

LET YOUR  
VOICES BE  
HEARD IN  
**ASEAN**



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Child Rights  
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# Let Your Voice Be Heard in ASEAN

## 1. THE CRC RIGHTS HOLDERS AND DUTY BEARERS

All children have rights. Rights are what all children have and are able to do as persons such as the right to have a name and nationality, the right to health, the right to play and the right to be free from abuse and exploitation.

Your rights as children are described in a very important document called the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)*.

Hi I'm Chit!

Hi I'm Lily!

You'd be glad to know that all countries in Southeast Asia have ratified the CRC. This means that governments in these countries have committed to fulfill, respect, promote and protect the rights of all children under their care.



In the place where you live, your parents, neighbors, church, school, community leaders, local governments, and other adults around you bear the responsibility to make sure that your rights as a child under the UNCRC are achieved and respected. In your country, your government and leaders have the duty to make and effectively apply rules and guidelines that would benefit you and other children.



In Southeast Asia, your national government is part of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations or ASEAN, which is a group made up of all ten Southeast Asian countries.



Here is the map of Southeast Asia and the logo of ASEAN!

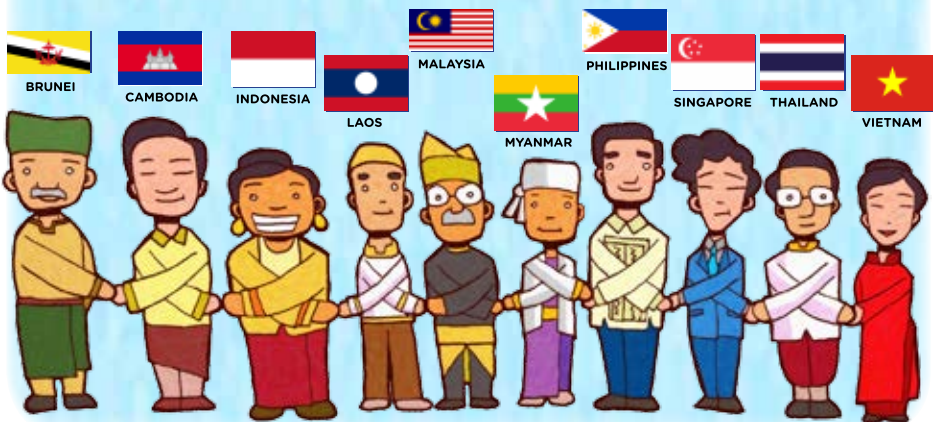


## 2. WHAT IS ASEAN?

The ten countries that make up ASEAN are: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.



One of ASEAN's main goals is to make sure that rights of children are fulfilled and protected.



In recent years, three other countries in Asia decided to cooperate with the ten ASEAN member countries, and these are *China*, *Japan*, and the *Republic of Korea*. Together, these thirteen countries are known as *ASEAN Plus Three*.



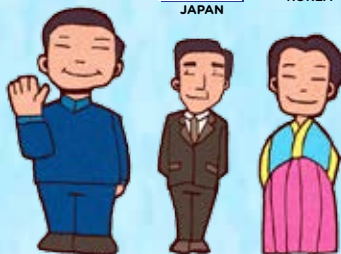
CHINA



JAPAN



KOREA





The ASEAN was established in August 8, 1967, when the countries mentioned above signed the ASEAN Declaration. The ASEAN Declaration is a document which contains the goals of ASEAN and describes how countries will work together.



The ASEAN's office is located in Jakarta, Indonesia. It is headed by the ASEAN Secretary General and is supported by the ASEAN Secretariat.

The ASEAN Secretariat has a very important role of helping plan, coordinate, and conduct activities of ASEAN officials.



### 3. WHY WAS ASEAN CREATED?

You might be wondering how and why ASEAN was created. Before ASEAN's establishment, there were conflicts among some Asian countries over certain issues.

Children suffer the most in times of conflict.



Leaders must ensure that all children have access to food, shelter, and other services for them to survive and develop and be protected from harm and abuse.

The formation of ASEAN helped these quarreling nations come together to solve their problems peacefully by talking with each other. In ASEAN, member countries promise to be friends and cooperate for peace, security, freedom and prosperity in the Southeast Asian region.





## 4. WHAT ARE THE SPECIFIC COMMITMENTS OF ASEAN TO CHILDREN<sup>1</sup> AND THE YOUTH<sup>2</sup>?

ASEAN has signed many documents to show its commitment to and concern for children. It has approved several declarations which emphasize the importance of empowering and training children and youth, promoting children's and youth's meaningful participation in matters that affect them, promoting and respecting children's rights, and protecting children from all forms of violence and abuse everywhere.

Declaration Against Trafficking in Persons Particularly Women and Children (2004)

Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women in the ASEAN Region (2004)

Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers (2007)

ASEAN Charter (2007)

Ha Noi Declaration on the Enhancement of Welfare and Development of ASEAN Women and Children (2010)

Bali Declaration on the Enhancement of the Role and Participation of the Persons with Disabilities in ASEAN Community (2011)

ASEAN Decade of Persons with Disabilities (2011-2020)

ASEAN Human Rights Declaration (2012)

ASEAN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women and Elimination of Violence Against Children (2013)



<sup>1</sup> Children - defined as individuals below the age of 18 years


<sup>2</sup> Youth - defined as individuals from 15 years old and above

## 5. HOW CAN CHILDREN INFLUENCE ASEAN TO FULFILL, RESPECT, PROMOTE, AND PROTECT THEIR RIGHTS?

Children can approach several offices in ASEAN to inform them about their issues, concerns, and recommendations. Under the ASEAN structure, children's issues are discussed within the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) especially during the following events:

- **ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Social Welfare and Development (AMMSWD)** – The AMMSWD is composed of the leaders of each country's Ministry/ Department of Social Welfare and Development.

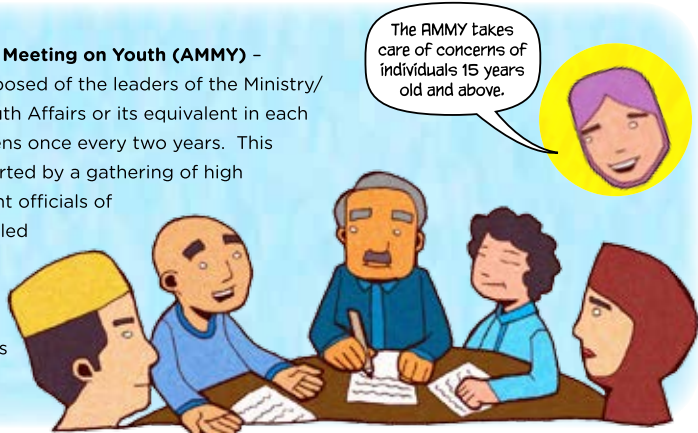
The AMMSWD happens every three years. AMMSWD is supported by the **Senior Officials Meeting on Social Welfare and Development (SOMSWD)**, another gathering of top government officials also working on social welfare, which happens once a year.



AMMSWD takes care of concerns of children below 18 years old.

- **ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Youth (AMMY)** –

The AMMY is composed of the leaders of the Ministry/ Department of Youth Affairs or its equivalent in each country and happens once every two years. This gathering is supported by a gathering of high ranking government officials of the same office called the Senior Officials Meeting on Youth (SOMY). The SOMY happens once a year.



The AMMY takes care of concerns of individuals 15 years old and above.

There are also two bodies in ASEAN, the **ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR)** and the **ASEAN Commission for the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC)**, which work to support and protect the rights of children.

- The **AICHR**'s main task is to promote and protect human rights of all the peoples in ASEAN, including children. It also advocates for countries to approve important international human rights instruments and conducts researches on human rights issues including children's rights.



- The **ACWC** is focused on women and children's concerns and supports advocacy efforts and programs for children and women's rights in ASEAN. It is responsible for conducting researches on the situation and well-being of women and children, encouraging ASEAN member countries to regularly review laws related to women's and children's rights, and supporting the participation of children in dialogues and consultation processes in ASEAN.



Lastly, there is also the **ASEAN Children's Forum (ACF)**, which is organized to provide a space for children to share their thoughts and concerns. The ACF happens every two years. Children from different ASEAN member countries are invited to attend the forum to discuss the challenges they face and share recommendations on various issues that affect them.



## 6. WHY SHOULD CHILDREN PARTICIPATE IN ASEAN?



Children are very important members of the ASEAN community. Children must be able to participate in ASEAN processes/discussions because these are opportunities to make governments notice children's concerns and help them fulfill, support and protect their rights.

If children, for instance, have a hard time talking to their government leaders, they could relay their issues to ASEAN and ASEAN, in turn, can discuss these with the concerned government. Participating in ASEAN processes will also help children learn more about the culture and experiences of children living in other countries. It provides a way for children to work together to build a better community.

The participation of children in ASEAN should be meaningful. Meaningful participation of children means that the process must:

- ☐ Be voluntary
- ☐ Be safe
- ☐ Be respectful of children's views
- ☐ Be child-friendly
- ☐ Include all children, even those in poor communities
- ☐ Have supporting adults who are trained to assist the children
- ☐ Be transparent and informative
- ☐ Include topics or concerns of children
- ☐ Have follow up actions





It's really inspiring to know about ASEAN and how children can and should voice out their views to ASEAN about important issues that matter to them.

So fellow child rights advocates, we hope that you will join us in encouraging friends in your country to participate in the ASEAN processes to ensure that our rights are upheld!

Let our voices be heard in ASEAN!



To learn more about ASEAN and how children can influence it, read the "Guidebook on Spaces for Children's Participation in ASEAN" which you can download from this link:  
<http://childrightscoalitionasia.org/a-guidebook-on-spaces-for-childrens-participation-in-asean/>





# Child Rights Coalition Asia

## **Child Rights Coalition Asia (CRC Asia)**

is a network of child rights and human rights organizations working together to be a strong voice for child rights in the region by leading in strengthening child rights movements, promoting innovative programs, and advocating better policies for and with the children.

