland decriminalize the breach of the sanctity of religion and protect freedom of thought, conscience and religion, as well as freedom of expression, in accordance with articles 18 and 19 of the Covenant.²²

5. Right to privacy

23. The Human Rights Committee was concerned that the definitions of situations granting civilian and military surveillance, for example, under the Police Act, might provide for overly broad powers of surveillance. The Committee recommended that Finland ensure that all types of surveillance activities and interference with privacy, both civilian and military, including online surveillance, interception of communications, access to communications data and retrieval of data, were governed by appropriate legislation that conformed with the Covenant, in particular article 17, including with the principles of legality, proportionality and necessity, and that surveillance and interception were conducted subject to judicial authorization and to effective and independent oversight mechanisms, and that the persons affected had proper access to effective remedies in cases of abuse.²³

6. Right to marriage and family life

24. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights expressed concern at reports of more frequent recourse to placing children in alternative care, and of insufficient assistance being provided to children of undocumented migrants and to unaccompanied children. It recommended that Finland prioritize efforts to keep children in, or return them to, the care of their family and to ensure families' access to forms of support in the caregiving role. It also recommended that Finland increase the capacity of preventive social care services, address the shortage of qualified personnel and ensure that unaccompanied children and children of undocumented migrants benefited effectively from social care services.²⁴

7. Right to work and to just and favourable conditions of work

25. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights expressed concern that young people experienced difficulties in securing stable and decent employment. Moreover,

the Committee remained concerned at the loss of jobs due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis, especially among groups that had traditionally been affected by unemployment, such as young people, persons with disabilities, those aged over 50 and women with a migrant background.²⁵

26. The same Committee noted with concern reports that provisions on minimum pay in collective agreements were not always respected, especially for migrant workers. It also expressed concern about the lack of legal protection of the labour rights of seasonal workers in the agricultural sector, who were often employed without a contract and thus vulnerable to exploitation. The Committee recommended that Finland investigate those reports and increase labour inspection in sectors of the economy where such violations were likely to occur. The Committee also recommended that Finland improve complaints mechanisms in those sectors to make them easily accessible, assist victims in obtaining redress and ensure that contravening employers, even when they were based abroad, were subject to sanctions. It further recommended extending coverage by labour and social security legislation to seasonal workers, including those in the agricultural sector, ensuring, among other things, that they received fair wages reflecting their conditions of work.²⁶

27. The same Committee recommended that, in addition to the “strategic desegregation” project and other projects planned under the Equal Pay Programme 2020–2023, Finland: (a) implement temporary special measures in order to accelerate representation in educational and occupational fields where either sex was underrepresented; (b) pursue awareness-raising campaigns challenging stereotypical expectations of gender roles; (c) implement measures to facilitate the return to work of carers of the family, especially those who were unemployed; and (d) strengthen legal protection against discrimination and unfair dismissal from work of pregnant workers.²⁷

8. Right to social security

28. While noting that the amounts of several social security benefits had been increased, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights was, nonetheless, concerned that cuts in benefits and the freeze on the National Pensions Index during the 2015–2019 parliamentary term had rendered those benefits inadequate and had disproportionately affected groups that were already disadvantaged. It urged Finland to include in the reform of the Social Security Act safeguards to ensure that social benefits remained adequate and that such cuts as were contemplated, including in the context of austerity measures, were temporary, covering only the period of crisis, were necessary and proportionate and did not disproportionately affect disadvantaged and marginalized groups.²⁸

9. Right to an adequate standard of living

29. The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination remained concerned that persons perceived to have foreign backgrounds continued to suffer from discrimination in the fields of employment and housing, and that the unemployment rate of women with a migrant background remained very high.²⁹

10. Right to health

30. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights recommended that Finland advocate in regional and international organizations for universal, equitable and affordable access to COVID-19 vaccines and drugs, including by supporting the proposals made at the World Trade Organization to establish a temporary waiver for some intellectual property rights for vaccines, at least for as long as the pandemic continued.³⁰

