



THE FIRST CHILDREN'S FORUM ANKARA, 2000



For every child
Health, Education, Equality, Protection
ADVANCE HUMANITY

unicef 

President Ahmet Necdet Sezer's Address	3
Why a Children's Forum?	5
Excerpts From the Opening Speeches	6
Tayfun Talipoğlu: Not far away, right next to us ...	11
How do we make our voice heard?	12
The Right to Participate in Education	12
The Right to Participate within the Family	16
The Right to Participate in Health	21
The Right to Participate in Legislation	26
The Right to Participate in the Media	31



"... We are all of us charged with the responsibility of full commitment to international conventions and of contributing to the activities under way, with education and health foremost among these, in order to leave you the legacy of a world which is inhabitable in every respect.

"Ratification by many countries, including Turkey, of the Child's Rights Declaration and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, both fruits of long and devoted efforts of the United Nations, is a very important step in the direction of creating a world where peace and tolerance reign.

"The Convention on the Rights of the Child stipulates above all that every child has the right to life and charges the state to safeguard the child's life and development. Recognition of children's rights is an indicator of the extent of social development in a country. Every society has an obligation to take children under its wing, and to ensure that children live and grow in the best circumstances. Childhood is the most delightful time of life. No adversity, no problem should distress children, or cast a shadow over their joy of living. Children should be able to live in the best circumstances possible.

"... Turkey has been striving to assure the best opportunities for its children since the establishment of the Republic, and is a staunch supporter of international efforts to safeguard children's rights. One of the fundamental objectives of our State is that our



children, the greatest asset of our nation, are raised and grow up in the social and economic atmosphere they deserve.

"... As both Nation and State, we must equip our children with the knowledge and skills required for the age in which we live, so that we don't fall behind the 21st century and so that we can improve the lot of our children. In addition, we have a shared accountability in taking under our collective wing our working,

homeless, or disabled children as well as children who need protection, and to rehabilitate them.

“In our age, as individuals, as nations, and as states, it behoves us to protect children’s rights regardless of creed, language or race. The effort, which begins with love, will contribute to ensuring that children of the world can live in peace and brotherhood, without concern for their future.

“Dear children, you are the most valuable asset of this nation; you are our future. Great Atatürk understood the love of Turkish children for their country and also their diligence. He had full confidence in you when he made a gift of the inauguration of the National Assembly — the 23rd of April — to you as your holiday.

“... It is heartening to see that you take charge of your own problems, are interested in

national issues, seek solutions, and communicate these solutions to the people concerned. This is the essence of democracy and citizenship. As naturally as it is your right to pursue the possibilities of a better life, so it is your democratic right to make every effort to make this pursuit a reality.

“In the near future you will govern Turkey and instilling a culture of peace and tolerance in the basis of democracy is of utmost importance today. The measure for this is the affection and respect people will develop for each other.

“The world of the future will be one of peace. All peoples of the world will live in understanding, love, tolerance, and knowledge of each other. All these exalted thoughts will be brought to life by you children, as the adults of the future. I congratulate you and wish you success in your endeavours.”

Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 4:

“The State must do all it can to implement the rights contained in the Convention.”

We are child delegates drawn from the 81 provinces of Turkey. As is the case in many countries of the world, we are endeavouring to help ensure the promotion, expansion, and exercise of children's rights in our country.

We began our activities one year ago today. First, we formed our children's commissions in all provinces under the guidance of the Social Services and Child Protection Agency in collaboration with UNICEF and the Ministries of National Education, the Interior, Health, and Labour. In each province, our friends of varying backgrounds became familiar with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and expressed their concerns and wishes on these commissions.

When we gathered together as friends and colleagues in the Children's Commission from all of the provinces at the First National Children's Forum, we realised how common our problems were, and how similar our expectations from the persons and agencies who are responsible for us. We collated the views and wishes that emerged during the Forum into a declaration and presented them to the President. There, at the highest level of the State, we got the promise that our concerns would receive attention.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child envisages that everyone under the age of 18 enjoys the rights to survival, development, protection, and participation. We are aware that it is not realistically possible to do away with the barriers to our rights all at once, and



to alleviate our difficulties immediately. We are also aware that any decisions taken by adults without hearing our voices, without including us, and in ignorance of us, will be useless ...

It was for this reason that the Right to Participate, which we had defined when we met as provincial child delegates in October, became the theme for the Children's Forum which we held between the 20th and 21st of

November, 2000. We declared that from now on, we want to participate in the decisions which have an impact on our lives in the family, at school, in the media, in the administration of justice and in health. We sought answers to questions about what should be done to lift the barriers to our participation — how, by whom, and when.

On the first day of the Children's Forum, we had group discussions. On the second day, we deliberated on the conclusions we had reached as groups the previous day. We presented the action plans that we subsequently developed to President Ahmet Necdet Sezer and received a pledge of support.

Even though the year-long Convention on the Rights of the Child Promotion Campaign is over, we will continue with our efforts

because we know that exercising our participatory rights will contribute to our development; help improve our ability to make decisions, overcome our problems, share and cooperate; help us to understand the true meaning of democracy; teach us to respect others' rights and to defend our own rights.

We the children expect both material and moral support from adults in all circumstances so that our efforts are not in vain. What we want from you is simple: put your hand on your breast and feel the heartbeat of the child inside of you, sense that enthusiasm and joy of living, and then see just how right we are. Now extend your hands to leave a warm touch in the heart of every child — believe us, we desperately need this.

With wishes that you nurture the child in your heart forever ...

ORÇUN DOĞAN was elected Coordinator for Turkey at the National Children's Congress:

"... All children hand-in-hand towards a better Turkey ... Hand-in-hand means better days, hand-in-hand means unity, hand-in-hand means struggling, hand-in-hand means victory. Let's hold hands. Let's make Turkey's star shine brighter."

