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Peaceful assembly and association in Azerbaijan**

Right of reply; Working Session 2

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, 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. This year, in April and last year 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, 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.

Thanks for your attention!