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**APPLICATION DE LA RÉOLUTION 60/251 DE L'ASSEMBLÉE GÉNÉRALE
DU 15 MARS 2006 INTITULÉE «CONSEIL DES DROITS DE L'HOMME»**

**Note verbale datée du 9 mars 2007, adressée au Haut-Commissariat des Nations Unies
aux droits de l'homme par la Mission permanente de la Turquie
auprès de l'Office des Nations Unies à Genève**

La Mission permanente de la République de Turquie auprès de l'Office des Nations Unies à Genève et des autres organisations internationales en Suisse présente ses compliments au Haut-Commissariat des Nations Unies aux droits de l'homme et a l'honneur de lui faire tenir ci-joint le texte des commentaires et observations du Gouvernement de la République de Turquie au sujet du rapport de la Rapporteuse spéciale sur la violence contre les femmes, ses causes et conséquences, M^{me} Yakin Ertürk, sur la mission qu'elle a menée en Turquie du 22 au 31 mai 2006 (A/HRC/4/34/Add.2).

La Mission permanente de la République de Turquie serait reconnaissante au Haut-Commissariat de bien vouloir faire distribuer le texte joint* en tant que document officiel de la quatrième session du Conseil des droits de l'homme.

* L'annexe est reproduite telle qu'elle a été reçue, dans la langue originale seulement.

Annexe

The views of the Government of the Republic of Turkey concerning the report of the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, Its Causes and Consequences, Ms. Yakın Ertürk and Information Note on the steps taken to combat violence against women in Turkey

(Mission to Turkey from 22 to 31 May 2006)

(A/HRC/4/34/Add.2)

1. The Government of the Republic Turkey (hereinafter referred to as “the Government”) welcomes the report of the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, Its Causes and Consequences, Ms Yakın Ertürk, (hereinafter referred to as “the Special Rapporteur”) concerning her mission to Turkey from 22 to 31 May 2006. The Government notes that *“the scope of the report is limited to suicide incidents in terms of geography and substance”* and that it *“focuses solely on issues related to violence against women in the region (South-eastern and Eastern Anatolia) and in Turkey, to the extent linked to suicides of women”*
2. The Government also welcomes the conclusions and recommendations in the report which are being carefully examined by the relevant authorities in Turkey, with a view to planning the course of action necessary for their implementation within the framework of Turkey’s policies to prevent, punish and eradicate violence against women.
3. Violence against women remains a priority issue in Turkey’s human rights agenda. The Government has taken significant steps to combat violence against women over the last couple of years. A lot has been done in this regard, particularly in the period following the mission by the Special Rapporteur. The Government reiterates its commitment that it will continue and strengthen its efforts to combat violence against women.
4. The Government is pleased to inform the Special Rapporteur that her report as well as the recommendations contained therein will be given due consideration within the framework of the road map defined by the Government to prevent, combat and punish violence against women.
5. General framework of the steps recently taken to combat violence against women as well as some comments of the Government relating to the report of the Special Rapporteur are provided herewith.

Turkey’s development policies regarding women

6. In the report it is pointed out that the basic development indicators for women in Turkey today are bleak. It is also stated in the report that *“economic deprivation, coupled with socioeconomic deprivation emanating from traditional patriarchal practices, put the regional underdevelopment disproportionately on the shoulders of women in the region (South-eastern and Eastern Anatolia)”, “their limited access to education, employment, information, health services and justice are major constraints on their citizenship rights, their ability to negotiate the terms of their existence and to obtain redress for their problems”*.

7. Turkey is very well aware of the fact that creating conditions conducive to the empowerment and development of women will significantly contribute to an environment in which women can participate in, contribute to and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development and in which they can fully exercise their fundamental rights and freedoms. With this understanding, women's issues are not only a priority agenda item for Turkey's human rights policies but also addressed as an independent area of concern for policy in the national development plans. In this context, combatting violence against women has also been regarded as a development issue, which is reflected in the Ninth Development Plan covering the period 2007-2013. It should be highlighted that combatting violence against women has been incorporated as an integral component of the development vision foreseen in the Ninth Development Plan.

