1. Definitions and stipulated rights of children with disabilities in Turkmenistan

a. Definition of disability as per law of Turkmenistan

According to the Code of Turkmenistan 'On social protection of the population', a person with disability is a "person with long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments as a result of which he or she has limited opportunities for full and effective participation in society". This definition also applies to children with disabilities. According to the law on 'Protection of the health of the Population' children with disabilities are determined as "children with defects of physical and psychological development as well as children with consistent health conditions". Finally, the law on 'Education' defines children with disabilities as "citizens with limited health, i.e., those who have physical and psychological disabilities."

b. Changes in the legislative and policy framework stipulating the rights of children with disabilities in Turkmenistan

In the last five years, the most noticeable legislative change concerning the rights of children with disabilities has been the introduction of three new legislations: Social Protection Code (adopted in 2012) with expanded provisions; "Education law" – with new clauses on inclusiveness and new Housing code (adopted in 2013). Furthermore, approved in May 2011, the 'National Programme of Turkmenistan for the Early Development of the Child and his/her Preparation for School for the Period of 2011-2015' (NP-ECD) is a major entry point for influencing the direction of the Government of Turkmenistan towards care and development of children with disabilities. It is also a strategic entry point to address negative stigma and social norms on disability.

Overall, several laws in Turkmenistan ensure rights and provisions for children with disabilities in the country. This includes social, economic, political and personal rights and freedoms provided in the Constitution, the Code of Turkmenistan 'On social protection of the population", the Family

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1 All data in this country profile is, unless otherwise specified, provided by the Government of Turkmenistan based on a country profile template in preparation for the 4th Child Protection Forum for Central Asia. Data from this submission comes from TransMONEE (2007, 2012), World Bank (2012), Ministry of Education and Ministry of Social Protection of Turkmenistan (2013). Based on this data, the analysis and conclusions were made by UNICEF Regional Office for CEE/CIS.
The Code of Turkmenistan, the Labour Code of Turkmenistan, the Housing Code of Turkmenistan, the Law of Turkmenistan 'On guarantees of the rights of the child', the Law of Turkmenistan 'On Education', the Law of Turkmenistan 'On Physical Culture and Sports ', the Law of Turkmenistan 'On Culture' and other legislative acts of Turkmenistan. Discrimination against children with disabilities is prohibited and punishable by law. Protecting the rights, freedoms and legitimate interests of children with disabilities is provided by the state in accordance with the legislation of Turkmenistan. According to the Law of Turkmenistan 'On guarantees of the rights of the child', children with disabilities are entitled to a decent and full participation in society. In order to provide the basis for social support and 'adaptation' of children with disabilities, the state maintains educational, medical and rehabilitation facilities for their education, vocational training and education appropriate to their state of health. Employment of children with restrictions for health reasons is carried out by the Office of Employment. Parents and legal representatives raising children with disabilities are provided benefits foreseen in the legislation of Turkmenistan.

c. Remaining challenges in the law

Despite a number of positive provisions in the legislation of the Republic of Turkmenistan as well as changes introduced since the ratification of the CRPD, the laws aimed at protecting children with disabilities still provide the basis for creating separate services for children with disabilities and do not systematically enforce social inclusion. This is particularly noticeable within the definition of disability and assessment and identification by different sectors in the country.

2. Assessment and identification of disability by different sectors

In Turkmenistan, screenings are conducted three times during pregnancy, at the maternity facility when a newborn is examined by a neonatologist, during the first month of life when the baby is examined by health care specialists and within the home visitation scheme that covers children from 40 days to 6 years of age. Early identification and intervention services are at a very nascent stage. Currently, the Ministry of Health Care and Medical Industry in cooperation with UNICEF is working on the introduction of early identification and intervention services. The Ministry of Health is now reviewing Order 115 that governs the delivery of MCH primary health care services with the aim to strengthen child growth and development monitoring through home visitation nurses.

The way of identification of children with disabilities in education is through mandatory medical assessments carried out to enter preschool or school and during the schooling process. Once a Medical and Pedagogical Commission of Experts determines that a child with a disability is better placed in special education settings (typically referred to as specialized pre-schools and boarding schools).

When it comes to the monitoring of the health conditions of the child, this is done by a medical worker in pre-schools. The conditions of the children are checked every quarter during the academic year and once every month during the summer months. Anthropometric and other relevant information is entered into the child's medical history file. The information is then conveyed to the parents and counseling and further guidance is provided.
The latest available official information (from the State Statistics Committee) on the number of children with disabilities registered in this country is for 2005. This number is 12,082 and includes only children with disabilities below 16 years.

