



MINISTER OF JUSTICE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

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**INTERIM BOARD CHAIR OF
GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP TO
END VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN
MS. ELISABETH DAHLIN**

Yerevan, 22 January, 2018

Dear Ms. Dahlin,

With this letter allow me to express our deep appreciation of joining efforts in a Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children worldwide. Violence against children is a global problem, growing and taking new forms in the digital age.

The Government of the Republic of Armenia has always been dedicated to the cause of ending violence against children. Armenia ratified the UNCRC in 1993, and its two optional protocols in 2005. In 2012, Armenia joined the Global Alliance Against Child Sexual Abuse Online, and in 2017, restated its participation in We Protect Global Alliance to End Child Sexual Exploitation Online. The Government of Armenia has a long-lasting record of positive and fruitful cooperation with UNICEF Office in Armenia, with violence against children being one of the priorities of our cooperation and action.

In line with these international commitments, many actions have been taken at national legislation and policy level to address the issue of prevention and response to violence against children in Armenia. Back in 1996, Armenia adopted the Law on the Rights of the Child, which specifically prohibits all forms of violence against children, including violent disciplining by parents. The Criminal Code and the Code of Administrative Offences provide for respective sanctions. A new law on Prevention of Domestic Violence and Protection of Victims of Domestic Violence has been recently adopted by the Parliament.

In addition to the legislative framework, there is also policy framework – National Strategy of the Protection of the Rights of the Child, adopted by the Government and outlining the priorities for the 2017-2021 period.

The Council on Access to Justice for Children, a new interdisciplinary multiagency body, was established in 2016 to coordinate and promote the state policy in the field of the rights of children in contact with the law, including the issues of violence against children. The Council is chaired by the Deputy Minister of Justice of the Republic of Armenia, and the designated Ministry of Justice staff covers the functions of Secretariat of the Council. The Council includes representatives from all relevant state agencies– the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Healthcare, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Police, the Investigative Committee, the Judiciary, the National Statistical Service and representatives of civil society organisations and now also business.

The main function of the Council is to serve as a multi-sectorial and multi-stakeholder platform for sharing and discussing legal, policy and implementation issues and defining priorities related to the rights of children in contact with the law and violence against children. The main function of the Council is to coordinate the activities of different state actors in an effort to effectively combat violence against children, in close cooperation with the civil society. The Council was established and is enhancing in close collaboration with the UNICEF Office in Armenia.

The Council's priorities for 2018 include acceleration of policy measures to address gaps in data on access to justice for children, development of a roadmap and an action plan to tackle different forms of violence against children such as violence in the family and online violence, as well as meeting the needs of children - victims and witnesses of violence. Taking note of Armenia's international commitments and national priority to achieve better protection of the right of the child to life free of violence, we hereby express our interest in becoming a pathfinding country within the End Violence Against Children Global Partnership. We strongly believe that accession to the End Violence Against Children Global Partnership as a pathfinding country and sharing experience with other pathfinding countries will contribute to the further progress in addressing the gaps and developing relevant policies and practices for more effective and efficient prevention and response to violence, eventually leading to significant decrease in violence against children in Armenia and worldwide.

Let me also take this chance to assure you that the Ministry of Justice, in its role of chairing and serving as Secretariat for the Council, expresses its commitment to further enhance its coordination role of bringing stakeholders together and moving the pathfinding process forward.

Mr. Suren Krmoyan, Deputy Minister of Justice and the Chair of the Council on Access to Justice for Children of Armenia, is authorized to act in the capacity of the focal point for issues related to accession to the partnership and further coordination of the process of becoming a pathfinding country. He can be contacted at suren.krmoyan@justice.am.

Let me avail myself of this opportunity to once again express our deepest gratitude and appreciation of the work of UNICEF for the benefit of children of the world. We are looking forward to continuous fruitful cooperation in the future.

BEST REGARDS,

DAVIT HARUTYUNYAN



CC: Ms. Susan Bissell

Director of End Violence Against Children Global Partnership

Mrs. Tanja Radocaj

Representative of the UN Children's Fund in Armenia