31. The same Committee remained concerned that primary health-care services were not sufficiently available and accessible throughout the country, and that certain groups experienced greater difficulties in accessing services.³¹

32. The same Committee recommended that Finland monitor the impact of the restructuring of health and social services on availability, equal access, affordability and quality of health and social services throughout the country.³²

33. The same Committee also recommended that the revision of the Mental Health Act and the Act on Substance Abuse, as well as the implementation of the National Mental Health Strategy 2020–2030 and other relevant strategies, be based on the right to health. It called upon Finland to: (a) increase the availability of mental health care, especially community-based care, in underserved regions and settings, such as schools and prisons; (b) enhance services for preventive and early interventions; and (c) increase the availability of affordable mental health care.³³

11. Right to education

34. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights noted with concern the poorer educational outcomes and bullying at school of pupils with a migrant background, children with disabilities, children in alternative care and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex pupils.³⁴

35. The same Committee expressed concern that Roma pupils continued to experience discriminatory attitudes at school, reported higher dropout rates and were often de facto schooled in segregated classes, in spite of the philosophy in Finland of inclusion in the education system.³⁵

36. The same Committee urged Finland to ensure equal access to inclusive education for all children, including children with a migrant background and Roma children, address the socioeconomic root causes of dropping out of school and ensure that delivery systems at all levels of education responded to the needs of students from different social and cultural backgrounds.³⁶

12. Cultural rights

37. UNESCO encouraged Finland to draw on constitutional guarantees to fully implement the relevant provisions that promoted access to and participation in cultural heritage and creative expressions that were conducive to implementing the right to take part in cultural life, as defined in article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and article 15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.³⁷

38. UNESCO also encouraged Finland to give due consideration to the participation of communities, practitioners, cultural actors and civil society organizations, as well as vulnerable groups (minorities, indigenous peoples, migrants, refugees, young people and persons with disabilities), and to ensure that equal opportunities were given to women and girls to address gender disparities.³⁸

13. Development, the environment, and business and human rights

39. While appreciating the leadership of Finland in promoting the business and human rights agenda in regional and international forums, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights expressed concern at the limited impact of the implementation of its National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights and at the absence of legal obligations for businesses under the country's jurisdiction to exercise human rights due diligence.³⁹

40. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights recommended that Finland adopt a regulatory framework on human rights due diligence making it compulsory for companies domiciled in Finland or under its jurisdiction to identify, prevent and address human rights violations in their operations, including abroad. Such companies should be liable for violations. Victims, including non-nationals, should be able to access effective remedies in Finland.⁴⁰

41. The same Committee urged Finland to conduct investigations when reports of human rights violations by Finnish companies were brought to its knowledge.⁴¹

B. Rights of specific persons or groups

1. Women

42. The Human Rights Committee acknowledged the efforts of Finland to combat violence against women, including the establishment of awareness campaigns, the opening of a telephone hotline and the proposed appointment of an independent rapporteur on the issue. The Committee remained concerned, however, by the persistence of violence against women, in particular the rise in cases of domestic violence in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.⁴²

43. The same Committee noted with concern the low level of reporting and of prosecution and conviction of perpetrators of violence against women, the insufficient number of shelters and rape crisis centres, especially in remote rural areas, and the charging of court fees for unsuccessful applications for restraining orders.⁴³

44. The same Committee was concerned about the low level of political representation of women with disabilities or ethnic minority backgrounds, and about the paucity of disaggregated statistics in that respect.⁴⁴

2. Children

45. UNHCR remained concerned about the continued practice of detention of children for immigration purposes. Immigration detention violated a child's right to liberty and a child's best interests should supersede other considerations of the State, including immigration control. The Aliens Act stipulated that children could be detained for immigration purposes under certain conditions. Unaccompanied children above the age of 15 could be detained where alternatives to detention were not deemed sufficient, while children of all ages with families could be detained if appropriate to maintain family unity.⁴⁵

