STATEMENT
By
Mrs. Sanja Zografska-Krteska
Deputy Permanent Representative

68th session of the United Nation General Assembly-Third Committee
Item 65: Rights of children

United Nations
New York
Friday, 18 October 2013

- Please check against delivery-
Mr. Chair,

The Republic of Macedonia aligned itself with the statement made by the delegation of the European Union and would like to make some observations in its national capacity.

Mr. Chair, human capital, as a power that moves societies through different stages of development, is enormously important asset for every country. There are prosperous countries which are not rich in natural resources, but there isn't any prosperous one without human capital. Children and youth are the potential that creates the human capital. They are our starting point to growth. Solid legislation, good education, proper health care and social protection are the areas through which we shape the future of our children.

The mentioned areas are incorporated in the Macedonian National Action Plan for Children’s Rights for the period 2006-2015. The priorities of the Plan are to fully implement the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child into different policies and activities with the aim of reducing inequalities, including all children in the education process and protecting children against all forms of violence, abuse and exploitation. The NAP has been revised, in 2012 in accordance with the recommendations of the CRC from 2010, with the objective to adjust it to the realities on the ground and to provide better response to the challenges in the promotion and protection of the rights of children.

Education paves the way to productive and fulfilled life. Education enables the enjoyment of freedoms from want and from fear. Therefore, it is crucial to provide every child with compulsory education free of charge. After the amendments to the Law on secondary education in April 2007, the secondary education is compulsory and free of charge in the Republic of Macedonia in addition to the primary education. Also, education is accessible to all persons under equal conditions in Macedonia.

To be able to understand deficiencies that exist in the system of child protection in Member States a continuous collection of relevant data is crucial, as well as analysis of existing and emerging trends.

Within the program for cooperation for the period 2010-2015, signed by the Government of the Republic of Macedonia and UNICEF, data collection systems in the area of social work and justice for children have been further developed, as well as new monitoring mechanisms. The database on vulnerable children in the Centres for Social Work started operating and is connected to the State Statistical Office. However, more improvements are necessary in respect to systematic collection and analysis of data for children with disabilities, which are considered the most vulnerable group. The need to make more efforts for their social inclusion has been recognized, as well as to provide better services for stimulating integration of disabled children in the educational system.
The Republic of Macedonia recently adopted the Law on child protection, which safeguards the best interest of the child and organizes the system of child protection around the rights of the child in accordance with the international legal standards. The Law contains provision for protection against any form of discrimination, as well as provision of legal protection in case of direct and indirect discrimination. The Law contains measures to protect children from illegal use or abuse of narcotics, psychotropic substances and precursors, enforce ban on the involvement of minors in armed conflicts and other acts of war, as well as from religious organization and activity and abuse of children for political or religious organization and activity.

The Law on juvenile justice, passed in July 2007, represents the reform of the juvenile legislation in Macedonia. It is based on the following principles: the principle of the protection of the minor and his or her rights, socialization and assistance in dealing with the minor, restorative justice, and prevention of juvenile delinquency.

The Government's policy on the prevention and dealing with sexual abuse of children and pedophilia was translated into the Action Plan for the period 2009-2012. The Plan contributed to the promotion of a coordinated system of cooperation among government agencies and the civil sector. In 2012 the Macedonian Government further adopted the Law on special registry of persons convicted of crimes of sexual abuse of minors and pedophilia, with the aim of enhancing the protection of children against this crime.

In regards to recent ratifications of international legal instruments, let me stress that Macedonia ratified the Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse in 2012 and is in the process of ratification of the Third Protocol to the CRC.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, I would like to point out that Macedonia strongly supports the work of the special mandate holders regarding children's rights. We are thankful for their reports presented before this Committee and believe that their findings are very useful in better understanding the problems and improving the comprehensive approach towards child protection.

The Partnerships between governments, UNICEF and other relevant UN entities and international organizations, civil society and children are significant for designing the post-2015 agenda to make it fit for children. The participation of children is crucial. The story of Malala Yousafzai shows that much more remains to be done to make the world fit for children. Malala become a symbol of bravery and determination for a justly cause. A cause that should have been part of her normal life, had education been not hijacked by those who’s interest is to keep people in dark. Let me use this opportunity to echo, once again, the slogan that nothing should be created about children, without children.

Thank you for the attention.