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Ensuring the participation of persons with disabilities in the social – political life in Azerbaijan and the role of the Ombudsman in this sphere

**Mr. Moderator
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

In modern period Participation in administrative bodies is considered as one of the main rights of people in all parts of the world and improvement of democratic institutions related to voting is one of the main directions of legal state.

In general, existing international standards with regard the participation of the community in social and political life are linked with main three rights: 1) the right to participate in state governance; 2) the right to vote and to be elected; 3) the right to equal opportunities for participation in public service spheres.

Adoption of the Election Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan and its further improvement resulted in establishment of solid election system able to function efficiently for a long time.

Azerbaijani Ombudsman office worked and carried out the relevant plan of actions jointly with the Central Election Commission during the previous electoral practices. The Ombudsman and the staff of the Office carried out in different districts of the republic the legal awareness events directed at promotion of active participation of persons from different social groups, including the persons with disabilities in social-political life.

On the eve of preparation to such events held by the Ombudsman Office in different cities and districts of our country the following works have been realized and positive results were achieved:

Thus, the publications regarding the right to vote, the rules of voting, rights and duties of observers, the right of journalists to participate in the elections were prepared, the local trainings were organized on election legislation jointly with the Central Elections Commission, the situation with provision of voters with voting cards was monitored, the Ombudsman and the Office staff members carried out the observation of the elections on the voting day.

It is noteworthy that, the in the Paragraph 3.10 of the National Program for Action to Raise Effectiveness of the Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms in the Republic of Azerbaijan the continuation of specialized courses on the election law for

members of election commissions was considered as a measure to be regularly implemented.

During the public hearing conducted by the Commissioner covering all districts of the country with the aim to monitor the situation with promotion and implementation of the NAPr, awareness of population on the voting rights, she kept such matters as participation without impediment of persons with disabilities in political life of the society and state equally with the other members of the society, participation in governing the state, to elect and to be elected, as well as creation equal opportunities for ensuring the right to participate in referendum in compliance with the legislation of the Republic of Azerbaijan, expressed her views in this regard.

According to the Article 17 of the Election Code states that during the organization and holding of elections (referendums), election (referendum) commissions, their members and other officials must create all possible opportunities for participation in elections for disabled voters or voters with other physical handicaps.

As a result of complex measure realized in the country in ensuring the voting rights, all necessary measures were undertaken for realization of the voting right of persons with disabilities alongside with all other citizens.

This should be mentioned to the point that according to the information from the Central Election Commission, the ramps were installed for voters with limited movement capacities in many election stations, at the same time, necessary measures are being undertaken for preparation and broadcast of awareness kind video clips accompanied by special sign language interpretation for voters with hearing and speech disorders

Thanks for your attention!