

Pledge by Armenia

Acceded to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on 23 June 1993

Ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict on 30 September 2005

Ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children child prostitution and child pornography on 30 June 2005



Pledges

1. Secondary education for juvenile offenders in penitentiary institutions will be organized
2. Draft a national Action plan to end violence against children.
3. Administrative data related to VAC (violence against children) will be developed in 2019-2021
4. In 2019 necessary measures for the ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on Protection of Children Against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (“The Lanzarote Convention”) will be taken
5. “Provision of Child Day-Care Services” Action Plan
6. Increased access to inclusive education for the children with disabilities
7. Taking measures to decrease the number of sex-selective abortions

Actions to be taken by the Republic of Armenia for the promotion, protection and realization of the rights of the child in the celebration of the 30th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child

1. *Secondary education for juvenile offenders in penitentiary institutions* will be organized for ensuring the fundamental right to education for children in contact with law, and their right to access to justice. For the implementation of the program from September 2019 a curriculum will be developed and a legal framework and funding from state will be provided.

“Legal education and rehabilitation programs implementation centre” NCSO of the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Armenia, Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of the Republic of Armenia will implement the program.

2. To ensure Sustainable Development Goal 16, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable institutions at all levels, in 2019-2021 the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Armenia,

Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of the Republic of Armenia, Ministry of Labor and Social affairs of the Republic of Armenia, Police of the Republic of Armenia will *draft a national Action plan to end violence against children*. Inter-agency council on access of justice will promote the implementation of the Action Plan, which will be included in the National Human Rights Strategy for the period of 2019-2021.

3. *Administrative data related to VAC (violence against children) will be developed* in 2019-2021 by the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Armenia, Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and sport of the Republic of Armenia, Ministry of Labor and Social affairs of the Republic of Armenia, Police of the Republic of Armenia, Statistical Committee of the Republic of Armenia. Indicators will be worked out and legal amendments will be prepared for the revision of administrative data registry system and software will be developed to provide data entry.

4. In 2019 *necessary measures for the ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on Protection of Children Against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse ("The Lanzarote Convention")* will be taken for the prevention of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, for the protection of children subjected to sexual exploitation and sexual abuse and for the prosecution of criminals. The internal ratification process will be ensured. The measures will be taken by the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Armenia

5. "Provision of Child Day-Care Services" Action Plan

Conditioned by and aimed at the fulfillment of the obligations undertaken by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the revised European Social Charter and other international documents of the Republic of Armenia, namely to ensure the right of the child to live and be brought up in a family, to implement the precondition 5.3 of the EU Budget Support Agreement "On Support to Human Rights Protection in Armenia", as well as by the need to develop alternative care services for children in difficult life situation, to improve their quality and accessibility, "Provision of Child Day-Care Services" Action plan is planned to be implemented. The aims of the Action plan are the realization of the right of the child to live in a family, improvement and development of the quality of alternative services for children, as well as expanding the scope of services provided by the respective non-governmental organizations. As a result, the organization of the care of children in a difficult life situation in a family will be ensured and their life quality will be improved. The action will also facilitate their integration into the society, as well as prevent children from entering the institutions. A large cooperation framework between the state and non-governmental organizations will be ensured, effective and transparent mechanisms will be created in the process of solving the existing problems.

The action envisages delegation of services to NGOs in Yerevan and 10 provinces of the Republic of Armenia. The process of delegation will be held in a competitive manner based on the results of needs assessment and the mapping of social services. The measurable result of the action is the provision of

assistance to at least 40% of the beneficiaries as envisaged in the framework of implementation of the precondition 5.3 of the EU budget Support Agreement “On Support to Human Rights Protection in Armenia”.

The number of children cared for in full-time care institutions under RA Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs is about 800. According to the analyses of the number of persons (by provinces) registered in Information System for the Registration of Persons with Disabilities “Pyunik”, as of December 2018, 8193 children with disabilities are registered in the Republic of Armenia. The highest number of registered children with disabilities is in the Gegharkunik province - 2392 children, and in Aragatsotn province - 904 children.

Based on the existing statistics and assessed needs for each region, it is envisaged to delegate appropriate services for 40% of children with disabilities to non-governmental organizations. The initiative will be implemented by the financial means occurring from the reorganization of full-time children’s care boarding institutions (“Vanadzor orphanage”, Children care and protection boarding institutions of Byureghavan, Dilijan, Gyumri (N 1 and N 2).

The policy is aimed at ensuring the right of the child to live in a family. Improving the legislation in the field and implementing a number of measures is directed to the above-mentioned policy and is aimed at returning children from the institutions to their families. Alternative services will be created for children and their families, alternative opportunities will be provided to the biological families of residents of reorganized institutions and socially vulnerable families who are in need of an urgent social support.

By the adoption of the draft a large cooperation framework between the state and non-governmental organizations will be ensured, effective and transparent mechanisms will be created in the process of solving the existing problems. As a result, the organization of care of children in a difficult life situation in a family will be ensured, their quality of life will be improved, the action will facilitate their integration into the society, as well as will prevent children from entering the institutions.

The action “Provision of child day-care services” has been Included in the 2019-2022 Medium Term Expenditure Programme as a new initiative.

