

## **Reply to the questionnaire on children's rights and inclusive social protection**

Omani legislation came to meet the aspects of care, protection and development of childhood in accordance with the human rights approach. This is represented in the Basic Law of the State as well as in various legislations, most notably the Child Law promulgated by Royal Decree No. (22/2014), as well as the ratification and accession to international conventions related to human rights in general and children's rights in general. Special, in addition to many legislations and laws that provide protection for the child.

It is worth noting that the Sultanate has made distinguished efforts to protect children from abuse and exploitation, and this interest is represented in the establishment of a number of mechanisms such as the Department of Child Affairs concerned with following up the rights of the child, the Department of Family Protection, the Department of Family Counseling, the Child Welfare Center concerned with caring for children who lack family support, and Dar Al-Wifaq. Among its specializations are the protection of children from abuse, the formation of child protection committees in all governorates of the Sultanate, and the establishment of a child protection telephone line via the number (1100). Training and reference guides have also been issued to protect children exposed to violence and abuse, and a national team of trainers has been prepared in the field of child protection, in addition to awareness programs in the field of protection. (All these mechanisms are affiliated with the Ministry of Social Development and with the participation of a number of relevant authorities, for example: , Ministry of Education, Public Prosecution, Royal Oman Police, NGOs).

### **Question 1: What social protection systems are in place for children in your country?**

Laws and legislation have been enacted to protect the rights of the child and empowerment in all fields, and the Basic Law of the State promulgated by Royal Decree No. (6/2021), in Article No. (15) emphasized the importance of promoting

social principles, and stipulated that “the family is the basis of society, and its foundation is religion.” Ethics and patriotism, and the state works to ensure their cohesion, stability, and consolidation of their values, and the state guarantees the achievement of equality between women and men, and is committed to caring for children, persons with disabilities, youth, and adolescents, as indicated by the law.

- The Child Law was promulgated by Royal Decree No. (22/2014), where the law guarantees - within social rights - the right of the child to survive and grow within a cohesive and solidarity-based family, and his right to maintain personal relationships and direct contacts on a regular basis with his parents.

All children residing in the Sultanate benefit from the applications of this law, regardless of their nationality or the nature of their residence, and all authorities concerned with childhood seek to invest its gains in organizing its affairs. A large space has been allocated for penalties designed to combat various types of domestic violence and abuse that children are victims of, as the chapters of from the second to the seventh, civil, health, social, educational, cultural, and economic rights, then the rest of the chapters are devoted to criminal accountability, protection measures and mechanisms, and civil penalties and compensation.

The law also came to establish the right of the child to enjoy a decent life in accordance with Article No. (28), which affirmed that “the child has the right to an adequate standard of living that meets the requirements of his physical, mental, psychological and social development, and it is the responsibility of the parents or guardian, as the case may be, to secure this standard of living in Limits of their capabilities and abilities. The state guarantees the fulfillment of the parents or guardian’s obligation to spend on the child by collecting child support from any of them when necessary in accordance with the provisions of the Personal Status Law.”

Article No. (7) of the Children’s Law guarantees the child’s right to protection from violence, exploitation, and abuse, and to decent humane treatment that preserves his dignity, reputation, and honor. The state guarantees him the enjoyment of this right by all available means. Every person, especially doctors, nurses and guardians, engages in, promotes or assists in traditional practices harmful to the health of the child, and in accordance with the provision of Article No. (67) of the aforementioned Child Law - whoever performs these practices shall be punished

with a prison sentence of no less than (6) six months and not exceeding (3) three years, provided that the penalty is doubled in its minimum and maximum limits in case of recurrence.

- The issuance of the executive regulations of the Child Law by Ministerial Resolution No. (125/2019), which included (131) articles divided into (6) six chapters, including definitions, areas of child protection, foster care, alternative care, family custody, protection mechanisms, and penalties. There are two chapters that contain several branches, namely, the third chapter on the nursery home, and the fourth chapter on alternative care and family custody. The list included many of the rights guaranteed by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its two Optional Protocols.

- Social Security Law: It is one of the components of the social safety net in the Sultanate of Oman, regulated by the law issued by Royal Decree No. (87/84) and its amendments, according to which monthly pensions are paid to groups that do not have sufficient income for living and do not have a breadwinner who is able to spend, in addition to Other aids and privileges include categories (disability cases, orphans, families of prisoners, abandonment cases)

- The aid regulation issued by Ministerial Resolution 72/2014, which is temporary cash and in-kind assistance, aid in special cases, aid in emergency cases, and aid in cases of damage to families and individuals, according to the aid regulation issued by Ministerial Resolution No. (72/2014).

- The Juvenile Accountability Law promulgated by Royal Decree No. (30/2008).

The National Committee for Family Affairs: Its system was issued by Royal Decree No. (12/2007), and it is a committee concerned with drawing up general policies and programs for family care in various fields related to the family, women and children. Based on Ministerial Resolution No. (146/2012), the executive regulations for the National Committee system were issued. For family affairs, Ministerial Resolution No. (300/2012) was issued regarding its technical secretariat.

- A committee to follow up the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which was formed by Ministerial Resolution No. (9/2001), and was reconstituted by Ministerial Resolution (155/2021), as its membership included a number of government agencies and civil society institutions.

The Committee for Follow-up on the Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child follows up on the rights of the child in the Sultanate through its tasks, including: monitoring national efforts in the field of childhood, following up on the implementation of the Child Law, following up on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, implementing cultural, educational and media programs for childhood, and setting up the necessary mechanisms and programs to decide on protection. comprehensive for all children, and contribute to spreading awareness among all segments of society about the principles of the Convention, and prepare national and international reports on the Convention and the two Optional Protocols.

