

GOVERNMENT OF ARMENIA RESPONSE TO THE TDA QUESTIONNAIRE

Answers to questions 1.1 and 1.2:

-- Article 257 of the Labor Code prohibits the employment of persons under 18 years old for work defined by the legislation of the Republic of Armenia (RA) as heavy, harmful, especially heavy, and especially harmful, as well as in other cases defined by the law. The list of such work is defined by government decree #2308-N of December 29, 2005 "On approving the list of work that is considered as heavy and harmful for persons under 18 years, pregnant women and women caring for children up to one year."

-- In 2008 a pilot research project was conducted to analyze the problems associated with child labor – motives of the work, spheres of the work, conditions and duration of the work, health condition of children and their education. An attempt was made to examine and assess the phenomenon, taking into account the difficult socio-economic situation in the country. As a conclusion it was presented that this phenomenon was not widespread in Armenia, and the number of working children was small- only 71 children in 1066 households. There have been no new surveys on child labor yet.

-- In order to have a clear understanding of the prevalence and motives of this phenomenon, point 9 of the timetable of the activities envisaged for the protection of children's rights in the social sphere of the program approved by the government on December 28, 2012 -- "On Approving the strategic program for 2013-2016 on the protection of children's rights in the Republic of Armenia and deeming invalid the RA Governmental decree #1745-N of December 18, 2003" -- envisages the conduct of a survey aimed at preventing the abuse of labor of working children. A preliminary discussion to support the research was held with a representative of the appropriate section of the US Embassy in the Republic of Armenia.

Answer to question 2.1:

-- By government decree of December 28, 2012, a strategic program on the protection of the rights of children in the Republic of Armenia for years 2013-2016, has been approved.

-- Working conditions for children are regulated by the RA Constitution, as well as following laws and regulations:

- RA Labor Code (adopted on November 9, 2004, came into force on June 21, 2005);
- RA Family Code (adopted on November 9, 2004);
- RA Law on Children's Rights (adopted on May 29, 1996);
- RA Law on State Labor Inspectorate (adopted on March 24, 2005);
- RA Criminal Code;
- RA Government Decree Governmental Decree # 2308-N "On approving the list of works that are considered as heavy and harmful for persons under 18 years, pregnant women and women caring for children up to one year;" as well as
- International Labor Organization Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labor (ratified by RA on March 22,2005, came into force on January 2, 2007);
- International Labor Organization Convention 138 on Minimum Age (ratified on October 3,2005, came into force on January 27, 2007).

Answers to questions 2.2 and 2.3:

-- According to the RA Constitution (Article 32) children under the age of 16 shall not be allowed to work full time. The procedure and conditions for their hiring for a part-time job shall be defined by the law.

-- According to the RA Labor Code (Article 15) the labor legal capacity and the capacity to acquire and implement labor rights with his/her activities, to create labor obligations and implement them (labor activity) in full volume originate upon turning age sixteen, except in cases stipulated by this code and other laws.

-- According to the RA Labor Code (Article 17) the minimum age for employment is 14, and persons from 14 to 16 years old, may work under an employment contract only with the written consent of one of the parents, adopter or guardian. A temporary employment contract is concluded with persons from 14 to 16 years old for the duration of up to six months. Persons from 14 to 16 years old may be included only in temporary work that does not harm their health, security, education or morality. Persons from 14 to 16 years old may not work during non-working days, non-working holidays or commemoration days, with the exception of participation in sports and cultural events.

-- According to the RA Labor Code (Article 140) shorter working hours shall be set for persons aged 14-16, - 24 hours per week; and for persons aged 16-18 - 36 hours per week. According to RA Labor Code (Article 249) employees under 18 years of age must undergo a medical examination. The medical examination is carried out during working hours, at the expense of the employer.

-- Article 154 of the Labor Code stipulates that the duration of daily uninterrupted rest of employees under 16 must be at least 14 hours, and not less than 12 hours for persons from 16 to 18 years of age and must fall in the time from 10 pm to 6 am.

