**REPLIES OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY TO THE QUESTINNAIRE PREPARED BY THE UNITED NATIONS SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON THE SALE OF CHILDREN, CHILD PROSTITUTION AND CHILD PORNOGRAPHY**

**Reply to the Question 1:**

In 2001, with a view to improving police services for minors, Children’s Offices were established in all 81 provinces, attached to Security Directorates, in keeping with the applicable legislation, primarily the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. All actions relating to child victims, children in need of protection or unaccompanied children are carried out by special staff trained in these fields.

Pursuant to the Law on the Protection of Children, which came into force in 2005, all measures regarding the protection of children under risk, in need of protection or driven into crime; and the securing of their rights and well-being are taken under the coordination of the relevant institutions.

A Circular was issued on 11 November 2014 (no. 2014/33) on this subject, which has been annexed to the present document.

It has been laid down in Article 1 of the Law on the Duties and Powers of the Police that:

“The police force protects public law and order, personal security and inviolability of domicile. It ensures that the life, property and sexual integrity of the people are protected and peace is secured. It helps those who ask for, and who are in need, such as children, the disabled or incapable; and carries out the duties imposed by laws and ordinances”

Accordingly, the police have especially recognized the protection of family life, of those in need of protection such as the disabled, incapable and children, as a prior duty.

With a view to mitigating the impact of trauma caused to the child by the sexual abuse he/she went through, and to avoid more damage during the investigation stage, “Child Monitoring Centers” have been established, attached to the Ministry of Health, composed of public prosecutors, lawyers, psychologists, social service experts and pedagogues. The Centers, which are operational in 19 provinces, are in charge of recording the accounts of children on the sexual abuse incident they have faced, and carrying out rehabilitation and relevant activities where necessary.

On 6 February 2014, the Law on the Organization and Duties of the Ministry of Family and Social Policies and certain other laws have been amended, as a result of which several organizations which had been in charge of providing care and rehabilitation services to juveniles who have been victims of crime, driven into crime or under risk outside on the streets have been merged under a single institution, namely Child Support Centers.

These centers are in charge of fulfilling the basic needs of children; identifying their physical, emotional, psychological and social needs and taking the necessary steps. It is ensured that these children return to their families and their native environment or are made ready for other social service models. The Regulation on Child Support Centers was put in force on 29 March 2015.

A working group composed of the officials of the Ministry of Family and Social Policies, field staff and academics have developed a psychosocial support and action program to be implemented in Child Support Centers with the financial assistance of the EU and the technical assistance of the UNICEF, which is called the Anka Child Support Program. It is currently being implemented as a psychosocial support and action program addressing children accommodated at Child Support Centers and their families.

Anka Child Support Program serves as a successful practice of rights-based care and recovery system. It has been aimed that every children accommodated at the center is monitored through an effective counselling system. In accordance with the right of participation of the child, a contract is made between the institution and the child. Every Center determines its own rating and grading system. A reward-based approach is being used in the implementation of the system rather than a sanction-based one. An individualized support program is assessed for each child every three months and the outcomes are followed up. Following the assessment, a decision is made of whether the child should be returned to his/her family, placed in another social service institution or continue attending the program.

**Reply to the Question 2:**

The Anka Child Support Program is a good example to assistance and rehabilitation practices which facilitate the rehabilitation and reintegration of child victims of crimes. It is a psychosocial support and action program. The program is aimed at minimizing trauma and eliminating behavioral disorders suffered by children who have been driven into crime, victimized, exposed to social dangers on the streets and thus came to the verge of collapsing; and help them become individuals who think, improve, believe in themselves and success, improve their life skills, intellectual capacity and quality of life and live in peace and harmony thanks to a transition from street life to an orderly life. The Anka Child Support Program, which aims an all-purpose approach and action, consists of the following components: Individual Needs and Risk Assessment Form, Group Works, Individual Counselling, Family Works, Supportive Environment Components, Principles of Approach for Supportive Staff, and Institutional Approach to Crisis Management. The Program has been in use at all centers since December 2014. First results are being taken. Cases in which children left the center without permission and other problems have been in decline. Children’s success at school has improved during the same period. Also pertinent to the reply of the third question, no challenges or issues have been experienced in the development of the program.

**Reply to the Question 3:**

The “Children and Youth Social Protection and Support Program” (ÇOGEP) has been put in practice for the reintegration into society of children driven into crime and child victims and to keep them away from crime.

