

In the Name of God

**Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished members of the committee**

May I start by extending our deep appreciation and thanks to you and other members of the panel for the opportunity given to the members of the Iranian delegation to present a report on the latest status of children in the Islamic Republic of Iran. Our government attaches utmost importance to this convention and I hope that the outcomes of this meeting will contribute to the advancement of the goals and objectives enshrined in the convention. Islamic Republic of Iran with a population of 67 million has the highest percentage of young people 20 million of whom are under 15 years of age. This calls for extensive planning by the relevant Iranian authorities to promote the status of this immense and precious pool of young talents.

Mr. Chairman,

Based on the obligations provided for in article 44 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran in March 2001 formed a national committee and invited the representatives of the relevant Iranian organs to join it. The National Committee informed its members of the concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child regarding the Initial Report of the Islamic Republic of Iran (contained in document CRC/C/5/Add.123). In their regular meetings, the members of this committee responded to questions on the progress made with regard to issues related to children, which were incorporated in the periodic report.

I now present a general overview of my country's report which the members of our delegation stand ready to respond any question which might be raised by the distinguished members of the Committee.

Section one: general principles:

This sections refers to the measures taken to promote the education of girls, narrow the gender gap, provide legal support for children born out of wedlock, revise or amend certain laws related to children, expand pre-school education, ensure pre and post natal support, enhance children's participation in the decision-making process and respect their opinions.

Based on the articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child the Ministry of Education has focused its activities mostly on the following two areas:

- 1- Increasing the educational coverage of school-aged children and young adults with priority being given to rural and disadvantaged regions and reducing the educational gap between urban and rural areas,
- 2- Promoting the education of girls especially in rural areas narrowing the educational gap between girls and boys by taking necessary steps to keep girls in schools at different levels.

Beside, the Ministry of Education has paid special attention to cultivation of the talents of the gifted students who in recent years have scored more than 250 various medals in International Scientific Olympiads.

To promote the participation of children in the decision making process and ensure respect for their opinion, several initiatives have been launched in our country including school mayors, student's councils, student parliament, national student's organization and Islamic Students Union.

Section two: civil rights and liberties:

Prohibition of torture or any other type of cruel or degrading treatment and punishment, access to information, freedom of assembly and association for children, adoption of various measures to fight against child abuse, raise awareness among teachers and parents of the rights of the child, organizing training courses and workshops on the rights of the child and implementation of joint projects with UNICEF on dissemination of information are included in this section.

Section three: family environment and alternative care:

This section deals with the activities of the Parents and Teachers Associations and the State Welfare Organization on parent awareness and guidance and also the measures taken by this organization with regard to children deprived of family environment.

Section four:

This section refers to activities, studies and surveys carried out by the Ministry of Health and Medical Training and the State Welfare Organization on issues related to the health and protection of children including the commissioning of hotlines, establishment of safe shelters for street children, creation of cultural and art centers for training children

vulnerable to delinquency and allocation of such funds by the State Planning and Management Organization.

The Ministry of Health and Medical Training is responsible for planning and implementing necessary measures on child care, immunization, and control of special common childhood diseases. Beside, given the importance of healthy nutrition for the child, the Ministry is also involved in making and implementing necessary policies to control malnutrition and promote breastfeeding. It is worth mentioning that the access to health and sanitary services for rural and urban areas has grown respectively to over 87% and 100%.

Section 5: Educational, leisure and cultural activities:

In its general plans, the government has envisaged the necessary grounds for equal access of children all over the country to educational opportunities and facilities. At present there are efforts under way by the Ministry of Education to include the contents of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in school textbooks in keeping with the development of the society.

Section six: special protective measures:

This section details the activities of the government organs and organizations responsible for the affairs of children such as prevention and control of drug addiction, elimination of violence against girls and women, launching a police hotline, dealing with issue of street children, protection and rehabilitation of children vulnerable to acute social harms, services rendered to refugee children, coping with juvenile delinquency, accession to Worst Forms of Child Labor Convention (No. 182) as well as the status of the children of minority groups.

To introduce new methods of arbitration on cases related to children the comprehensive law on juvenile delinquency has been revised under the instruction of the Head of the Judiciary and the draft bill of the new law has been submitted to the parliament for approval. In addition, the juvenile courts are substantially revising their proceedings on cases related to children and young adults. In this context, they are trying to substitute educational sanctions for criminal sanctions and address the problems of growth and consistency of the child with the society by benefiting from the views of psychologists, social workers and experts of child related issues. On the other hand several joint workshops with UNICEF have been held so far to promote the knowledge of judges who deal with child related cases. In the same context we can mention about the establishment of offices for protection of the rights of women and

children in the Judiciary as well as allocation of parts of provisions of the law on IT related crimes, to child pornography.

Religious minorities are allowed to appoint their own principals to administer their schools and organize courses in their own centers to teach their religious intuitions and ethnic languages and also to have their own publications.

Furthermore the Iranian Foreign Ministry and the UNICEF Office in Tehran supported the establishment of the national authority for the rights of the child which was initiated jointly in a project designed to uphold the Convention of the Rights of the Child. Consequently a working group consisting of the relevant experts was established. On the other hand the UNESCO Democracy, Peace and Human Rights Seat has been designated to implement a research project and work out a mechanism for work in this filed benefiting from the results of such research. The working group convinced of the need to establish a specialized body for strategic planning and coordination of activities to uphold the rights of the child in various aspects, has prepared a draft law on the establishment of the national authority for the rights of the child which will be submitted very soon to the relevant authority for approval.

In conclusion, sharing our deep sympathy with the victims and specially the children affected by the Tsunami, I take this opportunity to touch briefly upon the measures taken after the earthquake in Bam in our country.

This devastation calamity more than a year ago, claimed lives of over 27000 people and left thousands of others injured many of whom are children. Immediately after the calamity striking our country the relevant Iranian authorities mobilized all the available means in the affected area and the entire country to help the victims. We also enjoy the generous humanitarian support of the International community which helped alleviate considerably the suffering of the survivors of this disaster. I avail myself of this opportunity to express our sincere appreciations and gratitude to the members of the International community, the International Specialized Organizations and particularly the UNICEF Office in Tehran for their sympathy and contribution.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.