

“Plus 5” Review of the 2002 Special Session on Children and World Fit for Children Plan of  
Action

National Progress Report

TURKEY

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Following the UN Special Session on Children in 2002, the outcome document 'A World Fit For Children' was translated into Turkish and was shared with all the related sectors. In October 2002, a multi-sectoral meeting was conducted under the leadership of the Social Services and Child Protection Agency (SHCEK). Participants included representatives from relevant ministries, universities, civil society organisations, NGOs and UN agencies, and young people and children themselves. The decision was taken to draw up a National Plan of Action (NPA). Four working groups were set up, one for each area of the NPA, corresponding to the World Fit for Children (WFFC) priorities – i.e., Promoting Healthy Lives, Promoting Quality Education, Protecting Against Abuse, Exploitation and Violence, and Combating HIV/AIDS.

The four working groups reviewed all documentation pertaining to the implementation of the CRC in Turkey including the Concluding Observations on the Committee of the Rights of the Child and the check-lists which had been used to monitor the implementation of the CRC in Turkey until then. As a result, a matrix was produced assessing the current situation in Turkey, outstanding issues, necessary actions, responsible institutions/organisations and required resources under each of the WFFC priority areas. The working groups came together over a period of approximately one year, and also held a series of meetings with wider participation. In June 2003, a three-day workshop took place at which the NPA was finalised. All in all, this process involved: children, young people, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of National Education, departments of the Ministry of the Interior responsible for security, civil defence and provincial administration, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the State Planning Organisation, the State Institute of Statistics, the UNICEF National Committee, pressure groups, NGOs and academics.

2005 was identified as the start date for the NPA, with 2010 and 2015 identified as key target dates. The NPA calls upon government, civil society, children, families and communities to use several strategies to work towards its realisation. Key strategic approaches include strengthening government and NGOs so as to improve their implementation and monitoring of children's rights, social mobilisation among the public to solidify an awareness and commitment to children's rights, and improvement of policies, including the extension of compulsory education up to 12 years.

The final version of the NPA was approved by the public sector, NGOs and children themselves in early June 2004. Even before the formal adoption of the Plan, relevant government ministries and children's rights organisations began to use it in their planning and advocacy work respectively. Already, however, a need was arising to update the NPA in the light of the publication of new data from various sectors, including the Demographic and Health Survey published in late 2004, and a desire to reflect the latest situation concerning children and women. Work on the update initially proceeded slowly as the various sectors gave priority to their preparations for the next national development plan. However, the updating gathered pace in 2006 with active participation from all sectors including the Turkish Statistical Institute (TUIK-Turkstat) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA).

The document which you are now reading draws primarily on the data and contributions made by all relevant sectors and actors to the updating process in order to describe the progress made towards the implementation of the WFFC Plan of Action.

## 2. MAJOR ACTIONS TAKEN FOR CHILDREN

From the preparation stage onwards, the NPA has assisted government departments and non-government organisations to focus on children and their rights, and to include children in their planning. Government departments have been prepared to contribute to the planning and to report on progress in work related to the priority areas of the WFFC and NPA. However, the NPA is only one of a number of planning documents influencing economic and social policy. A major act of government in 2005 and 2006 has been the drafting of the Ninth National Development Plan. Instead of a five-year plan in line with past practice, this plan is to cover the years 2007-13, in line with the EU budget cycle. The Plan is drawn up under the coordination of the State Planning Organisation, which also prepares an annual macroeconomic programme and annual investment programmes on the basis of the Plan, as part of the annual central government budget preparation process, now based on a rolling three-year perspective. Meanwhile, some sectors have their own strategic planning processes, such as the meetings of the broad-based National Education Council, which most recently met in 2006.

Turkey's agreements with international organisations also give rise to a number of strategic documents. As part of the EU pre-accession process, Turkey prepares an economic programme, which is updated annually, and recently prepared a Joint Inclusion Memorandum focusing on the issues of social exclusion and inclusion. The drafting and implementing of legislation and policies is also shaped by the EU legislation and norms with which Turkey is seeking harmony. Cooperation between Turkey and the UN agencies active in the country now takes place within the context of a UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), which has been drawn up for the period 2006-2010, as well as individual country programmes and annual work plans. With respect to children, programmes agreed with UNICEF and the World Health Organisation are of particular significance. The standby accord with the IMF contains commitments for fiscal and monetary economic policy and structural reform measures. Policies have also been agreed with the World Bank under the Social Risk Mitigation Project and other agreements. There are EU projects and bilateral projects with various countries in many areas including areas like education and justice.

Naturally, the various plans, programmes, projects, frameworks and reports tend to overlap and influence one another. Accordingly, the Millennium Development Goals and the priorities of the WFFC are reflected not only in the NPA but in many other planning documents. This has been increasingly the case in the years since the UN summit. For example, several issues related to children and women were included in a national development plan for the first time with the adoption of the Ninth National Development Plan, the issue of child poverty has been incorporated into the JIM, the Ministry of National Education has developed sector policies on basic education and early childhood development, and the Ministry of Health may be about to adopt a child health strategy.

The planning process and the concerns of the political authority and public opinion have given birth to a growing list of initiatives over the past five years, especially in the areas of quality education and protection against abuse, exploitation and violence. These initiatives have included nationwide campaigns, landmark changes in national legislation and the development of new models for the provision of public services. Some of the major actions taken for children are as follows:

\* In 2003, a campaign was launched to achieve gender equality in primary school enrolment, as envisaged by the Millennium Development Goals. The campaign began in ten provinces where girls' enrolment was especially low and was later gradually expanded until it reached all 81 provinces in 2006. In this campaign, the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) has aimed to persuade families to send their out-of-school daughters and sons to primary school and maintain attendance for the full eight years. These efforts have been backed by the payment by the off-budget Social Assistance and Solidarity Fund (SYDF) of monthly

conditional cash transfers (CTT) under the World Bank-led 'Social Risk Mitigation Project' to hundreds of thousands of poor families whose children regularly attend school. Particularly in rural areas, bus services, lunches and uniforms have also been provided. The media and NGOs have lent strong support to the campaign.