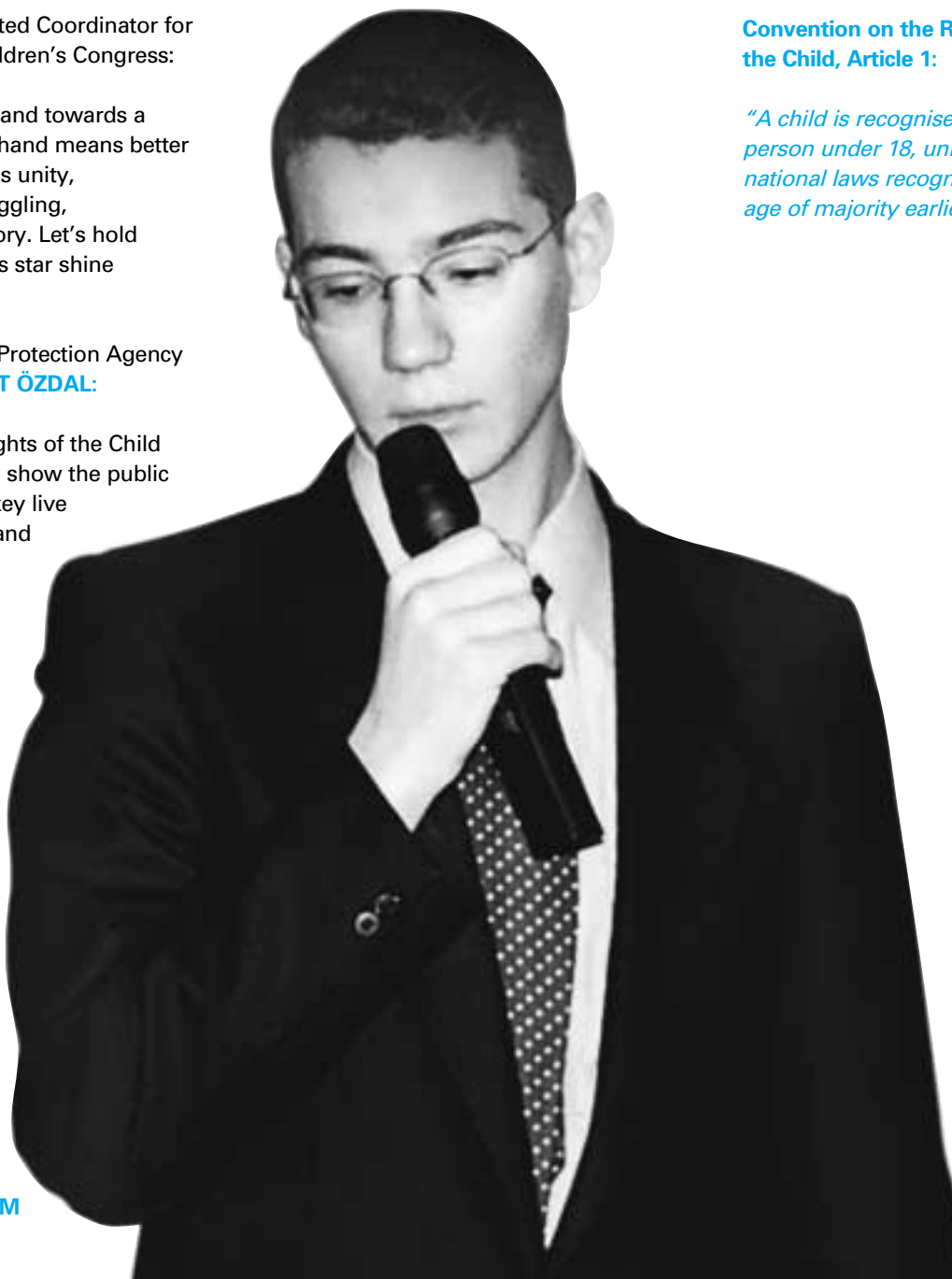
Social Services and Child Protection Agency General Director, **MEHMET ÖZDAL**:

"... The purpose of the Rights of the Child Promotion Campaign is to show the public that many children in Turkey live under difficult conditions and do not benefit fully from education and health services. Another purpose is to ensure equal and fair distribution of national resources to all children and increasing awareness of, sensitivity to, and protection of children's rights.

"The right to participate defines children's freedom to express their opinions and thoughts in every matter that concerns them ..."

Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 1:

"A child is recognised as a person under 18, unless national laws recognise the age of majority earlier."



UNICEF Turkey Representative,
PHILIPPE HEFFINCK:

“... Children make up 27 million of Turkey’s population of 65 million. This is three times the population of my Country, Belgium ... The Children’s Forum, which is fundamentally a Turkish national event, is, at the same time, part of the global movement for children ... The United Nations Special Session on Children (UNSSC) will review in September 2001 the implementation of activity programs during the last decade and will define what needs to be done in the next decade ... Turkey will assume a catalytic role in the global children’s movement with the celebration of the International Children’s Festival on the 23rd April next year. Over 45 countries will participate and a joint declaration will be issued. In addition, a song will be written, which we hope all the children of the world to be singing.

“... I would like to thank Turkey for not limiting its attention to the conditions of its own children and assuming an internationally catalytic role for over 45 countries.”

Chairman of the Society for the Protection and Rehabilitation of Children from Abuse,
Prof. Dr. **OĞUZ POLAT:**

“... The priority task of non-governmental organisations following the approval of children’s rights at the National Assembly was

to expand the convention on a social basis and to publicise it ... Many good things were being done in Turkey, but many good things were not being sustained. But today, I have great pleasure to say, an event that began last year is still going on today, and my young friends from last year are continuing their efforts with the same energy and with even greater enthusiasm. This fills us with great pride ... The time has come for children, who are the direct owners of the Convention, to represent Turkey at future UNSSC meetings, alongside and perhaps even more actively than the usual adult delegates.”

Ministry of National Education Deputy Under-Secretary, **ÖZCAN TEKİNER:**

“... The 2000–2001 academic year is under way in 58,000 schools in Turkey, with 550,000 teachers and 15,000,000 students ... We are committed to using every means at our disposal to minimise gender-based and inter-regional inequities in education.

“In addition to activities to expand the scope of primary education, a series of efforts are continuing to increase the quality of education ... Educational regions and councils were formed to ensure equal, effective, and productive use of resources along the basic principles of National Education, and with the participation of all social groups in decisions related to education. The child now has a say over education ...”



Ministry of Health Deputy Under-Secretary,
Dr. **MEVLÜT MERCAN:**

“... With the increased availability of quality maternal and child health services, much ground has been gained in reducing maternal and infant mortalities ... Polio and smallpox have been eradicated as a result of vaccination ... but malnutrition continues to be a silent, insidious peril ... babies born with iodine deficiency disorder are doomed to disability throughout their lives ... Another consequence of malnutrition is iron deficiency anaemia ... which has adverse effects on the immune system and is a significant cause of maternal deaths.

“... Respected members of the media, please continue to explain the consequences of the diseases and disabilities that malnutrition causes with greater space on your pages and on the television ... Mothers, please nurse your children long enough to protect them from potential diseases in the future ... Please protect them from cigarette smoke during pregnancy and after birth ...”

