FAMILY WELFARE IN TURKMENISTAN:
TRENDS AND INDICATORS

Country Paper
Co-ordinator: Ludmila Amanniyazova
National Institute of Statistics and Prognosis
Ashgabat

Background paper prepared for the Regional Monitoring
Report No. 8: A Decade of Transition (2001)

The opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the policies or views of UNICEF.
Contents:

1. Child and Family Welfare Monitoring Indicators
2. Analysis of Basic Trends in Child and Family Welfare
3. Risk Children and Social Aid

1. Child and Family Welfare Monitoring Indicators

We proceed from the following six development areas in the monitoring of child and family welfare: 1 – demographic indicators; 2 – macroeconomic indicators; 3 – health care; 4 – education; 5 – family welfare; and 6 – social protection of children, all indicators serving to evaluate progress and problems alike.

Children's situation cannot be regarded in isolation from a country’s overall socio-economic context. Changes in the gross domestic product (GDP), real wages and incomes in general, as well as employment, tell on the situation of families with or without children. The population age and gender structure allows to identify a group for activities in particular fields. The demographic processes of birth, death and migration influence the age and gender structure of the population and an increase or shrinkage in its size. As a country characterised by extended population reproduction, Turkmenistan has a large share of children (under 16 years, 41 per cent) and a high dependency coefficient – the ratio between the population under 16 years of age and those who are above the
working age, and the able-bodied population (0.88). Targeted social safety nets and access by households to health care, education and other services are of major importance in this connection.

The marriage age is an essential indicator. As practice shows, mothers and children alike run the greatest risk of death if mothers are very young, under 20 years of age, or fairly advanced in years, 35 and older, if intervals between pregnancies are short – less than two years; if a woman has given birth to five children or more.

Literacy and education are among the indicators which characterise a country's socio-economic development level.

Turkmenistan’s system of child situation monitoring leaves ample room for progress and covers only some of the fields. Thus, the Ministry of Education is monitoring and controlling educational aspects of children’s situation, and only according to its own methods. Likewise, the Ministry of Public Health and Medical Industry monitors health care, etc. The Turkmenmillihasabat, National Institute of Government Statistics and Information, conducts surveys of children's situation with respect to demography, education, health care, social security and family budgets. Comprehensive analyses and permanent monitoring of children's situation are not conducted in the absence of a co-ordinating body or a special unit within the Turkmenmillihasabat. The database on children's situation is far from adequate. Special sample sociological surveys of children's situation across the country and of its individual regions and monographic surveys of children's institutions should be conducted.

The basic users of information on children's problems among international organisations and programmes are UNICEF (the most comprehensive user), UNESCO (education), WHO (health care) and the UN Population Fund (reproductive health).
The Turkmenmillihasabat and UNICEF scheduled a joint study of children’s situation in two regions of Turkmenistan – the Balkan and Dashoguz velayats – for August–December 2000, with analyses to be based on available statistical reports of children's situation and household sample surveys data.

A LIST OF PROPOSED INDICATORS FOR MONITORING CHILD AND FAMILY WELFARE

Demographic indicators

- Crude birth rate
- Crude death rate
- Population share, age 0-4
- Population share, age 5-16
- Dependency coefficient
- Crude marriage rate
- Crude divorce rate

Macroeconomic Indicators

- GDP growth rate
- Real per capita GDP at $ purchasing power parity (PPP)
- Share of government social expenditures in GDP
Health care

- Infant mortality rate (under 12 months)
- Under-5 mortality rate
- Life expectancy
- Share of underweight children
- Percentage of population with access to clean drinking water
- Share of immunised children
- Public access to health services

Education and Literacy

- Population literacy
- Pre-school education enrolment
- Secondary education enrolment
- Public access to education

Family Welfare

- Per capita real income index
- Share of low-income families
- Employment and unemployment rate
- Income gap index (ratio between the incomes of the richest and poorest families)
- Share of food expenditures
- Per capita calorie intake
Turkmenistan is a country with extended population reproduction and a high natural population increase. High population growth rates influence the age structure of the population, marked by a large share of children and adolescents. According to the 1995 general population census, the average age is 23, with children and adolescents accounting for 41 per cent of the nation.

Figure 1

A steady drop in the birth rate is a salient feature of Turkmenistan’s current demographic situation.

The crude rate for 1999 was 18.5 pro mille as against 34.2 in 1990. It is characteristic of urban and

---

2. Analysis of Basic Trends in Child and Family Welfare

Demographic Indicators

---

Social Protection of Children

- Total number of crimes
- Juvenile delinquency rate
- Number of children brought up in infant homes, children’s homes and special institutions
rural areas alike. In town birth rates fell from 29.8 pro mille to 15.3, and in the countryside – from 37.8 to 20.9 in 1990-1999.

An analysis of birth rates in terms of age shows that in the past birth rates decreased mainly due to the lower birth rates among the urban population, whereas the reproductive behaviour is presently changing both in the urban and rural areas. The national summary birth rate plunged from 4.3 to 2.2 in 1989-1999. The number of average births per woman throughout her reproductive age fell from 3.6 to 1.9 in urban areas, and from 4.9 to 2.5 in rural areas.

In 1989 children under 5 accounted for 16.3 per cent of the population, whereas in 1999 they made up 11.7 per cent, the respective percentages for the 5 to 16-year olds being 25.2 and 29.6.

Over the past years crude death rates have been going down across the country: from 7.0 pro mille to 5.4 in 1990-1999. The fall in the crude death rate has been achieved due to the lower death rates both among the urban and rural populations. For that period the crude death rate of the urban population decreased from 7.1 pro mille to 5.8, and of the rural population – 7.0 to 5.1.

Population replacement rates are high enough in Turkmenistan, 3.3 births per death.
Turkmens prevail in the ethnic composition of the population, and their portion has been increasing in the past decades according to general censuses: 68 per cent in 1979, 72 per cent in 1989, and 77 per cent in 1995.

The family status is considered to be the principal factor of fertility rates. It produces an impact on mortality rates, migration, education and economic activity.

According to the 1995 population census, 64.9 per cent of men at the age of 15 and above were married, as against 61.4 per cent of women; divorced men and women accounted for 1.9 per cent and 3.6 per cent, respectively; while widowers and widows accounted for 3.1 per cent and 9.6 per cent. Among the basic reasons for a greater number of unmarried women are higher female life expectancy, and the numerical preponderance of women above 20 years of age.