\* Amendments have been made to the national primary school curriculum. These were put into practice as of 2005. The curriculum now incorporates inductive teaching methods which are expected to encourage child participation and make the learning experience more rewarding.

\* The provision of pre-school education has continued to increase, mostly in reception classes attached to state primary schools. The pre-school curriculum has been revised in parallel with the adjustment of the primary school curriculum. Enrolment among 5 year-olds has reached 25% and the government is committed to a target of 50% by 2013.

\* The normal duration of secondary education has been extended from three years to four, starting in the 2005-2006 school year. It is planned to make secondary education compulsory, extending the total compulsory education period from eight years to twelve.

\* In 2006, a new special education services regulation was published concerning education for those with special needs. The new regulation gives precedence to inclusion of disabled individuals in the general education system.

\* A strategy and action plan against violence in educational environments was drawn up in 2006 with contributions from a wide range of public bodies and academic institutions. Launched by the Minister of Education in October 2006, the strategy and action plan is concerned with all forms of violence, whether verbal, emotional, physical or sexual - whoever the perpetrator and whatever the cause might be. It targets school management, teachers, pupils, families and the local community, and will continue for at least five years.

\* Efforts to improve basic mother and child health care have continued. 90% of hospital deliveries take place in baby-friendly hospitals, encouraging exclusive breastfeeding, and in 67 of 81 provinces all hospitals providing maternity services are baby-friendly. Measles immunisation campaigns were conducted in 2003-6 and a maternal/neonatal tetanus vaccination campaign began in 2006. A renewed effort is also now being made to ensure full routine vaccination even in hard-to-reach communities. The sale of non-iodised salt to consumers has been banned by regulation, resulting in increased use of quality iodised salt and improved child nutrition.

\* A comprehensive new child health strategy is being drafted. Changes in the social security system have been introduced which will provide free health insurance cover for all children as of the middle of 2007. Further legislative changes affecting social services are under consideration and may provide additional benefits for children.

\* Information on reproductive health including AIDS and family planning has been incorporated in primary and secondary education curricula.

\* A national child poverty conference was held in 2006 with the participation of representatives of the EU Commission, numerous government agencies, members of parliament, media representatives, the private sector, children, international experts, NGOs and academics. More follow-up steps are expected to be taken in 2007.

\* A first-ever Child Protection Law was adopted by Parliament in 2005 in conformity with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and efforts to ensure that it is fully implemented continue. Research is being conducted on the need for further legislative changes to ensure that all legislation affecting children is CRC-compliant.

\* Also in 2005, a major overhaul of the penal code took place with significant improvements for children in conflict with the law, in line with the requirements of the CRC. The new Code, and simultaneous amendments to the Law on the Execution of Penal and Security, raised the minimum age of criminal responsibility from 11 to 12, and provided for a probation

system which will serve as an alternative to deprivation of liberty. Remission of sentence was increased for children, special arrangements were made for child victims, and the number of child courts was increased, to facilitate and accelerate court proceedings.

\* Despite an increase in demand from children obliged to live without parental care, SHCEK has been reducing the number of children in institutional care, and giving priority to fostering, adoption and support for families. More services are being provided in community and day-care centres. A new service model has been designed for children working and living on the street and is being introduced in high-risk provinces.

\* In 2006, the Prime Ministry's office issued a circular to state agencies calling for every effort to be made to prevent violence against children and women, including "honour killings".

\* Parliamentary enquiries have been held concerning children on the street and violence against women and children. In late November 2006, a new parliamentary enquiry about violence in schools was established.

### 3. RESOURCE TRENDS FOR CHILDREN

Resources are spent for children by a wide range of bodies - central and local government, social security institutions, extra-budgetary funds, revolving funds and others. Many items of public expenditure benefit children and adults collectively, particularly outside education. For these reasons, as in other countries, it is not currently possible to give an overall figure for public resources devoted to children. In addition, planning, budgeting, accounting and reporting procedures have been changing from year to year in order to improve transparency, health reforms is in progress and performance auditing and budgeting are being piloted. These developments will lead to improvements in the medium term but in the short term year-on-year comparisons of figures need to be treated with caution.

Public revenues have been increasing in real terms in recent years as a result of rapid economic growth (averaging about 7.5% per year between 2002 and 2006) and the growing ratio of public revenues to national income. This rise in revenues has been offset by the fact that a substantial part of the extra revenues has had to be saved in order to reduce government debt. As a percentage of national income, expenditure on education, health and social services has been moderate by international standards. However, Turkey is due to exit in 2008 from an IMF-backed structural adjustment programme, improving the prospects for social spending.

Education accounts for the largest single component of public expenditure specifically directed towards children. Public expenditure on education for children is channelled overwhelmingly through the central government budget, and especially through the Ministry of National Education (MoNE). MoNE accounts for about 65% of all public education spending, and universities for over 20%. Total spending on education as a percentage of national income is quite high in Turkey (6.75% of GDP in 2002). Much of this amount is made up of private spending, mainly by households on the education of their own children, including private school and cramming school fees. By contrast, public spending on education is quite low (4.29% of GDP in 2002). This situation favours higher-income groups.

In the medium term, the high proportion of school-age children in the population is expected to fall, which will contribute to higher per capita public spending. It will also be necessary to rectify discrepancies in educational spending in favour of tertiary and secondary education over primary education, and between regions and districts. Overall, the level of spending on education is hovering at about 4% and has yet to recover to the 4.8% of GDP recorded before the economic crisis in 1999. This is likely to be achieved in the near future.

