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**“PLUS 5” REVIEW OF THE
2002 SPECIAL SESSION ON CHILDREN
AND WORLD FIT FOR CHILDREN PLAN OF
ACTION**

March 2007

**ITALIAN “PLUS 5” REVIEW OF THE
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AND WORLD FIT FOR CHILDREN PLAN OF ACTION**

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1. Introduction

Italy's commitment to the protection of children is well demonstrated by the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child as well as the two Optional Protocols. These ones were transposed in the form of Law 46 of 11 March 2002, concerning the involvement of children in armed conflicts and measures to combat the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography – practices that treat children in the cruellest and most abhorrent ways, in clear violation of their rights.

This commitment was reiterated through Italy's participation in the special session of the UN General Assembly dedicated to children, which took place in New York in May 2002. The Conference discussed the work carried out at the international and national levels against all forms of violence and, in the document *A world fit for children*, the final Declaration approved by the Assembly, reiterated states' commitment to attain the fundamental objectives and the instruments to pursue them in order to preserve the dignity of children. These include the registration of each child at or shortly after birth; the creation of reception structures in the eventuality of their family failing to carry out its task of care and protection; prevention through information and training campaigns and the promotion of codes of conduct; the updating of national legislation to achieve an increasingly high level of protection for victims and of penalties for offenders; the collection of data on cases, actions and the impact of policies; the drawing up of agreements for the coordination of investigations; the monitoring of trafficking routes and the implementation of operational programmes.

For the compilation of the "Plus 5" review Italian National Progress Report as international commitment assumed by our country at the end of the UN special session, the Interministerial Committee for Human Rights, which operates in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and whose remit is to draw up and present to the United Nations the Government's reports on the implementation in Italy of the main Conventions on the protection of human rights, worked together with the Ministry for Solidarity Policies, also with the support of the National Centre for Documentation and Analysis of Childhood and Adolescence.

This clearly demonstrates the intention to involve an institution which include among its purposes the analytical and research activity involving all non-state actors that have always actively promoted the protection of children's rights and taken an active part at the national level in many informational and awareness-raising initiatives, providing a valuable contribution through their practical experience and support of children.

2. Most significant initiatives launched at national level since 2002 in favour of children and towards reaching WFFC targets

From 2002 to the present day, much progress has been made towards achieving the objectives of the document "A World Fit for Children" and of the United Nations Millennium Declaration, laid down during the special session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Law N. 451/97, by the Parliamentary Commission on Childhood, the National Observatory on Childhood and the National Centre for Documentation and Analysis of Childhood and Adolescence, made it obligatory and binding to prepare a biennial National and Government Plan of Action.

The plan, provided for by Article 2 (2), is a planning document of policies on childhood and adolescence prepared by the National Observatory on Childhood and Adolescence on which the government makes certain formal commitments towards implementing its preventative actions and initiatives on receiving the opinion of the parliamentary commission on childhood. Once it is passed by the Council of Ministers, the plan is enshrined by a decree of the President of the Republic.

On the implementation of the WFFC declaration since 2002 in particular, the Observatory has prepared a series of measures including the 2002-4 National Plan of Action, and Initiatives for Protecting the Rights and Development of Children in Formative Years, the “Plan of Action for Bringing About the Closure of Institutions for Children by 2006” and the New National Plan of Action 2006-8 in harmony with the commitments taken by Italy during UNGASS in May 2002, presently being drafted.

2.a National Plan of Action and Initiatives for Protecting the Rights and Development of Children in Formative Years 2002-4

The Plan confirms the priority of the interests of younger citizens and the indissolubility of the relationship that binds the child and adolescent to its family in order to create policies for childhood by building an effective system of family-oriented policies.

Starting from an analysis of the context and implementation of the previous version, the Plan identifies strategies, priorities and tools for defining systemic actions and guidelines to be implemented in the territory.

The main actions and interventions are:

- supplementing legislation in favour of maternity and paternity, with particular emphasis on adoptive and foster families;
- stimulating regional legislative measures on family-oriented social policies.
- stimulating local bodies to develop local planning in full accordance with the principle of horizontal subsidiarity;
- taking suitable measures to make the Convention on the Rights of the Child, signed in Strasbourg on 25 January 1996 operational;
- completing harmonization of Italian legislation with the principles of the UNO Convention;
- creating the National Information System on the condition of childhood and adolescence and completing the Istat – Ministry of Labour and Social Policies – ILO Information System on child labour;
- monitoring and assessing social expenditure and the quality of services for families and children;
- promoting the establishment of a database for every region on children outside their family environment;
- promoting innovative programmes for intercepting children and adolescents who have abandoned school or the learning process or who have been excluded from them;
- setting up suitable tools between state and region for reorganizing the sources and resources for promoting the rights of children and adolescents;
- timely launching ways of collecting data that provide an exact outline of the problem of witnessed intra-family violence;

- protecting world childhood through cooperation, monitoring, study and the promotion of programmes;
- creating “child-size” television programmes;
- preparing adequate legislative and financial tools for bringing about the closure of institutions for children by 2006;
- dedicating special attention to health protection;
- heightening public awareness to the problem of exploitation of children and adolescents for begging and identifying specific tools for combating it and for social reinsertion.

2.b The Action Plan for bringing about the closure of institutions for children by 2006

The permanent working group monitoring the closure of institutions within the National Observatory on Childhood and Adolescents drafted the Document for preparing an “**Action Plan for bringing about the closure of institutions for children by 2006**” as provided by the National Plan of Action, as well as initiatives for protecting the rights and development of children in formative years for the two year period 2002-4 (Article 2 of Law N. 451 of 23 December 1997) adopted during the plenary session of the National Observatory on Childhood on 16 March 2004..

During the meetings, the group assessed the suitability of setting up an *ad hoc* special fund pursuant to Law 149/01 and the reform of chapter V of the Constitution, and, jointly with the Regions, to launch programmes and initiatives alternative to institutionalization based on local conditions.

To this end, the work group defined a series of *ad hoc* initiatives seeking to identify not only the general and specific objectives, but also the short-, medium- and long-term actions, the expected results and the result indicators. The necessary actions to be carried out at local government, regional and municipal levels to achieve these objectives were indicated.

The following specific actions were thus identified:

- promoting the institution of family fostering;
- promoting adoption;
- disseminating alternatives to adoption and fostering such as “soft” adoption;
- recognizing the special needs of communities who welcome child victims of traumatic experiences;
- providing incentives to communities in which the family is seen as responsible for bringing up children;
- encouraging experimenting with other, innovative forms of reception;
- making effective the prohibition of institutionalising children under 6.

The document, to which regional representatives contributed, was incorporated into the **Agreement between the Minister of Work and Social Policies, the Regions, the Autonomous Provinces of Trento and Bolzano and Municipalities** on actions for bringing about the closure of institutions initialled during the Single State-Regions Conference of **16 December 2004**. This agreement was the basis for proceeding, on 17 December 2004, with the division of the **2,000,000 Euro** funding among the Regions pursuant to Article 2 (1) of

Legislative Decree N. 249 of 2004 for “Urgent initiatives in work and social policies” on the basis of the following criteria:

- the regions with the most institutions that have children in care (25%)
- the regions with the most children in institutions that have children in care (50%)
- the percentage of children in institutions on the overall resident child population per region (25%)

In accordance with the provisions of the 2003-4 National Plan of Action and initiatives for protecting the rights and development of children in formative years, and to promote awareness about fostering and taking into care in particular, the Ministry of Work together with the National Documentation Centre launched a campaign for **family fostering** in the months of December 2004 and January 2005. 200,000 flyers and 10,000 brochures were printed and distributed nationwide, an advertising spot was broadcast on the three RAI broadcasting networks and a campaign was launched on the websites of the main national dailies. In addition, an institutional site was set up: www.affidare.minori.it.

