



**Convention on the
Rights of the Child**

Distr.
GENERAL

CRC/C/104/Add.3
1 December 2003

Original: ENGLISH

COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD
CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES
UNDER ARTICLE 44 OF THE CONVENTION

Second periodic reports of States parties due in 2001

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN*

[16 July 2002]

* For the initial report submitted by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, see CRC/C/41/Add.5, for its consideration by the Committee, see documents CRC/C/SR.617-618 and CRC/C/15/Add.123.

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ABBREVIATIONS

LMO	Literacy Movement Organization
MOHME	Ministry of Health and Medical Education
NGO	Non-governmental organization
SKI	Street Kids International
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

IN THE NAME OF THE ALMIGHTY**THE SECOND PERIODIC REPORT ON THE RIGHTS OF
THE CHILD IN THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN****Introduction**

1. In spite of the fact that the subject of the rights of children has been brought up and approved by countries through various international documents since the end of the Second World War, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the Declaration on the Rights of the Child (1959), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), the International Labour Organization Convention No. 138 regarding Minimum Employment Age (1973), the United Nations Regulations Regarding the Minimum Standards Required for the Application of Justice Regarding Children (Beijing, 1985), and other documents, the most manifest and serious efforts of the international community for the materialization of the rights of children became apparent with the approval of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989, and its ratification by almost the unanimous majority of countries of the world. Undoubtedly, ever since then countries have made great progress through joining the Convention, and being influenced by its lofty human goals for the uplift of children.
2. However, at the beginning of the Third Millennium, the international community does not seem to have been able to create a more peaceful world for children. The deprivation of children from their basic rights and needs has continued to remain as a great problem for human societies. Violation of children's rights in many parts of the world, in various forms, still continues. Smuggling, trade and misuse of child labour, sexual abuse through forced prostitution and pornography, and even what is known as sexual tourism, violence against children at the family level as well as at the communal level, armed conflicts, lack of access to proper education and hygiene for the children, the existence of street children - which, mainly due to economic poverty and the break-up of the family environment - is on the spread at an alarming rate, and dozens of other forms of violations still continue to take place against children's rights.
3. Uplift of the status of children, and providing them with a humane and suitable life is part of the duties of Governments. However, so long as the issue of human development in all its facets, especially in the removal of poverty, has not materialized in the world, members of the international community, and especially the developing countries, shall be faced with difficulties in the matter of the attainment of the goals of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. These are problems that the international community should try to tackle seriously, and work towards the building of proper and effective economic and political international structures, which would directly affect the status of millions of children throughout the world.
4. The Islamic Republic of Iran formally joined the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1994 by presenting its document of ratification to the Secretary-General of the United Nations. On 9 December 1997, the country presented its preliminary report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC/C/4/Add.5). This Committee scrutinized the report during its 617th and 618th meetings, on 16 May 2000, and members of the Committee offered their final remarks on the report of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

5. The Committee, in its remarks, welcomed the progress made in the attainment of the major part of the goals of the programme regarding implementation of the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children of 1990. Other major positive points that drew the attention of the Committee in the preliminary report of Iran, were the implementation of article 30 of the Constitutional Law of the Islamic Republic of Iran regarding the provision of free education for all citizens till the secondary level, the access of more than 90 per cent of children aged 6-10 to primary education, the presence of the highest population of refugees of the world - a high percentage of whom were children - in Iran, and the offer of speedy and most effective aid to them, despite limited help from the international community.

6. In March 2001, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, as the national authority for the preparation of the periodic report, took steps to form a National Committee. The Committee invited representatives of the relevant organizations and organs involved in the problems and subjects concerning children, including: the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs; the National Association for the Protection of Children's Rights in Iran (an NGO); the Women's Participation Centre; the Lawyers' Association (an NGO); the National Management and Planning Organization; the municipality of Tehran; the National Welfare Organization; the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance; the Ministry of Education and Training; the Ministry of Health, Hygiene and Medical Education; the judiciary; the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting; the Islamic Consultative Assembly (the Parliament); the Islamic Human Rights Commission (an NGO); the Interior Ministry; the Workers' House (an NGO); the Dean of Higher International Studies of the University of Tehran; and the Dean of the Institution for Criminological Studies of the University of Tehran to become members of the Committee.

7. The aim of the formation of this Committee was the study of the concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (document CRC/C/5/Add.123), the collection of reports from various organizations on this subject, as well as the collection of the views and data of the members of the Committee regarding the latest changes and trends in development and successes attained during the previous five years in the field of problems relating to children, to prepare the first periodic country report.

8. In this committee, the concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child were distributed on the basis of the fields of responsibilities of the relevant organizations, and put at the disposal of the members of the Committee for their scrutiny and for presentation of a report. Further, with the determination of the field of responsibilities and fixing the methodology of work on the basis of the general guidelines regarding the material for the preparation of the periodic reports, approved by the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the members were made responsible to present their views and information for the preparation of the periodic report.

9. Members of the National Committee, during their various regular sessions, presented the replies of their respective organizations to the concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, and information concerning the progress made in the matter of children. On the basis of all the data presented, the Periodic Report of the Islamic Republic of Iran was prepared. Finally, a subcommittee composed of representatives of the Ministry of Education and Training, Ministry of Health, Hygiene and Medical Education, Management and Planning Organization, Head of the Criminology Research Institute of the University of Tehran, and an

attorney-at-law and member of the Lawyers' Association and ex-assistant prosecutor general of the Supreme Court (all of whom were members of the National Committee for the Rights of the Child), reviewed the report prepared from the technical point of view.

10. In this report, besides replying to most of the questions raised in the final remarks of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the activities carried out during the last five years, in the field of uplift of the status of children in the Islamic Republic of Iran, in six sections: general principles; civil rights and liberties; family environment and substitute guardianship; health and basic welfare; learning, leisure and cultural activities; and special protective measures, have been outlined.

11. In the first chapter under the title General Principles, which covers the subjects of non-discrimination, upholding the highest interests of the child, the right to life, survival and development, and respect for the views of the child, problems dealing with the uplift of the educational status of girls and the narrowing of the gender gap; legal support for children, including children born out of the framework of wedlock; reform of some of the laws pertaining to children, such as the law of guardianship of the children; expanding pre-school education; support before and after the birth of the child; increasing the participation of children in decision-making, and listening to their voice have been dealt with.

12. In the second chapter, which includes under the title Civil Rights and Liberties, the right to peaceful association and gatherings; the right of freedom from torture and/or other cruel behaviour and punishment; access to suitable information; the subject of freedom of parties and groups, etc., based on the Constitutional Law, and, in the same sense, the right to association and gatherings of children; the formation of a Technical Committee for Planning to reduce child abuse, programmes for the study and settlement of cases of abuse and torture of children; the action plan of the Ministry of Health, Hygiene and Medical Education; and UNICEF, regarding child abuse, and under the title of access to suitable information; steps taken by the Ministry of Education and Training, in the field of creation of information and sensitivity among instructors and guardians concerning child rights; the setting up of courses and workshops towards understanding the meaning of child rights; the implementation of joint programmes with UNICEF in the field of information dissemination, as well as the outstanding cultural activities of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, have been mooted.

13. In the third chapter of the report, under the title Family Environment and Substitute Guardianship, the three subjects of the guidance of parents, children deprived of a family environment and adoption have been covered. In this section, the activities of the National Association of Instructors and Guardians in the field of programmes and instructions for the guidance of parents; the activities of the Welfare Organization in the same field; as well as other activities of the organization pertaining to children deprived of a family environment, and programmes for adoption, have been brought up.

14. The fourth chapter, under the title Health and Basic Welfare, covers the subjects of health and health care; disabled children; abuse and neglect; physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration; and standard of living. In this chapter, it deals with the activities and studies and analysis of the Ministry of Health, and the National Welfare Organization, in the areas of health and aid to children; the activities and steps taken by the Welfare Organization and the municipality of Tehran, concerning disabled children; and teachings regarding prevention of

disability; the steps taken by the Prevention Deputy of the Welfare Organization to prevent bad behaviour with children being kept at hostels, the starting of a telephone help-line, the creation of safe homes for street children, the establishment of cultural and art centres for the education of children exposed to delinquency, the credits forecast in the budget for general services, and the manner of administration of the National Management and Planning Organization with regard to the earmarking of the credits.

15. The fifth chapter consists of topics concerning “Learning, Leisure and Cultural Activities”. Here, the subjects of job training and vocational guidance, the goals of education and training and leisure, recreation and cultural activities, have been dealt with. In this section the measures taken by the Ministry of Education and Training in the field of programming for the education of children, and learning statistics; life proficiency learning programmes; the education and training goals of the Ministry of Education and Training following the objectives of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, are delineated. The activities and programmes of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance for the uplift of the cultural status and the fulfilment of children and youth have been spelled out.

16. Finally, in the sixth chapter, under the title Special Protective Measures, the activities of organizations and organs dealing in children’s problems vis-à-vis the prevention and control of addiction, the rooting out of high-handedness towards women and girls, the commencement of the Emergency Police Centre 110, facing up to the growth of the phenomenon of street children, protective measures and rehabilitation of children facing extreme social abuse, the establishment of resettlement centres for children confronted with social abuse; the aid and services of the Islamic Republic of Iran to refugee children, including educational and health services; steps taken by the National Welfare Organization concerning hidden mines and children that have suffered because of the war imposed against the Islamic Republic of Iran; the transformation in the manner of investigation of delinquency crimes, and a sampling of verdicts issued in this respect; the steps that take place in the associations for the reformation and training of delinquent children; programmes for the rehabilitation of socially abused children; joining the International Labour Organization 1999 Convention (No. 182) concerning the abolition of the worst forms of child labour, as well as the status of children belonging to minorities, have been explained.

I. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

A. Non-discrimination (article 2 of the Convention)

17. The Constitutional Law of Iran, according to its articles 19 and 20, while considering all persons equal, has forbidden any kind of discrimination based on race, gender, colour, etc. It has guaranteed equality before the law, and protection of the people. In pursuance of the implementation of this article of the Constitutional Law, including in the domain of education and training of children, no discrimination exists, there is no bar to admissions based on religion, and no law, circular or regulation has been issued on this matter.

18. The Ministry of Education and Training, in pursuance of the goals of education and the ruling values of the society, based on the teachings of the religion of Islam, and to attain the objectives outlined by the World Summit for Children (1990) and in view of the rights of the child as laid out by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, has based its activities on the two following pivotal principles:

- To increase educational coverage of children and youth in need of learning at the general level, giving priority to rural and deprived regions, and the closing of the gap between cities and villages;
- The elevation of the educational status of girls, especially in the rural regions, closing the gap between girls and boys, and finding ways to keep girls learning, especially at the primary level.

19. The programme for combating the illiteracy of girls, and the implementation of this in 15 provinces of the country includes: the elevation of technical and professional expertise of the girls' secondary boarding-schools of the underdeveloped regions; the expansion and equipping of technical education facilities for girls; and the training of female instructors in the underdeveloped regions, are some of the programmes being implemented by the Women's Participation Centre in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Training. Lately, the full coverage of girls requiring education in six underdeveloped provinces has been considered, and approximately 7,000 girls needing education have been covered for primary education through the implementation of this programme. It is worth mentioning here that this programme is being continued.

20. Similarly, in pursuit of the removal of discrimination against all children, on the basis of Decree No. 617, dated 24 June 1997, of the Supreme Court, regarding the pursuit of a single strategy in the affairs of children born outside the framework of wedlock, the adulterer shall be considered as the father of the child, and all the responsibilities of a father, including the obtaining of an identity card for the child, shall be his responsibility.

B. Upholding the best interests of the child (art. 3)

21. Regarding the upholding of the best interests of the child within the framework of the family, article 1173 of the Civil Law was amended in 1997 as "Wherever, as a consequence of carelessness or moral degradation of the child's father or mother, who is in charge of the child's custody, the physical health or moral education of the child is endangered, the court can take any decision appropriate for the custody of the child, at the request of the child's relatives or guardian, or the head of the court of jurisdiction."

22. The following are evidence of lack of proper care and/or moral degradation of either of the parents:

- Injurious addiction to alcohol, narcotics and gambling;
- Notoriety in moral degradation and prostitution;
- Affliction by psychological illness, certified by a court physician;
- Abuse of the child, or forcing the child into performing immoral jobs, such as prostitution, begging and smuggling; and/or
- Repetition of corporal punishment beyond what may be common.

23. Article 1184 of the Civil Law (amended 25 May 2000, appearing in the *Government Gazette*, No. 16110) also states: “Wherever, the natural guardian of a child does not take care of the interests of the minor, and commits acts which cause losses to the ward, at the request of one of the child’s relatives and/or at the request of the presiding judge of a jurisdiction, after verification, the court shall dismiss the said guardian and ban him from encroachment in the property of the minor, and shall appoint a reliable person to administer the financial affairs of the child, as a guardian. Similarly, if the natural guardian, due to old age and/or ill health and the like, is not in a position to administer the estates of his ward, and does not appoint someone either for this job, according to the regulations of this Act, another person shall be appointed as a co-trustee with the natural guardian.”

24. On the basis of article 1186 of the Civil Law, “In cases where strong indications exist showing the dishonesty of the natural guardian in respect of the estate of his ward, the Public Prosecutor shall apply to the Court of First Instance, requesting that his actions may be investigated. The court shall examine the complaint and shall, in case of the guardian’s dishonesty being proved, act in accordance with article 1184.”

25. Article 96 of the Law of Imprisonment Affairs states that an interdict (*sic*) may complain against the guardian for non-payment of expenses and failing in his/her training and upkeep. In such a case, wherever the court considers the case admissible, it will issue a commensurate order. The guardian shall then act on the basis of that order. The text of this article shall be implemented if the Public Prosecutor informs the court of the guardian’s failure in the training and upkeep of the interdict and payment of his/her expenses. Article 97 of this Law may also be quoted, which says, “The interdict or any other interested party may inform the Prosecutor General, of the existence of a cause for the dismissal of the guardian. In such a case, if the Prosecutor considers the cause for dismissal to be admissible, he may request the court for the dismissal of the guardian.”

26. By way of upholding the best interests of the child in the areas of psychological health of the children within the context of education and training, from the school year 1996/97, a new position called “psychiatry educators” has been added to the school “medical educators” cadre, with the cooperation of the Deputy for Prevention, and the Department General of Medical Consultation, of the schools. The activity consists of three main sectors:

- Self-dignity, with the aim of increasing the level of self-respect and self-realization;
- Social expertise, with special stress on finding friends; and
- Thinking expertise, with special stress on problem-solving.

