

UNICEF TURKMENISTAN IN ACTION



December 2007

Issue 7

Convention on the Rights of the Child turned 18!

Inside this issue:	
Growing up with child's rights	2
UNICEF high level visit	3
Education officials visit the UK and Finland	3
Vaccinations campaign	4
UNICEF-Government Mid Term Review	4

Dear Readers!

Welcome to the new issue of our Newsletter. The last few months of the year, UNICEF has been very active in organizing events on children's issues and planning its programmes for the next year.

UNICEF and the Government of Turkmenistan have completed the mid term review of the joint Country Programme for 2005-2009. While we have reached a number of important results, new challenges have been set for the next two years to create a happy and healthy childhood for Turkmenistan's young citizens.

This year, the Convention on the Rights of the Child has turned 18 and this landmark event was celebrated all over the world. As the Convention recognizes every person under 18 as a child, the eighteenth anniversary was very symbolic and promoted the whole generation under the full protection of the CRC. On the occasion of the anniversary UNICEF and the Ministry of Culture and TV and Radio Broadcasting of Turkmenistan have produced a poster on child rights.

UNICEF has played an integral part in the nation wide vaccination campaign against measles and rubella initiated by the Ministry of Health and Medical Industry of Turkmenistan. The campaign aimed to cover about half of

the population of the country, including around two million children and one million women.

To support the Government's reform initiatives in education sector, UNICEF in partnership with the UK Embassy and the European Union have organized a two week tour to the UK and Finland for education officials of Turkmenistan. The study tour equipped the officials with knowledge on policy and management of publicly funded education systems.

The year 2007 has brought a new wind of change into the country. This year has also been a year of changes for me. Starting from 2008 I will work as Representative at UNICEF Uzbekistan office. As I am bidding a farewell to the Government, children, parents, educators, health workers, international organizations, agencies, public associations, and others, I would like to express my sincere appreciation for the support and collaboration you have provided UNICEF in its efforts to bring a happy life for Turkmenistan children. The past five years have been challenging and rewarding for me. I will always carry the memories of Turkmenistan and its warm people and children close to my heart.

Mabboob Shareef, UNICEF Representative

CRC @ 18

celebrating child rights since 1989.

know your rights!

take action!

Growing up with child's rights



The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) was ratified 18 years ago on November 20, and anyone born who turned 18 this year is part of the first generation to go from birth to adulthood protected by the CRC. Welcome and congratulations to you and the CRC!

Today more than ever before, young people are recognized as having rights. What's more, they are seen as playing an active role in asserting their rights.

The Convention is an international human rights treaty that says all children are born with basic freedoms and rights. A convention such as this is an agreement between people or countries where everyone agrees to follow the same law.

continued on page 2

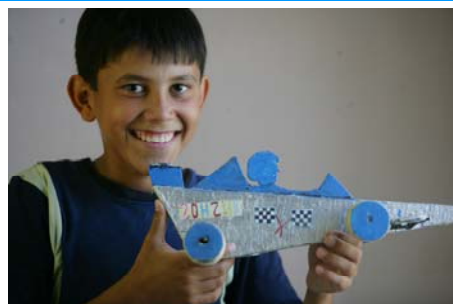
Growing up with child's rights



beginning on page 1

To commemorate this landmark anniversary of the CRC, UNICEF has undertaken a number of global initiatives to educate, empower and enable young people to express their opinions about the impact the CRC has had – or not had – on their lives.

How does the Convention for the Rights of the Child affect a child's life? What does it mean to have your rights met...or denied? At every stage of children's lives they have rights. In their early life, their rights to survival, to food, to an identity are very important. But when they reach school age, their right to an education becomes more and more critical. Finally, when they reach their teens, their rights to protection take on increased importance as they become more independent and engaged with the world around them.



Ages: 0-5 – Early Childhood

A good start to life includes a nurturing, safe and healthy environment that enables a child to survive and thrive; physically, emotionally, mentally and socially. This includes ensuring that all children have access to services and are registered at birth.



Ages: 6-11 – Childhood

All children have the right to a good-quality basic education in a supportive environment where they can achieve their full potential. Children also have a right to access information.



Ages: 12- 14 - Adolescence

All children have a right to protection from violence, harm and exploitation. Children have the right to live a life without the fear of being harmed physically and or emotionally.



Ages: 15-18 – Late Adolescence

Children have the right to develop their individual skills and abilities in an empowering environment where they can participate and contribute in the family, the school, the community and society.

UNICEF high level visit enhances child rights partnership

UNICEF Regional Director for Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States Ms. Maria Calivis visited Turkmenistan in late November to meet with high level officials of the Government and discuss potential areas of broadening strategic partnerships for children in light of new reforms initiated by the Government.

During her three day visit, Ms. Maria Calivis called on the President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov to review the progress the Government of Turkmenistan made in the area of child's health, education and social development. She also discussed about the priority areas of collaboration for the coming two years of

the Government-UNICEF Country programme.