-- According to the RA Labor Code (article 144) overtime work cannot be assigned to persons under 18 years of age. According to Article 153 employees under 18 years of age, who work for more than four hours, must be granted an additional break of at least 30 minutes to rest during their working time.

-- According to paragraph 7 of Article 155 of the same Code persons under eighteen years of age must be provided with at least two rest days per week and according to article 164 after six months of uninterrupted work at an organization, persons under 18 years of age shall be entitled to choose the time of annual leave.

-- According to the RA Labor Code (Article 257) Employment of persons under 18 years old shall be prohibited from performing work defined by the legislation of the Republic of Armenia as heavy, harmful, especially heavy, and especially harmful, as well as in other cases defined by the law. The list of jobs considered as hard and harmful mentioned in this article is stipulated at the level of RA Governmental decrees.

-- According to the RA Labor Code (Article 148) working at night shall be prohibited for persons less than 18 years of age. The latter may not work shifts either at home or in organizations.

-- According to RA Law on Children Rights every child has the right to a profession and engage in work not prohibited by law according to his/her age possibilities, health condition and capacities.

The right to education

- According to Article 39 of the RA Constitution everyone shall have the right to education. Basic general education shall be compulsory except for the cases prescribed by the law. Secondary education in state educational institutions is free of charge. In addition all citizens shall have the right to free higher and professional education in state higher and other professional educational institutions on the basis of competition as prescribed by the law. In cases and in conformity with the procedure prescribed by the law the state shall provide financial and other assistance to institutions implementing higher and other professional education programs, as well as their students.
- In addition the RA Law on "General Education" defines the general principles of state policy, guarantees the right to education, free and compulsory primary education and free secondary education basics, as fixed in the RA Constitution. Thus according to paragraph 7 of Article 18 of the law, basic general education is compulsory and this requirement should be kept until the student is 16 years old, unless the required basic level has been met earlier. After a student is 16 years old, the student may leave school with the consent of parents (legal guardians or adoptive parents).
- Third paragraph of Article 6 of the same law ensures free general secondary¹ education, as well as competition based free primary (vocational), mid-level, higher and post-graduate professional education in state education institutions.

Answers to questions 2.4 and 2.5:

-- The crimes and violations envisaged under these questions are envisaged under the following articles of the RA Criminal Code:

- Article 132.2. Trafficking or exploitation of a child or a person, who in a state of mental disorder is devoid of the possibility to control his/her actions or to fully or partially recognize the nature and the meaning thereof
 1. Recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt, of a child or a person, who in a state of mental disorder, is devoid of the possibility to control his/her actions or to fully or partially recognize the nature and the meaning thereof, for the purpose of exploitation, as well as the exploitation or keeping or placing a person in the condition of exploitation is punished by imprisonment for a term of 7 to 10 years, with or without confiscation of property, with or without deprivation of the right to hold certain positions or to practice certain activities for a term of up to 3 years.
 2. The same action committed:
 - 1) against two or more persons;
 - 2) by a group of persons with prior agreement;
 - 3) with the abuse of official position;
 - 4) by use of violence or threat thereof;
 - 5) by means of abduction;
 - 6) against an obviously pregnant woman;
 - 7) by means of organizing the crossing of the state border of the Republic of Armenia by the person;

is punished by imprisonment for a term of 10 to 12 years, with or without confiscation of property, with or without deprivation from the right to hold certain positions or to practice certain activities for a term of up to 3 years.

3. The actions envisaged in Part 1 or 2 of this Article, which:

1) are committed by an organized group;

2) has negligently caused the death of the victim or other severe consequences

are punished by imprisonment for a term of 12 to 15 years, with or without confiscation of property, with or without deprivation from the right to hold certain positions or to practice certain activities for a term of up to 3 years.