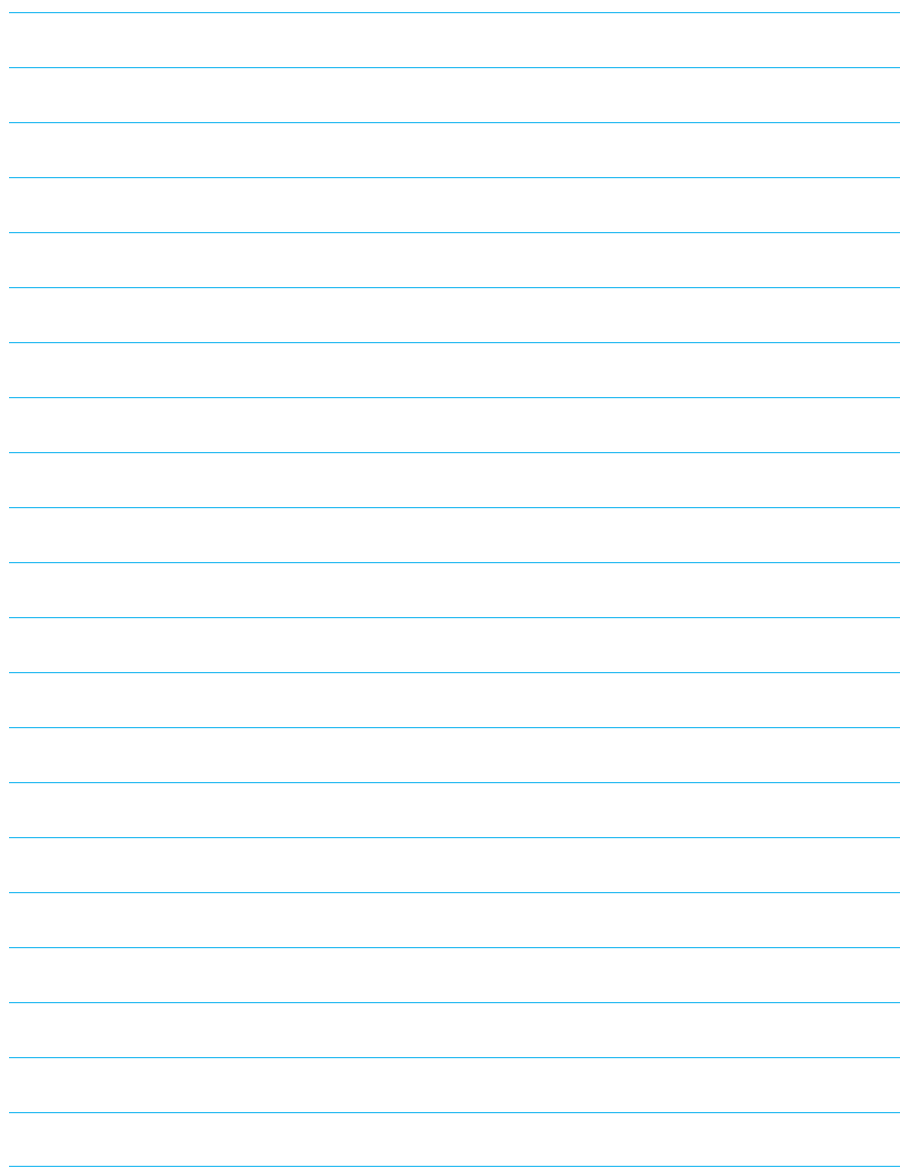
Know more about us at [www.crcasia.org](http://www.crcasia.org).

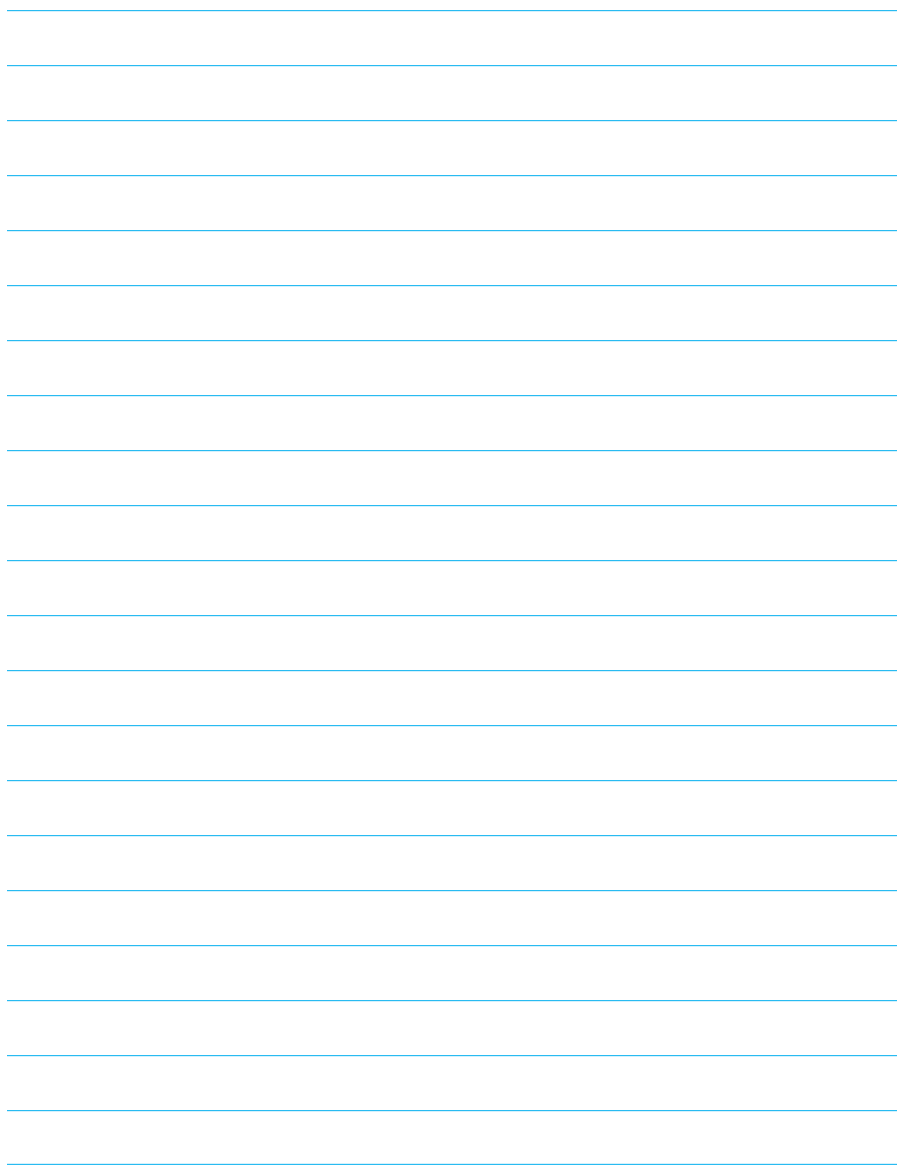
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The Convention on the Rights of the Child has 54 articles in all. Articles 43-54 are about how adults and governments should work together to make sure all children get all their rights.

Everyone under 18 years of age has all the rights in this Convention.

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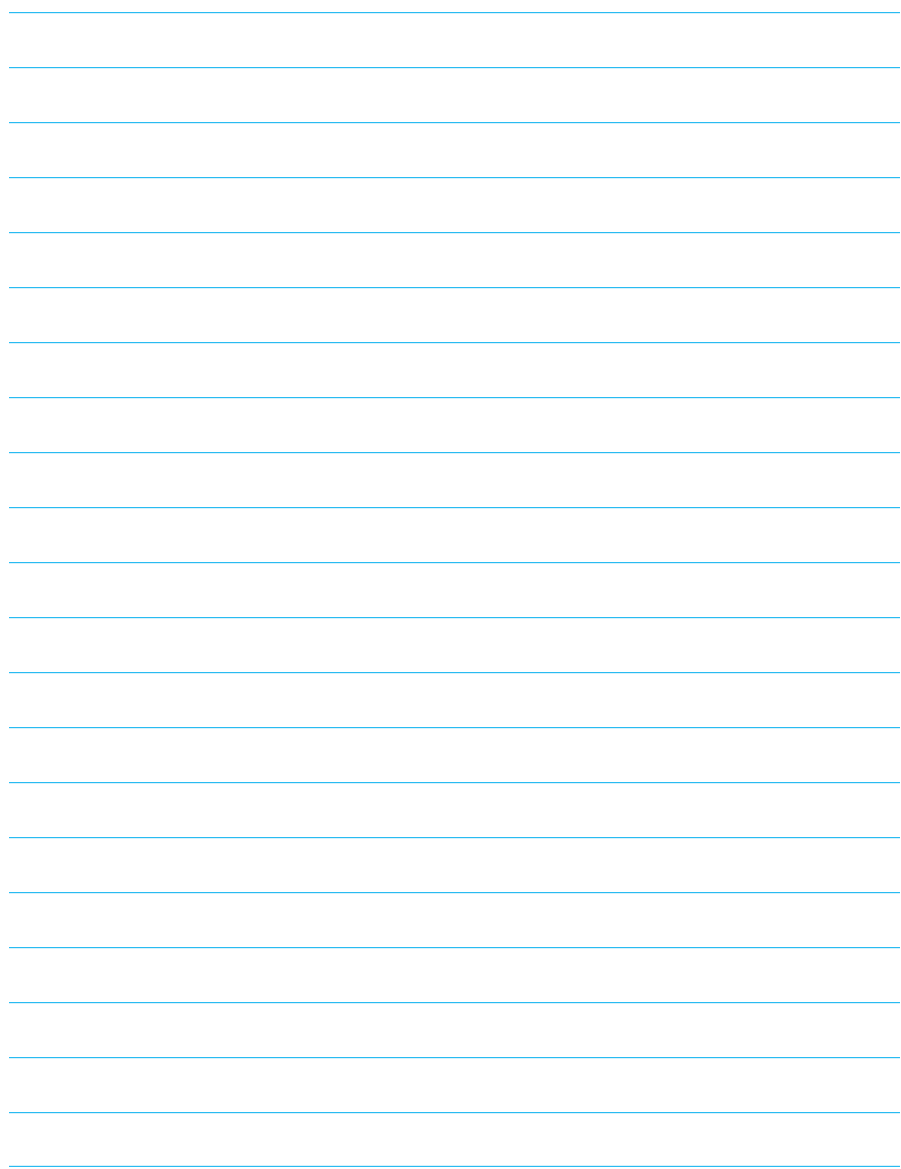
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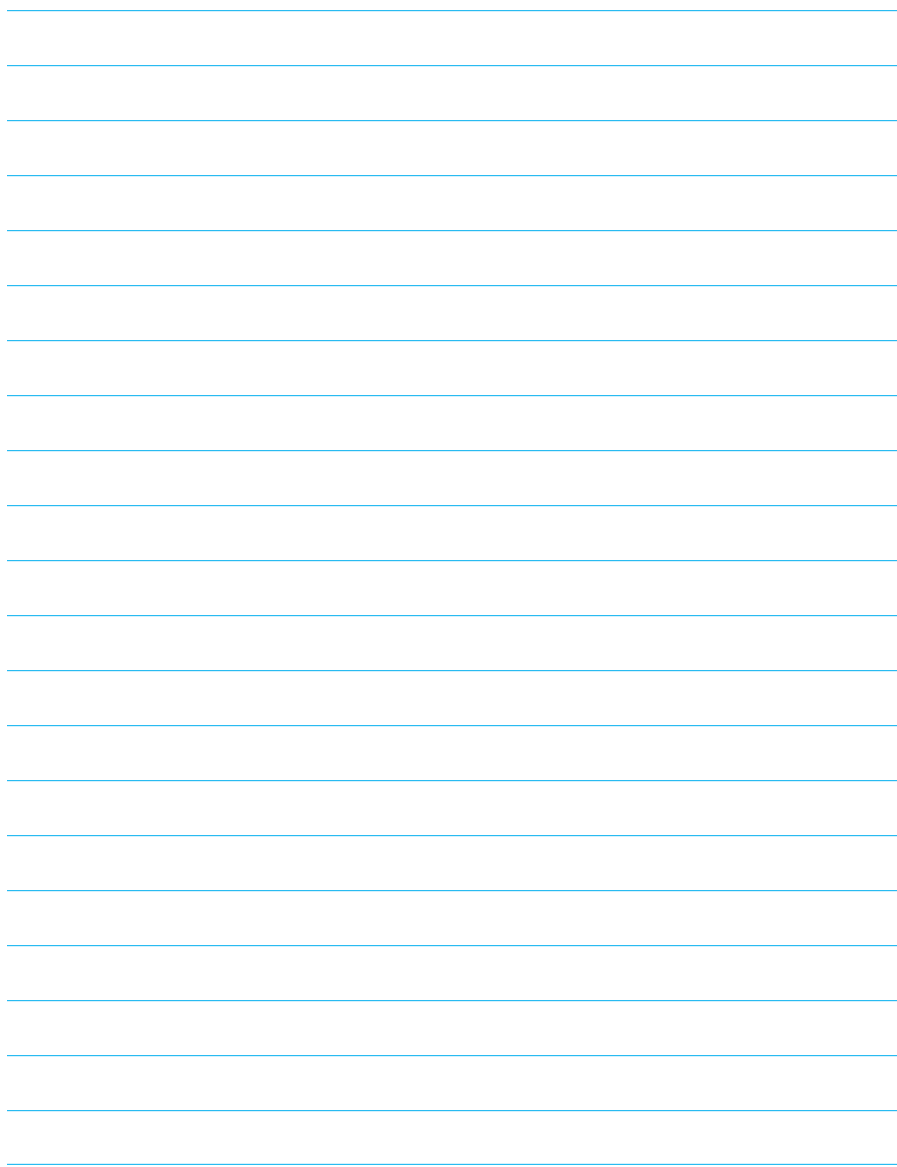
## ARTICLE 2

The Convention applies to everyone, whatever their race, religion, abilities; whatever they think or say, whatever type of family they come from.