- Based on the Child Law, child protection committees were formed in accordance with Ministerial Resolution No. 168/2015 AD. The committees are specialized in receiving complaints and reports about any violations of children's rights, and about cases of child exposure to violence, exploitation or abuse.

- Child Protection Line (1100): It was launched in January 2017 and is a free 24-hour hotline that receives reports from children or their representatives or other persons about the exposure of these children to abuse or danger.

The call center was launched on the number (1555) in August 2022, as it provides general inquiries, inquiries about requests, submission of reports of child abuse, beggary reports, in addition to providing family counseling and counseling services, and receiving suggestions and complaints.

- Child meeting Halls: This was opened in January 2017, then the experience began to be activated and circulated in all governorates, to be added to the child protection mechanisms to achieve his best interest, which are places equipped with a set of educational and recreational means, qualified to receive children's meetings with their divorced / separated parents in the best conditions.

Child protection delegates: The appointment of protection delegates came in accordance with Ministerial Resolution No. (43/2016), and they are distributed in all governorates of the Sultanate. They are entrusted with implementing the provisions of the Child Law and laws related to the protection of children from abuse, by receiving complaints and reports on violations of children's rights and

cases of children being subjected to violence, abuse, or exploitation, and taking the necessary measures.

- A team of trainers in the field of child protection: The Ministry selected a number of specialists from various governorates of the Sultanate and prepared them to be trainers in the field of child protection.

- My Protection page: It serves as a corner in which topics related to childhood are presented in general, and ways to protect children from the various patterns and forms of abuse in particular. The page provides an opportunity for users to learn about the social dimensions of wrong family practices.

- In addition to the enactment of laws and legislation to confront domestic violence, there is a set of parallel measures that address these issues therapeutically and preventively, including prevention through counseling and guidance for victims, or potential victims of domestic violence, and on the other hand, through awareness campaigns that are held on a large scale. Then treatment by receiving the victims, caring for them, and rehabilitating them, such as women and children subjected to abuse, and at a later stage, providing the appropriate family atmosphere for the reintegration of these victims.

The Ministry of Social Development has allocated telephone numbers to receive calls reporting the presence of children beggars on their own or with a member of their family. These reports are dealt with by the "begging team", where the adult is arrested and legal measures are taken against them, and the children are placed in the temporary care home. "Dar Al-Wefaq" to provide them with various forms of care and attention until the end of the legal procedures, and to reform the family's conditions and support it financially and morally, in coordination between the Ministry and other parties related to social work / governmental and private.

- Carrying out awareness campaigns in schools, clubs, universities, and other centers that gather children and youth; And keenness to benefit from the efforts and experiences in the field of child protection, and to exchange them between specialists working in the field, and those with specialization in related fields, parents, and caregivers.

**Question 2: What are the main gaps and challenges facing children's enjoyment of social protection in law, policy and practice in your country and their implications for children's rights?**

The issuance of the Children's Law and its implementing regulations was a response to the challenges posed in activating the rights of the child in an effective and appropriate manner without discrimination. Therefore, they constitute a reference and organizational framework in all procedures related to the protection of rights within social protection, in addition to the relevant laws and legislations and international agreements and treaties in this regard.

**Question 3: What good practices has the government started to ensure that social protection benefits children's rights in your country?**

- The vision of "Oman 2040" has become a guide for all activities, initiatives, policies, programs, and subsequent legislation at various levels, and for all groups and social strata, including children. Among its national priorities is welfare and social protection, and that the strategic direction of this priority is that the cohesion and strength of societies and the achievement of community peace requires achieving social justice by maintaining the sustainability and quality of social welfare services, such as providing social safety nets and family and youth support programs.

The Social Work Strategy (2016-2025) is of an interconnected nature that takes advantage of the past, to improve the quality of social life today, and to anticipate the future.

- The National Childhood Strategy (2016-2025), which relied on a human rights-based approach and a human rights approach to guarantee the rights of the child.
- The nature of Omani society characterized by the spirit of family bonding and social solidarity, the existence of an active civil sector, and the readiness of all

sectors for integrated work within the framework of social policies and strategies in force.

**Question 4: Are there examples of how measures and responses have been taken to alleviate poverty through emergency social protection systems?**

- Government support for the most needy groups (the disabled and sick, orphaned children and the like, families of prisoners, families abandoned by the head of the family, destitute families, the elderly, unmarried women, divorced women and widows...) where monthly salaries are allocated to these groups "under the umbrella Social Security Law" (87/84), and also benefit from material and in-kind assistance provided by civil associations and voluntary charitable institutions.

- The aid regulation issued by Ministerial Resolution 72/2014, which is temporary cash and in-kind assistance, aid in special cases, aid in emergency cases, and assistance in case of harm to families and individuals in need, according to the aid regulation issued by Ministerial Resolution No. (72/2014 AD)

Allocating material and in-kind assistance to individuals and families affected by accidents and disasters, and these programs and activities are organized in accordance with the aid regulations issued by Ministerial Resolution No. (72/2014), and one of the most recent examples of this is the "Tropical Shaheen" that the Sultanate of Oman was exposed to in 2021, where they joined hands the government's efforts represented by the National Emergency Management Committee, along with the efforts of civil society organizations, the private sector, and citizens, in confronting the effects of the situation and providing support to all those affected.