

**IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION  
ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD**

**List of issues to be taken up in connection  
with the Second Report of Iceland (CRC/C/83/Add.5)  
- Observations of the Government of Iceland -**

**Part I**

**A. Please provide data and statistics disaggregated by age and sex for the years 2000, 2001 and 2002, if available.**

**1. Demographic data of the under-18 population**

|                     | <b>Total population</b> | <b>Total under-18</b> |
|---------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>2000 - Total</b> | 283.361                 | 78.162                |
| <b>Men</b>          | 141.450                 | 39.834                |
| <b>Women</b>        | 141.491                 | 38.328                |
| <b>2001 - Total</b> | 286.575                 | 78.186                |
| <b>Men</b>          | 141.870                 | 39.902                |
| <b>Women</b>        | 143.125                 | 38.284                |

|                     | <b>2 0 0 0</b> |               |               | <b>2 0 0 1</b> |               |               |
|---------------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|
|                     | <b>Total</b>   | <b>Men</b>    | <b>Women</b>  | <b>Total</b>   | <b>Men</b>    | <b>Women</b>  |
| <b>&lt; 1 years</b> | 4.384          | 2.230         | 2.154         | 4.137          | 2.128         | 2.009         |
| <b>1 years</b>      | 4.162          | 2.055         | 2.107         | 4.375          | 2.227         | 2.148         |
| <b>2 years</b>      | 4.293          | 2.181         | 2.112         | 4.170          | 2.048         | 2.122         |
| <b>3 years</b>      | 4.255          | 2.196         | 2.059         | 4.274          | 2.175         | 2.099         |
| <b>4 years</b>      | 4.397          | 2.265         | 2.132         | 4.255          | 2.193         | 2.062         |
| <b>5 years</b>      | 4.327          | 2.224         | 2.103         | 4.416          | 2.269         | 2.147         |
| <b>6 years</b>      | 4.464          | 2.292         | 2.172         | 4.319          | 2.226         | 2.093         |
| <b>7 years</b>      | 4.632          | 2.311         | 2.321         | 4.487          | 2.296         | 2.191         |
| <b>8 years</b>      | 4.564          | 2.356         | 2.208         | 4.637          | 2.316         | 2.321         |
| <b>9 years</b>      | 4.508          | 2.324         | 2.184         | 4.597          | 2.380         | 2.217         |
| <b>10 years</b>     | 4.766          | 2.412         | 2.354         | 4.502          | 2.322         | 2.180         |
| <b>11 years</b>     | 4.470          | 2.272         | 2.198         | 4.796          | 2.424         | 2.372         |
| <b>12 years</b>     | 4.598          | 2.389         | 2.209         | 4.480          | 2.279         | 2.201         |
| <b>13 years</b>     | 4.156          | 2.202         | 1.954         | 4.628          | 2.401         | 2.227         |
| <b>14 years</b>     | 3.885          | 1.979         | 1.906         | 4.172          | 2.208         | 1.964         |
| <b>15 years</b>     | 3.893          | 1.909         | 1.984         | 3.894          | 1.984         | 1.910         |
| <b>16 years</b>     | 4.105          | 2.094         | 2.011         | 3.917          | 1.919         | 1.998         |
| <b>17 years</b>     | 4.303          | 2.143         | 2.160         | 4.130          | 2.107         | 2.023         |
|                     | <b>78.162</b>  | <b>39.834</b> | <b>38.328</b> | <b>78.186</b>  | <b>39.902</b> | <b>38.284</b> |

## 2. Budgetary allocations and spending

Budgetary allocation and spending for social needs for year 2000 according to The Statistical Yearbook of Iceland. Information not available for year 2001.

|                                       |   |                 |
|---------------------------------------|---|-----------------|
| Total public sector expenditure       | = | 272.589.000 ISK |
| Total % of GDP                        | = | 41,4%           |
| Total expenditure for social affairs  | = | 170.365.000 ISK |
| Social affairs % of total expenditure | = | 62,5%           |
| Social affairs % of GDP               | = | 25,9%           |

| Expenditure 2000 - Social affairs      | Million ISK | % of total expenditure | % of GDP |
|----------------------------------------|-------------|------------------------|----------|
| Education <sup>1</sup>                 | 39.654      | 14,55 %                | 6,0 %    |
| Health <sup>2</sup>                    | 51.016      | 18,72 %                | 7,7 %    |
| Social security and welfare            | 55.962      | 20,53 %                | 8,5 %    |
| Housing, planning and sanitary affairs | 6.207       | 2,28 %                 | 0,9 %    |
| Cultural affairs                       | 17.526      | 6,43 %                 | 2,7 %    |

