

League of Arab States
Secretariat-General
Administration of Family, Women & Childhood
Childhood Division

Draft
Arab Action Plan on Childhood
(Ten-Year Plan)

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Introduction:

1. The Draft Arab Action Plan on Childhood is presented for the benefit sake of children for the second decade 2004-2014 in light of the new international priorities that were endorsed after the Extraordinary Session of the United Nations General Assembly for the benefit of children that was held in New York in May 2002. This took place ten years after the enactment of the Children's Rights Agreement and convening the first International Summit Conference for Children, which endorsed the international declaration and actionplan for the survival, protection and growth of children for the ten years 1990-2000.
2. This project is also presented in light of Arab initiatives represented in the issuance of numerous Arab charters and agreements, foremost of which are the Arab Charter for Children's Rights (1983), the Arab Plan for Childhood (1992), the Arab Plan for Children's Culture (1993), and the Arab Declaration on the Family's Rights (1994).
3. Within this framework, and in supplementing Arab efforts that have been exerted particularly over the last two decades of the 20th Century to improve the status of children, especially in the areas of reducing mortality rates among children under five, raising vaccination coverage rates, increasing rates of enrollment in basic education, and the serious approach towards achieving gender equality in these areas; and
4. In reiterating the Arab commitment to accomplish what was not accomplished under the principles and objectives stipulated in the Children's Rights Agreement that was issued by the United Nations on November 29, 1989; and
5. In pursuance of the resolution adopted by the Council of the Arab League that was held at the summit level (239 – Beirut / March 2002); which called for considering:
 - ◆ The Arab Framework for Children's Rights, issued by the Council of the Arab League at the summit level (Amman/March 2001);
 - ◆ The Cairo Declaration for Activating Joint Arab Action Mechanisms "Towards an Arab World Fit for Childhood" issued by the high-level Arab Conference on Children's Rights (Cairo/July 2001);

Commitments that formulate frameworks for abiding by these rights, for the sake of improving the status of Arab children and underscoring their right to survival, growth and protection:

We, the participants in the third high-level Arab Conference held in Tunisia, call for considering:

This “Arab Action Plan on Childhood” a fundamental step, through which the Arab states renew their commitment towards children, stressing their ability to embrace their children and their youth and to provide them with all forms of protection and health, educational and social services through the various laws and mechanisms in effect, whether in the provisions or in reality, as well as considering it a document that complements the two mentioned documents, being a set of guidelines for national plans and mechanisms to be supported by regional mechanisms, the implementation of which must take into consideration the need for the various child-related policies, programs and mechanisms for the next ten years to be in line with the general principles stated in the Children’s Rights Agreement, particularly serving the best interest of children, non-discrimination among children, the children’s right to survive and grow, respect for children’s ideas, and their right to active participation in the formulation of programs and decisions related to their status and in their implementation

National plans need to be realistic and specific with timelines specified by each state in accordance with its circumstances and capabilities. National monitoring and evaluation systems should be established, allowing for the assessment of objectives achieved in the half decade covered by the Plan, and objectives through the end of the decade, abiding by unified principles and criteria - to be agreed upon - so as to allow for the continued monitoring and evaluation – on the Arab level - in order to follow up on levels of Arab performance by all Member States.

General Principles:

1. The need to adopt an Arab strategy for comprehensive action for the benefit of children for the next ten years, to enable Arab countries and communities to undertake the great challenge facing them of stepping into the 21st Century upon solid social, economic, and cultural bases that fulfill the aspirations of all human societies towards justice, democracy, and equality in their most noble meanings.
2. The contribution of all of the society's institutions in enabling the family to perform its duties and responsibilities towards children, being the first fundamental unit responsible for raising children so that they grow in a safe and stable family environment, and the continuous work towards materializing the principle of basic and joint responsibility of the parents in raising the child and fulfilling his needs for growth, in the best manner.
3. The expansion of implementation measures from the family and children themselves to all levels of responsibility in the state, and outwards to the international level, alongside the encouragement of partnership with civil society institutions in the area of formulating and implementing national action plans for children for the next ten years, in accordance with the diverse and ever-changing needs of childhood in Arab countries.
4. Greater pursuit towards ensuring a wide-scale participation by adolescents, males and females together, and ensuring their effective participation in the formulation and implementation of policies and programs related to them, which entails the removal of restrictions that bind the youth and the adolescents and their potential, and prevent them from contributing to the creative dialogue with others, and which qualifies our Arab societies to achieve self realization qualitatively and quantitatively in order to guarantee for themselves, permanently and continuously, survival as a living historical entity.
5. Intensification of the awareness of children's rights at the level of families, schools, universities, various media establishments, popular and youth bodies, professional networks and unions, and the variety of people involved with and working with or for children, as well as working towards social mobilization and the promotion of the culture of children's rights through effective and appropriate means, with the aim of activating and defending these rights within a framework that guarantees the required effectiveness of legal mechanisms on the ground and places them in a central position, in terms of their comprehensiveness, connectivity and coordination, within the human rights formula.
6. Support and backing childhood-related civil society institutions and the private sector, "institutions and individuals", and encouraging them to be synonyms and partners in providing childhood services, programs and projects, as well as encouraging businessmen and investors to contribute to industries related to childhood needs and to develop their capabilities and creativity.

7. Endeavoring to overcome the negative impact of globalization and associating with its positive outcomes, the fruits of which are reaped by only 20% of the wealthiest world countries, and by only 20% of the wealthiest population of Third World Countries.
8. Endeavoring to mitigate foreign debt burdens, to curb poverty and address its consequences, and to mobilize resources with all partners to improve conditions for children and their families.
9. Stressing the effective role of governments in social action, the expenditure required in this area, and the commitment to implement the 20/20 initiative that states the allocation of not less than 20% of national budgets for social expenditure, and the allocation of not less than 20% of international assistance for child-oriented services.
10. Taking into consideration the demographic dimension in development plans, setting economic and social policies to alleviate acute poverty levels and the acute class difference, and working towards ecological and urban development of poor areas, particularly in the vicinity of cities, rural areas and Bedouin areas, in a manner that corresponds to the obligatory environmental and health requirements.
11. Increasing budgets allocated for the support of childhood programs and projects that address children's rights in health, social, educational, cultural, environmental and information areas to the maximum limit from budgets allocated for social expenditure, and directing them towards projects and programs for activating children's rights in these areas.
12. Designing projects and programs in the field of child care, protection and development and implementing them at the national level, giving them priority in fiscal budgets, providing specialized technical cadres for them, and considering them an integral part of development plans and a pivotal aspect of sustainable human development.
13. Establishing national childhood information centers or databases and developing existing ones, so that they undertake the collection and documentation of data, conduct, disseminate and exchange specialized researches and studies in all areas related to the status quo and needs of childhood and to address their problems. In this field, these centers shall cooperate with similar Arab and international centers.
14. Creating the necessary mechanisms - and developing existing ones - of national childhood councils and bodies, underlining their responsibility in planning and follow-up in all areas related to children's rights, and coordinating governmental and non-governmental efforts.

15. Formulating a children's law on the basis of the "Model Comprehensive Legislative Guide for the Rights of Arab Children", that was issued by the League of Arab States and adopted by the Council of Arab Ministers of Justice, and making the necessary arrangement for enacting this law.
16. Defining the characteristics and standards of qualifications and expertise required for those working in the various areas of childhood and working towards raising their efficiency through continuous training.
17. Working towards the implementation of pilot initiatives related to child protection, such as child-friendly hospitals, child-friendly courts, appointing a state observer for children's rights, creating a committee for children's rights on legislative (representative) or consultative councils, and other such pilot initiatives that have been accomplished at Arab and international levels.

Draft Arab Action Plan on Childhood National Tasks

This plan aims at activating children's rights with due regard to:

- ◆ That children's rights must include all children without discrimination, particularly that which is based on gender discrimination between girls and boys, on discrimination between children in rural areas and urban areas, between rich and poor, between normal children and those with disabilities.
- ◆ That the sound growth and development of children is achieved through:
 - The integration of these rights, particularly in health care, sound early childhood, good quality education, the participation of all children, especially adolescents – the youth – in all aspects of social life, and the protection from all forms of dangers, abuse and exploitation; and
 - The continuity of these rights, from pregnancy and birth, to early childhood and through completing the age of eighteen.
- ◆

And this is achieved via means and measures that guide Member States in formulating their national plans in accordance with the circumstances, capabilities and legislations of each State.

Objectives and Measures

First: Children's Health and the Right of Every Child to a Sound Early Childhood

To activate the right of every male and female child to survive, live, obtain health care a balanced nutrition, and a safe and healthy environment, a sound early childhood, safe motherhood, spiritual, emotional and social development and a proper upbringing and education, and

In the light of the Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses (IMCI), whose aims are pursued by World Health Organization,

The Plan calls for adopting the following measures and procedures:

A. Reducing mortality and morbidity rates among children under five:

1. Continuing the reduction of morbidity rates and mortality rates among infants, newborns and children under five, caused by acute respiratory diseases by no less than one third, and diarrhea, malaria, measles, tuberculosis and malnutrition by no less than half by the year 2010.
2. Continuing the reduction of postpartum morbidity and mortality rates of mothers by no less than one third by the year 2010.
3. Completely eradicating polio, officially, by the year 2005.
4. Eradicating disorders resulting from Iodine deficiency - by adding Iodine to table salt - by the year 2005, and disorders resulting from Vitamin A deficiency and anemia, inclusive of Iron, by the year 2010, as well as Working towards the reduction of anemia resulting from Iron deficiency in mothers and children by adding essential elements such as Iron and salts o foodstuff.
5. Limiting children's infliction with epidemic and fatal diseases, such as AIDS and hepatitis, and setting policies that ensure preventative measures against them by the year 2005.
6. Reducing acute and moderate malnutrition rates among children under five, and reducing low birth weight rates by at least one third of the current rate by the year 2010.