2. Services and supports to children with disabilities and their families in Turkmenistan

a. Social welfare and support to the families of children with disabilities

The Ministry of Education, local authorities in two velayts in Turkmenistan are piloting two community-based play centres that also support children with disabilities and their parents. Preschool teachers in two velayats (in-service professional development) are trained in child development assessment and monitoring. Nurses in these velayats are trained in early childhood care and development.

In the area of non-formal education in Turkmenistan, there are 5-6 community-based ‘rehabilitation centres’ which are run by public associations and offer a variety of classes and activities mainly related to recreation and social activities. One centre for example, is run by the National Paralympic Committee of Turkmenistan. There are also ‘interest clubs’ or ‘children's
houses’ which are open to all children, including children with disabilities, to engage in social and recreational activities such as dancing and singing. The curriculum for these clubs is developed by the Ministry of Education. Finally, the government sponsors winter and summer camps for children in which children with disabilities also participate.

Proportion of children with disabilities below 18 years of all children below 18 years in residential care

The graph above describes the proportion of children with disabilities in special boarding schools out of all children in special boarding schools, but does not include additional potential numbers of children in other forms of residential care, since this data is not available. If it is assumed that boarding schools are the only form of residential care where children with disabilities live, then they represent 87 per cent of all children living in residential care in Turkmenistan. This proportion has been progressively increasing from 83 per cent since 2005.
b. Social Assistance to Children with Disabilities

The disability pension is paid according to three groups of assessed disability: totally disabled, incapable of any work, and requiring constant care (Group I); disabled persons with reduced working capacity and occasionally requiring care (Group II); disabled persons with reduced working capacity (Group III). Eligible persons include persons disabled while in military service, children with disabilities younger than age 16, or persons disabled since childhood. Thus, the different disability types (with onset of partial or total disability) allowances include: 1st group of disability: 1.6 times the basic amount (80 USD is the basic amount)(minimum), 3.3 times the basic amount (maximum); 2nd group of disability: 1.4 times the basic amount (minimum), 3.3 times the basic amount (maximum); 3rd group of disability: 1.2 times the basic amount (minimum), 1.6 times the basic amount (maximum).

Proportion of registered children with disabilities in the country where family/child receive state financial assistance

According to the administrative data of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population, as of 1 January 2013, there were 10,900 children under the age of 16 who were receiving disability allowances. Eligible are persons who have been disabled since childhood and children with disability who are younger than 16 years of age. Procedure for obtaining cash benefits are extensively regulated in the Social Protection Code. Although the system of economic support for families and children in need is established in terms of procedures, mechanisms and institutions, there are remaining challenges with the system. For example, there are gaps in support services for families and children with disabilities at the local level, there is lack of access to information for families on the entitlements and there are often difficulties in obtaining documentation for the application process which can often be cumbersome. The graph above demonstrates that there has been an increase in the number of children receiving disability allowance.
c. Early childhood development and education for children with disabilities

There are several types of educational services for children with disabilities: kindergartens (groups), schools / boarding schools for children with hearing impairments; kindergartens (groups) for children who are visually impaired; schools / boarding schools for children who are blind or visually impaired; kindergartens (groups) for children with speech difficulties; kindergartens, schools / boarding schools for children with intellectual disabilities; kindergartens, schools / boarding schools for children with disorders of the musculoskeletal system. A medical-pedagogical commission composed of doctors, specialists and pathologists who operate at provincial, district and municipal education bodies refer children to institutions. On the basis of the provisions of special (correctional) educational institutions of various kinds, children with disabilities receive rehabilitation, remedial, developmental assistance, and an appropriate education. In cases of unspecified diagnosis, educators conduct individual examination and observation, and with the recommendations direct children to medical and educational commissions. By 2012 in Turkmenistan, there were 2,409 children with disabilities attending boarding schools for special education, 830 children with disabilities receiving home schooling and 214 children with disabilities attending specialized preschool facilities. Students in special educational institutions are on full state support. The state also bears the cost of maintaining children with disabilities in the period of their education: categories of children who receive this support, and the order and size of the support are established by the legislation of Turkmenistan. For children with minor disabilities, programmes with an individually differentiated approach to learning are offered in regular secondary schools and regular pre-schools.

Number of children with disabilities in special pre-school facilities

The number of children with disabilities in regular pre-school is unknown currently, but the number of children with disabilities in special pre-schools has been shown to be decreasing, after peaking in 2010. Why this is occurring is currently unknown.
Proportion and trend of children with disabilities receiving education services through home-schooling, in boarding schools and in regular schools

Of all children with disabilities who are part of any education programmes, 24 per cent receive home-schooling, and 70 per cent are provided education in boarding schools for special education.

Proportion and trend of children with disabilities receiving education services in boarding schools

The trend over time shows an increase in the number of children with disabilities who are provided with education, and that more children with disabilities today are receiving education. At the same time the graph also shows that the number of children with disabilities in special boarding schools remained more or less the same over time.