Expenditure cannot easily be broken into sectors according to question A.2. For example the responsibility for juvenile crime prevention and rehabilitation lies with different agencies both on state and local level. These agencies, such as the Social services, the Child Protection Services, the Government Agency for Child Protection and the Prison and Probation Administration, do not itemize their spending according to such specific categories. Following please find information available for different sectors:

| Expenditure 2000<br>Families and children | Million ISK | % of total expenditure |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------|------------------------|
| Cash benefits <sup>3</sup>                | 7.046       | 2,58%                  |
| Day-care facilities                       | 5.713       | 2,10 %                 |
| Youth activities                          | 919         | 0,34%                  |
| Child Protection <sup>4</sup>             | 1.269       | 0,47 %                 |
| Home-help for fam. with children          | 120         | 0,04%                  |
| Children with disabilities <sup>5</sup>   | 1.332       | 0,49 %                 |

<sup>1</sup> Pre-primary is included in social security and welfare

<sup>2</sup> A disaggregated by age itemization of expenditure for health care is not available.

<sup>3</sup> Maternity benefits, family allowance and child maintenance.

<sup>4</sup> Child protection in local authorities, The Government Agency for Child protection, The Children's Ombudsman and The State Committee on Child Protection

<sup>5</sup> Homes for children with disabilities both short and long term, support families, special counseling, The State Diagnostic Center and benefits and allowances for carers of sick and disabled children

### 3. Children deprived of a family environment and separated from parents

Children 0-16 years placed outside their homes during year 2000 by age and per 1.000 inhabitants in the respective age groups:

|                    | <b>Girls</b> | <b>Boys</b> | <b>Total</b> |
|--------------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| <b>0-6 years</b>   | 2,5          | 2,8         | 2,6          |
| <b>7-12 years</b>  | 3,9          | 5,7         | 4,8          |
| <b>13-16 years</b> | 7,0          | 1,5         | 8,8          |
| <b>0-16 years</b>  | <b>4,3</b>   | <b>6,1</b>  | <b>5,2</b>   |

#### 3.1. Children in foster care

| <b>Number of children</b>                        | <b>2000</b> | <b>2001</b> | <b>2002<sup>6</sup></b> |
|--------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Placed in short-term foster care</b>          | 40          | 36          | 38                      |
| <b>Placed in long-term/permanent foster care</b> | 23          | 9           | 5                       |

As of **September 2002** there were in total 61 children in short-term foster care, 38 boys and 23 girls. Average age is 14 years, disaggregating by age:

| <b>Age in years</b> | <b>Number</b> |
|---------------------|---------------|
| 0 - 2 years         | 0             |
| 3 - 5 years         | 2             |
| 6 - 8 years         | 1             |
| 9 - 11 years        | 10            |
| 12 - 14 years       | 20            |
| 15 - 17 years       | 24            |
| 18 years            | 4             |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>61</b>     |

As of **September 2002** there were 172 children registered in long-term/permanent foster care, 97 boys and 75 girls. Average age when they went into foster care is 4 years. Average age of children in permanent foster care in 2002 is 12 years, disaggregating by age:

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<sup>6</sup> In the year 2002 (January 1-December 3) 17 boys and 21 girls have been placed in short-term foster care, 3 boys and 2 girls had been placed in permanent foster care

| <b>Age in years</b> | <b>Number</b> |
|---------------------|---------------|
| 0 - 2 years         | 5             |
| 3 - 5 years         | 9             |
| 6 - 8 years         | 22            |
| 9 - 11 years        | 33            |
| 12 - 14 years       | 46            |
| 15 - 17 years       | 46            |
| 18 years            | 11            |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>172</b>    |

### 3.2. Children in treatment homes

The State is responsible for homes and institutions being available to:

- admit children in emergencies in order to ensure their safety due to alleged offences or serious behavioural problems,
- evaluate the problems of children who are believed to require specialized treatment,
- provide children with specialized treatment due to serious behavioural problems, substance abuse and alleged offences.