For the implementation of the above mentioned action the financial means of children's full-time boarding schools are envisaged. The draft document on dissolving the 4 boarding schools for children has been developed and disseminated among the stakeholder institutions. A large cooperation framework between the state and non-governmental organizations will be ensured, effective and transparent

mechanisms will be created in the process of solving the existing problems. The impact of this action will be assessed by ratio of a number of children in difficult life situation to a number of children who have received social-psychological rehabilitation services. Registered number of children in difficult life situation is 7956, about 1500 children receive services as at 2019. The deadline for the implementation of the Action plan is 2022 and will be implemented by RA Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, international and partner organizations.

6. Increased access to inclusive education for the children with disabilities

The basis of inclusive education in Armenia has been launched since 1999, when the Law "On Education" of the Republic of Armenia confirmed the right to education for all children, including those with disabilities, to study in general education schools. According to the Point 6 of the Article 6 of the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On Education", "the state creates the necessary means for persons in need of special conditions for education to provide their education and social integrity." At the same time, the law ensured that the education of children in need of special education conditions at a general level can be implemented both in general education and in special schools under special programs depending on parents' choices.

The inclusive educational program was launched in Armenia in 2001 in order to implement the above mentioned provisions of the law. The system of inclusive education was functioning in parallel with the special secondary schools. A large number of non-governmental and international organizations support the introduction and expansion of an inclusive educational program. At the first stage of introduction of inclusive education, particular secondary schools received the "inclusive" status and additional funding to meet the special needs of students.

The policy of the implementation of universal inclusive education system follows the two main strategies:

- 1) improving the special education system: special schools reorganized into the support services for children,
- 2) making the education system flexible and student-oriented, in order to meet specific needs of each child.

General education schools are provided with additional teaching assistant positions and funding. As a result of the implementation of the law, children with special education needs will receive pedagogical and psychological support in 3 levels:

- in general education schools,
- in regional pedagogical and psychological support centers,

- in republican pedagogical and psychological support centers.

The transition to universal inclusive education is carried out in stages from region to region. At 2017-2018 academic year inclusive education has been implemented in 201 secondary schools, where 6300 children in need of special education conditions were included. The financing of Armenian general education schools is based on the number of students. The children in need of special conditions for education receive an increased amount. This mechanism serves as an additional intensive for schools to be interested in accepting children with special needs.

One of the main obstacles to the effective implementation of universal inclusive education system is the lack of teachers' skills to work in an inclusive classroom. Measures are being undertaken to overcome this obstacle. Particularly, this skills gap is attempted to be filled through appropriate training courses such as teachers training and retraining programs.

Trainings on inclusive education, tools for assessing children and providing pedagogical and psychological services were implemented for secondary school teachers, teachers' assistants and specialists of regional support centers in regions where universal inclusive education was provided.

Currently, in universities which provide teachers' specializations, special courses for inclusive education are being developed.

The majority of the existing school buildings were mostly built during the Soviet Union period and they are not adequately designed and equipped for children with disabilities.

At present, universal design requirements are prerequisite for new and renovated school buildings.

In 2014 the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia made amendments in the Law "On General Education" of RA, according to which the system of universal inclusive education will be fully implemented until August 1st, 2025.

Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of RA, the Regional Government units are currently leading universal inclusive education implementation. International organizations play a significant role as well.

Within "Toward Social Inclusion of Vulnerable Children: Expanding Alternative Care, Family Support and Inclusive Education Services as part of Child Care Reform" project UNICEF ensured revision of the policy framework, capacity building of all teachers, school administrators, specialists of multi-disciplinary teams in Syunik, Lori and Tavush regions, thus ensuring a smooth launch of the government action plan for making general education schools inclusive by 2025.

Within the USAID-funded grant program "Strengthening Inclusive Education System in Armenia" it is envisaged to undertake relevant adjustments prioritizing those schools where children move from the closed special schools. This program provides for the reconstruction of approximately 100 schools.

7. Taking measures to decrease the number of sex-selective abortions

The tendencies of birth rates according to sex verify that since 2000 the problem of selective abortions has increased. Various multi-level program measures have been carried out jointly with international and local public organizations for the prevention of sex-selective abortion. In 2016 amendments were made in Article 10 of the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On human reproductive health and reproductive rights", according to which the banning of sex-selective abortion has been ensured by law. Additional regulatory amendments and mechanisms for reducing abortion have also been defined by law. One of the mechanisms is that women are given a mandatory 3-day period for making a final decision for abortion.

After the adoption of the new law, the government of the Republic of Armenia adopted N 180 – N decision of February 23, 2017 "On approving the procedure and conditions of abortion and the annulment of the Government Decree No 1116-N of August 5, 2004", by which the medical and social guidelines for abortion have been clarified. As a result of the carried out complex measures some positive trends have been identified in the process of overcoming the problem of sex-selective abortions.

The measures implemented within the framework of "Prevention of sex-selective abortion 2015-2017 program" developed with the support of United Nations Population Fund, RA minister of Health and RA minister of Labour and Social affairs, are still continuous and large-scale works of propaganda inclined to public awareness are carried out, with the cooperation of state bodies, international organizations, including UN Population fund, "International center for human development", "Save the children", "World vision" and other local public and community organizations.