46. UNHCR also remained concerned that carrying out a judicial review on the legality of detention only when requested by the detained individual concerned could serve as an undue barrier to the exercise of the minimum procedural safeguard of prompt judicial review, in particular in the case of children.⁴⁶

47. UNHCR recommended that Finland: (a) ensure that children were not detained for immigration-related purposes and explore alternatives to detention that were appropriate for their age and specific circumstances; and (b) review the conditions of directed residence measures, to ensure that it truly represented an alternative to detention.⁴⁷

48. UNHCR also recommended that Finland: (a) introduce alternative care arrangements for unaccompanied children and ensure that institutional care was only considered as a last resort; and (b) integrate family- and child-appropriate reception arrangements for asylum-seeking children into existing national systems in the country.⁴⁸

49. The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination noted that 75 per cent of Sami children under the age of 11 lived outside the Sami homeland and was concerned that, despite an allocated budget increase, the number of qualified teachers of Sami languages remained insufficient. The Committee encouraged Finland to continue to make efforts to revitalize the Sami languages, including outside the Sami homeland, and recommended that it ensure adequate provision of health services and social care in the Sami languages.⁴⁹

3. Older persons

50. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights expressed concern over the shortage of affordable residential care for older persons and recommended that Finland: (a) guarantee in its legislation the rights of older persons both to independent living and to affordable and quality care, including residential care, as well as the right to self-determination; (b) pursue and monitor the realization of those rights in the restructuring of social services; and (c) increase the overall supply of affordable residential care, with adequate and qualified personnel.⁵⁰

4. Persons with disabilities

51. The Human Rights Committee remained concerned that persons with psychosocial or intellectual disabilities, including older persons with dementia living in social welfare institutions, might be subject to involuntary confinement or treatment without sufficient legal basis or procedural safeguards to guarantee their rights and interests.⁵¹

52. The same Committee recommended that Finland ensure, in law and in practice, that: (a) involuntary psychiatric confinement be used only where strictly necessary and proportionate, for the purpose of protecting the individual from serious harm or from injuring others, and only as a last resort and for the shortest possible period of time; (b) the procedures used for such hospitalization or treatment included initial and periodic judicial reviews and guarantees of an effective legal remedy; and (c) any abuse was thoroughly investigated and prosecuted.⁵²

53. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights noted with concern the difficulties experienced by persons with disabilities due to measures taken to contain the spread of COVID-19, such as the lack of access to services, and isolation. The Committee drew the attention of Finland to the differing effect of those measures due to disabilities, urging it to consult with organizations and representatives of persons with disabilities with a view to designing the most appropriate preventive measures.⁵³

54. The same Committee recommended that Finland ensure that workers with disabilities enjoyed the right to just and favourable conditions of work on an equal basis with others. It recommended discontinuing the practice of segregating workers with disabilities in sheltered workplaces, amending legislative provisions thereon and ensuring that persons with disabilities were guaranteed reasonable accommodation in the workplace, received fair remuneration for the work they performed, enjoyed equal remuneration for work of equal value and did not suffer wage discrimination due to a perceived reduced capacity for work.⁵⁴

5. Indigenous peoples and minorities

55. The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination noted the concern expressed by the Sami Parliament that, under the recent Nordic Sami Convention, the Government retained the power to define who was Sami. The Committee observed that the Supreme Administrative Court had the power to determine the eligibility of individuals to vote in Sami Parliament elections. The Committee recommended that, in defining who was eligible to vote for Members of the Sami Parliament, Finland accord due weight to the rights of the Sami people to self-determination concerning their status within Finland, to determine their own membership and to not be subjected to forced assimilation.⁵⁵

56. The same Committee recommended that Finland find an adequate, negotiated solution to the dispute regarding the rights of the Sami people in their traditional lands, including by revising its legislation on that issue and taking into account the ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169). It urged Finland to obtain the free and informed consent of the Sami people prior to the approval of any project affecting the use and development of their traditional lands and resources.⁵⁶