Subsequently, the Ministry of Work and Social Policies in concert with the Forum of the Departments of Social Policies launched a publicity and awareness campaign on the issue of fostering. The publishing plan aims at revitalising local government’s commitment to adopting operational plans to promote family fostering.

The funding of initiatives for implementing the right of every child to live in a family is contributed to by the funding made available by Law N. 285 and other specific funding tools made available by the Ministry of Work and Social Policies for pilot projects in the cities of Milan, Palermo, Naples and Arezzo.

2.c The hypothesis of the Plan of Action and initiatives for safeguarding the rights and development of children in formative years 2006-8

The National Observatory on Childhood is drawing up the **Plan of Action 2006-8**. This called for an in-depth analysis of the needs of childhood and of the emerging problems at national level, the monitoring of initiatives launched by the preceding Plan of Action and the analysis of the problems which are presently at the forefront at Community and International level and on which Italy is called upon to implement its international commitments in a concrete form.

In order to realise a welfare system suitable for children, the Plan of Action identifies a series of **systemic actions** to bring about:

- 1) institutional cooperation between levels of government and the implementation of the principle of horizontal subsidiarity;
- 2) definition of the essential performance levels of initiatives for childhood and adolescents;
- 3) completion of the complementary information system for childhood and adolescence between State and Regions in order to coordinate and complement the various sources of information on childhood and adolescence for providing support to national and regional government and promoting knowledge of the map of services and initiatives launched in Italy.

The Plan also combines specific **sectoral actions** with these three initiatives which take the following **strategic priorities** into consideration:

- 1) school reform;

- 2) education services for early childhood;
- 3) individual characteristics;
- 4) reform of juvenile justice, in particular to provide greater protection to children involved in legal proceedings and recompose the system of child protection;
- 5) the guarantor for childhood;
- 6) promote and support juvenile creativity;
- 7) the right to non-competitive sport “not being a champion”.

Lastly, the Plan contains a section on all aspects of promotion, protection and safeguarding rights which are divided into three theme areas namely:

- a. discrimination and subjugation;
- b. foreign-national children (unaccompanied, in temporary care, accompanied, asylum-seekers and refugees);
- c. education and children with difficulties;
- d. parents and children;
- e. active citizenship;
- f. violence perpetrated by and on children;
- g. health: risks and opportunities.

There is no doubt that Italian law N. 285 of 1997 “Measures for promoting the rights and opportunities for childhood and adolescence” was a very important tool for providing the initiatives and actions for implementing these objectives. It promoted real support at local level by means of a highly innovative methodology that devolved planning and implementing initiatives to a synergic cooperation among Regions, local bodies and the third sector. Local communities were able to promote projects appropriate to their own social reality, and thus respondent to the requirements of the beneficiaries because of how “territory-oriented” project planning was, enhanced also by the principle of horizontal subsidiarity between public bodies and civil society.

Periodic surveys carried out by the Ministry of Social Solidarity through the National Centre for Documentation and Analysis of Childhood and Adolescence have enabled the general planning lines to be laid for the initiatives pursuant to Law N. 285. The latest annual report to parliament on the implementation of the law – presented in September 2005 (data valid at 30 April 2004) – revealed that the majority of the Regions are bringing the second three-year phase of implementation (2000-2) to conclusion and in some cases developing annual planning on the basis of Law N. 328/00 reforming the social services. Initiatives on childhood and adolescence are therefore supplementing overall social policy planning.

The Regions, to which the reform of Chapter V of the Constitution attributes exclusive powers in social assistance, are fundamental for developing initiatives promoting the rights of childhood and adolescence. This attribution is important for understanding the orientation of the Regions because after the conclusion of the second three-year phase of funding, the application of Law N. 285 will be increasingly coherent with the general planning of each area.

In order to provide an overall view of the initiatives that have been launched, the National Centre for Documentation and Analysis of Childhood and Adolescence and the Ministry of Work and Social Policies, developed a database of the projects for the second three-year period of funding pursuant to Law N. 285. This database reveals that 3,899 projects had been launched at 30 May 2005. This is a significantly more than the 2,863 projects of first three-year period of 1997-9 – an increase of more than 35%.

The distribution of the projects created pursuant to the four articles of Law N. 285 defining the general objectives of the initiatives has a trend similar to the first three-year period of implementation of the law. In particular the highest number of projects – 2,063 – were created pursuant to Article 4 (“*Support services to the parent-child relationship, combating poverty and violence and measures alternative to taking children into care in educational-assistance institutions*”). In percentage terms, these are 41.4% of the 285 projects carried out. Here, note that between 2002 and 2004 no fewer than 275 projects were carried out specifically to rescue children from exploitation (Art 4 (1) (h)).

Initiatives pursuant to Article 6 (“*Recreational and educational services for leisure time*”) come second in the table with 1,765 initiatives, 35.4% of the total.

Then come the projects created pursuant to the other two Articles of the law: Art 7 (“*Positive actions for promoting the rights of childhood and adolescence*”) with 764, or 15.3% of the total and Art 5 (“*Innovation and experimentation of socio-educational services for early childhood*”) with 394, or 7.9% of the total.

Note, however, that the projects are not perfectly univocal with single articles of Law 285; indeed there are no fewer than 96 that are being implemented at a high level of complexity because the aim of each is to implement a combination of the provisions contained in all four articles.

The data on the state of implementation of the law reveal that the planning capacity of Law 285/97 is unchanged in the second three-year period despite the amendments. Indeed the number of projects approved is well above 3,000.

3. Resource trends for children

Expenditure for childhood and families amounts to 4.4% of total social expenditure or 26% of GDP (source EUROSTAT 2004). The monetary figure is some 15 thousand million Euros (not including education expenditure)

The expenditure for residential accommodation for families and children, which could be re-included in the previous figure (the EUROSTAT survey sheet is difficult to understand on this point) is estimated at some 220 million Euros – the average 2003 expenditure for each user is approximately 10,700 Euros for about 20,000 estimated users. To this must be added the costs of contributions from family fostering for which there is no overall data nationwide. Despite this, though, the available information on contributions made to foster families by municipalities (there were an estimated 14,000 fostering operations in 2003) makes it reasonable to assume that overall expenditure for family fostering is not less than 40 million Euros.

Educational expenditure for early childhood is assuredly not included in the figure for social expenditure. Today, child care services satisfy 9.9% of the demand for the 0-3 age-group while complementary services to the crèche amount to an estimated 2% of the overall demand. This means that overall coverage is some 12% of the demand of the total 0-3 age group for a total expenditure of 833 million Euros for 2003 (0.07% of GDP).

Public expenditure for education in 2004 was 5.3% of GDP (source EUROSTAT) for a total amount of 7.2 thousand million Euros.