All organisations concerned with children should work towards what is best for each child.

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Governments should make these rights available to children.

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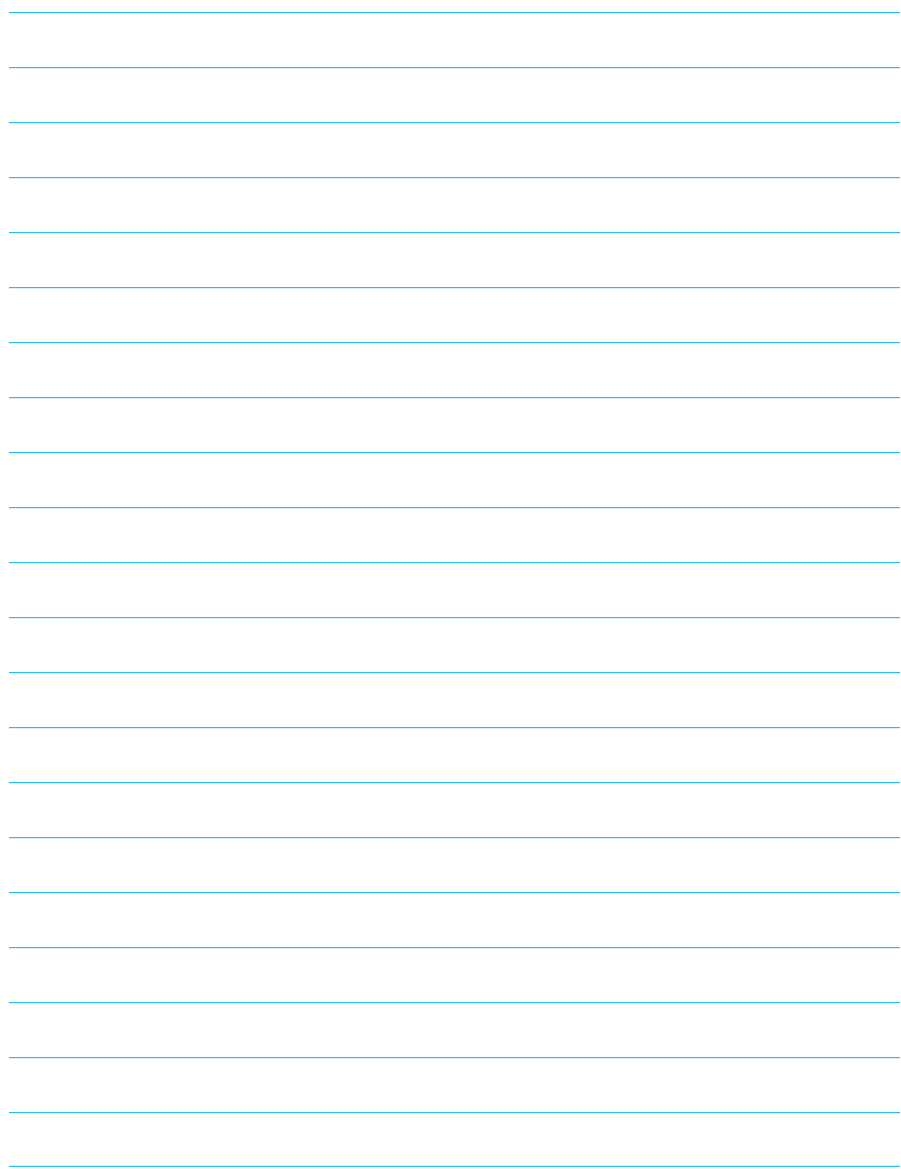
ARTICLE 5

Governments should respect the rights and responsibilities of families to direct and guide their children so that, as they grow, they learn to use their rights properly.

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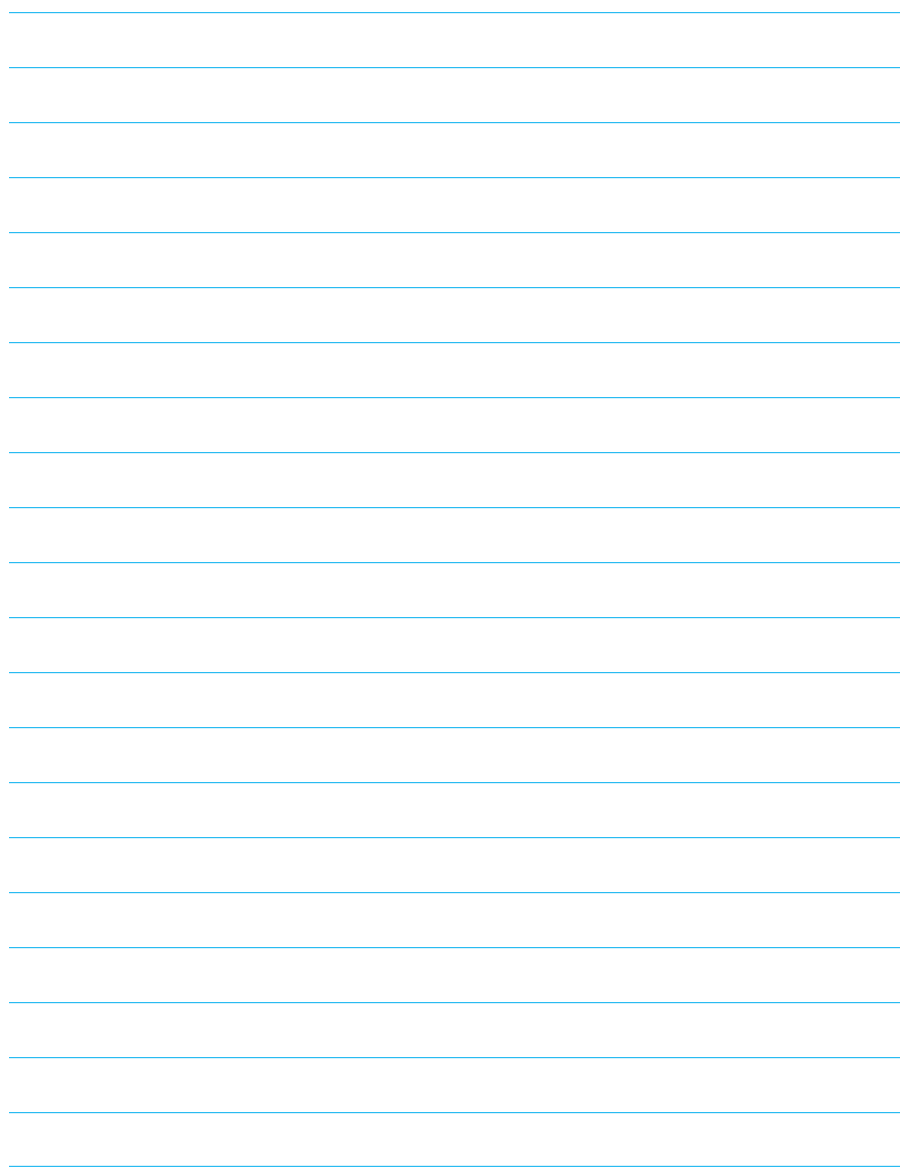
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## ARTICLE 6

**ARTICLE 6**  
All children have the right to life. Governments should ensure that children survive and develop healthily.

All children have the right to a legally registered name, and nationality.  
Also the right to know and, as far as possible, to be cared for by their parents.

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## ARTICLE 8

**Article 3**  
Governments should respect children's right to a name, a nationality and family ties.

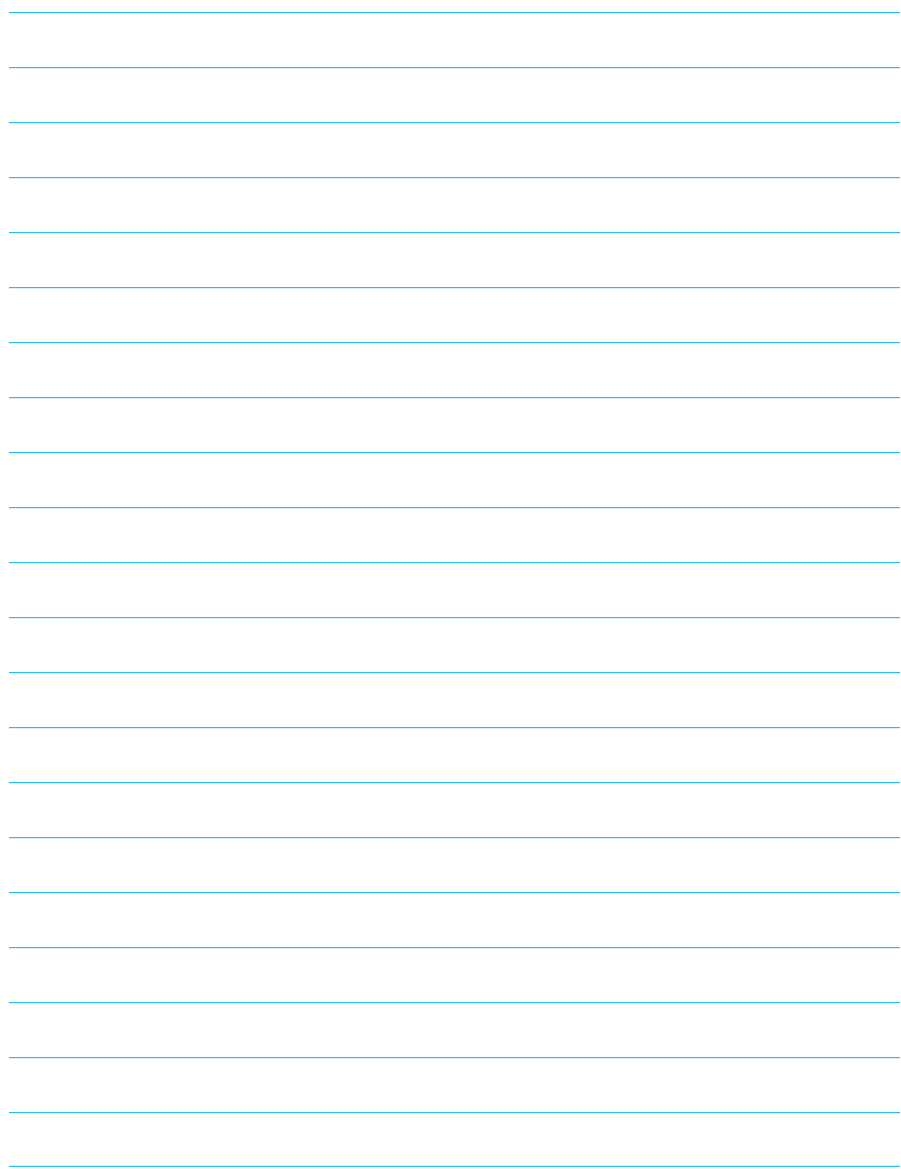


ARTICLE 9

Children should not be separated from their parents unless it is for their own good. For example, if a parent is mistreating or neglecting a child. Children whose parents have separated have the right to stay in contact with both parents, unless this might hurt the child.