8. One of the goals envisaged by the Ninth Development Plan is to ensure the active participation of women in economic, social and political spheres, with particular attention to those exposed to poverty and social exclusion. In order to increase the participation of women in the economic and social life, employability of women will be increased by improving vocational education opportunities targeting women. Furthermore, access of women and girls to education, health, housing, social and employment services will be ensured. The Ninth Development Plan also prioritizes measures targeting the reduction of the school drop outs and the increase in the rates of transition to secondary education among girls, particularly in rural areas. Support will be provided to meet the educational needs, particularly of girls in rural areas, coming from low-income households, and their access to education will be facilitated.

9. Another well defined target of the Ninth Development Plan is to prevent violence against and exploitation of women and to increase social awareness in this domain.

10. The above-mentioned goals are, indeed, consistent with the recommendations of the Special Rapporteur addressed to the Government concerning the promotion and advancement of women in Turkey.

The Circular issued by the Prime Ministry on “Measures to Prevent Violence Against Women and Children as well as Honour and Customary (Töre) Killings”

11. With the Circular issued by the Prime Ministry (2006/17), a nation wide campaign has been launched to strengthen the institutional and regulatory framework in order to effectively address the violence against women and children, with a view to eradicating this problem. In 2005, a Parliamentary Inquiry Commission was set up to address this issue. The Commission concluded its work and prepared a comprehensive report concerning the root causes of violence against women and children and submitted recommendations on ways to prevent such violence.

12. The Government fully endorsed the report by the Commission and issued the Circular entitled “Measures to Prevent Violence Against Women and Children as well as Honour and Customary Killings” No. 2006/17, which was promulgated in the Official Gazette dated 4 July 2006, No. 26218.

13. The Circular has established a comprehensive road map on the promotion and advancement of women, strengthening the legal and institutional framework, protection of women at risk as well as measures to prevent violence against women, paying particular

attention to honour/customary killings. The Circular endorsed a cooperative multi-agency and cross-sectoral approach. The aim is to develop a coordinated policy and practice in order to address the problem of violence from a holistic perspective. The specific measures to be taken have been listed under various clusters and the “responsible institution” for each measure has been designated along with the relevant implementation partners in the Circular.

14. It is worth mentioning some of the measures envisaged by the Circular, which overlap with the recommendations of the Special Rapporteur. In this respect, major steps foreseen by the Circular, which are directly relevant to the recommendations of the Special Rapporteur are as follows:

- establishment of a Standing Parliamentary Commission on gender equality,
- introduction of a “Framework Equality Law” as a matter of urgency,
- taking necessary legal and administrative measures for the effective implementation of the principle of equality before the law, enshrined in Article 10 of the Constitution,
- taking necessary steps to overcome the economic inequality between men and women,
- initiating a comprehensive review of the legislation, policies and practices with a view to identifying the those that may have negative impact on gender equality; endorsing positive discrimination for women as a State policy until gender equality is fully transformed into reality,
- introducing necessary amendments to the Law on Political Parties to ensure active participation of women in political life,
- endorsing and implementing positive discrimination in favor of women in employment sector, where necessary,
- undertaking multi-faceted and cross-sectoral activities to promote public awareness on the Law on the Protection of the Family No. 4320; strengthening the protection regime envisaged by the Law with an effective monitoring of its implementation and rectifying the deficiencies with possible amendments to the Law, where necessary,
- rendering supportive services for women in order to enable them to complete their education and to carry out professional activities,
- endorsing prevention of all forms of violence against women as a State policy; mainstreaming this policy into all segments of the administration; setting up a special fund from the budget for this purpose,
- lifting any discriminatory legal provisions amounting to human rights violations against women, particularly in terms of their physical integrity,