-- Article 165. Involvement of a minor in criminal activities

1. Involving a minor, who has reached the age of criminal liability for the relevant crime under this Code, into the committal of a crime, by means of promises, deception or other ways, by a person who has reached the age of 18 years, is punished by imprisonment for a term of 1 to 5 years.

2. The same action, if committed by a parent, teacher or other person in charge of rearing the minor, is punished by imprisonment for a term of up to 5 years, with or without deprivation of the right to hold certain positions or to practice certain activities for a term from 2 to 6 years.

3. The actions envisaged in Part 1 or 2 of this Article, if committed by use of violence or threat thereof, is punished by imprisonment for a term of 3 to 7 years, with or without deprivation of the right to hold certain positions or to practice certain activities for a term of up to 3 years.

4. The action envisaged in Part 1, 2 or 3 of this Article, if accompanied with involvement of a minor into an organized group, criminal association or into committal of a grave or particularly grave crime, is punished by imprisonment for a term of 5 to 10 years, with or without deprivation of the right to hold certain positions or to practice certain activities for a term of up to 3 years.

-- Article 166. Involvement of a child in prostitution or in activities related to preparation of materials and articles of pornographic nature

1. Involving a child into prostitution or into activities related to preparation of materials and articles of pornographic nature, by a person who has reached the age of 18 years, given the absence of crime elements envisaged under Article 132.2 of this Code, is punished by a fine in an amount of 200 to 400 times the minimum wage, or with detention for a term of 1 to 3 months, or by imprisonment for a term of 1 to 5 years.

2. The same action, if committed by a parent, teacher or other person in charge of rearing the child, is punished by imprisonment for a term of 2 to 6 years, with or without deprivation of the right to hold certain positions or to practice certain activities for up to 3 years.

3. The actions envisaged in Part 1 or 2 of this Article, which:

1) are committed against 2 or more persons;

2) were accompanied with use of violence or threat thereof

are punished by imprisonment for a term of 3 to 7 years, with or without deprivation of the right to hold certain positions or to practice certain activities for up to 3 years.

-- Article 166.1. Involvement of a child in the use of alcoholic drinks, non-medical use of strong or other narcotic drugs, in vagrancy or in activities related to beggary

1. Involving a child in the use of alcoholic drinks, non-medical use of strong or other narcotic drugs, in vagrancy or in activities related to beggary, by a person who has reached the age of 18 years, given the absence of crime elements envisaged under Article 132.2 of this Code, is punished by a fine in an amount of 200 to 400 times the minimum wage, by detention for a term of 1 to 3 months, or by imprisonment for a term of up to 5 years.

2. The same action, if committed by a parent, teacher or other person in charge of rearing the child, is punished by a fine in an amount of 300 to 500 times the minimum wage, or by imprisonment for a term of 1 to 5 years, with or without deprivation of the right to hold certain positions or to practice certain activities for up to 3 years.

3. The actions envisaged in Part 1 or 2 of this Article, which:

1) are committed against 2 or more persons;

2) are accompanied with the use of violence or threat thereof

are punished by imprisonment for a term of 2 to 6 years, with or without deprivation of the right to hold certain positions or to practice certain activities for up to 3 years.

-- Article 168. Buying a child with intent to undertake his/her care or selling a child with intent to place the child under the care of the recipient

1. Buying a child with intent to undertake his/her care or selling a child with intent to place the child under the care of the recipient is punished by imprisonment for a term of 2 to 5 years.

2. The same action committed:

1) with the abuse of official position;

2) against two or more children;

3) by means of organizing the crossing of the state border of the Republic of Armenia by the person;

4) by means of fake adoption;

is punished by imprisonment for a term of 4 to 8 years, with or without deprivation of the right to hold certain positions or to practice certain activities for a term of up to 3 years.

