

Honorable government representatives,
Distinguished delegates,

On behalf of my Minister, first of all, I would like to express the pleasure of being with such a distinguished audience here.

"National Plan of Action on Ageing and the Situation of Elderly People in Turkey" was adopted in 2007 in line with "2002 International Action Plan on Ageing" that was adopted in Madrid in 2002. The Action Plan underlines the current situation of elderly people in Turkey and covers targets that can be achieved in short, medium or long term and fundamental actions to be taken in order to reach these targets in line with the international commitments. With the intention of implementing the activities embedded in the Action Plan and determining the priority levels of the actions to be taken, "Implementation Programme of National Plan of Action on Ageing" was drafted.

The action recommendations are categorized in 3 priority areas. They are namely:

- elderly people and development
- enhancement of well being and health in old age
- and providing secured, facilitating and supportive environments.

With the purpose of ensuring equal, full and active participation of elderly people into social life, the tasks of coordinating activities on preparing national policies and strategies aimed at elderly people; carrying out social service or welfare activities for elderly people and building coordination and collaboration among all related public institutions or organizations were given to General Directorate of Services for Persons with Disabilities and Elderly People. For the first time in Turkey, services for elderly people were organized under a General Directorate in a Ministry in 2011. This shows us the importance given to this field in our country.

Practices for the well being of elderly persons show variety in Turkey. Within the scope of social insurances and general health insurance, elderly persons are paid old age pension either in a month long recess or in full payment. The other arrangements for elderly persons are provided within non-contributory social security system. All deprived, vulnerable or lonely Turkish Citizens over 65 ages have been entitled a monthly minimum wage by the Ministry of Family and Social Policies. As a requirement of the principle of "Social State" , old age pensioners are not expected to pay any premiums.

With our new care approach, institution oriented services will be ceased and mobile service concept including home care or nursing at home will be adopted. With this understanding, we aim to provide care services at usual surrounding of elderly persons within their family structure.

We can summarize some of the latest programs held in Turkey is as follows:

- Project funds are supplied by the government to ensure that all segments, primarily including the central administration, local governments and NGO work in coordination in the implementation policies for older people.
- To increase the number and quality of qualified staff in the area of social services for elderly, Public Education Centers are organized to train the staff in certain certificate programmes.
- The curriculums are reorganized in the universities to have a more qualified staff in elderly

services.

- Some regulations are made in the law of local governments, in order to make them serve more actively for elderly services.
- Research programmes are encouraged in the universities for elderly issues.
- To lessen the gap between the older people living in the developed and less developed parts of the country, supportive projects are funded by the government.
- To provide the active participation of older people to economic, social and cultural programs, councils of local authorities are reorganized, board members of private and civil sectors are regulated by laws.
- For awareness for active ageing, universities, NGOs, local and central authorities are encouraged to organize programmes.
- For accessibility and active participation, "age friendly cities" program is started to implement.
- Young generation at school is encouraged to participate in voluntary organizations for older people.
- Cultural activities, social activities are served in reduced prices for older people.
- Free or reduced transportation is supplied for people over 65 in many cities of the country.
- For the full participation of elderly people in the decision making process, "Elderly Branches" are formed under political parties.
- As the statistics shows us that in the following twenty years, the dependent population will decrease and the working population will increase in return. Therefore, we plan for the fund of social security institutions.
- As a young but ageing country, Turkey has started to strengthen the social security systems.

Before I end my speech, I would like to extend my deepest thanks to the organizing committee of this Ministerial Conference Meeting. Not an official call but as a strong wish of my Ministry, we would like to hold the next Ministerial Meeting of UNECE in Istanbul, Turkey.

Thank you very much for your attention.