RESOLUTION

The first international conference in the series of conferences «Safe Belarus for Children»

«Development of child protection system: National and international experience»

The first international conference «Development of child protection system: National and international experience» in the series of conferences «Safe Belarus for Children» was held in Minsk on 21-23, April, 2010. The conference was held at the initiative of INGO «Ponimanie» under the auspices of the U.S. Embassy Small Grants in Minsk and The Department of Humanitarian Affairs of the Office of the President of the Republic of Belarus.

More than 160 people took part in the conference.

Conference participants: the representatives of the House of Representatives of the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus, state administration, leaders of organizations; state, oblast and regional educational authorities; health care, social welfare, law enforcement and prosecution representatives; as well as the leaders and representatives of public organizations, higher educational establishments and mass media. International experts from Great Britain, the USA, Sweden, India, Lithuania and Ukraine, as well as the representatives of accredited in Belarus diplomatic bodies.

Conference participants:

conducted a situational analysis in the sphere of child abuse;

considered social, pedagogical, medical and legal aspects of creating an actual model of prevention of child abuse;

were introduces to medical, psychological, social and pedagogical, legal technologies of prevention, investigation, rehabilitation and reintegration of abused children;

were introduced to international and national mechanisms of child protection;

formulated supplements to the documents representing Belarus state policy in the sphere of prevention of child abuse.

In the course of discussion the following points were highlighted:

The ensuring of children’s rights and freedoms, protection of children from criminal offence and involvement in illegal activities as the priority line of the domestic policy.
The problem of child abuse has become a burning issue for many societies. The threats that children of different ages face become large-scale and acute.

Failure of the society to discuss the problem of child abuse contributes to the prevalence of this problem. The professional community lacks the necessary technologies of prevention of child abuse and rendering assistance to abused children.

The problem of child abuse is a burning issue for the Republic of Belarus. 82 under-age persons were killed in 2009, including 54 people under 14 years old, 9 newly-born infants; 104 persons were injured (including 48 persons under 14 years old).

The prevalence of sexual abuse arouses anxiety (270 sex offences were committed in 2009 as compared to 248 in 2008). The victim’s intention to conceal the crime accounts for high latency of the problem.

Crimes related to child trafficking for sexual exploitation and child pornography are of particular concern, which constitute blatant violations of child rights and freedoms. Despite the fact that such facts are rare in the Republic of Belarus, the state and civil society takes reasonable measures to prevent these threats.

Family violence is still a burning issue for many countries. Aggression towards close and weak, especially women and children, can not be justified; it does not recognize political and geographical boundaries.

The present date research on violence against children and neglect are monodisciplinary and do not give a comprehensive picture of types, forms and prevalence of maltreatment in the Republic of Belarus.

The strategy and models of combating child abuse include crime prevention, strengthening of criminal responsibility for crimes against under-age persons, ensuring control over the perpetrators of crimes and discharge from place of imprisonment, as well as creation of complex compensatory and rehabilitation measures for child victims. Strategy and models of implementation require modification and development of legislative, normative and law enforcement framework.

Guided by the above-listed,

Keeping in mind the UN CRC and the provisions of the national policy and legislation, which ensure comprehensive protection of children from all forms of humiliation, exploitation and violence,

Supporting the efforts of national Government, professional community and the civil society of the Republic of Belarus in the case of ensuring the realization of the right of the child to live in the society free from all forms of abuse,

Noting the considerable achievements of the Republic of Belarus in the field of child protection and observing child rights,
Taking into account the necessity to strengthen interagency and intersectoral cooperation in order to protect children from violence, neglect and other forms of maltreatment,

**Conference participants decide:**

- to inform the state agencies, national and international community on the results of the conference and the contents of the Resolution adjusted;
- to recommend the stakeholders to undertake strict measures to eliminate all forms of child abuse;
- to suggest the stakeholders to undertake measures to create effective system of early child abuse prevention which includes: development and broadening of the legal education, involvement of the mass media in the popularization of the preventive measures of combating child abuse and neglect;
- to recommend the higher educational establishments of postgraduate studies (social worker, social pedagogue, pedagogue –psychologist, investigator, forensic criminalist) to include into the curricula a special course of prevention of child abuse and rendering rehabilitation and remedial help to abused children;
- to recommend the oblast and regional executive committees, regional and city administrations to introduce child friendly investigation rooms in order to diminish traumatic psychological factors and investigation outcomes;
- to recommend state republican authorities to develop and adopt a system of regular research in the field of observance of child’s right to security and development in order to obtain relevant and reliable information;
- to recommend state republican authorities to promote the creation of a unified state statistical database on child abuse, including data on households, which were marked by acts of violence;
- to recommend Minsk, oblast and regional executive authorities to use all available opportunities in the community such as a public educational institutions, social and educational institutions, public health, welfare, internal affairs, public associations working in this direction, as well as mass media for combating violence against children;
- to recommend state republican authorities; Minsk, oblast and regional executive authorities to create conditions for increasing the number of public associations working in the field of child protection and create effective mechanisms of enabling NGOs to work on preventing child abuse, identifying cases of child abuse and rehabilitation activities with abused children;
- to recommend mass media not to cover information that depicts violence and cruelty;
to recommend public associations, professional groups, scientific communities, mass media to hold a public discussion and develop a code of ethics in the sphere of prevention of child abuse and rendering assistance to child victims;

to apply to the Ministry of Information with a request for an "open letter" to mass media with a request for active participation in combating and preventing child abuse by active and ethic news coverage;

to recommend Belarusian public associations to initiate and/or strengthen the cooperation with the executive authorities, the government at all levels, mass media in order to develop and adopt effective measures child protection and prevention of child abuse;

to encourage all stakeholders to take «The strategy of prevention of child abuse and rendering direct assistance to child victims» as a basis for prevention of child abuse that was developed by INGO “Ponimanie”, based upon recommendations of the Council of Europe Policy guidelines on integrated national strategies for the protection of children from violence, and has been approved during public debate in the regions of Belarus;

to suggest the state republican authorities to include the provisions of the Strategy into the Presidential Program «Children of Belarus» for 2011 – 2015 under the condition of INGO «Ponimanie’s» co-implementation and co-financing;

Conference participants express confidence that joining of common efforts of state and civil society for the purpose of realization of the above mentioned provisions that aim at child protection will give us an opportunity to build and develop Belarus safe for its young citizens.

The Chairman of the Organizing Committee,

The Chairman of the Scientific Committee,

The Head of the Board of Directors, Executive Director INGO «Ponimanie», International Consultant on Child Rights' Education and Protection

Dean of psychology, social and educational work department of the educational institution «Academy of postgraduate studies», PhD, Professor

____________________A. Makhanko

23.04.2010

______________________V. Yanchuk

Minsk, Belarus