Marriage rates have been plunging since 1992 (11.1 per thousand population in 1992 and 5.6 in 1999) mainly due to increasing rates of cohabitation outside wedlock as ethnic customs are reviving.
(religious wedding rites and concubinage). The divorce rate is also falling – 1.6 in 1991 to 1.1 in 1999 per thousand population.

The marriage age is an important indicator since it is closely connected with reproduction. The average first marriage age among women in Turkmenistan is 23 (the optimum), and among men – 24.2, though marriage is legally allowed since 16. The number of marriages among 15 to 17-year-olds of both sexes increased: 3.2-fold for women and 4.4-fold for men from 1989 to 1999 – an alarming trend for mother and child health.

The growing number of members in consanguineal families is the basic reason for large average family membership surviving in Turkmenistan, where families of 7 and more account for over a third of the total. The 1995 census was the first to register households rather than families in compliance with international practice. Unlike the family, the household may include non-related members, e.g., farmhands or a nanny, if they contribute their earnings, partly or wholly, to the household budget, or it may consist of one person.

In 1995 an average household had 5.3 members: 4.6 in urban areas and 6.0 in rural ones. A great number of dependants tells on rural family budgets by decreasing per capita incomes.

**Macroeconomic indicators**

Government regulation of public living standards is based on economic achievements and the growth in the GDP. From 1996 to 1999 the per capita GDP of Turkmenistan (in terms of purchasing power parity of the national currency), has increased by 35 per cent to reach $4.015 (see: *Basic Macroeconomic Indicators of the CIS Countries*. Statistical book of the CIS Interstate Statistical Committee, Moscow, 2000).
The country owes its success to reforms designed to promote economic self-reliance and sustainable progress of all economic fields. In the latter half of the 1990s Turkmenistan completed work on a legal framework for economic reforms, launched structural reforms in various sectors of the economy, finished privatisation in trade, consumer services and public catering, and started it in industry and other fields. Private enterprise made spectacular headway in 1995-1999, a private sector took shape and joint ventures emerged.

The country has created a stable and favourable climate for foreign investment thus encouraging capital inflow. Over $14 billion have been invested in the national economy throughout the Turkmen independence years. Considerable sums went to industry, with over a half of them to the processing sector. This made it possible to conduct an industrial restructuring in favour of processing industries and promoted the country’s economic independence from the exports of hydrocarbons. Gas accounted for 26 per cent in the industrial added-value structure in 1995, and a mere 8 per cent in 1999. Nevertheless, the oil and gas sector remains the main vehicle of national economic and social progress.

Textile industry is getting to the foreground, with an emphasis on cotton fibre processing and quality fabric production. The country was processing about 3 per cent of its cotton in the early 1990s, and 35 per cent in 1999. During 1995-1999, several dozen mills were built and commissioned which were equipped with the machinery to produce cotton yarn, denim and knitwear.

Agriculture has made great progress to improve food supplies and the raw material basis of processing industries.
Structural changes of recent years comply with strategic goals of a market-oriented economy. Commodity production and consumer services have been steadily increasing ever since 1995. In 1999, 70 per cent of the country economy’s demands were satisfied by its own production facilities; food imports have been cut drastically.

**Figure 3**

**Resource structure of the economy, per cent**

A changed consumption structure in the national economy testifies to emergent positive trends. In 1995, a mere 17 per cent of available resources was channelled to production, and capital accumulation was negligible. Beginning from 1996 the share of production used for the development of the manufacturing sector has been on the rise. In 1999, 29 per cent of total resources were used to meet current production needs and 25 per cent to increase fixed assets. The share of final consumption is steadily growing.
Priority financing of individual sectors promotes their higher growth rates: in 1999 these were 111 per cent in industry, 126 per cent in agriculture and 134 per cent in construction as against 1995. Rapid progress of the main sectors of the economy made it possible for the GDP to jump by 117 per cent in 1999 against 1995.

Economic restructuring conducted in 1995-1999 changed the sectoral structure of the GDP. Thus, whereas in 1995 industry accounted for 53 per cent of the GDP, in 1999 it made up merely 32 per cent. Rapid progress was made by agriculture and construction despite all the problems of transition. Their share of the GDP changed from 16 per cent to 26 per cent and from 6 per cent to 11 per cent, respectively.

Consistent large-scale reforms encouraged the development of the services sector as well as of the real sector of the economy. The share of services in the GDP grew by 6 percentage points to reach 31 per cent between 1995 and 1999. Health care services and education due to their priority development increased their share from 3.2 per cent in 1995 to 8.7 per cent in 1999.
The accelerated development of services is due to considerable private investment, as the appearance of a legal framework opened foreign and domestic credit lines, and streamlined arrangements for the establishment of private business and self-employment licensing extended the scope of private enterprise. Its share is the largest in trade – 70 per cent, then comes agriculture – 60 per cent, and transport – 56 per cent. In 1999 about 40 per cent of the GDP was produced in the private sector.

Improving the quality of life depends on the final consumption level. High rates of accumulation and consumption are characteristic of Turkmenistan’s economy today, while high rates of gross capital accumulation are clearly indicative of an increasing production potential.

Households play a leading part in final consumption.
Table 1

GDP final consumption structure

(per cent of the total)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>including: final consumption expenditures</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of this: households</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>government agencies</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gross fixed assets accumulation</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>change in inventories and acquisition of valuables</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>export/import balance</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-31</td>
<td>-38,0</td>
<td>-27,0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Turkmenmillihasabat data

Spending on government services which meets personal and collective need of the population rose from 11 per cent in 1993 to 15 per cent in 1999. A rapid growth in these indicators is associated with social policies designed to provide guaranteed free health care and education services, with government and security spending remaining within the necessary limits.

On the whole, the structure of GDP use still depends, to an extent, on the imports of goods and services. Despite the large deficit of foreign economic activities in 1997-1999, the fact that two thirds of the country’s imports is made up of production equipment shows that Turkmenistan has been integrated in the global economy and its production facilities are equipped with the latest technology.
Considerable government involvement in human resource reproduction is reflected in active socially targeted fiscal policies. Spending on social and cultural efforts accounted for 70 per cent of the government expenditures toward the end of the 1990s as against 61 per cent in 1995, with the aggregate share of health care and education growing from 26 per cent to 40 per cent.