57. While noting the increase in the number of students receiving instruction in Romani, and commending Finland for its well-developed Roma policy programme, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination remained concerned that the majority of Roma people faced discrimination in the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights, particularly in terms of access to employment, housing and education. The Committee recommended that Finland strengthen its measures to integrate Roma into the labour and housing markets, include Roma children in education and promote the teaching of Romani.⁵⁷

58. The Human Rights Committee recommended ensuring that religious minorities enjoyed adequate access to goods and services, in particular food products meeting their respective religious dietary restrictions, without discrimination.⁵⁸

6. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons

59. The Human Rights Committee remained concerned about social stigmatization, discrimination and violence against persons based on their sexual orientation or gender

identity. While noting the ongoing process to amend the Trans Act, the Committee was concerned about the lengthy procedure for legal gender recognition and the requirements to be sterilized and diagnosed with “transsexualism”, which was defined as a mental disorder.⁵⁹

60. The same Committee recommended that Finland: (a) eradicate all forms of discrimination and violence against and social stigmatization of persons based on their sexual orientation or gender identity, and provide access to effective remedies for victims of such acts; (b) establish a simple and accessible administrative procedure for change of civil status with respect to gender identity that was in accordance with the Covenant; and (c) effectively prevent the performance of irreversible medical interventions, especially surgical operations, on intersex children who were not yet capable of giving their full, free and informed consent, unless such procedures constituted an absolute medical necessity, and ensure access to effective remedies for victims of such interventions.⁶⁰

7. Migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers

61. The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination noted with concern several legislative changes that had weakened protection for asylum-seekers, refugees and other migrants in vulnerable situations. The provision of the Aliens Act on the granting of residence permits on humanitarian grounds had been repealed and applied with retroactive effect. The Committee noted reports about some asylum-seekers who continued to be held in police detention.⁶¹

62. The same Committee remained concerned by the difficulties faced by undocumented individuals in accessing affordable and adequate health-care services other than emergency care. The Committee noted with concern reports that recent asylum claims by persons belonging to certain groups received lower levels of approval. The Committee invited Finland to examine whether discriminatory policies might be affecting the number of asylum requests granted.⁶²

63. The same Committee recommended that Finland: (a) ensure that its current laws and any further restrictions concerning the removal of non-citizens from its jurisdiction did not discriminate in purpose or effect on the grounds of race, colour or ethnic or national origin and that non-citizens enjoyed equal access to effective remedies with respect to refoulement claims in removal proceedings; (b) maintain sufficient capacity in reception facilities providing adequate shelter, basic services and humanitarian assistance to ensure that asylum-seekers were not detained in punitive settings; and (c) ensure that undocumented migrants had effective access to affordable and adequate health-care services.⁶³

64. UNHCR highlighted that income requirements presented a significant legal and financial obstacle for refugees. The particular vulnerability and circumstances of refugees needed to be taken into account and they should enjoy more favourable conditions for family reunification. Many families were separated during flight and relied on family reunification as a legal pathway to enjoy their right to family life. The restrictions to family reunification in the Aliens Act risked leading to more individuals, especially women and children, having to resort to smugglers and undertake dangerous journeys.⁶⁴

65. UNHCR recommended that Finland: (a) lift all income requirements to facilitate family reunification for refugees and other beneficiaries of international protection; (b) strengthen the multidisciplinary assessment and determination of the best interests of the child in all family reunification procedures and ensure that children were reunited with their family in a positive, humane and expeditious manner; and (c) remove or reduce legal, practical and financial obstacles to family reunification for refugees and beneficiaries of international protection.⁶⁵

8. Stateless persons

66. UNHCR observed that the Nationality Act set out comprehensive measures to prevent statelessness. Particularly commendable was the automatic granting of Finnish nationality to children born in Finland who would otherwise be stateless. Finland was reviewing the Nationality Act with the aim of clarifying it. UNHCR welcomed the proposal to introduce one single definition of statelessness, instead of dividing statelessness into voluntary and involuntary.⁶⁶