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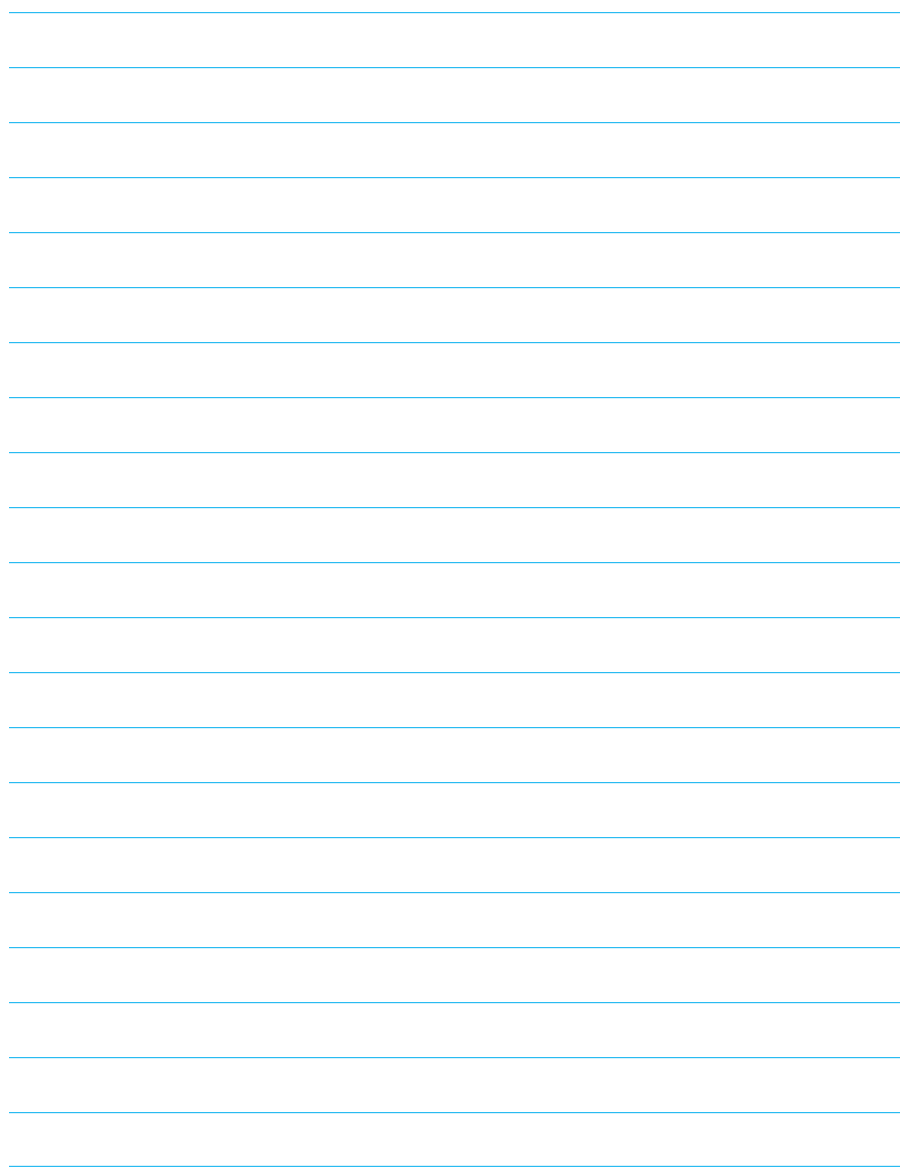
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## ARTICLE 10

Families who live in different countries should be allowed to move between those countries so that parents and children can stay in contact, or get back together as a family.

ARTICLE 11  
Governments should take steps to stop children  
being taken out of their own country illegally.

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## ARTICLE 12

Children have the right to say what they think should happen, when adults are making decisions that affect them, and to have their opinions taken into account.



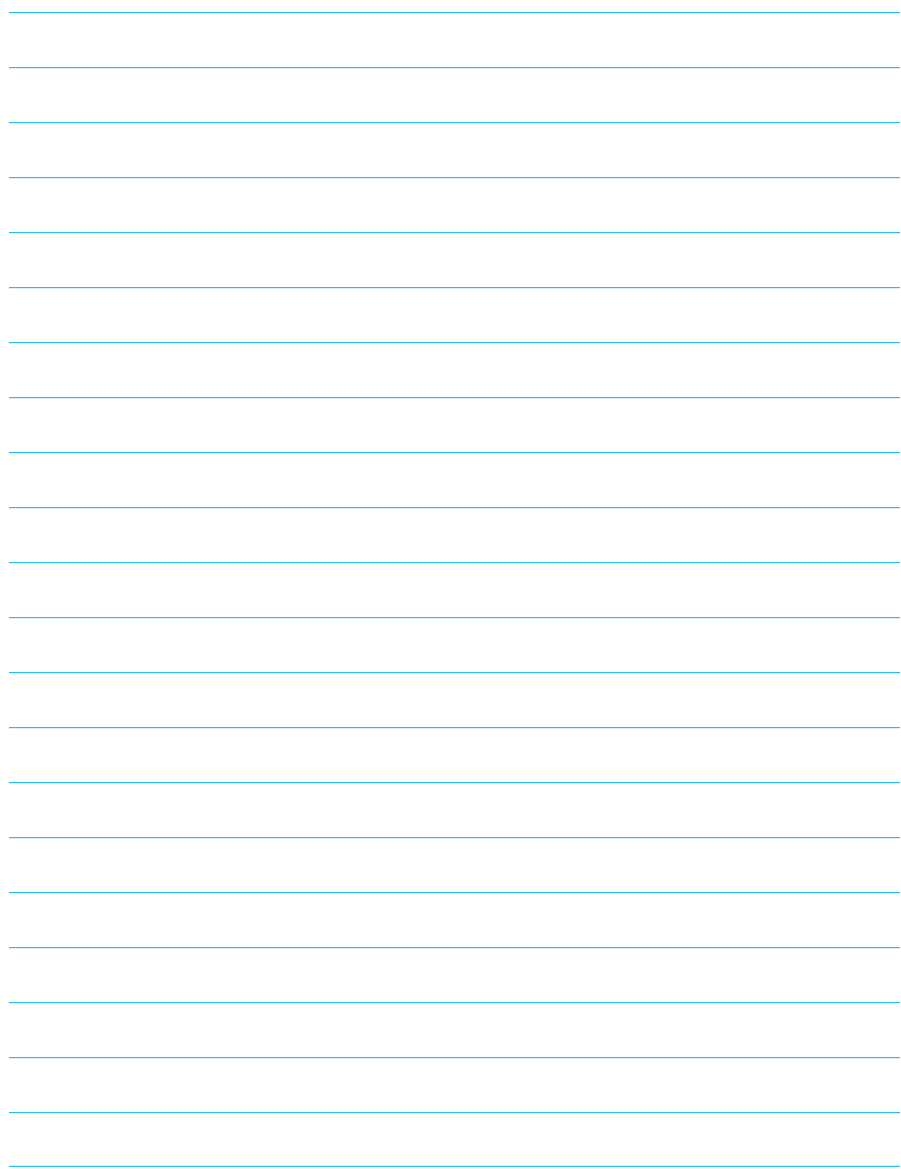
ARTICLE 13

Children have the right to get and to share information, as long as the information is not damaging to them or to others.

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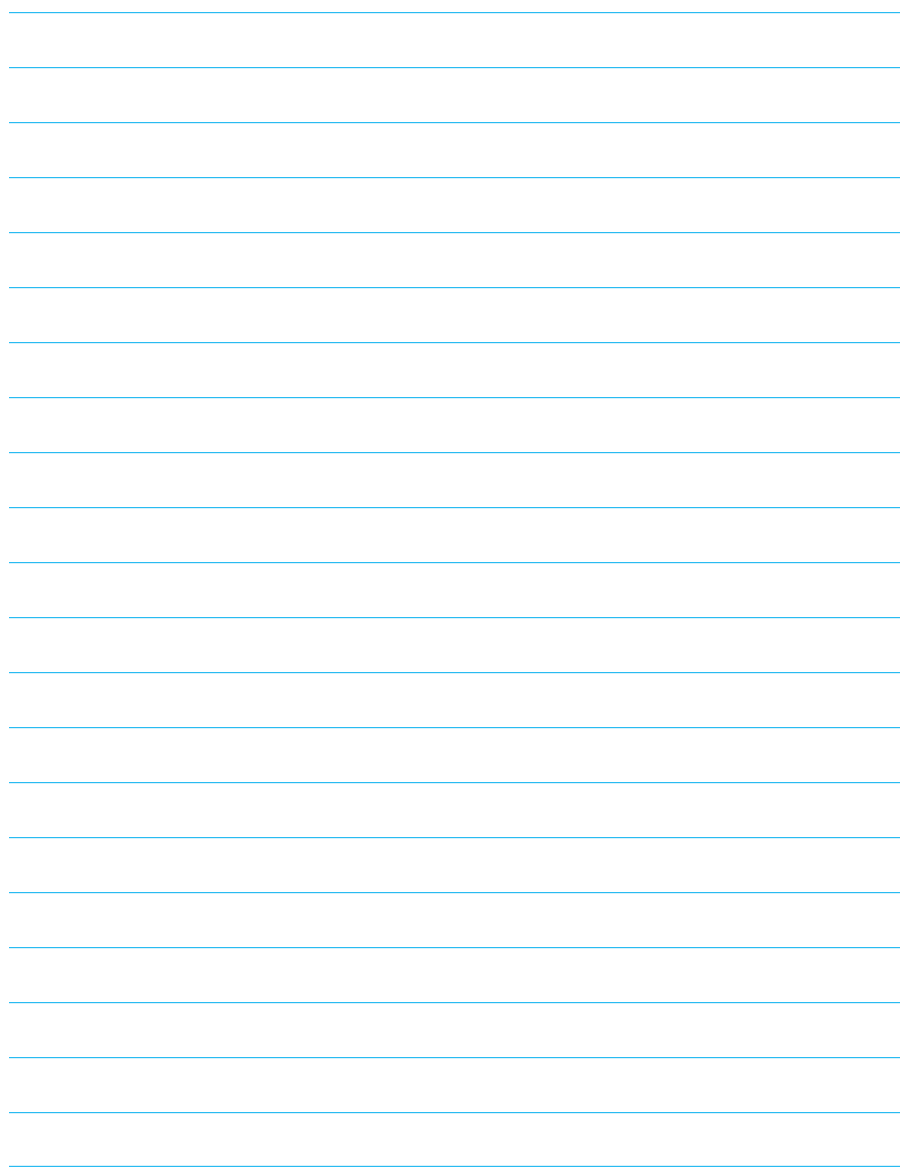
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## ARTICLE 14

Children have the right to think and believe what they want, and to practise their religion, as long as they are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights. Parents should guide their children on these matters.

Children have the right to meet together and to join groups and organisations, as long as this does not stop other people from enjoying their rights.