- training members of the judicial branch, pedagogists, psychologists and social service experts appointed to the Family and Juvenile Courts, particularly on gender issues; increasing the posts for such staff at these Courts,
- providing support to women related activities of the Public Education Centers affiliated to the Municipalities and Ministry of National Education as well as of the Society Centers affiliated to Social Services and the Child Protection Agency (SHÇEK); encouraging these centers to conduct activities focusing on literacy, human rights of women, gender equality and empowerment of women, in collaboration with relevant non-governmental organizations,
- producing spot films on violence against women and broadcasting them in national, regional and local media within the framework of a nation wide “public awareness campaign”,
- preparation and distribution of brochures and information materials on the prevention of violence against women, by the local administrations,
- increasing public awareness activities of the Directorate for Religious Affairs relating to the prevention of violence against women, through publications, meetings, sermons and special events,
- launching a campaign aimed at raising awareness and sensitivity on violence against women by public institutions and agencies in cooperation with civil society,
- providing financial support to women residing in women shelters; setting up a “Women Support Fund” to contribute to and facilitate the economic empowerment of such women; allocating temporary residences from existing resources for women who leave the women shelters to begin a new life; adopting necessary legislative amendments to allow for in kind and cash support to women residing in shelters run by civil society organizations,
- supporting the active participation of all the relevant stakeholders, including civil society, academia and women research institutes, in drafting laws on women’s issues,
- establishing a “Committee for Monitoring Violence against Women” under the coordination of the General Directorate for the Status of Women,
- establishing measures to eradicate violence against women relating to legal, institutional, educational and cultural spheres within the framework of a national action plan, from a gender sensitive perspective,
- integrating gender sensitive policies into all State plans and programs; maintaining effective coordination among public institutions and agencies; setting up monitoring mechanisms for their implementation and operationalizing the existing mechanisms,
- organizing a nation wide compulsory education on gender equality for the staff of public institutions and agencies, universities and private sector,

- developing an “Action Plan on Violence against Women 2006-2010” under the coordination of State Ministry Responsible for Women, in cooperation with all public institutions and agencies, universities, civil society organizations, private sector and local administration; establishing a mechanism for monitoring the implementation of this Action Plan.
- setting up a “service network model” for maintaining effective coordination of the activities on the prevention of violence against women, carried out by public institutions and agencies, women research institutes of the universities, civil society organizations and local administration,
- increasing the budget allocation for the activities of SHÇEK; bringing the women shelters in line with European Union standards qualitatively and quantitatively,
- reviewing the legislation governing women shelters with a view to improving their standards; setting up new women shelters and monitoring the conditions of the women shelters currently operating,
- preparing guidelines on the procedures to be followed by the law enforcement agencies for victims of violence,
- providing financial and logistic support to the activities of the civil society in establishing and operating women shelters as well as counselling/social centers for women,
- preparing standard question forms by the relevant Ministries in order to compile data on recorded incidents of violence against women and of honour/customary killings; progressively forming a national data base by the Turkish Statistical Institute,
- providing support to the relevant institutions in conducting researches on the root causes of violence against women and its societal implications and in implementing projects aimed at preventing violence against women,
- identifying harmful customs, traditions and social attitudes that have significant implications on violence against women; preparing educational programs aimed at changing these behaviour and attitudes; planning a nation wide educational program on the prevention of domestic violence, anger management, healthy communication among individuals,
- establishing primary and secondary boarding schools for girls in underdeveloped regions where traditional patriarchal practices are prevalent,
- preparing educational programs targeting the transformation of mentality on violence against women to be implemented in military service, mosques, social centers and work places where men are mostly employed,
- launching a nation wide information campaign to raise awareness among women on counselling and support centers rendering services and care for victims of violence,

- integrating the issue of violence against women into the internal training programs of the health staff, judiciary, law enforcement agencies, teachers, social service experts, psychologist, child development experts and other relevant occupations.
- establishing special units for victims of violence in all health institutions; equipping them with necessary infrastructure, capabilities and support staff,
- developing public messages on the negative impacts of the societal structures based on traditional gender roles and stereotypes as well as patriarchal order and disseminating them through textbooks, films, media, daily public discourse, sermons and academic works,
- organization of public awareness activities by the Directorate for Religious Affairs on honour/customary killings, negative impacts of traditional gender roles and stereotypes as well as patriarchal order,
- organizing joint campaigns on honour/customary killings, that target both men and women, in cooperation with the relevant public institutions, civil society and local administration; developing programs on the promotion of self-expression, communication and problem solving techniques targeting men and women,
- production of spot films on prevention of honour/customary killings,
- finding ways to challenge and overcome the traditional stereotypes and understandings dominant in the society on “customs” (töre) and the concept of “honour” (namus)
- developing a national “Action Plan on the Prevention of Honour/customary Killings 2006-2010” which would include all relevant public institutions and non governmental organizations and monitoring its implementation,
- setting up a nation wide help line which would operate 24 hours,
- establishing committees for the prevention of honour/customary killings at the local level consisting of representatives from the Office of the Governor, Security, Gendarmerie, Universities, civil society organizations, municipalities and office of mufti,

15. The overall coordination of the implementation of the Circular in terms of the measures on prevention of violence against women and of honour/customary killings, has been entrusted with the General Directorate for Status of Women (GDSW). The implementing/responsible agencies are required to present their quarterly activity report to the national coordinator (GDSW).

