**Information Note Prepared for Contributing to the Thematic Study Which will be prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights**

**Relevant Section: Recreation and Leisure Time**

**1 (a) Legislation**

Do you have any laws, policies, plans, strategies or guidelines relating to the inclusion of persons with disabilities in mainstream recreational and leisure activities?

* Item (a) of Article 187 of the **Presidential Decree No.1** states that *“Every necessary measure shall be taken with a view to tackling abuse and violence targeting young people and to eliminating every type of discrimination among young people and recommendations shall be developed in this regard”.*
* Item (b) of Article 5 of the **“Youth Centers Guidelines”,** which was issued in the official gazette dated 13/07/2003 and No. 25167 states that *“Youth shall be enabled to spend their leisure time in accordance with their interests, wishes and skills and they shall also be steered towards social, cultural, artistic and sportive activities”.* Item (e) of the abovementioned Article also states that *“Mental and physical health of young people shall be protected and their feelings of national unity and solidarity shall be strengthened through social, cultural, artistic and sportive activities”.*
* Article 646.3 of Title “2.3.10” of the **Eleventh Development Plan**, encompassing 2019-2023, states that *“Every person, particularly persons with disabilities, shall be encouraged to participate in sportive activities”*
* Following clauses are mentioned in the “Youth with Disabilities and Social Inclusion” Title of the **“National Youth and Sports Policy Document”**, which was issued in the official gazette dated 27/01/2013 and No. 28541:
1. *Preventing youth with disabilities from being exposed to social exclusion.*

*Objectives*

* *Supporting the creation of projects relating to integrating youth with disabilities to social life.*
* *Utilizing mass media tools, establishing cooperating with educational institutions and non-governmental organizations with the aim of raising social awareness regarding youth with disabilities.*
* *Taking youth with disabilities into consideration while materializing urban planning and design and ensuring that solutions responding their needs and wishes will be generated.*
* *Increasing the number of works focusing on raising awareness among youth with disabilities regarding their legal rights.*
* *When necessary, providing psychosocial services for the families of youth with disabilities by means of experts.*
* *Carrying out works focusing personal, social and cultural development of youth with disabilities.*
* *Training quality sports experts with the aim of ensuring that youth with disabilities may perform sportive activities.*
* *Upgrading and increasing the number of facilities for youth with disabilities they may shelter in case they do not have their parents or anybody else to look after them.*

**1 (b) Good Practices**

**Youth Centers**

Activities targeting youth with disabilities are carried out in Youth Centers, operating under the Ministry of Youth and Sports, in accordance with the articles of policies, plans, strategies and guidelines of the Ministry of Youth and Sports regarding “Persons with Disabilities”. Compliance with accessibility standards of persons with disabilities is taken into consideration during the establishment of the Youth Centers.

Cultural, artistic, sportive, science-technology, healthy life, volunteerism, educational and other recreational works are carried out for youth with disabilities in 338 Youth Centers and 81 provinces in order to ensure their participation in social life and integration to the society.

Abovementioned works can directly target youth with disabilities and they also focus on awareness. **“Mersin Yenişehir Youth Center”**, which was established with this purpose,provides services in abovementioned areas for youth with disabilities and their families. Said Youth Center and activities performed in this youth center can be considered as “good examples”.

In our youth centers;

54.933 young people participated in 1.050 activities, which were conducted in 2019 and targeted youth with disabilities.

6.310 young people participated in 320 activities, which were conducted in 2020 and targeted youth with disabilities.

Following projects and activities of the Youth Centers of our Ministry, targeting youth with disabilities in particular, will be enhanced and continue to be carried out within the scope of needs and interests of youth;

* Supporting youth to use their leisure time in an effective and productive way.
* Helping them participate in every aspect of social life and socialize.
* Ensuring that young people can benefit equally from every project and activity without being subject to any kind of discrimination.

**Youth Camps**

Projects, targeting social cohesion of youth with disabilities, have been approved within the scope of the Social Cohesion Projects of the project support program No. 2018/2, which is carried out under the Directorate General of Education, Research and Coordination of our Ministry.

Additionally, projects, which promote sportive participation of youth with disabilities and encompass disadvantageous people and persons with disabilities from all age groups, within the scope of “Physical Activity, Exercise and Sports” Title of the project support program No. 2020/1, announcement process is in progress, continue to be supported.

Other projects and activities carried out by our Ministry, targeting youth with disabilities and disadvantageous people, are as follows.

**“Youth Breaking the Barriers” Project**

“Youth Breaking the Barriers” project has been carried out with 14 young people (diagnosed as down syndrome, autism and other development disorders) and their 21 companions with intent to bring disabled and disadvantaged young people together with their peers in a different region and thus to contribute to their socializing and social rehabilitation and to ensure their social harmony through sports.

