



**The Center for Medical and Social rehabilitation for people  
with low vision**

**“LOW VISION”**

**ALTERNATIVE SUBMISSION  
to the 26<sup>th</sup> UN Human Rights Council session  
on the UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW  
of the Republic of MOLDOVA**

**The Submitting Stakeholder**

1. The present report is submitted by the Centre for Medical and Social Rehabilitation for People with low vision “LOW VISION”. “Low Vision” is a nongovernmental organisation, created in 2009 having as mission the deliverance of medical and social rehabilitation services to people with visual impairments by offering optical correction devices and contributing to changes in the governmental policies in respect of those persons.

More information on the web page: <http://www.lowvision.md/>.

**Issue to be addressed**

***The right to social inclusion of people with low vision***

*Previous recommendations of the Human Rights Council for Moldova on the issue<sup>1</sup>*

3. Eliminate discriminatory practices against persons with disabilities in the medical setting and ensure physical access of children with disabilities to educational and public institutions, as part of its implementation of the Strategy of social inclusion of persons with disabilities (Thailand) A/HRC/19/18, para. 73.19;

4. Provide social services on health and access to education to children belonging to the most vulnerable groups (Uruguay); A/HRC/19/18, para. 73.22;

5. Fully implement the reform of the residential care system for children, focusing especially on re-integration of children with disabilities (Israel); A/HRC/19/18, para. 73.51;

6. Consider ways and means to ensure the right to education of children with disabilities, also in collaboration with the relevant international organizations and agencies (Italy); A/HRC/19/18, para. 73.59;

7. Improve the levels of assistance provided to children, especially disabled children, children in vulnerable groups, orphans and street children, and

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.upr-info.org/database/>

ensure their full integration into society, and take all measures to put an end to child labour (Qatar); A/HRC/19/18, para. 75.21

## **Background**

8. 85% of poor eyesight cases<sup>2</sup> may be corrected by the optical correction and visual aid. The eye diseases caused by other rare diseases (optic nerve atrophy, macular degeneration etc.) refractive anomalies (myopia, astigmatism, long-sightedness etc.) complications of chronic diseases non-communicable (diabetes, hypertension, cancer etc.) and communicable (toxoplasmosis etc.) visual aid is a solution for social inclusion by prescribing rehabilitation devices. Thus, even if the people with low vision are considered as having a disability, they may be freed of its stigma by delivering to them the necessary visual devices.

9. Since 2009 when the reporting organisation started its activity 4,900 visually impaired patients from Moldova benefited, of the systems for increasing optical image such as magnifying glass, telescope, hyper eye, electronical devices, closed circuit television systems, spectral filters, non - optical devices are countervailing technical means. A third of the beneficiaries were children. It is a free and unique service in Moldova for beneficiaries supported by technical assistance and support of charitable organization "Hjelp Moldova" from Norway. The support provided by the reporting NGO is the only type of assistance these people are benefiting in Moldova as the state does not cover this kind of services.

## **The right to rehabilitation and education of people with low vision and blindness legal**

10. Legal blindness<sup>3</sup> that is the severity of visual disability determines the eligibility of individuals for inclusion in vocational education programs, rehabilitation, disability benefits, tuition, technical devices compensation, tax deductions etc. Moldovan law does not provide insurance with optical correction devices and their visual aid with protective tendency.

11. According to the Ministry of Health there are 453 low vision children registered in the country. At the same time, according to the "LOW VISION" centre database there are 710 children and adolescents having visual impairments. The Ministry of Labour, Family, and Social Protection does not provide data on the number of children and young people having visual impairments enrolled in general educational system. Thus, the state does not even hold statistics on children in need of visual correction devices. As a result people having this kind of impairments face social exclusion just

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<sup>2</sup> Visual acuity is at least 0.3 (20/70) in the better seeing eye and cannot be corrected with eyeglasses

<sup>3</sup> Visual acuity is less than 0.1 (20/200) in the eye with the best view and the best correction. Foreign term of Moldovan legislation

because of the lack of devices that could have helped them in their daily life. For instance, after the reporting NGO provided means of optical correction and visual aid for 34 children with the vision below 10% their school enrolment rate increased, 5 of them went to the kindergarten and 29 to community schools. Moreover, 32 young people have been integrated in higher education and technical vocational education as a result of providing them with the necessary devices.

12. Moldovan legislation does not insure the compensatory technical means for people with sensorial disabilities (vision, hearing). By contrast war veterans, elderly people and those with physical disabilities benefitate of technical means to lower their impossibility of getting over the existing social barriers as they receive white canes, crutches, bandages, wheelchairs as a part of social inclusion measures<sup>4</sup>. Therefore, people with low vision are discriminated against in comparison with people having other types of disability, especially mobility impairments.

### **Recommendations for decision makers**

13. Develop and adopt the mechanism of implementing the provisions of the Law No. 60 on Social Inclusion of People with Disabilities<sup>5</sup> in respect of people with low vision by providing specialized rehabilitation equipment for this category of people;

14. Include in the list of technical means for aid and rehabilitation services set by RECPOR<sup>6</sup> rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities and visually impaired persons;

15. Insure that the law on state social insurance budget for 2016<sup>7</sup> and subsequent years will encompass the provision on compensatory technical aid for people with disabilities;

16. Adjustment and approving the set of indicators to monitor implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities<sup>8</sup>, including on Article 26 on rehabilitation.

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<sup>4</sup> Government decision 567 from 26.07.2011 " Rules on how to ensure certain categories of citizens with aid". Available on

<http://lex.justice.md/viewdoc.php?action=view&view=doc&id=339650&lang=1>

<sup>5</sup> <http://lex.justice.md/md/344149/>

<sup>6</sup> Republican Experimental Center for Prosthesis, Orthopedic, Rehabilitation  
<http://www.crepor.org/>

<sup>7</sup> Rules on how to ensure certain categories of citizens with technical aids

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.particip.gov.md/proiectview.php?l=ro&idd=2866> ,