In the year 2002 The Governmental Agency for Child Protection runs one Diagnostic center for Youth, one long-term treatment home for children that need special drug and alcohol treatment and seven family oriented treatment homes with the average of six children each.

The average length of stay in treatment at the **Diagnostic Center** was 70 days in 2001 and average age is around 15 years. Following is the number of children placed at the Center:

|              | <b>2000</b>   |          | <b>2001</b>   |          |
|--------------|---------------|----------|---------------|----------|
|              | <b>Number</b> | <b>%</b> | <b>Number</b> | <b>%</b> |
| <b>Boys</b>  | 78            | 54,2     | 79            | 51,6     |
| <b>Girls</b> | 66            | 45,8     | 74            | 48,4     |

The average length of stay at the **Family orientated treatment homes** was 475 days in 2001 and the average age at the end of stay is between 16-17 years. Following please find the number of children placed at treatment homes:

|              | <b>2000</b>   |          | <b>2001</b>   |          |
|--------------|---------------|----------|---------------|----------|
|              | <b>Number</b> | <b>%</b> | <b>Number</b> | <b>%</b> |
| <b>Boys</b>  | 89            | 64,0     | 80            | 59,0     |
| <b>Girls</b> | 50            | 36,0     | 56            | 41,0     |

## 4. Schools

The net enrolment ratio and completion rates in percentages:

### a) Pre-school

#### Enrolment 2000

|                   |                                   |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 0-2 years:        | 22 % of total in age group        |
| 3-5 years:        | 91 % of total in age group        |
| <b>0-5 years:</b> | <b>56 % of total in age group</b> |

Ratio male/female in pre-schools: 52/48

#### Enrolment 2001

|                   |                                   |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 0-2 years:        | 29 % of total in age group        |
| 3-5 years:        | 92 % of total in age group        |
| <b>0-5 years:</b> | <b>61 % of total in age group</b> |

Ratio male/female in pre-schools: 51/49

### b-c) Primary and lower secondary education

The law on compulsory education (primary and lower secondary) stipulates that all children and adolescents between the ages six and sixteen attend school. Enrolment is 100 % for 2000, 2001 and 2002.

Ratio male/female in 2000: 52/48

Ratio male/female in 2001: 51/49

### d) Upper secondary education (general and vocational)

The majority of upper secondary programmes are 3 or 4-year programmes.

#### Enrolment 2000

|           |                           | Male | Female |
|-----------|---------------------------|------|--------|
| 16 years: | 90% of total in age group | 88 % | 91%    |
| 17 years: | 77% of total in age group | 74%  | 81%    |
| 18 years: | 67% of total in age group | 64%  | 71%    |
| 19 years: | 62% of total in age group | 59%  | 65%    |

#### Completion school year 1999/2000

(graduates as percent of 20 year olds)

|        |     |     |     |
|--------|-----|-----|-----|
| Total: | 85% | 81% | 89% |
|--------|-----|-----|-----|

### Enrolment 2001

|           |                           | Male | Female |
|-----------|---------------------------|------|--------|
| 16 years: | 89% of total in age group | 88 % | 90%    |
| 17 years: | 80% of total in age group | 78%  | 82%    |
| 18 years: | 70% of total in age group | 67%  | 74%    |
| 19 years: | 65% of total in age group | 60%  | 70%    |

### Completion school year 2000/2001

(graduates as percent of 20 year olds)

|        |     |     |     |
|--------|-----|-----|-----|
| Total: | 91% | 86% | 97% |
|--------|-----|-----|-----|

## **e) Vocational**

### Enrolment school year 1999/2000

(of all upper secondary)

|        |     |     |     |
|--------|-----|-----|-----|
| Total: | 37% | 24% | 13% |
|--------|-----|-----|-----|

### Completion school year 1999/2000

(graduates as percent of 20 year olds)

|        |     |     |     |
|--------|-----|-----|-----|
| Total: | 35% | 41% | 28% |
|--------|-----|-----|-----|

## **f) Dropout and repetition**

School participation is 100% at the primary and lower secondary levels. Children progress automatically from one grade to the next according to age. Information is not available for dropout rates and repetitions at the upper secondary level.

