

## Message by UNICEF Iran's Goodwill Ambassador on Children's Day

I would like to congratulate all children of Iran on the occasion of Children's Day, 8 October 2007.

It is so gratifying to see that the situation of children in my country is improving every year in many areas, especially in the field of basic health and education. These improvements are tangible results of the efforts made by the Government, non-governmental organizations, and so many others who have joined hands to improve the living situation of children even in the furthest rural parts of this beautiful country.

The theme of this year's children's day is: "A World Fit for Children – A World Free of Violence."

Violence against children has so many different faces and can take place anywhere children spend their time – in the family, in the street or in schools. Children can be at risk in any environment and violence against them – be it verbal abuse or physical violence – can happen through anyone.

Most often, however, it is close to home where children suffer the most – through parents, caregivers, relatives or other children. At the same time, it is there where violence against children is the least visible and acknowledged – in their own homes and in the midst of their own families. This goes hand in hand with the dangerous hesitation to openly challenge violence within the family. This is where the vicious circle closes itself, making prosecution of such cases near to impossible. Hence, it is only with prevention we can address the problem.

Too often children are seen as property, not as individuals and rights-holders, with the same right to protection as other family members. This year's children's day is dedicated to raising awareness about all forms of violence against children. Let us strive for a more conscientious effort to protect our children, to be kind to them and in particular, to use constructive forms of child-rearing and discipline that do not involve violence or humiliation.

All children deserve happiness and proper care. Let us give them these essentials of life.

Mahtab Keramati



UNICEF Iran's Goodwill Ambassador