B. Providing high-quality health services and improving the family and society's practices related to children's health

7. Spreading and promoting pre-marital medical checkup offices to ensure that both parents are healthy, and consequently the health of the children.
8. Spreading and promoting birth registration offices in all areas to ensure the registration of all children.
9. Fully acknowledging the right of all children, including neglected children and children of unknown parentage, to have a first name and a family name and the remaining identity aspects, the right to acquire a nationality, and, as much as possible, the right to know his parents and receive their care.
10. Eliminating all forms of discrimination among children, including banning discrimination on the basis of origin of birth, and adopting positive measures to achieve actual equality among all children in a tangible and effective manner.
11. Continuing progress in comprehensive vaccination programs for children under one year old and ensuring that vaccination rates for children under five is not less than 90% by the middle of the ten-year Plan, particularly vaccination against diphtheria, whooping cough measles, tuberculosis, and pneumonia, and all vaccinations in line with health developments and requirements, as well as maintaining the rise of vaccination levels against tetanus for women in child-bearing age, and promoting the advantages of new and improved serums and preventive health activities to include all children in all areas.
12. Providing physical and mental health care for mothers, the health of the mother being an integral part of the child's health, strengthening safe motherhood services, reproductive health services and birth-spacing, and providing basic pre-natal and post-natal health care for mothers and newborns.
13. Encouraging and supporting exclusive breastfeeding for newborns up until the age of six months, while using safe supplementary foodstuff up until the age of two years.
14. Promoting nutrition awareness and raising awareness among mothers about the importance of balanced diets during pregnancy and breastfeeding.
15. Endeavoring to increase food production and providing support services necessary to guarantee food security for poor families, and preparing a strategy to improve the food status and the fair distribution of food among families.
16. Endeavoring to abolish all social practices that are harmful to children's health, particularly to female children, such as circumcision and early

marriages, and designing educational programs and campaigns for this purpose.

17. Providing basic health services to everyone, qualifying health care management cadres, and working towards developing the infrastructure of these managements.
18. Establishing a comprehensive health insurance scheme for all children, including those with special needs, and implementing it in or outside schools, and in nursing institutions, workshops and vocational training centers.
19. Consolidating the role of “school health” and developing its facilities, as well as the continuously training - before and during employment – its working team of the general practitioner, the psychiatrist and the social worker, to enable it to carry out its responsibilities of identifying diseases, adopting the necessary measures to limit their spread among students, linking the school environment with the family environment, enhancing the environmental and mental health, providing assistance to children with psychological disorders, discovering harmful behaviors, such as smoking and drug abuse, before it develops into addiction, carrying out health, environmental and nutritional education for school children and giving them knowledge and instilling in them sound behavioral patterns in those fields.
20. Curbing disability rates, particularly mental disability, by undertaking the preemptive measures of pre-marital medical checkup, promoting awareness about disability causes, providing health care for mothers during pregnancy and delivery, endeavoring to discover and treat disability cases in embryonic stages, early detection of disability cases after birth, and by keeping abreast with new scientific developments and discoveries in this area.
21. Supporting the various programs and mechanisms necessary to enable the physically or mentally disabled child to lead a full life and under conditions that preserve his dignity, strengthen his self-reliance and prepare him for actual participation in society, as well as promoting the importance of society-based therapy and rehabilitation for those with special needs, and encouraging popular societies in this field and supporting their capabilities.
22. Supporting precautionary measures against HIV infections (AIDS), and undertaking appropriate measures to improve the health media and education concerning this virus for all people in general and for children in particular.

23. Providing health care for children under difficult circumstances, during natural catastrophes, wars and famines, and for working children, homeless children and orphans.
24. Preventing discrimination in benefiting from all areas of health care and health indicators, be it on the basis of region, sex or social class.
25. Working towards curbing road accidents, domestic accidents, school and playground accidents, and raising awareness about their harmful consequences.
26. Promoting comprehensive and specialized health awareness with regard to the health of mothers and children, via schools, the various media outlets and available communication channels.
27. Raising awareness about the dangers of health hazardous habits, such as smoking, drugs and alcoholic beverages that lead to addiction.
28. Increasing health education media programs for children, and focusing on sound patterns of life and growth and on positive behavior leading to better health for all.

C. Providing a safe healthy environment:

29. Reducing the number of people deprived of healthy utilities and cheap and safe potable drinking water, and generalizing sanitary drainage networks by no less than one third by the year 2010.
30. Endeavoring to provide a clean and safe environment and an appropriate healthy abode, especially for poor families, and providing more gardens and parks, particularly for the children of those families.
31. Prohibiting the burial of nuclear and dangerous industrial waste, and activating national, Arab and international control systems that are responsible for this issue.
32. Setting and applying legislative laws necessary for curbing pollution of natural resources by chemical, biological and physical pollutants.
33. Treating depositories from factories and hospitals, solid waste, chemical insecticides and car exhaust in a safe manner.
34. Adding environmental education topics to school curricula and extra-curricula in all school stages and to the curricula of education faculties.

35. Consolidating governmental and non-governmental efforts to provide environmental awareness and education programs for all.
36. Intensifying environmental information via all types of media outlets, informing people about importance of preserving natural and water resources, and raising awareness about the dangers of wrong behavior leading to the exhaustion of these resources.
37. Encouraging studies and researches on environmental pollutants, and disseminating their results about the harms caused by such pollutants to schools, centers and organizations working in the area of childhood.

D. Strengthening early childhood services:

38. Supporting and strengthening health care service for mothers, strengthening safe motherhood services and reproductive health, and requiring delivery to in hospitals or well-equipped health units, for free or at the least possible cost.
39. Extending the period of mother care for children (breastfeeding) to not less than six months if the mother is working, and granting her appropriate facilities and exemptions until the child is two years old, as well as intensifying programs to educate mothers about the importance of breastfeeding.
40. Endeavoring to formulate qualified and trained cadres of female health attendants (aides) to assist and guide mothers, and to protect babies, health and family-wise and socially until they reach the age of three.
41. Expanding awareness programs for guardians to include the proper ways of handling children, and to train them on methods of psychological care, on the principles of proper upbringing, on the characteristics of each stage of the child's growth and maturity and the needs of every stage, as well as educating them about the importance of establishing good close relations with the children, in addition to expanding into the area of publishing and circulating simplified guides that address the various problems of children.
42. Raising awareness among men to help mothers in caring for children and in carrying the burden of responsibility in the household and in the family life.
43. Providing and developing childhood care and development institutions, expanding into the area of establishing day-care centers or nurseries and kindergartens, and working towards increasing enrollment rates at low prices, as well as improving the quality of existing ones.

44. Supporting the cooperation between the family and the kindergarten to grant the child opportunities to express his inherent creative abilities, and consolidating their efforts to stimulate and release these abilities, to encourage their activities, to develop the values and objectives for these activities, and to emphasize their positive tendencies.
45. Raising family awareness through the various media outlets, and designating radio and television programs to educate people about the importance of early childhood, the proper upbringing methods that are capable of shaping a sound personality for the child without resorting to physical or psychological violence, the methods of instilling values, knowledge and skills in him and raising him on moral values, and raising the family and society's awareness about maternal duties, children's rights and sources of help and assistance for children in difficult circumstances.
46. Educating the family and the society about children's rights to play, recreation and entertainment, about the importance of the role of play activities in the child's upbringing in terms of fulfilling his psychological and physical needs, and stressing the need to avoid violence in these play activities.
47. Endeavoring to provide toys on the market and in kindergartens, and promoting and making available "children's play libraries" in kindergartens, schools, clubs and children's parks, as well as in institutions for children with special needs.
48. Encouraging national and private sector investment in the field of manufacturing toys and dolls and producing cartoon films, and providing investors with tax facilitations in this field in order to avoid depending on imported products, whose aspects, concepts and values contradict Arab values and culture, as well as encouraging the creation of an Arab cartoon character that would be popular with Arab children, and making it the focus of children's tales, plays and songs, so that it would replace Western cartoon characters, in addition to giving attention to educational and learning games that help children to focus, to contemplate, to solve problems, and to create, in addition to enjoying the game.
49. Expanding into the area of allocating safe areas appropriate for children play in public parks, equipping them with equipment and tools suitable for the various age groups.

Second: Good Quality Education

To activate the right of every male and female child to good-quality basic education, and

In implementation of all recommendations issued by Arab and international conferences on education, and

In taking into consideration the problems and obstacles, stated in the Regional Report that was prepared by the UNESCO's Regional Office for Education in the Arab countries, on the evaluation of "Education for All" for the year 2000, from which education in most Arab countries suffer, and

In the concern to ensure that all children in the Arab countries receive excellent education, including pre-school education, in a manner that develops their capabilities and raises them to the maximum; and

In response to the spirit of the age, which is characterized by scientific and technological revolution, and which emphasizes concepts of self-learning and continuous education for life, and

In departing from the point that education is a societal concern that requires the concerted efforts of all official and popular institutions to meet its requirements, including the development of the school and making it an ideal tool for promoting values of tolerance and the culture of human rights,

The Plan aims at promoting good-quality education and calls for adopting the following procedures and measures:

A. Pre-school Education:

1. Expanding and developing pre-school education in early childhood, so as to absorb at least 50% of the children by the middle of the ten-year Plan, and 90% by the of the Plan.
2. Considering early childhood part of compulsory official educational stages, with its own plans, budgets and cadres.
3. Requiring organizations and institutions, where there is a large number of mothers, to establish nurseries and kindergartens to absorb the children of working women and the children of its surrounding local community, while giving adequate attention to poor, rural and remote areas.

4. Preparing qualified and trained female teachers and supervisors for this stage, capable of fulfilling the needs of children at this early age, and discovering and developing their capacities and skills.
5. Developing early childhood institutions, in terms of buildings, equipment, curricula, educational material, methods and means, so that they be safe environments guaranteeing the children good care and health, a feeling of love and security, the ability to learn and to release of abilities and skills.
6. Raising the awareness of guardians regarding the importance of this stage, and encouraging their participation with the educational institution on regular basis in programs designed to develop children's senses, abilities and creativity.
7. Raising awareness of the importance of play in the children's education and physical, mental and emotional growth, and in the development of their abilities and aptitudes, and of the importance of play activities in sound upbringing, through wide-scale awareness programs with the participation of the family in the institutional programs.
8. Developing children's literature and books in this stage, in terms of content, context, layout, illustrations, the use of simple Arab language, and varying the levels of presentation and difficulty to develop the child's love for books and for reading.

B. Basic Education

In view of the fact that illiteracy, the loss of educational opportunities and turning to other interests, all begin with deprivation of basic education, the Plan aims to seriously seek to absorb all children who are within the age of basic education through the following procedures and measures.