16. The “responsible institutions” designated in the Circular have prepared their own road maps to implement the measures foreseen in the Circular. They have reported to GDSW their plans as well as activities already undertaken for the implementation of the Circular. The first two periodic reports (July – September 2006, October-December 2006) are published on the web-page of GDSW and can be accessed on the internet at “www.ksgm.gov.tr”. These progress reports demonstrate that prevention of violence against women and of honour/customary killings

have been mainstreamed into policies, programs and plans of the relevant public institutions. It is worth referring to some of the steps already undertaken by the relevant “responsible institutions”, which are significant to the recommendations of the Special Rapporteur.

National Action Plan 2007-2010

17. Preparatory work has begun for the preparation of a “National Action Plan 2007-2010” defining concrete measures on the legal, institutional, educational and cultural framework for the prevention of violence against women and honour/customary killings. The activities on the preparation of National Action Plan will be carried out under the “Institutional Capacity Building Component” of the “Gender Equality Project 2007-2008” undertaken within the framework of the EU Pre-Accession Financial Assistance.

18. Combatting violence against women is an integral component of the “Gender Equality Project 2007-2008”. In this framework, qualitative and quantitative field research on the root causes and consequences of domestic violence against women, will be undertaken. On the basis of the findings and conclusions of this research, a comprehensive National Action Plan on the prevention of violence against women will be developed. In order to monitor the progress in practice, a database and service models, as well as various awareness and professional training program modules will be developed. For this purpose, the first consultation meeting with the relevant stakeholders was held on 22 February 2007. On this occasion, the purposes of the project and contemplated activities were publicly announced. The “Institutional Capacity Building Component” of the project became operational in March 2007.

Steps taken by the Ministry of the Interior

19. The Ministry of the Interior issued a Circular on “the Coordination of Measures on the Prevention of Honour and Customary Killings”(dated 11.01.2007 and No. 6) addressed to all the Offices of the Governors. The Circular envisages the following measures to be taken:

- Complaints of women and children subjected to violence lodged with the law enforcement agencies as well as the situation of those identified ex officio by the law enforcement officials, shall be dealt with urgently by women staff to the extent possible, with due diligence and sensitivity.
- Judicial proceedings regarding the complaints or applications on violence against women shall be reported to the Public Prosecutors at all stages.
- In places where there is no women shelter affiliated to SHÇEK, the Municipalities shall immediately set up new women/child shelters.
- Committees shall be established in provinces chaired by Governors or deputy governors as well as in districts chaired by the district governor to address honour/customary killings and implement necessary measures to prevent such crimes.
- All forms of protective measures shall be taken to protect women and children who complain that they are facing the risk of being a victim of honour/customary killings

as well as those facing domestic violence, as a matter of urgency and in cooperation with the relevant social service units, strictly observing the principle of confidentiality.

- Until the victims of violence are safely placed in appropriate shelters, all their needs including inter alia accommodation, food, treatment and transportation, shall be met from available funds of the relevant institutions, as a matter of urgency,
- In places where there is no shelter, women who inform the authorities that they are facing the risk of honour/customary killing, shall be immediately provided with protection; the relevant social services units will be immediately informed of this situation,
- The places of temporary accommodation and protection for victims shall be identified in advance in regions where there is no shelter. The law enforcement agencies shall be informed of the addresses of such places. Confidentiality shall be strictly observed. The law enforcement officials shall be present during the transfer of the victims, if deemed necessary.
- Events for raising public awareness aimed at overcoming the prejudices and traditional understandings of honour and customs shall be organized.
- Special professional training shall be given to the law enforcement officials who take part in the investigations on violence against women and honour/customary killings.

20. The General Directorate for Local Administrations of the Ministry of the Interior initiated a project for the establishment of new shelters for women subjected to violence in 8 municipalities in the period of 2007-2008.

The Draft Law Amending the Law on the Protection of the Family

21. In paragraph 65 of the report, it is stated that the Law on the Protection of the Family No. 4320 “*has not lived up to the high expectations and seems to be rarely used.*” It is indicated that “*the courts fail to enforce the protective orders*” issued in accordance with the Law No. 4320.