Ministry of Finance figures are available for budget performance in all years up to 2005 and for proposed budget expenditure allocations in 2007-2009, in line with the recently-adopted "rolling" three-year budget framework. In both 2004 and 2005, 69% of all budget spending on education services went on personnel, including social security contributions. The share of capital expenditure was just 9% in 2004 and 10% in 2005. The remaining education expenditures went on procurements of goods and services, and current transfers.

Assessing public expenditure on children's health is complicated by the fact that health expenditure for children is not generally reported separately from other health expenditure, and also by the variety of organisations which finance health services, including revolving funds and social security institutions which are off-budget. Public expenditure on health in Turkey amounted to a modest 4.4% of GDP in 2003, according to the OECD. Budget health expenditures have, however, exceeded expectations in 2004-6. As in the case of education, private expenditure on health is also significant.

Out of total budget spending on health services in 2005, purchases of goods and services accounted for 32% in 2005 compared to 25% in 2004. The share of personnel spending including social security contributions went down from 64% to 59%. The share of capital expenditure fell from 11% to 9%. There is a need to reduce the proportion of health spending which goes on pharmaceuticals and to increase annual per capita public spending on preventive health services, which was on US\$4.8 in 2003.

Under recent legislation the existing obligatory health insurance systems are due to be replaced by a General Health Insurance System as of mid-2007. This may eventually lead to better planning, estimation and reporting of health expenditure, as all parts of the populace come to be covered by the same scheme. Moreover, the scheme is intended to ensure that all citizens, and not just a majority, receive health insurance cover. The government intends to pay health insurance premiums for all children.

Total central government budget spending on social security and social assistance services amounted to YTL24.4bn (5.0% of GDP) in 2005. However, YTL23.5bn of this amount went on transfers to social security institutions with responsibilities for pensions and health. Only YTL830m remained to be spent on assistance to the unemployed, families and children, the elderly, invalids and others without any social security. The Social Services and Child Protection Agency (SHCEK) accounts for a large part of budgetary spending on social services and for 97-100% of the budgetary spending on social services for families and children. It is best known for its residential child care facilities but also operates various other institutions and programmes. Spending by SHCEK has been increasing and is about 0.4% of GDP.

Outside the budget, the Social Assistance and Solidarity Fund (SYDF or SYDTF), one of the extra-budgetary funds, also provides social assistance, financed mainly by statutory shares of tax and other public revenues. It is through this fund that conditional cash transfers are made to poor families in return for their children's attendance at school and uptake of family and child health services. The Fund's spending has been increasing from a low base. The extra-budgetary funds are to be restructured and legislation on social assistance is still pending, following the recent health and social security reform legislation. These changes could lead to more accurate targeting of the use of the Fund's resources.

Expenditures for children are also made by various other ministries, such as the Ministry of Justice or the Ministry of Culture. However, these are not individually quantified. Likewise, some tax expenditure schemes are likely to benefit children. These include a corporate or personal income tax exception for earnings of educational institutions, a VAT reduction for donations of hardware and software for schools, the deductibility of family education, health, food, rent and clothing expenditures from the personal income tax base, and corporate and personal income tax allowances for donations to schools, health facilities and students hostels - in particular, the "100% education" campaign, whereby donations in kind and cash for the provision or repair of new school buildings, classrooms and equipment have been 100% tax-deductible since 2003.

**Trends in social spending:**

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
	outturn	outturn	allocation	allocation	allocation	allocation
<b>Total central government budget educational services expenditure</b>						
YTLm	16,619	18,718	21,552	33,618	36,189	38,838
% GDP approx.	3.9	3.8	4.0	5.4	5.2	5.0
<b>Total central government budget health services expenditure</b>						
YTLm	4,963	7,335	8,135	7,392	7,742	7,928
% GDP approx.	1.2	1.5	1.5	1.2	1.1	1.0
<b>Total SHCEK budget</b>						
YTLm	267	326	512	792	828	853
% GDP approx.	0.06	0.07	0.10	0.13	0.12	0.11
<b>Health expenditures of social security institutions</b>						
YTLm	12,684	13,963	14,476*	n/a	n/a	n/a
% GDP approx.	2.9	2.9	2.6	-	-	-
<b>Expenditures of revolving funds attached to Health Ministry</b>						
YTLm	4,002	6,582	8,330*	8,988**	n/a	n/a
% GDP approx.	0.9	1.4	1.5	1.4	-	-
<b>Total expenditure of Social Solidarity and Assistance Fund</b>						
YTLm	1,275	1,305	1,252*	1,300**	n/a	n/a
% GDP approx.	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	-	-

\* estimated outturn. \*\*programmed. Source: Ministry of Finance 2007 budget bill documents

#### 4. DEVELOPMENT AND USE OF MONITORING INSTRUMENTS TO TRACK WFFC AND MDG TARGETS

Turkish official bodies produce a wide range of data which can be used for monitoring the achievement of WFFC and Millennium Development Goal (MDG) targets. Additional monitoring instruments are also being developed, with a view to providing more specific information relevant to children, disaggregated by location and gender.

Existing data series include, in brief:

\* The national population census, carried out once every ten years –most recently in 2000 – and the extensive range of environmental, demographic, economic and social statistics published regularly by the Turkish Statistical Institute (TUIK or Turkstat, formerly the State Institute of Statistics). As of 2003, Turkstat has been publishing surveys of household income and consumption distribution on an annual basis. It has also developed an annual poverty study, which measures the level of poverty according to various definitions, and makes it possible – *inter alia* – to track the incidence of children living in poverty, depending on family size, region and urban or rural environment.

\* The five-yearly Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) published by the Institute of Population Studies of Hacettepe University in Ankara. The survey provides essential information with respect to fertility trends and practices and infant and child mortality, as well as household characteristics, the status of women, the take-up of health services, child nutrition, immunisation and childcare practices. The 2003 survey was carried out in 2003-4 and published in late 2004.