67. UNHCR encouraged Finland to establish a full-fledged dedicated statelessness determination procedure. Establishing such a procedure and affording those identified as stateless the protection to which they were entitled would allow Finland to better fulfil its commitments under the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons.⁶⁷

Notes

- 1 [A/HRC/36/8](#), [A/HRC/36/8/Add.1](#) and [A/HRC/36/2](#).
- 2 [CERD/C/FIN/CO/23](#), para. 26.
- 3 UNESCO submission for the universal periodic review of Finland, para. 12.
- 4 UNHCR submission for the universal periodic review of Finland, pp. 4–5.
- 5 *Ibid.*, p. 5.
- 6 [CCPR/C/FIN/CO/7](#), para. 7.
- 7 UNESCO submission, para. 12.
- 8 UNHCR submission, p. 2.
- 9 [CCPR/C/FIN/CO/7](#), paras. 18 and 19 (d).
- 10 *Ibid.*, para. 12.
- 11 *Ibid.*, para. 13.
- 12 *Ibid.*, paras. 14–15.
- 13 *Ibid.*, paras. 16–17.
- 14 [E/C.12/FIN/CO/7](#), para. 19.
- 15 [CCPR/C/FIN/CO/7](#), paras. 10–11 (a).
- 16 *Ibid.*, paras. 10 and 11 (b).
- 17 *Ibid.*, para. 14 (c)–(d).
- 18 *Ibid.*, para. 19.
- 19 [E/C.12/FIN/CO/7](#), para. 5 (a) and (c).
- 20 UNESCO submission, paras. 4 and 13.
- 21 [CCPR/C/FIN/CO/7](#), para. 37.
- 22 *Ibid.*, paras. 40–41.
- 23 *Ibid.*, paras. 34–35.
- 24 [E/C.12/FIN/CO/7](#), paras. 32–33.
- 25 *Ibid.*, para. 23.
- 26 *Ibid.*, paras. 25–26.
- 27 *Ibid.*, para. 19.
- 28 *Ibid.*, paras. 27–28.
- 29 [CERD/C/FIN/CO/23](#), para. 20.
- 30 [E/C.12/FIN/CO/7](#), para. 9.
- 31 *Ibid.*, para. 41.
- 32 *Ibid.*, para. 42.
- 33 *Ibid.*, para. 44.
- 34 *Ibid.*, para. 46.
- 35 *Ibid.*
- 36 *Ibid.*, para. 47.
- 37 UNESCO submission, para. 15.
- 38 *Ibid.*
- 39 [E/C.12/FIN/CO/7](#), para. 6.
- 40 *Ibid.*, para. 7.
- 41 *Ibid.*
- 42 [CCPR/C/FIN/CO/7](#), para. 18.
- 43 *Ibid.*
- 44 *Ibid.*, para. 12.
- 45 UNHCR submission, p. 3.
- 46 *Ibid.*, p. 4.
- 47 *Ibid.*
- 48 *Ibid.*, p. 5.
- 49 [CERD/C/FIN/CO/23](#), paras. 18–19.
- 50 [E/C.12/FIN/CO/7](#), paras. 34–35.
- 51 [CCPR/C/FIN/CO/7](#), para. 30.
- 52 *Ibid.*, para. 31.
- 53 [E/C.12/FIN/CO/7](#), paras. 16–17.
- 54 *Ibid.*, para. 30.
- 55 [CERD/C/FIN/CO/23](#), paras. 14–15.

- ⁵⁶ Ibid., para. 17.
⁵⁷ Ibid., paras. 12–13.
⁵⁸ [CCPR/C/FIN/CO/7](#), para. 39.
⁵⁹ Ibid., para. 20.
⁶⁰ Ibid., para. 21.
⁶¹ [CERD/C/FIN/CO/23](#), para. 24.
⁶² Ibid.
⁶³ Ibid., para. 25.
⁶⁴ UNHCR submission, p. 3.
⁶⁵ Ibid.
⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 4.
⁶⁷ Ibid.
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