

Human Dimension Implementation Meeting 2007

24 September – 5 October 2007

Working session 10:

Specifically selected topic: Gender aspects of security I

Intervention by the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my honor and privilege to address Annual Meeting on Human Dimension

Women's participation in decision-making processes on political, legal and executive levels, their access to social provisions, healthcare and medical service, education, programs on literacy development and social welfare implies their involvement in social-political activity and is one of the most important instruments to achieve equality with men.

Equal participation of men and women on the level of decision-making in political and social life is the main term to establish a democratic society based on the principles of equality and respect to human rights.

After being independent Azerbaijan Republic ratified 203 international agreements of which 27 concerning only women issues. Azerbaijan Government tries to achieve gender equality through obligations emerging from its legislation and international documents which are joined.

By the Decree of the President of Azerbaijan dated February 6, 2006, a State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs was established on the bases of the State Committee for Women Issues. The Committee is the national mechanism to conduct family, woman and children policy in the Republic. The State Committee pays special attention to the issues related to equal participation of women and men in decision-making. The government of Azerbaijan takes

certain measures to provide balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making to ensure better implementation of its commitments emerging from international documents.

Coordinators (focal points) that are responsible for carrying out the gender policy in the ministries are part of the Interministerial Council, which was created as part of the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs.

This year the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs presented to UN Committee on all forms of discrimination of women rights 2nd and 3rd report on behalf of the Government.

There are very close cooperation between the State Committee and non governmental organizations. At present the State Committee is cooperating with OSCE on the Directory of NGO operating in Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan Government is carrying out series of reforms directed to realizing the goals of the Millennium Declaration. The integration of the gender policy in the general strategy of development of the country serves to increase the rationality of this strategy, it fosters an equal distribution of benefits from programs that are directed at economic growth and well being of general population.

Many achievements have been got in the sphere of legislation in the result of collaboration of the State Committee with other state organizations and National Parliament. Thus, the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on Gender Equality adopted in 2006 reflects the definition of discrimination. According to the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated 29 November 2006, the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs was charged to supervise ensuring of gender equality as corresponding State body and the State Committee is to introduce annual reports on realization of the Law to the National Parliament

Like in other countries, cases of domestic violence are one of the main obstacles hampering democratic development in our Republic. Violence against women is an obstacle to the achievement of the objectives of equality, development and peace. Violence against women both violates and impair the enjoyment by women of their human rights and fundamental freedoms as it mentioned in Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The long-standing failure to protect and promote those rights

and freedoms in the case of Violence against women is a matter of concern to our State. “Complex Program of Republic to combat domestic violence in democratic society” is being elaborated. The objective of the Program is to decrease cases of domestic violence through taking special measures in different areas. The number of employed persons is also expected to be increased due to considered changes to the economic development. All these are part of the combat against domestic violence.

A working group has been established to elaborate draft law on domestic violence. The most significant measure in the field of legislation is preparation of draft Law “On fight against domestic violence” of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Draft Law has been prepared with the participation of the representatives of governmental, non-governmental and international organizations and has been discussed publicly. Some amendments have been made to the Draft Law taking into the consideration the proposals from public discussions. After the collecting of proposals regarding the Draft Law from the governmental structures and making new amendments, the Draft was submitted to the National Parliament. Draft Law envisages measures for prevention of domestic violence, presenting protection order, creating statistical database on domestic violence and etc.

The Government is concerned with increasing cases of early marriages which constitute the violation of human rights. There is little concrete information about their incidence because they are unregistered and therefore they are not recorded as part of any standard data collection system. However, although there is no data on early marriages disaggregated by regions, it is possible to hypothesize that the highest rate of early marriages is present in the southern part of the country. The State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs has conducted awareness-raising campaigns on marriages in the regions. Also The State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs has conducted awareness-raising campaigns in the regions dedicated to the International Day for Fight against violence against women together with United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

Another working group has been established in order to prepare National Action Plan on Women and Family Problem. The working group consists of representatives of governmental, non-governmental and international organizations as well. The Draft Action Plan has been given to the discussion of NGOs. The final draft has been submitted to the Cabinet of the Ministries.

Advancement of women is a critical factor for development, in particular with regard to the eradication of poverty. This approach was reaffirmed by the Millennium Declaration. It has been recognized that the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women have a direct impact on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration in all areas, including development, security and human rights. In line with this, Azerbaijan has continuously been integrating gender equality and empowerment of women as a cross-cutting issue into its development policy. The State Program for Social and Economic Development of the Regions of Azerbaijan for the years 2004-2008 aims at providing balanced economic development of our country and enhances *inter alia* favorable environment for women along with men in key spheres of development. Within the framework of this program the new employment strategy with special focus on women's employment was endorsed.

The essential policy of the Employment strategy elaborated by the Order of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated October 26, 2005 is to provide the human resources with the jobs and to involve more women professionals into business life. A special attention has been paid to the women engagement into the social life. Also it was pointed out that women having children should be given work places due to the Regulations and financially encouraged.

The State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs along with UN Development Program and with the support of Norway Government presented the Report relating the Gender issues this September.

But the main objective is achieved not only through improvement of statistical data. The objectives of gender policy are achieved through changing of public

opinion, overcoming traditional stereotypes. This is a long-term strategy and it will be focused on educational programs.

Thank for your attention.