## **5. Children with disabilities**

### **a) Children living with their families**

There were 794 children diagnosed as children with disabilities in the year 2000 and 760 in 2001. Information disaggregated by sex is not available

### **b) Children in homes**

There were 16 children living in homes for children with disabilities in the year 2000 and 2001, 11 boys and 5 girls. They live in three family oriented homes, one with 6 children and the other two with 5 children each.

Children with disabilities do not live in institutions in Iceland. The policy is to assist parents as much as possible to bring up their children at home in their natural family environment.

### **c) Children attending regular schools**

Information on the number of children with disabilities attending regular schools is not available.

### **d) Children attending special schools**

Children with disabilities attending special schools were 189 in the year 2000 and 191 in the year 2001.

## **6. Children in conflict with criminal law**

### **a) Children who allegedly committed a crime, which was reported to the police**

Following is the number of children who allegedly committed a crime against the General Penal Code, which was reported to the police. Each person is counted once in each case so that if a person allegedly committed repeated offences during the calendar year he may be counted more than once:

|              | <b>2000</b> | <b>2002</b> |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| Total age 15 | 249         | 319         |
| Total age 16 | 413         | 333         |
| Total age 17 | 483         | 557         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>1145</b> | <b>1209</b> |

Disaggregated by age and sex:

|                 | <b>2 0 0 0<sup>7</sup></b> |            |              |            | <b>2 0 0 1</b> |            |              |            |
|-----------------|----------------------------|------------|--------------|------------|----------------|------------|--------------|------------|
|                 | <b>Boys</b>                | <b>%</b>   | <b>Girls</b> | <b>%</b>   | <b>Boys</b>    | <b>%</b>   | <b>Girls</b> | <b>%</b>   |
| <b>15 years</b> | 187                        | 20,8       | 61           | 25,1       | 254            | 26,0       | 65           | 27,9       |
| <b>16 years</b> | 334                        | 37,2       | 77           | 31,7       | 268            | 27,5       | 65           | 27,9       |
| <b>17 years</b> | 378                        | 42,0       | 105          | 43,2       | 454            | 46,5       | 103          | 44,2       |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>899</b>                 | <b>100</b> | <b>243</b>   | <b>100</b> | <b>976</b>     | <b>100</b> |              | <b>100</b> |

### **b-c) Children sentenced by courts to sanctions - nature of sanctions**

The Prison and Probation Administration (PPA) notifies persons resident in the Reykjavik area of decisions to suspend conditionally the issue of an indictment. The PPA exercises supervision and control of young persons in this regard. The PPA's studies indicate that approximately 70% of the young persons involved are not registered with further offences against the General Penal Code in the suspension period.

<sup>7</sup> Information on sex not available in three cases.

| <b>Suspension of Indictment</b> | <b>2000</b> | <b>2001</b> |
|---------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>Total age 15</b>             | <b>24</b>   | <b>14</b>   |
| - boys                          | 22          | 14          |
| - girls                         | 2           | 0           |
| <b>Total age 16</b>             | <b>21</b>   | <b>34</b>   |
| - boys                          | 13          | 30          |
| - girls                         | 8           | 4           |
| <b>Total age 17</b>             | <b>14</b>   | <b>32</b>   |
| - boys                          | 13          | 26          |
| - girls                         | 1           | 6           |

Following are penalty determinations received by the Prison and Probation Administration for enforcement, relating to persons between the ages of 15-17 years at the time of sentencing, conclusions under Code of Criminal Procedure (CCP) Article 124<sup>8</sup> and accepted settlements:

| <b>Criminal sanctions</b>                               | <b>2000</b> | <b>2001</b> |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Unconditional imprisonment                              | 1           | 0           |
| Unconditional imprisonment + fine                       | 0           | 0           |
| Unconditional imprisonment + conditional imprisonment   | 1           | 0           |
| Conditional imprisonment                                | 42          | 41          |
| Conditional imprisonment + fine                         | 17          | 4           |
| Determination of penalty conditionally suspended        | 11          | 9           |
| Determination of penalty conditionally suspended + fine | 0           | 0           |
| Fine                                                    | 19          | 22          |
| <b>Number of sentenced persons total</b>                | <b>91</b>   | <b>76</b>   |
|                                                         |             |             |
| Number of fines imposed under CCP Article 124           | 23          | 12          |
| Number of fines by accepted settlement                  | 124         | 97          |

Number of conditional sentences of persons 15-17 years of age received by the PPA for enforcement including additional, non-standard conditions:

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<sup>8</sup> According to CCP Article 124 if a defendant comes to court and enters a plea of guilty the judge can, on the request and recommendation of the prosecutor, conclude the case by imposing a fine.



| <b>Criminal sanctions</b>                             | <b>2000</b> | <b>2001</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Conditional imprisonment + unconditional imprisonment | 0           | 0           |
| Conditional imprisonment                              | 1           | 2           |
| Conditional imprisonment + fine                       | 0           | 0           |
| Determination of penalty conditionally suspended      | 1           | 0           |
| <b>Number of sentenced persons total</b>              | <b>2</b>    | <b>2</b>    |

#### **d) Deprivation of liberty - period of imprisonment**

In the year 2000 there were two sentences for unconditional imprisonment but these two cases both relate to the same person. In the first case this person was sentenced to 2 months unconditional imprisonment and 8 months conditional imprisonment, the conditional part was readjudicated in the second case and the person sentenced to 3 1/2 year unconditional imprisonment.

#### **e) The percentage of recidivism cases**

Information on the percentage of recidivism cases is not available. Following are the number of cases, relating to persons between the ages of 15-17 years at the time of sentencing, where conditional sentences are readjudicated by reason of or without breach of condition:<sup>9</sup>

| <b>Readjudication</b>                                                          | <b>2000</b> | <b>2001</b> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Number of conditional sentences readjudicated by reason of breach of condition | 9           | 9           |
| Number of conditional sentences readjudicated without breach of condition      | 2           | 1           |

## **B. General Measures of Implementation**

### **1. Intersectoral co-ordination and co-operation on child rights**

**i-a)** As stated in the second report of Iceland (73-75 and 78-81) a public organ, the Family Council, was established in accordance with the Parliamentary Resolution on a Public Family Policy. Among the general objectives of public authorities in the implementation of family policy is to create an equilibrium between family and work and to ensure co-operation between institutions with the family taking into account the

<sup>9</sup> Conditional sentences readjudicated without breach of condition refers to the cases where a person commits a second crime while the first crime is being adjudicated for which he then receives a conditional sentence.

responsibility of parents for their children. In May 2001 the Family Council published two reports. The first report contains the results of a survey conducted by the Family Council on the position of each local municipality on family matters. Some municipalities have already formed a public family policy and others are urged to follow. The second report is a comprehensive overview of issues that concern families, which facilitates intersectoral co-ordination.

On May 11th 2001 the Icelandic Parliament approved a Resolution on the preparation for a comprehensive, co-ordinated public policy in the matter of children and youth. The objective of the policy-making is to ensure the interests and welfare of children in all areas of society and to provide for them all equally the best conditions to develop their abilities to the fullest extent. In accordance with the Resolution a committee has been established with the participation of members from The Prime Ministry, The Ministry of Social Affairs, The Ministry of Health and Social Security, The Ministry of Justice, The Ministry of Education, The Ministry for the Environment and The Federation of Icelandic Municipalities. On the basis of the public policy the committee is charged with developing a five year action plan in co-operation with all public and private institutions, agencies and NGO's that work for the best interests of children, including associations of adolescent persons. The committee is currently formulating the policy and working on the action plan which will take into due consideration the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The committee has held extensive meetings and has met with 75 different authorities and agencies working with children's issues. It is expected to finalize the work in early year 2003. The work of the committee is considered a major step in ensuring intersectoral co-ordination that specifically focuses on child rights.

According to the new Child Protection Act, no. 80/2002, the Ministry of Social Affairs is responsible for policy formation in the area of child protection and shall submit a four-year plan of action to the Parliament following each local government elections. The Act provides that a local authority shall for each electoral term make an action plan in the field of child protection in the district. The intention of this is to encourage local authorities to establish clear objectives in child protection, and work to pursue them. This is intended to strengthen child protection in the country, and make it more efficient and effective.

The importance of necessary intersectoral co-ordination and co-operation on child rights is generally emphasized at all levels. Many examples can be found of a problem-oriented approach where central and local authorities co-ordinate their efforts in fighting certain problems concerning children and youth, such as drug problems, juvenile crime prevention and rehabilitation, sexual abuse and health problems. Following are a few examples:

#### National Health Plan

In 2001 the Icelandic Parliament adopted a National Health Plan to the year 2010. This plan has a problem-oriented approach and it is closely related to that of the revised

WHO's European strategy on Health 21. The priority areas for Iceland include alcohol, other drugs and tobacco prevention and children and adolescents.