Enrolment of the 3-6 age group in infant school is 100% as is that of the 6-10 age group in elementary school and the 11-13 age group in first year of secondary school. Enrolment of second year in secondary school is 93% of the overall 14-18 age group.

Health service expenditure is also not included in the above amount of social expenditure for childhood and families. Overall health expenditure was 6.7% of GDP in 2005 (some 93 thousand million Euros) in line with other European countries. It is probable that health expenditure for services for childhood and adolescence corresponds at least to the density of these services in the territory, namely 17% of total expenditure, or 15 thousand million Euros. The 2007 financial law contains measures for enhancing social equity and protecting the weaker social categories exclusively for the quota of the above funding trend. Note, in particular, the establishment of new resources for funding initiatives in the areas of social solidarity and the family, and the increase of resources already earmarked. The Social Fund for 2006 was 800 million Euros while some 1,635 million Euros have been earmarked for 2007, 1,645 for 2008 and 1,378 for 2009.

4. Development and use of monitoring instruments to track WFFC/MDG targets

4.a Initiatives for monitoring progress towards targets

Several initiatives have been launched in recent years for verifying, disseminating, monitoring and promoting policies for childhood and adolescence. These include in particular:

- **Awareness campaigns**

From 2002 to the present day many initiatives have been launched to heighten awareness:

- the ILO campaign for training school teachers against child labour with the publication of the “SCREAM” educational project and social mobilisation package. This is part of the IPEC international initiative against child labour that recognises the worth of young people as a force for change in society. The main objective of SCREAM is to uphold the rights of children through education, art and the media;
- the information campaign against sexual violence and abuse with the booklet “Uscita di sicurezza [Emergency Exit]” created jointly with adolescents within the theme-based programme of preventing hardship and violence against children. In addition, this programme led to the recognition in 2001 of projects which were launched with funding by Law 285/97 in services for foreign national children, for supporting parenthood, adolescents and for combating ill-treatment and sexual abuse, as well as the national Seminar on “Preventing Hardship in Childhood and Adolescence: policies and services for promotion and protection, listening to children and working in a network” (Florence, 24 September 2002), and also the publication of the acts of the seminar in the volume "Prevention of Hardship in Childhood and Adolescence" .
- Campaign in favour of family fostering by the production of the brochure “affidare [fostering]” broadcasting an advertising spot on the RAI state network, presence on the web by purchasing a banner on the main online newspapers (Corriere della Sera, Repubblica and Avvenire), participation in various

nationwide broadcasts on family fostering, and the creation of a theme website (cf. answer point 2).

- Training campaign for work inspectors to combat child labour by the translation and distribution of the ILO handbook for work inspectors and the organization of training seminars.

▪ **Events**

From June 2002 to today several encounters have been organised both for days of study and seminars reserved for directed to operators.

In particular the World Day Against Child Labour was held in Rome on 12 June 2002 jointly with the ILO, the National Conference on Childhood and Adolescence in Collodi on 18, 19 and 20 November 2002, World Day against Child Labour in Rome on 12 June 2003, again jointly with ILO, the informal meeting of Ministers responsible for Childhood of the 25 EU countries under the Italian Presidency of the EU Council organised in Lucca on 26 November 2003, the National Day for the Rights of Childhood in Rome on 20 November 2004, jointly with the Bi-chamber Commission for Childhood, the National Conference on Childhood and Adolescence held in Florence on 21 and 22 November 2005 and the National Day for the Rights of Childhood held in Rome on 20 November 2006, again jointly with the Bi-chamber Commission on Childhood.

▪ **Research**

Important research initiatives have been launched in cooperation with the National Centre for Documentation and Analysis of Childhood and Adolescence to investigate areas and themes on the world of childhood on which there is a scarcity of data and analysis.

- **Perception of learning difficulties in school-age children** (obligatory elementary and mid-school);
- **Children and the media;**
- **Education services for early childhood;**
- **Children outside the family;**
- **How children's lives change** (data gathered within the Multiscope Survey "Aspects of daily life" 2005 by a special form on childhood based on a convention between ISTAT, the Ministry of Work and Social Policies and Istituto degli Innocenti of Florence).
- **"Life Itineraries: from childhood to adulthood"**. This research project, presented in November 2004 in implementation of the 2002-4 Childhood Plan, responded to the need to acquire data on the phenomenon of childhood violence in ascertaining how widespread it is. The survey was conducted with a great many interviewees and was extended to other forms of childhood abuse (psychological and physical ill-treatment, neglect, witnessed violence). The broad outline questionnaire of the face-to-face interview enabled data to be collected on the state of physical and mental health of those interviewed in order to analyse the possible consequences of abuse. It also collected basic data on demographic, social and family of origin variables to enable possible risk factors to be analysed which could be associated with abuse and the seriousness of its consequences.
- **Experimental research project for the creation of a national monitoring system for children victims of neglect, ill-treatment and/or sexual abuse reported and taken into care by local services.** The aim of the project

which is one of the tasks attributed to the National Centre, is to contribute to gathering comparable data nationwide. This was also stressed in the National Plan of Action 2002-4 prepared by the National Observatory on Childhood and Adolescence (ex Art. 2 Law N. 451/97), which states that one of the priority actions is “to identify constant and homogeneous systems for registering the frequency (number of cases per year) of the phenomenon of abuse of children in all its forms.

The main aims of the project are:

- to experiment with shared survey models in suspected or ascertained cases of ill-treatment and sexual abuse on children;
- to collect comparable data at intra- and inter-regional level.

The subject of the survey was children reported and/or taken into care by local services as identified by being at psycho-social risk and/or:

- sexual abuse
- physical ill-treatment
- psychological ill-treatment
- neglect /pathology of treatment
- witnessed violence

The actors involved in collecting data are first and foremost local service workers, and social workers in particular. The latter are perceived as professional figures whose function attributed by current legislation on preventing family hardship and on protecting and safeguarding children makes them the most frequently given the task of collecting reports.

The data on each child are recorded on a child fact-sheet that summarises the qualitative and quantitative information gathered by the local services on:

- ✓ the child – personal information
- ✓ details on the family context (structure, social-personal information of the parents, other children etc.)
- ✓ reasons for the child being reported to the service
- ✓ initiatives undertaken by the service in favour of the child, the family nucleus and the person responsible for ill-treatment/abuse
- ✓ details on the hardship and the forms of child abuse reported
- ✓ details on the person(s) responsible for ill-treatment/abuse

The fact sheet has been translated into a user-friendly database software prepared by the National Centre and has been made available to all services involved for computerising the fact-sheets.

The fact-sheet can also become a means for creating an organized memory of cases within the service facilitating documentation to reduce the risk of loss of information caused by the turnover of operators and the difficulty in systematic documentation of the itineraries and data collected.

- **Recovery and taking into care of child prostitutes. Research conducted in seven parts of the country. (March 2006).**

The objective of this research project conducted by the National Centre for Documentation and Analysis of Childhood and Adolescence is to explore the evolution and outcome of the experience of children caught up in the network of prostitution and to contribute to the drive which has been gaining momentum in recent years to develop and implement ever more effective

support and recovery for children and adolescents victims of sexual exploitation.

The main aim of this research project is to understand the many aspects of the problem in order to identify an itinerary that children and adolescents can follow to escape the clutches of prostitution.