Within the scope of the project, our young people have gained different sportive and cultural experiences through ski training and city tour. During the evening programs, training seminars have been organized by two education specialists for the companions of the young people with disabilities. In the first session of the seminars, each companion has been presented with a “Special Education and Sports Book”. During the training seminars, the families of the youth with disabilities have been provided with the general information about autism and the behavioral problems therapy trainings and the examples of the activities for children with autism.

**Cities, Cultures and Regions Project**

Cities, Cultures and Regions project has been carried out in order to enable the youth especially living in rural areas and disadvantaged to get to know more about the nearby cities rich with historical and cultural places and their own districts and provinces and also to meet with their peers living there and to contribute to increasing the dialog among them.

Disadvantaged young people living in rural areas who do not have the opportunity to see their own city or neighboring cities with their own means, the ones whose families are paid monthly below the minimum wage, relatives of martyrs and veterans, apprentices working in industry, young people living in the streets, relatives of the prisoners, young people with minor disabilities, young people migrating with their families, etc., and such other disadvantaged ones are benefited from the project.

Participating young people have the chance to visit the places they have been wondering or have not had the chance to see before. National, moral, and cultural features of the region are introduced, and cultural, moral, and social events are depicted by the professional tourist guides.

**“We are Aware” Project**

Considering the efforts to properly improve the participation of the individuals with disabilities in recreation and leisure time activities, “We are Aware” project carried out by our Ministry certainly supports the efficient participation of the disabled persons in Recreation and Leisure Time activities. The platform of “We are Aware” ([www.farkindayiz.gov.tr](http://www.farkindayiz.gov.tr)) aims to raise the awareness of young people about the risks such as online harassment, cyber bullying, propaganda, insult to the religious and cultural values, sexually explicit and violent broadcasts and internet addiction.

By insulting Islam and our cultural and national values, ridiculing, simplifying religious factors through comics, common use of violence and causing obscenity to become ordinary in the movies, TV series, animated cartoons, digital games, and music productions; psychological, social and cultural attitudes of the disabled individuals, the youth and the children are being badly affected, and it is clearly observed that most of the free time of these groups is spent in these channels.

In this context, referring to the “Recreation and Leisure Time” in Annex-3, it is under consideration that disabled individuals appearing in the risk group should be informed about the dangers they face with in virtual environments. In cooperation with the related stakeholder organizations, it will be appropriate to raise and develop the awareness of the disabled individuals through the relevant platform.

**Volunteering Activities**

Considering the efforts to increase the participation of disabled individuals in the activities in the field of sports, it is understood that these should be supported by volunteering activities. The platform of “Young Volunteers” ([www.gencgonulluler.gov.tr](http://www.gencgonulluler.gov.tr)), which brings all individuals, especially young ones who want to participate in the volunteering activities and the organizations seeking volunteers together, has turned 5 (five) years old as of June 2020.

Having six different categories such as disaster and emergency, environment, education, sports, culture and tourism, health, and social services, the platform of “Young Volunteers motivated by the motto of “You, be a volunteer, too” takes action in order to create a culture of volunteering in our country.

**Relevant Section: Sports**

Sports branches for the hearing-impaired persons are subject to the rules of the regular federations. All sports competitions are played by the same rules. Only for some of the branches, the referees keep the flag in their hands as well as the whistle. Other branches for the ones with disabilities are carried out on different playgrounds and by different rules. Since there is no need for a special playground or special rule, championships are organized more easily compared to the other federations of persons with disabilities.

For example, championships, league, or promotion competitions (national and international) of our Olympic branches such as football, basketball, bowling, wrestling, karate etc. are organized by the same organizational structure.

The answers given to the other questions in the related section are as follows.

3 (a) Ministry of Youth and Sports, Directorate General for Sports Services and Provincial Directorates and District Directorates and national and regional sports units are available in our country.

3 (b) Sports competitions for the disabled persons and the regular sports competitions benefit from the same structure.

3 (c) There are no difficulties in reaching high performance training centers. Directorate General for Sports Services offers the same opportunity for us as per our request.

3 (d) Disabled Persons' Federations take the advantage of regulations for honorary and reward pension of the successful athletes as well. Athletes who have received medals in the international arena are supported by our government for life.

3 (e) Yes, it has a separate structure. Disabled Persons' Federations for Hearing, Physically and Visually Handicapped and for Special Athletes are available. Organizations are being held within these federations. As for the clubs, there exist for only the disabled ones or for both.

Federations have been centrally working throughout Turkey. However, the clubs in the regions cooperate with “Provincial Representatives of the Federations” for the development of sports and athletes.

There exist many sports branches within the Disabled Persons' Federations and competitions and championships are being held accordingly.

Allocation of Funds for the branches varies.

The athletes with disabilities participate in the organizations and are encouraged by our federations in this regard. Thus, they exert and challenge themselves and gain experience. Under favor of this competitive environment, they are much more successful in International Disabled Championships.

Trainers, managers, and other employees take the responsibility for being a psychologist, supporter, life coach, brother, father, mother as well as being a sportsman. They support the athletes with disabilities not only during the competitions or the trainings but also in every part of their life.