

Protecting children from all forms of violence.

Her Royal Highness,

Your Excellencies,

Distinguished participants,

First of all, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the Council of Europe and Principality of Monaco for organizing a high level conference related to children and family issues.

The XXI century is considered as the century of children rights. Children are the part of the society which needs the most and special care. Thus, we-policymakers should tend to focus on developing future generation through the child- friendly society. Taking this into consideration, new Social Welfare Programs should address best interests of the children.

Rapid change of the world, active globalization, cataclysms, occurring in our planet, differentiation of the society and other factors influence families and children in particular. Unfortunately, in the modern world children are victims of many forms of violence. They are neglected, abused and killed.

Traditional family model is the foundation of the society and a democratic statehood is firmly consolidated on its roots. I would like to mention that being a democratic state Azerbaijan established state policy on the solution of family, women and children issues. Up to now more than 30 state programs for children have been adopted. In 2009, when the economic crises stroke numerous countries in the world, Azerbaijan declared it as a year of the Child. Children First and Second Forums with the participation of children from all regions were conducted.

Having implemented several researches, we determined such areas where our efforts should be strengthened as early marriages, children with disabilities, evasion from education, street children.

We've analysed and established the omissions in legislation. As a result, two laws on gender equality and domestic violence were ratified in our country. I would like to congratulate all of us with the adoption of proposal on increasing of woman minimum age for marriage to 18 years 2 days ago in our country. This is an example of successful effort on prevention and solution problems on early marriages and sexual violence.

Unfortunately, one of the ongoing unsolved problems is the refugee and IDP children who faced violence as a result of war. As a result of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict more than three hundred thousand children are internally displaced, hundreds of children were killed. Still innocent Azerbaijan children are subjected to violence and being killed in the border regions. Their voices have not been heard on international level yet.

NGO's, activity is very important and it is a kind of help and support to the Government, especially in the direction of prevention violence against children. As an example we can mention the Heydar Aliyev Foundation which is led by the First Lady of Azerbaijan, Mrs. Mehriban Aliyeva, who pays a great attention to the vulnerable group of children. We have been implementing a joint project "The XXI century without violence". As a result of this project the law on domestic violence were ratified and 5 shelters for mothers and children were established in the regions.

Now within a new program, regional meetings on "XXI century against violence - as a key factor in the strengthening of the internal culture" are regularly conducted in all regions.

We carried out the joint project with UNICEF on “The analysis of the situation of street children” and as a result reintegration and rehabilitation of street children by involving appropriate bodies are going to be implemented soon.

We highly appreciate the work and projects of the Council of Europe. As a member of the UN Children Convention and its protocols, we also signed European Convention on Sexual violence against children and have already started to work on its ratification. First discussions in the parliament have been held and we are planning to launch countrywide awareness raising programs and trainings through our Family and Support Centres .These centres cover all the vulnerable groups and provide psychological and legal consultations, active therapy sessions and trainings.

We would propose to spread gained experiences and realized programs within the project on “Building Europe for and with Children” and to establish the coordination network with the support of the Council of Europe.

In the conclusion, I would like to mention that the children of XXI century are our future generation. We should work together to find and apply remedy that will allow us to treat current problems. Solving issues concerning children policy would result in establishing healthier society. With no doubts, building the world full of peace and love will serve for the best of our future.

Thank you for attention!