The following investigations are presently under way:

- Prevention of traumas on children caused by road and domestic accidents;
- How do adolescents live;
- The quest for identity and false dependences (a series of analyses on “the phenomenon of sects and its popularity among children, the new drugs; internet; alcohol; gambling; child delinquency and gangs);
- Services of general interest with a special eye to policies on childhood;
- Structures for protecting children.

▪ **Activity of the National Centre for Documentation and Analysis of Childhood and Adolescence**

The journals published by the Centre include monographs containing works by experts, study and documentation on single topics which through time have been further developed to provoke thought and provide working tools for new significant approaches for tackling issues on children and adolescents. The journals published from 2002 to the present day are the following:

- Ongoing trans-formation and training
- Educational services for early childhood
- European numbers
- Promoting the territory
- Children and adolescents in family fostering
- Italian numbers
- Experiences and good practices with Law N. 285/97
- Emerging from silence
- under 14
- projects in 2001
- children and adolescents who work
- projects in 2002
- European numbers
- Children and adolescents in institutes for children
- Projects in 2003
- National interregional training beyond Law N. 285/97
- Child care services and other complementary educational services for early childhood
- Difficulties in learning
- Multimedia children
- Every child has the right to a family
- Lives in the balance
- Progress report on implementation of Law 285 of 1997

Furthermore, thirteen editions of the three-monthly journal “Cittadini in crescita [Growing citizens]” have been published since 2002. This responds to the need for a periodic tool of knowledge and update on the problems arising from the initiatives launched by public and private social bodies in this sector as well as seventeen editions of the Bibliographic Digest – a three-monthly publication of commented

reports from the major Italian publications, both articles and monographs on childhood and adolescence produced jointly with the Tuscany Region.

Lastly there is the volume [“Prevention of hardship in childhood and adolescence” with preliminary reflections that emerged during the national seminar on “Preventing Hardships in Childhood and Adolescence: policies and services for promotion and protection” held in](#) Florence on 24 September 2002.

4.b Improvement in routine reporting systems and in using these data in the planning process and in reports to the committee

Several initiatives have been launched in recent years to verify, examine and monitor the implementation of policies and initiatives for safeguarding children and adolescents. All the initiatives conducted in this sector are a basic starting point for setting new objectives and strategies and for defining and perfecting acts and policies presently in the process of implementation.

Note in particular that:

- The latest monitoring of the implementation of the 2002-4 National Action Plan and initiatives for protecting the rights of children in formative years took place in 2005. This passage, as already reported, accompanied an in-depth analysis of the needs of childhood and the problems emerging at national EU and international level, and is crucial for preparing the new Plan.
- The investigation on child labour conducted by ISTAT in implementing the Convention with the Ministry of Work and Social Policies enabled underage children who work in Italy to be counted. This has led to the preparation of a specific action plan against the exploitation of child labour, divided into various stages:
 - Translation and widespread distribution of the guidelines for work inspectors prepared by ILO Geneva;
 - Training seminars for work inspectors who in turn will become trainers in the problems of child labour;
 - Identification and dissemination of good practices in child labour by means of a study of the projects carried out pursuant to Law 285/97;
 - Completion of Journal N. 30 “Children and Adolescents who work – a panorama from Italy to Europe”, of the series “Questions and Documents of the Ministry of Work in cooperation with the National Centre for Documentation and Analysis of Childhood and Adolescence;
 - Creation of the website www.lavoro.minori.it specifically aimed at investigating the phenomenon of child labour.
- The many research projects conducted by the National Centre for Documentation and Analysis of Childhood and Adolescence, funded by the Ministry of Social Solidarity and indicated by the National Observatory on Childhood and Adolescence, were published in journals distributed free of charge to Italian operators and to whoever asks for one. These research projects that analyse the problems that emerge from the universe of childhood are a priority starting point in the later period of debate and development of appropriate policies.

In addition to the investigations mentioned in the various points of this report, the following are of special significance:

- “All children have the right to a family”. This research project enabled all the bodies in Italy that take children into care, and the number of children in care to be monitored with an eye to their closure as provided by Law 149 of 2001;
- progress reports on projects pursuant to Law 285. This enables the creation of databases for planning created by local bodies for childhood and adolescence. Surveys lead to the identification of good practices at local level and the enhancement of projects that could be disseminated nationwide or even internationally.
- “Children outside the family”. The National Centre for Documentation and Analysis of Childhood and Adolescence is constantly monitoring children outside the family with the valid cooperation of the Italian Regions and Autonomous Provinces. This investigation will be useful for understanding the developments of the process of de-institutionalisation in Italy.

5. Enhancing partnerships and alliances for children and participation

The commitment laid down in Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child which, as we know, requires states to guarantee children and adolescents capable of discernment the right to freely express their opinion on any issue that interests them, is a commitment that Italy is very much aware of especially in creating policies for the wellbeing of children. Indeed, institutions and children have often had to confront each other on issues that directly involve the latter.

Government commitment has also been implemented thanks to the valid cooperation of Coordination for the Rights of Childhood and Adolescence (PIDIDA), and especially children and adolescents who participate in the project. The **Participatory Group of PIDIDA** (Per i Diritti dell’Infanzia e dell’Adolescenza [For the Rights of Childhood and Adolescents) is a free discussion point for debating and coordinating of which UNICEF in Italy is the Secretary. It is open to all associations and NGOs and, in general, bodies in the Third Sector involved in promoting and protecting the rights of children and adolescents in Italy and the world. PIDIDA was established in 2000; the Italian committee for UNICEF invited Italian bodies involved with children and adolescents to cooperate in the preparation for the 2002 Special Session on Childhood of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

The work begun with the Special Session of 2002, in which representatives of children also took part thanks to PIDIDA and the Ministry of Work and Social Policies, continued in 2002 with the **National Conference on Childhood 2002** in which children took an active part both during the plenary sessions as well as in the **Forum for Children and Adolescents** jointly organised with the Participatory Group of PIDIDA.

The first stage of a new itinerary began with the **Second Forum for Children and Adolescents** (18 and 19 November 2006), that enabled children and adolescents of the PIDIDA associations to get involved in drafting the new National Plan for Childhood. Sixty children and adolescents between 9 and 18 elected as delegates by their peers discussed their ideas and proposals for the next Plan at the Istituto degli Innocenti in Florence on 18 and 19 November 2006 with representatives from the Ministry of Social Solidarity.

The children were asked to debate three issues: I meet, I enjoy myself and I live, each of which was developed in the plenary sessions of the work groups and presented to the political heads by the delegates selected by the children themselves.

After the meeting in Florence, the young participants were called upon to share the final document of the **Forum for Children and Adolescents** with their peers in the Associations they came from all over Italy, friends and school chums.

Lastly, two young representatives of the Forum made an official presentation of the final document on the **National Day for the Rights of Childhood** organised on 20 November 2006 by the Parliamentary Commission on Childhood and the Italian government.

Lastly, it is noted that the projects funded by Law 285/97 also cover participation by children. The objectives of Article 3 of Law 285 on the creation of recreational and educational services for leisure time and the creation of positive action for promoting the rights of childhood and adolescence, the exercise of basic civil rights, better use of the urban and natural environment by children, the development of wellbeing and quality of life of children, the enhancement and respect of diversity, characteristics of gender, culture and ethnicity ((c) and (d)) as provided by Articles 6 and 7 of the Law can be pursued in particular by supporting and developing services aimed at promoting and enhancing participation by children at propositional, decisional and management levels in community ambits and also occasions for reflection on important issues for civil cohabitation and the development of capacity for socialisation and insertion into school, community and family and by means of measures aimed at promoting the participation of children and adolescents in the life of the local community including its government.