**Health and Hygiene**

The state of public health is evaluated by such indicators as mortality and morbidity rates for basic disease groups and specific age brackets. Thus, the causes of infant and child mortality are mostly respiratory and contagious diseases, and accidents. Younger adults largely die as a result of accidents and other external causes, while among the older population groups the causes of death are cardio-vascular diseases and cancer.

The epidemiological situation changes as high birth and death rates decrease: chronic conditions replace acute forms of diseases and injuries.

**Most deaths** in Turkmenistan are caused by cardio-vascular diseases – about a half of the total in 1999, respiratory diseases – 12 per cent, tumours – 7.3 per cent, and infectious and parasitic diseases – 6.6 per cent.

Fatalities vary with age. Respiratory diseases prevail among children under 5 years of age (approximately 50 per cent), and cardio-vascular diseases among persons of the able-bodied age and seniors, 38 per cent and 76 per cent, respectively (fig. 6)
The State Presidential Programme "Health", launched in 1995, brought infant mortality down from 42.2 to 25.4 in 1999, under-5 from 13.0 to 7.1 per thousand, and maternal mortality from 99.5 to 41.2 per 100,000.

National programmes to combat acute intestinal and respiratory diseases and to promote baby breast-feeding and sanitary education of primary school children were launched to control the basic causes of infant deaths.

**The compulsory immunisation of children** is effected by primary medical institutions. The Immunoprophylaxis national programme, adopted in 1993, brought down infectious disease morbidity. Within the MEKAKAR programme framework, the Ministry of Health and Medical Industry organised mass immunisation campaigns against polio and diphtheria, which involved a respective 99.6 per cent and 93.7 per cent of children. Measles morbidity rates remained high to necessitate the implementation of WHO diagnostic and treatment standards.
Average life expectancy has been rising over the last several years. However, while this indicator for men increased from 61.8 years (1989) to 62.5 (1999), the average life expectancy of women decreased from 68.4 to 67.9 years, the main cause being deaths from diseases of the circulatory system. Cardiac ischemia ranks first among such diseases with considerable morbidity rates among the female population. Cardio-vascular diseases account for a large number of disabled persons above 50 years of age. Women's cerebro-vascular mortality rates are also high, so Turkmenistan has to give heed to preventing and early diagnosing these diseases, with an emphasis on women patients.

Drinking water quality has a tremendous impact on public health. About 85 per cent of urban and 42 per cent of rural dwellers had access to safe drinking water in 1999. In the past years Turkmenistan started introducing the latest water treatment and disinfection processes and equipment on a wider scale. In 1995 water intake and treatment facilities with a daily capacity of 100,000 cu m of water were built in Mary. A drinking water factory to produce daily 150,000 cu m was commissioned in Ashgabat in 1997. It was built using technologies of the US-based Calligan Construction Company, and the construction of a similar factory to produce 300,000 cu m a day and of a water treatment complex is being completed in the west of Turkmenistan’s capital.

To supply the seaside towns of Turkmenbashi and Khazar with drinking water, a water-desalination plants will be built using back osmosis techniques to produce daily 10,000 and 5,000 cu m, respectively. A similar desalination complex with a daily capacity of 1,000 cu m was commissioned in the first quarter of 2000 in the village of Esenguly.
The Amu Darya River satisfies close on 90 per cent of the entire national water demand and is essential for water supply to the country’s economy. The giant Karakum canal withdraws annually 10-12 cu km of river water to take it to Turkmenistan’s arid south.

The established water supply network is inadequate. The overall water losses in agriculture approach a third of the amount withdrawn. The loss is caused by filtration and explained by the fact that canals linking farms (total length – 6,300 km), the Karakum and a greater part of irrigation networks within farms (total length – 30,400 km) have earthen beds.

The problem of water bodies protection from waste water pollution has aggravated over recent years. Almost all waste water is channelled into the desert, rivers and irrigation canals untreated, impairing the quality of water and polluting the environment. More than 3.6 cu km, or 54 per cent of drain water, is channelled into rivers and reservoirs. Construction of a 312 km collecting main across the desert started in 2000 to reach the Golden Age Lake in the Karakum desert. Another collector, which is 720 km long and has a capacity of 20 cu m/sec, will start in the Dyanev entrap of the Lebap velayat to take drain water out of the Lebap, Mary, Akhal and Dashoguz velayats. The newly-established production amalgamation Garagum Shor Suv Gurlushyky will be responsible for construction. The initial phase of construction is to be completed in 2004, with the collector being commissioned in 2020.

Economic hardships of a transition to market-oriented economies reduced public access to medical services in many post-Soviet countries.

Unlike them, Turkmenistan assigns top priority to health care development, and the presidential programme "Health" launched in 1995 is being carried out. Health expenditures accounted for 4.3
per cent of the GDP in 1998 against 1.8 per cent in 1995. Improved financing is accompanied by reducing the number of redundant hospitals, and medical personnel cuts.

According to a living standard survey conducted by the World Bank and the Turkmenstatprognoz in 1998, more than 70 per cent of respondents had easy access to medical institutions to which they were applying for assistance, spending less than 30 minutes to get to them. Some 17 per cent spend less than an hour. The answers did not reveal considerable differences between respondents from various parts of the country with respect to the proximity of a medical institution where they applied to for treatment of their latest illness or injury.

**Figure 7**

![Bar chart showing the time it took to reach medical assistance by location and time](image)

The majority (72 per cent) of the respondents spent less than half an hour on their latest visit to (consultation with) the doctor concerning their illness or injury, which is not long. The time spent did not vary considerably between urban and rural areas.

Almost 97 per cent of the respondents did not pay for their visit to the doctor, which means that access to health care services in Turkmenistan is fairly broad.
Over 38 per cent of the respondents did not apply for medical aid on occasion of their illness or injury mainly because they preferred self-treatment or did not think they ought to see a doctor. The number of those who fall back on self-treatment is the greatest among the urban population, roughly 70 per cent of the respondents.

