



**THE PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

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**General discussion on item 66: Promotion and protection of the rights of children
11 October 2019**

Mr. Chair,

We thank the Secretary-General, the Special Representatives and the Special Rapporteur for the reports submitted under this agenda item.

A healthy and productive society with a prosperous and sustainable future is one that guarantees children their fundamental rights and provides them with opportunities for lifelong progress. Every child needs quality education, healthcare designed for his/her unique needs, proper nutrition, safe and nurturing environment.

As we are approaching the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the best way to mark this important milestone is to accelerate the implementation of the landmark treaty. It is also necessary to speed up our collective efforts for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, as they are inextricably linked to human rights generally and the rights of children specifically.

We are encouraged that there have been ongoing improvements in the well-being of children around the world, including, among others, the enrolment of more children in school, the decrease in the under-five mortality rate and in the number of children suffering from stunting, as noted in the report of the Secretary-General on the “Follow-up to the outcome of the special session of the General Assembly on children”.

However, millions of children continue to face numerous challenges. It is unacceptable that the number of casualties caused by the killing or maiming of children in the context of armed conflict has dramatically increased. We regret that the basic tenets of international humanitarian law and human rights law are being disregarded by some State actors, including in our region.

Mr. Chair,

My country attaches great importance to the social protection, education and healthcare of children, especially the disadvantaged and vulnerable. The Government's consistent efforts to eradicate poverty and improve the well-being of the population have a positive impact on the lives of children and their families.

We believe that the foundation for lifelong success is laid in early childhood. During the 2018-2019 academic year, 75% of the 5-year-old children were enrolled in preschools. Currently, around 99,000 children across the country participate in preschool groups in 3,000 State public schools.

Children with special needs, refugees and IDPs are entitled to a free education at any state school or university, and free medical care. Graduates of state-run child-care institutions who do not have a place of residence receive apartments and social allowance, as well as full support of the State concerning rehabilitation and reintegration. The state of children in this category is monitored by the Ministry of Education, which collects and updates information every three months.

During the past year, over 80 projects addressing social issues of children from low-income families and children with disabilities have been carried out in the country. As a result, new day care centers have been built in 13 regions, community-based rehabilitation centers for children with disabilities have been opened in 22 regions, and in 15 other regions centers offering different social services to children have been established. Around 5,000 children benefited from these projects.

In 2017, we adopted the "State Programme for the Development of Inclusive Education for Persons with Disabilities 2018-2024" aiming at ensuring persons with disabilities access education on an equal basis as others and eliminating barriers to their full and meaningful inclusion.

As part of the support to the inclusive education in Azerbaijan, a study entitled "Knowledge-Attitudes-Practices towards Children with Disabilities" was carried out jointly by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan and UNICEF's Country Office last year. The aim of the study was to better understand society's attitudes about disabled children and offer recommendations to support the transition of the education system from a medical approach to a social/inclusive approach.

In June 2019, the EU and UNICEF launched a joint initiative to protect the rights of the most vulnerable children and young people. This project aims to engage civil society in delivering a broad range of support to vulnerable children through community-based organizations, modelling of services and programmes in the areas of social protection and inclusion, as well as the establishment of national standards across several sectors.

To conclude, Mr. Chair, let me emphasize that our main objective is to ensure that all children enjoy equal rights and have same opportunities.

I thank you.