6. Achievement of the WFFC Plan of Action and related MDG targets

6.a Promoting healthy lifestyles

The commitment of the National Health Service (SSN) in the maternal-childhood sphere has grown considerably from preventing and treating illnesses to safeguarding and treating the child-family unit and actively promoting the development of the child in its various phases of growth. This was made possible because of significant improvements in basic health care such as, for example, free-choice paediatric care and new scientific discoveries in childhood development.

The National Health Plan for 2003-5 falls within a scenario of major change in the political-institutional framework following a process of increased devolution of powers from State to Regions. In terms of assistance this follows a strategy of subsidiarity in the participation of the various institutional and social subjects in managing services for the public.

As mentioned in the introductory report to the new National Health Plan, the role of the State in matters of health is transformed from predominantly organizing and managing services into guaranteeing equality nationwide. Considering the existing regional differences, the health plan puts forward suggested lines of development to reduce risks and promote qualitative and quantitative equality in the services provided.

The role of the state as guarantor takes the form of a table for monitoring and verifying Essential Levels of Health Care (LEA) set up under the secretariat of the State-Regions Conference for implementing the agreement of 8 August 2001. The task of the table is to

monitor and verify the LEA actually provided and the correspondence between budgeted and actual expenditure.

In this sense, the National Health Plan outlines the objectives to strive towards in order to assure the constitutional guarantee of a right to health and other social and civil rights in healthcare, also bearing in mind the EU objectives in terms of health, and the need to coordinate with EU programmes.

In the chapter on childhood “La salute del neonato, del bambino e dell’adolescente [The health of the newborn, the child and the adolescent]”, the health plan continues to achieve the objectives of the mother-infant project of the 1998-2000 National Health Plan in which promoting the health and healthcare in formative years (childhood and adolescence) is given special prominence.

In order to assure evenness, efficiency and coherence of initiative among the many disciplines in the mother-infant sphere where there is much inter-dependency, similarity and complementarity, the Project Objective calls for an organization which can lead to an integrated system of services to the public, especially in promoting healthcare in the so-called birth itinerary and assistance in formative years.

The National Health Plan focuses its attention on a number of essential aspects (for example infant mortality and congenital disease) in the health of the child in terms of objectives reached and critical points to be overcome. In particular, prenatal health is perceived as a preventative objective to strive towards by means of an inter-sectoral approach involving family doctors, free-choice paediatricians, schools, community centres and the mass media. The strategic objectives to guarantee the health of the newborn, the child and the adolescent include:

- Implementation of specific programmes for protecting maternity and improving obstetric and paediatric and neonatal care in the perinatal period;
- Education in health and hygiene of young people and families with the contribution of schools, local bodies and the appropriate social assistance services with particular attention to preventing ill-treatment, abuse and child exploitation, obesity, sexually transmitted diseases, drug addiction, injuries or accidents;
- Developing clinical-organizational guidelines and diagnosis and therapeutic procedures to be also implemented at local level with free-choice paediatricians and family doctors;
- Establishing a paediatrician at district level to act as community paediatrician with the task of promoting healthcare projects for children, rationalising the network of paediatric services in response to acute pathology and children with special needs (chronic pathology, neuro-psychic handicaps, disability, conditions of risk, weak subjects);
- Rehabilitation of surgeries/consultancy rooms that function in the preconception period locally and in hospitals in order to actively promote all initiatives that can reduce risks during pregnancy.

Special attention is focused on the problem of preventing unwanted pregnancies in adolescents by appropriate sex education which must involve all educators and social and health workers alongside the family within a project of education aimed at responsible procreation, and preventing sexually transmitted disease.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has identified improving the quality of life of mother and child as one of the world’s main health objectives and in accordance with this the Ministry of Health recently promoted the adoption of **National Guidelines for safeguarding,**

promoting and supporting breastfeeding which, in addition to being beneficial for the health of the mother is a natural and normal source of nourishment in infancy.

As a public health measure, these guidelines recommend that children be exclusively breastfed up to six months and that breastfeeding continues with adequate supplements up to when mother and child feel like it, even after the child's first birthday.

Breastfeeding is also recognized as a basic right of the child, and mothers have a right to support in their wish to breastfeed.

In order to achieve the objectives in the guidelines, the Ministry of Health is committed to supporting regional initiatives to train health and social workers in accordance with the WHO and UNICEF recommendations. This will enable these workers to provide the necessary information and support to women competently, and promote initiatives aimed at creating suitable environments and conditions for breastfeeding. In accordance with the State-Region Conference, therefore, certain specific recommendations have been developed for operators in the areas involved in hospitals and at local level and a national committee will be set up with adequate funding to protect, promote and support breastfeeding. This national network will cooperate in the development, creation and assessment of national and regional plans integrated with the remaining activities of the mother-infant sphere.

Lastly, the Ministry of Health takes on certain specific commitments in harmony with other government bodies in order to create an integrated system of promotion, protection and support for breastfeeding.

The Ministry of Health has also created information campaigns to communicate and promote awareness on AIDS, vaccination, diet, smoking and lifestyle, in particular the following.

- In 2003 (carried over into 2004) the 7th preventative-information campaign against AIDS to prevent at-risk behaviour, and provide advice to those who have had at-risk behaviour to have HIV testing. Furthermore, to disseminate a message of solidarity to those affected by HIV/AIDS, inviting them to contact the toll-free number for consultancy on any aspect or doubt on AIDS.
- Extraordinary vaccination campaign against measles, mumps and German measles. The campaign outlines support orientation for the Regions in conducting their local campaigns while setting itself the objective of strengthening at national level the efforts made in local campaigns.
- Health of the child and the prevention of domestic accidents in formative years. Creation of a booklet entitled "*Quando nasce un bambino* [when a baby is born]" for new parents with tips on the care, hygiene and safety of their baby in its first year of life. The aim of the campaign is to provide support and information to parents and to mothers in particular in the weaning and psycho-physical development of their child in its first year of life, and to make parents and child-minders aware of the basic rules of prevention and environmental safety to follow in later years of growth.
- Proper diet and encouraging physical activity. The Ministry of Health has promoted the topic of healthy lifestyles in particular by campaigns focusing on proper diet and the importance of physical activity.

Improved obstetric and paediatric/neonatal assistance during the perinatal period is an important objective that could contribute to cutting inequality in neonatal mortality rates and especially the problem of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). A recent law (**N. 31 of 2 February 2006** "Discipline on diagnosing victims of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and unexpected foetus death") also provides for awareness and prevention campaigns to be promoted to guarantee proper information and the preparation of specific programmes of multidiscipline research and the drafting of guidelines for preventing the pathology.

Law N. 7 of 9 January 2006 was passed recently on “Measures for preventing and prohibiting the practice of female genital mutilation” with the objective of preventing, assisting and rehabilitating women and young girls subjected to genital mutilation. The law punishes this intolerable practice that breaches basic human rights, first and foremost that of physical integrity. Female genital mutilation occurs in Italy because of large-scale immigration from countries where this practice is still commonplace. Practices of this nature which are dangerous to health and the psycho-physical development of girls can be eliminated by preventative educational and cultural initiatives.