22. The Law No. 4320, which entered into force on 17 January 1998, was adopted for the purpose of preventing domestic violence as well as protecting the abused spouses and other family members against such violence through protective court orders. However, over the years it has been observed that shortcomings and deficiencies do exist in the implementation of this Law. The report of the Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry on Honour Killings as well as the Prime Minister’s Circular No. 2006/17 have concurred that the deficiencies of the Law No. 4320 should be rectified by introducing necessary amendments to the Law with a view to strengthening the protection against domestic violence. Therefore, General Directorate for Status of Women (GDSW) initiated a series of consultations with the relevant public institutions, lawyers and civil society organizations. As a result of these consultations, a draft law has been prepared to amend the Law No. 4320, which is currently being considered by the Turkish Grand National Assembly.

23. The most significant amendment introduced by the draft Law is the expansion of the definition of “victim of domestic violence” to include all family members facing domestic violence, regardless of living in the same household with perpetrator of violence or not. In this respect, the amendment offers protection to spouses, children and other family members living in the same household with the perpetrators of violence as well as those who are not living under the same roof with the abusers due to divorce or separation.

24. The draft Law also expands the scope of the protective measures, to include inter alia, the referral of the abuser to a health institution for examination and, treatment or rehabilitation if deemed necessary.

25. The draft Law amends the relevant provisions of the Law No. 4320 governing temporary alimony awarded to victims of domestic violence in need of economic support for maintenance when protective measures are in force. The amendment clarifies that temporary alimony will be ordered by the court ex officio, provided that the victim has not already been awarded alimony in accordance with the Turkish Civil Code.

26. The draft Law envisages that the applications for protective measures as well as the proceedings relating to the enforcement of protective orders are free of charge.

27. The draft Law introduces new provisions for monitoring the enforcement of protective measures. In this respect, it envisages that the court submits a copy of the protective order to the Public Prosecutor, who is entrusted with monitoring the implementation of the order through the law enforcement authorities. In case of non-compliance, the law enforcement authorities will investigate the situation ex officio and immediately inform the Public Prosecutor of any violation of the court order. The Public Prosecutor will initiate legal proceedings before the justice of the peace against the abuser who has not complied with the court order. The court may sentence the perpetrator from three to six months imprisonment in cases of non-compliance with the court order.

Training of the Law Enforcement Officials

28. In order to ensure the effective implementation of the protective orders by the court and immediately act upon the situations of non-compliance, it is targeted that the law enforcement officials at all levels assume a more visible and active role in enforcing preventive and protective measures. For this purpose, a Protocol on the “Project for Training on the Role of the Police in the Prevention of Violence against Women and Procedures to be Followed” was signed between GDSW and the Ministry of the Interior on 26 December 2006. Within the framework of the Protocol, 40,400 law enforcement officials from 921 police headquarters and 276 police stations will attend a training program. The program includes courses on gender equality, the Law on the Protection of the Family No. 4320 and its implementation, judicial and administrative proceedings relating to violence against women, measures to be taken and duties conferred under the relevant legislations and the Circulars regarding the protection of victims, and ways to raise awareness and sensitivity on the relevant legislative framework.

29. Within the framework of the “Project for Training on the Role of the Police in the Prevention of Violence against Women and Procedures to be Followed”, a group of trainers will be formed in the regional centers (designated as the provinces of İstanbul, Ankara, İzmir,

Diyarbakır, Erzurum, Samsun, Bursa, Kayseri, Adana and Antalya and provincial districts) in the first phase. In the second phase, the trainers will train the staff of the Provincial Directorates for Security, Police Stations, and Police Headquarters.

30. Furthermore, necessary steps are being taken to include the issues of gender equality, women's rights, violence against women and honour/customary killings in the curriculum of the Police Academies, Police Colleges and Police Schools.

31. In accordance with an agreement concluded between GDSW and Turkish General Staff, the training program for soldiers and non-commissioned officers shall include "education of girls, the participation of women in decision-making and economic life, honour/customary killings, gender equality, violence against women". GDSW has provided Turkish General Staff with the educational materials on these subjects.

Steps taken by the Ministry of Justice

32. To date, 56 psychologist, 56 pedagogist and 21 social workers have been appointed to the Family Courts established pursuant to the Law No. 4787. A comprehensive analysis on human resources for the Family Courts have been made and the needs for new staff and posts have been identified, giving due consideration to the work load of these courts. Accordingly, employment of further 178 personnel, consisting of 50 psychologist, 47 pedagogist and 81 social workers have been planned. The necessary proceedings for the employment of these personnel have already begun.