\* The statistics gathered by the various ministries and other government departments concerning developments and activities in their own fields. An example is the annual education statistics published by the Ministry of National Education, giving the enrolment rates for boys and girls at various levels of education and types of schools by province as well as information on numbers of schools, classrooms and teachers.

Developments specifically related to monitoring the achievement of WFFC and MDG can be summed up as follows:

\* In addition to the CRC check-list, to strengthen national monitoring and evaluation systems and capacities, a matrix of child-centred social indicators spanning health, education, child protection and social policy was developed in 2002-2004, so that data could be collected in line with these indicators on a province-by-province basis. As of 2005, all provinces began to measure and report on the indicators, although their use in planning and budgeting remained minimal. In 2005-6, a revision of the matrix was carried out, with a view to matching the indicators more closely to the MDGs. The indicators were revised and finalised and a consensus on them was reached among all government sectors at a one-day workshop held under the coordination of the Ministry of the Interior (MoI) in early April 2006. The indicators are consistent with the MDGs, the CRC and EU child-related social inclusion indicators, and are disaggregated by gender. Turkstat also developed a manual which sets out the exact definition, means of calculation and source of data for each indicator. First attempts to collect and compile data from all provinces in line with the revised 25 Quality of Life indicators will commence in 2007.

\* Software has been developed and training has been provided to for the collection and monitoring of the 25 Quality of Life indicators and officials of relevant government bodies have learned to use the software and train others in its use. The software accommodates the 25 Quality of Life indicators and the related MDGs, EU social exclusion indicators as well as MDG 2006 and SOWCR 2006 indicators. The MoI and Turkstat will be responsible for coordination and monitoring.

\* The 25 Quality of Life indicators and software were launched through a series of two regional workshops held for deputy provincial governors and provincial planning directors in 2006. All provinces are now equipped to use the revised set of quality of life indicators to collect, analyse and report data on children and to use it for budgeting purposes and for measuring and reporting on progress on the quality of life of children in provinces.

\* Meanwhile, the State Planning Organisation and the UN country team published a report on progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in 2005.

## 5. ENHANCING PARTNERSHIPS, ALLIANCES FOR CHILDREN AND PARTICIPATION

Within the five years that have elapsed since the World Summit For Children, the number of organisations and individuals joining forces for the benefit of children in Turkey has increased considerably, both within and without the public sector.

Among international organisations, besides the UN agencies headed by UNICEF, the European Union and its member states have become much more important partners for children within the past few years.

Within government, the relevant departments of the Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of Health have continued to play key roles, together with the Prime Ministry Social Services and Child Protection Agency (SHCEK). However, other government agencies have also become increasingly involved, in one way or another, in programmes and projects aimed at children. Such agencies include the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Turkish Statistical Institute (Turkstat), the Social Solidarity and Assistance Fund, the Population Department, the Southeast Anatolia Administration and others. At the local level, provincial and district governors are directly involved in education and health campaigns, the collection of information and social work for disadvantaged groups, and have set up child rights committees. This is also starting to be the case for municipalities.

Outside the public sector, the number of pressure groups and voluntary organisations concerned with children has been growing. These range from the bar associations with their child rights committees to groups organising volunteers to start parenting education. The latter have played their part in areas like girls' education campaigns and parenting education. The vogue for social responsibility has not by-passed the Turkish private sector, and several multinationals, Turkish-owned companies, private foundations and individual benefactors have contributed to the construction of schools or chosen to sponsor projects and campaigns in areas as diverse as girls' education, promotion of breast-feeding, salt iodisation and child participation.

The active participation of children and adolescents was always intended to be an integral part of monitoring and evaluating the activities planned in the NPA. Indeed, children were involved right from the start.

Turkish ratification of the CRC led to a campaign to raise awareness about child rights. This was followed by a National Children's Congress in 2002. The Congress in turn decided to set up a national Children's Forum, which was to come to consist of one boy and one girl from each province. The Forum was initiated in 2000 by SHCEK, the national agency which had taken on responsibility for monitoring implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

During the third Children's Forum on November 19-20 2002, children from all Turkey's 81 provinces came together to work on the first draft of the NPA. A few months later, 550 children from all over Turkey conducted a final review of the NPA. It was this version, with the opinions of children, which was distributed to all related institutions and organisations and approved by all the sectors.

Since 2004, the meetings of the Forum have focused on child rights training - in which Forum delegates learn from their peers how to train children in their own provinces on topics like children's rights, communication skills, effective learning methods, gender discrimination, conflict resolution and protection from violence.

Important decisions were taken in 2006. Efforts were made to energise the child rights committees which had been set up at the provincial level at the time of the inauguration of the Children's Forum. Each province has a child rights committee made up of children

themselves, and a child rights committee made up of adult representatives of various sectors. Two members of the children's committee also sit on the adult committee.

Children attending the seventh annual gathering of the Child Forum in 2006 launched a new campaign to promote and raise awareness about child rights, and to boost children's participation in decision-taking at all levels. The "Rights of the Child Promotion Campaign" will go ahead in twenty-five provinces spanning the entire country from Tekirdag to Hakkari. The first phase of the campaign will last until November 20, 2007, and will be managed entirely by children. The provinces in question have been chosen because they have active child rights committees and/or are candidates for the Child Friendly City initiative being conducted by the Ministry of the Interior.

The children plan to print brochures, posters, T-shirts, hats, mugs and newspapers; to stage competitions, tournaments, exhibitions, theatrical performances, picnics, walks, torchlight processions and regattas; to shoot films, visit officials, fly kites and plant trees. Some will be working with children in detention, disabled children, children on the streets, children in institutions, children requiring special education or children out of school. Others will be tackling rural health services, the quality of education, birth registration, substance abuse, family planning, earthquake readiness and traffic congestion.