The new rules state that whoever practises infibulation will be jailed for between 4 and 12 years with a longer sentence if mutilation is carried out on an underage child, and in every instance when it is done for profit.

Law N. 7/2006 provides for various initiatives such as information campaigns directed at the communities concerned resident in Italy, the establishment of a toll-free number, the development of guidelines for health workers and other professional figures who work with communities of immigrants from countries where this practice is carried out, in order to launch initiatives of prevention, assistance and rehabilitation of girls subjected to this practice.

6.b Promoting quality education

The Ministry of Education is active in the process of reforming school autonomy, which has been ongoing for some years and which was launched by Law 59/1997, subsequently added to by Constitutional Law 3/2001 and Law 53/2003 reforming the education system, and Law 30/2003 on employment and the labour market.

As indicated in the guidelines *Per una scuola di qualità* [For a quality school] approved by the Ministry in November 2003 “in the new education system, the State establishes general principles in the syllabuses, it defines the requisites of accreditation of the supply of education and training and it provides for the assessment of learning levels”, then the “primary responsibility of the school in defining personalised syllabuses will take the form of conjugating local requirements expressed by local autonomy and the manufacturing system in accordance with nationwide orientation”.

Law N. 53 of 28 March 2003, delegates to government the adoption of one or more legislative decrees for identifying the general rules and defining the essential levels of performance in teaching and professional training.

The government is required to assure equality of access to all levels of teaching and professional training and promote lifetime learning enabling a gradual application of rights-duties in education and training from infant school to the highest cultural and professional levels.

Particular emphasis is placed on the need to align the school world with the employment market to ease the move from the high school to professional training, and supplement the courses of the second cycle for students over sixteen with work, alternating school and work in close cooperation with companies and chambers of commerce ensuring the acquisition of skills of value for the world of work as well as basic knowledge.

The orientation that emerges from the *For a quality school guidelines* with its report of ten years of experience in the quality network comprising over 1,600 schools and launched jointly by the Ministry and the Confederation of Industrialists has the following objectives: to disseminate the culture of quality in schools, encourage improvement in the school system,

encourage and provide incentives for levels of excellence, ease voluntary access of schools to the system of crediting and certification, promote and support innovation for continual improvement of the supply of training and learning, encourage a culture open to innovation, provide the schools with information, methodologies and tools for an efficient cooperation with the various subjects present in the territory – institutions, local authorities, companies and labour organizations – experiment and create models of school-company alternation and support new administrative policies enhancing autonomy, quality and teacher training.

The guidelines then dwell on the requirements and methods of a quality-based management system also describing the potential offered to schools by certification according to UNI EN ISO 9001:2000.

Assessment by an outside body certifying quality attests the capacity of an institution to guarantee the implementation of a training contract formalized in the training plan as well as its ability to harness the processes of planning and supply of services in order to achieve continual improvement.

Again within the perspective of reforming school autonomy the **National Plan of Orientation** aims at overcoming the fragmentation of services being provided by various public and private subjects and institutions and begin constructing a real integrated education system.

The new system of orientation presently emerging and the consequent initiatives to be launched have the objective of supporting people in making decisions in their lives – in educational, professional and personal affairs – and carry them out throughout their lifetimes. The National Plan, therefore, takes account of the need that arises in all contexts of an effective orientation centred on the person and the various requests for orientation in relation to age in order to contribute to enhancing the human resource within the territorial network and the subjects who represent it: the school, the family, the local bodies, volunteer work and solidarity, the world of work and companies.

Furthermore, the Department for the development of education issued a circular on 21 May 2001 on the **National three-year project to innovate infant schools**. The project is to support developing *curricula* based on quality standards and criteria, organizational and didactic flexibility, continuity of the educational process through a combination of negotiated processes of research and reflection, shared and disseminated amongst all those who are in some way involved in school re-qualification. This project is a further stage in the process of re-qualification that marks the evolution of the school. It is also a further stage in the process of integration of the education system that culminated in Law N. 62 of 10 March 2000 and here featuring teaching by plurality and the wealth of contributions made by the various institutional subjects.

The Ministry then dedicated particular attention to the education of pupils with special requirements, such as programmes for the **handicapped, the school in hospital the school at risk and the school for a large number of migrants**.

On this first of these, the Ministry circulars of 13 September 2001 and 22 January 2003 indicated the criteria for distributing and using the funds earmarked for the integration in school of pupils with handicaps.

Regarding the **school in hospital**, the Ministry issued circular N. 56 of July 2003 on initiatives for strengthening and re-qualifying the provision of school integration of pupils who are hospitalized or who are in day hospital, for which the sum of 929,622 Euros has been earmarked. This amount is higher than the previous year's because a check on school year 2002-3 revealed that there had been a substantial increase in the call for home schooling for

hospitalized pupils. The objective is to broaden the supply of schools in hospitals and allow home teaching to meet demand and to guarantee the right to health and education.

At present there are 18 “outside schools” linked to hospitals for hospitalized pupils and for home schooling in 18 Regions with 139 schools and 146 hospitals involved, and there are 433 actual teaching posts in addition to 220 sets of hours.

The financial resources earmarked for the **school at risk** are 53,195,060.00 Euros overall per year. After informing the trade union beforehand, the Ministry of Education divides each year’s resources among regional school offices on the basis of social and economic hardship indicators.

On the issue of migrant pupils, the Ministry has set up a new department for dealing with the **integration of foreign national students**. This department has launched a series of initiatives jointly with the various institutional and non-institutional actors to favour complete integration of foreign students while respecting identity and to prevent them, too, from abandoning school.

Which activities to follow also emerges from the investigation on foreign national pupils of non-Italian citizenship conducted yearly by the General direction for information services which provides data on the results of exams and testing conducted in schools at the end of the school year.

This analysis indicated that it was necessary to focus particular attention on continuing the education of adolescents, supporting the decisions with good orientation.

In addition, special attention was turned to ensuring the obligation of school attendance was also respected by the children of immigrants without a regular stay permit, placing them in classes that correspond to their actual age except for special exceptional cases assessed by the teachers in the schools concerned.

Lastly, on the basis of demand for support from young people and families, the Direction General for the student at the department of education has developed a national plan called **Centre for youth association**, which makes use of experience gained in Italy and Europe.

These centres of youth association set up to assure complementarity of intervention on the part of the principal educational actors (school, family and social private), provide support to growth processes personality development, re-orientation, intergenerational dialogue and responsible participation. Furthermore, they contribute to creating awareness, planning, decision-making capabilities and insertion into the world of work and society. The project is aimed at a target of young people aged between 13 and 18.

On the question of coordination, the Ministry has set up **National Forum** of the most representative **student associations** in order to encourage dialogue and debate between the Ministry and student associations, and the National Forum of the most representative parent associations in order to encourage dialogue and debate between the Ministry and parent associations.

6.c *Child protection against abuse, exploitation and violence*

The Italian parliament has passed a new law to combat sexual exploitation entitled **“Measures to combat the sexual exploitation of children and paedo-pornography whether or not through Internet” (Law N. 38 of 6 February 2006)** aimed mainly at:

- Increasing the age limit for protection against certain types of crime;

- Updating legislation on illegality in the light of new crimes that can be committed by computer with which pornographic material produced by the exploiting children can be exchanged anonymously.