**Figure 8**

*Reasons why respondents did not apply for medical assistance in case of illness or injury during the past month (per cent of total answers)*

More than 80 per cent of the respondents were taking medicines in connection with illness or injury during the month preceding the survey (78 per cent in town and 83.3 per cent in the countryside); 94 per cent could afford buying medicines, including 92 per cent in town and 97 per cent in the countryside. Most of them bought their medicines in public pharmacies (43 per cent), 28 per cent from private traders and 22 per cent in private pharmacies. The share of persons who made their purchases from private traders was large in the countryside (45 per cent).

Turkmenistan introduced voluntary health insurance as of January 1, 1996, with 4 per cent deducted from all cash incomes. Some 89 per cent of the entire population, dependants included, were covered by insurance as of April 1, 2000, according to the Ministry of Health and Medical Industry of Turkmenistan. Insured persons are entitled to price reductions up to 90 per cent to purchase...
certain medicines with doctor’s prescriptions, and some population groups receive them free in public pharmacies.

The 1998 living standard survey showed that slightly more than 10 per cent of the respondents received the necessary medicines free of charge. Close on 6 per cent of the respondents could not buy medicines: 31 per cent of these could not find them on sale and another 31 per cent had them at home.

**Figure 9**

![Why didn't you buy this medicine?](chart)

Medicines were harder to get in the countryside – 36 per cent "could not find them on sale" – than in town, 26 per cent. It is necessary to improve medicine supply, especially in rural areas.

Over 67 per cent of hospitalised respondents reported spending on medicines, gifts to medical staff, etc. The expenditures amounted to 100,000 manats for 56 per cent of patients, 101,000-200,000 manats for 20 per cent, 201,000-300,000 manats for 8 per cent and more than 300,000 for 16 per cent. Townspeople spent slightly more than villagers.
The survey conducted an assessment of basic anthropometric characteristics of every respondent – height in centimetres (with millimetre precision), weight in kilograms (grams), and arm thickness above the elbow in centimetres (millimetres).

Children were divided in five age groups:

- 0-12 months
- 12 months to 7 years
- 7 to 11 years
- 11 to 14 years
- 14 to 18 years

Children and adolescents in towns were taller than in rural areas, with the exception of 14-17-year-old girls and male infants under 12 months. Age and gender differences in weight between town and country were negligible.
Average height and weight of children and adolescents by sex, age and residence (n = 5,264)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Groups of respondents by age (years)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0-1 (n = 274)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Height (cm)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Turkmenistan</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>town</td>
<td>63.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>countryside</td>
<td>61.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boys</td>
<td>61.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>girls</td>
<td>62.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>town:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boys</td>
<td>61.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>girls</td>
<td>66.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>countryside:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boys</td>
<td>62.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>girls</td>
<td>61.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weight (kg)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Turkmenistan</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>town</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>countryside</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boys</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>girls</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>town:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boys</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>girls</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>countryside:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>girls</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the absence of explicit recommendations on the use of the weight index for children and adolescents, and of regional standards, we proceeded in our comparisons from the standards for child and adolescent physical development broken down by sex and age found in medical literature (A.V. Mazurin and I.M. Vorontsov, *Propedeutics of Infantile Disorders*, Meditsina Publishers, Moscow, 1985).
Children's growth rates usually slow down after 12 months of age. Acceleration is first observed between 4 and 5.5 years of age for boys and after 6 years for girls. Then growth rates slow down again to come to the minimum at 9.5 years for boys and 8.5 for girls. Later, boys grow moderately but steadily up to 13 years of age. Then follows another acceleration period which comes to the maximum between 13.5 and 15.5, when it is replaced by sharp deceleration. Girls have a very short period of growth stability, with another acceleration period starting a mere 6 months later (from 8.5) to reach the maximum at 10-11.5 years of age.

Unlike height, weight is rather an unsteady index liable to strong response to endo- and exogenetic impacts. Babies get somewhat thinner after birth to regain weight by the 7th to 10th day, to steadily gain weight later. The pace is reversibly proportionate to age, with the exception of the first month – the younger the baby the quicker it gains weight.

Table 3

Weight and height standards of children and adolescents by age and sex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age groups (years)</th>
<th>0-1</th>
<th>1-6</th>
<th>7-10</th>
<th>11-13</th>
<th>14-17</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Height (cm)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boys</td>
<td>63.2</td>
<td>94.0</td>
<td>124.9</td>
<td>142.7</td>
<td>160.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>girls</td>
<td>62.3</td>
<td>93.8</td>
<td>125.6</td>
<td>143.2</td>
<td>157.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weight (kg)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boys</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>35.1</td>
<td>49.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>girls</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>48.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Actual average figures for age and sex groups of children and adolescents in Turkmenistan do not reveal considerable deviations from the standard, especially for weight.

**Table 4**

**Actual weight and height distribution among children and adolescents by sex and age (n = 5,264)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0-1 years</th>
<th>1-6 years</th>
<th>7-10 years</th>
<th>11-13 years</th>
<th>14-17 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Height (cm)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Town:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boys</td>
<td>61.1</td>
<td>96.7</td>
<td>97.4</td>
<td>103.7</td>
<td>126.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>girls</td>
<td>66.2</td>
<td>106.3</td>
<td>95.4</td>
<td>101.7</td>
<td>124.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>countryside:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boys</td>
<td>62.0</td>
<td>98.1</td>
<td>94.3</td>
<td>100.3</td>
<td>125.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>girls</td>
<td>61.4</td>
<td>98.6</td>
<td>94.6</td>
<td>100.8</td>
<td>124.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weight (kg)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Town:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boys</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>94.1</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>111.1</td>
<td>25.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>girls</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>115.9</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>104.9</td>
<td>25.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>countryside:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boys</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>110.4</td>
<td>26.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>girls</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>112.7</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>105.6</td>
<td>25.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Analysis of deviation frequency shows that 42-56 per cent of children and adolescents have below-standard height, and 37-53 per cent of them are underweight.
Education and literacy

The obtaining demographic trends in the country raise the demand for educational establishments.

The educational system of Turkmenistan is regulated by the Constitution, Law on Education, and a number of bylaws. The law guarantees free education at all levels within the framework of the national standard for all citizens irrespective of ethnic origin, social or property status and gender. Free access to education results in a high level of literacy and educational achievements. According to the 1995 population census, 99.8 per cent of the population in the 9-49 age bracket were literate. The percentage for adults above 15 years of age was 98.8. Per thousand population at the age of 15 and older 92 persons had higher education, 9 – incomplete higher, 166 – secondary specialised, 477 – general secondary, 183 –incomplete secondary, and 48 – primary education.