In support of the campaign, SHCEK is leading a technical committee including representatives of the Ministries of the Interior, Health, National Education, Labour and Justice, NGOs, municipalities, the gendarmerie, the State Planning Organisation, the Turkish Statistical Institute and the public institutions responsible for broadcasting and sports. A child-friendly version of the CRC has been developed, a campaign newsletter has been designed - which will be published quarterly - and five regional meetings are being arranged for 2007.

## 6. ACHIEVEMENT OF WFFC PLANS OF ACTION AND RELATED MDG TARGETS

### 6.1 Promoting healthy lifestyles

In the area of healthy lifestyles, the NPA targets a reduction in the infant and child mortality rate, better antenatal and postnatal care, reduced prevalence of micronutrient deficiency among women and children, a reduced maternal mortality rate, an increase in the ratio of children exclusively breast-fed during the first six months, an increase in the vaccination rate for children under one year, the maintenance of polio-free status and an increase in the knowledge and capacity of families to better ensure survival, growth, psychosocial and cognitive development as well as the protection of their children.

It is clear that nobody can have a healthy life style if suffering from hunger and extreme poverty. Under Millennium Development Goal 1, Turkey is committed to eradicating extreme poverty and hunger by halving the proportion of people who suffer from hunger between 1990 and 2015. There have already been dramatic improvements with respect to the proportion of the population living on less than US\$1 per day at purchasing power parity (0.01% in 2005), the prevalence of underweight children under five years of age (4.2% in 2003) and the proportion of the population living in food poverty (0.9% in 2005). However, the share of the poorest 20% of the population in national consumption to 11% by 2015 requires more effort. Similarly, while the proportion of the population living below the food and non-food poverty line has declined considerably from over 28% until 2003 to 20.5% in 2005, there is still much progress to be made to reduce this to the targeted 13% by 2015.

There are 1.38 million live births in Turkey annually. Infant and child mortality rates have witnessed a sharp improvement in recent years. 78% of births now take place at a health facility and 83% are attended by trained health personnel. Under Millennium Development Goal 5, Turkey is committed to reducing the maternal mortality rate by three quarters between 1990 and 2015. A major national survey conducted in 2005-6 put the maternal mortality rate for Turkey as a whole at 28.4 per 100,000 live births. This compares to a figure of 49.2 arrived at by the Ministry of Health in 1997-1998. As this earlier figure was based on hospital records collected from 53 provinces, it was probably an underestimate. The improvement may reflect urbanisation, better education of women and lower fertility as well as better health care. Further reductions in maternal mortality depend on improvements in rural areas and far-flung regions. The new survey puts maternal mortality is 20.7 per 100,000 in urban areas but 40.3 in rural areas. The "East Black Sea" and "Northeast Anatolia" regions still have maternal mortality ratios as high as 68.3.

As of 2003, the under-five mortality rate per 1,000 live births had come down to 37 from over 50 ten years earlier, and the infant mortality rate had fallen to 29 per thousand from over 40 ten years earlier. Turkey is therefore hopeful of achieving its targets of 20.7 for under-five mortality and 17.5 for infant mortality by 2015 under Millennium Goal 4. Once again, however, this will require greater attention to communities which are hard to reach due to distance and/or low educational and income levels. In rural areas 31% of pregnant women give birth unattended by any trained personnel. This rises to 47.7% in eastern parts of the country. In these communities, acute respiratory infections and diarrhoea still pose major risks to the lives of infants.

Although over 95% of women breastfeed, exclusive breastfeeding during the first six months is relatively low at 21%. About 8% of babies have low birthweight. The rate of moderate stunting is 15% for children in the age group of 24-59 months. One out of every 8 children under age five is shorter than the expected height for his/her age. Stunting is a serious problem especially in Eastern Anatolia (22.5%). This rate may get as high as 26% for children of mothers with more than 6 children. According to a 2005 survey the household use of iodised salt was only 69.5%. However, recent regulatory changes are likely to have raised this figure, reducing iodine deficiency-related disorders.

The rate of vaccination against measles was put at only 79.4% in 2003. However, the recent measles vaccination campaigns have raised this to 95%. If the momentum can be sustained, the target of 100% vaccination under Millennium Development Goal 4 may be achieved ahead of the 2015 schedule. As of 2005, the routine immunisation coverage rates were 88% for BCG, 90% for DPT3/OPV3, 90% for measles, 85% for Hepatitis B, and 47% for Td2+-. Turkey has polio free status as the last reported case of polio was in 1998.

The number of disabled people in Turkey was 8.5 million for the year 2002, meaning that 12.29% of Turkey's population was disabled. The ratio of orthopedic, visual, auditory, language and mental disabilities in the age group 0-9 was found out to be 1.54%, whereas the ratio in the age group 10-19 was 1.96%. Children with chronic diseases in the age group 0-9 constituted 2.60% and children in the age group 10-19 constituted 2.67% of the population. According to the research, 55.7% of the disabled people had access to health services. The Social Services and Child Protection Agency (SHCEK) provides services to the disabled, and ongoing legislative changes will provide them with free social security.

Under Millennium Development Goal 7, Turkey is committed to halving the number of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and sanitation. Available information suggests that Turkey is close to achieving this, with 90.9% of the population benefiting from safe drinking water in 2003 compared to 83.1% in 1994, and 86.5% enjoying safe sanitation compared to 67.4%.

## 6.2 Promoting quality education

Millennium Development Goals 2 and 3 require Turkey to achieve universal primary education by 2015 at the latest, and to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2015 or preferably 2005. The targets of Millennium Development Goal 2 also envisage that as of 2015, 100% of primary school entrants should reach grade 5, and that 100% of 15-25 year-olds should be literate.

These objectives are enshrined in the NPA. With a view to promoting quality education, the NPA also aims: to reduce the number of students per class; to increase the use of computer technology at all levels starting with primary education; to improve school infrastructure and equipment endowment; to establish support and preventative services for adolescents; to extend compulsory education to 12 years; to increase special education opportunities for the disabled; to improve the vocational/apprenticeship training system, and to create alternative learning opportunities for children who are outside the educational system.