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## ARTICLE 16

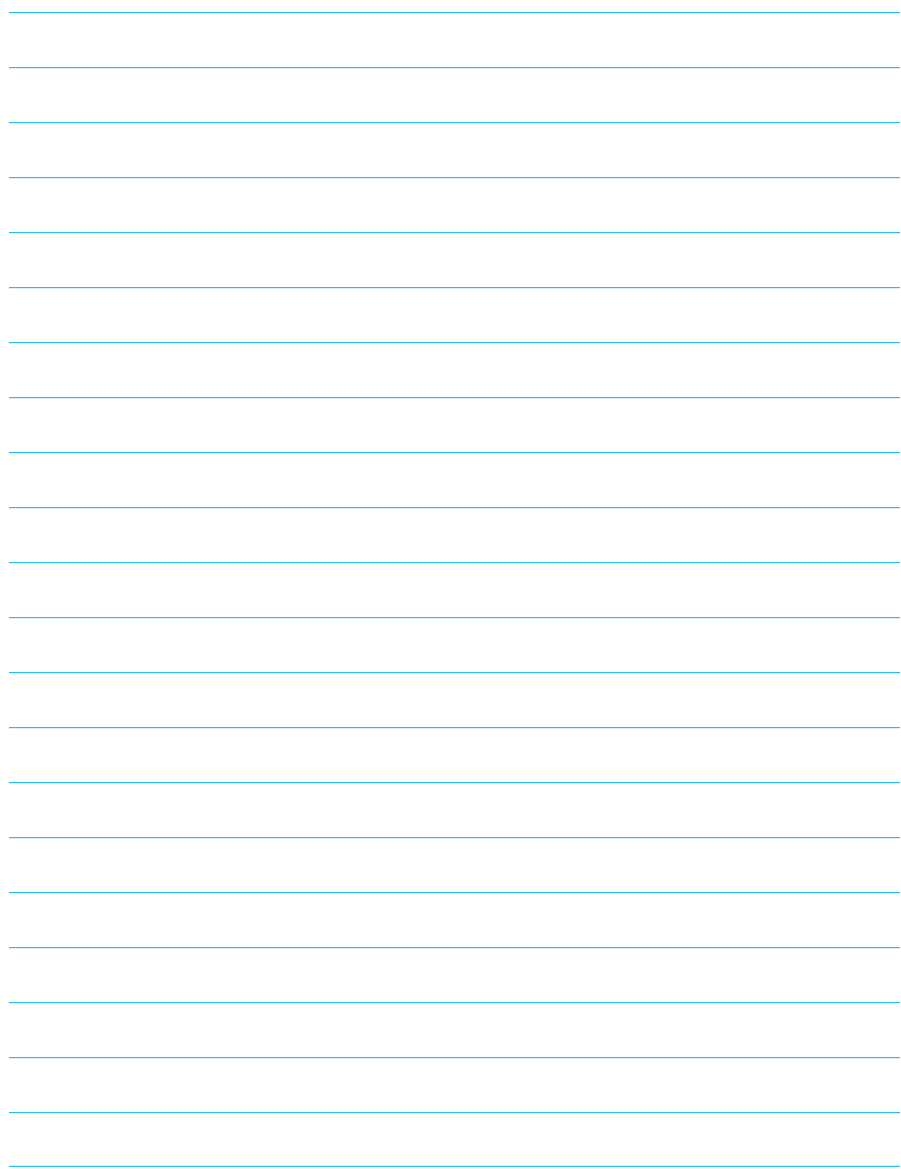
Children have a right to privacy. The law should protect them from attacks against their way of life, their good name, their families and their homes.



ARTICLE 17

Children have the right to reliable information from the mass media. Television, radio, and newspapers should provide information that children can understand, and should not promote materials that could harm children.

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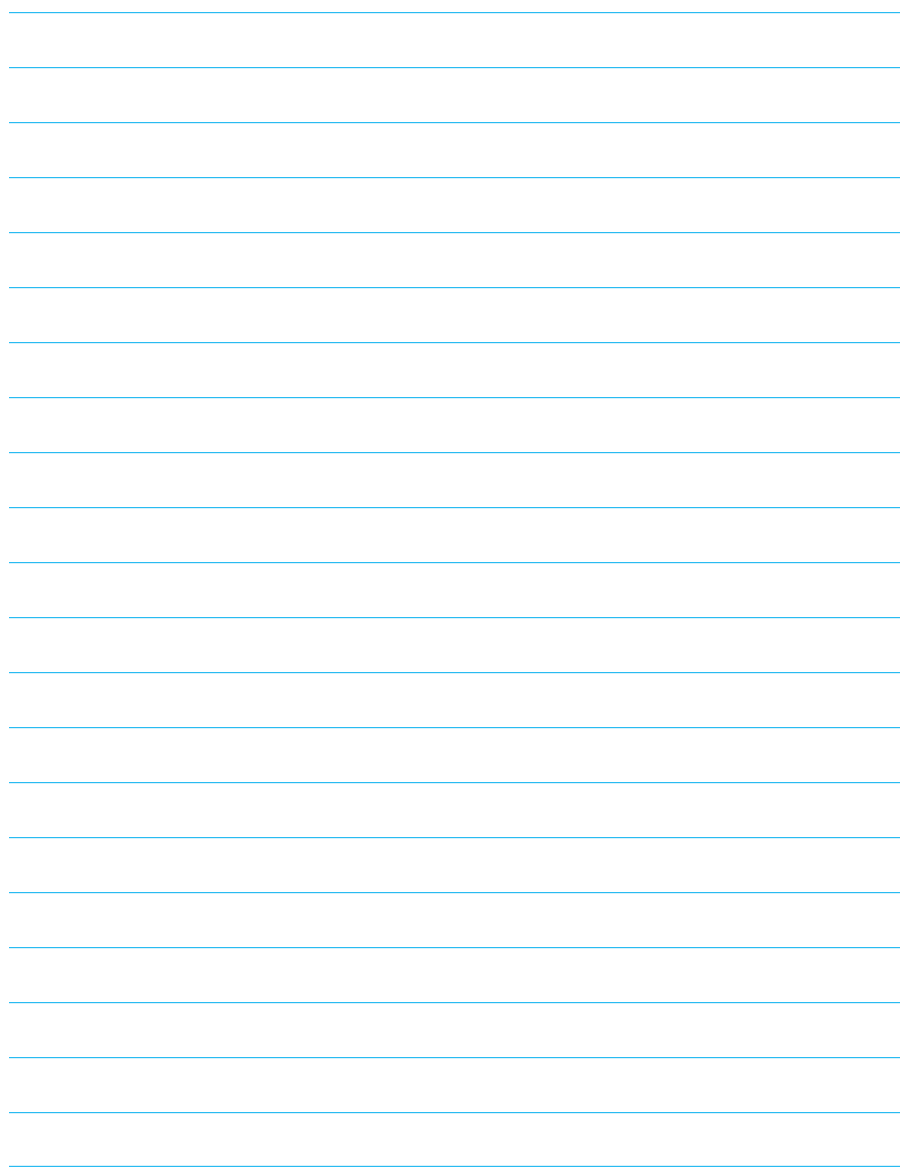
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## ARTICLE 18

Both parents share responsibility for bringing up their children, and should always consider what is best for each child. Governments should help parents by providing services to support them, especially if both parents work.

Governments should ensure that children are properly cared for, and protect them from violence, abuse and neglect by their parents, or anyone else who looks after them.

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## ARTICLE 20

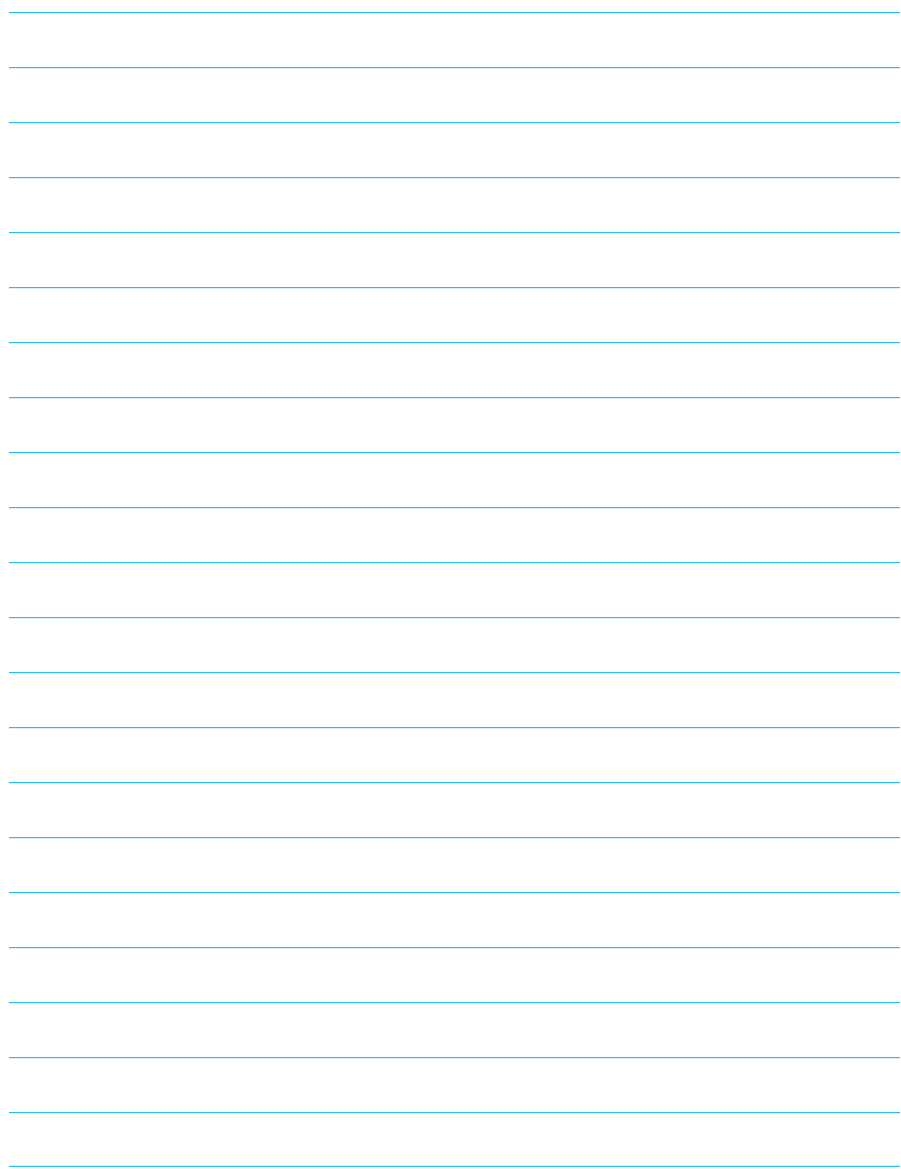
Children who cannot be looked after by their own family must be looked after properly, by people who respect their religion, culture and language.



**ARTICLE 21**

When children are adopted the first concern must be what is best for them. The same rules should apply whether the children are adopted in the country where they were born, or if they are taken to live in another country.