The President of Turkmenistan announced the introduction of a new educational policy in May 1993. A government programme to implement the new presidential educational policy for 1993-1997 was adopted to achieve the ambitious goals of updating the content of education and elaborating new approaches to the next generation's upbringing.

Those years saw a structural change in education as secondary schools went over to nine years of schooling and higher educational institutions to four years. Evening and correspondence courses were abolished as inefficient.

In compliance with the programme, foreign language tuition starts at pre-school institutions and is continued at specialised schools and general-educational schools with specialised classes. Centres were opened for paid foreign language courses.
The Ministry of Education drafted a Statute of State Public Secondary Schools in Turkmenistan to promote the government programme implementation. The President approved the statute in August 1998.

Secondary education in Turkmenistan is compulsory and has two levels. Compulsory education starts at the age of 7 to go on for nine or ten years – nine for schools with Turkmen as the basic tuition language and with Russian as an auxiliary one and ten for Russian-language schools with a reverse arrangement.

Secondary specialised vocational educational establishments include medical, teacher-training, music, art and technical schools. The higher educational institutions comprise universities and institutes specialising in various fields. Interviews are required for admission.

School enrolment rate is 93 per cent. The 1999 enrolment was 94 per cent both for primary and secondary schools – high enough by world standards – owing to a ramified network of 1,948 schools all over the country.

However, the material and technical facilities at schools do not meet present-day requirements. Less than 35 per cent of schools have computer classes; 11 per cent of schools are badly in need of repair, and 5 per cent are dilapidating. The stock of textbooks and aids is insufficient, although the independence years saw over 12 million copies of more than 150 titles printed (including 40 in the new Turkmen alphabet in more than 4 million copies). Textbook and teaching aid shortages were reported in more than 30 per cent of localities involved in the 1998 living standards survey conducted by the RTI, a US-based research institute, and financed from a World Bank loan.
Few Turkmen secondary school students have to repeat a grade, and the fall-away rate is below 3 per cent (see: *Turkmenistan: Education Review*. UNDP, 1997).

In recent years the number of pre-school institutions and their enrolment rates have dwindled. The nursery enrolment rate (children aged 1 to 3) decreased merely by 1 percentage point (from 24 per cent to 23 per cent) between 1989 and 1999. Kindergarten enrolment (3-7 year-olds) has decreased drastically from 71 per cent in 1989 to 36 per cent in 1999, a trend threatening to tell on children's preparedness for school and mothers' employment, as well as on the family purse.

According to the 1998 living standards sample survey, 32.2 per cent of respondents aged 7-29 were studying at educational establishments, including 95 per cent at secondary schools, 2.8 per cent at secondary vocational schools, and 2.0 per cent in higher educational establishments. Among the respondents the share of persons aspiring to master's or doctoral degree was small.

According to the survey, 94 per cent of children aged 7 to 16 were enrolled in schools, including 93.1 per cent of boys and 94.9 per cent of girls. Primary schooling accounted for 96.9 per cent of children aged 7 to 9, including 41.4 per cent in urban schools and 58.6 per cent in rural.

Close on 57 per cent of 15 to 16 year-old boys and girls were enrolled in grades 9-11 of secondary schools; 34 per cent in the same age bracket studied in grade 8; 6.7 per cent in vocational schools and 2 per cent in higher educational institutions and attended various training courses.

Alongside public educational institutions, Turkmenistan has establishments with mixed ownership forms, though the latter are only emergent and account for a mere 0.2 per cent of the total student body. State educational institutions are more accessible to the public today, as borne out by the
survey. About 99 per cent of respondents said that the latest establishment they attended was a state-
run one.

The survey covered young people's aspirations and long-term plans following the completion of 
education at a certain level.

Some 10 per cent of respondents who had completed secondary general or specialised education and 
were not studying at the time of the survey intended to continue education. As they answered the 
question, "Why don't you continue studying?", 54 per cent said their studies were over, and 26 per 
cent said they did not want to study anymore.

A mere 4 per cent of school-leavers who did not enter educational establishment in the current 
academic year intended to continue schooling to receive secondary specialised or higher education. 
As the survey showed, higher education was less accessible. Though the majority of higher 
educational establishments were located in Ashgabat, Turkmen capital, the problem was not so 
much in geographic distance as in enrolment limitations, a greater demand for certain professions, 
etc.
### Table 5

Reasons Not to Continue Education (n = 6,559) (per cent of total respondents)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons:</th>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Countryside</th>
<th>Turkmenistan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education completed</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>54.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No desire to go on</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>26.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too expensive</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed to enrol</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health problems</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never studied</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The survey allowed to determine physical accessibility of educational institutions. Educational institutions are more accessible in rural localities than in urban areas. Access is the easiest to rural secondary schools (62.5 per cent of respondents spent no more than 15 minutes to get there) and vocational schools (87 per cent of respondents spent no more than 30 minutes to get there).

Schools are cutting extended-day groups thus making parents spend more time than before helping children with homework.
According to the survey, 65 per cent of parents help their children prepare homework. These include mostly mothers (24 per cent), only 12 per cent of fathers, and 16 per cent of elder children. Thirty one per cent of school students spend less than an hour a day on homework, and 56 per cent up to 2 hours.

According to the survey, 72 per cent of respondents never missed classes in the academic year 1997/98, 16 per cent missed less than two weeks, and 2.5 per cent more than two months – mostly rural students.

The survey has identified some problems in the educational system, one of them being poor attendance which is characteristic of secondary general and specialised schools and of higher educational institutions alike. School students missed classes because they were ill (66 per cent), did farmwork (30 per cent, 98 per cent of these are rural dwellers) and lacked of decent clothes and footwear (1.3 per cent). The reasons for absenteeism at higher educational establishments included: illness – 66.7 per cent, reluctance to study – 4.7 per cent, and farmwork – 9.5 per cent (50 per cent of these were rural residents).