1. Considering elementary education as compulsory, depriving children of which would entail penalties, provided that it remains free and of no unexpected or indirect expenses.
2. Expanding in establishing basic education schools in all residential complexes, and closing the gap between the ratio of establishing schools and the increasing birth rates, so that the percentage of those deprived of basic education due to school shortages would decline to 60% by the middle of the ten-year Plan, to reach 100% by the end of the ten-year Plan for both males and females.
3. Increasing the percentage of female teachers in the elementary education level in view of the children's needs at this age to motherly attention, and to

instigate female children enrollment in education, particularly in remote areas.

4. Considering the general educational plan and providing free education the responsibility of the state, as well as encouraging investment in private elementary education to ease the state's burden.
5. Preparing programs to support needy families within a framework of social solidarity, and encouraging investment in small projects to facilitate the absorption of all children of both sexes in schools, and ensuring their continued enrollment, including children of ethnic minorities, street children, working children, refugees, those afflicted with crises, and those placed in correctional facilities.
6. Tackling the problem of dropping out from basic education at the individual level of each child, so that it becomes one of the responsibilities of each of the social worker and the psychological specialist in the school to study and follow-up each dropout case, separately, and to design solutions that address the economic, social or educational causes of the dropout, in order to eradicate the phenomenon of reverting to illiteracy and to decrease the waste of human, social and economic capabilities.
7. Providing informal programs through various means to obtain basic education opportunities for those who missed such opportunities, supplying beneficiaries of these programs with books, tools and different facilities, free of charge, and holding contests and giving awards and privileges in cases of success, and pursuing formal and informal education.
8. Expanding community schools and single-class schools in far-reached and remote areas, with the participation of local bodies and administrations and the contribution of the society's non-governmental organizations.
9. Setting unified criteria for passing and succeeding in the basic education stage, to be applied in all public and private educational systems and institutions, in a manner that facilitates the transfer from one system to another one, or adopting the educational results of one system to continue following stages in another system.
10. Providing educational, psychological and social guiding services – through school health program – to help students with educational, behavioral, psychological and social problems.

C. Secondary Education

Secondary education corresponds to the age stages of maturity, and requires special care in preparing and qualifying students, either for a particular vocation through specialized institutes and centers, or for university education and developing his abilities towards positive and effective participation in public life. This requires guaranteeing to meet the educational and training needs of all students in the adolescent age, by benefiting from suitable educational and vocational programs to help them earn sustainable means of living, seeking to provide secondary education to all in a gradual manner, and working towards linking the general secondary education to vocational and technical education.

This is why the Plan calls for adopting the following measures and procedures:

1. Diversifying and branching out secondary education, and linking it with employment and development needs, establishing integrated or comprehensive secondary schools encompassing, under one school roof, literary, social, economic, commercial, scientific and technical subjects out of the principle of “vocalizing” academic education and “generalizing” technical and vocational education. In other words, making secondary education general and providing flexibility for transferring among subjects in such a manner as to respond to the needs of students.
2. Expanding the establishment of vocational schools and vocational training centers, developing their programs, and linking them to the needs of students, the local community, and the requirements of the labor market, to enable the youth to acquire skills needed for productive work.
3. Encouraging productive work in schools, by linking industrial, agricultural and commercial institutions with educational institutions, and enhancing their role in the formulation of the educational programs objectives, purposes and content, and assuming part of the responsibility in their administration, implementation, evaluation and finance.
4. Resorting to the system of shifts between studying and working, to provide room for the student to learn a vocation at the worksite at the hands of a vocational, professional or trade instructor (apprenticeship) for some time and return to regular school studies other times, and obtain certified qualifications and certificates.
5. Strengthening existing informal education programs and paying attention to the development of their quality, eliminating the barriers that stand between them and formal education and achieving integration between them, Providing educational and training programs of varied levels and fields for males and females alike within a framework of continuous education, from the cradle to the grave, that is characterized by flexibility and that responds to students needs and the evolving needs of society, the labor market, and the rapid technological advancement.

6. Entrenching the principle of “self-learning”, to enable students to continue education and training throughout their lives, and facing up to the rapid development in labor and other fields facilitating means of distant learning and education through educational and training packages that contain reading material and audio and audio-visual recordings or through radio and television and taking advantage of modern information and communication technologies that enable learning via computers, CDs, Internet, E-mail, etc.
7. Providing guidance and consultative services to help students choose the education or vocation that suits their capabilities and abilities, and to solve their problems as related to adolescence.

D. Education for Girls

In view of the gender gap in education in the Arab World and the lacking participation of women in public life, it is necessary to accord much more attention in the Plan to the education of girls, in order to be able to achieve the objective of enrolling 50% of girls in basic education by the middle of the ten-year Plan, to achieve gender equality in this education by the end of the ten-year Plan that would be in line with the population growth in each country – in accordance with the Dakar action framework 2000. The Plan calls for adopting the following measures and procedures:

1. Non-discrimination between males and females in obtaining education opportunities.
2. Endeavoring to provide girls with schools in safe areas and at short distances from residential areas.
3. Reducing school expenses and other incidental expenses, such as the cost of uniforms, meals and school transportation.
4. Providing in-cash and monetary assistance to needy girls, such as exempting them from paying fees, providing them with books, school clothes and stationary for free, and providing them with meals and school grants and food supplies for their families, and other measures that proved in many countries to encourage girls to enroll in and stay in schools and informal programs.
5. Combating girls labor at the age parallel to basic education and providing social, educational and health care for working girls.
6. Enacting legislations that incriminate the deprivation of girls from basic education opportunities.

7. Providing sufficient room space in schools and the qualified female teachers, particularly in rural areas, to facilitate absorbing girls in the stage of basic education.
8. Moving towards productive education in schools, leading to acquiring girls with skills that would constitute feasible rewards for them to continue the education.
9. Including in school curricula and girls' education programs awareness lessons about the importance of education, girls' rights to education and gender equality, and introducing models of successful and pioneering women.
10. Expanding in cultural, social and service activities in girls' schools and the participation of families in creating a pro-girls education community.
11. Adding to girls' education curricula information technology, modern communications and scientific subjects alongside female skills programs, such as sewing, tailoring, embroidery, healthy cooking and family-and childcare skills and knowledge.
12. Raising awareness through the media about the importance of girls' education on a wide scale, and refuting backward ideas, traditions and anti-girls' education social trends.
13. Expanding in programs of granting incentives and awards to girls who distinguish themselves in school performance and activities, and developing the families and local involvement in honoring distinguished girls.
14. Encouraging popular and charitable bodies and organizations to contribute to the establishment of girls' schools.
15. Encouraging the establishment of single-class schools for girls in remote areas and in areas with low population density.

Qualitative Development of Education:

E. The Development of the Environment and Methods of Education

1. Providing safe and healthy education environments that ensure protection from harm, violence and discrimination, underscore values of respect, tolerance and understanding of others, and be facilitative of learning with a content of advanced curricula that meet the needs of children and the

requirements of a changing society, of rich educational stimulants that bring out their energies, attract them to school and prompt them to stay in school, as well as help them learn well, develop their talents and aptitudes, and enable them to improve their lives and develop their communities.

2. Developing and diversifying teaching modes and methods by lessening the method of indoctrination and giving more room to interactive methods based on dialogue, discussion, problem-solving methods, practical methods and case studies that allow children to actively participate, to develop their mental abilities, their scientific and critical abilities, their creative energies, and their inventive abilities, as well as give them self-learning skills so they become capable of developing themselves in the future and adapting to novelties.
3. Improving evaluation methods and working on diversifying them by lessening questions that focus on memorizing information, as well as using the help of methods that measure IQ levels, aptitudes, talents, skills and the desirable tendencies and values.
4. Giving more attention to curricula of science and mathematics, and expanding in the establishment of science clubs and centers for talented and gifted children, in rural and urban areas alike and in cooperation with all sectors of the society.
5. Developing the value and social contents of school textbooks, in order to stress and promote contemporary values related to human rights, and abolish forms of bias, bigotry and discrimination on the basis of gender or race.
6. Setting a monitoring and follow-up system to make education programs in line with these values and principles.

F. The Teacher

1. Enhancing teachers' motivation and attracting exceptional people to the teaching profession, by improving the economic conditions of teachers, strengthening their social status, improving their satisfaction level of the profession, providing incentives to outstanding teachers to encourage them to innovate and create, and improving their school job conditions.
2. Developing the criteria for accepting student-to-be-teachers and selecting them from education faculties and teachers' institutes, in terms of fulfilling the suitable personal characteristics and the good academic education.

3. Preparing teachers prior to employment for all stages of education with university education qualification suitable for each category, and continuing their training during employment, obligatorily and periodically, to raise their professional efficiency.
4. Reconsidering teachers' pre-employment preparation curricula and during-employment training programs, using active teaching methods in their preparation and training to develop their abilities to think, analyze, criticize, research, and innovate, and to give them self-learning skills and interactive learning methods, as well as training them on the use of the modern information technology and communications, in view of what such technology can provide to them in terms of self-learning capabilities, so that they are able to employ these methods and means with their students.
5. Subjecting teachers to evaluation by all bodies concerned (educational inspectors, administrators, guardians, local authorities, the students themselves, etc) and taking this into consideration when promoting them and renewing their licenses, in order to maintain the quality of education.
6. Improving educational and school administration systems decision-making mechanisms and accountability procedures, and expanding the participation of teachers and the community in the planning, the execution, the follow-up and the evaluation of the educational process.

G. Creative Education

Education in the Arab World continues to depend at large on indoctrination and memory activation and organization, and on regarding the retaining of a specific volume of given information as the main requirement of the educational plan. However, the accelerated development of knowledge and growth of skills of innovation and creativity and the efficient use, rather than outcome, of teaching methods, all pose a serious challenge for the Arab civilization, which is required to keep up with the new variables of civilization by turning to creative education that involves the development and upgrading of a student's ability, not only to absorb a ready-made piece of information, but also to obtain it, develop it and discover ways of using it, and being sensitive to different problems. Therefore, education development plans must encompass, in addition to the previous aspects, the following measures and procedures:

1. Setting intensive training programs to train teachers on methods of creative thinking and on what is meant by the various creative abilities.
2. Reconsidering the philosophy of education, so that it becomes a philosophy of developing creative abilities and skills.