33. Increased participation of judges and prosecutors in training programs on the rights of women, violence against women and children, will be ensured through cooperation with the European Union, other relevant organizations and state institutions.

34. Data on the recorded incidents of honour/customary killings and violence against women are being collected on a daily basis in the pool created by the "National Justice Network Project". The implementation deficit can only be addressed if it is known and documented. For this reason, it is necessary to institute systematic data collection that will permit analysis, tracking outcomes of reporting, recording, investigating, prosecuting and convicting violence against women. With this understanding, National Justice Network Project will be advanced horizontally and vertically, in order to collect more systematic data on cases of violence against women and honour/customary killings and to make them available for a nation wide use.

35. The Ministry of Justice has issued a Circular addressed to the public prosecutors, which envisages the following measures to be taken:

- Public Prosecutors shall immediately launch investigations into the incidents of domestic violence whether reported or acknowledged by other means; the judge of the Family Court shall be immediately informed of this situation to render protection order.
- Public Prosecutors shall monitor the implementation of the court-issued protection orders in close cooperation with the law enforcement officials.

- Judicial proceedings shall be immediately initiated for those who do not comply with the court orders.

Steps taken by the Ministry of Health

36. “Crisis Intervention Centers” have been established in the emergency rooms of the State Hospitals in 32 provinces within the framework of the “Program for Psychosocial Support in Cases of Suicide Attempts and Crisis Intervention in Emergency Rooms” as part of the suicide prevention initiatives of the Ministry of Health. These centers provide services to patients injured in cases of suicide attempts and other crisis as well as incidents of domestic violence and abuse. A new program on “dialogue with fathers” is being implemented by the Centers. The purpose of this dialogue is to provide fathers with information on family health and women’s issues. Such a dialogue also enables the Center to inquire about the domestic conditions conducive to risk factors for violence. All meetings and consultations with fathers are recorded by the Center. Follow-up on dialogue is pursued, if deemed necessary.

37. Within the framework of the “Program for Psychosocial Support in Cases of Suicide Attempts and Crisis Intervention in Emergency Room” educational activities are being carried out in the 1st and 2nd pilot provinces. The issue of domestic violence has been included in the courses of these educational programs. The health workers and professionals of the Emergency Rooms at the State Hospitals in 32 provinces have received special trainings on crisis, violence, identification of domestic violence, principles on intervention and distinction of cases that should be directed to the Crisis Intervention Centers. Training of the new staff will continue on a periodical basis.

38. Plans are under way to increase the numbers of the Crisis Intervention Centers nation wide in 2007-2008.

39. With the aim of overcoming and changing harmful customs and traditions in family relations, a new educational program for 2007-2008 is being prepared. Within this framework, brochures and information materials entitled “communication in marriage” will be published and distributed this year.

Steps taken by the Directorate for Religious Affairs

40. 17 sermons on the prevention of violence against women and children, have been made nation wide.

41. On the occasion of 25 November 2006 “International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women”, public awareness activities were carried out in many provinces by the Directorate for Religious Affairs.

42. 47 staff received special educational training on the issues of violence against women and children and honour/customary killings. The training program included lectures on the duties, functions and responsibilities of GDSW, the new Civil Code from the perspective of women’s rights, honour/customary killings and gender equality.

43. A Counselling unit for women has been established.

44. Internal consultation meetings were organized to explain the measures envisaged by the Circular (2006/17) to the staff.

45. Public awareness activities on the prevention of violence against women will continue to be carried out regularly. Public events, seminars and other activities for the prevention of violence against women will be organized on special occasions such as the International Women's Day, Mothers Day and International Family Day.

Steps taken by the General Directorate for Family and Social Studies

46. "Mother-Father School Seminars" are being carried out in cooperation with the local administrations. The seminars aim at providing guidance on healthy family relations and communication under various topics. New plans are under way to institutionalize these seminars through a project called "Development of Mother-Father School Project". This project targets disadvantaged families, with particular focus individuals subjected to domestic violence. In the first phase of the project (2007), a field research will be carried out in order to identify the needs, expectations and proposals on family education in Turkey. In the second phase (2008), necessary educational materials will be prepared on the basis of the findings of the research. On-line education is also being designed as a part of this project.