27. This programme was put into effect during the school year 1996/97, on a trial basis, in five schools in the town of Rey, covered by the project “Clean Cities”. It covered some 2,000 students. In the school year 1998/99, this programme was extended to 6 provinces, and in 1999/2000 to 11 provinces, covering 130 instructors, 114 psychiatry educators, and 9,609 students under training. It was also carried out during the academic year 2000/01, in the same 11 provinces, i.e.: Khuzestan, Gilan, the cities of Tehran Province, Yazd, West Azarbaijan, Sistan and Baluchestan, Hamedan, Isfahan, Kordestan, and Fars, and, on the whole, 495 psychiatry educators, 12,718 students, and 181 instructors were trained. Three

other provinces are on the list, to be added to this programme, besides the 11 provinces, during the academic year 2001/02, and the programme will be thus conducted in 14 provinces with as much as 50 per cent growth in the number of trainees as compared with the programme carried out in the previous year.

28. Extension of pre-elementary school training and developing the contents of the pre-elementary school training is among other programmes to be executed with regard to the following forms.

Extension of pre-elementary school training

29. Implementation of the "Head Start" plan involves training children of 3-6 years of age together with their parents. This plan is implemented at the pre-elementary school centres and gathering halls in urban and rural areas. This programme has been conducted as a pilot plan in Gilan province.

30. An indirect training plan has been established for children's parents (from newly-born to the 3-year-old children). Receiving brochures and bulletins, the parents will be familiarized with educational concepts on how to behave with their children (up to age 3) in the course of eight phases. This plan has been implemented in the southern district of Tehran, and the province of Gilan as well.

31. Utilizing the specialized services offered by the experts from the Welfare Organization, along with the physical facilities and equipments existing at the urban and rural kindergartens affiliated with the rehabilitation complex, the private sector will attempt, in another programme, to establish typical kindergartens.

32. Establishment of private pre-elementary school centres in cities and villages has been achieved through the payment of free loans and money loaned without interest from budgetary resources. The private sector will be assisted to establish private kindergartens, giving priority to less developed regions of the marginal zones of the cities and urban areas. It is predicted in this plan, that 50 per cent of the nominal capacity of these centres will be devoted to the children belonging to the needy families, so that with the subsidy paid to the children, all or part of their expenditures may be fulfilled. This will be executed as a pilot scheme in the provinces of Gilan, Ilam, Sistan and Baluchestan, and Tehran (southern district).

33. It is predicted that the number of students under the coverage of pre-elementary school training at the private sector may go up to 20 per cent, and also the ratio of the population under coverage, with other centres (self-sufficient and governmental) included as well, may rise in 2001, from 3 to 3.4 per cent in proportion to the total population of the students.

34. It is worth mentioning that, at the present time, there are 1,320 rural complexes and kindergartens, and they have covered 6,000 rural children so far. In 2000, a total of 236,645 children received services in 3,989 kindergartens, including 1,838 private, and 486 self-supporting kindergartens, and 1,665 rehabilitation complexes.

35. Providing and organizing the contents of pre-elementary school training: this plan will be launched in order to update the educational programmes and introduce the latest scientific and

specialized innovations at the stage of pre-elementary school education, to coordinate and unify this training, and set forth methods appropriated for evaluation and supervision of the pre-elementary school centres through developing a practical and dynamic system. This plan is to be executed in the provinces of Kordestan, Lorestan, and the western district of Tehran.

Plan to follow up on the rights of the child

36. This plan is put into action in order to create the ground for the realization of the rights of the child, to familiarize the parents, supervisors and the authorities in charge of children's affairs about their own rights, to follow up for the full execution of the articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to ensure an executive guarantee for the rights of the child in the year 2000, and, ultimately, to design and refine the overall organizational structure of the rights of the child. To do so, from each province, at least one expert on child affairs has been selected and trained in the Welfare Organization. Moreover, many provinces in the country, such as Kermanshah, Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari, Qazvin, Tehran, Isfahan, West Azarbaijan, East Azarbaijan, Ardebil, and Zanzan, have endeavoured to conduct educational workshops on the rights of the child, for the children's affairs experts, and the principals and instructors at the kindergartens.

37. The important point to be mentioned is that in order to achieve the articles of the rights of the child, the Welfare Organization, the office of Children's and Adolescents' Affairs, has published essays and books on this issue. Some of these books and essays have so far been printed, and some are yet to be printed. Among the titles, one can refer to: "A Translation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child for Adolescents aged 13-18", and books entitled as *Maltreatment of Children, Guidelines for Teaching Human Rights and the Rights of the Child for Students at the Elementary and Secondary Levels* and *A Psychological Analysis of a Story, and Its Impact upon the Evolution of a Child's Personality*.

Training human resources at the pre-elementary school centres

38. This programme has focused on training the principals, instructors, official experts and experts on children's affairs all around the country, in collaboration with the University of Rehabilitation Sciences, in a centralized and non-centralized manner. In order to enhance the level of service delivery, and services to empower children, the Office for Children's and Adolescents' Affairs will endeavour to train these groups of people, and in total, 1,184 individuals will undergo training by the end of March 2002.

Providing facilities required for receiving bank loans

39. In assisting the private sector, this programme will be executed in order to establish pre-elementary school centres and kindergartens with a sum of 30 per cent of the existing and/or newly-established centres.

Payment of subsidy to kindergartens and private pre-elementary school centres

40. This programme is developed in order to receive and devote at least 30 per cent of the nominal capacity of these centres to needy children and children without guardians and families,

who are under the coverage of the Welfare Organization. The kindergartens established in the deprived and marginal areas of cities and villages, will also be helped and assisted under this programme.

Transfer of kindergartens in the complex of rehabilitation services to the private sector

41. Based on the budgetary law of the Welfare Organization, in 2001, 25 per cent of the kindergartens will be transferred to the private sector. This step is being taken in pursuance of the goals of the Third Plan, based on the policy of transferring of government centres to the private sector in order to modify and minimize the government sectors.

Holding kindergarten festivals everywhere

42. This plan will be launched in line with accomplishing the recommendations proposed by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, with topics such as singing songs, children's theatre, and story telling all over the country, in collaboration with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Many of these plans are directed towards "securing the best interests of the child" (art. 3).

C. Right to life, survival and development (art. 6)

Prenatal care

43. In order to prevent genetic disorders and other problems, a comprehensive programme has been launched on the prevention of prenatal handicaps originating from genetic disorders. This programme has embraced various dimensions, each of which pursue certain goals; on the whole, however, these dimensions are centred only upon one goal, that is, a decrease in the rate of the prevalence and occurrence of types of paralyzes originating from genetic disorders.

44. In addition to establishing genetics counselling centres, and training the counsellors, another section of this programme is devoted to upgrading the level of public awareness through holding classes by trained experts at the same counselling centres, on how to prevent paralyzes as a consequence of genetic disorders. In 1999, 173 trained counsellors in total were at work at 68 centres. It is worth mentioning here that more than 32,000 files for counselling were made from March 1999 up to March 2000.

45. A plan to determine the causes of mental retardation, to offer genetic counselling and train the relatives can prevent the birth of mentally retarded infants. This programme seeks to study the causes of mental retardation among those who are affected by this problem, and, accordingly, 500 mentally retarded individuals have so far been identified in Tehran, 300 in Isfahan, and 300 in Khorassan province.

46. A plan to prevent paralyzes as a consequence of congenital measles was conducted in three stages:

- Stage 1 was to study the level of immunity in the community, based on research from 1997-1999, the level of immunity was revealed to have fallen to 78.4 per cent, a warning signifying an epidemic to happen;

- Stage 2 was to determine the ratio of eye disabilities as an outcome of being affected by congenital measles among the children aged 0-4 years who had referred to the health centres in Tehran in 1999; the population covered by this programme was 1,000 children from 0-4 years of age;
- Stage 3 was to determine the ratio of eye disabilities among the population under coverage of stage 2, in 2000.

This programme is now at the stage of data collection and elementary statistics.

Post-natal protection

47. An educational plan entitled “How to provide appropriate psychological stimuli for baby by mother, and to study the effect of this training on the maturity of the baby” used films and illustrated pamphlets to instruct mothers on how to behave with their babies during the first few months of its life, and how to create an environment rich in suitable stimuli. So far, four educational, coloured and illustrated books, two brochures, and six educational posters have been designed and printed. After conducting the required training, this scheme will be launched as a pilot plan.

48. The tenth book, as part of Civil Law on separation and guardianship, is centred on securing the interests and rights of those children who are without a father, parental ancestor or guardian from either side. Articles 1207 to 1256 elucidate specific legal points on this issue. Among these points, the chief one is in article 1191 of the Civil Law (vol. 2, book 8, chap. 3), which places emphasis on the condition that “If the guardian appointed by the natural guardian does not take steps for the maintenance or the training of his ward or for the administration of his estate, or if he abstains from fulfilling his duties, he will be discharged.”

49. Amendment and revision of the comment on article 1041 of the Civil Law (vol. 2, book 7, chap. 2), regarding marriage of a minor with the consent of the guardian, has been approved by the Islamic Consultative Assembly (the Parliament). It is under consideration by the Expediency Council of the Regime for final ratification. Efforts are under way here that increase the minimum marriage age for girls and boys. Early and forced marriages should also be stopped.

D. Respect for the views of the child (art. 12)

50. The programme to follow up on the rights of the child developed by the Welfare Organization, Office for Children’s and Adolescents’ Affairs, has already been executed in order to implement the relevant articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. So far, while being in its very first stages, the programme has conducted workshops on teaching the rights of the child, in order to familiarize the organization’s experts with the Convention. This is expected to facilitate future programming for carrying out the duties entrusted to them within their jurisdiction and powers, in child affairs and the attainment of the child rights, in the best manner possible.

51. In order to better promote the role of students in decision-making, and to ensure their voice is being listened to, together with the “School Mayor” plan, student councils at the schools,

student parliaments, and the newly established National Students Organization, of which more than 3.6 million children have so far acquired membership, have just become active. Besides this, the syndicate of Students' Islamic Societies has also started functioning.

52. Moreover, a competition under the title of "Students Write on the Rights of the Child" has been started as a pilot programme in five selected schools. To administer this competition along with workshops and various meetings, teachers and instructors selected from the five schools were trained in order to convey the concepts of the rights of the child, so that with the introduction of definitions on the rights of the child they may teach their students the concept of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Five books are also being prepared for publication. These are some of the measures that, together, should provide the students with an opportunity to take part in various matters, and practically to familiarize them with such notions as democracy and rights of citizenship.

II. CIVIL RIGHTS AND LIBERTIES

A. Freedom of association and peaceful assembly (article 15 of the Convention)

53. Based on articles 26 and 27 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, all Iranian citizens are entitled to hold rallies and gatherings, regardless of age. In view of article 26, all "parties, societies, political, commercial, and Islamic associations, or associations of the recognized religious minorities, are free, provided they do not violate the principles of independence, freedom, national unity, and the Islamic tenets of the Islamic Revolution. No one is to be hindered from, or forced to take part in a gathering".

54. Likewise, children's participation in the camps, and other scientific, cultural and sports gatherings, is fully endorsed, encouraged and supported by the Government. Annually, the Welfare Organization, on the occasion of World Children's Day, is active in celebrating the occasion and holding gatherings for children and adolescents. In 2000 as well, children held a rally for the Centre for Dialogue Among Civilizations. At the end of this rally, they passed a resolution on the proper administration and follow-up of their own rights, on various grounds, based on the articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

B. Right to freedom from being subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment (art. 37 (a))

55. During the last two years, the Ministry of Health and Medical Education (MOHME), as a sub-category of the Bureau of Mental Health, and in collaboration with executive officials and university professors and the UNICEF office in Tehran, has endeavoured to develop a programme of action on how to prevent, reveal and settle the phenomenon of child abuse. In this connection, the MOHME has had several achievements and innovations, the chief ones being an advisory technical committee together with a specialized training committee for the experts in various sections of the Ministry of Health on the rights of the child, providing a plan to distribute information on the rights of the child among all hospitals and health centres in the country. This will convey messages about the right of the child to emancipation from persecution and all types of unmerciful behaviour, and to launch a plan based on the World Health Organization (WHO) protocol concerning inter-group physical abuse.

56. The plan is also focused on the provision of greater and more effective protection for those children kept at “pseudo-family” centres (a pseudo-family is defined as a volunteer family taking care of the children of relatives). The chief measure adopted in this regard is two telephone lines set up for the bureau of pseudo-family affairs of the Welfare Organization. In order to give awareness to the children residing at such centres, over the two telephone lines, there are posters, brochures and cards printed and offered to the centres. Moreover, the bureau of “pseudo-family” centres benefits from the assistance of children’s representatives at these centres, to ensure the submission of reports on child abuse.

57. The staff at these centres are being trained on the Convention on the Rights of the Child and life skills; at some centres, the children also receive training in life skills.

58. In 2000, a plan on settling the cases of child abuse, proposed by the Welfare Organization, was executed in nine provinces. In each province, 10 kindergartens, 10 primary schools, 10 secondary schools and 10 high schools and other centres affiliated to the Welfare Organization are covered by this plan.

59. According to reports received so far, from January to February 2000 this plan has recorded 42 cases of child abuse, of which there were 35 boys and 7 girls in 5 provinces, including Hormozgan, Kordestan, Kermanshah, Zanjan, Khuzestan, and also at the rehabilitation centre in south Tehran. The average age was 13.45 years, the minimum age 8 years, and the maximum age 18 years; 47.6 per cent of abuse took place at home, 42.8 per cent both inside and outside the home, and just one case occurred outside the home. Ninety-five per cent of the abuse was physical, one case sexual, and one case emotional abuse. Some 50 per cent referred to physical abuse taking place at the school.

60. The plan for settling the child abuse cases, executed by the Welfare Organization, is partly devoted to giving information and promoting awareness about the articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, especially article 37 (sect. A), to increase awareness and produce sensitivity among the authorities responsible for public training, including educational officials and executives, principals and experts, teachers and instructors, and chiefly students and their parents.

C. Access to suitable information (art. 17)

61. The Ministry of Education has placed great emphasis, especially during the last year, on promoting awareness and sensitivity at the level of the officials and principals in the Ministry and the provinces as well as among the teachers and instructors, students and parents. A report on the Conference on the Rights of the Child in Geneva, submitted to the Minister of Education, and essays on the rights of the child printed in a newsletter issued by the Office of the International Educational Cooperation of the Ministry of Education, and also in the *Negah* monthly, both organs of this Ministry, were distributed to principals and officials of the Ministry of Education, all around the country. This is typical of achievement in promoting awareness.