3. Developing school laboratories and the school environment, to enable students to conduct experiments and find answers to educational questions.
4. Turning the classroom lesson content into queries and questioning, and homework into research for answers to questions raised in the classroom.
5. Developing school libraries to provide reference books and resources, into which students would look for answers to proposed questions.
6. Supporting the supply of schools of various levels with computers and linking them to the Internet, so as to provide access to research sources for ideas and information.
7. Making training on the use of computers and the Internet an integral part of basic education, to familiarize children with them and with how easy they are to use.
8. Developing evaluation tests to guarantee that, in addition to absorbing information, there is the ability to produce ideas characterized with originality and flexibility, or to evolve known ideas, or to criticize existing formulas and concepts on the basis of creative tests.
9. Supporting children's analytical and constructional skills, and developing their abilities to process raw materials, instruments and games, and to conduct experiments on various elements of the environment, in order to acquire the experience of discovery and development.
10. Doubling the number of school visits to different sites and locations, such as factories, museums and fields, as an essential part of the educational process included in the school curriculum, and of the outcome requirements expected from children.
11. Holding contests and developing competitions on the basis of creativity, innovations and ideas at the individual level and among groups, as well as between classes, schools and educational zones, , whether at the theoretical level, the literary level, or the different fields of science, and granting prizes, privileges and honorary ceremonies to winners, while allowing winning opportunities and expanding the base of granting prizes rich and promising attempts.

H. Informal Education

Endeavoring to take advantage of information technology and communications in education, so as to keep up with scientific developments and the challenges of the modern information and telecommunications revolution, in a manner that is in line with the needs of the labor market, as well as allowing more room in educational curricula to study means of handling the information technology and training on it, through the following measures and procedures:

1. Endeavoring to encourage children to join computer and Internet clubs, in order to raise the level of education and, eventually, enabling ten million Arab children at least to use this technology by the year 2005.
2. Developing programs that provide effective education situations, which helps students to comprehend the relationship between technology on the one hand and natural, human and environmental sciences on the other, and to implement and develop prototypes for technological products, giving them the ability to assess the impact of technology use on the individual, the society and the environment, as well as the ability to criticize bad Internet sites.
3. Establishing “mobile technological institutes” by means of buses, equipped with computers, a provider to download information off the Internet and an electric generator to be able to operate it on a continuous basis, to travel remote areas, offering computer courses to beginners and proficient ones, in a manner that contributes to the eradication of information illiteracy at the widest scale, and that encourages children and the youth – males and females – to deal with technology without having to leave their villages continuously to go to faraway fixed centers and clubs.
4. Offering soft interest-free loans to encourage children and the youth with limited income to own computers, in order to keep abreast with technology and information.
5. Providing tools, laboratories, programs, trips and participation opportunities in order to discover gifted children at an early stage, and endeavoring to develop, sharpen, and care for their creative and innovative abilities throughout the various stages of education.
6. Expanding in the use of radio, television, self-learning material, modern information and communications technology in education and training within the framework of distant learning, or in virtual schools, so that adults are able to use modern technology in performing their work.
7. Expanding the participation in the development and production of self-learning programs through local specialists, and benefiting from the results and expertise of societies that are advanced in fields of scientific and technical knowledge, in accordance with the international standards of quality and taking into consideration the specificity of the Arab culture.

Third: Empowering All Children, Particularly the Male and Female Adolescents, to Develop their Capabilities and to Participate in the Advancement of their Communities

The Plan aims at working towards enabling children, particularly male and female adolescents, to exercise their self-expression right in accordance with their available capabilities, giving them the knowledge, the skills and capability to make decision and interact with others, developing their potential and their creative capabilities, enabling them to effectively partake in the advancement of their communities, to face life's challenges and to build a better future, by adopting the following measures and procedures:

1. Encouraging male and female adolescents to take part in measures and decision affecting their status and enabling them to express their opinions freely and to receive information and ideas.
2. Allowing adolescents opportunities and encouraging them to develop their potential and capabilities, so they become good citizens capable of shouldering responsibility.
3. Giving children and adolescents, who were deprived of education, a second chance to receive good basic education.
4. Adopting measures and procedures that guarantee the protection of adolescents from delinquency, and enacting the laws regarding the judicial systems of juveniles, so that they suited with the requirements of the Children's Rights Agreement and related international standards, in order to ensure the children's right to special treatment that serves their dignity and facilitates their rehabilitation and contribution to constructive roles in the community.
5. Offering support to male and female children and adolescents in the area of learning ways to protect and prevent themselves from acquiring AIDS and blood-transferable diseases, and providing voluntary and anonymous ways of offering information and guidance to them and of testing for these diseases.
6. Emphasizing the rights of male and female adolescents and helping them to overcome various problems of marginalization, social and economic exclusion, employment exploitation, mistreatment and violence.
7. Giving special care to delinquent children and adolescents and strengthening programs for protection from delinquency and for social and economic rehabilitation.

8. Stressing the role of the family in the proper upbringing of children and adolescents until the age of 18 years, by educational, cultural and awareness means, and activating the role of school parent council to ensure interaction between the family and the school and to prevent contradiction of guidance and consultations.
9. Setting classroom and non-classroom educational curricula for adolescents that are inspired by religious teachings, human rights principles and moral values.
10. Working towards adopting the results of studies, researches and scientific papers on the adolescent age, as well as the suitable proposed solutions to handle problems resulting from physical and psychological transformations and from negative cultural influences and wrong behaviors, whether in the surrounding environment or media globalization.
11. Making use of pioneering Arab and world experiments in the field of children's rights in terms of participation, expression of opinions and freedom of expression, such as children's parliaments, children's societies, student councils and various children's organizations, and encouraging critical innovative thinking and open dialogue among children and the youth, as well as introducing pioneering initiatives in this field.
12. Familiarizing adolescent children, "male or female" with all their right and with the governmental and non-governmental efforts being exerted to enact those rights, by expanding the participation of children and adolescents in the various educational and media-oriented activities, developing and promoting them, and providing the necessary supporting resources.
13. Enabling children and adolescents to exercise their right of expressing their own opinions, in accordance with their capabilities and their level of maturity, about efforts being exerted to activate their rights, and of partaking in those efforts as is suitable with their age groups, as well as respecting those opinions and taking them into consideration, whether at the level of the family, the cultural or media institutions, or before judicial and administrative parties and the various official authorities.
14. Encouraging children and adolescents to formulate their own societies of all forms and names, entrenching in them the spirit of participation and social volunteerism, and strengthening their contribution to the cultural, artistic, athletic and social life as suitable with their age groups.
15. Granting children and adolescents the opportunity to express their opinions and to listen to them during judicial and administrative proceedings, and when

decisions pertaining to them are being made, whether directly or through a representative person or body.

16. Expanding in the establishment of youth centers and sports clubs in various areas, in order to absorb the youth in this age group, to contribute to the development of their creativity and talents, and to provide them with an opportunity to occupy their free time with what is physically and mentally useful, as well as providing equipment and machines related to physical, athletic, cultural and entertainment development.
17. Providing programs and means which ensure that male and female children and adolescents receive information from the various national, regional and international sources, promoting and broadcasting them, for the purpose of respecting their rights, improving and supporting the efforts exerted by families, schools and cultural institutions, in order to enable the youth to use modern communications techniques of information and communications technology, so that they are able to stress their presence on the information arena, and are qualified to deal with the technologies of the age, as well as working towards guiding them during usage to preserve their Arab values and identity, while taking into consideration the economic reality of the youth in poor areas and working towards encouraging civil society initiatives and contributions in this area.

Fourth: Children's Culture

Children's culture is characterized by a qualitative specificity, from which comes its educative value and elective elements that aim at raising generations with feelings of pride and belonging abundant with elite values and ideals, and which sets the foundation for children's cultural identity at an early age, and supports their inclinations, ways of thinking, and their social, religious and scientific concepts. Thus, it becomes necessary to plan the path of children's culture over the next ten years, in order to achieve and support these objectives, by adopting the following measures and procedures:

1. Encouraging Arab innovators to increase child-targeted cultural production for the various age groups, whether visual, audio or print, and giving children access to them to benefit from them in return for cheap prices.
2. Supporting joint efforts among all or some Member States to hold conferences that discuss, set and endorse the symmetry of values that need to be abided by in the area of children's culture, and encouraging the contribution of intellectual, literary people and artists in this area and supporting them financially and morally.
3. Setting criteria for children's books, in terms of production, raw materials, illustrations, colors, the various pictures, and the use of simple Arabic language, and encouragement general commitment to this criteria.
4. Involving experts and education advisors as consultants in media programs prepared for children in order to mind the characteristics of maturity and development stages in programs that address the various age groups of children.
5. Developing artistic and musical taste in children and involving them in activities of this nature, whether in schools or through cultural institutions.
6. Encouraging the special publishing of books, magazines, dictionaries, illustrated cultural encyclopedias for children, and overcoming obstacles that prevent their transfer among Arab countries.
7. Encouraging children's literature writers, materially and literally, in order to motivate them to produce more and better work.
8. Promoting the principle of "Reading for All" and "Reading for Pre-school Children" through the encouragement of families, schools, cultural institutions, social clubs, media institutions and publishing houses specialized in children's literature.

9. Diversifying cognitive materials in children's cultural resources and presenting them in an exciting story-like form, inclusive of religious knowledge and stories, particularly science fiction, simplified science, future science, autobiographies of Arab scholars, information on Arab countries and basic information in fields of health, nutrition and environment.
10. Raising awareness about cultures of human rights, children's rights, tolerance and peace – based on righteousness and justice - among peoples and religions, in all forms of child-targeted cultural production.
11. Encouraging school journalism in a way that makes children feel their importance and the importance of their production and their specificity allows them the opportunity to express their potentials and capabilities through their various creative productions.
12. Expanding in the establishment of school libraries and children's libraries outside schools in cultural centers and clubs, and promoting them in all areas and developing their services, as well as providing them with cadres qualified to deal with children, and activating their role particularly during vacations and summer holidays.
13. Expanding in the establishment of children's cultural centers and science clubs, under the supervision of specialists, in order to develop the creative and cultural capabilities of children and enable them to use their free time in developing their talents.
14. Promoting the culture of museums, and expanding in the establishment of simplified science museums and national heritage museums.
15. Paying attention to children's cinema and cartoon movies, and expanding in the establishment of children's theatre, puppet shows, children's music and songs as well as increasing dependence on Arabic productions, to maintain the Arab identity of these productions, to motivate Arab artists in all forms of these fields, and to encourage national investment in their production.
16. Purifying media programs, especially drama, from negative trends and values that undermine the role of the family in the process of upbringing and education, and its integral status in the life of children.
17. Encouraging companies that manufacture television sets to add technical features that allow parents to prevent their children from watching certain programs, such as pornographic and violent programs on foreign satellite channels.
18. Obliging Arab television broadcasting institutions to set specific ratings for broadcast programs before they are broadcast, showing the suitability of these

programs for children, in order to enable families to protect children from inappropriate material.