Targets within the priority area **alcohol, other drug and tobacco prevention** concerning children and adolescents are:

- Reduced consumption of alcohol and other drugs of those who are under age by 25% (under 18 years). According to studies from 1998 20% of pupils in the 10th grade said they had been drinking 3-6 times last 30 days before these studies were carried out and that year 16% of the pupils in the same grade said they had smoked hash.
- Reduced smoking among children and adolescents 14-17 years to a prevalence less than 5%. In 1997 5-21% of adolescents 14-16 years smoked.

Targets within the priority area **children and adolescents** are:

- Measures will be taken to reduce by 25% health differences among children linked to social position of parents. In 1991-1995 an index of long-term diseases among children linked to the education of the father was as follows: university education 1, secondary education 1,17 and primary education 1,47.
- Extend the psychiatric services to reach on an annual basis to at least 2% of all children and adolescents in the age group 0-18 years. In 1997 psychiatric services covered 0,4-0,5% of the age group 0-18 years.
- Reduced by 25% accidents and accidental deaths among children. In the period 1991-1995 35 of 60 per 100.000 boys in the age group 1-14 years died an accidental death and comparable figure for girls in the same age group were 30 or 56,7 per 100.000.
- Reduced prevalence of dental caries (DMFT) among 12 year olds to 1,0. In 1996 DMFT among 12 year olds was 1,5.

#### Children with long-term diseases

The Icelandic government adopted a special policy for matters relating to chronically ill children in the year 2000. It consists of co-ordinated efforts and actions in the area of health and social security, education, social matters and finance.

#### Public Health Centre

The Minister of Health and Social Security presented a bill of law to the Icelandic Parliament in December 2002 proposing the establishment of a new institution, the Public Health Centre. Among other things the centre will provide a base for many health-promoting institutions, such as the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Council, The Icelandic Nutrition Council, the Anti-Tobacco Council and the Program on Child and Youth Injury Prevention.

#### Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention

The Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Council was founded in 1998 and it gives particular attention to abuse among children and adolescents. The Council places special emphasis on co-operation between all parties concerned and the co-ordination of their efforts, such as those of the health care services and health institutions, municipal

social authorities, police agencies, the school system, the criminal justice system and non-governmental associations.

### Child Protection

According to the new Child Protection Act child protection authorities shall in their work seek to maintain good collaboration among themselves and with other agencies concerned with children. Art. 20 stipulates that all those who, due to their position and work, are involved with children must collaborate with child protection authorities and that child protection authorities shall also seek to maintain good collaboration with these parties. The Minister of Social Affairs may by regulations issue further rules on collaboration between child protection committees and other agencies in consultation with the ministries under whose aegis the relevant agencies operate.

According to Art. 7 the Government Agency for Child Protection may run special service centres with the objective of promoting interdisciplinary collaboration, and strengthening and co-ordination of agencies in the handling of cases of child protection.

**i-b)** Different governmental authorities are responsible for the collection and analysis of data in their respective fields.

The Governmental Agency for Child Protection collects data from all child protection committees and publishes an annual report of child protection in Iceland. The Agency shall also ensure that research and development work is carried out in the field of child protection. The Director General of Public Health has similar tasks in the area of health.

The Ministry of Education collects information from municipalities on school affairs each year. According to the Primary School Act the Ministry of Education provides the Parliament with a report on school affairs at three-year intervals.

Statistics Iceland publishes The Statistical Yearbook of Iceland, which is a key publication of Icelandic official statistics and is intended to give an overview of statistical information of the Icelandic economy and society. The Yearbook serves as statistical reference work in a number of economic and social fields. It is also intended as a guide to statistical sources through references to the institutions responsible for providing data. The small size of the Icelandic society and its institutes inevitably limits the scope of official statistics in the country but the Yearbook is under constant development.

**ii)** The emphasis on problem-oriented co-ordination and co-operation on child rights is intended to diminish the danger of duplication in areas of competence. The imminent comprehensive policy and action plan on the affairs of children and youth will provide further guidance and hopefully target unnecessary overlap or duplication in areas of competence.

iii) The imminent policy and action plan on the affairs of children will reflect all provisions of the Convention so as to ensure full protection of the rights enumerated therein.