62. Moreover, in order to impart awareness to teachers, instructors, and students, in the framework of joint programmes of the Ministry of Education and UNICEF, there are five less developed provinces (Kordestan, Sistan and Baluchestan, West Azerbaijan, Hormozgan, and Kohkilouye and Boyer Ahmad) that are given priority in the activities conducted to enhance general information and awareness.

63. Among other measures adopted by the Ministry of Education, the chief one is a plan developed on universal education, in the schools of the country. The methodology, curricula and contents of universal education are absolutely in line with the rights of the child. This plan will be executed as a pilot scheme in the current academic year; accordingly, there are 20 schools selected in the country to receive the curricula offered under the Universal Education Plan. Teachers and instructors of these 20 schools go through the relevant courses to teach the related curricula; the required pamphlets are also to be prepared.

64. In the five above-named provinces, the issue of children's rights is also taken into account, with the intention of reducing differences and inequality between urban and rural girls and boys, and raising the coverage of education. Teachers, instructors and officials are chosen from each one of the country's provinces, mainly the five less developed provinces already mentioned, to participate in the courses and workshops for training the conceptions of the rights of the child and the articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Each participant, after passing the course, shall follow up the issue in his/her own province and play an active role in sensitizing, training and developing these notions, within the framework of similar courses, workshops and gatherings. Incorporating certain concepts into the educational programmes of the schools is also a plan to be developed in future.

65. The highlights of the cultural activities conducted in various departments of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance in the year 2000, and at some time before that, are categorized in the sections that follow.

Press and journals

66. During recent years, with regard to the facilities provided and the required atmosphere created in public libraries, especially in the new buildings, a situation has been promoted to make the children's section as active and favourable as other sections in the library. In this regard, children have been lucky; that is, from among 19 million books loaned out in 1999, there were 1 million children's books. Also, nearly 40 per cent of the budget allocated to purchase books is devoted to children's books. Part of the activities of the press deputy of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance and the related centres is conducted in relation with children and adolescents. Related journals print health and educational texts for students, on rural and family issues in the provinces, and information on children.

67. The following are the most important titles of these journals: *Omid-e Enghelab*, *Nahal-e Enghelab*, *Bachchehaye Enghelab*, *Shahed-e Nojavan*, *Az Shoma Ba Shoma*, *Roshd-e Marzdaran-e Nojavan*, *Keyhan-e Bachcheha*, *Nedaye Zanjan*, *Bachcheha-e/Gol-Agha*, *Sadaf*, *Annual Press on Children and Adolescents*, *Mahtab*, *Hi! Children*, *Soroush-e Nojavan*, *Omid Ayandeh*, *Let's Teach to Our Children*, *Soroush-e Koudak*, *Zamzam*, *Baran*, *Classmate (Hamkelassi)*, *Ehsan*, *Sadaf-e Nojavan*, *Shapiro*, *Sabine*, *Growth of the Student*, *Growth of the Child*, *Growth of the Beginner*, *Family Magazine*, *Rouz-haye Zendegi*, *Khaneh and Khanevadeh*,

Golhaye Zendegi, Rah-e Zendegi, Healthy Child, Barg-e Sabz, Javan-e Khanevadeh, Pand-e Zendegi, People & Life, Ahang-e Zendegi, Kanoon-e Khanevadeh, Khanevadeh va Sargarmi (Family and Hobby). There are a total of 28 journals and magazines related to children and adolescents, and 13 journals devoted to the family.

68. Moreover, the House of Young Newspapermen, established with the assistance of and collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, the High Council of Youth, the Association for Thought Education of Children and Adolescents, and the families of the adolescent and young newspapermen, provides the children as well as the adolescents with an opportunity to express their views and opinions through working for the press. The House of Young Newspapermen, as an institution for youth, issues three publications: *A Research Journal of Children's Literature, A Study of Children's Literature* and *Home*.

69. In addition, exhibitions on children's paintings and handicrafts, and art and cultural festivals on various national, Islamic and religious occasions were conducted during recent years with great success.

70. The Children's Book Council pursues the following goals:

- To provide a possibility in order to provoke children and adolescents to more and deeper study;
- To assist in publishing Farsi books useful for children and adolescents;
- To enrich and expand children's and adolescents' special national literature;
- To strive for cooperation and coordination among all people and organizations which, through the books, can have an impression on children and adolescents; holding exhibitions on children's books, determining special celebrations for children's books;
- To pay attention to the qualitative improvement of all instruments that, like a book, may make an impression on the mind, the thought and the power of creativity of children and adolescents, such as journals, theatre, radio and television, cinema, toys, and the like;
- To encourage research on children's and adolescents' books, holding sessions for discussion and various workshops, selecting the best of children's and adolescents' books ever written, revised, versified, painted and translated; and granting awards to the producers;
- To establish a reference library in the "Council", and to guide and encourage people or cultural organizations to found equipped libraries for the use of children and adolescents; and
- To provide instruments to direct teachers, librarians, fathers and mothers, the directors of children's and adolescents' organizations in the field of children's books, to publish a quarterly, to communicate with national and international centres in other

countries pursuing similar goals towards children's books, and to print typical books for children and adolescents after having obtained permission from the competent authorities.

71. The main activities conducted by this Council are to encourage the producers and researchers of children's literature. The groups on research and evaluation of books in the Council annually hold several meetings to study and evaluate the books published. The results acquired through this effort, for the information of all those interested, are reflected in a list of the selected books on children and adolescents, research essays and annual awards, in the Council's Newsletter and/or the Press.
72. In order to upgrade the community's level of information towards children's books and literature, there are several public and specialized workshops continuously active at the Council, on familiarization with children's literature, literary criticism, creativity and other subjects.
73. To conduct activities in line with offering services to "children in need", there is a special group working to establish small libraries in hospitals, to hold sessions on storytelling and bookreading for sick children, and to conduct seasonal workshops for those willing to cooperate in this.
74. With regard to a request by international organizations in Iran, and the confirmation of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Council has prepared books on literary criticism in the camps, centres for the residence of the needy and the schools, and has also assisted in establishing libraries.
75. This Council's section on world relations is a member of the Books International Office for the Young Generation and is, accordingly, in communication with other national offices all around the world. The Council also communicates with the international and research centres on children's literature in Germany, Austria, Japan and in other international organizations such as UNESCO, UNICEF and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).
76. Compilation of a children's and adolescents' dictionary, in 21 volumes, is among the most important activities carried out in the country to produce an authoritative and comprehensive reference work, not only for children and adolescents, but also for the adults who deal with this age group.
77. Celebrating the first Theatre Festival at the mosques in 2000, holding art and cultural classes for children and adolescents, and familiarizing them with occupations and skills in various cities in Iran, are all activities carried out by the Council.
78. A series of cultural, legal, social and commercial activities, all achieved by the Society of Authors for Children and Adolescents, helps in the accomplishment of the goals adopted by the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Presently, the society has 220 members, all of whom are authors, poets, translators, literary critics, researchers and newspapermen for children and adolescents. In pursuit of this goal, section 4 of the goals of the society, adopted in article 17 of the Convention, lists them as follows:

- To give material and spiritual support for the rights of the members;
- To create a ground suitable for the material and spiritual growth of the members;
- To establish a relationship between the members and the related art and cultural centres and organizations, inside and outside the country;
- To establish a relationship between the members and their audiences;
- To exchange information and experiences among the researchers, critics, experts and professors within and outside the country;
- To create a situation suitable for participation of members in art, cultural and scientific circles within and outside the country; and
- To prepare facilities for offering valuable art works to the community.

79. The major activities accomplished by this society in 1999, in the cultural section, may be outlined under several headings:

- Arbitrating as the Specialized Committee on Children and Adolescents at the sixth Press Festival;
- Holding the first contest for new authors at the Press Festival;
- Cooperating in publishing the “Friday Book”;
- Planning to publish unfinished books. Under this plan, five books left unfinished by five authors, being members of the Society, are printed and distributed. The Society, after receiving, analysing, and selecting the best works, published them along with the names of the authors, as members of the Society, and the names of the new publications;
- Holding educational meetings;
- Cooperating with the fourth international fair on the children’s book illustrator;
- Replying to an inquiry by the Ministry of Islamic Guidance on a plan for a comprehensive educational and applied university of children’s literature and literature on fiction;
- Conducting a joint Council on Children’s Literature and Cinema. This council, in collaboration with the Society of Authors for Children and Adolescents, and the Children’s and Adolescents’ Cinema, pursues two simultaneous plans on the establishment of a mutual relationship between child literature and cinema:
 - A film-book plan, based on which 10 films are selected to appear as books;

- A book-film plan, based on which, 12 novels for adolescents by 12 authors as members of the society are selected to appear as films.

80. The main activities conducted by this council during 2000 are:

- Holding four educational workshops (on editing, story-writing, translation and journalism);
- Participation in the Tehran International Book Fair, and honouring one pioneer in children's and adolescents' literature;
- Holding festivals for the best of children's and adolescents' literature, in order to choose 20 authors, poets, translators, critics and researchers on children's and adolescents' literature during the past 20 years;
- Sending members of the society to some cities in the country in order to conduct sessions on travels and stories, and take an active part in children's and adolescents' gatherings and festivals.

81. On the social and cultural improvement of rural girls and their accessibility to information, the following activities have so far been carried out:

- Encouraging rural girls towards reading books and membership in 1,320 libraries affiliated with the Rural Rehabilitation Centres, in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance and other internal, external and international offices;
- Taking part in preparing and executing a letter of understanding with the Literacy Movement to hold literacy classes in cooperation with educational guides and the follow-up groups, and to enjoy intersectoral cooperation with the Deputy for Prevention Affairs of the Welfare Organization, Rural Rehabilitation Office and the Literacy Movement Organization (LMO);
- Providing and distributing more than 1,500 brochures and the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the announcement boards at the centres for rural rehabilitation services, for the parents' information regarding the articles of the Convention;
- Providing and distributing more than 15,000 books, bulletins, posters and pamphlets about children's issues and their rights, among 1,320 postal centres and rural rehabilitation houses, for use in the libraries of these centres; and
- Training the villagers working at the rural rehabilitation centres, as a good start for the growth of a child during its first year of life, by means of videotapes; and transferring this training to the parents of children living in villages.

III. FAMILY ENVIRONMENT AND SUBSTITUTE GUARDIANSHIP

A. Parental guidance (article 5 of the Convention)

82. The Parent-Teacher Association in the Islamic Republic of Iran, as a non-profit and non-governmental organization, established with the assistance and support of all those interested in educating children and adolescents, develops various educational and cultural programmes in order to direct and guide parents all over the country. The activities and programmes of this organization are directed towards familiarizing parents with the latest educational findings, promoting the level of relationships among the members of the family, and preventing damage and abnormalities in the family.

83. The main activities conducted by this association are brought out in family education, counselling and guidance, publications and intersectoral cooperation. Those undergoing family education training with this organization are classified into the following five groups:

- Young persons of marriage age;
- Parents of pre-school children;
- Parents of students in primary schools;
- Parents of adolescents in secondary school; and
- Parents of youngsters in high school.

84. It is worth mentioning here that the educational content of each level is organized consistently with the needs of that group, along with emphasis on such issues as the rights of the child, children's mental and physical health, and children's nutrition, especially, at the level of elementary and pre-elementary school training.

85. In order to deliver services on family guidance and counselling to the families in educational, marriage and other areas, more than 100 centres for family guidance and counselling are established all over the country, under the supervision of this organization. Holding regular courses for the promotion of knowledge, especially among the counsellors at the centres, is seriously followed up by this organization; paying due attention to the legal issues, especially the rights of the child within the educational content of the courses conducted, is emphasized.

86. The *Peyvand* monthly publication, with a circulation of 170,000 copies per month, is among the instruments much valued by this organization for the development of family training; during recent years many articles on issues related to the rights of the children have been published by this monthly publication.

87. To involve the country's artistic community in "family recognition" and the related issues, this organization has prepared the ground by establishing a section for a contest on family film, in the international festivals on educational films, in order to introduce, evaluate and introduce the best work to the community. It is evident that issues related to the rights of the children are somehow (either directly or indirectly) reflected in these works.

Table 1
Courses on family training in the country, 1998-1999

Number of courses on family training	Number of participants			Number of instructors of family training
	Female	Male	Total	
18 242	1 535 644	370 923	1 906 567	9 362

Table 2
Courses on family training in the country, 1999-2000

Number of courses on family training	Number of participants			Number of instructors of family training
	Female	Male	Total	
24 009	5 327 311	1 946 440	7 243 749	7 705

Table 3
Centres for family counselling and guidance, 1999-2000

Number of centres	Female counsellors	Male counsellors	Total
92	87	170	257

Table 4
Centres for family counselling, 2000-2001

Number of centres	Female counsellors	Male counsellors	Total
102	87	197	284

88. With regard to this issue, the Welfare Organization, on the occasion of World Children's Day, attempted to hold gatherings in which children and adolescents could actively participate; the officials also delivered speeches on this occasion.

89. Moreover, conducting training workshops on the rights of the child, for officials and experts at the Welfare Organization, is among the major activities initiated by the organization to give awareness to parents and familiarize them with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The concepts thus learned will be transferred by the trainees to the principals and instructors in the kindergartens, and in the courses to come, from the new trainees to the parents. It is hoped that by the end of the current year a considerable part of this plan will have been implemented.

90. A plan to rehabilitate and enable the families under the coverage of the Welfare Organization has the overall goal of identifying the abilities and talents, psychological inclinations and characteristics, technical skills, and the problems and difficulties of all members

of the households as service-receivers (households headed by mothers). This is done in order to promote and disclose the abilities and reduce all problems and obstacles in the family. Among other goals, there is a plan designed to upgrade the level of knowledge in the members of the family on the appropriate manner to establish social relationships together and with their children. This plan is being executed in 28 provinces in the country.

B. Children deprived of family environment (art. 20)

91. The Welfare Organization has conducted several activities for children deprived of family environment. These include a plan on establishing cooperative centres for such children. This plan is designed for the better settlement of the children, and improving their state of security. In 2000, in the budget programme, facilities were taken into account, such as housing loans, allotments and paying tuition fees of the non-governmental universities, and developing plans for the employment of such children.

92. A plan aims at minimizing and settling government and non-government boarding centres. In view of the fact that institutional and camp life is, in the long term, one of the chief and most deep-rooted causes of social complications, the policy of minimization is, therefore, given priority in the programmes of the “pseudo-family” section of the Deputy for Social Affairs.

93. The results obtained by this plan are: minimizing government centres and reducing the number of children residing at these centres, permeating the centres with an atmosphere more akin to the texture and quality of a family, promoting the quality of assistance activities, a rise in transferring children towards living in a family or foster family environment, avoiding separation between children and the family, and strengthening plans that can assist the sustainability of the relationship, and life between brothers and sisters.

