**The main measures taken by Saudi Arabia in order to protect children from all forms of violence or exploitation**

This paper incorporates the main measures taken to protect children from all forms of violence and exploitation, including sexual exploitation. It has been developed for the purposes of the report to be submitted by the Special Rapporteur on the sale and sexual exploitation of children, including child prostitution, child pornography and other child sexual abuse material, to the 77th session of the UN General Assembly in October 2022.

1. Saudi Arabia’s laws prohibit all forms of abuse against children, including sales or exploitation. The issuance of the Child Protection Law by Royal Decree M/14 dated 25/11/2014, represents a comprehensive legal framework for the protection of children under 18 years from abuse and neglect. Several acts constitute abuse or neglect of the child, including causing of education interruption, mistreatment, harassment, or exposing to exploitation, using words offensive to his dignity, and discrimination against him for any reason. Article (9) of the law states that “A child may not be sexually exploited nor exposed to any form of sexual exploitation, nor shall he be subject to trafficking for purposes of criminal activities or beggary.” In order to ensure the proper upbringing of the child, the law has prohibited the production, publication, display, circulation and possession of any work directed at the child, addressing his instinct or encouraging him to engage in any behavior in violation of the law.
2. The Executive Regulations of the Child Protection Law issued in 2015 also included striving to consider the best interests of the child in all procedures related to him, whether provide by public or private social care institutions, courts, administrative authorities or other entities. The regulation included the child’s right to be protected from economic exploitation and performing any work that is likely to be dangerous, impede his education, harmful to his health or physical, mental, moral or social development. The prohibition of employing child in any work that may endanger the health, safety or morals of the child. It prohibits particularly the employment of any child in the worst forms of child labor defined in the relevant international conventions.
3. The issuance of the Personal Status Law by the Royal Decree m/73 dated 9/3/2022, which is addressing the provisions regulating the family relationship, and aims to maintain the family stability as the core component of society, and to control the discretionary power of the judiciary to enhances the stability of judicial rulings and limits the difference in rulings, frames relations between family members and protects their rights, and accelerate the family disputes settlement.
4. The Anti-Harassment Law was issued by Royal Decree M/96 dated 31/5/2018, which stipulates in paragraph 2 of Article 6 that “The crime of harassment shall be punishable by imprisonment for a period not exceeding five years and a fine not exceeding 300,000 riyals, or by either penalty, If the victim is a child, a person with disability, if the offence occurs in a workplace, place of study, shelter or care center”. The law was recently amended by Royal Decree M/48 dated 14/1/2021, adding a new paragraph to Article 6 stating that it is permissible to publish judgment summary in the local newspapers at the expense of the convict, in order to enhance the prevention of such crime.
5. The issuance of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law in 2009, acceding the conventions and protocols concerned with combating the trafficking in persons, and a national committee was formed to combat trafficking in persons, comprising representatives from the relevant government authorities. This committee is concerned with following up the law implementation and working to build national capacities in the field of combating trafficking in persons. These measures have contributed to building a legal and institutional framework that guarantees the protection of all persons without discrimination from human trafficking, providing them with health, psychological and legal assistance, compensating them for damages and other requirements for redress.
6. The Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law is in line with national and international standards in order to combat trafficking in persons, by prohibiting all forms of trafficking in persons described in The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (Palermo Protocol), defining criminal descriptions, penalties of up to (15) years in prison, and a fine of up to (1,000,000 SAR), tightening the penalty in cases where the victim is a woman or a child, and emphasizing the principle that the consent of the victim is not considered in any of the crimes stipulated in the law.
7. To report crimes of trafficking in persons, an application has been designated to receive reports of potential crimes of trafficking in persons. The application includes the following categories: forced labor, sex trafficking, beggary trafficking, slavery-like practices, organ trafficking, and there are penal departments in the relevant courts to hear cases of trafficking in persons.
8. The “National Referral Mechanism for Victims of Trafficking in Persons” has been launched, aiming at following up on documenting cases of trafficking in persons, from monitoring them to adjudicating them by the competent courts, and guiding workers in the concerned authorities to the applicable procedures at each stage in accordance with the Anti-Trafficking law.
9. Regarding to the complaints related to any forms of violence against children, a free hotline to support and assist children under 18 years, has been established, which aim to receive complaints related to children subjected to any form of abuse, neglect and exploitation, whether at home, school, district, public places, governmental or private institutions, etc., and provides immediate and specialized advice to children. the Child Helpline has become a member of Child Helpline International
10. The Human Rights Commission - an independent monitoring entity - in promoting and protecting human rights for all without discrimination, and receiving complaints related to human rights violations and takes legal measures regarding them and addresses practices that may constitute a violation of their rights through monitoring, awareness-raising and other measures. The Human Rights Commission also works to ensure that the relevant governmental authorities implement the laws and regulations related to human rights, detect abuses, and take the necessary legal measures in their regard. It also monitors government entities to implement the relevant international human rights treaties which Saudi Arabia is a party, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols, and to ensure that all necessary measures have been taken by those entities, in addition to that, the Human Rights Commission takes on the mission of monitoring the implementation of the Convention, through the complaints received by it.
11. The Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development has adopted a strategy for protection from domestic violence and child protection. The strategy seeks to achieve and provide security for children and support them and support families as a safe and supportive environment for children, free from violence and achieving psychological and social security.
12. Proceeding from the strategic partnership between the Family Affairs Council and UNICEF, an awareness campaign for early childhood development entitled (YETRABA FI EZEKOM) was launched in partnership with the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Family Safety Program, Child Welfare Association, and MHRSD represented by Violence Protection Reporting Center, to promote the optimal development of the child in all its aspects, including nutrition, health, physical, social and emotional development, and to educate parents and society about the importance of the first (1,000) days of a child's life. It covered 9 topics: an overview of early childhood, brain development, healthy nutrition, care based on response and interaction, security and safety, early learning, public health, the role of parents in early childhood, and the launch of the digital family initiative "FamCare", where The Family Affairs Council was adopted as an extension of the Family Affairs Council’s keenness to empower the family, enhance its role in building and developing society, and protect it from all that might hinder its path.
13. The Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman initiative to protect children in the cyber world was launched, to enhance protection and awareness of cyber security by strengthening and supporting children, parents, teachers and decision makers around the world to raise awareness of cyber risks and threats, and to confront the challenges that represent cyberbullying, the increasing targeting of children electronically, impersonation electronic harassment, intellectual influence. The initiative looks to enhance the cybersecurity of children, protecting them in cyberspace, raising awareness of children and parents regarding suspicious content on the Internet, clarifying risks in cyberspace, and cooperating to develop best practices, develop policies, and support implementation by evaluating the level of awareness of children globally, launching training programmers, supporting decision makers and educators to use best practices to protect children online.

In conclusion, it should be noted that all these measures directly affect Saudi Arabia's achievement of the SDGs, especially (SDG 1 poverty, SDG 4 education, SDG 5 gender equality, SDG 8 decent work and economic growth, SDG 10 reduced economic inequalities and SDG 11 sustainable cities and communities, SDG 16 Peace, justice and strong institutions and SDG 17 partnerships for the goals).

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