-- Article 262. Facilitating prostitution

1. Establishing, managing or maintaining premises for prostitution, or using public facilities for prostitution, or regularly providing an apartment or other accommodation for prostitution, or getting material benefits by facilitating prostitution in other ways, given the absence of crime elements envisaged under Article 132 or Article 132.2 of this Code, is punished by a fine in an amount of 200 to 400 times the minimum wage, or by detention for a term of up to 3 months, or by imprisonment for a term of 1 to 4 years.

2. The same action committed:

1) by a group of persons in prior agreement;

2) with the abuse official position;

3) by means of organizing the crossing of the state border of the Republic of Armenia by the person;

4) by using an obviously pregnant woman;

5) by using two or more persons;

6) by using a minor;

7) by using a person, who in a state of mental disorder is devoid of the possibility to control her actions or to fully or partially recognize the nature and the meaning thereof is punished by imprisonment for a term of 3 to 6 years, with or without confiscation of property, with or without deprivation of the right to hold certain positions or to practice certain activities for a term of up to 3 years.

3. The actions envisaged under Part 1 or Part 2 of this Article, if committed by an organized group, are punished by imprisonment for a term of 4 to 8 years, with or without confiscation of property, with or without deprivation of the right to hold certain positions or to practice certain activities for a term of up to 3 years.

-- Article 263. Dissemination of pornographic materials and articles

1. Dissemination, advertisement, sale, and for such purposes creation of pornographic materials or articles, including printed publications, movies and video materials, images or other articles of pornographic nature, given the absence of crime elements envisaged under Article 132, 132.2 of this Code, is punished by a fine in an amount of 200 to 400 times the minimum wage, or by detention for a term of up to 2 months, or by imprisonment for a term of up to 2 years.

2. Presentation of child pornography through a computer system or storing child pornography in a computer system or a storage system of computer data is punished by a fine in an amount of 400 to 800 times the minimum wage, or by detention for a term of up to 3 months, or by imprisonment for a term of up to 3 years.

3. The same action, if committed by an organized group, is punished by imprisonment for a term of 2 to 4 years.

-- As well as Article 179.1 of the RA Administrative Violations Code:

Prostitution

Engaging in prostitution, results in a fine 20 times the minimum wage. Same actions committed within a year after the administrative penalty was issued, result in a fine 40 times the minimum wage.

-- The Criminal Code also prohibits abetting or involving minors in the use of narcotic or psychotropic drugs (Article 272).

-- Article 19 of the Law on Children's Rights prohibits involving a child in trade, use or production of alcoholic beverages, narcotics and psychotropic drugs, cigarettes, literature and tapes with erotic or horror content, as well as the performance of such labor which can be harmful for the child's health, physical and mental development, or hinder the acquisition of education.

-- The provisions of these laws are applied equally regardless of persons' gender.

Answer to question 3.1:

-- The National Commission on the Protection of Children's Rights operates in the Republic of Armenia, the members of which include both interested state bodies, and representatives of non-

governmental organizations. The Commission continues its activities aimed at a unified state policy on protection of children's rights and interests, ensuring the basic safeguards for the protection of their rights and interests, and developing suggestions for solving problems that occur. During the year, in three sessions, the Commission has discussed issues relating to the protection of children's rights, local issues of cooperation between local and international NGOs and the government, results of implemented programs, and other issues.

-- The commission developed the RA Prime Minister's draft decision "On establishing a National Commission on Children's Rights, on approving the charter of the commission and its individual composition, and deeming invalid the RA Prime Minister's Decision #835-N of October 28, 2005" which includes new functions and expands the composition of the commission. The draft has been presented to the Prime Minister for approval.

-- The main objectives of the commission are:

- Assist in the coordination of activities of the state bodies responsible for the children's rights protection;
- Assist in the development and implementation of state policy and strategic programs aimed at the protection of children's rights and interests.
- Assist in solving the problems of children living in difficult conditions;
- Assist in the cooperation between state government and local self-government bodies implementing the protection of children's rights and interests; the state, community and private institutions carrying out children's care; non-governmental, political, scientific and other organizations.

