

STATEMENT

BY PROF. DR. HAMIT HANCI

**CHAIR OF THE FORENSIC SCIENCE DEPARTMENT
FACULTY OF MEDICINE
ANKARA UNIVERSITY**

HEAD OF DELEGATION

**AT THE MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD
REGARDING THE CONSIDERATION OF THE INITIAL COUNTRY REPORT OF
TURKEY ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OPTIONAL PROTOCOL TO
THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD ON THE SALE OF
CHILDREN, CHILD PROSTITUTION AND CHILD PORNOGRAPHY**

Geneva, 17 May 2006

Experts specialised in this field nationwide have also contributed to the country report by providing their knowledge and opinion through a closed internet group set up by the General Directorate of Social Services and Child Protection.

The rights of the child in our country have preceded over many other issues of negotiation in the European Union harmonization process. In this regard, during its EU accession process, Turkey has introduced legislative amendments in the field of the rights of the child pursuant to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

**Mr. President,
Distinguished Committee Members,**

The most significant legislative amendments have been introduced to the Turkish Penal Code and the Penal Procedural Law which have been re-codified. In this framework, the definition of the child has been incorporated for the first time in the Penal Code, according to which every individual who has not completed the age of 18, has been defined as a child in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The other significant amendment to the Turkish Penal Code is the clear definition of sexual abuse and its articulation as a separate crime. Furthermore, penalties envisaged for sexual crimes against the children have been aggravated. Immaterial damages, as well as material damages, suffered by the victims have been explicitly recognised and entailed punishments by the law.

Encouraging the child to prostitution, facilitating, procuring for and mediating child prostitution, giving materials containing obscene images, writings or words, displaying and reading them and having them read or heard its content, and even possessing them have been defined in detail as a crime in the new Turkish Penal Code.

With the new Turkish Penal Code, the treatment of victims of prostitution has been granted a state guarantee.

Following the signing of the "Additional Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children" to the "UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime" by Turkey on 26 February 2003 and its subsequent entry into force on 18 March 2003, human trafficking

Children who are victims of crimes defined in the Optional Protocol have also been granted protection under the Draft Witness Protection Law.

**Mr. President,
Distinguished Committee Members,**

With the Law on Social Security, all children have been granted health care guarantee regardless of affiliation with any social security institution.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for national coordination for the issues related to Trafficking in Human Beings in Turkey. A "National Task Force in the Fight Against Human Trafficking" was established in 2002. This Task Force, in 2003, prepared a "National Action Plan on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings" which was approved by the Prime Ministry. Most of the objectives of the National Action Plan have already been achieved. In addition Turkey cooperates effectively with the International Migration Organization and the European Union in combating human trafficking. This cooperation covers areas such as assisting the trafficked victims, strengthening institutional capacities and training of security forces.

In addition to the training on the implementation of the newly enacted legislation for all relevant professional groups, training for children within the framework of the academic curriculum of the Ministry of National Education is also currently underway. There is a plan to compile and distribute all relevant legislation on the rights of the child in order to increase the level of public sensitivity and awareness on the issue. This project is underway in collaboration with UNICEF and with the participation of the relevant institutions in Turkey.

In Turkey, every national body allocates resources from its own budget to be used for activities related to the rights of the child.

Many national and international conferences, symposiums, panels and similar events pertaining to the rights of the child are organized in Turkey. The International Congress on the Rights of the Child is planned to be held in Turkey in November 2006, with the participation of representatives from all relevant specialized fields. The General Directorate of Social Services and Child Protection Agency is in charge of coordinating the organization of this event. Exchange of information and experiences on international and national policies with regard to children is aimed with this Congress.