Statement of Kazakhstan

at the 4th Forum for Child Rights Protection "Creating inclusive policies, systems and services for children with disabilities ", Dushanbe, August 2013

Dear Forum’s participants and guests!

First of all, let me thank the Government of Tajikistan and UNICEF Regional Office for giving me an opportunity to participate in the Forum and to share Kazakhstan’s experience in the social protection of children with disabilities.

Dear colleagues!

For many years we in our country, like other Central Asian countries, shared idea that the best support for the disabled is the state care and cash transfers. But these days we acquired a new understanding of the need to support children with disabilities.

So, Kazakhstan began to modernize the approaches by their inclusion into social life, identification and elimination of existing barriers, creating an environment that helps them feel themselves useful and necessary for the society.

Today Kazakhstan has over 500,000 people with disabilities, of whom 67,000 are children.

Last year 152 thousand children with special needs were identified. 83,7% covered by the training programmes, including 93.4% covered by the special education programmes, 79.6% by pre-schools and a half of children of early age.
Special (correctional) pre-school and school establishments and special education classes (groups) of educational establishments provide schooling to every 7th child.

At present, 12 thousand children (7.7%) get education in special classes and groups with partial integration and over than 20 thousand children are integrated into regular classes and groups. 7% get training in private educational establishments, health care and social protection facilities, vocational schools and colleges.

6% of children get home schooling, and for the first time special budget was allocated for step-by-step 3-year plan of acquisition of computers, assistive technology devices and connection to the Internet.

Unfortunately, a) for various reasons 6.6% of children and adolescents are temporarily out of school training. Every 5th child of preschool age and more than a half of early age children are not covered by rehabilitational pedagogies; b) older way of placing children into the specialized kindergartens and special boarding schools; c) there are good laws, but there is no clear implementation mechanism to achieve better results for children.

One of the first post-Soviet countries in 2009 we adopted the law "On special social services", which introduced the integrated system for the provision of social services by combining medical, psychological, educational, cultural, legal, economic, personal and employment services. The human and financial resources of the social work system were improved. New approaches made the shift from the medical diagnostics to the development of social skills. Positive change was made in the behavior of parents from abandonment to willingness to upbring children in the family.

In order to provide social support and to improve the lives of children with disabilities, the state guarantees the following benefits:

- special state’s disability benefit;
- benefit for the person raising a child with disability in a size of one minimal salary from 2010, so parents now can care for a child up to the age of 18.

Regional authorities may provide additional forms of support based on their decision.

Children with disabilities are provided with prosthetic and orthopedic care, cecity-Surdo tools, wheelchairs, spa treatment and essential hygienic products according to the state programme of individual rehabilitation.

At the same time, Kazakhstan is the only CIS country, which legally approved and adopted the rules allowing establish conditions for the development of barrier-free educational environment.

So, the State Education Development Program by 2020 identified concrete steps in development of inclusive education system, recognition of the right of all children for education with no exception, rejection of “uneducable child” concept became the key factor of educational policy for persons with special needs.

Another important point for improvement of social protection for persons with disabilities was signing of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by the President N.A. Nazarbaev in 2008.
In order to establish conditions for ratification of the Convention in the country, the Action Plan was developed to promote the rights and to improve quality of life of the people with disabilities in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2012-2018 period. The Plan is an important 2 phased step towards meeting the obligation to provide an access to services, leisure and barrier free environment for the wellbeing of persons with disabilities including children prior to the ratification of the Convention before 2018.

Recommendations made by the persons with disabilities at the development stage allowed to introduce different measures into the Plan to establish fundamental conditions to ensure the rights of persons with disabilities in key areas of wellbeing and aiming at barrier free integration into the society by 2018.

During the last few years changes were made in the laws. It is planned to introduce more amendments into a set of legal acts, align existing norms in education, health care, culture, sports, employment, urban development, information and communications, including upgrades of housing and the provision of special transportation means to the people with disabilities. The draft law on minimum social standards is being discussed.

A great attention is given to the purposeful systematic approach to positive public attitudes towards disability issues. Since changing the psychology, mindset of people is not an easy task, but an important one if we want to achieve better results projected by the present Child protection Forum. In this regard, the media plan was approved and the special section on public domain was introduced, the first national contest "Different=Equal" is being conducted and an action plan is currently developed to declare 2015 the Year of Equal Opportunities.

The pre-natal and neonatal screening was introduced with the focus on pre-delivery diagnosis. Early prevention of inborn and inherited illnesses, identification of motor-skeleton deficiencies, hearing or eyesight functions, monitoring of growth and development of children under 5 with the specific focus on psycho-neurological development of children at the primary health care level, development of rehabilitation services.

NGOs including the associations established by people with disabilities who are the members of the Coordinating Council on social protection of persons with disabilities under the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan, make direct contribution to the development of suggestions to improve the system of social protection of persons with disabilities and to ensure their rights and interests. A person with disability was appointed to be the Adviser for the Minister of Labor and Social Protection.

The achievements of Kazakhstan in promotion and support of people with disabilities in making decisions related to them was recognized by an international competition announced by the UN Development Programme in 2012.

Truly, there are more issues than the positive outcomes, but willing to change the things in a strategic way, systematically and fundamentally, our delegation brought central and local level representatives to gain new ideas at the Forum and focus our efforts on:
- early detection, prevention and rehabilitation of disability, i.e. developmental activities for young children with special needs in development;
- transition to the International Classification of Functional Disability and Health, which in turn will help to increase the effectiveness of rehabilitation programmes for the children with disabilities.
- identification and elimination of barriers by enabling access and participation of children with disabilities in all spheres of life;
- development of integrated services and measures to assist families with children with disabilities, allowing implementation of alternative approaches in dealing with this category of children;
- raising public awareness on the problems of persons with disabilities to promote favorable environment for their effective adaptation.

Thank you for your attention!