-- At the April 25, 2012 session of the RA Commission on the Protection of Children's Rights, the commission developed a draft joint decree of the RA Police, the RA Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs and the RA Ministry of Health on the creation of a working group for solving the issues of begging and vagabond children. The aim of the implemented activities is to install modern rehabilitative services aimed at solving the problems of begging and vagabond children, which will be included in the 2013 annual program of the National Commission on the Protection of Children's Rights.

-- During the January 31, 2013 session the commission discussed the possibility of conducting a survey on worst forms of child labor.

-- The activities aimed at combating trafficking in persons are coordinated by the Council on Human Exploitation (trafficking) in Armenia, which is headed by the RA Deputy Prime Minister.

An interagency working group (TWG) headed by the chief of the department of international organizations of the ministry of foreign affairs, is operating to organize the ongoing works of the council. The council coordinates all the activities in the area of the struggle against trafficking. Representatives of public and international organizations and social partners actively participate in the activities of the council and the working group. The council coordinates all activities in the area of anti-trafficking, including actions aimed at preventing child trafficking.

The council and working group follow the implementation of the National anti-trafficking program by all respective state structures and reports on activities conducted are regularly posted on the official website of the RA Government.

-- For details on anti-trafficking activities, including child trafficking, see responses provided for the US DOS 2013 report (transferred to US Embassy in Armenia on January 31, 2013 by RA MFA Note No 14/00982).

Answer to question 4.1:

-- In the Republic of Armenia the implementation of provisions of the RA Labor Code and other normative legal acts containing labor right norms are being supervised by the RA State Labor Inspectorate operating within the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs. The objectives, authorities, the rights and responsibilities of labor inspectors are set by the RA Law on State Labor Inspectorate. According to this law (Article 10, paragraph 14), the RA State Labor Inspectorate carries out supervisions and oversight of the implementation of the rights of persons up to age of 18 provided for by labor legislation.

Answer to question 4.2:

-- RA State Labor Inspectorate implements its objectives and duties through 126 labor inspectors, who are considered civil servants.

Answer to question 4.3:

-- During 2012 the RA State Labor Inspectorate was allocated 288,882,700 AMD (about 713,290 USD) from the state budget, of which 202,881,600 AMD (about 500, 942 USD) was paid in wages. The Inspectorate central office and its territorial centers are provided with sufficient office conditions. The Inspectorate has been provided with 16 service cars and 1 laboratory car for its use. Each month the Inspectorate is provided with gasoline in the amount determined by the RA government.

Answer to question 4.4:

-- The state labor inspectors receive training based on the annual program of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs. The training includes the application of the most effective measures for the implementation of the RA Labor Code and other regulations including provisions on labor rights, which also include issue pertaining to protection of child labor. The fourth RA National Plan of Action against Trafficking in Persons for years 2013-2015ⁱⁱ envisages trainings on exploitation of persons (trafficking), especially labor exploitation and exploitation (trafficking) of children.

Answer to question 4.5:

-- During 2012 there were 395 labor inspections carried out. During the inspections compliance with all the norms of the RA Labor Code are examined, including those on child labor rights, and

the implementation of the norms ensuring their protection. The inspections did not register any violations of labor rights of people aged 14-18 or violations of guarantees envisaged by law.

Questions 4.6 through 4.9: none applicable.

Answer to question 5.1:

-- Specialized subdivisions of the RA Police deal with the prevention and investigation of the cases of child forced labor/trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, use of children in illicit activities, as well as crimes against and by children.

Answer to question 5.2:

-- According to the existing order children discovered on the territory of the Republic of Armenia, who have broken the law, are parentless, are left without appropriate care, and all other children who fall under such "risk group" are referred to the Children Support Center of the Armenian Relief Fund," where they receive medical, moral-psychological, and social assistance. Children who have become victims of exploitation or trafficking are referred to the corresponding organizations that provide assistance to trafficking victims according to the National Referral Mechanism of Trafficking victims.