Establishment of a Committee for Monitoring Violence Against Women

47. Efforts to set up and institutionalize a "Committee for Monitoring Violence Against Women" are under way. The Committee which will be chaired by the State Minister Responsible for Women and Family, will consist of members from the relevant public institutions and agencies, universities and civil society organizations. The first meeting of the Committee is scheduled for 14 March 2004.

Public Awareness Activities

48. The Government has initiated a cross-sectoral awareness-raising campaign to prevent violence against women, disseminate information to women on their rights and on the protection against violence, and provide targeted education and training for professionals. Some of the awareness raising activities were referred to above.

49. Furthermore, stickers stating "Stop Violence Against Women" were widely displayed in shops on various occasions. The stickers were placed near the firm/trademark/price labels on clothing products in shops, in cooperation with the Turkish Clothing Manufacturers' Association. During the week of "25 November International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women" posters with themes on "Stop Violence Against Women" were displayed in the shop windows in shopping centers. Same posters were also widely displayed during the week of 25 November in public places in Ankara and İstanbul, in cooperation with the Municipalities.

50. National and local television channels began broadcasting spot films in which the Prime Minister, the State Minister Responsible for Women and Family, President of the Directorate for Religious Affairs and General Director for Status of Women deliver public messages on the prevention of violence against women.

51. The report of the Parliamentary Inquiry Commission concerning the root causes of violence against women and of honour/customary killings and measures to combat this problem, was published in December 2006 and widely distributed to the deputies, relevant public institutions and agencies, governors, local administrations, universities, civil society, private sector and media.

Council of Europe Campaign to Combat Violence Against Women, Including Domestic Violence (2006-2008)

52. Turkey is actively participating in the “Council of Europe Campaign to Combat Violence Against Women, Including Domestic Violence”. A Turkish academician Prof. Dr. Feride Acar from the Middle East Technical University has been appointed to the Task Force set up in accordance with the Action Plan adopted at the Council of Europe Third Summit.

53. A Turkish delegation headed by the State Minister participated in the launch of the Campaign held in Madrid on 27 November 2006.

54. A “High Level Official”, “Contact Point and “Parliamentary Liaison Official” were designated at the national level for the implementation of the Campaign.

55. Turkey is planning to provide financial contribution to the Campaign.

Paragraph 18 of the report

56. In paragraph 18 of the report, it is stated that “In its attacks, the PKK has often targeted central State institutions such as schools and health centres, which has meant no schooling for many children in the region”.

57. The Government would like to stress that the terrorist organization PKK/KADEK/KONGRA-GEL has targeted the educational institutions and teachers in order to recruit school-age children, thus, aimed for high prevalence of illiteracy which is the main cause of poverty and underdevelopment of the region. The terrorist organization PKK/KADEK/KONGRA-GEL targeted hundreds of rural schools, destroying the entire rural education system in the region. By the end of 1990s, thousands of schools were closed and tens of thousands of students were annually deprived of receiving education. The illiteracy rates in south-eastern Turkey that rose sharply as a result of this development remain high even today. As referred to above, the Government is committed to addressing this problem and has stepped up its efforts to ensure that children in this region can effectively exercise their right to education, through well defined measures targeting particularly the girls in the region.

Paragraph 22 of the report

58. In paragraph 22 of the report, it is indicated that women recruited by the terrorist organization PKK/KADEK/KONGRA-GEL have been targeted by the security forces. The Government would like to stress that the terrorist organization PKK/KADEK/KONGRA-GEL abuses the pressure against women and girls in the region with the promise of freedom in order to recruit them, as a result of which they fall victim to another patriarchal pressure exerted this time by the terrorist organization PKK/KADEK/KONGRA-GEL. In this respect, women and

girls recruited by the terrorist organizations are primarily the victims of such terrorist organizations, not of the states.

Paragraph 28 of the report

59. In paragraph 28 of the report reference is made to the Civil Code regarding the legal age of marriage. For the sake of clarification, Article 124 of the Civil Code states that men and women can not marry until they complete the age of 17 and under extraordinary circumstances and due to very important reasons women and men, who have completed the age of 16, can marry with the special permission of the judge.

References to the term “conflict” in the report

60. In the report, Turkey’s fight against terrorism has been described as “conflict”. It should be highlighted that Turkey’s legitimate fight against the terrorist organization PKK/KADEK/KONGRA-GEL in order to protect the very basic human right, the right to life of its citizens, is not a “political or military conflict” and should not be regarded as such.
