**Terms of reference**

**Consultancy to provide technical expertise of the draft Concept Paper on Inclusive Education in the Republic of Belarus**

1. **Background**

In 2014, there were 138,111 children with disabilities registered by Ministry of Education (MoE) of the Republic of Belarus and 27,379 of children with disabilities registered within the system of social protection. The highest child disability rates are due to mental impairment, congenital abnormalities and nervous system disorders.

The Belarus Government strives to ensure that all children have access to education. Several years ago authorities refused the use of the term “uneducable” in respect to children with severe health disorders. The national legislation provides for the education of every child taking into consideration his/her ability for learning and potential and creating special environment for the education process.

The fundamental legal document regulating the development of all levels of education is the Code of the Republic of Belarus on Education, entered into force in September 2011. Special education is defined by the Code as a separate type of education, along with general and non-formal education. With that, the Code spells out that special education is provided at two levels: preschool and general secondary school. The Code also stipulates the education of children with disabilities in boarding schools operating under the umbrella of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (MLSP). Joint Resolution of MoE and MLSP as a by-law act defines the framework for organizing education process for this category of children.

MoE pays special attention to ensure the right of children with disabilities to education. Over 70% of children with disabilities are enrolled in education at general educational institutions. The Government steadily strengthens the support system for children with disabilities and their families enabling their easy access to community based services and in particular to education at the place of the child’s residence. The shift from education at special schools to integrated classes at general schools was observed during last years. Integrated education is arranged on a case-by-case basis following the recommendations of the education professionals but the final decision is taken by the parents of the child. Children with severe and multiple health disorders have the right to attend the centers of correctional and developmental education and rehabilitation within the education system or can have a home-based education.

In 2013, the Ministry of Education declared its intention to make the next step in reforming the education system by introducing the inclusive education with the main focus on children with disabilities as the most vulnerable who have high risk of exclusion. At the same time the inclusive education should concern all learners.

There is an understanding that an equal access to inclusive educational services for the children with disabilities requires the creation of an adaptive educational and barrier-free environment, setting-up the system of capacity development and special training of teachers and other education workers, for example, tutors, allocation of additional funding, methodological and teaching aid provision, improvement of relevant legal framework, breaking down existing stereotypes of parents and society towards inclusion of children with disabilities.

Another issue on the national agenda is a simultaneous shift from a medical to a social model of disability by health, education, labour and social protection systems.

In order to have a clear vision where and how to go forward to setting-up an inclusive education system the Ministry of Education facilitated the work on drafting the Concept Paper on Inclusive Education in Belarus that is to provide the Government with a strategy and concrete action plan. This work was seen as an open and participatory process and the MoE invited UNICEF and civil society for cooperation in this matter.

UNICEF committed to engage an international consultant to review the developed document in light of international approaches and standards taking into consideration the national context, provide recommendations if any on its improvement before the Paper’s formal endorsement by the Ministry of Education.

1. **Aim and Objective(s)**

The aim is to provide technical expertise of the draft document of the National Concept on Inclusive Education pf children with disabilities in the Republic of Belarus.

The objectives are:

1. To review the Concept on its relevance to the national context through performing a desk review of the existing documents of national legislation, relevant primary and secondary quantitative and qualitative data, reports from the survey’s and studies and other relevant documents;
2. To make a specific review of how the Concept’s chapters are in compliance with international standards of Inclusive education and provide remarks on each chapter;
3. To assess the Concept through the lens of human rights and equity approaches;
4. To draw up specific concluding remarks on the Concept and provide set of recommendations.
5. **Expected results**

The key deliverables:

1. Information note (10 pages maximum) on the desk review available within 10 days from the start of consultancy;
2. First draft of the report within 14 days from the date of finalization of the desk review;
3. Final report (15 pages maximum) within 7 days upon receipt of the draft report including list of recommendations;
4. Summary document, 2-3 pages in accordance with UNICEF format.
5. **Timeframe and conditions**

The duration of the consultancy is from the September to 31st October 2015.

The hired Consultant is expected to work from home.

1. **Required qualifications**
   * + - Advanced degree and/or academic background in Education or Social Sciences;
       - Extensive experience in legislation/policy development on inclusive education, strong working knowledge of joint UNICEF and UNESCO position on inclusive education;
       - Proven knowledge on child rights, children disability, current trends in inclusive education development and social reform processes in CEE/CIS countries;
       - Excellent communication and presentation skills;
       - Excellent analytical and conceptual skills;
       - Fluency in English required, the knowledge of Russian is an asset, but not a requirement.
2. **Supervision:**

UNICEF and the Ministry of Education are responsible to provide the consultant with relevant documentation and materials upon his/her request in timely manner.

The consultant will perform the assignment under the direct supervision of ECD Officer, Ms. Natallia Aleksandrovich.

The Ministry of Education may be consulted on a regular basis for the feedback.

1. **Remuneration**:

UNICEF Belarus will pay the consultant’s fee through the wire transfer to the consultant’s account within 10 days after the submission and approval of the final report.

**HOW TO APPLY**

Qualified candidates are requested to submit:

1. A cover letter;
2. Curriculum vitae;
3. A signed P11 (<http://www.unicef.org/about/employ/files/P11.doc>)
4. Fee proposal (expected honorarium, including taxes and other charges). The maximum allowable sum of the advance payment is 30%.

The deadline for the submission of proposals is **2 September 2015, 18:00, Minsk time.**

Contact person on the content, goals and objectives of the assessment is Natallia Aleksandrovich, tel. (+375 17) 210-26-50, 210-55-89, email: [naleksandrovich@unicef.org](mailto:naleksandrovich@unicef.org)

Contact person on the issues of submission procedure is Nadzeya Lukina, Programme Assistant tel. (+375 17) 210-26-50, 210-55-89, email: [nlukina@unicef.org](mailto:nlukina@unicef.org)