This is the second meeting taking place at such a high level this year



between the UN Children's Fund and the Government of Turkmenistan. The first meeting was held between the President of Turkmenistan and UNICEF Executive Director Ms. Ann Veneman in New York in

September where the President recognized UNICEF's work in the country and pledged to personally oversee joint programmes for children and devote special attention to them. The President also referred to his efforts to further accelerate progress in health, nutrition, and education.

Ms. Calivis also met with the Chairperson of the Medjlis Ms. Akja Nurberdiyeva, Vice Premier Minister in charge of Health and Education Mr. Hydyr Saparliyev, and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. Vepa Khajiyev to discuss major child rights related reform areas as well as future programme adjustments associated with the joint Government-UNICEF Mid-term programme review.

Turkmenistan education officials visit Finland and Great Britain

A Ministry of Education delegation visited Finland and the UK in September to get an insight on the education systems of European countries. The study visit, organized by the United Nations Children's Fund, in cooperation with the UK Embassy in Turkmenistan, Finnish Ministry of Education, and European Union, exposed a group of Turkmen education officials to broad issues related to improvement of quality of learning, and management and policy dimensions of a publicly funded education system in Europe. In Finland the delegation visited the National Board of Education, Ministry of Education, major universities, schools and kindergartens. In England the education specialists were exposed to the work of Office for Standards in Education, London Centre for

Leadership and Learning, Training and Development Agency for Schools, Qualifications and Curriculum Agency, and Centre of Voca-



tional Excellence. The study tour focused on different aspects of basic, higher, and vocational education issues. The education specialists from Turkmenistan benefited from the discussions with their compatriots in Finland and UK on the ap-

proach towards development of comprehensive national education policy, process of curriculum review and development, interactive teaching techniques to make learning enjoyable for the students, and functioning of different autonomous bodies to work on diverse aspects of education.

UNICEF has been supporting the Government of Turkmenistan in its education reform initiative and was designated as a lead UN agency for education. Both as a lead UN agency and its unique mandate for ensuring quality education for children, UNICEF is offering all possible assistance, especially in the areas of early childhood education and basic education. UNICEF also builds partnerships with other development agencies in supporting the education reform processes.

UNICEF helps to organize a national vaccination campaign



The Ministry of Health and Medical Industry of Turkmenistan completed a national vaccination campaign that would prevent children and women of Turkmenistan from measles and rubella. The measles and rubella vaccination campaign is supported by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), World Health Organization (WHO), U.S. Centre for Disease Control (CDC), USAID and Zdrav Plus project.

A two week vaccination campaign against measles and rubella was launched for the first time in

Turkmenistan, and aimed to cover the entire population of 7-23 years old and women of 24-40 years old that represent about 3 million people or half the population of the country. The vaccination is the only cost effective way of preventing congenital rubella infection, which often cause blindness, deafness and mental retardation. The vaccination against rubella is even more effective when used with measles vaccines.

The official launch of the campaign took place on 12 November at the Children's Palace in Ashgabat. "This landmark vaccination campaign will allow children, youth and women of fertile age to protect from the vaccine preventable diseases, such as rubella and measles. We are pleased and grateful to the international organizations and national partners for uniting in this great initiative," said Maral Aksakova, Head of Epidemiological Department of the Ministry

of Health and Medical Industry of Turkmenistan.

The vaccination of population was carried out by 3,000 teams in all health houses and additional centres in schools and workplaces.

Those who were unable to get vaccination during the two week campaign period are offered to get immunized later.

Mr. Abdul Alim, UNICEF Deputy Representative underlined the importance of the landmark campaign by saying that "the healthy youth become productive citizens and contribute to the economy and prosperity of the country."

"Turkmenistan's high immunization coverage is a real success story. It is important that the country continues to sustain its high immunization coverage," said Mr. Abdul Alim.

UNICEF and the Government set priorities for 2008-2009

UNICEF and the Government of Turkmenistan have completed the Mid Term Review process of the joint Country Programme for 2005-2009 and set the priority areas of collaboration for the coming two years. MTR has taken place in the backdrop of major reform initiatives of the Government of Turkmenistan, the necessity to further improve the coherence among the UN Agencies for achieving results in support of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and UNICEF's organizational reform to gain a sharper programme focus and operational efficiency to emerge as an influential knowledge leader for children's rights. To fur-

ther improve the conditions of children and women, the Government of Turkmenistan has made significant achievements with technical assistance of UNICEF during the first three years of the joint Country Programme. The noteworthy achievements are Turkmenistan's submission of the CRC report; Multi Indicator Cluster Survey that provided for a range of social data; adoption of policies to improve child survival; sustained immunization programme; significant investing in social sectors and rural development; and specific preventive interventions to ensure a safe and productive future for youth. The Mid Term Review has revealed that during 2008-

2009, UNICEF and the Government of Turkmenistan will focus their efforts and resources on preparing the National Plan of Action for children, addressing issues on juvenile justice, disability, and institutional care, improving the child rights legislation, and strengthening the capacity of service providers and velayat partners on local level planning for children. In addition, a strong emphasis will be put on quality improvement of education, neonatal care, and nationwide awareness raising and behaviour impact campaigns on health, education, HIV/AIDS prevention and protection issues.