(Note: Answer to questions 5.3 and 5.4 were not provided, since GOAM had agreed that Post would directly contact the police for figures and updates. End note)

Answer to question 5.5:

-- During 2012, training courses on related topics were organized for a total of 300 police officers from different groups. The trainings are continuous, and are envisaged under the draft of the fourth RA National Plan of Action against Trafficking in Persons for years 2013-2015 and its implementation timetable.

Answer to questions 5.6, 5.9 and 5.10:

-- During 2012, the law-enforcement bodies investigated 12 criminal cases on charges of Articles 132.2, 166, 168, and 263 that involved minors. Eleven of the cases were launched in 2012. The law-enforcement bodies investigated 9 criminal cases on charges of Articles 165 and 166.1.

-- During 2012 two persons were convicted for forced child labor (trafficking/sexual exploitation).

1) By the June 1, 2012 decision of the Yerevan city Shengavit district trial court Kristine Nersisyan was found guilty on charges of Article 132.2 paragraph 2 points 2,4,7 of the RA Criminal Code and was convicted to 11 years in prison. Kristine Nersisyan reaching prior agreement with Rafik Markosyan had recruited minor Astghik Galstyan and transferred her to the Russian Federation, where she was subjected to labor trafficking.

2) By the December 18, 2012 decision of the Yerevan city Kentron and Nork-Marash district trial court Lusine Nersisyan was found guilty on charges of Article 132.1 paragraph 2

points 1 and 3 of the RA Criminal Code and was convicted to 8 years in prison. Lusine Nersisyan subjected minors Mariam Gevorgyan and Elmira Adilyan to sexual exploitation in Turkey.

-- In addition courts examined two more cases on child labor (trafficking/sexual exploitation) which are still in progress.

-- Conditional sentences or fines have not been applied to persons convicted for trafficking.

(Note: Answer to question 5.7 was not provided as GOAM understood this as to refer to the law-enforcement statistics already provided. End note.)

Answer to question 5.8

-- During 2012, there were 8 minors who were victims or were engaged in crimes investigated under Articles 132.2, 166, 168 and 263 of the RA Criminal Code. The two minor victims who were discovered during the 2012 investigation of cases under Article 132.2 of the RA Criminal Code were referred to the NGOs, and one minor victim was placed in the Children Support Center Foundation. In addition one more minor who was in danger of being trafficked was referred to NGOs.

Answers to questions 6.1-7.9

-- As mentioned in the answer to the question #1.2, in December the RA Government approved the Strategic Program for the Protection of Children's Rights in the Republic of Armenia in 2013-2016. This program, among many other activities, envisages a study aimed at the prevention of child labor exploitation, as well as the establishment of day care centers for children in difficult life situation in Yerevan and the regions based on needs assessments.

-- The fourth National Plan of Actions against Trafficking in Persons for 2013-2015 and the timetable of implementation of its activities was developed during 2012 and presented to the Government for approval in February 2013. The action plan has a separate chapter on the prevention of child trafficking.

-- Under the family benefits and one-time financial assistance program, which is aimed at the improvement of the social-economic situation of poor families, about 100,300 families received benefits as of December 2012; 80.69% of the families had children. The 2012 state budget had allocated 37,105 billion drams (\$91.4 million) for this purpose. The amount of family benefits is determined by adding to the basic figure of the benefit an addition per every child up to 18 years old. The amounts of this addition are being differentiated by the level of family's level of poverty, the place of residency and by the number of children. Therefore 89% of the envisaged financing is directed to families with children.

-- Based on the RA government protocol decision #4 of the February 2, 2012 session, a program is implemented on assessment, assistance and monitoring of the educational needs of children aged 16-18 of the families registered in the vulnerability assessment system program. The

purpose of this program is to increase the possibility for these children aged 16-18 to receive professional education, thus supporting the families' engagement in active social programs, as well as increasing the families' welfare level.

