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

a. Definition of disability as per the law of the Republic of Uzbekistan

The official definition of a child with disabilities is provided in the law 'On guarantees of the rights of the child' of Uzbekistan as a child who “because of limited vital functions in consequence of physical, mental, sensor and / or psychic impairments” needs social assistance, protection and is recognized disabled in accordance with the procedures stipulated by law. Moreover, the same law provides the definition of “a child with disorders of physical and psychological development as a child with physical, mental, sensor and/or psychic impairments, which do not represent a serious ground for granting disability”. Besides, the law 'On social protection of people with disabilities in the Republic of Uzbekistan' defines a person with disability as a person “who due to the limitation of vital functions as a result of physical, mental, psychological and sensor disorders was recognized as a person with disability in the order established by the law and is in need of social protection and assistance (the same applies to children with disabilities). Finally, the same law says that “limitation of vital functions is full and partial loss by a person of a capacity or possibility to carry out self-service, movement, orientation, communication, control of behavior as well as possibility to study or to work”.

b. Changes in the legislative and policy framework stipulating the rights of children with disabilities in the Republic of Uzbekistan:

In Uzbekistan, the rights of children with disabilities are governed by, inter alia, the law on 'The Guarantees of the Rights of the Child' 2008, law 'On protection of health of citizens' 1996, law 'On social protection of people with disabilities in Uzbekistan' 1991, law 'On education' 1997 and law 'On charity' 2007. The law on 'The Guarantees of the Rights of the Child' of 2008 provides the legal basis for all the rights of children with disabilities. Moreover, there are a number of government regulations and decrees aiming at provision of additional support and protection of children with disabilities, such as individual rehabilitation programmes, specialised pre-school educational facilities for children with disabilities, home teaching for children with disabilities who are unable to attend regular schools due to their health

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1 All data in this country profile are, unless otherwise specified, provided by the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan based on a country profile template in preparation for the 4th Child Protection Forum for Central Asia. Data from this submission come from the State Statistical Committee, the Ministry of Public Education, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (2012). Based on this data, the analysis and conclusions were made by UNICEF Regional Office for CEE/CIS.
conditions and/or due to long treatment, and on specialized professional colleges for persons with disabilities.

The most recent changes in legal provisions and policy related to children with disabilities are encompassed in the law ‘On social protection of people with disabilities in Uzbekistan’. This law was substantially amended and enhanced on 11 July 2008 and articulates today the main provisions of state policy for persons with disabilities. The law provides a clear definitions of ‘a child with disabilities’, ‘social protection of people with disabilities’, ‘rehabilitation of people with disability’, ‘medical social expertise’, ‘limitation of vital activity of a person’. This law also envisages sanctions for violation of the rights of people with disabilities. Moreover, there were important changes introduced to the regulations administering entities such as the Medico-Psychological Commissions by specifically targeting disability criteria when making assessment for children 0-16 years of age. Finally, changes in the regulation ‘On approval of the regulation on the order of compensation payments for newly acquired rehabilitation technical aids or service” made in 2009, give people with disabilities a possibility to receive compensation for wheel-chairs, hearing aids, crutches and repairs of technical supports.

c. Remaining challenges in the law

Despite provisions and some changes in the legislative framework introduced in the last five years, the laws aimed at protecting children with disabilities still provide bases for creating separate services for children with disabilities and do not systematically enforce social inclusion. Thus, the laws promote placement of children with disabilities in specialised educational facilities if a child’s disability does not permit him/her to attend regular public school and/or pre-school. Regulations designed for assessment and identification of disability also enforce the medical approach to children with disabilities, which aims at creating specialised services and ‘correcting’ disability.

2. Assessment and identification of disability by different sectors

In the last 5 years, there have important and noticeable reforms that took place within healthcare system. Measures for improvement of the reproductive health of mothers in rural areas of the country have been introduced. This includes the supply of micronutrients to pregnant women. The regulation of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan 'State Programme of Early Identification of Congenital Diseases and Inheritiditary Diseases for Prevention of Birth of People with Disability from Childhood for the period of 2013-2017' introduces modern technologies for early identification of a wide spectrum of congenital malformations. Since 1998 the country has been implementing a project on 'screening of mothers and children'. Following on from this, treatment and rehabilitation of children with chronic disorders is carried out in specialized medical research centers. Therapy and rehabilitation is carried out at the National Research Institute of the Medical Center of Pediatrics. There are also regional health care centers, clinics, medical schools, primary health care facilities and other institutions of the country. All children with phenylketonuria diagnosed by screening all newborns receive free specialized nutrition. A system of observation of children with hypothyroidism by a specialized clinic has been established. Children with phenylpyruvic oligophrenia identified as a result of screening of newborn children also receive treatment through a policlinic and receive specialized nutrition.

Being a structural part of the policlinic, the Medical Consultative Commissions consist of various medical experts. These commissions determine disability and establish a disability status for children up to the age of 16 which gives entitlements through the Regulation of the Minister of Health and Minister of Labour and Social Protection. A medical certificate issued by the medical consultative commission that recognizes a child’s disability, serves as a basis for receiving a
disability allowance. The validity of the medical certificate is for one or two years, or up to the age of 16 years depending on the disability. Children 16 years and above are referred to a medical-labour expert commission by health policlinics. This commission establishes a disability status and the degree of impairments of functions, efficiency of medical treatment, rehabilitation potential, opportunities for social adaptation and possibilities for being involved in professional activities, and based on this establishes the level of need for social protection supports. Persons with disability up to the age of 16 and from the age of 16 are classified as 'persons with disabilities from childhood'. Taking into account the level of the disability the medical-labour commission can ask to repeat the examination of disability status once in six months, once a year or every two years. Disability status can also be assigned on a permanent basis. In reality, these commissions usually lack substantiated standards for assessment, standardized assessment methods that could be used during medical examination, and criteria for assessing the individual condition of a child.\(^2\)

Besides the above, children with disabilities (up to the age of 16) undergo a medical examination twice a year in a policlinic to assess their health status. Based on the results of this medical examination adjustments are made to the individual rehabilitation programme. In addition, children affected by hypothyroidism who receive treatment with the use of iodine-containing medicine are placed under the observation of a policlinic. Children with phenylpyruvic oligophrenia identified as a result of screening of newborn children also receive treatment via a policlinic and receive specialized nutrition.