94. This plan was executed during 1999-2000 in various provinces around the country. The latest statistical information obtained by this plan are: from April to June 2001, there were 145 government (rehabilitation) children’s and adolescents’ houses, in which 3,100 children and adolescents are staying. Also, there were 120 “Houses for Board of Trustees” for children and adolescents, in which there resided 1,330 children and adolescents.

C. Adoption (art. 21)

95. The pseudo-family plan is among those plans designed in the current year by the Welfare Organization. Pseudo-family is defined as a family taking care of from one to three children, within the families of volunteer kinsmen (either blood relatives or in-law relations), who are considered to be competent and able to maintain good supervision over the life of such children.

96. This plan is one of the major types designed to take care of children without guardians. The plan aims to:

- Protect against long-term residence of children at the boarding centres;
- Strengthen the patterns of protection inside the family;

- Extend and continue de-institutionalization at the boarding section; and to
- Offer good supervision to the children considered to be living with the competent family.

IV. HEALTH AND BASIC WELFARE

A. Health and health services (article 24 of the Convention)

97. The Bureau of Children in the Ministry of Health and Medical Education, as one of the subdivisions of the Health Deputy, has initiated in recent years programmes for planning and leading the executive activities on childcare, vaccination, combating specific childhood diseases and diseases prevalent in childhood. Other bureaux, such as the Bureau of Nutrition, are also concerned with developing policies and leading the required activities to combat child malnutrition, and to encourage breastfeeding.

98. In the course of a change brought about in the system of the Ministry of Health and Medical Education (MOHME) in 2001, a bureau with the title of General Bureau of Youth was established, and has just initiated its activities and duties on processing school health issues, including youth psychological and physical health.

99. The Welfare Organization, as an institute for social welfare, covers a wide range of preventive, protective and rehabilitative activities and programmes, as well as special social services, all conducted under the supervision and assistance of the Government, institutes and volunteer groups, to train people as health workers. This organization has developed two policies - general and specific. The general policy considers the whole population, whereas the specific policy takes care of special groups and people who are in emergency situations.

100. In the Islamic Republic of Iran, accessibility of health facilities is provided for more than 87 per cent of the population in rural areas, and about 100 per cent in urban areas.

101. Since the health situation of Iranian children is reported in detail each decade to the United Nations, through a country evaluation report on the follow-up to the World Summit Conference for Children held in 1990 and, in view of the fact that the estimates thus acquired portray the success achieved by the Islamic Republic of Iran to be by far, in most cases, greater than the goals emphasized in the World Summit Conference, the Committee on the Rights of the Child is, therefore, called upon to devote attention to that report.

102. During the last five years, three wide-ranging studies have been conducted on the knowledge and practice indicators among youth, in the health section of the Ministry of Health and Medical Education (MOHME). The three studies conducted are:

- A study of knowledge and practice, among girls and women of 15 to 25 years of age, of reproductive health, in 1996;
- A study of knowledge and practice among girls and boys of 10 to 19 years of age, as to the health issues, especially reproductive health and health during puberty, in the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1997; and

- A study of the situation of mental health in girls and boys of 10 to 19 years of age, the results of which are yet to be published.

103. These studies generally deal with various aspects of physical, psychological and social health, especially the knowledge of people regarding reproductive and physical health issues. These studies are actually a foundation for thorough programming to eradicate strained circumstances, together with psychological and physical difficulties with which children and adolescents are faced.

104. In 2001, a study was to be undertaken to illustrate the epidemiological countenance of adolescents' and youths' social and mental complications in each province.

B. Disabled children (art. 23)

105. The municipality of Tehran, in order to provide assistance in educating disabled children, has endeavoured to establish primary schools for boys and girls with the intention of training mentally handicapped children (children with a lower IQ, as compared with normal children, and unable to study at ordinary schools), along with the aid and cooperation of skilful and specialized teachers.

106. Consideration of issues related to abused women and girls is among the plans ratified by the Centre for Women's Participation, launched in the current year, in collaboration with the Welfare Organization.

107. Similarly, the Bureau of Pseudo-Family of the Deputy for Social Affairs in the Welfare Organization, has designed a plan to "resolve the protection of abused children without guardians" with a view to eliminating discrimination towards the abused children without guardians. The plan pursues the following goals:

- Creation of equal opportunities;
- Reduction of formal institutions and substituting them with pseudo-family associations; and
- A unified approach on how to protect the abused children without guardians.

108. This plan is delivered in 28 provinces and, in total, 2,636 abused children reside at centres for protecting such children, among whom there were some protected by "pseudo-families", and some who were under the care of their own families.

109. The Prevention Deputy of the Welfare Organization has also launched several plans and programmes on abuse prevention. Among these is the programme for the prevention of amblyopia, or impaired vision. This programme was first conducted as a pilot scheme in 1995 in kindergartens and pre-elementary school centres in Bandar Abbas, in 1996 in Isfahan, and thereafter in the provincial centres. The programme is further expanded every year. The point to be taken note of is that amblyopia has a prevalence of 2.5 per cent in the country.

110. A plan was made in 2000 to carry out optometric examinations on more than 1 million children, besides those covered by kindergartens and pre-elementary school centres, through increasing the number of optometric centres. This plan is already being executed.
111. A plan on considering the preventable causes of blindness among students in schools for the blind was executed as a pilot scheme in 1999 in the two provinces of Tehran and Fars, and was further extended in 2000, in the schools for the blind and/or at the centres for training and protecting the blind, in these provinces. A comprehensive programme on the prevention of handicaps as a consequence of genetic disorders was introduced in the section on “prenatal birth protection” (see paragraph 43). As regards determining the causes of mental retardation, offering genetic counselling and training the relatives, this plan was also introduced in the section on “prenatal protection” (see paragraphs 43-45).
112. Training children and their parents on prevention from burning and poisoning uses various educational tools such as films, posters, pamphlets and other complementary activities. Students in this programme receive the required training on the causes responsible for burning and poisoning, and how to prevent them. Through observing simple security precautions, they should be able to protect themselves and the younger children against all types of dangers in the home.
113. Parents are also trained, using films and pamphlets. This is executed as a pilot plan in the metropolitan district No. 1 of Tehran, recognized as one of the most vulnerable areas. In collaboration with the Ministry of Education, 4,500 children aged 7-10 in 12 schools for boys, and close to 1,200 mothers were trained in the academic year 1998-1999. The programme on prevention of burns is now being executed in the central cities of the provinces of Mazandaran and East Azerbaijan, and also in the central cities of the provinces of Gilan and West Azerbaijan, by training all students at the primary level, as well as the mothers referred to the Health Centres, by holding question-and-answer sessions, showing films, posters and offering pamphlets.
114. A plan has been designed for training in the prevention of various types of handicaps and social abuses to increase knowledge and change the attitude of literacy students participating in the prevention groups organized by the Literacy Movement Organization. This plan was launched in 1998 in 13 provinces in the country and 17,000 literacy students were trained. This plan was executed as well in 2000, in all the provinces throughout the country.
115. A plan on training in the prevention of handicaps and social abuses, in collaboration with the Construction Campaign (*Jihad-e Sazendagi*), was developed with the intention of teaching prevention texts to enhance the knowledge and change the attitude of villagers who participate in the classes on skills training held by the Ministry of the Construction Campaign. This plan was executed in 1997-1998 in 26 provinces in the country; 10,000 people underwent training. Now, these training programmes are being conducted in all provinces.
116. A community-based rehabilitation programme was designed in the Office of the Rehabilitation Deputy of the Welfare Organization, pursuing the following objectives, in order to improve the state of the handicapped. The chief objectives are:
- To create in the handicapped a sense of confidence in their abilities;

- To provide access to general services on a regular basis;
- To prevent handicaps;
- To put disabled children into normal schools;
- To provide opportunities for their active presence in the community;
- To provide the rights of the handicapped, and have them benefit from their full participation in activities; and
- To benefit from the community and the national institutes for service delivery.

117. The facilities offered in 2000 for disabled children by the Rehabilitation Deputy of the Welfare Organization are summed up as follows:

- Delivering medical rehabilitation services to 379 government units;
- Delivering daily mental rehabilitation services to 40 government units;
- Delivering daily mental rehabilitation to 25 government centres;
- Delivering rehabilitation for the blind and the deaf to 100 government centres;
- Delivering publication/cultural services to 10 government centres;
- Delivering 250,000 rehabilitation aid instruments;
- 340 non-governmental rehabilitation centres; and
- 110 government skill-training centres.

118. Services delivered to disabled children under 14 at the rehabilitation centres of the Welfare Organization include the following:

- Delivering round-the-clock rehabilitation services to 7,000 disabled children at 120 government rehabilitation centres;
- Delivering round-the-clock rehabilitation services to 13,000 disabled children at 400 non-governmental rehabilitation centres;
- Delivering about 8,000 wheelchairs for children;
- Delivering services on artificial limbs, and their repair, 8,000 items;
- Delivering about 7,000 hearing aids to deaf children;
- Delivering about 40,000 medical-aid instruments for children handicapped by spinal impairment, such as probes and urine bags;

- Delivering about 80,000 batteries for hearing aids;
- Translating 73 books into Braille characters for blind children;
- Transferring 63 books onto tapes;
- Training the families of the blind and children under 6 who are hard of hearing, up to 200 people; and
- Training 850 children in auditory skills.

C. Abuse and neglect (art. 19), physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration (art. 39)

119. In this section, in addition to the cases indicated on the activities conducted by the Prevention Deputy in the Welfare Organization, it is necessary to mention that, in order to prevent social complications, programmes are executed with the collaboration of the “Healthy City” headquarters, which centre on the social health of children and adolescents.

120. It is worth mentioning that a “Healthy City” is defined as a city where, through providing and expanding the socio-physical and environmental conditions, and taking better advantage of the existing resources and facilities, an environment is created under which people, while respecting and supporting one another, and taking part in conducting all affairs of life, can improve on their abilities as far as possible.

121. Based on an act of the Council of Ministers in April 1996, the Provincial Health Council and the County Health Council, constituted by the highest executives in the province and the county, are considered to be the ipso facto directors of the Healthy City project. The aim is to improve the health and quality of life of citizens living in cities, especially those in the low-income group.

122. The Bureau of Pseudo-Family in the Office of the Deputy of Social Affairs of the Welfare Organization, has, therefore, attempted to set up two telephone assistance lines. Children without guardians kept at boarding centres are, compared to other children, more vulnerable, due to awkward living conditions, and are sometimes exploited. Exploitation refers to any behaviour that harms the rights of the child, including physical, psychological, emotional and social abuse, or neglect of children’s basic needs.

123. The plan pursues the following goals:

- To prevent maltreatment of children residing at boarding centres; and
- To supervise the protection and care as conducted by boarding centres, charity institutions, boards of trustees and other institutes.

124. Since the time that the telephone lines have been installed, more than 3,000 calls, 100 written reports and referrals have been registered from all over the country. An examination of the situation of people indicates that 85 per cent of the callers were from centres for boys, and 15 per cent from centres for girls.

125. The cases put forward included: corporal punishment and dissatisfaction with the instructors, 50 per cent; improper and unsuccessful release of children from the centres, 35 per cent; inadequacy in the welfare of children at the centres, 5 per cent; transfer to other units against the will of the child, 3 per cent; neglect towards the age composition among the children, especially at centres for boys, 3 per cent; no regular payment of allowance to the children, 2 per cent. This plan is being executed in four districts of Tehran, as well as in the provinces of Khorassan, Isfahan and Fars.

D. Standard of living (art. 27, paras. 1 to 3)

126. By establishing houses for street children as well as for the children without guardians and/or with bad guardians (Sabz, Reinhanceh, Shoush), the municipality of Tehran has made an effort to gather these children from around the city, and bring them under its protection and training. Moreover, through organizing workshops on training skills, the municipality trains such children in order to brighten their future through skill development.

127. The municipality of Tehran also assists children's education, allocating 5 per cent of the necessary tools and assets. Establishing cultural, arts and sports centres is among other achievements of the municipality for children's education, in order to stop crime and offences. A Fund for Social Assistance has been established as another achievement to help the needy and poor families.

128. To expand such activities, the municipality has made the following recommendations:

- To empower the non-governmental institutes for protecting street children;
- To establish relationship with the non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and organize a cooperation committee; and
- To establish and develop cultural, entertainment and sports centres for children.

129. The credits predicted within the present budgetary system of the country are classified as social, economic, public and national defence affairs. A large portion of these credits belongs to social affairs, including the sectors of general education, art and culture, health, treatment and nutrition, social security and rehabilitation, physical training and affairs of youth and women, skill development and research. For each, funds are directly allocated with regard to the fulfilment of the social and cultural rights of children and women. The credits allocated to this section make up close to 43 per cent of the total budget of the country, whereas there are also credits in other sectors that, in order to create fundamental facilities, are indirectly devoted to reconstruct the deprived zones and contribute in the realization of children's and women's rights.

130. As has already been mentioned, in our country, macropolicy is not basically regulation-oriented, rather it is sectoral, and developed under general topics, related exclusively to the duties of several organizations and institutes. With regard to the ratification of the Third Economic, Social and Cultural Development Plan (2000-2004), and for the full execution of this Law, the President of Iran submits the plan's annual progress evaluation report, at the latest by September of the following year, to the Islamic Consultative Assembly (the Parliament).

131. On the basis of this, the system of coordination and supervision over the execution of the Third Development Plan, ratified in 2000 by the Council of Ministers, and the directions of the Management and Planning Organization, the executive organizations are required to prepare a report on the operational progress of the Third Plan, in the course of evaluation, within the following framework, and deliver it to the Management and Planning Organization, including:

- Evaluation of the policies developed;
- Evaluation of the measures taken;
- Evaluation of the objectives and execution of the plan;
- Evaluation of investments made;
- Evaluation of the execution of resource mobilization (general income, internal resources of government corporations, domestic banking facilities, foreign banking facilities, foreign direct investment, resources of the private sector and other resources);
- Evaluation of the execution of allocation of the capital resources (development credits, investments by government corporations, investments by the non-governmental sector - including private, cooperative and general non-governmental organizations); and
- Evaluation of the progress of current and development credits for sectors that have received the resources.

132. The evaluations carried out are submitted by the Management and Planning Organization to the President, and he then forwards them to the Islamic Consultative Assembly.

133. One of the most important characteristics of the programming system of the Third Plan or, in other words, its distinctive feature as compared with other plans in the past, is the consideration of the issue that the system designed should be left open to review while in progress.