State Minister, **HASAN GEMİCİ:**

“... With the Convention on the Rights of the Child, various obligations were placed on parents and states to ensure a healthy, happy, dignified childhood for children. The same

convention's principal element is safeguarding the child's highest interests in all manner of decisions and actions regarding children.

"... Here, I would like to share an observation of mine about the Congress on the 20th of April. This was truly an important event for Turkey. It was really exciting to see these commissions from 81 provinces of Turkey conduct work in their respective provinces and subsequently come together to compile this work into a national report. However, since the evening's agenda was taken up by a European-league football match and the Presidential elections, this performance, this significant accomplishment of our children did not get the publicity it deserved ... Unfortunately public opinion limits itself to a single-item agenda; we go after one specific issue each day and pay no attention to other events no matter how important they may be.

"... We have a very young population; 40% of our population is under the age of 18. This means that 4 out of every 10 people are children. The way to creating a powerful Turkey that can compete with developed countries in the next millennium is through more affection for our children — raising them well in a healthy environment, and meeting their physical, emotional, and social needs at the highest possible level."

The Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on the 20th of November 1989. Turkey signed the convention on the 14th of November 1990. The convention was ratified by the National Assembly on the 9th of December 1994, with reservations on articles 17, 29, and 30. With Law No. 4058 enacted on the 27th of January 1995, the Convention on the Rights of the Child was transformed into a national legal provision. The Social Services and Child Protection Agency (SHÇEK) was designated as the coordinating agency for the enforcement of the Convention in Turkey.



TAYFUN TALİPOĞLU: NOT FAR AWAY, RIGHT NEXT TO US

In addition to the relevant State agencies and non-governmental organisations which have stood by us throughout the Children's Forum we organised on 20–21 November 2000, we had an older brother who gave us power and great support: journalist Tayfun Talipoğlu. We know him from our television screens, microphone extended to all and sundry in every corner of Anatolia. This time he held his microphone out to us, so that we could be heard by millions ...

"When you've got an opportunity, make good use of it," he told us.

Some of us were so excited that what came out our mouths was not what we wanted to say. Seeing this, he bolstered our courage:

"Don't be timid when you talk, my friends. The way you say something is more important than what you're saying and everyone of you is in a position to know "how". If there is criticism, you are the ones who can best determine its dosage because for years on end we've been talking on television and radio in this country, and you've been listening. Now it's your turn to talk ... ten years from now, the politicians and journalists who don't move with the times, won't be here — but you will."

As we spoke out, reeling off our problems and suggestions, one after the other, he asked:

"You're raising my hopes; let me see which one of you has the strongest voice."

When one of our delegates mentioned a barrier to freedom of belief, he said:

"We can't show the courage you're showing ... thank you so much and congratulations. I only hope that you can remain this straightforward throughout life."

When we got too wordy, he would say:

"If you ever have to make a presentation to someone in a high place, make sure to be brief and and to the point!"

When he saw that we were becoming impatient for our rights, he reminded us once again the importance of patience:

"Don't ever think, 'well, I've said a few words here and what difference did it make?' This is how we're brought up to think. Of course Turkey didn't get here in one day, for better or for worse. Neither good nor bad can take over in one day. But what's important is that you make yourself heard and say what you have to say."

He would hint: "I have a complaint about you; there's no children's song here. How come you didn't say: There's no children's song?"

He both moderated our Forum, and broadcast our voice to viewers of 'Bass String, Travelogue' for 45 minutes.

Our heartfelt thanks to Tayfun Talipoğlu and his team ...



Our warmest thanks go to the Children's Rights Group of Gazi University Faculty of Communication who gave us a helping hand: as with previous activities, the Children's Rights Group of Gazi University Faculty of Communication was once again on our side, supporting our efforts on the sidelines. We watched an informative cassette on Children's Rights Group activities which they produced and a video film describing activities undertaken within the framework of the 'Rights of the Child Promotion Campaign.'

HOWDO WEMAKEOURSELVES HEARD?

When we got together at the preparatory meeting to define the agenda for the Children’s Forum, colleagues from every province discussed how we would convey our problems and suggestions to others. What methods would be appropriate? We wanted to make sure that we didn’t bore our audience and that our meaning was crystal clear.

We thought of the game, Twenty Questions, where you think of something or someone and your friends ask you questions to find out what’s on your mind. They can ask anything except the name of that ‘thing’. The questions are often endless: “Is it alive? What colour is it? Is it here in this room right now?” before they figure out what it is.

This fun game inspired us to define what our priority concern for the Forum would be, how should it be addressed, who would help, and when would it be resolved. We arranged ourselves into groups at different tables and using this method, discussed everything related to the matter in hand. Just like the game, time passed without notice and the effort didn’t become boring at all.

We’d like grown-ups who are reading this to remember this game, to return to their own childhood for a moment and see how we had such fun getting the job done.

Here comes the work of our groups!

THE RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE IN EDUCATION

Discussing ‘the Right to Participate in Education,’ our group focused on students’ inability to criticise the school system, teachers, disciplinary regulations and frequent changes made to the educational system without consulting the students themselves. Our colleagues criticised adults’ peremptory dismissal of our views with expressions like “You’re a kid, you don’t know what you’re talking about, you don’t understand.” They also noted the following areas that need particular attention: inter-regional and gender-based differentials; choice of appropriate subjects for study; the university entrance examination; problems related to vocational high schools and the lack of participatory methods in teaching.

They asked for action to increase awareness of children’s rights among children, adolescents and parents. They demanded the discontinuation of differential practices across provinces and schools.

Positive practices were also mentioned — such as more wide-spread use of suggestion boxes in schools for example.



Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 28:

“The child has a right to education, and the State’s duty is to ensure that primary education is free and compulsory, to encourage different forms of secondary education accessible to every child and to make higher education available to all on the basis of capacity. School discipline shall be consistent with the child’s rights and dignity.”