Article 600 (a) (1) of the penal code as substituted by Law N. 38/2006 on “sexual acts with children in exchange for money or other economic gain” provides that when the victim is aged between fourteen and eighteen the sentence be from six months to three years imprisonment and a fine. This article also increases imprisonment (from a minimum of 2 to a maximum of 5 years) for this crime for victims under sixteen.

The non-alternativeness between detention and fines either for this crime or for crimes of spreading, disseminating or possessing underage pornography is an important part of this law. The law introduces new crimes in spreading paedo-pornographic material: Article 2 introduces “inducing children under eighteen to take part in pornographic exhibitions” that carry from six to twelve years imprisonment and a fine. Article 2 also introduces the *ex novo* crime into the penal code of disseminating and offering paedo-pornographic material whether or not free of charge. Article 3 carries a sentence of up to three years and a fine for possessing pornographic material depicting children. In both cases the penalty is increased by up to two thirds if the quantity of material possessed is consistent.

Article 4 of Law N. 38/2006 on paedo-pornography introduces a new crime – virtual pornography – described as the representation of “virtual images created using illustrations of children under eighteen or parts of them”. In addition, the legal responsibility of juridical persons, companies and associations is extended to the new criminal instance of “virtual pornography”.

Another innovation brought in by Law N. 38/2006 is the introduction of perpetual barring from any position in any kind or level of school or from any office or service in public or private institutions or bodies prevalently frequented by children (Articles 5 and 8). This additional penalty is applied to all those found guilty of sexual violence on children, sexual acts on children, underage pornography and exploitation of child prostitution.

Note, furthermore, that in an innovation to the penal code, Article 11 does not allow those accused of such crimes to resort to a reduced sentence within special trial procedures (so-called bargaining).

In a comment to Article 19, the law provides for the Ministry of the Interior to **establish a “National Centre to combat paedo-pornography on the Internet”**, with the task of collecting reports from all public and private bodies involved in the struggle against child pornography.

Furthermore, Article 20 provides for the establishment of an **“Observatory to combat paedophilia and child pornography”** at the Presidency of the Council of Ministers – Department for Family Policies. This body has the task of acquiring and monitoring data and information on the activity of all the public administrations in the prevention and repression of paedophilia. The Observatory will set up a database to collect all useful information and data supplied by the public administration for monitoring the phenomenon.

The operational model put forward for the new Observatory has three main phases:

1. collecting data;
2. processing the data collected;
3. exchange and discussion with operators and those involved in any way or at any professional level in the phenomenon.

The subjects to whom the information and the research produced by processing are addressed are highly varied. They are judges, policemen, prison wardens, social workers, teachers,

health workers, psychologists and educators and all those who in some way are involved in the repression and prevention of sexual abuse on children.

In order for the database to function properly the establishment of networks among information centres is a fundamental priority. In particular, the flow of information produced by the Police, the Carabinieri and the law courts are full of important information on the following:

- the profile of subjects who have committed violence on children;
- the circumstances in which the act took place;
- the characteristics of the victim and his/her life context;
- the activation of the process of protection and recovery during the legal proceedings and afterwards.

This information is a resource that has to be strengthened through a “normalisation” process of surveys that enable homogeneous data to be collected which would not be otherwise available from other sources.

Further measures for combating the spread of paedo-pornography over the Internet is the obligation for Internet service providers to inform the Centre at the Ministry of the Interior of any information they may come into possession of regarding companies or subjects who distribute or trade in paedo-pornographic material. These providers are also obliged to use the filtering tools that will be identified by the Ministry of Communications in concert with the Ministry for Innovation and Technology.

Of no less importance are the financial resources for combating the trade of this material: indeed banks, credit card operators and Poste Italiane S.p.A. will be involved as will financial intermediaries in order to gain access to information on the use of credit cards for illegitimate purposes and if necessary to cancel authorisation to use them.

Lastly, Law N. 38/2006 contains an important measure for combating sexual tourism for the exploitation of children. Indeed the new law reiterates and enshrines the obligation for tour operators (already provided by Article 16 of Law N. 269/1998) to print in propaganda material that Italian law punishes the crimes of child prostitution and pornography with imprisonment even though it is committed abroad (Art. 17, Law N. 38/2006). Operators who do not comply with this obligation are fined a higher amount.

Law N. 228 of 2003 on **trafficking** children identifies specific measures against people trafficking and Art 13 provides for the establishment of a special programme of assistance for the victims of crimes provided for by Articles 600 (*reduction or maintenance in slavery or servitude*) and 601 (*People trafficking*) of the penal code in order to provide adequate temporary conditions of lodging, board and healthcare for their physical and psychological recovery. The programme was recently defined by Presidential Decree N. 237 of 2005 “Regulation for implementing Article 13 of Law N. 228 of 11 August 2003 on measures against people trafficking, with projects co-funded by the State, Regions and local authorities”. State funding for 2005 was budgeted at 2.5 million Euros. If the victim of exploitation in trafficking is a foreign national, the measures of social protection the measures of social protection, such as the issue of a special stay permit to enable the foreign national to escape from violence and conditioning by the criminal organization and take part in a programme of assistance and social integration remain unchanged.

Alongside actions of a legislative nature, the following initiatives are also contemplated:

- **implementation and extension nationwide of an anti paedophile emergency number 114 (child emergency)** promoted by the Ministries of Communication, Work and Social Policies and Equal Opportunity. The service set up with the emergency number 114, managed by Telefono Azzurro, can be

called 24 hours a day to report situations in which the psycho-physical health of children and adolescents are at risk, or at risk of trauma. The operator assesses the emergency, supplies psychological support to the caller and contemporarily activates the local services and institutions (Law and Order and Public safety, health emergency, state prosecutor, law courts, social health services etc.) with which the immediate or short term measures are decided for a specific intervention with the aim of creating a protective “network” round the child while respecting his needs and rights.

- In implementing Article 18 of Single Text N. 286 of 1998, an “**Toll-free anti-trafficking number**” was set up which is today funded by the Ministry of Equal Opportunities with national resources as provided by Article 18 itself. The service is active 24 hours a day and comprises one national station and 14 local stations. The toll-free number takes requests for information and help directly from callers, it assesses and selects the calls deemed to be reliable and sets up procedures for putting the victim in contact with the local station and successively with the project operators.

The following initiatives are carried out within the Ministry of the Interior to combat abuse, exploitation and trafficking of children:

The Ministry has issued a series of circulars containing norms and orientation including the one dated 14 February 2003 on the use of children – whether or not foreign nationals – for begging. This reiterates the need to act with other police forces, the municipal police and social services in order to define more adequate measures to curtail the phenomenon. Lastly, a further circular was issued on 29 December to the provincial heads of police for full implementation of the new measures provided by Law N. 228 of 11 August 2003 to combat the exploitation of children for begging. In particular, the circular formulates directives for a proper coordinated prevention and repression of the phenomenon closely linked to predominantly foreign criminal gangs involving children in illicit activities. Close attention is paid to unaccompanied foreign national children who are easy victims of abuse and exploitation.

In this sense, the “*Protocol of cooperation among the government of Romania, the Local Council of the 3rd District of Bucharest and the prefecture and municipality of Turin on repatriation of Romanian children victims of exploitation*”, signed on 19 June 2003 is of great relevancy .