According to national data derived from household labour force surveys, literacy in the 15-25 age group was 95.6% in 2004—up from 92.8% in 1990. For men, the figure was 98.0% but for women it was only 93.3%. For the entire population aged over 15, the 2000 census put literacy at 94.4% among men but 78.5% among women. There is a widespread network of adult education centres, one of the functions of which is to provide literacy courses. 175,229 people attended such courses in 2005.

The Turkish Statistical Institute (Turkstat) estimated that in 2005, there were about 9.5 million children in the 0-6 age group and 16 million children in the 7-18 age group. By 2005, it was anticipated that 25% of the relevant age groups should be enrolled in pre-school education, 100% in primary education and 75% in secondary education. In fact, the actual coverage for the year 2005 was 20% in preschool, 90% (gross 95.6%) in primary education (ages 6-14) and 57% (gross 85%) in secondary education (ages 15-18).

Pre-school enrolment, mainly in reception classes in state primary schools, has risen to 25% for the 2006-7 school year. These figures apply to the 60 to 72-month age group. Enrolment at younger ages is much more limited due to limited provision in the public sector.

The figure for primary school enrolment represents a considerable improvement over the 75% recorded in 1990. The extension of compulsory schooling from five years to eight in

1997 was followed by a rapid increase in the number of Regional Boarding Schools and Primary Schools with Accommodation, which now have a boarding capacity of 195,958. In addition, school bus services were introduced for children in sparsely distributed rural settlements. 679,589 children benefited from school bussing services the school year 2005-2006.

Nevertheless, there is still some way to go before universal primary school education can be achieved. Achieving the Millennium Development Goal target depends on ensuring that girls enrol in primary school and do not drop out, and on improving enrolment rates in far-flung regions.

In 2005-6, net primary enrolment was provisionally put at 87.16% for girls compared to 92.29% for boys. There is also a significant drop-out rate among girls in grades 6-8. According to figures published by the Turkish Statistical Institute (Turkstat ), net primary schooling ratios in 2002 ranged from 100% in a number of the most developed western and northwestern provinces to 63.6% in the Eastern province of Bitlis. For girls, the spread was from 100% to 54.07%.

It is clear from these figures that it has not been possible to eliminate gender disparity in primary education by 2005, as intended under Millennium Development Goal 3. It is now hoped to do so in 2007. Nevertheless, the situation has been improving: in 1990, the ratio of girls to boys in the first eight years of education was 84%; it has since surpassed 90%.

Although there have been improvements in all levels of education with regards to the infrastructure and supply of teachers, the quality of education is still negatively affected by shortages in physical infrastructure and human resources, double sessions and overcrowded classes along with, where rural schools are concerned, the merging of students from different grades.

Class sizes are sometimes as large as 50 or more, especially in fast-growing cities where the child population is swollen by migration. For 2002, Turkstat put the national teacher-pupil ratio in primary education at 26, but reported ratios as high as 33 for Istanbul and 33-45 for numerous Eastern and Southeastern provinces. The NPA foresees a normal class size of 30.

Secondary schools enjoy relatively larger resources, but costs of schooling and transport, the need for children's labour and low family and child perceptions of the benefits all appear to limit enrolment. Net enrolment is 61.13% for boys but only 51.95% for girls. According to the Turkish Statistical Institute figures for 2002, net secondary schooling ratios ranged from 68% in Ankara (69% for girls) to 11% (6% for girls) in Sirnak in the Southeast. The ratio of girls to boys in secondary education has nevertheless risen over the years from about 65% in 1990 to about 75% in 2005.

Secondary schools are divided into general secondary schools and technical and vocational secondary schools. The former are in the majority, and aim to prepare their students for university entrance. However, pressure for limited university places is intense. Public debate focuses on the nature of the university selection examination, which has also spawned a large cramming school sector, and the need for expanded and improved vocational and technical secondary education.

While there has been some progress in the introduction and promotion of new technologies in education, the average number of students per computer remains at 48, compared to ten in EU countries. Foreign language education is another area in which improvements are targeted.

### 6.3 Child protection against abuse, exploitation and violence

In line with the Millennium Declaration, the NPA advocates the establishment of a protective environment for socially excluded children, including children with disabilities, working children, children living and forced to work on the streets, children living outside parental care

in state-run institutions and children in conflict with the law. Specifically, the NPA aims to: increase awareness about child rights violations including violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect; minimize the ratio of children working or living on the streets, in need of protection, in need of special education, in conflict with the law, and in closed institutions; promote the establishment of preventive measures and alternative models of care, protection and parenting education; ensure that national legislation complies with international instruments, including the CRC; train professionals working in the juvenile justice system and child protection services to establish minimum standards of care and protection for children living outside parental care and promote a child friendly justice system. A large number of initiatives have been taken in these areas in recent years. Legislation has been changed and new models are being implemented. Data collected in future years is therefore expected to point to improvements.

Many families continue to rely on their children's labour in family enterprises in agriculture and other sectors and at home. Others need the income which their children earn. According to the Child Labour Force Survey (1999), 10.2% (1.6 million children) of 16.9 million children in the 6-17 age group were employed in economic enterprises. While two-thirds of these working children were in the 15-17 age group, about half a million were aged 6-14. In all, 942,000 children were working in agriculture, 357,000 in industry and 337,000 in trade and other services. Three-fifths of the children concerned worked as unpaid labourers on family farms, in family shops or in other family businesses. The remainder earned wages or ran micro-businesses of their own. Turkey's child labourers include agricultural workers migrating seasonally from one region to another, children selling goods on the streets of major cities, children sorting waste and children performing menial, exhausting or repetitive tasks in repair shops and factories. 61.7% of children who were employed in economic enterprises were boys and 38.3% were girls. 52.1% of children working in economic enterprises worked 40 hours or more a week. 62.6% of them earned less than the minimum wage. Long working hours negatively affect children's development and prevent them from attending school. A high proportion of working children are also affected by work accidents or occupational diseases. The 1999 survey also showed that 29.7% of children aged 6-17 (4.8 million children) were engaged in domestic work. According to the 1999 survey, over 40% of girls and 15% of boys aged 6-17 were engaged in such work, which is often made necessary by large family size or by the death, illness, injury or absence of a parent.. More recent data on child labour will become available in 2007. Urbanisation, economic development and longer years of schooling may have helped to reduce some forms of child labour.