THE RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE IN EDUCATION

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE	HOW SHOULD IT BE DONE	WHO SHOULD DO IT	WHEN SHOULD IT BE DONE
1. Students' participation in the development of education programs should be increased.	Student opinions should be polled through surveys, etc., which should then be presented by a representative to education authorities	Student representatives and provincial/district National Education Directorates	At the end of the year and during curricular modifications
2. Discrimination among students should be prevented and equal participation and opportunity should be ensured for all students (regional, gender-based, inter-school differentials, e.g., between vocational and regular high schools).	Awareness of students and teachers should be raised; discrimination by teachers among students should be prevented.	Guidance services to increase teachers' and students' awareness are needed; Ministry of National Education (MONE) should provide training to teachers	As soon as possible
3. Student representation should be established and become fully operational at all schools in all provinces.	The new regulations (on establishment of school councils) must be applied at all schools in all provinces.	School administrations and provincial/district National Education Directorates	As soon as possible
4. The right of all children and youths to participate in education must be ensured at all stages of schooling, particularly preschool education.	Families' awareness should be increased by MONE, non-governmental organisations, the press, and the media.	MONE, NGOs, press/media	Should be continuous. However, should be increased and accelerated at the approach of each academic year.
5. The number and variety of social activities should be increased and the participation of all students ensured.	Curricula should be moderated with greater focus on social activities. Financial resources and opportunities for social activities should be provided and increased.	Relevant Ministry of National Education units	



ORCUN, Ankara

I'm going to talk about the education system and university examinations in particular, which I'm currently facing.

The Student Selection Examination deprives us of many things at an age when we should be more social, more active. I have university preparation courses six days a week. After eight hours of school, I have an extra four hours of courses and I go home exhausted.

After that, I'm expected to study for school and also to do the tests for the university course. My friends and I have no social life at present — we can't even go to a movie more than once every two months or perhaps during a week when we don't have examinations. And if we fail the university entrance exam, the system makes it hard to find a job as a high school graduate.

For those of my friends who live in hostels, the picture's even gloomier. Some face hostel disqualification after reaching the age of 18.

That's why the university entrance exam has a disproportionately important place in the life of a 17-year-old and also because the system is not vocation-oriented, those who fail the university exam are left in a no-win situation.

SANIYE, Ankara

Above all, I want injustices in education to be eliminated. I attend a vocational school and there is great discrimination between students of regular high schools and vocational high schools. I'm at a great disadvantage in the university exam. While the score of regular high school students is multiplied by 0.5, mine is multiplied by 0.2, which is a great injustice. I want this to be corrected.

MURATHAN, Ağrı

I am also a vocational high school student. I've finished my preparatory year and I'm currently in high school first grade. My future looks dismal. I'm considering quitting school, but maybe the Ministry of National Education will show mercy and unblock our way in the future.

BELKIS, Ordu

I'm a 3rd grade student at the Computer Department of Middle Anatolia Technical High School. Our State spends a major portion of the education budget on vocational schools, but the money allocated for education in general is too little, in the first place.

Frankly, I find the university entrance exam

system totally irrational. I'll take the exam this year. I've been attending courses for two years. The money currently circulating in the courses, in the private sector, is beyond measure. The Ministry of National Education is responsible for our education, but they don't want to be held accountable for it. Why is it that school education isn't adequate enough for me and I have to attend preparation courses? I have to manage two schools at once, which reduces my productivity. Frankly I can't feel young. I think young people ... are being exploited in matters like the university exam which have nothing to do with justice, equality, and common sense. That is, I think the Ministry of National Education must face up to it's responsibility as soon as possible.

SANIYE, Ankara

Families are asked to pay money to meet other requirements of the school such as management fees, & c... and I want these to be stopped. All right, maybe donations can be requested, but not all families can afford them. In the end, in Turkey today it is those who have money who can get an education, and those who don't, can't. So much money is collected at schools that some families no longer want to send their children to school, because they can't meet the bills. One book costs, I don't know, 10 million (US\$6). I mean, you shouldn't lean that hard on people.

The student is told, "You have to buy the school bulletin." If she can't buy it, can't afford it, if her family can't meet the expense, how can she pay? ... You say that "the State's budget is not enough." How come there's enough for everything else but not enough for education? We need to talk about this.

HÜLYA, Adiyaman

The problem we most often meet in Adiyaman is the effect of the diploma score on the university exam scores. Of course, maybe it you get it everywhere in Turkey, but as you know, education in the East is under very poor conditions. After not getting an adequate enough education, we see that regardless of region or quality, East or West, good or bad, schools are treated the same and diploma scores are graded on the same scale. We are very much against this both as a school and as a province.

ARZU, Bolu

I have an older brother who graduated from middle school (junior high school) — he wanted to go to a super high school, but he got tossed into standby while some people with lower grades than his got admitted. It shows that connections can get you into some schools. I mean they discriminate.



THE RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE WITHIN THE FAMILY

Discussing the right to participate within the family, delegates gave examples of adult behaviour at home which they found most upsetting. We discussed everything we encountered in family life: from the slighting of our opinions and ideas to not having the right to speak up; from lack of trust to the pressure to 'study'; from intolerance to beatings; from the indictment of families who commit violence against their children to specialist assistance in dealing with abuse; from not being consulted while making decisions about us to inconsistent treatment.

We agreed that "Naturally there are times when a child is right, and there are times when he or she is wrong. But this matter is very important to us: families that treat their children with violence will never raise an individual who is an asset to society. We are people who deserve affection not beatings."

We agreed that we want girls to be sent to school; we don't want marriage at an early age; we want everyone to take action for the education of parents; we want democracy within the family; we want respect for the child's interests and his or her choice of profession — and we don't want to be pressured about our beliefs.



Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 18:

"Parents have joint primary responsibility for raising the child, and the State shall support them in this. The State shall provide appropriate assistance to parents in child-raising."

THE RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE WITHIN THE FAMILY

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE

HOW SHOULD IT BE DONE

WHO SHOULD DO IT

WHEN SHOULD IT BE DONE

1. The child should be seen as an individual with the right to speak in the family.

Children should periodically meet with experts to discuss their place in their families and their ability to express themselves. Awareness of students and teachers should be raised; discrimination by teachers among students should be prevented.

Every child should have access to an expert for consultation in times of need. Parents should ask the child's opinion. SHÇEK, UNICEF, MONE, and the MOH should work to enlighten both children and parents regarding the child's right to speak up in the family.

Children can be more knowledgeable than their parents in some instances.

2. The child's right to prosecute his/her family

The child's right to bring his/her family to justice should be legalised. Laws enabling children to defend themselves against their families should be formulated.

The State should exercise its right to prosecute the family when it fails to protect its children. The State should provide support to the family for the protection of children. This issue should be addressed by the Ministry of Justice, SHÇEK, and the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

As soon as possible

3. Freedom of thought (religious beliefs, political, etc.)

The family should provide a loving, respectful environment that nurtures freedom of thought and should not pressure the child. Parents' understanding of the importance of providing a democratic atmosphere at home should be ensured.

Non-governmental organisations should raise the awareness of society, and consequently families, regarding freedom of thought. Schools should provide adequate information on the child's right to freedom of thought.