The role of the Ombudsman for Children is to seek to ensure that, in their dealings, public authorities, central and local alike, individuals, societies and other associations of individuals, and representatives of legal persons, give full consideration to the interests, needs and rights of children as set forth in the Convention.

## **2. Resource allocation to the Office of the Ombudsman for Children**

Budgetary allocations to the Office of the Ombudsman for Children is as follows:

|      |   |                                |
|------|---|--------------------------------|
| 2000 | = | 16,4 million ISK               |
| 2001 | = | 19,2 million ISK <sup>10</sup> |
| 2002 | = | 18,1 million ISK               |

The budget for the office of the Ombudsman for Children for the year 2003 is ISK 20,7 million ISK. Apart from the Ombudsman the Office has two employees, one of them part time (85%). The Office also hires special project managers or specialists for certain projects if the occasion arises.

## **3. Public awareness campaigns**

As stated in the second report of Iceland (56) the National Centre for Educational Materials has published three booklets entitled "My rights". The booklets describe the substance of the Convention on the rights of the child. They are continuously sent to all compulsory schools and the schools urged to discuss the material. A handbook for teachers is also published with ideas on how to use the Convention in ordinary school life. The Ministry of Education sent a special publication of the Convention to institutions, unions and NGO's that work in the field of education. The Ministry has financially supported some courses for teachers where the Convention has been discussed

The Convention on the Rights of the Child has been published in the Icelandic Law Collection since 1996 and is regularly referred to in notes to bill on matters concerning children, in conferences, seminars, courses, workshops and materials that deal with the welfare of children.

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Save the Children Iceland organized a special conference in Reykjavik in April 2002 in preparation for the United Nation's Special Session on Children. The conference was entitled "Guarding our youth: The right of children to protection" and focused on children's rights in general.

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<sup>10</sup> Including a special allocation of 2 million to start the project NetParliament.

The Ombudsman of Children has for the past three years organized a NetParliament for Children, an interactive web on the Internet with the objective to provide Icelandic children with an opportunity to express their views as provided for in Article 12 of the Convention. The resolutions of the NetParliament are reported and sent to the relevant government authorities each year.

The Ombudsman for Children published a special brochure in September 2002 in collaboration with The European Law Students Association in Iceland. The brochure is called: "They who will inherit the land ... cannot be heard" and deals with the implementation of Art. 12 of the Convention. It highlights practices that public authorities can adopt to ensure the rights of children to influence decisions that affect their lives. The brochure was launched at a conference dealing with democracy in schools.

A significant proportion of the function of the Ombudsman for Children is as before to provide counsel and guidance and the Ombudsman has communicated with innumerable parties in recent years to facilitate and emphasize the importance of the rights of the child.

## **Part II**

The Convention on the rights of the child in Icelandic (from the Icelandic Parliament's web page [www.althingi.is](http://www.althingi.is)):

<http://www.althingi.is/lagas/125b/1992018.2c5.html>

## **Part III**

### **New legislation**

The most important new legislation in the field is the new **Child Protection Act**, no. 80/2002, which came into effect June 1st 2002 and contains many important changes. Following is a brief highlight of the most relevant innovations:

#### *a) Principles of child protection work*

The Act seeks to summarize the principles upon which all child protection work is based. Among other principles Art. 4 states that in child protection work those arrangements shall be made which may be expected to be best for the child. The interests of children shall always be paramount in the work of child protection authorities. The authorities shall take account of children's views and wishes in accord with the age and maturity of the child and shall seek to maintain good collaboration with children and parents with whom they have dealings, showing them the utmost tact and respect.

*b) Larger and more effective areas of jurisdiction of child protection committees*

The Act makes various provisions, which are intended to encourage the formation of larger and more effective areas of jurisdiction for child protection committees in the country. These provisions are expected to strengthen the child-protection work of local authorities and to strengthen the committees professionally.

*c) Arrangements made by child protection committees*

The Act contains revised provisions on arrangements made by child protection committees with an aim to strengthen the rights of children in each instance.