134. The point deserving special attention is that the Management and Planning Organization, during continued and regular sessions, observes and supervises, in the course of execution, the activities and measures that are identified on the basis of legal verdicts in the Law of the Third Plan and the acts approved by the Council of Ministers. The organization also presents a quarterly report on the progress of the execution of the plan to the President. Moreover, based on the predicted factors, the organization recognizes the decisions and measures adopted as against the policies of the plan, prior to their execution, and undertakes the necessary preventive, legal actions in this matter.

135. In order to identify the less developed regions, and provide assistance for their development, in past years and in the First and Second Country Development Plans, the regions were identified by the Bureau for Deprived Regions affiliated to the President's office, based on rural districts. In this way, credits earmarked for these areas were taken into consideration for

providing fundamental facilities, such as paved roads, schools, health facilities, water supply, environmental health operations and fundamental operations to create employment opportunities for the development and construction of these areas.

136. In order to expedite the development and construction of cities and villages, in addition to the executive policies and strategies discussed in various sections on development, the executive strategies (eighth chapter in the document of the Third Development Plan) on recognition of less developed areas, developing and executing development programmes, are thus projected.

137. Accordingly, the Management and Planning Organization is responsible to determine the less developed areas, in collaboration with the Bureau for Deprived Areas, affiliated to the President's office. Now, the less developed areas in the country, within the geographical limits of the country's divisions, are recognized and prepared in two separate tables. On the basis of priorities, these are ratified by the Council of Ministers. Thus, all credits predicted for these areas in the total annual budget of the country, will be allocated, with the ratification of the Council of Programming and Development in each province.

138. In order to create employment opportunities in the less developed areas, such factors as exemption from payment of taxes for the investors in such areas, payment of part of dividends of the facilities granted to the investors in the private sector and the cooperatives, etc., have been forecast for self-employment plans designed by the Government. It is also granting more for facilities for the less developed areas as indicated in the framework of the annual budgets.

139. In addition, the Council on Programming and Development, organized in each province, and chaired by the Governor-General (subject of article 70 of the Third Development Plan), will be responsible for decision-making, adoption, leadership, coordination and supervision of programming, expansion and development of the provinces, within the framework of the macroplans, policies and strategies of the country. The chief duties of this Council are: the examination and verification of long-term and mid-term plans for provincial development, drawing up plans designed for expansion and development of the provinces; developing strategies required for the provinces' incomes and expenditures, and proposals to acquire new resources; examination and distribution of provincial expansion credits; recognition of the abilities and relative advantages of the province; creating the grounds required to encourage and expand grass-roots investments in economic, productive and social projects; settling assistance, and developing grass-roots partnership in constructive measures and charitable affairs; proposals to programme women's and youth participation in economic, social and cultural activities in the province; proposals for programmes for establishing a social security system at the provincial level, to the relevant authorities; examination of the employment situation at the provincial level, and prediction of ways encouraging investment on employment opportunities.

140. The Welfare Organization also offers the following services to those children who belong to more vulnerable groups, that is, single-parent families (children attended by the mother), in line with assigning priority to them, and promoting the standard of living:

- 51,972 children are covered to receive facilities and social welfare;
- For 2,879 children, facilities are provided for going to kindergarten, and for the payment of their tuition fees;

- Classes are organized for students at various educational levels, to fill their leisure time;
- 51,972 people make use of the advantages of the Medical Services Insurance;
- 45,129 students at various educational levels receive aid to meet their educational costs;
- 7,000 people have received technical and vocational training, based on the resources of the community;
- 4,056 under-2-year-old children have enjoyed good nutrition services; and
- The resolver plan (for the use of students of non-profit schools) has also been launched to assist the students' educational progress.

V. LEARNING, LEISURE AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

A. Education, including training and vocational guidance (article 28 of the Convention)

141. Among the policies receiving special attention of the Government in its macroplanning, is the creation of grounds essential for equal provision of educational facilities for all children in the country. In this respect, article 158 of the Law of the Third Development Plan, together with its executive circular letters, are all manifestations of planning centred around this perspective. The literacy rate of 6-year and older females and for the male population in the year 2000, was 80.5 and 88.7 per cent, respectively. Though the literacy rate among men is still higher than that of women, the point that definitely needs to be mentioned is the 6.3 per cent rise in female literacy rate as against 4 per cent rise in male literacy rate, from 1996 to 2000. This is indicative of a reduction in disparities between men and women with regard to the literacy rate of the 6-year and older population.

142. In the school year 2000-01, girls made up 48.2 per cent of the total number of students in the learning centres of the country; this rate reveals a 1 per cent point rise in comparison with 1996-97. In the school year 2000-01, 50.9 per cent of pre-university students were girls, a rate reflecting a growth of 2.5 per cent as compared with the year 1996-97.

143. It deserves to be mentioned that the Ministry of Education has offered a plan to the Council of Ministers on increasing mandatory education up to the end of the secondary level (age 14), upon which no decision has so far been made. Skill-training centres for girls in 2000 increased to 206 centres.

144. In order to strengthen the occupational skills of young girls studying at boarding schools for secondary school girls in the less developed areas, measures have been adopted in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, such as developing the participation of rural and tribal women in the form of economic bodies of rural and tribal women, at the national level, a

plan on organizing cooperatives of young girls and women as university graduates, in the country (being implemented). A plan to survey the situation of women throughout the country in search of a job (with the cooperation of the Ministry of the Interior) is among other measures being taken.

Programme on Training in Life Skills

145. This programme is prepared and developed by the Bureau for the Prevention of Social Abuse of the Deputy for Prevention, in the Education Ministry. The programme on life skills is a school-based programme, which, through teaching the basic and infrastructural skills on the fitness of children and adolescents, strives to hinder psychological social abuse. In this programme, 10 basic skills on social and psychological health are taught to children and adolescents. Among the skills taught are: interpersonal relationship skills, communication skills, decision-making skills, skills on how to deal with agitation and stresses, the skills of congeniality and self-awareness.

146. This programme is being implemented with the goal of early prevention of socio-psychological abuses, specifically, the prevention of the urge to commit suicide and addiction among Iranian children and adolescents. This is a joint programme of the Bureau for Prevention of Social Abuses, and the Bureau for Counselling and School Health of the Education Deputy of the Ministry of Education.¹ This programme was proposed in 1996, and after the necessary coordination, it started its executive activities in 1998. In 2000 this programme covered 16,000 students, all at the primary level, in the provinces of West Azerbaijan, Ilam, Tehran, Sistan and Baluchestan, and Kermanshah.

147. In this respect, in collaboration with other organizations, the Centre for Women's Participation has adopted measures and activities, including the following:

- Educating and training 886 women instructors for skill training;
- Supporting 150 socio-cultural associations for women, in order to train the young girls and women all over the country, to make good use of their leisure time;
- Allocating Rls 5 billion to the Women's Bureau of the Ministry of Education, to launch various projects throughout the country to train girls up to March 2000;
- Holding the first Workshop on Women's and Girls' Human Rights (the central areas of the county, 16-19 January 2000);
- Implementing a project jointly designed by the Centre for Women's Participation and UNICEF, making preparations for conducting the Second Workshop on Women's and Girls' Human Rights (for southern areas of the country);

¹ It should be pointed out here that in the recent restructuring at the Ministry of Education, the Education Deputy's office was split up and amalgamated with the office of the Deputy for Physical Training and Health and the office of the Deputy for General Education.

- Holding gatherings for young girls inclined against, or running away from, social values, in March 2000 (Centre for Women’s Participation, and the Women’s Society of the Islamic Republic of Iran); and
- Holding an international one-day gathering on protecting displaced and refugee women and children in April 2000, in collaboration with the Centre for Women’s Participation, and the Association for the Protection of Displaced and Refugee Children and Women in the World (Advocate).

B. Objectives of education and training (art. 29)

148. Concerning this article of the Convention, many of the cases and conceptions of human rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child are found in the framework of popular literature and common terminology. These originate from the teachings and values of the religion of Islam and the rich and deep-rooted Iranian culture, especially, in the text of the general goals of education and training of the Islamic Republic of Iran, approved by the High Council for Education on 22 October 1998, and the goals of each educational level, primary, secondary and high school, passed on 19 May 2000.

149. Currently, the Ministry of Education is making efforts, in line with the latest developments, to incorporate the contents of the Convention into the educational and training objectives and the curricular programmes. For example, we may speak about the following moral, scientific-educational, artistic-cultural, and social objectives:

- To nurture the spirit of self-reliance, and personal independence;
- To nurture the feeling of moral generosity, and provoke self-respect;
- To nurture optimum human emotions, and peaceful coexistence;
- To nurture the spirit of combating unemployment, idleness, and spurious occupations;
- To nurture a spirit of research, reasoning and rationalization, reflection and contemplation, criticism and creativity;
- To nurture a spirit of constant learning and teaching;
- To recognize, nurture and direct one’s talent to elevate man and society;
- To recognize the mysteries of the world of creation, and the laws of nature, as divine signs, in order to improve man’s knowledge, cognition, and experiences;
- To develop the Persian language and alphabet as the common language and alphabet of Iranians, and teach the Arabic language for familiarization with the Holy Koran and Islamic tenets;
- To develop science and technology, and the skills required by man and the community;

- To nurture a spirit for reading books and studying;
- To recognize the history, culture, and civilization of Islam and the world, while emphasizing contemporary culture;
- To nurture a spirit for upholding of sanctities and family relationships, on the basis of Islamic rights and ethics;
- To nurture a spirit of honouring the law, and being bound to abide by it;
- To nurture a spirit of discipline in social and personal relationships;
- To nurture the spirit of responsibility and participation in religious, cultural, and social activities;
- To strengthen the spirit of forgiveness, devotion and sacrifice in social relationships;
- To nurture liberality, and enduring others' opinions in the exchanges of thoughts; and
- To nurture a spirit for respecting the personality of people, observing their material and spiritual rights.

150. In line with the objectives of education (art. 29), the Ministry of Education pursues the following activities: execution of joint programmes, plans, and projects, holding various educational workshops and seminars, especially, on eradication of disparities between urban and rural areas, and between boys and girls, and teaching the conceptions of the rights of the child, and the skills of living, in cooperation with the UNICEF office in Tehran, and the implementation of population education by the Ministry of Education in collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) (see annex 1).*

151. Part of the environmental and economic goals of education are introduced in the following terms:

(a) Environmental goals:

- To secure psychological and physical health through providing appropriate conditions;
- To strengthen a spirit for observing general health and protecting the environment;
- To nurture a spirit for regarding physical training as a ground for man's spiritual growth; and

* Annexes can be consulted in the files of the secretariat.

(b) Economic goals:

- To consider the significance of economic development as an instrument to achieve social development;
- To recognize the value and sanctity of work and legitimate livelihood;
- To train skills and create readiness and interest towards productive occupations in the fields of agriculture, industry and services;
- To nurture a spirit for assisting the poor;
- To recognize skills and productive occupations in order to increase national income, eliminate unemployment and economic independence;
- To strengthen a spirit for combating economic exploitation, and occupation against the interests of the Islamic community; and
- To recognize the economic resources of the country and the right ways of using them, and to nurture a spirit for preserving the public wealth, and the national treasures.

C. Leisure, recreation and cultural activities (art. 31)

152. In its macroprogramming, the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance has allocated special budgets and designed programmes specific for upgrading the cultural level, and the greater growth and improvement of children and adolescents. In the annual productions of the Iranian films, a share is specifically considered for children and adolescents, that is, during the last decade (1990-1999) close to 50 films were produced for children and/or on children.

153. Moreover, besides the various festivals held annually on the cinema, the International Festival of Children's and Adolescents' Films, which is of special value, is held each year in November, in Isfahan. This year, the Fifteenth Festival of Children's Films was celebrated with greater pomp than ever before.

154. Now that the Development Plan (2000-2004) has drawn the perspective for the future activities of various sections of the country, the department for the Cinema Deputy still envisages to hold annually the international festival for children's and adolescents' films. Further, the production of children's and adolescents' films, the following programmes are set out: 6 films in 2000, 15 films in 2001, 17 films in 2002, 20 films in 2003, and 22 films in 2004.

155. In order to encourage the authorities and film producers to make such films, 71 films - including 25 films on the "Sacred Defence" for children and adolescents, 25 religious films for children and adolescents, and 21 special films for children and adolescents - are supported with a budget of Rls 5,208 billion. Moreover, the Society for the Young Cinema and the Farabi Foundation both play a vital role in offering programmes and various films for children and adolescents.

Imaginative arts

156. In this section, the activities are categorized under several activities:

(a) International exhibition of the works of the illustrators of children's books: the Fourth International Exhibition of the Works of Illustrators of Children's Books was held in three sections: illustrations in the text of children's books, illustrations on the front cover of children's books, and a section on a contest recommended under the title of "Sacred World, Child's World", with the attendance of 31 countries and 187 illustrations, submitted in 1999. Also, the Second International Conference on Children's Books and the Contemporary World, under the same title, "Sacred World, Child's World", with the attendance of 31 countries, and 187 illustrations was also held in 1999;

(b) Music: in 1999, eight music tapes for children with an average circulation of 60,000 copies were produced and supplied;

(c) Dramatic arts; and

(d) The Tehran International Festival of Puppet Shows is held every two years in order to communicate with foreign artists and to propagate puppet shows and plays. The eighth festival of puppet plays was conducted in 1997, with 33 plays on stage, including 7 foreign sections, from Russia, Greece, India, Austria, Belgium and Croatia along with 26 Iranian plays.

Festival of child and adolescent theatre

157. This festival is also held annually in the country, in order to empower, develop, disseminate and introduce the art of theatre for children and adolescents. The tenth festival of children's theatre was held with 13 plays in 2000. Moreover, in 1999, 16 plays on child and adolescent plays, with an average of a one-month show, are conducted in Tehran Halls.

158. The National Cultural Inheritance Organization, in line with cultural developments during the last two years and with World Children's Day, designed and executed extensive programmes all over the country, underlining the cultural rights of children. The theme of "Children's Ties with Cultural Inheritance" has been announced as the theme for its introductory programme.

159. These programmes are centred on:

(a) Designing appropriate programmes to introduce cultural inheritance to children;

(b) Drawing the attention of parents towards the subject and its significance; and

(c) Encouraging organizations that work for children to pay attention to the above-mentioned subjects.

160. To do so, programmes, such as cultural-product and child-book exhibitions, plays, painting and tale-telling, free visits to museums in the country and playing traditional music were conducted. The UNICEF office in Tehran, the Association for Thought Education of Children and Adolescents, the Welfare Organization, the Little Girls of the Earth, affiliated with the

International Centre for Dialogue Among Civilizations, the followers of cultural memorials and many publishers or organizations working for children at the provincial level, Tehran's museums, and cultural complexes organized programmes under the message: Children, Friendship and Cultural Inheritance.