19. Organizing cultural and entertainment festivals and activities that address the interests of children and the youth, as well as organizing gatherings, cultural tours and camps in Arab capitals and cities, thus contributing to the process of familiarizing children with their large Arab homeland.
20. Involving children in cultural, historical and social contests, as suited to their age, in order to enhance and diversify their interests and their creativity.
21. Training children, as of the elementary stage, on political and democratic exercises, by diversifying activities and practices that require elections, , monitoring and accountability, in schools, such as children's municipal councils and children's parliaments, and in various non-classroom and social activities, with the purpose of instilling in them a political culture.
22. Increasing children's opportunities to use and deal with information and communication technology, providing schools, libraries and clubs with computers, and doubling the number of training courses on Internet usage and on means of accessing various information, as well as activating cultural exchange between Arab children and children of the world.
23. Paying attention to developing cultural sources for children with special needs, such as books, magazines, theaters, radio, television and computers, and enabling them to obtain the equipment and machines suitable to their disability.

Fifth: Physical Fitness and Physical Education

The plan aims at allowing for raising new generations with physical fitness, sportsmanship, persistence and the ability compete as individuals and as groups, by intensifying attention given to the physical fitness of children and adolescents and developing their athletic abilities in and out of the framework of formal education, and with the effective contribution of the Ministries of Youth and Sports in Member States, by adopting the following measures and procedures:

1. Providing specialized and qualified male and female trainers in all schools and in all education stages.
2. Providing playgrounds and gymnasiums equipped with safe sports machines and equipment in all schools, and working on making them available in youth clubs and center with the cooperation of the local community.
3. Using test batteries for initial and continuous evaluation of athletic potential and aptitude, at the beginning of enrollment in schools and throughout the education stages.
4. Considering physical education an integral part of the school curricula, and carrying out quarterly evaluation for children's athletic performance through competitions, the scores of which to added to their scholastic grades.
5. Setting comprehensive physical fitness programs, sustained by training sessions and timetables for registration and follow-up, and setting sports programs that include theoretical curricula, in order to develop their sportsmanship and affiliation, side by side with practical curricula.
6. Taking into consideration the need for continuity and sustainability in developing children's athletic abilities and aptitudes throughout the successive ages, and guiding them towards specializing and excelling in a single sport.
7. Supporting opportunities for exercising, and increasing available capabilities, in a manner that allows increasing facilities in deprived areas.
8. Introducing into scholastic programs sports values and information on history of championships and major international competitions, as well as raising the standard of the sports culture by publishing booklets on selected sports information.
9. Supporting competitive exercises at the level of individual and group game, and encouraging a wide-scale participation in physical fitness programs and various sports activities.

10. Forming local teams and sports teams for children and the youth within the various sports federations.
11. Enrolling athletically-prominent children in sports clubs, and giving them additional care and qualification to participate in listed championships.
12. Providing free healthy nutrition for children participating in competitions, championships and extended training programs.
13. Preparing school playgrounds and their sports equipment to receive children during summer vacations.
14. Expanding in the setting up of summer camps with sports programs and competitions.
15. Employing the scouts movements to help children and adolescents develop properly and shoulder responsibility.
16. Encouraging the formation of popular organizations with sports specialists in the area of competitive sports, and urging investors and major economic institutions to contribute in this field.
17. Raising awareness through the various media outlets about the close connection between exercising on the one hand and physical fitness, physical and psychological health on the other, and about the importance of exercise in the prevention and treatment of many ailments.

Sixth: Media

A. Child-Targeted Media

The process of formulating children's cultural awareness is the outcome of the process of social upbringing through the family, the school and the various media outlets, in which television occupies a particular status, given the high number and diversity of local and satellite channels. In light of the major challenges that face the Arab media on the threshold of the 21st Century and the severity of technical competition in this field, this plan stresses the need to direct more attention to child-targeted media, by adopting the following measures and procedures:

1. Developing and rationalizing the media message targeted at children and adolescents, by:
 - a. Linking it to knowledge and information related to everyday life and problems of society.
 - b. Including in it positive trends of Arab self-esteem, pride in the Arab identity and nationalism.
 - c. Purifying it from blemishes that contradict religious, moral and social values and from discrimination on the basis of gender, social class and others.
 - d. Fulfilling the needs and interests of children of various age groups.
 - e. Extending space allocated for children's media, as they represent more than half the population of the Arab community, while improving its content and raising its artistic and productive levels, making it attractive and exciting.
2. Emphasizing the presentation of distinguished and fine Arabic productions of children's cartoons and puppet shows, to motivate Arab artists in this field and to encourage Arab investments in this fledgling industry, giving it the opportunity to develop, quantitatively and qualitatively, so that it would be able to compete with highly-technical imported materials, which may have negative impacts on children's personality, tendencies and affiliations.
3. Paying more attention to programs on children's creative abilities, including in them contests and prizes for distinguished children, and presenting their attempts and having them evaluated by specialists.
4. Extending space allocated for children in newspapers and weekly magazines.
5. Extending space allocated for children on local broadcasting stations in order to serve all provinces, particularly remote and poor areas.
6. Carefully selecting imported media material and avoiding that which is harmful and that which instigates violence and inferiority.

7. Extending space allocated for educational programs for the various school stages in all media outlets, while emphasizing the need to pay attention to literacy programs and supporting them with the best of specialized elements.
8. Stressing the use of simplified classical Arabic language in television and media programs and materials, particularly in those addressed to children.
9. Training and qualifying those responsible for preparing, producing and presenting child-targeted television programs, and involving children in the planning and preparation of these programs.
10. Encouraging children with special needs to participate in media programs and extending space allocated for them in these programs, developing them and providing them for free or at a lower cost and on a wider scale.

B. Media targeted at people responsible for children's affairs:

The plan aims at directing more media attention to raising family awareness on the proper methods of upbringing for each of the children's age groups, particularly early childhood and adolescence, and about the best ways to tackle the problems of each stage, and at introducing children's rights and the importance of social and political upbringing via the various print and audio-visual media outlets and by educational experts and specialists in childhood affairs, while increasing dependence on "drama", given its attractive nature and influence on all family members, including children. This is done by adopting the following measures and procedures:

1. Extending space allocated for awareness programs on health, environment and sex education, in order to raise the awareness of the family and those to be married on solving marital problems and family planning, supporting these programs with the best contemporary and unconventional guiding means in a simple, interesting and convincing manner.
2. Extending space allocated for dialogues and interactive programs between children and adults on social phenomena and problems, as well as public issues and problems related to them.
3. Emphasizing the culture of non-discrimination on the basis of sex, and endeavoring to alter the negative stereotyping of women in media programs and drama.
4. Prohibiting the use of children in advertisements and commercials and prohibiting the broadcast of advertisements that encourage bad habits or negative values, and endeavoring to rationalize the involvement of children in artistic works (the cinema, theatre and television), in order to protect their health and psychology and moral values.

Seventh: Protection

This plan aims at activating the right of all children to protection from all forms of violence, harm, negligence, damage or physical, mental or psychological abuse, and from all forms of discrimination on the basis of gender, social class, religion, color or race, whether at home, in school or in the society, as well as protecting from all forms of economic exploitation and labor that hinders their natural growth and deprives them of education, and from all forms of maltreatment and sexual assault and exploitation, and from medical experiments or transplants, as well as protecting them from recruitment in military actions and armed conflicts, and their destructive consequences, in addition to protecting them from their exploitation in the production, possession, dealing or consumption of narcotics and hallucinogens, protecting them from the phenomenon of delinquency, and instating a special system for delinquent children that ensures their right to a treatment that correlates with their age and gives priority to their rehabilitation and their performance of constructive roles in society. To achieve these objectives, the Plan calls for adopting the following measures and procedures:

(1) General Protection

1. Registering every child at birth, activating his right to obtain a name and a nationality, in accordance with applicable national laws, and ensuring the right of neglected children and children of unknown parentage to a first name, a family name and the remaining identity aspects, the right to acquire a nationality, and, as much as possible, the right to know his parents and receive their care.
2. Ensuring genuine equality among all children whether in texts or in reality, and endeavoring to remove the various forms of discrimination among children, including discrimination concerning the age of marriage and discrimination related to a child born to a mother from an Arab country and a foreign father.
3. Bypassing national legislations in terms of that which correlates with the statutes of the Children's Rights Agreement, in a manner that ensures the protection of children from all forms of violence, negligence, harm, exploitation and discrimination, whether at, school, institutions, the workplace or in the local society, and endeavoring to implement these laws and undertaking the necessary measures to put them into effect.
4. Intensifying the application of laws on all crimes committed against children, in order to eradicate the phenomenon of escaping punishment, by bringing perpetrators to justice and publishing punishment verdicts brought against them for committing those crimes.

5. Providing service programs for protection and care from harm and legal aid for children in conflict with the law, as well as judicial systems specific to children during criminal investigations or trials, while taking into consideration the principles of reformatory justice and providing specially trained personnel to contribute to the reintegration of children in society.
6. Eradicating harmful or arbitrary traditional practices, especially those that violate the rights of female children, such as early marriage and circumcision, and raising awareness about these harmful consequences of these practices.
7. Adopting and implementing policies for the protection of children suffering from social deprivation and subject to harm, including orphans, abandoned children and children living in destitute poverty, as well as protecting them, rehabilitating them and reintegrating them in society, and ensuring they receive educational, health and social services.
8. Combating kidnap situations, including international kidnapping of children, and setting penalties that correlate with the extent of damage inflicted upon these children.
9. Ensuring that children receive effective humanitarian assistance in due time during natural catastrophes, endeavoring to set appropriate plans for emergency situation and preparing for them, and ensuring the provision of all forms of possible assistance and protection for children and helping them resume their normal life as soon as possible.
10. Setting laws for the preventing the exploitation of children and adolescents in the production, propagation and consumption of narcotics and hallucinogens, and stressing the application of these laws, while providing treatment and endeavoring to rehabilitate children harmed by these practices.
11. Imposing more stringent penalties for all types of crimes against children, including crimes of trading in children or exploiting them in prostitution, trading in their organs, afflicting them with deformities to convert them into beggars, and adopting all measures to provide societal and institutional protection, facilitating the reintegration of children who are victims of these crimes in the society in cooperation with civil society institutions, and raising awareness about the illegitimacy of exploiting and sexually harming children, inclusive of the use of the Internet.
12. Encouraging measures that aim at protecting children from falling victims to internet websites that include violent and pornographic scenes, and from computer programs and games that negatively affect children's morals and

psychological growth, as well as stressing the responsibility of the family, the parents, the guardians and care providers in this regard.