Students' reluctance to study is connected with high academic loads and disappointment with the chosen profession or vocation.
Table 6

*Reasons cited by school and university students for missing classes*

*(per cent of respondents, n = 675)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons:</th>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Countryside</th>
<th>Turkmenistan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School children</td>
<td>University students</td>
<td>School children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illness</td>
<td>73.2</td>
<td>73.4</td>
<td>46.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmwork</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>40.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No clothes, boots</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't want to study</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational institution is far away</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No teachers</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had to earn a living</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Family Welfare**

- Employment and unemployment rates
- Expenditures on foodstuffs
- Calorie intake per capita

Income is among the principal means of enhancing choice and welfare. Turkmenistan population's incomes have been rising during recent years as consumer prices stabilised and real monetary incomes increased.
Figure 12

Changes in real monetary average per capita incomes in Turkmenistan (per cent to nominal)  
(based on survey of 1,350 households)

The share of low-income families (households) with monetary incomes below 50 per cent of the national average income shrank to 15.4 per cent in 1999 against 17 per cent in the previous year. Income gaps were mainly due to large households with many dependants, particularly children.

It should be noted that the transition period in Turkmenistan saw a trend toward receiving income in kind, especially in rural areas. Largely adding to material welfare, in-kind receipts somewhat narrow the gap between average monetary incomes in town and countryside. Products received from personal farming plots add to the population's monetary incomes. With consideration for such in-kind products, the share of persons with incomes below 50 per cent of the national average fell to 4.1 per cent in 1999.

Transfers in-kind also have a beneficial impact on living standards. Every Turkmenistan resident is entitled to free gas, electricity and water supply, salt, subsidised utility charges and transport fares, etc. Moreover children, students, the disabled, and non-working pensioners buy flour at reduced prices. With account taken for price subsidies (not including free education, health care services,
etc.) the share of persons with incomes below 50 per cent of the national average made a mere 1 per cent in 1999. So, in assessing the a poverty level, we ought to take into consideration gross (aggregate) incomes of the population rather than monetary ones.

Transition to the market economy entails greater income differentiation. Monthly surveys of household budgets, conducted by the Turkmenmillihasabat give an idea of public income concentration in quintile (20 per cent) groups. The first group includes persons with the lowest incomes and the fifth group, with the highest. In 1999, average per capita incomes of the fifth group exceeded those of the first one fivefold. With account taken for natural incomes (farming plot products assessed in money terms, and price subsidies) the gap between them is down to 3 times. Besides, in the gross income of low-income groups transfers in kind and farming plot products exceed by 30 percentage points those of the high-income groups. This means that transfers in kind and farming plot products are an important budget item of Turkmenistan's low-income households, which are, for the most part, families with many children.

The 1998 living standard survey conducted by the World Bank and the Turkmenstatprognoz demonstrated an inversely proportional relation between the economic status of a household and the number of children in it. As a result of partial employment necessitated by children upbringing households with children account for 92 per cent of all low-income households; 69 per cent of these households have three or more children. High-income groups offer a reverse picture, only 66 per cent of households have children, 29 per cent of these have one child.
## Composition of Turkmenistan households by gender, age and number of children under 16 in quintile (20 per cent) groups

Monthly average per 100 households, persons (March 1997 – March 1998)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All households</th>
<th>Quintile groups by per capita income</th>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Count ryside</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 Lowest</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members per household</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>children under 7</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-11</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-15</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boys 16-17</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>men 18-59</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 and above</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>girls 16-17</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>women 18-54</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 and above</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total households with children under 16, %</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>22.8</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>21.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>including, with</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 child</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>18.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 children</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>25.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 children</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>24.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 and more children</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>45.3</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>30.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rural residents make up 70 per cent of the lowest-income group, with the highest dependency rate and low incomes, while urban households account for more than 71 per cent of the highest-income group.

**Figure 13**

Terrestrial distribution of households in quintile groups by income

Rural households, with their modest incomes, naturally spend less than urban ones, and the share of consumer expenditures in urban budgets exceeds the rural, mainly because there are more adults in urban households which have greater physiological demands than children. Besides, the cost of living is higher in towns. The rural population tend to accumulate and save more, though.

Foodstuffs predominated in households' consumer expenditures, accounting for 53.2 per cent of the total in 1999. Non-food consumer goods come next, making up 26.3 per cent. A positive trend of spending less on foodstuffs and more on non-food consumer goods and services has been observed since 1996. Calorie value of food rose simultaneously from daily 2,013.5 calories per capita in 1996 to 2,270.5 in 1999, though the structure of consumer expenditures remains less rational than in 1989, and the calorie value of food is lower.
Low-income families in Turkmenistan are entitled to government aid. Assistance offered by Turkmenistan's social safety net has become more targeted beginning from 1997. Persons with an average per capita income under 80,000 manats were entitled to low fixed prices for basic foodstuffs, with the arrangement valid only for flour for the income group below 120,000 manats. Those subsidised prices alone raised average national incomes, dependants considered, by an average 50 per cent. The population entitled to fixed-price flour roughly accounted for 67 per cent, and to other foodstuffs, 70 per cent on average across the country.

Since January 1998 the arrangement involves only flour for low-income families, children, non-working pensioners and the disabled. Nevertheless, every third resident of Turkmenistan now receives monthly government subsidies (reduced prices for a specified amount of flour) in addition to monetary incomes.

Despite economic hardships, in the recent years the country has managed to maintain a system for social protection of persons employed in state-financed spheres – health care, education, etc., which have a comparatively large share of female employees. Average wages in that sector rose every year by 50 to 100 per cent, enhancing their economic status, especially in 1997-2000, largely thanks to consumer prices stabilising.

Turkmenistan is implementing strategies promoting social protection of women, with an emphasis on mothers.

The Majlis (parliament) adopted a new law on government allowances as of July 17, 1998, which provides for measures of women's social protection. Under this law and the law on the leaves (Article 15), pregnant women are entitled to prenatal and maternal allowances. Low-income families receive childcare allowances before the child reaches 3 years of age. Persons who do not
receive pensions – in particular, women over 62 – are entitled to social allowances. In case of loss
of the breadwinner, non-able-bodied members of his family, in particular, the wife or mother,
children, sisters, grandchildren and others receive respective allowances. The minimum amount of
the allowances equals 40 per cent of the statutory average monthly wage.

Under Turkmenistan's new law on pensions, adopted in 1998, the period of time spent by non-
working mothers' on taking care of their children up to 3 years of age (total not to exceed 6 years) is
included in their working and pension insurance records. Women who gave birth to children and
were bringing them up until they reached the age of 8 are entitled to retire earlier than the legally
stipulated pension age of 57 (one year earlier in case of three children, 2 years in case of four, and 3
in case of five or more children, or a child disabled since childhood).