161. The experts in the training and advocacy section in these organizations are willing to improve the course of the programmes and take firm steps towards this goal, through exchange of their experiences with other related organizations and institutes.

162. Measures adopted for children by the Supreme Headquarters and associations related to the association for mosques in the country can be categorized under the following subjects:

- Preparing the ground for the education of children and adolescents who communicate with the mosques one way or the other. Approximate statistics indicate that nearly one million children and adolescents covered by the educational programmes of the mosques are being educated in the Koran and Islamic teachings, art and skill training;
- Holding camps and contests in the cities to promote the spirit of cooperation, assistance, and familiarity with workshops and factories;
- Establishing libraries for children, with at least 500,000 members;
- Conducting counselling classes for parents on various subjects such as family planning, health, child education; and
- Holding the “Sarv festivals” in the mosques by children and adolescents. These festivals have so far been conducted twice.

163. With regard to holding Omid Child and Adolescent Theatre Festivals in Hamedan, from 1996 up to 1999, the following have annually been brought to the stage:

- The sixth child and adolescent theatre festival in 1996 held performances of 11 plays;
- The seventh child and adolescent theatre festival in 1997, 12 plays;
- The eighth child and adolescent theatre festival in 1998, 10 plays; and
- The ninth child and adolescent theatre festival in 1999, 10 plays.

VI. SPECIAL PROTECTIVE MEASURES

A. Special protective measures (arts. 22, 37 (b), (d), 32 and 36)

164. A comprehensive programme on the prevention of addiction has been initiated by the Bureau for the Prevention of Social Injuries, in the office of the Deputy for Prevention of the Education Ministry, since 1997. One of the chief strategies of this programme is to prevent

addiction and to strengthen substitute activities in order to fulfil the psychological and social needs of adolescents and youth. Accordingly, various activities are designed for the leisure time of the youth and adolescents. So far, 19 provinces are covered by this programme.

165. Further, in order to occupy the leisure time of the youth living in villages, the Rural Bureau of the Deputy for Social Relations in the Welfare Organization, has conducted educational classes on various skills, such as collecting herbs, participation in tourist and pilgrimage camps, and taking part in sports activities such as volleyball, ping-pong, chess, running races, bicycle-riding, etc. This has included the participation of 84,689 girls, as members of the rural rehabilitation posts and houses, and the assistance of the full/part-time volunteers and the rural persons working in these centres.

166. The Centre for Women's Participation, in developing legal strategies to hinder all forms of physical and psychological violence against women and girls, in collaboration with Tehran University and other local universities, has endeavoured to offer a plan to survey the phenomenon of domestic violence against women and girls. The first phase of this plan studies the existing situation of domestic violence against women, utilizing two methods - documentary and field. The second phase surveys the reasons and factors influential in domestic violence against women and girls. Several regional meetings were held to check the outputs of the plan.

167. Moreover, establishing a centre for temporary social support for self-supporting women, by the Welfare Organization, has been under consideration since 2001.

168. Establishing the Emergency Police Centre 110 of the Islamic Republic of Iran Disciplinary Force, for urgent intervention in conflicts and disturbances, can give protection for women and girls victimized by violence. Besides, employing female police and establishing a centre for female police in the police stations of nine big cities by the end of the Third Development Plan can also play a valuable role in delivering the required services to combat violence against women and children.

169. In the same sense, the Centre for Women's Participation has conducted the following activities during last year:

- Programming and adopting operational strategies to eliminate violence against women and girls, with the assistance of a specialized committee, at the Centre for Women's Participation, affiliated to the President's office, and the Women's Bureaux and Families' Affairs, of the Welfare Organization;
- Holding the first educational workshop on women's and girls' human rights (16-19 January, a joint project by the Centre for Women's Participation and UNICEF), women's human rights and freedom from violence being one of the topics of discussion. It may be pointed out that programming and preparing for the second educational workshop on this issue, is on the schedule;
- Holding an educational workshop on violence against women, by the Centre for Graduate International Studies of Tehran University and UNDP, in the framework of a plan to strengthen the capacities of research, and teaching human rights, in July 2000;

- Holding an educational workshop on “violence against women and girls: how to prevent it, and to rescue its victims”, by the Centre for Women’s Studies and Research, and UNFPA, in December 2000;
- Organizing a national committee to fight violence against women, in the Health Deputy’s office of the Ministry of Health and Medical Education, in order to design a programme of action on combating violence against women, and rescuing its victims.

B. Children in harsh conditions

170. Based on article 79 of the Labour Law, employment of individuals under 15 years is forbidden, and the employers of individuals under 15 years not only have to resolve this act of violation, but are also liable to be fined. Therefore, the duties and responsibilities on the manpower in the country are related not only to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, but also to other organizations, such as the Management and Plan Organization. However, the Ministry of Labour, in addition to following up on the issues and problems of the labourers covered by the Labour Law, also undertakes such jobs as protection and security of the labour force, providing information and statistics on manpower, and studying “the qualitative and quantitative recognition of supply and demand in the work market”. Thus, among the duties of this Ministry, is dispatching inspectors to various workshops and preparing reports on the situation of labourers working in these workshops. If the inspectors notice a labourer below 15 years of age, the employer shall be referred to the court.

171. Unfortunately, during recent years, as a consequence of economic, family, and social problems, the issue of child labour has been recognized as a phenomenon, and to prevent it, various measures have been adopted. These include the alleviation of civil and cultural deprivation, the extension of social justice, and extension of executive ways to protect the rights of the child.

172. The issue of street children, and other children who work in the streets, is an undeniable phenomenon in our country. In view of the fact that such children have no identified employer, or do not work in any one specified workshop, they cannot be supervised in the usual way, and thus, the labour inspector cannot practically restrain them.

173. Since August 2001 there has been a plan for gathering the street children in order to create employment opportunities for these beggars, or returning them to the families. The decentralized rehabilitation and the professional skill-training of the street children has just been initiated.

174. The budget allocated for this issue is Rls 19 billion, 10 billion of which is devoted for conducting specialized work on alleviation of the needs of beggars and street children; another 9 billion is considered for supplying the executive demands forecast. Based on this plan, these children will be gathered temporarily by the Ministry of the Interior, and thereafter, they will be transferred to camps, so that, having classified them on the basis of specialized roles of various institutes, they will be referred to the relevant organization.

175. The affairs of those who are left alone on the road - the lost, the runaway, and those who are in need of long-term rehabilitation and protection - in turn demand specialized services, all among the responsibilities of the Welfare Organization. The municipalities and the courts of justice also will fight against bands and profiteer rings who operate in beggary and bringing children onto the streets.

176. According to the “Executive Regulations of the Centre for Protection and Rehabilitation, Regarding Girls and Women who are Endangered by Acute Social Abuse, and the Socially Abused Women and Girls (Special)”, adopted on 7 July 1997, the Welfare Organization will protect such people at the centre, or will cover them temporarily and by delivering services as social assistance, psychological, technical, cultural and skills-testing, pave the way for their return into a healthy life through reunion with the family, training and creating an employment opportunity, earning a legitimate livelihood, marriage and establishing a family. The organization also provides assistance to these people by fulfilling their minimum economic demands, and resolving their problems and difficulties.

177. The Deputy for Social and Cultural Affairs of the municipality of Tehran has made great efforts to resolve the issue of street children, and together with the centres for protection, and in collaboration with the Welfare Organization, leads these children towards settlement centres, “Khaneh Sabz”, and “Shoush” for boys, and “Khaneh Reihaneh” for girls, and thus brings them into rehabilitation. Over the year or so since the establishment of these centres, close to 7,000 street children have been gathered from around the city, and settled down. The settlement centres seek to act as a bridge, linking the runaway or castaway children and adolescents to their homes and families. Thus, the true responsibility of these centres is to prevent this group of children from joining the world of the children and adolescents who commit crime and offences. After gathering the street children and adolescents, and ascertaining that they are without a guardian, or have a bad guardian, children will be sent to the guardianship unit. There, each child will receive, based on age and gender, such services as welfare, health, medical, and educational assistance. In the meantime, efforts will be made to put the environment and the atmosphere of the family, as well as the child itself, in a proper state for the return of the child into the home and family.

178. In this regard, the municipality makes the following recommendations:

- Upgrading the general cultural level of and training families through conducting educational classes for them;
- Enhancing general awareness of the rights of the child, and promoting the cultural level among the families;
- Establishing free-of-charge counselling associations, and extending their services for the families;
- Holding educational classes for children on how to behave with others, and especially with parents;
- Training teachers;

- Familiarizing children and adolescents with the rights of the child, and incorporating them into their educational material;
- Confronting those families and teachers who make children suffer punishment;
- Examining the laws related to the rights of the child and the family and their executive obstacles; and
- Establishing telephone assistance centres for children.

179. The Islamic Republic of Iran is one of the countries faced with the issue of street children in big cities during the last decade. Among the cities in which the phenomenon of street children has become complex, are Tehran, Mashhad, Isfahan, Shiraz, and some other large and medium-sized cities. The Welfare Organization, the Imam Khomeini Relief Committee, the municipalities, the Offices of the Governors-General, the Ministry of Health and Medical Education, and the Association for Reformation and Education, all have taken measures to settle the situation of these children, and will continue to do so within the framework of their defined duties.

180. Success in any reformist movement needs to be under constant supervision and evaluation, and receiving feedback shapes the method of practice and attainment of goals. Since lack of evaluation leads to inaccurate decision-making, persistence of wrong trends and direction, and waste of money, time and manpower, the Educational and Research Centre of the Organization of Prisons, as a centre for research in matters of social abuse, has launched several research programmes in this connection. Following a request by the Deputy for Social Affairs of the Municipality of Tehran, the centre, as an impartial and non-profit research centre, is entrusted with the evaluation of the practices at Khaneh Sabz and Khaneh Reihaneh centres, from the time of their establishment up to the time of starting the research (November 1999).

181. One of the reasons for the evaluation of progress of the Khaneh Sabz and Reihaneh projects, was the fact that this evaluation-oriented research provides for part of the information essential for the decisions to be adopted by the policy makers. Through this project, the important trends in the practice of these centres are expected to be disclosed. This can prove a good and reliable source for judging regarding the viability of the programmes being pursued. Without such information, decision makers will not have a reliable framework for a proper understanding of what is going on in these centres, concerning either the inputs, the processes, or the outputs pertaining to preventing these children from committing offences, and then settling their situation.

182. The evaluation of practices at Khaneh Sabz and Reihaneh enhances the incentive for more effective and goal-centred activities among the experts and officials working at these centres. In fact, an endeavour is made for directing the efforts made by the executive section towards the vital goals adopted by Khaneh Sabz and Reihaneh. That is, solving the situation of street children in Tehran. Consequently, it is expected that such evaluation will intensify the control achieved by policy makers and decision makers over the activities of Khaneh Sabz and Reihaneh.

183. The following recommendations are made for the upgrading of the practices, and improving the situation of the project on Khaneh Sabz and Reihaneh:

- To provide and design speedily an accurate organization chart, that should be fundamental and scientific, based on the existing goals and duties;
- To determine and make a documented description of the job, and description of the duties of the managers, superintendents and employees from the highest to the lowest ranks, in a scientific and principled way;
- To determine the qualifications for getting jobs and positions available;
- To train the employees;
- To absorb manpower possessing appropriate specialization;
- To stabilize the organizational system;
- To conduct constant internal inspection by the Social Deputy of the Municipality;
- To settle the financial situation;
- To coordinate more with the Welfare Organization and other related institutes, and to avoid competition;
- To establish a follow-up unit;
- To establish a street unit;
- To establish contacts with municipalities (and other relevant organizations) sending refugees, to arrange for the facilities for the protection of families facing dangers in those cities;
- To attach greater importance to skill and technical training favoured by the market;
- To establish relationship with the International Agency for Street Children (SKI) in Canada and to make use of the experiences and products made by this agency;
- To establish a site on the Internet to introduce the project, and exchange information and experiences of similar organizations across the world;
- To offer transparent and lawful definitions of the Khaneh Sabz and Khaneh Reihaneh centres and their activities, in order to establish the legal position of these centres;
- To establish a street assistance-providers' unit;
- To avoid propaganda in the media on the services delivered in these centres;
- To obstruct continuous contact made by unqualified people with the help-seekers;

- To use the minimum number of temporary physicians and nurses in the centres;
- To completely equip units with health and medical equipment, especially first-aid equipment;
- To conduct a full medical examination, as well as vaccination of all help-seekers and personnel, upon their entrance into contact;
- To conduct regular pesticide sprays and disinfections; and
- To make a personal file for the help-seekers from the time of their admission up to the time of their release.

C. Refugee children (art. 22)

184. Based on human and Islamic principles, and in view of the international commitments and conventions developed on the rights of the refugees in the last two decades, the Islamic Republic of Iran has been home to millions of foreign refugees and asylum-seekers. Regional and international changes over the past two decades, especially the continuation of war in Afghanistan, the Persian Gulf war, internal clashes in northern Iraq and some other changes, were factors on the basis of which millions of people, weary of war and starvation, chose this country as a safe haven and a good home for a temporary life. Iran warmly received these refugees, and considering the refugees as guests, provided the right atmosphere for their settlement, and the possibility to live in different regions all over the country. In this respect, part of the services offered by the Islamic Republic of Iran to children, as asylum-seekers and foreign refugees, are outlined below.

185. In total, 194,717 Iraqi and Afghan asylum-seeking children are under the direct coverage of the Ministry of Education, studying at various levels of primary to high school education. Among these children, 11,792 study in the camps. The others study all over the cities, together with Iranian children. The per capita cost for each student is estimated at RIs 700,000. Through coordination made with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), this agency has contributed 10 per cent of the expenses incurred by the Ministry of Education for this purpose. It is worth mentioning here that all camps, based on their needs, possess primary and secondary schools. High school students go to the schools in cities and villages. Most important, 50 schools have so far been established for the exclusive use of asylum-seekers.

186. Almost all Iraqi and Afghan asylum-seeker children needing to be educated are studying under the educational system of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Only a few of these asylum-seekers, who do not have the identity cards, receive the unofficial training of the Literacy Movement Organization (LMO), or other informal schools. The reason why refugees with no identity cards do not register in the official educational system is their illegal entry and residence in this country. Delivering all types of services to such refugees leads to the illegal inflow of thousands of foreign refugees. For this reason, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran does not consider the delivery of additional services as appropriate. However, as has already been mentioned, the unofficial training of refugees, who need to be trained, is basically not withheld from them.