-- Within the framework of the RA National Plan of Action for the Protection of the Rights of the Child for 2004-2015 adopted by RA government decree #1745-N on December 18, 2003, numerous social programs are being implemented, particularly:

1. *The program of state assistance to graduates of RA residential care institutions.* Since 2004 the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs has been implementing the program of state assistance to graduates of RA residential care institutions, adopted by the RA Government decree #1419-n on October 30, 2003. Within this program the following events have been carried out continuously: social patronage of beneficiaries, career advice, training, assistance with job placement, provision of housing and property, medical assistance, provision of legal advice, etc. Housing for the graduates is being provided from the social residency fund constructed and used in different regions and cities of the republic. Recently, 169 one-room apartments were allocated, for ten-years of free usage for the graduates of orphanages, as well as children in need of housing, who were left without parental care, on the basis of trilaterally signed agreements. During 2012, 27 social apartments located in Maralik city of Shirak region, were provided to beneficiaries.

2. *“When September comes” program.* The program “When September Comes” is carried out in RA to support children from poor families. The program is run by benevolent organizations to help the families registered as beneficiaries in the vulnerability assessment system, i.e. children left out from secondary education and children of fallen freedom fighters' families with 3 or more school age children. School supplies, clothes and food are provided to them. School children from poor families in regions and cities receive aid from the benevolent organizations.

3. It is imperative to provide better social security to children of special secondary educational institutions and improve the consistent management of these institutions. For this purpose, the joint decree of RA Minister of Labor and Social Affairs No 44-A/1 of April 18, 2012 and RA Minister of Education 299-A/K decree of April 18, 2012 provided for the establishment of a working group which conducted a survey of 23 special educational institutions in regions and cities of RA, based on the educational and social needs assessment questionnaires. Out of 2150 children studying in these institutions, 1379 receive night care. In order to improve social security for these children and provide a better quality of life, the joint decree of RA Minister of Labor and Social Affairs No 67-A/1 of July 20, 2012 and RA Minister of Education 726-A/K decree as of July 20, 2012 confirmed the “Action plan for insuring consistent management of educational institutions for children with special needs and provision of social security for those children.”

4. *Creation of 3 centers for the care of vagabond and begging children and the organization of their care.* As result of collective actions completed, the number of begging children has decreased year after year. The number of begging children who are accounted for now is 15,

whereas about 10 years ago it was around 300. This positive result was reached because of the cooperation between different government agencies and international and local NGOs. During the April 25, 2012 session of the RA National Commission for Children's Protection, the draft of the joint order of the RA Police, the RA Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, and the RA Ministry of Health about the creation of a working group for addressing the issues of vagabond and begging children was drafted. The goal of the actions being implemented is to establish modern rehabilitation services to address the issues faced by vagabond and begging children. This goal will be included in the National Commission's 2013 children's rights protection annual program.

5. *Creation of day-time community centers for children.* The two children's social day care centers in Yerevan and Gyumri continue their operation in accordance with December 7, 2007 RA Government Decision No. 1877 "Day-time care provision to children," which regulates the specifics for day-time care provided for disabled children ages 6-18, children deprived of parental care, and children with disciplinary difficulties. Day-time care is one of the main types of social services. It can be carried out either in institutions or in-house until the child's social and psychological recovery. The center currently provides services to 100 children.

The four day-time centers in Dilijan, Ijevan, Noyemberyan and Berd are also still operating and providing services to 25-200 children including children with physical and mental disabilities. The centers actively cooperate with the families as well as the regional departments for the protection of women's and children's rights.

The coordination of the centers' activities is managed by the RA Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs together with the "Bridge of Hope" NGO, which provides the professional services part of the program.