13. Conducting field studies and in-depth researches about the status of children under difficult conditions, or of children with special needs, relying on accurate data and statistical indicators to identify causes leading to these conditions and their impact on the physical and psychological formation of children, as well as their impact on the social structure as whole and its social security.
14. Establishing an accurate database and updating continuously, in order to identify the percentage of children of the total population and the percentage of children living under difficult conditions due to occupation, wars, natural catastrophes and famines, or of children forced by their living conditions to work or to be homeless, or of those children with special needs in terms of physical or mental disabilities, their conditions and severity, their most significant causes, and the most important treatment programs and projects, so that people concerned, legislators and decision-makers may make use of these statistics.
15. Raising awareness of the family and the society's member and institutions about their humanitarian, religious and national responsibilities towards these children, and about the need to provide protection for children from all forms of violence, harm and negligence, as well as raising awareness about the extent of damage that would befall the society and its developmental plans should the number of these categories rise.
16. Providing consultative services and psychological treatment opportunities for the families of maltreated children.
17. Appointing a high-level specialized state observer for children's rights, who would be affiliated with the Ministry of Justice, and whose supervision would cover all provinces and regions in cooperation with the national childhood council or organization.
18. Forming an entity or a committee to be responsible for the protection of children from maltreatment, negligence and violence, to include as members governmental and non-governmental institutions, physicians, social, psychological and legal researchers, and representatives from the police and the judiciary, as well as working towards providing the necessary capabilities and support for this entity in order to enable it to provide comprehensive services to affected children.

(2) Protection of children under difficult conditions:

Children under difficult conditions fall under the following categories:

- A. Children subject to dangers under the effects of occupation, armed conflicts, wars, aggressive actions and mass deportation.
- B. Children with special needs, namely those with mental disabilities, those suffering from learning difficulties and from behavioral and reflexive disorders, and those with physical or sensory disabilities.
- C. Street children.
- D. Children who suffer from maltreatment or physical and sexual abuse.
- E. Children working in all productive and service labor during the basic education stage, whether that is a measure or in family businesses and projects.
- F. Delinquent children or those threatened of becoming delinquents.

The plan aims at providing all services, care, rehabilitation, training and opportunities of integration in society for the five categories of children, as well as alleviating the damage inflicted upon them and helping them avoid bad circumstances and the harsh consequences of their conditions, while developing legislations that impose legal and social protection for them.

As for the fourth category, the plan also aims – in addition to the aforementioned – to fully prohibit child labor by the end of the ten-year Plan, providing protection and care for those working at present, and gradually curbing this problem until it is eradicated.

To achieve these objectives, the Plan calls for adopting the following measures and procedures:

A. Protecting children exposed to dangers under conditions of occupation, wars and armed conflicts:

1. Endeavoring to implement international legitimacy and United Nations resolutions with the aim of ending the occupation of Arab territories and activating the Geneva Convention on the protection of civilians, particularly children.
2. Seeking to remove children from war zones and armed conflict areas, and guaranteeing affected children access to safe areas.
3. Providing means of protection and care for children affected by foreign occupation and affected by the conditions of armed conflicts, and

emphasizing their right to protection and health and social care, education, and uniting with their families, under these conditions.

4. Partaking in international endeavors to enlist issues related to children's rights and protection in plans of international peace process plans adopted by the United Nations.
5. Prohibiting the recruitment of children in war operations, and the treatment of captive ones as prisoners, and providing effective measures for their rehabilitation, their return to civilian life, and reintegrating them their societies.
6. Seeking to protect children from landmines, from unexploded ammunition and from other types of explosives, and offering treatment and assistance for victims and rehabilitating them.
7. Rehabilitating and training children affected by the dangers of wars and conflicts, and providing them with compensatory kits for free.
8. Incriminating the targeting of children in urban areas, as well as their intentional assassination and injury, and regarding this as crimes of war and seeking to label perpetrators of these actions as war criminals.
9. Establishing governmental institutions to monitor violations of children's protection from the dangers of war, issuing reports in this regard, and encouraging and supporting civil society institutions to undertake that as well.
10. Evaluating and monitoring the impact of international sanctions on children, and adopting effective measures, in accordance with the International Humanitarian Law, to alleviate the negative impacts on children and women.

B. Protecting children with special needs (the disabled):

General Principles

1. Developing national registration systems for all cases of disability, whether mental, physical, sensory or health disability.
2. Including all kinds of disabilities in national census procedures, surveys and researches, as part of the population and family census.
3. Setting projects and programs and allocating set budgets within the framework of social expenditure budgets for the care and rehabilitation of the disabled with special needs.

4. Expanding in the establishment of institutes and training centers for teachers and trainers, and developing study and training courses to keep up with new variables in the field of care and rehabilitation of people with various disabilities.
5. Developing criteria for buildings, establishments, schools, utilities and means of transportation to give the opportunity of movement for children with physical disabilities.
6. Especially encouraging the audio-visual media in order to alter concepts and trends towards the disabled.
7. Developing and expanding psychological and social evaluation methods of members of this category, in order to form the basis for their rehabilitation and care and for providing services to them.
8. Paying more attention to qualifying and training psychiatrists and social workers who work with children with all types of disability.
9. Exempting all systems and means as well as evaluation equipment and tools imported for the benefit of this category from all customs duties, and exempting locally manufactured ones from the various taxes and charges.

Disability Prevention Policies:

Policies to limit disabilities start with early preventive programs, that aim at early protection or detection and early intervention, by confronting risk factors, or eliminating conditions leading to disability.

The following needs to be achieved in this area:

1. Providing early health care for pregnant women in order to limit the risk factors, such as mothers contracting German Measles, cardio-related disorders, glandular problems, kidney problems and pregnancy infections, Giving medical advice, and offering alternatives to fathers and mothers in cases of chromosomal deficiency, Rh factor problems and improper pregnancy.
2. Providing sound health information at individual levels for pregnant mothers on dangers of smoking, drug and alcohol abuse, malnutrition, exposure to X-rays, and raising awareness about reproductive health.
3. Limiting factors related to premature birth, and providing appropriate medical care for premature babies.
4. Developing genetic-related consulting services, and establishing fully equipped centers for genetic-related diseases within local hospitals.

5. Paying more attention to categories with potential for genetic problems, such as marriages among once-removed relatives, mothers suffering from habitual abortion, pregnancies at a late age, or birth-giving to children with disabilities, genetic disorders or deformities.
6. Raising awareness about reproductive health and offering services in this area, as well as introducing people to checkup and treatment centers.
7. Encouraging marrying couples to perform the necessary medical tests, and raising awareness about the importance of these tests among male and female school students.
8. Providing protection from problems related to difficult deliveries, lack of oxygen, misuse of equipment, or contracting hepatitis, and encouraging delivery in specialized hospitals under full medical supervision.

Providing educational opportunities and rehabilitation for disabled children with special needs:

The Plan calls for adopting all measures to give children with special needs access to basic education opportunities and suitable rehabilitation to enable them to overcome their disability, and to enjoy all educational and recreational services, fully, equally and without any discrimination, and endeavoring to integrate them in ordinary schools, whenever possible. This could be achieved by adopting the following measures and procedures:

1. Providing the appropriate tools for early detection of all categories of disabled children, designing early intervention programs, and providing progressive curricula that would help develop their abilities and aptitudes to the maximum, as other children receive.
2. Encouraging media outlets to perform a constructive and effective role in the area of introducing programs for disability prevention and health guidance, in addition to special programs raising the awareness of people with special needs, their families and the society, in order to achieve their complete social integration.
3. Providing the adequate means and measures, including legal measures, to ensure the right of children with special needs to education in the same schools and institutes as those available to other children, with the exclusion of exceptional cases resulting from the nature of the disability, in which case only the state commits to providing education in special classes or schools, where the following conditions shall be available:
 - To be linked with the normal education system and suitable to the needs of children with special needs, in such a manner as to enable the achievement of specified and set objectives, and the periodic assessment of obtained

results, and to be subject to review in order to improve schooling conditions.

- To be easily accessible and close to the child's residential area.
 - To provide full education for all children with special needs, whatever their age and the degree of their disability.
4. Providing the adequate means and measures, including legal measures, to ensure the right of children with special needs to vocational training and rehabilitation in the same institutions and training and rehabilitation centers as those available to other children, with the exclusion of exceptional cases resulting from the nature of disability, in which case only, the state commits to providing vocational training and rehabilitation in special rehabilitation institutes or centers, where the same above-mentioned guarantees and conditions for normal education schools shall apply.
 5. Acknowledging the right of children with special needs to full participation in the society's public life and in its various social, educational, cultural and other areas, while adopting measures and decisions which remove the various barriers that hinder the full integration of children with special needs in social life.
 6. Setting special programs for the training of specialized and qualified cadres to expand in the rehabilitation programs of society, allowing the training of mothers and families to teach and care for their disabled children, and to exchange services, knowledge and expertise within various local communities under specialized supervision.
 7. Encouraging civil society institutions to effectively participate in the area of caring for disabled children, and providing them with all facilities to expand their services to all disability categories.
 8. Putting in place a monitoring and follow up system in order to make the variety of policies and programs targeting children with special needs in line with these values and objectives.

C. Protecting homeless children:

For these children, the streets are considered shelters and the environment from which they earn a living most of the day, due to their total or partial separation from their families, the lack of protection for them, and the lack of education opportunities and health care, which exposes them to various forms of delinquency. Vagrancy during childhood should be considered a pathological disorder requiring treatment, or a disorder in the child's family conditions requiring intervention, and not a crime for which the child should be punished.