Within the context of ensuring the personal and social development of children and youth, the program is aimed at the implementation of measures for the social protection of them, the development of them as socially beneficial individuals through providing social and educational assistance, the integration into urban life of those who have migrated to the city and other disadvantaged groups who were unable to adapt, and the abatement of other hardships which set obstacles to a safe life.

**Reply to the Question 4:**

The following articles of the Regulation on Child Support Centers, which came into force on 29 March 2015, are relevant:

Article 4 § 1

a) the services for children shall be provided in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, human dignity and pride. Privacy shall be protected, personal rights shall not be violated and such violations shall not be allowed, and the interests of the child shall always be sought in any decision or action to be taken in respect of him/her.

b) the opinions of the child shall also be taken into account in any action in respect of him/her.

Article 3 § 1

g) The child representative shall mean the representative who has been elected by the children for a term of six months among themselves in order to increase the efficiency of the services provided in the centers and the children’s participation in the services and management.

Article 18

1. The coordination and evaluation commission shall consist of the director of the center, the deputy director, professionals, nurse, religious official and the child representative. Other staff may also be called to the meetings where necessary.

2. The child representative shall attend the sections of the commission’s meetings which relate to children’s issues.

**Reply to the Question 5:**

On this issue, the “Child-Friendly Cities Project” is being carried out, of which the Ministry of Interior is among the stakeholders. Information on the project is as follows:

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| Name of the Project | Child-Friendly Cities |
| Partners | The Ministry of Interior, United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), Turkish Association of Municipalities, United Cities and Local Governments Middle East and West Asia Section, World Academy for Local Government and Democracy |
| Objectives | Creating cities and local governments which take into consideration the voices and opinions of children and are sensitive towards the realization of children’s rights. |
| Subject | The project is the embodiment of the Convention on the Rights of the Child at the local level. This means the reflection of children’s rights to politics, laws, programs and budgets. |
| Financial Resources | UNICEF and IKEA (An international store based in Sweden) |
| Cost | 500,000 US Dollars |
| Duration | 2 Years |
| Start Date | 2014 |
| Date of Completion | 2015 |
| Cities applicable | İzmir (Bornova), Giresun, Adana (Yüreğir), İzmir (Bornova), Bitlis, Ankara (Mamak), Şanlıurfa (Eyyubiye), Kırklareli (Lüleburgaz), Erzurum (İspir) |
| Works carried out | The Project is currently underway in Manisa and Mersin.  By the implementation of the Child-Friendly Cities Project, regarding children living in places where   * child labor, * children living and working on the streets, * Syrian immigrants, and * Roma people   are common, it has been aimed that cooperation shall be made with selected local governments on designing child-friendly policies and programs with a view to supporting children who lack the opportunities, through educational, social, sportive and cultural means and providing integration opportunities and environments. |
| Benefits | Situation analysis and needs assessment works will be carried out in every municipality among children, parents, teachers and service providers.  In accordance with the results of needs assessment works, the capacity of local administrations will be strengthened and child-friendly places such as libraries, playgrounds and community centers will be established in urban areas and the existing ones will be supported to ensure that children can exercise their right to education, health, participation and development. |

According to the information received from the Ministry of Family and Social Policies, any person, families or the child himself can apply to provincial directorates, the Ministry’s institutions, or the call center “ALO 183” to report a child in need of protection. The children deemed in need of protection by any state institution or organization may be referred to the Ministry of Family and Social Policies. The news which appear in the press are taken as denunciations and the necessary procedures are carried out by the Ministry with a view to ascertaining whether the child needs protection and ensuring that he/she receives the appropriate services. In respect of those children who are deemed to be in need of protection by social workers, the necessary applications are made to the relevant courts in accordance with Article 5 of the Law on the Protection of Children and the protective and supportive measures are requested. Any or all of the measures relating to health, education, counselling or care can be requested as needed by the child. Among the children in respect of whom a decision of care or protective measure has been taken as a result of his/her having been a victim of or driven into crime or having faced social dangers in the streets, those who are deemed to be in need of psychosocial support are given services at the Child Support Centers attached to the Ministry, which provide services on a temporary basis.

**Reply to the Question 6:**

Child Support Centers are specialized in the determination of protection needs, taking into account the age and gender of the child, as well as the type of crime and victimization. The Centers specialize in providing support services for pregnant girls, child mothers, children addicted to drugs, unaccompanied migrant children, street children, children driven into crime, and child victims of crime.