187. All refugee and asylum-seeking children, from birth up to the assigned age, are vaccinated at medical centres against communicable diseases. In villages, the children are vaccinated by teams specially sent there for that purpose. Moreover, many consignments of vaccines have so far been sent to Afghanistan.

188. At all camps and cities, those affected by communicable diseases, especially children, are sent to the medical centres in the country. They receive medical services free of charge. Besides, those children who require surgical operations, but could not afford them, have received treatment with the assistance of UNHCR and NGOs, and more extensively, through assistance in the medical centres. They are exempted from paying the fees, or have received a general discount.

189. In the course of conflicts in Afghanistan, fighting against external enemies and, later, during the civil war, many children have lost members of their families as a consequence of bullets and arrows fired, and especially, the explosions of mines. The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, with due regard to humanitarian sentiments, has, therefore, introduced these children to the Red Crescent Society of the country, to supply them with artificial hands or legs, and other prosthetic limbs.

190. In view of the fact that Afghanistan possesses the greatest minefields in the world, many children are unfortunately threatened with being struck by these mines. Accordingly, the Islamic Republic of Iran Government has opened regions in the marginal zones, as the return path for Afghan refugees to their country. At the time of the repatriation of the asylum-seekers, especially the children, the necessary training for encountering mines is conducted both practically, and using models and video pictures, for the returning refugees.

191. In order to create a peaceful atmosphere for the students, libraries are established almost in half of the camps in the country. Here, the refugee children, while enjoying this atmosphere to study their lessons, can also use fiction, scientific and educational books in the libraries. Moreover, there are plans to establish libraries in all the camps. At present, in those camps that do not have libraries, books consistent with the gender and age of the children are distributed at mosques and/or office buildings.

192. Based on the general policy of the Ministry of Health and Medical Education on breastfeeding, efforts are being made to implement a project through advocacy propaganda. However, in cases where the mother is not fit enough to nurse the child, powder milk will be provided by MOHME and charitable NGOs, as supplementary nutrition for the newborn infant.

193. An absolute majority of the camps possess some green scenery created for the improvement of morale of the refugees, especially of children. In some of the camps a playground, of the crudest type has been made. This policy is to be extended to all camps up to the time that satisfactory conditions are attained.

194. One of the problems that the refugee children are faced with is the issue of being separated from the family, especially on the group's entrance into the country. The Islamic Republic of Iran Government, using various methods, tries to join the children with their families. So far, it has been completely successful in this regard.

195. Of the other complications that some children face are the loss of all family members or being abandoned. In this respect, efforts are made to take at least the children without guardians, and street children, and improve their situation. In the first phase, if the child should have a family, attempts will be made to return the child to the family, and, if this is not possible, its guardianship will be entrusted to its relatives or competent families who have the moral and financial qualifications.

196. Based on coordination made with the “World Food Programme”, all children residing in the camps, from age 2 upward, will be covered by free food rations. Each month they will receive five food items, including bread, rice, oil, sugar and grains. In addition, cash and non-cash aid such as clothes and items of foodstuff, based on their needs, will be provided for the children.

197. In order to encourage girl students residing in the camps towards studying, a joint plan with the World Food Programme is implemented, in which a 5-kilo oil tin will be provided every month for each of the 5,608 girl students. It should be mentioned here that, besides the assistance indicated, in the less developed regions in the country, the refugee students in the school receive the same ration as that provided to Iranian children.

198. A plan for establishing a centre for recognizing street children has also covered displaced Afghan children, who form a higher percentage of street children than Iranian street children. This plan aims at providing a situation for the return of these children to their families, protecting them against social abuses, preparing possibilities for their education and offering to them appropriate skill-training.

D. Children involved in armed conflicts (art. 38), including their physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration (art. 39)

199. The Deputy for Social and Preventive Affairs of the Welfare Organization, using the information sources in many countries, and through the necessary coordination with the Ministry of the Interior and other related institutions, has designed special educational programmes to prepare an awareness campaign in border areas regarding the problem of hidden mines. The execution of this plan can be a good and humanitarian measure on prevention of handicaps from hidden mines, with the collaboration of the Welfare Organization and other related institutes. In 2000, by conducting field research in Kordestan province, and visiting some mined lands, part of the information required for the execution of the plan was gathered.

200. Due to the eight-year war imposed on Iran, many children lost their families in bombardments and on the war fronts. The children left behind by the martyrs number 147,757. Some of these children are now youths, and have enjoyed special supportive facilities offered by the Martyrs' Foundation, including special aid for supporting of the families and for their education.

E. Children involved with the law, and the administration of justice to youth (art. 40)

201. By order of the Chief Justice, since last year a five-man Commission made up of university professors of law and criminology, and senior judges of the Supreme Court, has started working on a revision of the Comprehensive Child Delinquency Law. This measure is being taken to introduce new methods of arbitration and implementation, in keeping with the views of the United Nations and UNICEF regarding children. Nearly 80 per cent of the law has already been revised and the draft of the new law has been prepared.

202. At present, the stages for the implementation of the said laws, and the responsibilities of the other supporting bodies, including the Ministry of Education and Training and the Welfare Organization are being compiled. The Comprehensive Child Delinquency Law will soon be forwarded as a bill for the approval of the Islamic Consultative Assembly (the Parliament).

203. The legal age for criminal responsibility is one of the problems that needs to be resolved by Iranian religious jurists and lay lawyers, as it is in other legal systems as well. To resolve this problem and find a satisfactory solution in this matter, meetings are being held at the research centre of the Justice Department, under the title "Compilation of a draft psychiatric health law, and a review of the legal age for criminal responsibility". Religious jurists and laymen lawyers and psychologists have been invited to comment on this matter. These meetings are still in progress, and it is hoped that the fruits of these meetings will be used in compilation of the Law of Psychiatric Health and the fixing of the boundaries of criminal responsibility and the necessary attention to maturity age.

204. It is well known that the lofty Islamic Shariah, the unique Heavenly Book which has recommended pardon and forgiveness even in the heaviest and harshest of crimes, such as those calling for retribution, and the great and kind Prophet of the religion has recommended the giving of love to children and showing kindness to them. They cannot but look at children and their rights with kindness and generosity. In the area of punishment, the fact should be taken into account that, first of all, an undiscerning minor is not liable to prosecution and punishment. Secondly, the punishment meted out to a discerning minor is also a discretionary punishment, the variety of which in Islamic law is great and includes discretionary punishments of a light and exemplary type such as exhorting and counselling, taking to task or rebuking. This Islamic view of kindness must be reflected in the laws of the Islamic Republic of Iran. This has already happened in a number of cases.

205. In the light of the above, and from the point of view of Islamic religious laws, resorting to alternative punishments - a new turn noticeable in today's world in crimes calling for discretionary punishments, especially crimes committed by children - is quite a fair and possible alternative.

The appearance of a revolutionary trend in methods of judgements of children's courts

206. Children's courts in Iran have taken steps towards employing the global achievements relating to child rights, and paying attention to the special needs of judging youth. They are on the path to creating a serious change in methods of judgement regarding children and youth.

These courts now try to replace the penal guarantees with educational guarantees. They take into account the views of psychologists, social workers and child specialists, and attend to the problems relating to maturity and putting children and youth in step with society. The following rulings are examples of the beginning of a real revolution in the domain of child rights in the methods of judgement of the courts of justice in Iran.

- (a) File No. 5/2102/79
Investigating Authority: Branch 2102 of Tehran Public Court
Specialized in Children
Investigation Date: 4.8.2000

Details of the accused:

1. Child of Syed Mohammad, Identity Card No., Issued at Tehran, Date of Birth: 1981, Educational level: High school diploma, Muslim, Single, Without any penal record, Residing in Tehran;
2. Child of Syed Mohammad, Identity Card No., Issued at Tehran, Date of Birth: 1982, Educational level: High school diploma, Muslim, Single, Without any penal record, Residing in Tehran;
3. Child of Syed Mohammad, Identity Card No., Issued at Tehran, Date of Birth: 1985, Educational level: Guidance school certificate, Student, Single, Without any penal record, Residing in Tehran;

Charge: Breaking car glass and stealing properties inside the car.

Court ruling

207. Taking into consideration all the file documents and writings and the disciplinary force report, and finding the instruments used for the theft, through a body search of the accused persons, and finding the stolen properties from their house according to the house search report prepared with guidance and direction from the accused persons, all indicate that the theft was carried out by the above-mentioned accused persons.

208. The verdict of the court-appointed psychologist points out that the above-mentioned persons were examined through “heredity interviews” and intelligence and personality tests. The results of the above tests show that all the three persons enjoyed excellent levels of intelligence, and no specific psychological disorder was observed in them. They have excitable personalities, are looking for dangerous and stressful successes and very soon get bored with natural monotonous stimuli.

209. According to the statements made by the accused persons in the disciplinary-forces office and in the court, as shown in the prepared minutes of the meeting and the explicit confessions and acceptance of the accusation by the accused and other signs and analogies present in their

file, their accusation has been proven to the court. Their act is compatible with article 656 of the Islamic penal law. So, as the unconditional consent of complaining persons (according to the meeting minutes prepared in the disciplinary-forces office) records in the file, taking into consideration the private aspect of the offence, with reference to article 6 of the Penal Procedure Code, a deferred-prosecution order was issued. Regarding the public aspect of the offence, and with reference to article 656 of the Islamic Penal Law, and considering articles 17 and 22 of the same law, and taking note of the fact that according to the reports of the Identity Recognition office, they did not have any penal record, and that according to the verdict issued by the psychologist of Tehran's Welfare Organization, they were motivated by their youth and a search for excitement; and as their father is very well-off, they could not have had any financial motive in committing the above offence; and as the above-mentioned persons have a high intelligence quotient, and have expressed their regret on various occasions during the court sessions; and their educational level is high, the first-degree and the second degree accused persons were sentenced to perform 20 hours of weekly computer service for the Welfare Organization for a period of six months.

210. The association is under obligation to report the results of their work to the court on a monthly basis. Regarding the third-degree accused person, as youth is one of the factors absolving penal responsibility, and with reference to article 49 of the Islamic Penal Law, the person is issued an order absolving him of the penal aspect and from the reform and training aspect as per verdict of the selected psychologist that: "The above-mentioned person was an offensive person under the influence of, and due to trying to get in step with, his peers, his motive in committing the offence was influenced by the above. It is necessary that he should leave his home only after informing his family, and under their supervision, and only according to the timing determined by his family." The court sentenced him to stay at home for a period of two months, under the supervision, reform and training of his father. The Welfare Organization should exercise sufficient supervision in the execution of the above verdict, and should report the results on a weekly basis. This ruling was issued in person, and is liable to revision after its notification by the Tehran Province Appeals Court (*Head, Branch 2102 of Tehran public court, Specialized in Children's Section, (ii) Ruling No. 206, Date: 25.9.2000*).

211. In another court ruling, regarding the accusation of a 16-year-old man on the charge of the use of a forged document (buying and selling forged tickets of the bus company), the court took into account the report of the disciplinary force, the forged tickets from the accused person, the complaint filed against the accused at the disciplinary force office and in the court, as shown in the prepared minutes of meeting, and the explicit confession and acceptance of the accusation by the accused. His accusation was proven to the court, and with reference to article 528 of the Islamic Penal Law, and considering articles 17 and 22 of the same law, the accused was sentenced to perform gardening services for a period of two months, with the deduction of his period of incarceration. The ruling has been notified and the file is sent to the Ruling Execution Department for execution of the ruling and any action necessary.

212. Recently, the Office of the Socially Abused of the Social Affairs Deputy of the Welfare Organization has also introduced the "Out of Court Compromise Centres" project. Objectives of this project are as follows:

- Making compromises between the complaining person and the accused child or adolescent, in order to avoid the presence of the child or the youth in the Correction and Rehabilitation Centre or prison;
- Identification of the underlying factors which lead the child or the adolescent towards the crime;
- Prevention of a repeat offence by the person, through the provision of social and psychological counselling services to the person or family; and
- Provision of necessary protective services to the needy applicants.

(It is necessary to mention here that this project has been implemented in the eastern and western areas of Tehran on a pilot basis.)

F. Children deprived of liberty (art. 37)

213. Based on the official statistics, there are over 600 children living alongside their mothers in prisons throughout the country. According to this data, the number of girls exceeds the number of boys, and children under-2 form a notable percentage of the total number of such children.

214. Noting the above issue, the Pseudo Family Office of the Social Affairs Deputy of the Welfare Organization has developed a project, in stages, with the objective of drawing up policies and execution programmes which are appropriate, can be evaluated, and have a general and overall vision, designed to protect the children's rights regardless of their identity, tribal affiliation, nationality and communal affiliation. This project aims at organizing an appropriate programme for removing the children from the environment of imprisoned women and resettling them in their life, while at the same time preserving their relationship with their mothers. The above project is being pursued in coordination with the Prisons Organization and other offices of the Social Affairs Deputy.

Table 5

Children under incarceration in the prisons, in all provinces, prior to project implementation

Sex	Girls under 2	Boys under 2	2-6 year-old girls	2-6 year-old boys	Girls above 6	Boys above 6	Total girls	Total boys
Number of children of imprisoned mothers	117	136	124	128	76	40	317	304

Table 6**Children under incarceration in the prisons of 17 provinces and one district of Tehran, up to July 2001, based on their age and sex**

Number of incarcerated children of the imprisoned mothers	Girls under 2	Boys under 2	2-6 year-old girls	2-6 year-old boys	Girls above 6	Boys above 6	Total girls	Total boys	Grand total
Before project implementation	75	68	63	46	32	14	165	128	293
After project implementation	61	55	25	17	2	-	88	72	160

G. Legal establishments for youth (art. 40)

215. Regarding the establishment of special courts for the consideration of child and youth offences, with reference to article 219 of the Law Concerning Public and Revolutionary Procedure Courts, approved in the year 1999, regarding allocation of branches for considering children's offences, and comment 8 of the Law for the Establishment of the Public and Revolutionary Courts, approved in 1994, and regarding selection and appointment of suitable judges to consider children's offences, there is no specific legal problem.

216. So, with reference to article 219 of the Penal Procedure Code, approved on 19 September 1999, in each of the judicial jurisdictions, one or more branches of public courts are allocated to consider all offences involving children. According to the comment on article 220 of this law, "All offences committed by people under the full age of 18 years shall be dealt with in the Children's Court, in line with the public regulations". In fact we may say that the Iranian lawmaker has selected the age of 18 as childhood age to serve as a criterion for the jurisdiction of the court that should consider the children's offences. Some of the characteristics of these courts are spelled out as follows:

- The court's duty to announce to the child's parent or supervisor that they should attend the court, and in case of failure to attend the court or appoint a lawyer, the court should itself appoint a lawyer to defend the child (article 220 of the Penal Procedure Code);
- Investigating the spiritual and psychological status of the child or his parent or legal guardian, or the family status and the child's home environment (article 222 of the Penal Procedure Code);
- Forbidding the publication of the proceedings of the court, or filming and making photographs, and revealing of the identity and personal characteristics of the accused child (article 225 of the Penal Procedure Code); and
- The possibility of revision of the ruling of the scrutiny court, based on the reports received from the Correction and Rehabilitation Centre, regarding the status of the children, and their correction and rehabilitation (article 229 of the Penal Procedure Code).