Turkey ratified the ILO Convention on the Minimum Age for Employment in 1998 and the Convention concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour in 2001. The Labour Law of 2003 states that children under the age of 15 cannot be admitted into lawful employment. There are also limits on the areas in which persons under 18 can be employed, their working conditions and their working hours.

The struggle against child labour in Turkey began with the International Child Labour Prevention Programme (IPEC) of ILO in 1992. In the years from 1992-2006, 101 projects were implemented in the context of the IPEC program with the participation of relevant government ministries, trade unions and confederations, non-governmental organizations, local governments and universities. Since 1993, eight projects carried out by the Labor Inspection Board have assisted 60,000 working children and their siblings. These children were withdrawn from work and channeled into schools.

The number of children working on the streets is thought to number tens of thousands. The phenomenon is most common in large urban centres receiving migration from rural areas. In poor urban districts, where families face tough economic conditions, more and more children are moving away from routine parental control. Typically, children start to work on the street from age of 10-12, although some are even younger. 90% are boys. They face many risks including violence, physical and sexual abuse, being forced to commit crime by others, substance addiction, chronic and contagious diseases, unhealthy living conditions and

unbalanced nutrition. Most children working/employed on the streets maintain ties with their families and go back home daily, even if it is very late at night. These children face the risk of becoming full-time street children. Among the children working on the streets, many are school dropouts, while there are also some who have never been to school. A new service model for children on the streets is being rolled out to high-risk provinces.

Recent years have seen an increase in the number of children coming into contact with the law, particularly on theft and robbery charges. Meanwhile, a series of legislative and administrative measures have been adopted so as to bring Turkey into line with the provisions of the CRC in this respect. Key legislation includes Turkey's first-ever Child Protection Law, enacted in 2005, and amendments to the penal code and related legislation. Aims include minimising custody and imprisonment, accelerating trials, ensuring privacy, preventing interruption to children's education, encouraging rehabilitation and ensuring that child suspects and offenders are handled only by police child branches, child courts, child penitentiaries and professionals and personnel trained in dealing with children. The minimum age of criminal responsibility has been raised from 11 years to 12. A probation system has been established, remission of sentence increased, and arrests prohibited in most cases for under-15s. Special arrangements have been made for child victims and child witnesses of crime and violence. The number of child courts has been increased.

As of January 2002, all 81 provinces had police child branches and 43 had fully equipped childcare units. Separately, crime prevention centres for children have been established in major cities. In 2004, 1,310 of every 100,000 children appeared as defendants in criminal courts. Compared to 1994, the number of children brought before criminal courts was up by 48.5%. Nine out of every ten children tried were boys. As juvenile courts had still not been expanded throughout the country, only 34 out of every 100 children were tried by juvenile courts. Even so, the number children receiving custodial sentences fell from 6,254 in 2000 to 4,523 in 2004. The full separation of child offenders from adults through the establishment of child detention centers and supervision houses has not yet been achieved. These indicators are thought to have started to improve with the implementation of new measures.

For children obliged to live without parental care, the Social Services and Child Protection Agency (SHÇEK) runs childcare institutions and orphanages. As of April 2006, there were 100 childcare centers and 111 orphanages, providing protection and care for 22,273 children. Children are mostly placed in care due to economic difficulties, followed by the death of parents and abandonment. In line with a change in policy in favour of ensuring that children remain with their families, extremely poor parents are given support in cash and in kind as an alternative to placing their children in care. The number of families receiving aid rose by 70% between 2001 and 2005 to reach 19,735. Only 4% of children in need of protection are given to foster families. However, efforts are being made to make the foster family service more widespread. The average figure for adoption is around 500 children annually.

SHÇEK also manages day nurseries, child and youth centres, centres for children working on the street and rehabilitation centres. Moreover, as of 2005, there are 69 SHÇEK care and rehabilitation centers serving 5,195 disabled persons. However, this is a small proportion of the total number of the disabled, many of whom remain invisible. Some services are also provided for women seeking refuge and for refugees and their children. All these services require further expansion.

Urbanisation and higher levels of education are reducing the phenomenon of child marriage and childbirth: according to the national Demographic and Health Survey for 2003, the percentage of women aged 15-19 who had already given birth or were pregnant was 8%, compared to 10% in 1998. However, forced and informal marriages, honour killings and suspicious suicides among young women are commonly reported in some parts of the country. Violence against children in the home or at school is a problem, although corporal

punishment is outlawed. There is little information on sexual abuse of children within and outside the family.

#### 6.4 Combating HIV/AIDS

The first case of AIDS in Turkey was diagnosed in 1985. The number of reported HIV positive and AIDS cases was 2,412 in the 1985-2006 period. This figure includes 612 officially reported cases of AIDS and 1,800 persons infected with HIV. Due to deficiencies in the surveillance system and health information network, it is almost certain that the actual number of cases is much higher than officially reported. Nevertheless, Turkey continues to have a low level of AIDS by international standards. At the same time, there is a danger that HIV/AIDS prevalence will increase in view of the young population, the relative lack of public information and life skills-based education and limited knowledge of the extent of condom use, the rapid rise in HIV/AIDS in neighbouring countries, the large number of tourists visiting Turkey every year (about 20 million),

Most officially reported HIV/AIDS cases are concentrated in the age group 15-39. This means that two thirds of individuals with HIV/AIDS first contracted the virus while they were in their 20s. According to the statistics of the MoH, there were 51 HIV positive children under age 15 in the period 1985-2006. In the same period, there were 59 HIV positive children in the age group 15-19 and 305 young people in the age group 20-24. The total number of mother to child transmission cases was 41.