As soon as possible

4. Choice of school and profession

The child should define his/her own areas of interest and should be able to attend his/her choice of school without pressure after completion of primary education. The child should be guided by his/her family and school based on the child's own merits. In some areas of Turkey a profession passes from father to son, whereas every child should have a choice in selecting a school and a profession according to his/her aptitudes, without facing gender-based discrimination. Girls should be sent to school.

MONE should conduct this — especially by providing guidance to families and children through teachers, education experts, and Guidance Research Centre staff.

As soon as possible

THE RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE WITHIN THE FAMILY

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE	HOW SHOULD IT BE DONE	WHO SHOULD DO IT	WHEN SHOULD IT BE DONE
5. Choice of friends	The family should keep a watchful eye over the child and, rather than becoming directly involved in the choice of friends, should direct the child by example. The family should avoid gender, opinion and belief-based discrimination in the choice of friends. Rather than sever relations with friends who are considered 'bad', we should win them over by continuing our friendship with the support of our families.	The child and the family should receive assistance from experts if necessary.	As soon as possible
6. Coercion of children to marry early	Having taught the child about the problems of early marriage, decision-making by the child on matters concerning him/her should be ensured.	Marriage at an early age through coercion may lead to adverse conditions such as suicide, health problems, etc. In particular, the Ministries of Justice and Health, SHÇEK, and the Ministry of Internal Affairs should conduct joint activities on this issue, and the condition should be prevented not only through legislation but with information/education activities.	Immediately
7. The right to play and have fun	The number of play areas should be increased and conditions necessary for the child's social and cultural interaction within his/her areas of interest must be provided. The family should not confuse play time and study time.	The Ministry of National Education should increase the number of social activity facilities. Schools should organise outings to the theatre, trips, camping events and sports competitions to entertain children during free periods. Families' support should be obtained.	Immediately
8. Obtain the child's views on a change in his/her environment	Any decision about a change in the child's environment should be made with his/her future in mind. SHÇEK and the family should obtain the child's opinion when deciding on where the child will live, and should assess the conditions.	Assistance of experts should be sought to reduce the impact of a change in the child's environment and to ensure his/her adaptation.	As soon as possible

THE RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE WITHIN THE FAMILY

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE

9. Avoidance by the family of physical or emotional violence in child rearing

HOW SHOULD IT BE DONE

Parents should be made aware that children cannot be trained properly through physical and emotional abuse. Appropriate parenting guidance should be provided to the family for the use of valid child-rearing techniques. Families that expose their children to violence should be prosecuted, and the severity of existing measures should be increased.

WHO SHOULD DO IT

SHÇEK should work with the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and the Ministry of National Education.

WHEN SHOULD IT BE DONE

As soon as possible



MUSTAFA, from Tokat

There are many waifs hawking paper hankies in the streets. Doubtless these children have no rights to speak of. There is no one to listen to their problems. If you were to ask them: 'What do you want to be when you grow up?' none could say 'I want to become an attorney, I want to become a teacher' because they have no rights. Do these children hawk tissue in the street or shine shoes because they want to? If the parents are directly responsible for bringing these children into the world, I definitely want a law to be passed for the prosecution of those parents in order to ensure that the rights of these children are recognised.

ERDAL, from Bayburt

Guidance counselling at schools isn't fully developed. In one school some kind of test was done in a guidance counselling class, and one of the questions was, 'Have you ever thought of committing suicide?' There were forty people in the class, and fifteen of them replied that they had thought of killing themselves. Low grades received at schools are the real reason for this. Because guidance counselling is not developed, people can't feel relaxed or they can't relax because psychologists aren't consulted. Perhaps if guidance counselling is made widely available at schools then most reasons for suicide will be eliminated and people will find jobs more easily, and will be able to take the university exam.

DELEGATE,

I think children's rights in style of the European system should be provided within Turkish families, because when the families' economic conditions are poor in Europe, they give them financial assistance for child care, they make financial investments.

DELEGATE,

When a child is born, a birth certificate is issued, and his/her religion is written on it as 'Islam'. If that child doesn't adopt Islam as his/her religion when he/she grows up, the child's freedom is restricted here.

AYHAN, from Ankara

What I want most is prevention of unenlightened marriages — I've been watching this for years. Two ignorant people fall in love, get married for the sake of pleasure, make ten or twenty children, let them out on the street, thinking somehow they'll manage, someone will take care of them. I mean the least the State could do is maybe pass a law against this.

DEMET, from Kars

Parents contradict themselves... Sometimes, while they're doing work, they let their children sit in front of the television for hours so that they won't be 'under foot'. When the child grows up some more, say school age, they prevent them from watching television.

THE RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE IN HEALTH

With our friends who conducted the Children's Forum group study on health we sought answers to the questions:

- Are we happy with health services?
- To what extent are we able to access health services?
- Do we get attention when we're ill?

The group focused particularly on free health care services for children, environmental health, and inadequacy of health care services in both urban and rural regions of the East.

We want to see the establishment of children's hospitals to serve us in cities with a certain population.

Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 6:

"Every child has the inherent right to life, and the State has an obligation to ensure the child's survival and development."

Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 24:

"The child has a right to the highest standard of health and medical care attainable. The State shall strive to see that no child is deprived of access to effective health care services."



THE RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE IN HEALTH

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE	HOW SHOULD IT BE DONE	WHO SHOULD DO IT	WHEN SHOULD IT BE DONE
1. Laws preventing children from forming (health related) associations should be abolished	Support of authorised organs and politicians should be sought for children to exercise their participatory right.	Turkish Grand National Assembly	Until 23 April 2001
2. The public should be informed about children's rights to help ensure that children can exercise their right to participate.	Coordinated action by relevant public agencies and institutions and non-governmental organisations should be ensured.	SHÇEK, Ministry of Health, MONE, Administration for the Disabled, Ministry of Internal Affairs, UNICEF, all national and international NGOs	Must be started immediately and should be continuous.
3. All public agencies and institutions should be equipped to offer free, adequate and qualified health services based on the equal opportunity principle.	Relevant agencies should be encouraged through the use of our participatory rights to pass required new laws. Awareness of patients' rights should be raised; children should have the right to choose a health care facility and doctor, and to be informed about health problems. Dedicated children's hospitals should be established in cities of a certain population. Children's wings with play and education rooms, should be set up in all hospitals of public agencies and institutions. Maternal-child health centres should be expanded and the quality of services improved. Adequate protection, sheltering, and health care services should be provided free of charge to homeless and substance-abusing children. Effective work should be done to develop family medicine and to provide preventive health care services.	Ministry of Health, SHÇEK	Activities should be started immediately.