In the recent years 13 day-time centers have been created in different regions for children's development and rehabilitation. Since 2010, the Gyumri kindergarten named after Fridtjof Nansen in the Shriak region has been reorganized and is operating as a children's care and protection boarding institution. The institution provides care and education for children in difficult life situations from poor families and families in need. By 2015, the number of such day-time community centers is planned to bring up to 25 through state and other financing.

6. *Organization of summer vacation for socially vulnerable children.* The children's summer vacation is organized each year by the inter-agency commission which was created by the decree of the RA Prime Minister. In accordance with the RA Prime Minister decree # 538-A of June 19, 2012, summer vacation for children of fallen or disabled military servants, orphans and school-age children from less endowed large families is financed from the state budget in children's health camps from July 1 in two shifts, each shift being 20 days long. The decree also applies to the educational programs and methods being implemented among the school students who are on summer vacation to modernize and help students organize additional educational activities within their interests and physical and mental capabilities. Safe transportation and other issues related to students going on vacation are also addressed. The responsibility for organizing the summer vacations for the students of three specialized orphanages operating within the RA Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs system is also supported by local and

international humanitarian organization, as well as the church which ensures the logistics for the students' medical care and rehabilitation, provides the means for food, care and other necessities. Attached is information from the RA 2012 and 2013 budget about the financing of social programs.

Reference			
	Program name	2012	2013
1	04. Assistance and advise to graduates of RA orphanages	87,937	72,859
2	08. Round-the-clock care services for children	4,216,181	4,565,200
3	09. Services to return to the families children residing in the RA institutions, which implement their protection and round-the-clock care	28,990	28,990
4	10. Social care services for children appeared in risky zones	455,573	535,237
5	12. Protection and night care services for children	2,462,915	2,477,359
6	13. Social care services by children's daily care centers for children in difficult life situations	126,449	127,674
7	14. Services to install foster family care in RA	69,475	71,746
8	15. Provision of financial assistance to school-age children in the RA orphanages	18,857	15,192
9	16. Provision of scholarships and one-time financial assistance to graduates of RA orphanages.	9,360	6,897
10	17. Provision of financial assistance packages to families where children have returned to their biological families	23,897	23,897
11	20. Provision of temporary accommodation services for homeless children	63,923	67,608
The changes in spending in 2012/2013 (increase or decrease) are connected with the changes in the number of program beneficiaries.			

(Note: Figures are estimates in dollars using a 1-406 dram exchange rate. End note.)

-- The provision of food to elementary school students was included in the 2012 RA government action plan as a priority. The aim of this program was to ensure stable food supply system for elementary school students which will give the opportunity to provide healthy food for all elementary schools students in the RA, improve their health and overcome poverty, contributing to the increase in their attendance and receiving general elementary education. During 2012, about 50,000 elementary students in about 700 schools from 7 regions received food. The school food programs are known as means for affordable education, social protection and long-term investment in human capital. These programs which indirectly increase the quality of education can be used for the benefit of the poorest and most vulnerable children. At the same time, these programs prioritize the policy and strategy of inclusive education, which make quality education more accessible for the most vulnerable.

-- In 2010, the “School Food” program of the Global Food Program restarted. The length of the program is 3 years—October 2010—October 2013. In 2010, the program was tested in two regions—Tavush and Gegharquniq, and food was provided to more than 12.5 thousand students in elementary schools. In 2011, the regions of Lori, Shirak, Aragatsotn, and Kotayq were also included in the program. The target of the program is the 50,000 children studying in about 700 elementary schools in 7 regions who have insufficient food supply. The food is provided during the 180 school days, 5 times a week, over a 3-year period.

ⁱ In RA the normative duration of education is 12 years through a 3 level system: 1) 1st level/ elementary/ 4 years 1-4 grades; 2) 2nd level /primary/ 5 years, 5-9 grades; 3) 3rd level/secondary/ 10-12 grades. Children who are six years old or will turn six before December 31 (including) of that year are admitted to first grade.

ⁱⁱ The draft will be sent to the RA Government [for approval] in the first ten days of February.