



***THE EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN
TO THE KINGDOM OF BELGIUM
MISSIONS TO THE EUROPEAN UNION AND NATO***

*Address: Av. Franklin Roosevelt, 99, 1050
Brussels, Belgium*

*t. 322-6728844, f.322-6723946,
e-mail: press@uzbekistan.be*

Protection of children's interests and rights is a priority task

The Uzbekistan Trade Unions Federation jointly with the concerned ministries and agencies, under support from the International Labor Organization (ILO) at the republican and regional levels, a series of round table meetings were held dedicated to the International Day of Fighting against the Use of Child Labor.

It was noted at the said events that the matters related to securing the children's rights, protection of health and giving them high quality education have become the priority directions of the government policy since the first days independence in Uzbekistan. For instance, legal frameworks have been created for the national education system aimed at radically reforming the education sphere, establishment and development of the national system of personnel training at the level of developed countries.

In 1992, Uzbekistan ratified the ILO Rights of Children Convention which is one of the first officially adopted international documents. The country has adopted the Guarantees of Child's Rights. In all documents related to the child's interests, the issues of securing the children's rights have been set at the level of international standards.

The national model "A healthy mother means a healthy child" allowed to surround the fair part of the mankind and the rising generations with special care. Under its framework of implementation, the State Program of further strengthening the population's reproductive health, protection of mothers', children's and teen-agers health in Uzbekistan for the period of 2014-2018 has been approved. Thanks to this, the women of fertile age, children and teen-agers have been totally covered, birth of children with congenital defects has been prevented.

In 2014 alone, 6.5 million preschoolers and school pupils, students of vocational colleges and lyceums were subjected to comprehensive medical

examination which allows to detect disease at early stages and to successfully prevent them.

Uzbekistan conducts also free vaccination of all children at the age of two years which allowed to entirely eliminate such diseases as diphtheria, poliomyelitis and tetanus.

Today, 92 percent of the country's children meet the standards of the World Health Organization in terms of development parameters. The rating of countries made up by the International Organization "Save the children" showed that Uzbekistan holds the 9th position among the 161 countries where the health of the rising generation is best taken care of.

At the same time, the country closely focuses on giving the young generation high-quality education. For instance, education expenditures annually allocated from the public budget constitute between 10 and 12% of the GDP. About 60% of the total annual budget of the country is channeled to the support of the social sphere of which half to education.

It is worth to note that based on the passed "Education" and "The National Personnel Training Program" laws of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the unified continuous education system has been introduced in the country. The general secondary education and secondary special, vocational education with the total period education of 12 years is mandatory and free of charge.

The fundamental feature of the model implemented in the country consists in the fact that the after 9 years of education in the general education school, the pupils continue the next 3 years in specialized vocational colleges and academic lyceums each, along with study of general education disciplines, receive vocational training in 2-3 professions demanded in the labor market.

Beside this, there is a system of additional education introduced which includes musical and sports schools, schools of arts, "Perfect Generation" Centers, study groups of various aspects. They ensure that children are purposefully and usefully occupied during their leisure time.

In general, during the period of independent development, around 9,500 schools, 1,500 lyceums and colleges have been built and rebuilt which have been also provided with all the required modern equipment and text-books.

In 2015, 353 general education schools are constructed, rebuilt and overhauled as well as 147 vocational colleges and academic lyceums are overhauled totally to the sum of UZS 400 bn. Until 2020, it is planned to construct, rebuild and overhaul 500 general education schools of which 101 will be newly built schools as well as 810 vocational colleges and academic lyceums will be overhauled.

According to the results of the survey of development of human assets conducted in 2012 by the World Intellectual Property Organization and one of the largest international business-schools INSEAD, Uzbekistan was the 5th on the planet in terms of the level of development of the education system.

According to Article 77, the Labor Code, Republic of Uzbekistan, recruitment is allowed as from the age of sixteen. Under the “Education Law” of the Republic of Uzbekistan, a system has been established for education that specifies 12-year education for all children which precludes existence of underage children in the labor market.

It has to be noted that in 2008 Uzbekistan ratified Convention 182 of the International Labor Organization (ILO) on prohibition of urgent actions to eliminate the worst forms of child labor and ILO Convention 138 on the minimal age for employment which is successfully implemented in practice. In order to enhance the liability of business entities and individuals for breaches in the requirements of inadmissibility of use of underage children’s labor, as well as for a breach in the labor code in respect of persons who are below 18 years old, in 2009 году, the Law re: “Amending the Labor Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan on administrative liability due to improvement of the laws regarding protection of the rights of the underage children”.

In accordance with this, said Code has been supplemented with new regulations that set up stricter liability for officers and other persons for a breach in the laws of labor and safety of underage youth, for use of underage youth labor in work that may cause harm their health, put at risk their safety or morals as well as for administratively forcing underage youth to work.

In accordance with Article 241, the labor Code, Republic of Uzbekistan, it is forbidden to sue the labor of youth below eighteen years old in work with unfavorable working conditions, underground and other work that may harm the health, put at risk their safety or morals of this category of laborers. It is not allowed for persons below eighteen years old to lift and mover loads exceeding the eight limits established.

Taking adequate steps to effectively implement the ILO conventions is the important topic of collective agreements between employers and Trade Unions. The general agreement between the country’s Government, the Trade Unions Federation and the Chamber of Trade and Industry on socio-economic issues for 2014-2016 contains direct prescription on commitment of the parties to faithfully abide by the ILO conventions. Similar commitments have been included in the collective compacts at the sector, territorial and local levels. For instance, almost all collective agreements contain regulatory provisions on compliance with the minimal age for employment and on prevention of the worst forms of use of child labor.

The system-based activities carried out in this respect ensure prevention of use of child labor. In order to enhance the said activities under the guidance of the Uzbekistan Trade Unions Federation, a Coordination Board has been created for child labor issues. It is a standing public authority consisting of representatives of concerned ministries and agencies, Trade Unions, employers’ association, other public society institutions.

The main objective of the Coordination Board is to coordinate activities and to unite the efforts of government bodies and public society institutes aiming at implementation of the national policy of elimination of the worst forms of use of child labor and improvement of activities in this sphere.

Due to development of agriculture and private farming as well as of small businesses and self-employed entrepreneurship, the activities related to prevention of use child labor in the said spheres are growing. For instance, activities are carried on to build up the potentials of employers, farmers, staff members of ministries and agencies, hokims of cities and districts, heads of education institutions, chairpersons of territorial committees of women and rural citizens. At the initiative of the Trade Unions Federation, lessons dedicated to study of national and international labor standards, including ILO Conventions with a special focus on the Child and Forced Labor Conventions have been included in all the courses of improvement of skills of administrative officers. Specific attention is paid to information/entertainment activities: special booklets, methodology guide-books are published, parents' meetings are held which serve to enhance the awareness of both parents and their children.

In the process of its work, the Coordination Board specifically focus on monitoring prevention of use of child labor in various sectors of the economy. For example, cotton fields are monitored in autumn period, business at other times. Beside this, the Coordination Board holds its monthly meetings to address coordination and further improvement of activities in these directions.

Round table meetings at the republican level and in 14 regions of the country were conducted under the slogan: "No to child labor, yes to high-quality education!".