The Plan aims at conclusively dealing with the problem of street children, through the elimination of its root causes and the tackling of the phenomenon in its current stage

to isolate it and then eradicate it, and that is by adopting the following measures and procedures:

1. Establishing research organizations and associations to conduct comprehensive studies to reveal the phenomenon's causes and size, ways of dealing with it and methods of fulfilling the actual needs of those suffering from it.
2. Encouraging governmental and non-governmental institutions to get involved in resolving the family problems of street children.
3. Intensifying the applicability of compulsory education, eliminating ways for school dropout, and reducing direct and indirect tuition fees.
4. Providing trained specialists for the so-called "street masters" to deal with street children cases on an individual level.
5. Setting special measures and mechanisms for monitoring the difficult situations faced by children, and adopting the necessary measures and programs for protection against this phenomenon, including the imposition of strict penalties , when necessary, on parents who neglect their children and leave them on the streets.
6. Imposing strict penalties on commercial institutions that push children to promote their products on the streets, and regarding the business recruitment of street children or training them to do so, or making a profit through them, or imposing tributes in return for protection, or shelter or other, a crime punishable by law, the perpetrators of which are subject to strict penalties.
7. Endeavoring to integrate homeless children or children without supporting families into host families or care institutions within local communities that suffer from this phenomenon, with integrated care and rehabilitation systems, social and recreational programs and vocational education, in order to host street children who have no shelter or families.
8. Encouraging businessmen and civil society institutions to contribute to the tackling of this phenomenon, to conduct researches and studies, and to establish schools and boarding institutions to provide alternative care for children without supporting families, orphans, children without known parentage, or juvenile delinquents, in order to provide them with shelter and health, educational and social care.

D. Protecting children from all forms of maltreatment or physical and sexual abuse:

The phenomenon of children's maltreatment and physical and sexual exploitation represents one of the standing problems – in varying degrees - in some Arab countries as it is in other world countries, and it is a phenomenon that contradicts all children's rights charters. This Plan call for combating this phenomenon in its different forms, and adopting the following measures and procedures would be a contribution:

1. Endeavoring to provide statistics, studies, and scientific researches related to monitoring this phenomenon, analyzing its causes and deriving tools and solutions that would ensure its eradication quickly and efficiently.
2. Training specialists and people concerned in social, health, judicial and popular societies, and developing ways to monitor, study and evaluate this phenomenon.
3. Intensifying media campaigns and awareness programs for the targeted categories (the family, the staff of educational institutions, decision-makers, children ...)
4. Raising awareness especially among children by developing curricula in education programs, and educating them about the importance of the body and how to protect it.
5. Encouraging schools' health centers to pay attention to the importance of this phenomenon, and providing specialized units to listen to children subject to aspects of exploitation and sexual harassment.
6. Revising laws and legislations related to the phenomenon of children's maltreatment and sexual exploitation, in a manner that achieves the longed-for effectiveness in the area of protection against this phenomenon, monitoring it at the right time, and providing adequate social and judicial safety mechanisms.
7. Signing on to the optional protocol of the Children's Rights Agreement with regard to selling children and exploiting them in prostitution and profane materials.
8. Developing the legal system pertaining to children affected by all types of maltreatment and exploitation, including sexual exploitation of children, and endeavoring to prepare legal chambers and sections specialized for listening to the children statements and affidavits, and seeking the aid of social and psychological specialists.
9. Ensuring the right of children affected by all types of maltreatment and exploitation, including the sexual exploitation of children, in terms of

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reporting, making complaints and litigating, directly or through whoever has legal supervision on them.

10. Ensuring health and psychological habilitation and rehabilitation for children suffering from aspects of maltreatment, exploitation and sexual abuse.

11. Ensuring rehabilitation for perpetrators of sexual crimes against children.

E. Eliminating child labor and protecting working children:

Child labor represents one of the most severe problems in some Arab countries, and it is a phenomenon that contradicts all children rights charters. This Plan calls for curbing this phenomenon in phases until its eradication by the end of this ten-year Plan, by endeavoring to emphasize that childhood is for learning and habilitation, putting end to school dropout, eliminating obstructions to continuing education by lowering tuition fees or actually implementing free education, as well as raising the level of education, and expanding in the area of vocational education in poor and rural areas. Adopting the following measures and procedures would greatly contribute to this:

In phases:

1. Drafting legislations that ban and incriminate the employment of children under certain ages, in accordance with relevant international standards, and working towards ensuring the presence of and intensifying periodic monitoring, as well as implementing laws with as much effectiveness as possible.
2. Committing owners of business where children work legally to respect the legal regulations that specify the conditions and circumstances of child labor.
3. Establishing or developing inspection and monitoring mechanisms, by which working children are registered, as well as the institutions they work in, their protection measures, their wages and working hours, and any other conditions pertaining to the circumstances of child labor.
4. Offering additional incentives to working children, in terms of institutions and organizations other than the labor institution during their work, in return for their pursuit of education and excelling in it.
5. Encouraging youth clubs and centers in the different areas where there is a density of child labor to open free vocational training classes for working children and to involve them in social and athletic programs and activities..
6. Committing institutions where children work to sign comprehensive medical examination for those children at accredited medical organizations every six

months, and to provide this report to the social department responsible for following up on child labor or to the children's rights monitoring organization..

7. Providing all working children with comprehensive health insurance against diseases, accidents and work injuries.
8. Raising the awareness of working children and their families of the need to seek immediate treatment when they fall sick or they suffer a work-related injury, to report the sickness or injury immediately to the social department responsible for following up on child labor or to children's right monitoring organization.
9. Applying strict industrial safety policies on institutions that engage children, with additional prerequisites for the protection of children.
10. Imposing graded penalties on child labor in rural areas for children working in agriculture, whether on family farms, or as laborers.
11. Prohibiting institutions, companies, governmental or non-governmental organizations and affiliated agencies from contracting, in any shape or form, imports, services, joining in projects where children work illegally.
12. Expanding in the provision of support for poor families that resort to having their children employed, by giving them soft loans to set up small projects.

Strategically

1. Calling on Member States that have not yet ratified Agreement No. 138/1973 and Agreement No. 182/1999, which were issued by the International Labor Organization, and Agreement No. 18/1996 on the employment of juveniles, which was issued by the Arab Labor Organization, to do so quickly.
2. Stopping the issuance of licenses for establishing agricultural, industrial or service projects that rely on child labor, whether completely or partially.
3. Prohibiting the employment of new children or the replacement of current workers with new children, in the various projects, workshops or rural works, once this plan enters into force.
4. Drafting legislations that set deadlines, ending with the lapse of the ten-year Plan, categorically prohibiting child labor.
5. Setting a transitional period, during which compulsory education is expanded to cover that age where work becomes legitimate, provided that strict penalties on child labor are imposed thereafter.

6. Providing monitoring tools and organizations to work on combating poverty and extremely-impooverished living conditions, in order to prevent forcing children into the labor market.
7. Regarding child labor, after the transitional period, a punishable crime , for which both the business owners and the parents receive severe penalties.
8. Expanding in the area of technical and vocational education in poor and scattered areas, and expanding in the establishment of productive recreational summer camps, providing income to help children in their deprivation of education and recreation.

F. Dealing with juvenile delinquents or those subject to delinquency

The phenomenon of juvenile delinquency represents one of the severe problems in some Arab states, although there is a lack of in-depth studies on the subject.

This phenomenon is closely connected to many factors, of which is, primarily, the aggravated phenomenon of street children due to their complete or partial separation from their families and the lack of sufficient programs in the area of protection against delinquency and social marginalization.

The plan aims at combating the problem of child delinquency conclusively and in a manner adequate to international protection standards, by adopting the following measures and procedures:

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1. Establishing research organizations and specialized societies, and providing statistics, studies, and scientific researches pertinent to monitoring this phenomenon, analyzing its causes, and deriving the mechanisms and solutions capable of dealing with it quickly and efficiently.
2. Training specialists and people concerned in the social, health, and judicial organizations and popular societies, and developing ways to monitor, study and evaluate this phenomenon.
3. Revising legislations to ensure children's right to a special pre-trial proceedings system, by adopting the following arrangements:
 - Setting a minimum age, below which children are considered incapable of violating the criminal law (in this area, one could refer to some experiences, like the Tunisian child protection magazine), where a child under thirteen years of age would have the benefit of conclusive evidence of his incapability to break criminal laws.
 - The undertaking of follow-up on and investigation of offenses and crimes perpetrated by children by a special judicial authority.

- The exclusion from resorting to legal representation, and the undertaking of all activities and researches necessary to arrive at the truth by the children's judge, directly or through a person qualified to do so.
 - The need to inform parents or guardians of the follow-up procedures.
 - The need to assign a lawyer for the child, in the event that he does not have one.
 - Adopting a special system for precautionary detention by limiting this procedure to cases of the more serious crimes, or it became evident that no other arrangement could be adopted, while ensuring a number of guarantees: specifying a special area for children in the detention center or prison, so as to ensure the separation of children from the rest of detainees, and enabling the child to enjoy weekends and official holidays during the period of the detention.
4. Revising legislations to ensure children's right to a special proceedings system during the trial, which entails the following:
- The inadmissibility of personal right in children's cases, in order to avoid a lengthy case and to prevent the judge from being influenced in his procedures and arrangements by the plaintiff's claims.
 - Treating all crimes as offenses with the exception of murder crimes.
 - Judging and sentencing after the exhaustion of all defense means.
 - The need to hear out the child and his parents or guardian, as well as the rest of the witnesses, experts, and lawyers.
 - The possibility of exempting the child from being present, as serves his interest.
 - Ensuring the confidentiality of the court sessions, and limiting access a certain number of people: the child, the parents, the district attorney, the guardian, the lawyer, the experts, the childhood institution's representative or the children's right protection representative.
 - Diversifying rulings that may be adopted with regard to the right of the delinquent child and giving priority to the care arrangements and decisions of educational and reformatory nature.
 - Endorsing the principle of adjoining imprisonment penalties when material succession of crimes occurs, unless the judge rules otherwise, in which case the decision must be justified.
5. Revising legislations to ensure children's right to a special proceedings system in the implementation process, which entails the following:
- Placing the implementation system of the procedures and penalties determined for the child under the supervision of the children's judge.