THE RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE IN HEALTH

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE	HOW SHOULD IT BE DONE	WHO SHOULD DO IT	WHEN SHOULD IT BE DONE
<p>4. On the environment:</p> <p>a) Prevention of environmental pollution</p> <p>— environmentally correct behaviour should be ensured.</p> <p>b) Safety and hygiene of foodstuffs must be ensured.</p> <p>c) Effective action to prevent communicable diseases must be maintained; attention should be given to inoculation.</p>	<p>Anything threatening the environment and human health should be disallowed; adequate, clean drinking water should be supplied.</p> <p>More space should be reserved for sports activities.</p> <p>Enforcement of existing environmental health laws and the enactment and supervision of new laws should be ensured.</p> <p>Products for children should be monitored to ensure that they are healthy and hygienic.</p> <p>Environmentally safe manufacture and utilisation of agricultural chemicals should be ensured.</p> <p>Haphazard use of drugs should be prevented through public education (restriction of over-the-counter sale of prescription drugs)</p> <p>Publications/broadcasts should be produced to make the public aware of household accidents and how to prevent them.</p>	<p>Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Agriculture, municipalities, Ministry of Industry, non-governmental organisations</p>	<p>Activities should be started immediately, to be completed by November 2000.</p>

THE RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE IN HEALTH

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE

5. Greater focus should be placed on education in order to expand awareness

HOW SHOULD IT BE DONE

The mass media should be utilised.

Having at least two annual health check-ups should be encouraged.

Early and consanguineous marriages should be discouraged and prevented.

Patients' rights and sex education should be expanded; information should be made more accessible.

Student health commissions at schools should become fully operational.

WHO SHOULD DO IT

MONE, Ministry of Health, media agencies

WHEN SHOULD IT BE DONE

Should be started immediately and continued without interruption

DÖNÜŞ, from Burdur

I think our country's greatest problem is health. As you know, with scandal of smuggled, uninspected buffalo meat and such going around, I don't think human health is considered to be important. When you're buying meat, you might stop and wonder 'Should I buy this or not? Is it healthy?' Many buy without thinking, but how are you to trust butchers and suchlike when you have uninspected buffalo meat going around? I think a lot of responsibility falls on the Ministry of Health.

EREN, from Mersin

Everyone of us here thinks about their own health but what about those who eat out of trash cans in the street? I want to know, why doesn't anyone see them? There are so many people in Turkey who eat out of trash cans, and no one mentions the matter of their health, I mean everyone's talking about themselves.

YASİN, from Ankara

There are two things I have to say about health. This is something seen most of the time in Istanbul; children collect pills from dump sites, they collect drugs, and they eat food. I think it would be better if steps were taken against these dump sites and the trash in our environment.

SALİH, from Siirt

I want to mention a matter that everyone sees but does nothing about. There are no health care services in Siirt, or in the Eastern and Southeastern provinces in general. They exist only in provincial centres; there aren't any in districts and villages. If someone in a village gets sick, he or she can only go to the centre three times in any given week. If you get sick outside those 3 days, you can't go because the roads are closed. I want adequate health care services to be delivered to the provinces and administrative districts.

BELKIS, from Ordu

I'm in the situation that when I get sick, I have to ask myself the question 'Should I go to the doctor or not?' What if I go and completely endanger my life? We see on television, someone has surgery, and something gets left inside their body. It's very easy to be negligent of a person's life, but it can be very hard to make that person better when something like that happens.

AYŞE, from Niğde

If I were to have a traffic accident today, believe me I would have no hope of surviving — ambulances arrive late and patients get transferred to the other side of town for no good reason.



THE RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE IN LEGISLATION



“There is no such thing as a criminal child; there are children who are forced into crime. The child picks up bad influences from his/her family and surroundings ...”

“Children should not be punished like adults for their misdeeds; we can’t redeem them that way. In order to rehabilitate them, we must educate them...”

“While he is being questioned, the already frightened child’s knees are weak, he’s shaking like a leaf when he sees uniforms and then he is taken to and from detention. Those who handle children in this sort of situation should both avoid wearing a uniform and be

well-trained enough to understand child psychology ...”

“When parents decide to get divorced, it’s really the child whose opinion the judge should ask: ‘Which one of your parents do you want to live with — what do you think?’”

This is how those of us in the group that discussed children’s right to participate in the administration of justice expressed our thoughts. Even if laws related to us contain long, complicated texts that we don’t understand, in essence, we have attempted to tell grown-ups what these laws should contain.

Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 3:

“In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.”

Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 40:

“A child in conflict with the law has the right to treatment which promotes the child’s sense of dignity and worth, takes the child’s age into account and aims at his or her reintegration into society. The child is entitled to basic guarantees as well as legal or other assistance for his or her defence. Judicial proceedings and institutional placements shall be avoided wherever possible.”

THE RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE IN LEGISLATION

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE	HOW SHOULD IT BE DONE	WHO SHOULD DO IT	WHEN SHOULD IT BE DONE
1. Children turning to crime should be educated using different approaches for rehabilitation that also take their wishes and views into consideration.	The media should be employed as a means to provide information. Information meetings should be organised at schools to reduce the juvenile crime rate.	Children should actively participate in information meetings with the steering of experts. Non-governmental organisations should be set up. And children should enlighten their schoolmates, families, and friends.	All activities should be started as soon as possible.
2. The child should be heard directly or through a representative at civil courts as well as at criminal courts.	An adequate number of experts should be on duty at these courts to ensure that the child can exercise his/her freedom of expression and his/her right to participate.	The State should make the necessary legal and organisational arrangements.	All activities should be started as soon as possible.
3. The physical appearance of juvenile courts and the formal attire of staff at these courts should be modified to be less intimidating to children.	Children's opinions should also be sought for these changes.	The State, universities, non-governmental organisations, and children should perform this activity. The activity should be carried out in collaboration with relevant persons, agencies, and institutions.	All activities should be started as soon as possible.
4. Arbitration agencies should be resorted to in all cases involving children, and the conditions necessary for the child's self-expression should be provided.	Arrangements should be made in the organisational structure and legislation.	The State and non-governmental organisations should perform this activity.	All activities should be started as soon as possible.

THE RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE IN LEGISLATION

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE

5. Prior to trial, the child should be prepared by psychological experts and provided with legal information.

6. In order to improve children's participatory skills, the right of children to form associations, provided for in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, should be put into practice.

HOW SHOULD IT BE DONE

This information should enable the child to actively use his/her participatory rights.

Information activities should be initiated to resolve such problems as those arising from criminal records.