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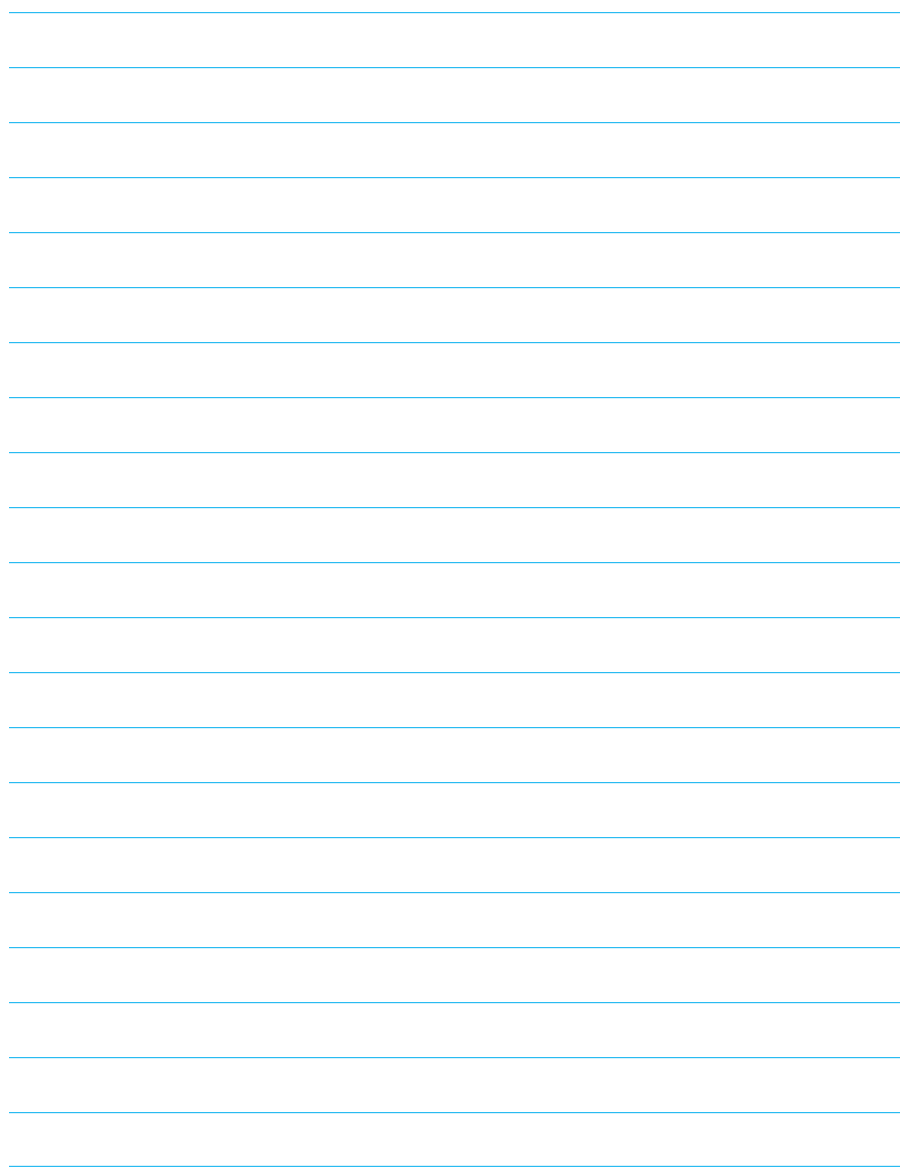
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## ARTICLE 22

Children who come into a country as refugees should have the same rights as children born in that country.

Children who have any kind of disability should have special care and support, so that they can lead full and independent lives.

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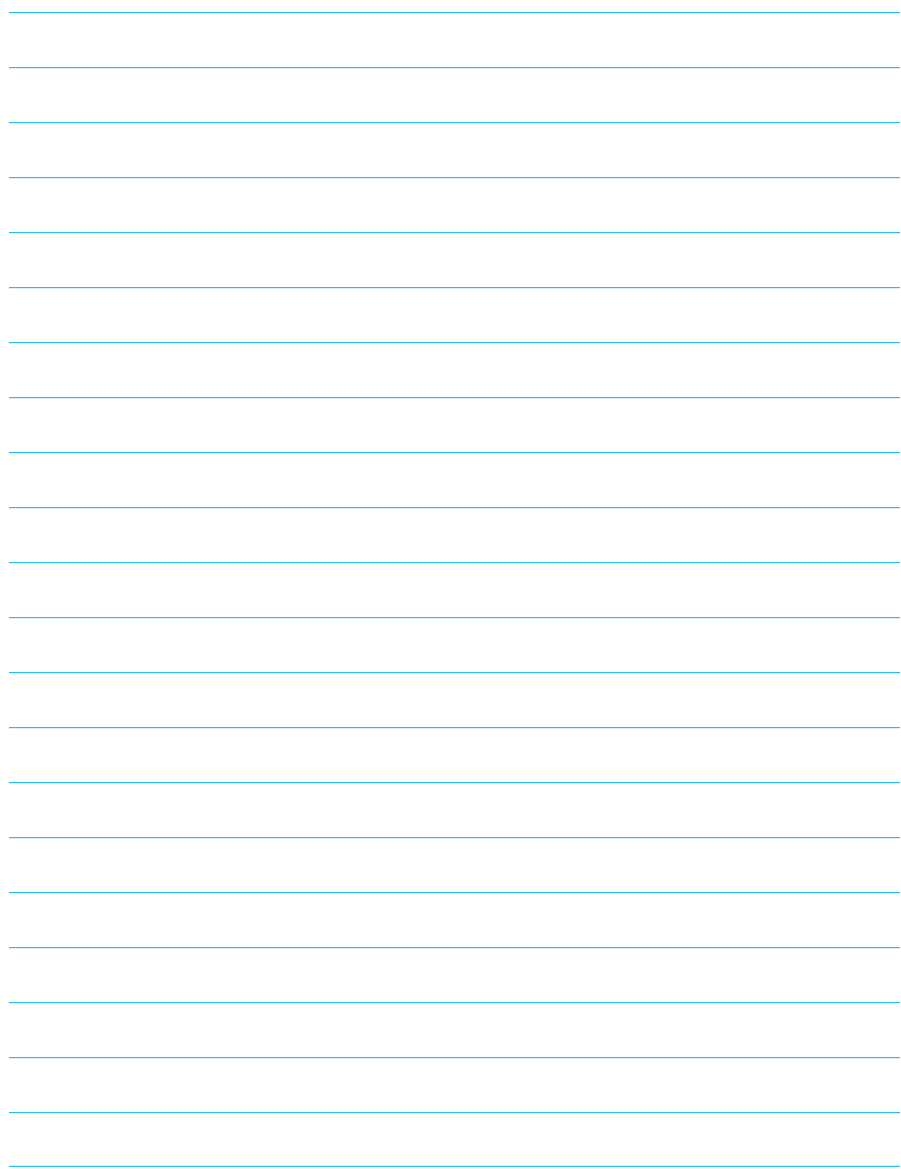
## ARTICLE 24

Children have the right to good quality health care, to clean water, nutritious food, and a clean environment, so that they will stay healthy. Rich countries should help poorer countries achieve this.



Children who are looked after by their local authority, rather than their parents, should have their situation reviewed regularly.

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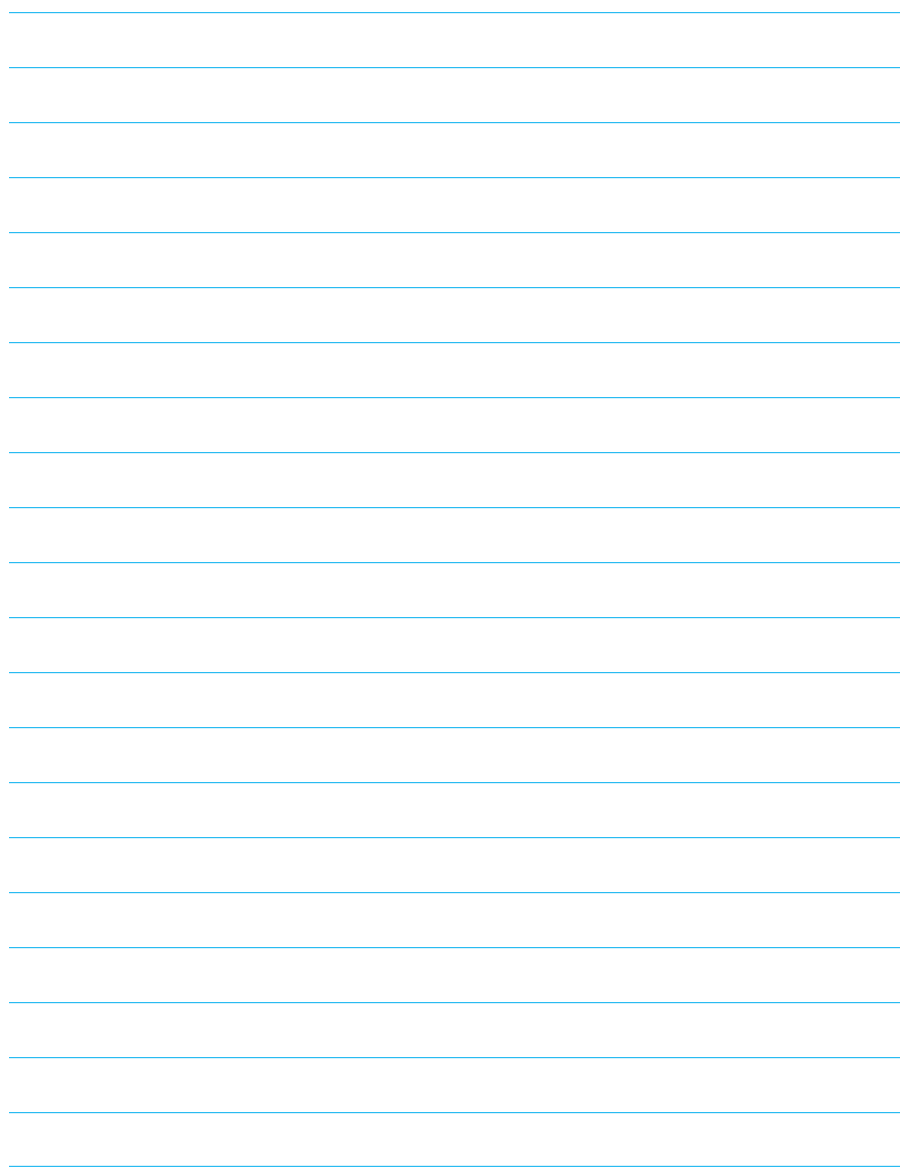
## ARTICLE 26

The Government should provide extra money for the children of families in need.

ARTICLE 27  
Children have a right to a standard of living that is good enough to meet their physical and mental needs. The Government should help families who cannot afford to provide this.

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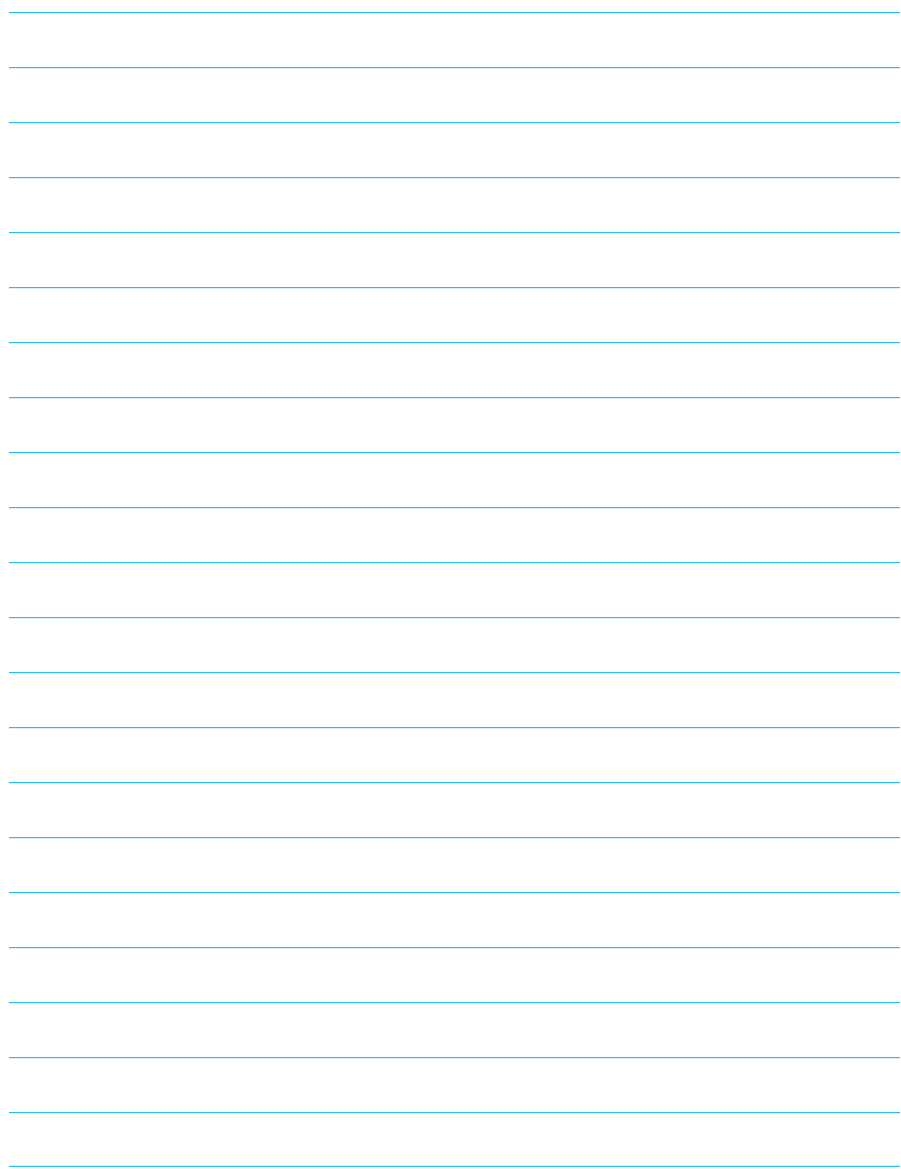
ARTICLE 29

Education should develop each child's personality and talents to the full. It should encourage children to respect their parents, and their own and other cultures.