217. In order to promote the educational level of judges for the Special Courts for Children regarding child right issues, and their familiarization with child rights conventions, various educational workshops have been organized, in collaboration with UNICEF, in different cities of the country (Tehran, Isfahan and Ardebil) in October-November 2001. In this respect, to support and accompany abused children or children who have committed offences, at all stages of the procedures (the follow-up stage, preliminary investigation, court session, verdict, and verdict execution), efforts have been made to design a project for establishing services to assist abused persons, and especially, abused children. According to this project, support services will be established in the police, courts and correction and rehabilitation centres.

H. Correction and rehabilitation centres

218. According to article 1 of the Procedural Code for the Establishment of the Correction and Rehabilitation Centre, the centre is responsible for taking care of training, and reforming the children under its coverage, in accordance with the Delinquent Children's Court law approved in 1959. Active Correction and Rehabilitation Centres in the country, and the average number of their help-seekers, are as follows: Ilam, 40; Bushehr, 50; Tehran, 420; Mashhad, 130; Ahwaz, 350; Sanandaj, 70; Kermanshah, 70; and Yazd, 80.

219. Programmes of the Correction and Rehabilitation Centres include:

- (a) Art and cultural activities: Screening of films, theatrical performances, singing classes, in-house magazines, newspapers, organizing in- and out-of-the-city pilgrimage and fun camps, sports and religious activities, organizing religious instruction classes for Muslim children;
- (b) Vocational training activities: Organizing periodic training classes on electricity, sewing, handicrafts, wood-carving, make-up, welding, carpet weaving, etc.;
- (c) Health and medical activities: Spraying various places with pesticides, fumigation, quarantine, patient screening, injection, bandaging, sending patients to hospitals and for blood tests, etc.;
- (d) Social work and counselling activities: Solving the problems of the help-seekers, arranging meetings of the help-seekers with their families, legal counselling, psychotherapy, preparation of personality files, and trying to reduce the punishments meted out;
- (e) Food programme: Feeding the help-seekers, provision of their nutritional needs and prevention of malnutrition among them have also been high on the agenda of the officials of Welfare Organizations. Regarding the above, all the centres distribute food supplies based on approved standards;
- (f) Educational programmes: Necessary actions have been taken to ensure accessibility to continuing education for the help-seekers eager to promote their educational status at all educational levels. One outstanding activity in this regard is the presence in prisons of the Literacy Movement Organization (LMO) for the provision of literacy training to illiterate help-seekers, on a very active and extensive basis.

220. State of the Correction and Rehabilitation Centres under construction:

(a) Constructed and under construction centres, their predicted capacity and date of opening:

Isfahan Correction and Rehabilitation Centre (Third Development Plan)	150 persons, 2003
Tabriz Correction and Rehabilitation Centre	150 persons, 2000
Urumieh Correction and Rehabilitation Centre	150 persons, 2000
Zahedan Correction and Rehabilitation Centre (Third Development Plan)	150 persons
Shiraz Correction and Rehabilitation Centre	150 persons, 2001
Kerman Correction and Rehabilitation Centre (end of the Third Development Plan)	150 persons
Gorgan Correction and Rehabilitation Centre	150 persons, 2002
Rasht Correction and Rehabilitation Centre	150 persons, 2002
Khorramabad Correction and Rehabilitation Centre	150 persons, 2002
Sari Correction and Rehabilitation Centre	150 persons, 2001
Bandar Abbas Correction and Rehabilitation Centre	150 persons, 2000

(b) Temporary opening of Correction and Rehabilitation Centres:

- All provincial director-generals' offices have been put under obligation to rent appropriate places to open Correction and Rehabilitation Centres, and to transfer all the under-18 prisoners to these places; and

(c) Opening of Correction and Rehabilitation Centres in all provincial capitals:

- The Prisons Organization has planned to construct and open Correction and Rehabilitation Centres in all the provincial capitals by the end of the Third Development Plan of the country.

I. Physical and psychological recovery of the child and his social reintegration (art. 39)

221. Codes on the regulations of the Ministry of Education have bluntly forbidden any type of punishment, even in the form of classes that are beyond the student's ability. Moreover, punishments have been considered for people who mete out physical punishment against the students. Examples of this type of punishments against the above people are available.

222. The Sports and Training Deputy's Office of the Ministry of Education, the Office for School Health and Counselling, and the Office of Planning and Development of Training, are responsible for the training of teachers and educational guides on ways of assessing, protecting, reporting and acting against various types of misbehaviour, punishment, physical abuse, and other types of misconduct against the children. Since last year, the collaboration between the Ministry of Education and the Welfare Organization has increased on the above issue.

223. In line with implementation of the objectives of article 39 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Abused Persons' Office of the Social Affairs Deputy of the National Welfare Organization has prepared several programmes including the Project for the Establishment of Centres for the Identification of Street Children and Provision of Appropriate Housing for Them. The objective of this programme is to identify street children and provide appropriate housing for them in order to speed up efforts to protect them from social harm, paving the way for their return to their families and continuation of a healthy and appropriate life, identification of their abilities, provision of an appropriate environment for fostering their creative abilities and arranging facilities for the continuation of their education and the provision of appropriate vocational training for them.

224. The latest statistics from the year 2000 regarding clean-living environments in the cities and housing of street children, shows that out of 2,813 persons registered in the 17 provinces under the project, 46 were girls and 2,767 were boys. Of the above-mentioned total population, 1,618 registered persons were holders of foreign nationalities.

225. The Project for the Establishment of Rehabilitation Centres for Socially Abused Girls and Women includes as its objectives:

- Provision of necessary facilities for social and psychological rehabilitation and rejuvenation, in order to avoid a relapse into deviations, and follow-up activities after their release; and
- Facilitating access to the families of the help-seekers, in order to gather more information and conduct preliminary assessment leading to their release. The latest statistics show that out of the total number of people registered in 18 rehabilitation centres during the year 2000, 420 were under 18.

226. The Healthy House Project for Girls includes as its objectives:

- Protection and care of the girls in need of social protection due to their moral problems, without the need for rehabilitation services;
- Provision of bases for their education, employment, self-sufficiency and independence; and
- Identification of the abilities and capacities of these girls and guiding them towards making use of these capacities.

227. The Preventing Girls from Getting Involved in Social Abuse project has registered a total of 263 girls in 18 provinces and 23 rehabilitation centres. Out of the above population, 117 were under-18 girls.

J. Other forms of exploitation (art. 36)

228. Regarding health and protection regulations, working in the informal sector is protected by law (comment of article 85). However, by definition, this sector is practically devoid of legal supervision. Regarding family workshops, a point worth mentioning here, is the hard-line interpretation of the Ministry of Labour and the Arbitration Authorities subject of chapter 9 of the Labour Law, on the definition of these workshops. According to this definition, only those workshops are recognized as family workshops in which, first, only the employer, his father, mother and his children work; and secondly, the workshops are established in the home of the employer or other members of his family.

229. It is the responsibility of the employer to be in possession of documents to prove the legal age of all children working in workshops, and to submit the positive documents whenever required to do so. This concerns only the workshops of the formal sector in which, according to section A of article 96 of the Labour Law, Labour inspectors are obliged to supervise the implementation of the regulations relating to the protection of adolescent labourers (persons in the 15-18 year age group). While visiting the workshops, these inspectors should request the employer to hand over positive legal documentation to prove the legality of employment, when they come in contact with suspicious cases. In such cases, the employer is required to hand over the necessary information to the labour inspector (art. 98). Furthermore, inspectors from the Social Security Organization also visit the workshops in relation with labour insurance. As the insurance is compulsory for all the labours, the inspectors also control the documentation relating to the age of adolescent workers.

K. Annex to International Labour Organization Convention No. 182 (1999)

230. Laws and regulations of the Islamic Republic of Iran guarantee physical and psychological health and children's rights, including the conditions and age status of the child for education and employment. However, a point worth mentioning here is the manner of implementation of the current laws and regulations, and the necessity to supervise and have direct and indirect control over the prohibition on using children as labourers.

231. Although children participate in family work in agriculture and the carpet industries, the degree of this type of participation is not alarming. However, in 2001, due to the joint proposal of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Industries and Mining, the subject of Iran's joining International Labour Organization Convention No. 182 on the prohibition and immediate action for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour was discussed in the Council of Ministers meeting, and was sent to the Parliament in the form of a bill.

232. After the bill was approved by the Parliament and ratified by the Council of Guardians, the President circulated it. Accordingly, people who use children for harmful jobs, which are the

subject of Convention No. 182 and its complementary proposals, will be subjected to the punishments mentioned in article 172 of the Labour Law, and their work licence will be cancelled.

233. It has been stipulated that, in future, the Ministry of Labour in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Medical Education and the Ministry of Industries and Mining, will provide the final list of harmful jobs, subject of section D of article 3 of the Convention, and forward it to the Council of Ministers, accompanied by its working guidelines. The Islamic Republic of Iran's joining of the Convention on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour is an indication of the commitment and undertaking of the country to ensure the adherence to child rights regarding their employment.

L. Children of minority groups (art. 30)

234. The articles of the Constitutional Law of the Islamic Republic of Iran clearly protect the rights of ethnic and religious minorities, and have been formulated based on the variety and differences of their religious beliefs and their varied cultures, religious affinities and ethnicity.

235. The Commission Responsible for the Supervision of Schools Belonging to Religious Minorities, in the Ministry of Education, has approved the appointment of the principals of the minority religions from their own religion. Today, the religious minorities can benefit by appointing a principal from their own faith for their schools. The associations of minority religions are also at liberty to organize religious and ethnic language training classes for their co-religionists in their own centres. The number of schools of minority religions has reached 65 pre-primary, primary, guidance, high school, vocational training and pre-university schools in Tehran.

236. A glance at the status of rights of religious minorities, especially after 23 May 1997, reveals that these religious minorities have increased the number of their cultural and social activities. The publication of new magazines and the ability to publish even severe criticisms in these magazines is a proof of the above statement. Since October 2000, a special committee has been formed in the Ministry of the Interior, by order of the President of Iran, to solve the issues and constraints faced by religious minorities.

237. Regarding the right of development and other citizenship rights, there is a gap in the attainment of these rights between different provinces of the country. This difference is due to various factors including the vastness of the country and its deserts, a very wide scattering of inhabited areas, the high level of insecurity in economic activities, the low efficiency of the labour force and their skills, and long distances between the production and consuming markets in these areas. Furthermore, issues such as drug trafficking in the border provinces, are also reasons leading to lesser development of these areas. If the ethnic minorities too reside in these areas (the areas which due to the above-mentioned reasons have lagged behind in the attainment of their development and other rights, compared to other areas), they would also be affected by the current situation and the living conditions of other citizens in these areas.

238. All religious minorities residing in Iran enjoy the liberty to conduct their own ceremonies and celebrations. On the day of the religious celebrations, religious minorities working in government offices, and their children studying in schools, are entitled to a holiday.

239. Religious minorities face no constraint on publishing books in their own languages and alphabet, nor in publishing books on various issues, such as children's and adolescent literature, history and religion, books on which are among those published. Each of the religious minorities has its own publishing company. Books of the Zoroastrian religious minority are published by Farvahaar and Chista publication companies. Those of the Assyrian religious minority are published by the Assyrian Association Publication Company.

240. The following are some of the minority-related cultural activities undertaken by the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance:

- Issuing of licences to organize cultural ceremonies, music concerts, pleasure camping, national-religious and ethnic celebrations especially designed for Zoroastrian, Armenian, Assyrian, and Jewish children;
- Issuing of licences to publish school and non-school books for children of the religious minorities in their own ethnic languages;
- Issuing of licenses to organize scientific, educational, and sports competitions for children of the religious minorities; and
- Provision of facilities to teach ethnic languages in the schools belonging to the religious minorities.

241. Regarding the welfare of the minorities, according to comment 3 of the Procedural Code of the nurseries and kindergartens, in the workshops where most of the mothers are from religious minorities, the workshop or factory manager is under obligation to select a principal for the kindergarten from the same religious minority, in coordination with the Ministry of Labour.

CONCLUSIONS

242. **In conclusion, it should be mentioned that despite the existence of some problems and constraints in the full realization of the rights of Iranian children, which is partly due to the current laws, and the rest due to the problems regarding execution, the general trend of the status of children in the Islamic Republic of Iran is towards improvement. Other than the achievements in the health and educational domains and the revision of some of the laws dealing with children, as mentioned in the report, it should also be mentioned that one of the most important activities in the country during recent years has been the attraction of the attention of the public towards the issue of children's rights and related issues.**

243. **Today, it is difficult to find a weekly magazine, which does not include at least one or two articles regarding the Convention on the Rights of the Child, or other issues related to children's rights. This is especially important, as the attention of the mass media to children's issues has attracted the attention of other organizations and foundations to these issues, leading to the integration of these subjects in their work plans.**

244. In view of the vastness and variety of the subjects relating to children, which has naturally encompassed many local bodies and organizations, as also the valuable experiences gained in the matter of the implementation of other international conventions, it is felt that coordination between the active organizations in the field of the rights of children, as well as pursuing the goals for the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its supervision at the national level, needs a centralized procedure.

245. As has been explained in the preface to the report, with the initiative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a National Committee, composed of knowledgeable and fully authorized representatives of all the relevant bodies, was formed to draw up the first periodic report of the Islamic Republic of Iran, for presentation to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, and has prepared this report. For more effective implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Islamic Republic of Iran is at present studying a procedure that would not only shoulder the responsibility of the preparation and presentation of country reports in the said field, but, would also coordinate the activities of the relevant organizations in the field of children.

246. As poverty alleviation policies and the improvement of public welfare is among the priorities of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran's programmes, it is hoped that within this framework more facilities would be provided for children. By reducing the existing gaps in the provision of facilities among different areas, and promoting the quality of the services and welfare facilities, the rights of the children in the country will be guaranteed even more than before.

247. As mentioned in the introduction to this report, the attainment of the goals of this issue, needs not only the efforts of officials working on children-related issues in the country, but also calls for the efforts of the international community in promoting all-round human development, especially in the areas of poverty elimination and the reduction of inequalities.