**Number of registered children with disabilities below 18 years in the country**

![Bar chart showing the number of registered children with disabilities below 18 years in the country from 2005 to 2012.](image)

According to the latest official information, there were 81,120 children with disabilities below 18 years registered in the country by 2012. Since 2005 the total number of registered children with disabilities has decreasing by about 32 per cent. The reason for this decrease is unknown.

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3. Services and supports to children with disabilities and their families in Uzbekistan

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

In accordance with the revised law 'On social protection of people with disabilities in the Republic of Uzbekistan', every child with disabilities has a right to rehabilitation. The purpose of the programme is "restoration of their social status, abilities for self-service and different types of professional activities" which allow persons with disability to enjoy a full-value life and enjoy their rights and realize potential abilities. The medical consultative commission of the medical institution in a child's local area develops an individual programme for his/her rehabilitation.

In the system of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of Uzbekistan, there are six residential care institutions, called 'Muruvvat houses' ('Mercy' houses) for children with severe mental disabilities. These are located in Fergana, Andijan, Bukhara and Kashkadarya regions and two are located in Tashkent city. These institutions had 1,403 children with disabilities below 18 years in 2012 and are public health institutions for children with disabilities aged 4 to 18 years who have severe mental disabilities. The process of placement in these residential care institutions is carried out in accordance with the regulations on the boarding schools for children with disabilities 'Muruvvat' was approved by the Cabinet of Ministers in 2011.

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

In 2011, there were in total 34,685 children below 18 years in residential care in Uzbekistan. Out of this, 59 per cent were children with disabilities. It is important to highlight that the majority of children with disabilities in residential care in Uzbekistan reside in special boarding schools.

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3 This includes children with disabilities below 3 years in residential care, children with mental disabilities below 18 years in residential care, children with disabilities below 18 years in special boarding schools
In 2012, children with disabilities below 3 years represented 19 per cent of all children below 3 years in residential care.

b. Social assistance to children with disabilities

Social support schemes designed for improving the well-being of children with disabilities and persons who have had a disability since childhood include:

a) Monthly allowances in the amount of two minimal wages for children with disabilities under 16 and individuals over 16 having disability since childhood. The allowance is not awarded to children with disabilities who live in boarding schools or children's homes under full state support. For other children with disabilities under 16 and persons over 16 with a disability the allowance is assigned for the duration of the medical certificate that confirms the presence of disability. At the beginning of 2011, there were a total of about 232,500 recipients, including 96,200 children with disabilities under 16 and 136,300 persons who were over 16 and have a disability since childhood. These disability allowances are administered by the State Pension Fund under the Ministry of Finance. Prior to 2009, disability allowances for children with disabilities and individuals having disabilities since childhood were financed from the Pension Fund.

b) Exemption of Personal Income Tax for one of the parents raising a person who has a disability since childhood, including a child under the age of 16, who need constant care;

c) Exemption of Personal Income Tax, Property and Land Taxes for persons who have a disability since childhood and who are employed, have a personal income and/or own property or land.

d) Free medicine, equipment such as wheelchairs, hearing devices, prosthesis and medical and transportation services for persons who have a disability since childhood;

e) Institutional care and an entitlement to housing after they leave state care institutions for persons who have a disability since childhood and children with disabilities who are orphans or deprived of parental care.
c. Early childhood development and education for children with disabilities

Schools that are piloting inclusive education exist in Uzbekistan and while showing some progress, this practice has not yet been replicated country-wide. Hence, the majority of children with disabilities are placed in special boarding schools and pre-school facilities. According to the regulations of these boarding schools, children are supposed to go home over the weekend. In reality, this only happens in a small number of cases.

The Government of Uzbekistan continues to work on a gradual introduction of inclusive education in the country. A resolution on inclusive education and rights of children with disabilities to education was drafted by the Ministry of Public Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, and the Ministry of Higher and Specialized Secondary Education. This resolution outlines the steps to be taken to implement a comprehensive model of inclusive education, particularly for children with disabilities, with individual student education plans and support teams. This resolution has yet to be approved by the Cabinet of Ministers and therefore is not yet implemented. Besides, the education sector plan for 2013-2017 was developed in the country covering all sectors of education and envisaging inclusion of children with disabilities in regular educational institutions. Finally, under the national programme of reconstruction of general schools it is required to build access ramps to the school buildings regardless of whether a school is a part of the inclusive education process or not.
In 2012, there were 20,182 children with disabilities attending specialised pre-school facilities. This number has been increasing. There is no data on the number of children with disabilities in regular pre-schools.
In 2012, there were 18,559 children with disabilities in the boarding schools for special education, and 10,268 children with disabilities were enrolled in home schooling. The overall trend seems to be a reduction in the use of special boarding schools and more reliance on home-schooling for children with disabilities.