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This image shows a full page of blank, lined paper. It features approximately 20 horizontal blue lines spaced evenly across the page, typical of standard notebook paper. The lines are thin and light blue, set against a plain white background. There is no handwriting or other markings on the page.



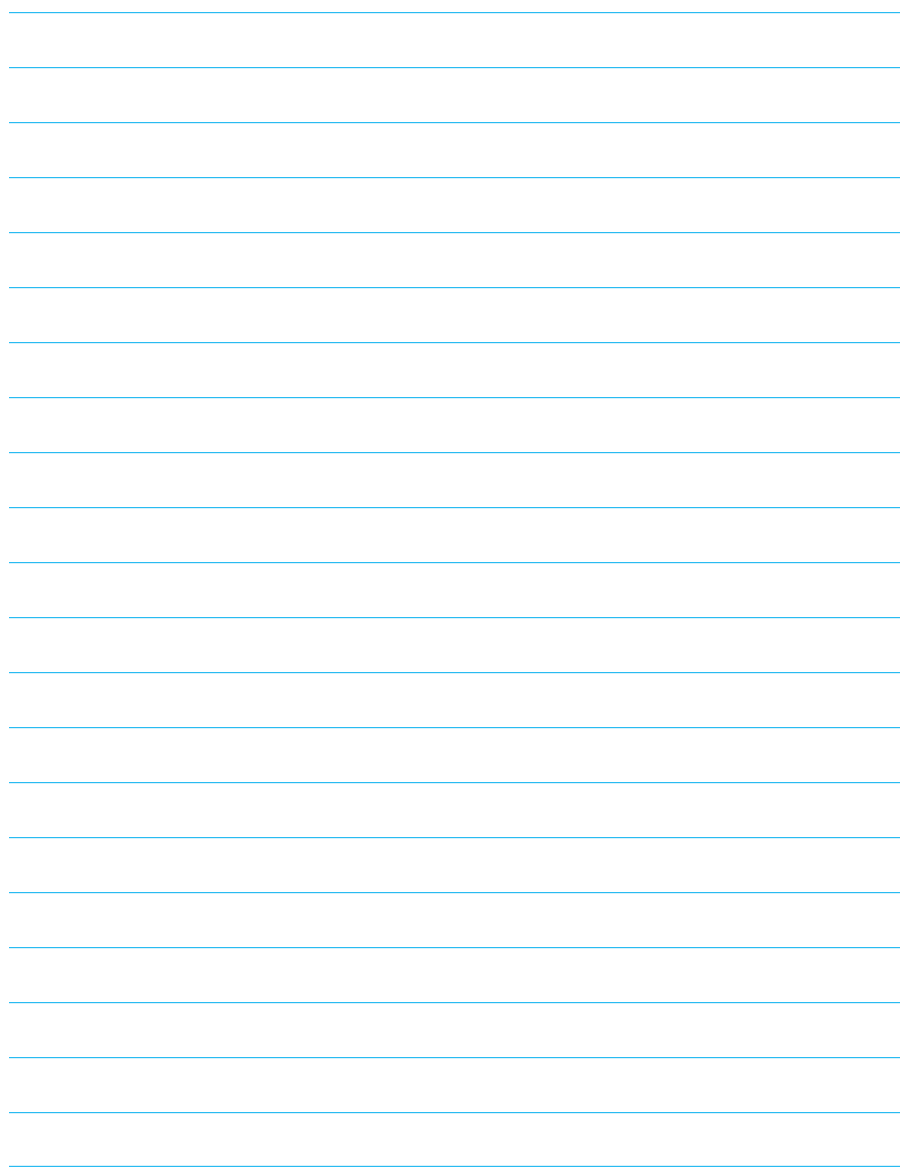




ARTICLE 31  
All children have a right to relax and play,  
and to join in a wide range of activities.

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## ARTICLE 32

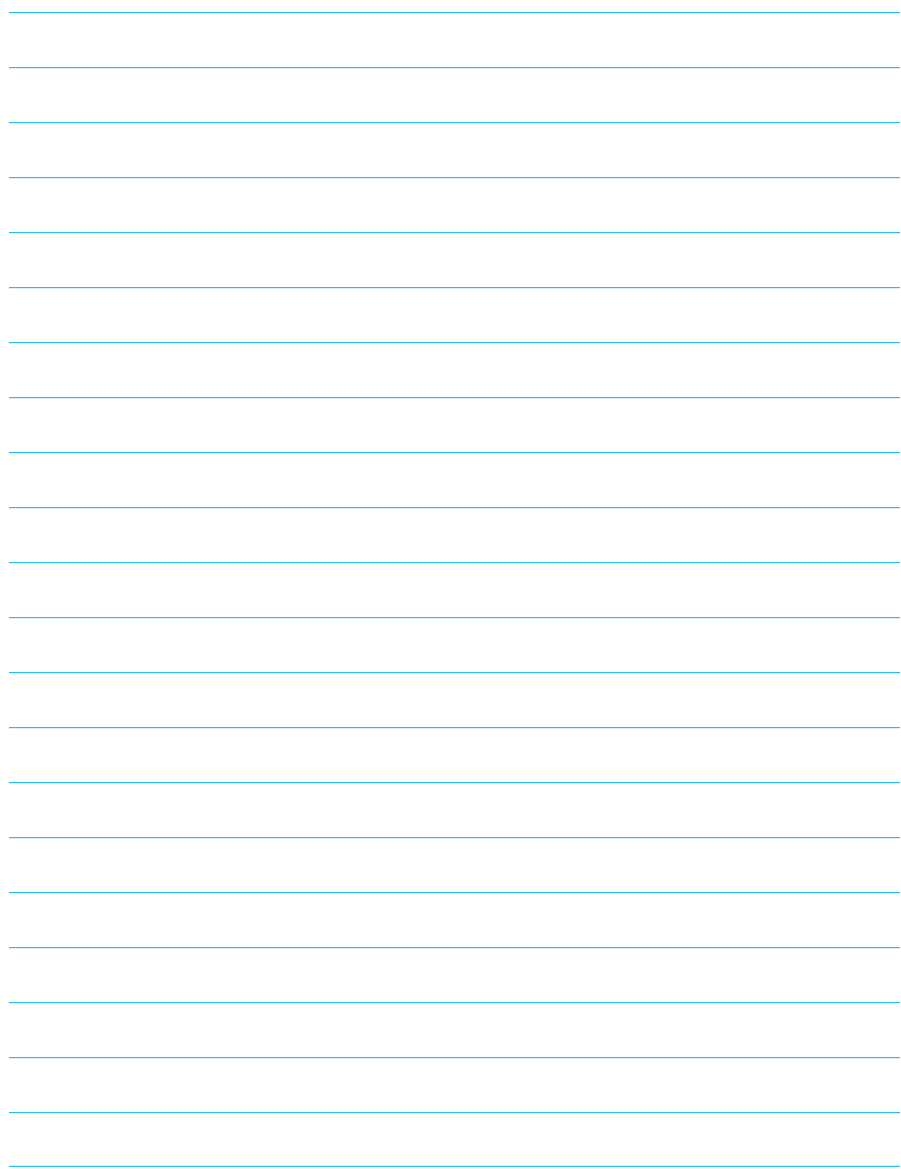
The Government should protect children from work that is dangerous, or might harm their health or their education.



ARTICLE 33  
The Government should provide ways  
of protecting children from dangerous drugs.

ARTICLE 33  
The Government should provide ways  
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[illegible]

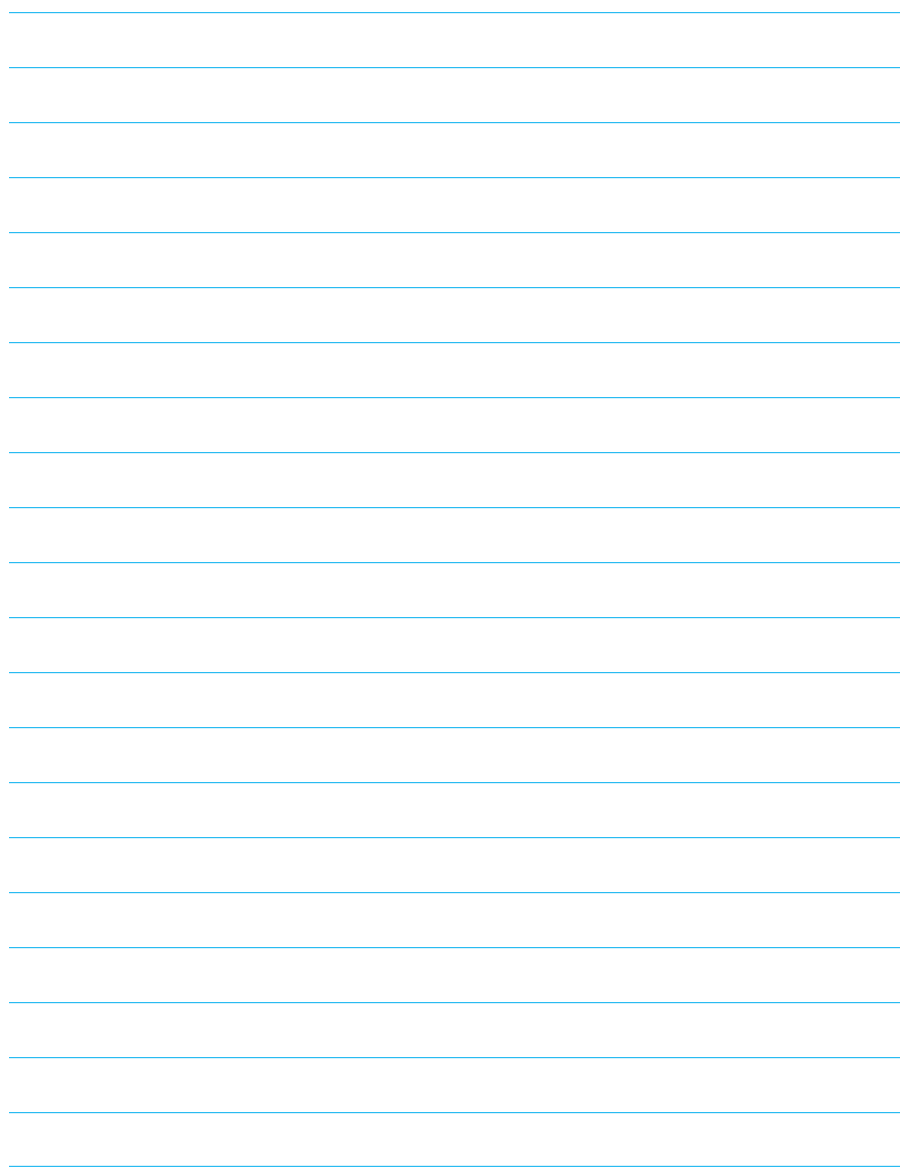
## ARTICLE 34

The Government should protect children from sexual abuse.