WHO SHOULD DO IT

Bar associations, relevant departments of universities, volunteers, and non-governmental organisations should perform this activity.

The State will make the necessary legislative arrangements to accord children the right to form associations. The children in turn will use their participatory right to carry out the social activities needed to publicise the Convention on the Rights of the Child. *Adults are obligated to provide material and spiritual support to children in their efforts to exercise their participatory rights.*

WHEN SHOULD IT BE DONE

All activities should be started as soon as possible.

All activities should be started as soon as possible.

DELEGATE, from Ankara

I'm taking part as the representative of the Peace Scout Club in Ankara.

In Turkey we can't form associations but in scouting, children under eighteen years of age have the right to gather in clubs and freely express their opinions.

SUAT, from Trabzon

In my view there is no such thing as a guilty child — there is only an accused child. In our country the police run after a child who's sesame bread in the street, while there are people in high places who have robbed the State.

DENİZ, from Giresun

Children should be kept in juvenile detention centres rather than in prisons until they are found guilty. If they are being encouraged by their families to commit crimes, they should be kept away from their families for a certain amount of time — of course taking care not to frighten the child. The child should be given psychological help and should be educated on the subject — taught not to commit crimes.

MÜSLÜM, from Urfa:

I want feuding to be abolished, because children are the ones who suffer most.

TAYFUN TALİPOĞLU, reporter:

So, why do you suppose feuding is so common where you're from?



MÜSLÜM:

Because it's the East, because blood feuds are common in the East.

TAYFUN TALİPOĞLU:

So, do you know how blood feuds begin?

MÜSLÜM

There are many people who haven't been to school in Eastern Anatolia; it's because of ignorance.

TAYFUN TALİPOĞLU

How many children are in your family?

MÜSLÜM

Eight.

TAYFUN TALİPOĞLU

How many boys, and how many girls?

MÜSLÜM

Five boys and three girls.

TAYFUN TALİPOĞLU

If you happened to see your sister with a boy friend in Urfa, what would you do?

MÜSLÜM

Me, I would beat her.

TAYFUN TALİPOĞLU

But why would you beat her — because you want to, or because they'd expect you to do something like that in Urfa?

MÜSLÜM

Because such things aren't done in Urfa, that's why.

TAYFUN TALİPOĞLU

Why aren't such things done in Urfa? I mean don't girls and boys walk side by side? ... They do.

MÜSLÜM

I mean, if such a thing happened in Urfa, they'd be ridiculed.

TAYFUN TALİPOĞLU

So, you're saying, Maybe I wouldn't really want to beat her, but there would be social pressure on me in Urfa, like 'Why didn't you beat your sister?'

MÜSLÜM

Yes.

TAYFUN TALİPOĞLU

But don't you think it's past time to break this chain? Look at you, here as a big delegate. Right now, you're Turkey's one child in eighty-one. There should be something you could do, shouldn't there? On the one hand you say you want traditional killings to be stopped, on the other hand, you bow to social pressure. Let me ask you again: Would you beat your sister if you saw her with a boy?

MÜSLÜM

No.



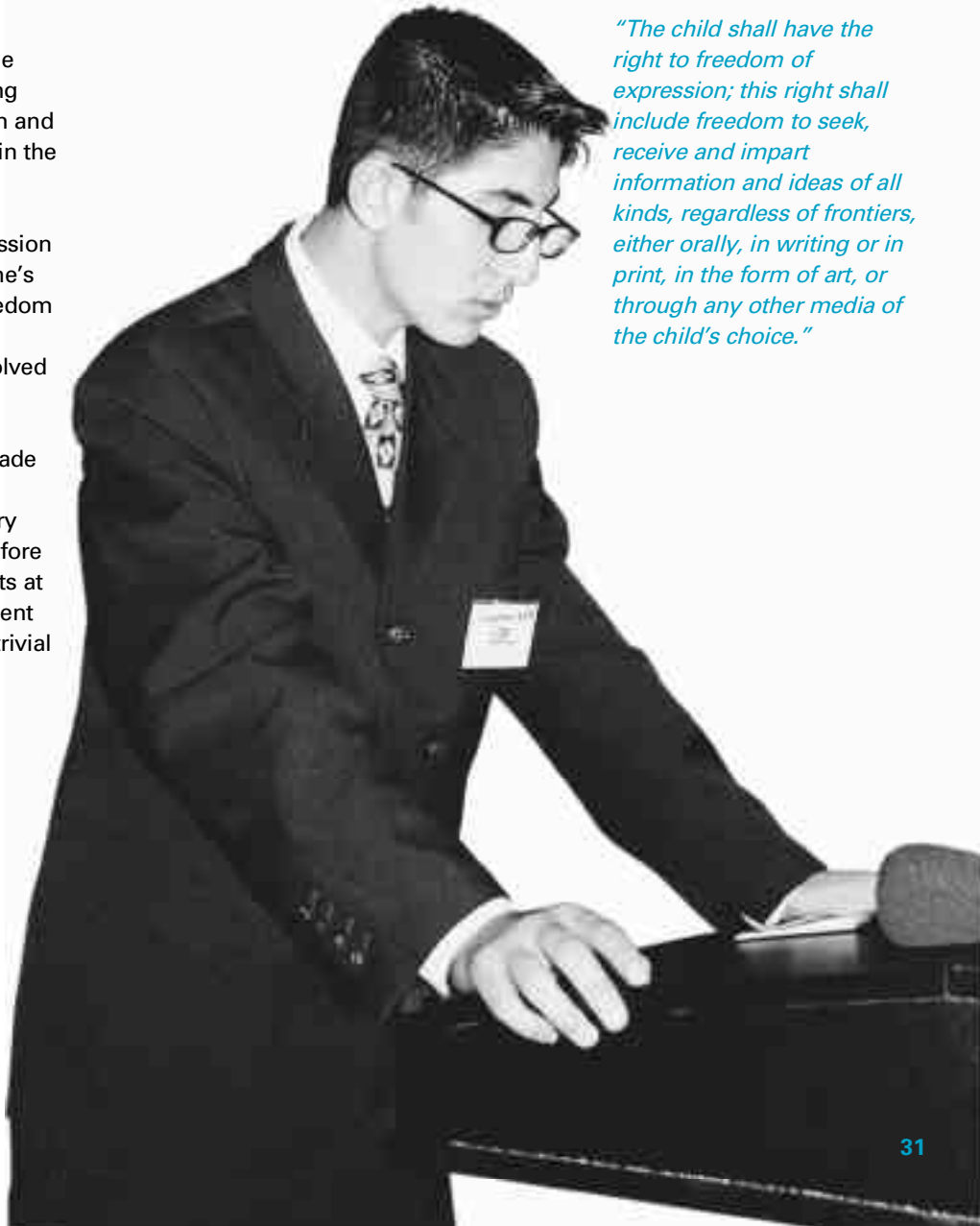
Our group focused on the question ‘what is the right to participate and what is the media?’ and we discussed many topics ranging from freedom of thought to the media’s place in society. We looked at the television viewing and newspaper reading training which families give their children and the representation of homeless children in the media.