*d) Power to rule in child protection cases*

According to the Act the power to rule in cases where parents are deprived of custody is transferred from child protection committees to the courts. Provision is also made for the participation of the courts in the following circumstances:

i) Parents may submit to a judge the decision of a child protection committee to apply measures regarding placement of a child for up to two months.

ii) The child protection committees shall submit to a district court judge cases for measures regarding placement of a child if they are to last longer than two months.

iii) Parents may take legal action for review of permanent arrangements made for a child and review of prior decisions.

*e) Child Protection Appeals Board*

The Act provides for the establishment of a Child Protection Appeals Board. This change coincides with the fact that some cases are subject to court proceedings. The Child Protection Appeals Board deals with other decisions of the child protection committees.

*f) Procedure of child protection committees*

The Act contains detailed provisions on procedure of cases before child protection committees, such as rules regarding the initiation of a child protection case, investigations, schedules for the handling of cases, time frames and decisions.

*g) Court procedure*

The Act contains special rules of procedure for court proceedings. These provisions are entirely new, as Icelandic law has not hitherto provided for child protection cases to be brought before the courts.

*h) Child as party to a case*

The procedural rules of the Act provide that a child who has reached the age of 15 is a party to a child protection case. This is an important innovation, which is intended to strengthen the legal status of children in child protection cases.

*i) Disciplinary punishments and coercion in homes and institutions*

A special section deals with institutions and therein the rights of children in treatment homes and institutions. This innovation aims to establish a legal framework for the application of rights and of coercive measures within all homes and institutions run on the basis of the Act.

### **New bills**

The Parliament is currently debating a bill for a new **Act in the Respect of Children**. The most important innovations are:

- a mothers duty to disclose the paternity of a child
- provisions on the right of an alleged father to initiate court action concerning the paternity of a child
- clearer provisions regarding who has custody of a child and what that entails
- clearer provisions on power to rule in disputes regarding custody
- a new provision on implementation of decisions relating to access.

The bill proposing the establishment of a new institution, the **Public Health Centre**, has already been mentioned. The Role of the Center is to strengthen the co-operation of agencies dealing with prevention and health promotion.

### **New institutions**

- The Centre for Child Health Services was established in 1999 to strengthen the services to the specific group of children aged 0-5 years. The general aim of the services is to stimulate the development of child health promotion in Iceland, in particular to strengthen the health work with children in need for interdisciplinary services. The Centre aims to conduct research and actively participate in training of different health professions.
- In the year 2000 a new and enlarged paediatric department was opened at Akureyri Hospital in the north of Iceland. In February 2003 the paediatric ward at the National University Hospital in Reykjavik will move to a new specially designed ward which will improve the services for all children and adolescents and their families.
- In September 2003 a new nursing and rehabilitation home for children with long term diseases and handicapped children with long term diseases will open.



## **Newly implemented policies/programmes**

Following is a short list of only a few of the newly implemented policies and programmes in Iceland:

- Since 1999 a special project on health promoting schools has been pursued as a cooperation between the Ministry of Health and Social Security, the Ministry of Education and the Director General of Public Health. Similar projects on healthy communities and healthy workplaces are in progress.
- In the year 2002 the Director General of Public Health started a program on suicides. The main target is to prevent suicides and suicide attempts and minimize their psychosocial effects. Furthermore the goal is to co-ordinate the work of all those that are working in this field and support them through teaching, training and counseling.
- The Icelandic Accident Registration started in 2002. The purpose is to co-ordinate accident registration on a nation-wide level through the collection of accident data into a centralized bank. This will enable the development of more strategic accident prevention projects, increase co-operation and enhance public risk awareness.
- Some health centres in Iceland offer special outpatient service for adolescents. The goal is to increase their access to primary health service and strengthen their sense and responsibility for health. Special emphasis is made on alcohol and drug prevention, prevention on sexually transmitted diseases, information on birth control and increased access to birth control devices, counseling on abortions and general counseling on development and health promotion.
- The Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Council and the Federation of Icelandic Municipalities have signed a three year co-operation agreement on a community based prevention project that is due to start in January 2003.
- In the year 2001 the Icelandic Red Cross, The Ministry of Social Affairs, the City of Reykjavik and the surrounding municipalities along with the Directorate of Labour organized a new work-training center for young people 16-25 years old who have dropped out of school and have difficulties finding work.
- The Ministry of Education has appointed a committee to make a report on the status of social and leisure activities of children. The purpose is to strengthen the participation of children and young persons in societal and leisure activities and propose changes to the current Youth Act. The report is due in February 2003.