ARTICLE 35  
The Government should make sure that children are not abducted or sold.

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[illegible]





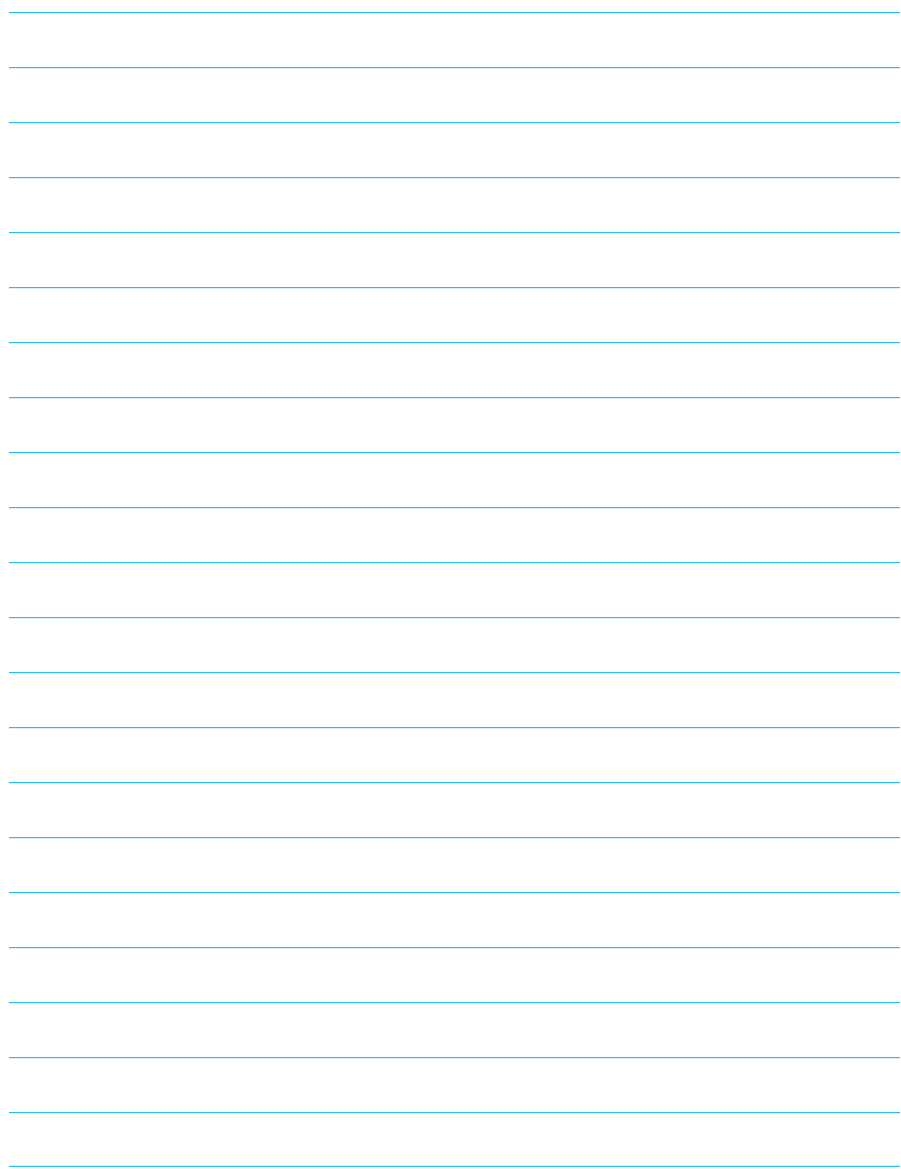
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## ARTICLE 36



Children who break the law should not be treated cruelly. They should not be put in prison with adults and should be able to keep in contact with their families.

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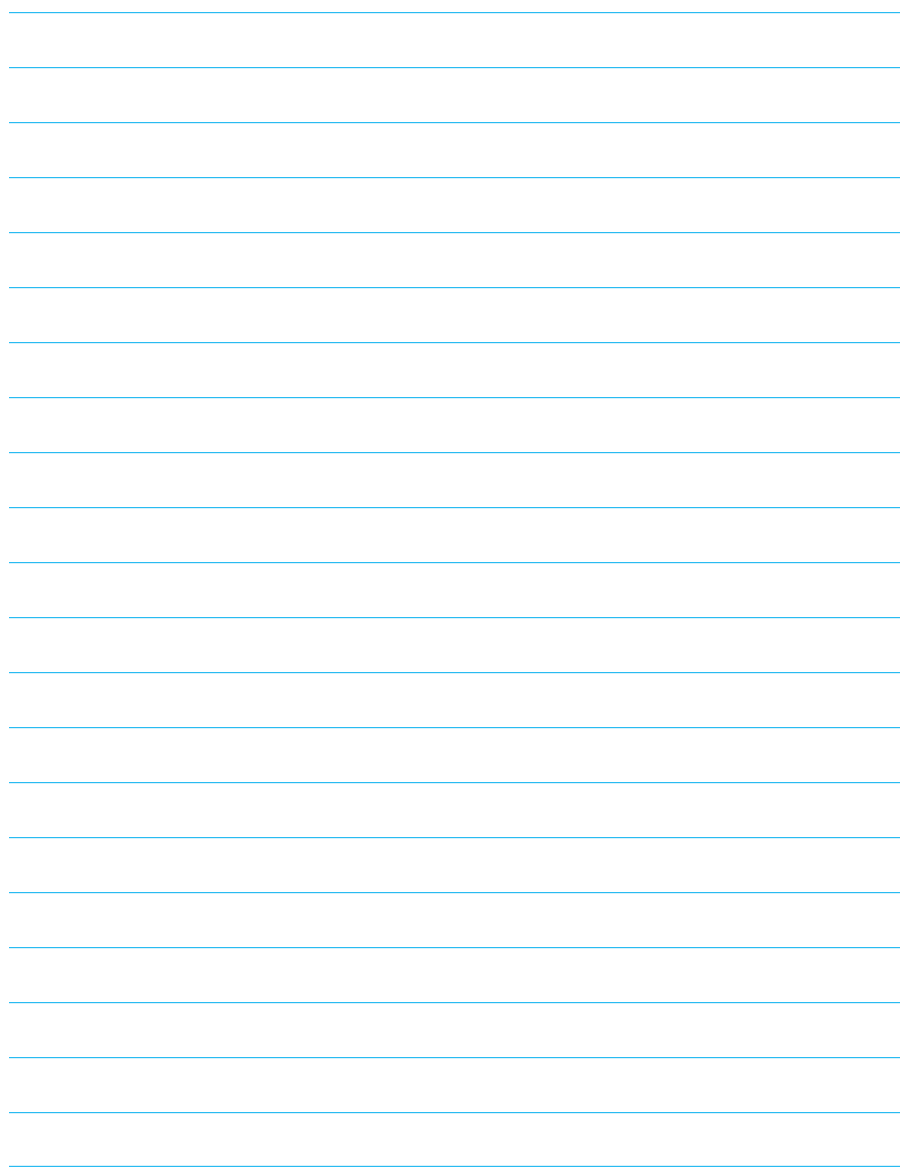
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## ARTICLE 38

Governments should not allow children under 16 to join the army.

Children who have been neglected or abused should receive special help to restore their self-respect.

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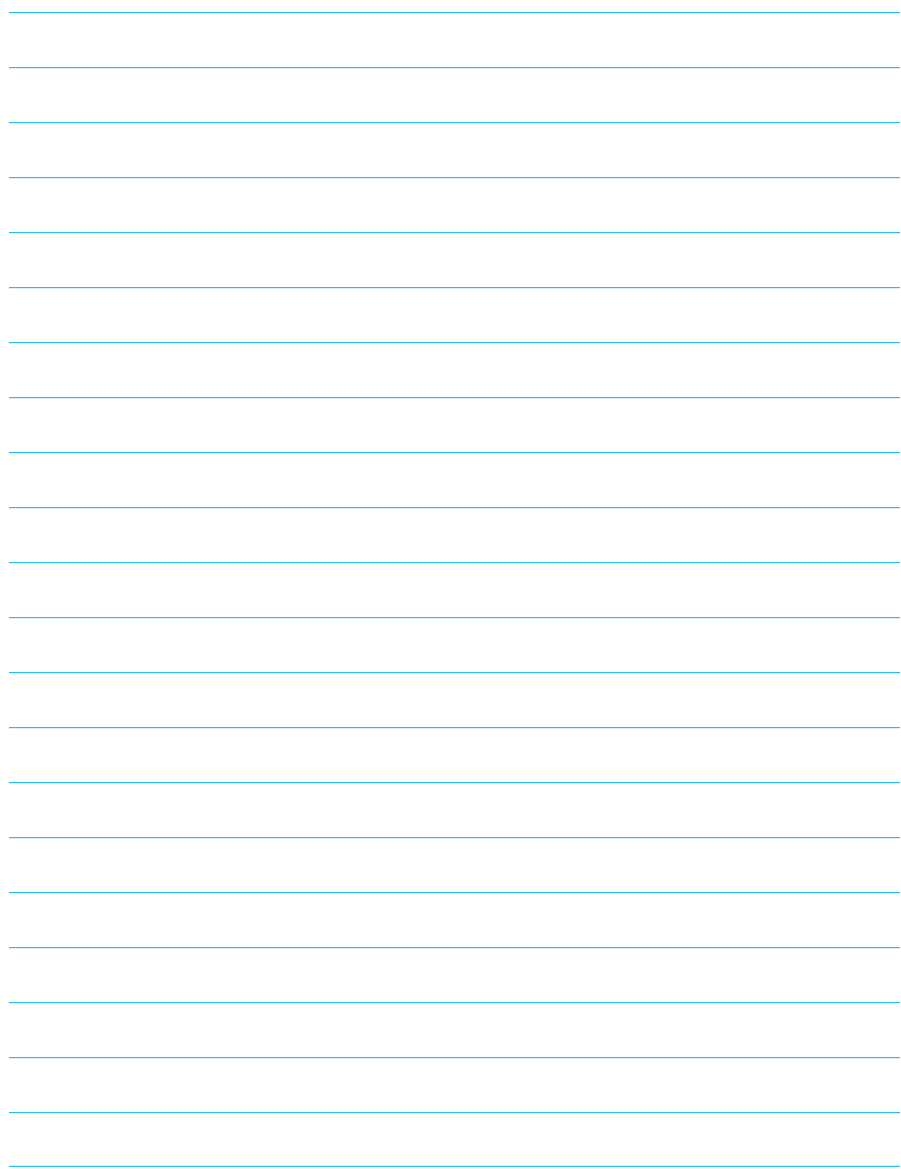




ARTICLE 41

If the laws of a particular country protect children better than the articles of the Convention, then those laws should stay.

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[illegible]

The Government should make the Convention known to parents and children.

**WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY?**

Children's rights are a special case because many of the rights laid down in the Convention on the Rights of the Child have to be provided by adults or the state.

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However, the Convention also refers to the responsibilities of children, in particular to respect the rights of others, especially their parents (Article 29).



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PLAN  
INTERNATIONAL