Low-income families and families with many children are entitled to reduced pre-school institution
fees and income tax concessions. Government allowances account for 90 per cent of entire pre-
school institution financing, with parental fees making up 10 per cent. Fees are halved for families
with four or more children.

The National Institute of Government Statistics and Information makes monthly calculations of the
subsistence income for various gender and age groups on a national level and for particular velayats
(provinces). The figures are offered to the Cabinet of Ministers, the Ministry of the Economy and
Finance, and the Social Security Ministry to proceed from in setting minimum wages, pensions,
allowances and scholarships, and in analyses of the population's standard of living.

Economic activity of the population, the labour market, and their regional aspects are essential
social indicators of living standards, and reflect the efficiency of reform implementation.
The labour market reforms, which are effected with a view to socio-economic policies, sectoral development and investment priorities, display the following trends:

- growing economic activity of people in all parts of the country;
- spread of non-state forms of ownership and public involvement in job creation;
- redistribution of employment from the public to the private sector;
- emergence of a fairly steady informal employment sector:
- considerable share of women and youth working on personal farming plots and in agriculture in agrarian velayats;
- promotion of secondary employment and diversification of income sources.

In 1999, the population's economic activity grew 8 per cent against 1995.

The emergence of a multistructural national economy expanded the scope of job opportunities. Reduced employment at state-run industrial facilities and organisations and increasing economic activity in the non-state sector are a trend pronounced everywhere. The share of those employed at state-run companies shrank from 46 per cent in 1995 to 37 per cent in 1999.

Well-educated people prefer employment in the public sector: 70 per cent of public sector employees have a higher education, complete or incomplete, and a secondary vocational education as against 45 per cent among the entire economically active populations. This is due to the age profile of state company employees: over 70 per cent of these are above 30 years of age. Older people are less mobile, and the public sector is attractive to them because of higher wages – double what private companies were offering in the first three months of 2000.

The private sector is steadily taking shape across the country and is employing 10 per cent of the entire workforce, according to labour force survey conducted in Turkmenistan in the spring of 2000.
The situation is most conducive for private enterprise in big cities – Ashgabat and provincial centres possess greater economic and intellectual potential, developed finance and consumer markets and are characterised by greater dynamism in information services. In towns, those employed in the private sector accounted for 14 per cent as against 10 per cent across the country and 9 per cent in rural areas.

Dominating the private sector are companies which operate without forming a legal entity. Private enterprise is developing mostly in trade, consumer services, car repairs and other services and accounts for 50 per cent of the workforce in that sphere. A private sector is emerging in the public utilities sphere, where it employs 10 per cent of its workforce; household appliance installation and maintenance (8 per cent); industry (7 per cent); transport, communications and construction (6 per cent each), and other spheres.

A comparatively large share (7 per cent) of Turkmenistan's able-bodied population work on personal farming plots, mainly women and young people; 74 per cent of the entire population working on personal plots in the Dashoguz velayat are aged 16-29. The respective figures for the Lebap and Akhal, Balkan and Mary velayats are 70, 63 and 44 per cent. Work on personal farming plots will certainly remain among essential economic activities, especially in the Turkmen countryside.

Agriculture is one of the best-developed spheres of employment, especially for the Turkmen youth. Men and women under 29 years of age account for 44 per cent of the entire population employed there.

Working youth account for a half of employees in trade and the utilities. The fact that their share is large in sectors which do not require high skills threatens to break the succession of workforce
generations. To take the edge of that trend in rural areas, it is necessary to establish small-scale farm
produce processing factories and textile mills there, and encourage consumer services.

A recent work force survey has shown that people generally have several income sources, with
average national index being 1.2.

Regional labour markets correctly reflect market-oriented transformations in the economy. Active
job-seekers make less than 5 per cent of the economically active population, according to the survey
data. The share of respondents actively looking for jobs, who can start on new jobs within the next
two weeks, made up 4 per cent of able-bodied respondents, i.e. close to respective percentages for
countries with advanced market economies – 5 for Japan and the USA, each (see: Human

Out of the total number of unemployed 68 per cent of respondents resided in urban localities, and 32
per cent in rural areas. Townspeople made an overwhelming majority of persons seeking jobs
through employment agencies and independently – 64 per cent and 70 per cent, respectively. The
rural population owed their smaller share of the unemployed to farming plots, land assigned for
private holding, and long- and short-term leases.

Whereas urban respondents when asked to specify basic prerequisites for employment or starting
their own business, named vocational training – (61 per cent) and retraining (77 per cent), their rural
counterparts mentioned loans (53 per cent) and possession of land plots (70 per cent).
Respondents in search of employment belong to the able-bodied population – more than 47 per cent are under 29, and 23 per cent are aged 30-44; 48 per cent of them have complete or incomplete higher education, or secondary vocational education.

Young people under 29 are non-competitive in the workforce market, because they lack profession or training (59 per cent) or work experience (49 per cent).

As respondents were specifying reasons for their unemployment, 53 per cent reported dismissal or personnel reduction, 8 per cent – liquidation of the company, and 4 per cent – contract expiry. Not all of them applied to employment agencies, with 72 per cent preferring to seek job on their own. Many of these are under 29 (69 per cent). Some (22 per cent) do not know about the agencies' activities, and 53 per cent do not think they would offer them jobs to their liking.

*Hyakimlik*-assisted employment agencies ought to inform the public – in particular, employers – about the agencies' functions and purposes through the mass media; they should be more active in updating vacancy databases and make the job search as quick as possible. It is necessary to streamline the system of youth vocational training and of adult job-seekers retraining.

The workforce survey identified key factors of enhancing job opportunities in the private sector: 17 per cent of respondents named loans and land plot acquisition.

A Board for Private Enterprise Promotion under the Cabinet of Ministers renders organisational assistance and offers consulting services to entrepreneurs as they set up and develop their business, and arranges for teaching of the ABCs of private enterprise.

Small-scale project crediting is among the ways to promote private enterprise. Investment projects are credited from the state budget in the amount of 1 per cent of actual expenditures.