**Reply to the Question 7:**

Supportive programs are provided at Child Support Centers for children driven into crime, child victims of crime, street children and unaccompanied migrant children.

**Reply to the Question 8:**

In accordance with the powers set forth in the legislation, Children’s Police unit is in charge of returning to the relevant institution or to their legal representative minors who are suspected to be in need of protection, who have reportedly been exposed to negligence and abuse, who fled from home or the institution held, exposed to crime, have a tendency to crime, live or work on the streets, are unable to describe the place they live, are unable to express themselves, cannot be identified, have been found, are refugees or unaccompanied, in accordance with the nature of the decision taken in respect of them by competent administrative and judicial authorities.

**ANNEX**

CIRCULAR no. 2014/33

In today’s world, where the Internet, an important form of communication is becoming widespread, the sexual abuse of children is among the major problems faced. It is important that measures be taken within the framework of international cooperation, which can ensure the fight against this global crime. The fight against child abuse on the internet can be more effective by enhancing international cooperation. For this purpose, Turkey has been among the 54 States which participated in the “Global Alliance against Child Sexual Abuse Online”, where it has been decided that a common fight is required and four key targets have been determined:

1. Enhancing efforts to identify victims and ensuring that they receive the necessary assistance, support and protection;

2. Enhancing efforts to investigate cases of child sexual abuse online and to identify and prosecute offenders;

3. Increasing awareness among children, parents, educators and the community at large about the risks;

4. Reducing the availability of child pornography online and the re-victimization of children.

Alliance member States have pledged to realize the objectives above.

In this context, works for the elimination of sexual abuse of children on the internet will be expedited and it shall be ensured that the following measures be promptly and effectively implemented to raise efficiency in fighting this crime and to solve the problems that may arise in practice:

1. Supervision of internet cafes will be conducted regularly and diligently. Moreover, the required actions shall be taken to prevent students form spending time in internet cafes during school hours (informing parents of absence in class via SMS, cooperation with internet café managers, etc.).

2. As per the Regulation on Shared Internet Access Providers, which came into force on 1 November 2007, periodic checks will be made and the required measures will be taken to prevent the use of computer games which encourage ill-behavior such as sexual abuse of children, obscenity, prostitution, violence, gambling and which may have a negative impact on the psychological and physiological development of minors.

3. To encourage the use of safe internet packages, which have been made available for free by the Telecommunications Directorate (TİB), fliers and leaflets will be printed and posted in frequently visited public spaces. Awareness-raising activities shall be carried out on the dangers that may be faced by children on the internet and how to be protected.

4. A wide-ranging evaluation of the issue of school security shall be made by a committee including the officials of the relevant institution, presided by the chief of civil administration. Particularly, strangers will be prevented from reaching students inside and in the vicinity of schools particularly during start and end times.

5. Awareness-raising activities shall be organized on the negative impact of internet and social media use on children and the risks they contain, through seminars, conferences and all available communication means (e-mail, SMS, leaflets, etc.), addressing students, teachers and parents. The age range of the children to be included and the contents of the education programs will be determined by expert opinion.

6. The topics of “child sexual abuse, internet safety, the negative impact of social media use on children and the risks associated” shall be included in the training programs for police and gendarmerie staff.

7. Utmost care shall be taken during statement-taking and other stages of investigations to avoid the disclosure of the identity of child victims of sexual abuse. It shall be ensured that child victims be closely followed by school counselors and the relevant staff from the Ministry of Family and Social Policies. All the necessary expert assistance shall be provided to erase the damage caused by the incident.

8. Close cooperation shall be maintained particularly with the TİB and other relevant organizations for the apprehension of perpetrators and blocking access to the websites concerned.

9. Within the context of awareness-raising works, chiefs of civil administration shall coordinate the provincial and district units of the relevant ministries and institutions, and assist works to be carried out by these institutions.

10. Law enforcement units shall give priority to other preventive law enforcement activities concerning the crimes that might be committed in this field.

11. The works and actions carried out shall be taken into account within the institution’s performance evaluations through reviews by the officials of the Ministry of Interior. The reports to be prepared throughout the year on the works carried out in provinces shall be submitted by Governor’s Offices to the Ministry by the end of January in the following year.