

Pledge by Montenegro

Succeeded to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on 23 October 2006

Succeeded to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict on 2 May 2007

Succeeded to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children child prostitution and child pornography on 23 October 2006

Ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure on 24 September 2013



Pledge

1. The sustained promotion, protection and realization of the rights of the child with the special focus on the most vulnerable, and to reduce the number of children in large-scale institutional care by 30 % by the end of 2023.
2. The 30th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child will be celebrated at the highest level, and the President of Montenegro will host children, the Golden Advisors of the Institution for Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms.

30th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child Template for States parties' commitments and initiatives

1) In light of the commitments we have made under the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols, as applicable, we have undertaken the following to highlight our commitment to the promotion, protection and realization of the rights of the child in celebration of the 30th anniversary of the Convention:

- **What?** *(Please provide one specific and measurable action that will be taken to implement the Convention, e.g. birth registration for all children; increased access of children with disabilities to inclusive education; deinstitutionalization of all children under the age of XX.)*

Over the last decade, the Government of Montenegro, under the leadership of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, with the support of the European Union and UNICEF,

implemented comprehensive social and child protection system reform, focused on supporting vulnerable children and families to prevent parent-child separation and establish family support services and alternatives to institutionalization, with a predominant focus on the expansion of foster care as the most preferable form of alternative care for children without parental care. In 2013 Montenegro legally prohibited placement of children under three in large scale institutions and engaged in building institutional capacities for progressive prevention of family separation and deinstitutionalization. In parallel to the system reform a massive awareness raising campaign called [«Every Child Needs a Family»](#), was implemented. As a result of all these efforts, the number of children in institutional care decreased by 58% in the period 2010-2018 and the number of children aged under three, who are particularly negatively affected by institutional care is almost completely eradicated. At present, there are 364 children in foster care in the country, out of which number 315 children in kinship care and 49 children in non-kinship care, which is five fold increase comparing since 2010.

On this special occasion of celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Montenegro would like to highlight our commitment to the sustained promotion, protection and realization of the rights of the child with the special focus on the most vulnerable and express readiness to reduce the number of children in large scale institutional care for 30 % by end 2023.

- **Why?** *(Please provide the rationale behind the action to be taken, e.g. XX of children are not registered at birth; the majority of children with disabilities do not attend mainstream schools; XX of children currently live in alternative care institutions.)*

Montenegro is aware that children who are growing up in institutions are more likely to suffer specific delays in physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development. Despite the best efforts of dedicated and caring staff, it has been proven that children who grow up in institutions do not have equal chances for growth and development like other children. Every child needs permanent contact and attachment with a parent or a close person who care for the child to obtain optimal growth and development. Given their limited capacities and resources, institutions are unable to offer this required level of care.

- **How?** *(Please provide information on the steps envisaged, and resources allocated, to complete this action, such as through a national policy, strategy, programme or activities, e.g. implement a national birth registration programme; adopt a national policy on inclusive education; establish a family-based foster care system for children who cannot stay with their families. This could also include information on how the impact of this action will be assessed.)*

Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare of Montenegro has adopted a policy and legal framework that emphasizes the importance of supporting vulnerable parents and children and preventing parent-child separation. Such measures have stopped many children from being placed in the large-scale residential institutions that harm their development and constrain their potential. The Government of Montenegro has adopted the Strategy on

Realization of Child Right for the period 2019-2023 with budgeted Action Plan, which envisages further development of family support services (i.e. family outreach worker, daily care for children, counselling services, supported living, etc.), as well as expansion fostering service with focus on urgent and specialized foster care.

- **When?** *(Please provide a deadline within the next 5 years for completing this action, e.g. by 2022.)*

By end 2023.

- **Who?** *(Please provide the name of the Government ministry or agency who will take the lead in implementing and monitoring this action, as well as implementing partners including civil society and children's organizations, e.g. Ministry of Social Affairs or Prime Minister's Office in collaboration with XX civil society organizations.)*

Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare in cooperation with Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Institute for Social and Child Protection, Ministry of Finance, civil society organizations, UNICEF and local communities.

- 2) We have made the following plans to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Convention:**
(Please provide information, including dates and venues, on any events or activities planned by the State party to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Convention.)

30th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child will be celebrated at the highest level, and the President of Montenegro will host children, the Golden Advisors of the Institution for Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms. Children and relevant stakeholders will participate in the event, which will be organized with UNICEF support.

List of Activities for the Occasion of Celebration of the 30th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child

Montenegro is fully devoted to protection and promotion of the rights of the child. This is one of the main priorities in the work of our Government. We cooperate with all relevant international organizations, and NGO in order to improve life of every child in our country, particularly the most vulnerable and provide better future for them.

Montenegro aligned to the initiative Voluntary Global Pledge – For Every Child Every Right in September 2019, in order to recommit to the principles enshrined in the Convention.

In the context of the 30th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child Montenegro organized numerous activities during this year:

- Presentation of the Strategy for Child Rights in Montenegro 2019-2023 in cooperation with UNICEF in March 2019. Children and young people had active involvement and largely contributed to the development of the Strategy;

- Joining to regional initiative “Equitable Access Justice for Children”, in order to empower children and families. This is joint initiative of the Ministry of Justice, Delegation of EU, Government of the Kingdom of Norway and UNICEF launched in April 2019;
- Promotion of the Immunization Week – celebrated last week of April;
- Exhibition “My Values and Virtues” as the part of the programme for the development of socio-emotional skills of children, May;
- Presentation of the key findings of the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) data in cooperation with UNICEF, May;
- Regional Conference on the Early Childhood Development, in cooperation with UNICEF and international scientist, October 2019;
- International Day of children – to be marked in cooperation with the President, as the children will symbolically take over their office in Cetinje, 20 November 2019.