The group agreed that freedom of expression entails responsibly and openly stating one’s opinions without interfering with the freedom of others. The group also talked about whether or not the media should be involved in individual freedoms.

As a group, we agreed that the media made up the fourth power, coming after the legislative, the executive, and the judiciary powers, and sometimes even ranking before these, because the media can steer events at will. The media can expand a small incident into a scandal or present a scandal as a trivial occurrence.

Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 13:

“The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child’s choice.”



THE RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE MEDIA

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE	HOW SHOULD IT BE DONE	WHO SHOULD DO IT	WHEN SHOULD IT BE DONE
<p>1. Coverage on children's rights in television programs, newspapers, and magazines should be ensured.</p> <p>a) Children do not participate in the media (conflicts with the principle of equality); this should be ensured.</p> <p>b) Under-eighteens make up half of the population of Turkey. Productions oriented to children should be given space in the press as well.</p>	<p>Through programs The press Posters, brochures Advertisements</p> <p>The media should act as an intermediary in raising awareness amongst advertising companies and private agencies about children's rights</p>	<p>Student representatives and provincial/district National Education Directorates</p>	<p>In 2001.</p>
<p>2. Children should not be exposed to emotional and physical abuse, or stripped of their dignity.</p> <p>a) Exploitation of children and divulgence of their identity in the media or the press should be prevented.</p> <p>b) Children's programs, and cartoon films in particular, should contain no elements of violence; identification with villains should be discussed.</p> <p>c) Children should not be exploited in advertisements.</p>	<p>A web site should be opened on the Internet.</p> <p>A toll-free 'child-violence' hot line should be established.</p>	<p>A commission made up of children</p> <p>A society to safeguard children's rights that includes children among its members</p> <p>Dedicated state ministries and the Social Services</p>	<p>In 2001</p>

THE RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE MEDIA

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE	HOW SHOULD IT BE DONE	WHO SHOULD DO IT	WHEN SHOULD IT BE DONE
<p>3. Considering that children’s rights are safeguarded by their families until a certain age, parents should screen all broadcasted and printed material.</p> <p>a) Parents should educate their children about television-viewing habits; training should be provided to families for this purpose.</p>	<p>Television should not be used as a surrogate baby-sitter, or as a means of reward/punishment.</p> <p>Television should not be on all the time. More time should be spent on children than on watching television</p> <p>Children should be trained to read newspapers and magazines.</p>	<p>The media should educate families. Who should educate the media?</p>	<p>In 2001.</p>
<p>4. The contents of TELEVISION programs in particular should be reviewed and supervised.</p> <p>a) Children’s programs other than cartoons should be developed.</p> <p>b) The number of children’s news programs should be increased and news coverage by children should be specialised.</p> <p>c) Children should be given the right to express themselves.</p>	<p>A higher council should be established for the supervision of children’s programs.</p> <p>Visual and sound effects that may be upsetting to children should not be used in news programs.</p>	<p>Children</p>	<p>In 2001</p>

THE RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE MEDIA

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE

5. Let our voice be heard.

a) Let's express ourselves within the confines of freedom and respect.

b) Adults should be made aware of children's rights and their respect for these rights should be ensured through the media.

c) Confidentiality and ethical conduct principles should apply to children.

HOW SHOULD IT BE DONE

Children's sections similar to economic, political, and sports sections should be set up in wide-circulation newspapers. These sections should contain news and editorials about children rather than cartoons and puzzles. Children's supplements can be published as an alternative.

WHO SHOULD DO IT

WHEN SHOULD IT BE DONE





KADİR, from Hatay

RTUK (Radio and Television Higher Council) penalises offensive television channels by taking them off the air. I think rather than blacking out their screens, offending TELEVISION stations should be made to pay a fine in order to stay on the air and they should have their broadcasts restricted to educational programmes, documentaries, cartoons and programs that don't contain blood and violence.

MURAT, from Isparta

We children should be asked our opinion when the media produces children's programs. That is, what kind of programs do you like? What kind of a program should we

make? ... On education, on recreation, for instance.

ARZU, from Bolu

In my opinion the media should be trained by children, I mean children should be polled for their ideas and the kinds of programs they want to see on television. If you want a certain children's song, for instance, a telephone line could be arranged for children to call in their requests.

ELİF, from İstanbul

I think there should be an informative channel for children, with appropriate content for children to watch.

Personally I'm not curious about what society women like Sibel Can and Hülya Avşar are doing. I don't care about them. I want something that can educate me. I want the media to hear this. If they do it on their own, they might lose viewers, but at least a few can benefit from this.

BELKIS, from Ordu

My point-of-view until two or three years ago was 'I can't live without watching television'. Then one day I sat down and thought to myself: 'what does television give me — what can I learn from some actor's life?' Now I watch almost no television at all, and I never feel like I'm missing anything. I even watch the main news broadcasts briefly — what's important to me are the headlines. If the main news bulletin in my country gives air-time to an actor's life, where he/she went, how he/she ate, with whom he/she went, I won't watch it at all.

EREN, from Mersin

I saw something on television the other day where some homeless children were sleeping inside a cash point. The assistant general manager arrived. If I'm not mistaken, it was

the 10th of November (Atatürk's Anniversary) because they sang the national anthem while marching and observed a minute's silence. The assistant general manager took two of the children and put them in his car. Here they were, homeless children on the media, one sitting in the front and the other in the back of the man's car. He said, 'We'll enroll them in school. Except there were four other children there in addition to those two. So these two are human and the others are Martians?'

DELEGATE, from Ankara

I think inexperienced people are working in the sector at present. I mean, a graduate of the faculty can't find a job in the sector. Mostly doctors, lawyers, teachers — people like that — are working in the sector. I think if specially trained people are employed, they can better manage the public.

DELEGATE

I would like to thank TRT1 and TRT2 on behalf of all my friends. There are approximately twenty television channels in Turkey and only TRT airs a program called 'Child News'. We watch it all the time. We expect this kind of thing from the other channels too.