- Committing the judge to following up on these procedures and penalties determined for the child in close cooperation with concerned parties, and giving permission to conduct medical or psychological tests, or social researches, as well as looking into all implementation difficulties.
 - Committing the children's judge to review the child's file once every six months at the maximum, in order to review the decided procedure, to be undertaken either upon himself or upon the request of the public prosecution, the child, his parents, his guardian, his lawyer, or the head of the institute in which he was placed. In all cases, the judge shall not replace a protective measure or a caretaker procedure with a physical punishment, while the reverse is possible.
 - Endorsing the mediation system for all violations and offenses committed by children, with the exception of crimes, as a mechanism that aims at achieving a reconciliation between the delinquent child and his legal representative on the one hand and the plaintiff or his representative on the other, the aim of which is to suspend criminal pursuit, the trial, or the implementation.
- 6- Putting in place psychological, educational, social and vocational habilitation programs, in order to protect delinquent children from going back after the lapse of the reformative period, and to give them genuine opportunities to reintegrate and perform a constructive role in society.
7. Encouraging the formation of specialized societies and ensuring their effective participation with the rest of civil society in programs for protecting children from delinquency and for their social reintegration.

Monitoring, Follow-up and Evaluation Procedures at the National Level

Member States shall work towards strengthening ways and means of monitoring, following up and evaluating the implementation of this Plan's procedures, by providing national monitoring and follow-up apparatus, and partaking in monitoring and follow-up apparatus at the Arab level, in order to abide by the application of the objectives of this Plan, in accordance with the circumstances and capabilities of each State, and that is by adopting the following measures and procedures:

1. Promptly setting national childhood plans with specific deadlines, as guided by the Arab Action Plan, issued by the League of Arab States.
2. Setting detailed monitoring and follow-up systems to implement the objectives of this Plan – in light of measurable indicators - through childhood-specialized organizations and councils within the State, and working on developing statistical capabilities in these organizations and councils and in childhood research centers and data banks.
3. Issuing an annual national report on the status of childhood, performance and achievement indicators, and obstacles faced encountered in all areas the Plan's action, to be prepared in participation with the widest of governmental and non-governmental sectors, and to be discussed at the highest official and non-official levels, in a manner that helps the preparation of periodic reports about Member States, to be submitted to the International Commission for Children's Rights in Geneva and to the childhood administration at the League of Arab States.
4. Using unified monitoring and follow-up forms set by the League of Arab States, to contribute to the preparation of the periodic Arab report, issued by the League every two years.
5. Holding national seminars and conferences to discuss the different childhood-related issues, particularly urgent problems within the State that might arise during the implementation of this Plan, and reporting achieved progress in the area of implementing the childhood national plan.
6. Benefiting from this Plan's addendum, which is issued by the Arab League every two years, and which contains practical programs and pilot projects that were implemented on the Arab or international level within this Plan's objective areas.

Action at the Pan-Arab Level within the League of Arab States and Specialized Bodies Therein

First: Consolidating tasks and activities of the Arab Advisory Committee on Childhood, being one of the mechanisms for joint Arab action – in view of the absence of an Arab ministerial council for childhood - and due to the numerous areas for activating children’s rights, and due to the fact that its membership includes leaderships responsible for childhood, representatives of councils, organizations and higher committees on childhood or similar agencies within Member States, as well as representatives of technical secretariats of specialized Arab ministerial councils, and relevant Arab organizations functioning within the scope of the Arab League. The Committee shall undertake the following tasks, in accordance with internal regulatory bylaws:

- a. Proposing Arab policies, plans and programs that comply with divine laws and the provisions of all Arab agreements and charters related to children’s rights, as well as international charters endorsed by the Arab countries in this regard, guaranteeing the strengthening of cooperation and coordination on the Arab and international levels.
- b. Following up on Member States and the joint Arab action apparatus in the implementation of the objectives of Arab and international – the ones ratified by Arab States – childhood-related strategies, declarations and agreements conventions, through periodic monitoring and follow-up procedures at the Arab level.
- c. Issuing a report every two years on the status of Arab childhood and indicators of Arab performance and achievements, in light of national achievement reports of Member States, and continuing the preparation of periodic reports by Member States to be submitted to the International Commission for Children’s Rights in Geneva.
- d. Supporting governmental and non-governmental national efforts that support the rights of Arab children, on all levels, and broadcasting the distinguished and pilot efforts in the area of implementing the objectives of this Plan.

Second: Updating the internal bylaws of the Arab Advisory Committee on Childhood and determining its references within the framework of re-structuring the Secretariat-General of the League of Arab States, allowing it to submit its recommendations to the Arab League Council, in order to guarantee the activation of these recommendations.

Third: Seeking to make the topic of “Arab children’s rights”, the unified report on the status of Arab, and the most important achievements and problems, a permanent item on the agenda of the periodical Arab Summit – whenever possible, to guarantee that it receives the highest degree of attention and follow-up.

Fourth: Undertaking by the Childhood Division at the Administration of Family, Women and Childhood within the League of Arab States of the tasks of the Technical Secretariat of the Committee, in addition to its other humanitarian tasks, while at the same time supporting its capabilities with adequate financial and technical support, thus allowing cooperation and coordination with specialized Arab ministerial councils, the Arab governmental and non-governmental concerned, international organizations, and the relevant U.N. regional offices, as well as the childhood-related national agencies within Member States.

Fifth: That working programs of ministerial councils, Arab organizations and Arab League departments and sections concerned – each in its field – shall include childhood-related programs and projects, in coordination with the Advisory Technical Committee for Arab Childhood and its Technical Secretariat.

Sixth: Setting progressive training programs for work leaderships in the area of children's rights, as well as designing, implementing, following up on and evaluating projects, in accordance with the most recent scientific and theoretical trends, in cooperation with the Secretariat-General of the League of Arab States and its specialized agencies, as well as with relevant regional governmental and non-governmental councils and organizations.

Seventh: Developing the “Model Legislative Directory for Arab Children's Rights”, which was set by the League of Arab States and adopted by the Arab Council of Ministers of Justice, periodically every five years, so that it is reference guiding Member States in the review and development of their childhood-related legislations and in drafting a special law on children.

Eighth: Establishing a humanitarian relief emergency room or operations center within the framework of the League of Arab States for the benefit of children suffering from natural catastrophes, epidemics and the repercussions of wars and embargoes, to coordinate among Arab States and U.N. relief agencies, and to undertake the provision of immediate supplies in case of emergencies in a specific period of time.

Ninth: Seeking to establish an Arab fund for childhood within the framework of the League of Arab States, providing the necessary financial resources through contributions by Member States and donations to finance activities and programs in the various childhood areas, and in the areas of training and rehabilitation of leaderships working in childhood-related areas, as well as establishing and supporting pan-Arab projects and pilot and joint activities in Arab States, especially the poorer countries, in addition to conducting researches and studies on urgent problems, participating in the implementation of children relief programs in cases of emergency resulting from natural catastrophes, epidemics and the repercussions of wars and embargoes.

Tenth: Inviting Arab development funds to offer financial assistance to the Arab Fund for Childhood, and giving priority to financing projects of childhood and motherhood care in Member States, especially in the poorer countries.

Eleventh: Appointing a “General Commissioner for the Rights of Arab Children” at the level of the League of Arab States, to follow up on legislations related to children’s rights and guarantee their implementation, as well as influential political developments in the status and rights of Arab children and procedures for their protection, in addition to representing the Arab League in international forums concerned with children’s rights.

Twelfth: Establishing an Arab observatory within the League of Arab States, to be headquartered in one of the European capitals or in one of the cities of the United States, whose task would be to defend Arab interests and the rights of Arab children by monitoring, following up and compiling information and media material, and immediately coordinating in this regard with Arab States, and Arab institutions and organizations concerned, in addition to preparing the necessary media material and publishing them at the widest level, and adopting face-saving procedures, including legal procedures, in accordance with the statutes of international agreements.

Thirteenth: Establishing an Arab childhood information center to compile, document, exchange and publish information related to the status of Arab children, as well as the available expertise in this field, together with plans, projects, studies and statistics, and using the expertise of already-established international and Arab centers in forming a pan-Arab information database on Arab childhood, from which researchers, students, policy-makers, strategy-makers and decision-takers in the Arab Nation could benefit.

Fourteenth: Having an electronic web site for Arab children on the Internet, within the electronic website of the League of Arab States, achieving a presence for Arab children in the information arena, qualifying them to deal with contemporary technologies and providing them with cultural information about their Arab Nation, as well as introducing them to the most important events, Arab heritage figures, Arab contributions to science and how they enriched human knowledge, the most important tourist and archeological sites in Arab countries and the most popular songs from children’s folklore. This would be in a simplified and attractive manner “in three languages” – Arabic, English and French – in order to give Arab children and children of the world the chance to get acquainted with the rich Arab civilization.

Protecting Children's Rights under Occupation

Towards the end of the 20th Century, when South Africa was the last to be liberated, the world was bidding farewell to this form of loathsome occupation. Countries and peoples of the free world stood by and supported the resistance of that country, the struggle of its liberation movement, and its national leadership in rejecting the occupation of lands, the usurpations of countries, the oppression of people, racism, and exploitation.

At the same time, the Israeli occupation was entrenching itself in the land of Palestine, exercising all forms of oppression and aggression, violating every human right of its peaceful people, and violating every one of the children's right of its innocent children, the same rights that were endorsed by all the countries of the world, and ratified in their charters, declarations and conventions, including Israel's.

In spite of the support of the countries and peoples of the free world for the resistance of this country and its struggle in rejecting the loathsome occupation, an evil alliance among the usurpers of rights, those lost from the truth, and those keeping silence about what is right made the path to the liberation of this country strewn with thousands of bodies of martyrs, many of whom were innocent children, with number increasing day in and day out.

The situation has come to require a humanitarian stand, a shout calling no .. no to killing children and to the premeditated injury of children. There is an impelling need to hold a conference that includes everyone with a free voice and live conscience from all over the world. An international conference to be held anywhere in the world – to be agreed upon – to discuss the rights of the children of Palestine, the means to protect their right to life and to health and social care and education, and to set practical programs for such protection, its mechanism and its guarantee.

And that is in implementation of the decision of the Arab summit meeting (238 Beirut/March 2002)

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