The general objectives of the protocol are to:

- facilitate relations, information exchange and cooperation among the signatories,
- assure assisted repatriation and reinsertion into the family of origin,
- guarantee the support of services dedicated to the protection of children in cases where immediate reinsertion into the family of origin is not possible.

The Ministry has also promoted a series of **protocols of inter-institutional agreement** within the measures to combat child abuse and exploitation which, especially from 2002 onwards has seen a substantial upswing. These protocols seek to implement the provisions of Law N. 66 of 15 February 1996, *Norms against sexual violence* and Law 269/1998 both of which introduced specific innovations in coordinating the various juridical authorities and in measures for assisting child victims. The Ministry has also launched a series of internal training initiatives and refresher courses on crimes committed against children. A database to aid monitoring, containing all data on sexual abuse on children – the age and gender of the victim and his/her relationship to the perpetrator contained in the report to the police and the

children's department in police headquarters – has been set up at the Central Direction of the criminal police.

Note that in order to identify the most appropriate measures to investigate the phenomenon of violence, the Ministry of Social Solidarity has launched three projects with the National Centre for Documentation and Analysis of Childhood and Adolescence:

- The research project "Percorsi di vita: dall'infanzia all'età adulta [Itineraries through life from infancy to adulthood]" (see point 4);
- Experimental research project to create a national monitoring system for children victims of neglect, ill-treatment and/or sexual abuse reported and taken into care by local services (see point 4);
- Recovery of child prostitutes and taking them into care. An exploratory research project in seven parts of the country. Research project (March 2006) (see point 4).

7. Summary of lessons learned and initiatives undertaken since 2002 for accelerating the process towards achievement of WFFC and relevant MDGs, and outlining of future initiatives planned at national, sub-national or regional levels

The most important lesson learned is the importance of coordination among all the actors involved in planning and implementing policies for childhood.

Indeed, constructing a valid system of networks for planning is the basis for the success of Law 285/97 "Measures for promoting rights and opportunities for childhood and adolescence" which promote a participatory model by mobilising all the resources available in the territory. Furthermore, there has been constant coordination by the National Observatory, in particular the National Plan of Action and initiatives for protecting the rights and development of children in formative years 2002-4, the "Plan of action for bringing about the closure of institutes for children by 2006", and the processing of important documents that have provided suggestions to the legislator and public administrator:

- **The document to establish the National Guarantor for Childhood**

On 16 March 2004, the National Observatory on Childhood and Adolescence approved an orientation document outlining the attributes at both national and local levels that will hopefully be assigned to the guarantor for childhood as regards role and function, appointment and mandate, organization of the office, resources, requisites, incompatibility, revocation, relations with associations, participation of children, coordination between national and regional authority.

The guarantor must be extraneous to any state power in order that the role enjoy full independence, and he/she should be appointed by a representative body.

The Observatory believes that it would be appropriate to set up a National guarantor as well as Regional guarantors so that each could function in his/her own territory. It is also to be hoped that the law setting up the national guarantor also contain the essential indications on the role and functions of the regional guarantors in order to facilitate preventative harmonisation of the regional laws that will set them up.

The Observatory believes that the tasks of the regional guarantors should cover as broad a spectrum as possible as a body rooted in the territory while the national guarantor should be assigned the typically specific tasks of a central authority

including: a) the functions provided by Article 12 of the European Convention on implementing the Rights of the Child and pursuant to Article 18 of the UNO Convention on the Rights of the Child; b) awareness-enhancement and promotion of the rights of childhood; c) consultancy by formulating recommendations, proposals, and reports; d) promotion of mediation; e) ensuring the guarantee for all of competent bodies for protecting the wide range of interests more specifically deriving from the condition of childhood (in this sense the guarantor should have the power to act legally to protect the wide range of interests of children); f) promotion of initiatives for removing situations that could be detrimental to children and adolescents (in this sense, the guarantor must have the power to acquire information); g) prepare periodic reports.

By contrast, the Observatory deemed it appropriate to exclude the function of passing measures and representing children from his/her the tasks although regional guarantors could be assigned the job of training legal guardians.

In order for the work of the national guarantor to be coordinated with that of the regional ones, a national conference of guarantors will be set up which will identify the general lines for implementing the rights of childhood.

Lastly, the document contemplates possible forms of collaboration at both regional and national level with the third sector by the creation of consultative bodies and forms of participation of children in the work of the guarantor, for example by taking part in the consultative organs.

- **The document on the follow-up of the Strasbourg Convention on listening to children**

The National Observatory on Childhood and Adolescence has set up a work group on the follow up of the ratification of the Convention of Strasbourg in order to:

- Work towards integration and broadening the applicability of the convention;
- Identify the series of tools both substantive and interpretative which can make the legal protection of children effective.

The Group has focused its attention on the following points in particular:

- Integration of the categories of controversy in issues regarding the family (parental authority, Natural Filiation and opposition on the part of the child towards acts carried out by the parents) in order to make the Convention applicable;
- Identification of supplementary tools for implementing the convention in terms of the representation of the child in legal proceedings and family mediation. This aims at resolving the problems deriving from defining responsibilities and attributing them to where there are many figures who may fulfil this function.
- Listening to the child (Article 6 of the Convention). Careful assessment will be carried out on how the child is listened to in order to give it a precise definition towards improving the quality and the context of listening and the skills of the listener;
- Speed up legal proceedings by identifying cases, moments and contexts for suggesting a streamlining of penal and civil proceedings and procedures involving a child;
- Investigating the concept of a child's capability of discernment and the contexts in which it can be called upon.

- **The third Report on the condition of childhood and adolescence in Italy “The exceptional everyday”.**

The National Observatory on childhood has supplied the National Centre for Documentation and Analysis of Childhood and Adolescence the guidelines and necessary contributions to prepare the third report on the condition of childhood and adolescence in Italy “The exceptional everyday” approved during the plenary session of 14 March 2006. The report is in two parts; the first is a detailed analysis of the condition of childhood and adolescence in Italy and the second examines the rights of childhood and adolescence on the basis of the legal system in Italy – in the light of the reform of Chapter V of the Italian Constitution – and Europe and with a survey of good practices activated by state administrations (Ministries, Regions and local authorities) and by associations that are somehow involved in the promotion and protection of child citizens.

The many initiatives planned for the immediate future include:

- **Promotion and monitoring of the discussions between government and social parties to combat child labour and school abandonment**

The need to develop new strategies and tools that are effective against the exploitation of child labour and to continue what has been achieved by the “Charter of commitments for promoting the rights of childhood and adolescence and eliminate the exploitation of child labour” of 1998 led to resumption on 4 September 2006 of the discussions on child labour to define and strengthen actions and programmes for creating increased protection of the rights of children and adolescents within the necessary agreement between the public bodies concerned, employers’ and workers’ organizations and other interested groups.

- **Preparation of positive actions for guaranteeing and protecting the rights of citizenship of boys and girls forced into begging.** A campaign will be created to heighten public awareness, and training projects created for social workers.
- **Ongoing monitoring of the situation of closing down institutions in Italy that take children into care**
- **Preparation of positive actions for promoting the right to play and the enjoyment of more and safer places for socialisation,** implementing the requests of children made during the national day for the rights of childhood and adolescence on 20 November 2006.