EBRD opened in Turkmenistan small- and micro-credit lines for entrepreneurs, the Central Asian Enterprise Promotion Fund also opens credit lines to private businessmen. Entrepreneurs can also obtain loans from the International Joint Stock Bank for Reconstruction, Development and Private Enterprise Support and the Turkmen-Russian commercial bank Rossiisky Credit, and others.

**Children at Risk and Public Aid**
*(social protection of children)*

Crime, a global source of personal danger, has been mounting in many countries of the world in the past decade. The overall global number of registered crimes is rising by an annual average of 5 per cent – much faster than the population increases – impeding the efforts of those countries' governments in combating crime.

The crime situation has changed drastically in transition economies. Registered crime is rising throughout most of the post-socialist world. Georgia, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan are the only exceptions. The growth of crime and corruption are the result of "government aloofness" in many countries (see: Report on Human Development in European and CIS Countries. UNDP, Moscow, 1999).
Turkmenistan, on the contrary, has demonstrated a steady decrease in registered crime ever since 1992. Theft predominates, as world-wide, though a tendency is observed in the increase of abuse of office, e.g., bribery, misappropriation and embezzlement.

Crimes are reported to the police more often in urban localities, where telephones are available and personal property is insured.

According to the findings of the sample survey of the living standards and social development, conducted by UNDP and statistical agencies in 1997 across Turkmenistan, about 33 per cent of respondents failed to report crimes to the police (unregistered crimes). Homicide was reported by 100 per cent of respondents, robbery by 33 per cent, and theft and burglary by 50-60 per cent. Police intervention is a must in case of robbery and premeditated murder. There is an opinion, however, that swindles and less dangerous forms of physical violence are facts of private and public life, and that the communities can protect themselves against these crimes (see: Crime Trends and Criminal Court Practice on Regional and Interregional Levels. UN, N.Y., 1993).

Approximately 11 per cent of households at the time of the 1997 survey had limited access to law-enforcement agencies (the absence of police officers in the vicinity of the crime site), while 55 per cent of respondents did not believe law-enforcement agencies could take effective measures.

**Juvenile delinquency** is decreasing in Turkmenistan. Crimes committed by adolescents or with their accompliceship went down by more than 62 per cent, including grave crimes (murders) by 47.4 per cent. At the same time the number of juveniles in correctional or penal institutions increased threefold in 1999 as against 1989.

Regrettably, information available on juvenile delinquency is insufficient for a detailed analysis. Crime prevention strategies envisage such measures as job creation, living standards improvement through subsidies, prevention efforts concerning potential offenders and persons with a criminal record (organisation of fulfilling leisure), and educational work in communities. Such indirect preventive measures were elaborated in a national programme Strategies for Socio-Economic
Reforms in Turkmenistan for a Period up to 2010. Direct measures involve limitation of opportunities to trespass the law.

"Every resident of neutral and independent Turkmenistan is entitled to protection from arbitrary action of the bureaucracy. No one can encroach on private life and private homes in this country," said President Saparmurat Turkmenbashi, addressing an enlarged cabinet of Ministers session on April 18, 2000. A presidential decree of May 12, 2000, stipulated the establishment of a commission to guarantee legality with respect to some procedural actions. The search of Turkmen residents is presently prohibited to enhance their personal safety.

Presidential pardons of criminal convicts logically contributed to civil society progress. Pardons were granted to adults and juveniles guilty of minor crimes and misdemeanours and possessing no previous criminal record, and allowed them to rejoin the community as its full-fledged members.

A presidential decree introduced a moratorium of capital punishment, as of January 1, 1999. Capital punishment was banned by the Majlis (parliament) in December 1999 to promote humanity in law-enforcement efforts.

Turkmenistan possesses four infant homes for a total of 295 inmates, where 239 orphans and children left without parental care resided at the start of 2000. Infants under 12 months accounted for 32 per cent of inmates, children aged 1 to 3 for 45 per cent, and children above 3 years of age for 23 per cent.

Out of 260 children placed in these institutions in 1999, 58 per cent were orphans and children left without parental care; 42 per cent were placed there by their parents. Out of 212 inmates who left infant homes the same year, 57 per cent rejoined their parents, 37 per cent were adopted, and 6 per cent reached the ceiling age to be transferred to other social security institutions.

Government expenditures on infant homes amounted to 1,702.2 million manats in 1999.

Children leave infant homes at the age of 3 to be transferred to children's homes. Children's homes are educational institutions which look after children between the ages of 3 and 16, take care of them and provide necessary health services. Turkmenistan had three orphanages for a total of 810
inmates at the start of 2000: two for children of all ages within the specified bracket, and one for
dead children of pre-school age. A children's home sheltering 500 was built in Ashgabat on an Abu
Dhabi government donation in conformity with an agreement.

Children under 6 years of age account for 16 per cent of children's homes inmates, 7-15 year-olds
for 75 per cent, and 16 year-olds and older for 9 per cent. 205 new inmates entered children's homes
in 1999, and 112 left them: 7 entered vocational educational establishments and 13 secondary
specialised schools, 4 took up jobs, 24 entered boarding schools, 4 came under guardianship, one
was adopted, 57 joined their parents, and 2 left for other reasons.

The children's homes are employing a total 67 teachers; 73 per cent of these have complete higher
education, 1 per cent incomplete, and 22 per cent – specialised secondary vocational education.

Government annual expenditures on children's homes amounted to 1,044.5 million manats in 1999,
or 3.7 million per inmate.

The government takes special care of disabled children. Turkmenistan's Yeloten
psychoneurological boarding school can take in 250 inmates but had 251 by the end of 1999. The
greater part (90 per cent) of inmates are unable to attend general school and only 31 per cent of them
are being trained in work skills. The home employs six doctors, 18 certified nurses, 153 other junior
medical staff, ten teachers and 24 tutors with degrees in pedagogics.

The government spent more than 1.7 billion manats on maintaining this home in 1999 at an annual
average 7 million per inmate.

Catering for mentally and physically retarded children are 14 specialised boarding schools with a
total of 2,462 inmates. The schools use specially adapted curricula which differ from those in
general secondary schools. Medical specialists permanently supervise the inmates' tuition, education
and treatment. Vocational training is envisaged in the curricula, and school-leavers are entitled to
guaranteed employment.

The government spent 9,421.8 million manats on boarding schools for limited-abilities children in
1999 and 3.8 million manats per inmate._