According to the statistics, heterosexual intercourse is the most common route of HIV transmission in Turkey (1,279 cases). The route of transmission was unknown in 709 cases. Homo/bisexual intercourse seems to be the third most common cause of transmission (197 cases), followed by IV drug use (117 cases).

There is a National AIDS Commission, established in 1996. The Commission is chaired by the Minister of Health and the Association for Family Planning, a national non-governmental organization, conducts its secretarial work. Revised national objectives and strategies have been adopted for 2006-2010.

## 7. SUMMARY OF LESSONS LEARNED, INITIATIVES UNDERTAKEN AND FUTURE PLANS

Since the UN Special Session on Children in 2002, the outcome document 'A World Fit For Children' has informed Turkey's policies in the key areas of Promoting Healthy Lives, Promoting Quality Education, Protecting Against Abuse, Exploitation and Violence, and Combating HIV/AIDS. The National Plan of Action was drawn up swiftly with widespread participation. The Millennium Development Goals and other goals for children have also been included in the Ninth National Development Plan and other planning documents and accords concluded during this period.

This planning process and the concerns of the political authority and public opinion have led to the launching of a large number of initiatives including a major girls' education campaign, amendments to the primary school and pre-school curricula, an increase in the length of secondary education, a new regulation concerning education for those with special needs, a strategy and action plan against violence in educational environments, measles and maternal and neonatal tetanus vaccination campaigns, changes in social security legislation, steps towards a strategy for combating child poverty, the adoption by Parliament of a first-ever Child Protection Law and other legislative improvements for children in conflict with the law and new policies for children obliged to live without parental care. This is in addition to ongoing efforts in areas like mother and child care and immunisation. Children's issues have moved up the national agenda, and parliamentary enquiries have been held concerning children on the street, violence against women and children and violence in schools.

Public revenues have been increasing in real terms in line with the strong growth of the economy in recent years, and it is expected that the completion of a structural adjustment programme, which has reduced the burden of debt, will make it possible to direct more funds towards social sectors benefiting children. Meanwhile, the full use of a new set of quality of life indicators, alongside the existing range of quantitative data, will make it possible to measure progress towards the Millennium Development Goals and the aims of the WFFC in a more accurate and timely manner—and on a province-by-province basis as well as nationally.

Also heartening is the ever-growing number of organisations and individuals joining forces for the benefit of children, ranging from huge international organisations like the European Union to small NGOs. Within government, the Ministry of National Education, Ministry of Health and Social Services and Child Protection Agency (SHCEK) are being joined by numerous other agencies. Local government and the private sector are also starting to play their part.

With respect to child participation, the national Children's Forum, set up as a sequel to ratification of the CRC, played a part in the preparation of the NPA. Since then, the Forum and the associated provincial children's rights committees, also made up of children, have engaged in new activities, culminating in the 2006-7 "Rights of the Child Promotion Campaign", which will be managed entirely by children.

Circumstances are ripe for Turkey to build on the progress which it has already made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals and the ideals of a world fit for children. However, as a large middle-income country with important regional variations, Turkey is having to face issues arising in developed and developing countries alike. While the proportion of the population living on less than a dollar a day is only one per thousand, the proportion of the population living below the food and non-food poverty line is still around 20%, with 13% targeted by 2015. Likewise, the national education and health systems are widely developed, maternal and infant and child mortality rates have been falling steeply and primary education has increased—but routine immunisation rates fall just short of 90%, illiteracy has not been eliminated entirely, and net eight-year primary school enrolment is incomplete, with significant rates of non-participation in poorer provinces and especially

among girls. Accordingly, the challenge now is to ensure availability and take-up of quality services in far-flung regions and urban districts with rapidly-growing populations. At the same time there is demand for more and better services, for example in pre-school education and quality technical and vocational education.

In line with the Millennium Declaration, the NPA advocates the establishment of a protective environment for socially excluded children, including children with disabilities, working children, children living and forced to work on the streets, children living outside parental care in state-run institutions and children in conflict with the law. A large number of initiatives have been taken in these areas in recent years. Legislation has been changed and new models are being implemented. The number of working children, which was 1.6 million in 1999 (0.5 million for 6-14 year-olds), may be falling due to urbanisation, economic development and longer years of schooling, but tens of thousands of children may still be working on the streets in major cities. Recent years have seen an increase in the number of children coming into contact with the law. The implementation of new laws improving the juvenile justice system has still to be completed. Some 20,000 children are still living in childcare centres and orphanages, although current policies favour care in the family environment. Existing services for the disabled require further expansion. There is public concern about issues like child poverty, violence against children, early marriage, honour killings and sexual abuse of children.

The number of reported HIV positive and AIDS cases was 2,412 in the 1985-2006 period (612 AIDS; 1,800 HIV). Due to deficiencies in the surveillance system and health information network, it is almost certain that the actual number of cases is much higher than officially reported. Monitoring will be improved and vigilance and educational efforts will continue in view of the young population, the rapid rise in HIV/AIDS in neighbouring countries and the large number of tourists visiting Turkey every year.

The updated NPA will encourage and assist government agencies in developing strategies and monitoring progress towards the ideals of the Millennium Development Goals and the World Fit For Children statement. From now on, more use is also expected to be made of the NPA in creating public awareness, maintaining commitment and lobbying for the necessary allocations of funds. In 2007, Child Intersectoral Board is to be convened to discuss overall strategy, and Minister of State Nimet Çubukçu, the minister responsible for women and children, is expected to launch and champion the NPA, and help to familiarise parliamentarians with it.