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**Statement by the Delegation of Azerbaijan
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Peaceful assembly and association in Azerbaijan

Madam Moderator,

Peaceful assembly and association is considered one of democratic attainment in Azerbaijan. After restoration of our independency Azerbaijan does its best to implement commitments on development of democracy.

I would like to emphasize that law on peaceful assembly appropriates to modern European standards, this was confirmed by international organizations, too. In 2008 after amendments on the law coordinated with Council Europe Venice Commission, highly appreciated as well as OSCE Baku office declared that preparation of the law there were taken into account proposals of OSCE.

There are provided all opportunities for peaceful assembly and association in Azerbaijan. This year, even just couple days ago opposition held several rallies with the consent of Executive Power of Baku. During the rallies there were not any obstacles or restrictions, on the contrary, there were taken all security measures to hold peaceful rallies. Official Baku declared that they highly appreciate to be held sanctioned rallies by Azerbaijani opposition. State's point of view is that opposition has to hold rallies according to the law. According to the law rallies will be held in the very places which relevant Executive Power of Baku will determine. The opposition is able to organize any time the rallies freely determined places. Approximately in all the European countries.

In 2014 Azerbaijani parliament accepted law on "Public participation" to enhance Cooperation Bridge between civil society and state bodies. According to this law in all state bodies there will be created public councils that will be consist of different experts from civil society, media organizations and private sectors. It's been already established in 5 state bodies.

Shortly I would like to stress on amendments on NGO legislation done in 2014. NGO legislation serve to enhance transparent activity of NGO-s, social control, accountability, increasing of responsibility and efficiency. Law demand from NGO-s to be open and transparent.

In accordance with the Open Government Initiative National Action Plan for 2016-2018, the Council of State Support to Non-Governmental Organizations under the Auspices of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan this month held a constituent assembly of the Government-Civil Society Dialogue Platform on Open Government Initiative.

The assembly was attended by representatives of state agencies and non-governmental organizations. Dialogue and cooperation are always useful for society and many issues can be solved through dialogue. Platform activities are aimed at obtaining information, cooperating with the government and parliament in fiscal transparency, making recommendations on reforms being conducted by the government on these issues, monitoring the implementation of the government's action plan in the framework of the Open Government Partnership Initiative, representing Azerbaijan's civil society in the Open Government Partnership Initiative, cooperating with state agencies, local civil society institutions and international organizations, private sector representatives and promoting e-government.

Some political activists is not involved for their political view as claimed by some delegations or international organizations. They are charged on criminal code's article swindle, illegal business, evasion from payment of taxes, fake official documents and other articles. All these crimes are considered serious crime according to the legislation of Azerbaijan. Taking into consideration all of these, it can be valued as a pressure on law-enforcement bodies of Azerbaijan to be required exemption by some international organization.

Referendum in Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan has entered on a new stage in the post oil era. It is advisable to make amendments in the constitution in order to respond to the call of a new stage. Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev signed an order to hold a referendum on September 26 for making amendments to the country's Constitution.

Amendments on constitution are considered continuation of political and economic reforms holding in the country. Institute vice-presidency is an optimum institute to provide implementation of the decisions. It is an important step removing the age limit at elected bodies.

Increasing the presidential term from 5 years to 7 years aims to reduce the intensity of intense selection process, create opportunities for the activity of citizens not only political, but also economic, social, humanitarian and other spheres, to make additional budget savings. On the other hand, there is an assurance to guarantee implementation the reforms, designed for the future strategic objectives, economic development and social welfare programs of the full amount. 6-7 years of a presidential term is defined in the constitutions of many countries like Austria, Finland, France, Israil, Kazakhstan, Italy, Ireland, Libanon, Singapour, Russia and others.

"Basic human and civil rights and freedoms," which is designed on Constitution to change the articles of Chapter 15 that make up more than 60% of the total changes.

According to the project protection of human dignity, rights and freedoms and giving judicial guarantees, also protection of the administrative order, In order to ensure a more secure labor rights of citizens to ban lockout, inclusion of the concept of progressive social responsibility regarding western legal system to the concept of property, increasing the responsibility of public authorities in relation to the citizen, tightening of requirements to prevent possible cases of arbitrariness, identification of the same requirements for the municipalities and municipal officials, reliable guarantees for the protection of personal information and etc. are progressive proposals in the direction of human and civil rights and freedoms. At the same time, unlike the previous edition of the proposals in the framework of international law, in cases of loss of citizenship is intended to be defined by law. The draft project of the proposed amendments in the field of human and civil rights and freedoms have been taken into consideration the requirements of the international law.

For an instance, although 27 amendments made to the US Constitution in 229 years, the number of proposals to amend the Constitution exceeded 11 thousand.

The need to amend the Constitution of Azerbaijan appeared regarding to country's socio-political, economic and cultural life of the major changes that took place, as well as the political and economic processes taking place in the region and the world after 2009, during the last 7 years.

598 of the observers registered are representatives of two NGO-s. Two of them were registered upon special permission while the rest was registered at their own initiatives.

37,429 people have been registered to observe the referendum at constituencies.

22,481 were registered at their initiatives while 881 are representatives of NGOs. 4,410 of the observers are representatives of "New Azerbaijan" campaign group, 3,024 – "Civil Society" campaign group, 4,577 of "Municipality" campaign group.

Thank you for the attention!