

**HUMAN DIMENSION IMPLEMENTATION MEETING**  
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**Working session 8**

**Activity of the Azerbaijani Ombudsman in Ensuring Gender Equality and  
Combating Domestic Violence**

**Mr. Moderator**  
**Ladies and Gentlemen**

I would like to mention that, Azerbaijan joined to almost all essential international documents protecting women's rights. Azerbaijan has made certain accomplishments in relation to gender policy, which envisages the ensuring of equal representation of women and men in all state structures of the Republic; providing the refugee and internally displaced women with working places through relevant state programs and reviewing the legislation with due regard to gender aspects.

Azerbaijan today closely cooperates with international organizations protecting human rights, including also UN Women, OSCE and Council of Europe in the sphere of gender mainstreaming. In terms of gender mainstreaming, the Government follows the recommendations given by international and regional organizations to improve the national laws accordingly, and takes active part in the work of different bodies of the abovementioned organizations towards gender mainstreaming.

Azerbaijani Ombudsman is being organized her activity in ensuring women's rights and gender equality on the basis of 12 priority directions of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and a conceptual approach here is that bearing in mind various peculiarities of women groups, their protection is subjected through different and sometimes individual approaches.

The Azerbaijani Ombudsman appointed a specialized adviser on women rights and gender equality to better protect women's rights and promote gender equality.

Ombudsman uses various forms of advocacy how to raise awareness of the population groups. For example, Ombudsman Office and its regional offices deliver a set of awareness raising events on gender equality, women's rights, domestic violence, reproductive health and family planning for population throughout the country, including remote areas with participation of local executive bodies, judiciary, prosecutorial and law-enforcement authorities, municipalities, local communities, non-governmental organizations and Ombudsman's Resource Center namely Azerbaijan Women and Development

Center and the advocacy work is carried out at the community level and in complex.

Ombudsman gave her opinion and proposals in her annual reports concerning the draft law on reproductive health and reaffirm to accelerate the adoption of the draft, establishing Alimony Fund, increasing the number of women health consultation centers in urban and rural areas, expanding advocacy work on family planning and reproductive health to the community level, and re-establishing the bank of breast milk.

Taking into account the Commissioner's proposals, "a National Action Plan on Prevention of gender based discrimination in Azerbaijan for 2019-2022 has been revised and was drafted a new National Action Plan for Prevention of Selective Abortions in Azerbaijan for 2019-2022.

The Working Group, which includes also the Ombudsman, drafted the National Action Plan on Eliminating and Combatting Domestic Violence in Azerbaijan for 2019-2023, the National Action Plan on Gender Equality for 2019-2024, Azerbaijan National Strategy for Children for 2019-2029, which are expected to be adopt in the coming days.

I would like to note that on the initiative of the Ombudsman, it has been annually holding "Human Rights Month" around May and June, "Peace Month" in August and September, and "Child Rights Month" from October to November. The activism actions taken by involving the Government, local authorities, NGOs and media outlets, population groups, communities throughout those months focus attention of the Government and the society on the issues of protection of the rights of different groups of the population and facilitate to the development of human rights thinking and legal culture.

One of the leading universities in the country- Baku State University on the initiative of the Ombudsman includes "Human Rights" and "Introduction to Gender" subjects to its academic curriculum in law and other faculties; organizes lectures about both topics, as well as it has been prepared a compilation of relevant academic lectures.

In the frame of the 16 days of activism against gender based violence started from 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women" and continued to 10 December, Human Rights Day, it has been organized awareness events in the capital and districts and educational materials have been dispensed to the public.

Elimination of and addressing the risks of violence are one of the issues that are always in the focus of the Ombudsman. Therefore, the Ombudsman organizes various activities to promote the issues of protection of the rights of violence victims, including women and children, protects a healthy family environment, promotes education, and also makes proposals for improving legislation and institutional mechanisms.

The Ombudsman's Office jointly with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Azerbaijan implemented "Prevention and Response to Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in Internally Displaced Communities" Project

in the frame of which trainings were held in the capital and regions, and numerous publications were prepared and dispensed.

The Commissioner proposed to ratify CoE Conventions on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (also known as the Istanbul Convention) and the Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (also known as the Lanzarote Convention) as well as to adopt the draft law on Protection Children from Corporal Punishment.

The Ombudsman Office, Press Council and CoE jointly organized series of trainings in the frame of “Gender Equality and Media Freedom Project in Azerbaijan” in different regions of the country consequently, main achievements were that the Code of Ethics of Journalists of Azerbaijan was amended from the perspective of gender equality principle in their work; as well as a new course “Gender equality and media freedom” to the academic curriculum for faculties of journalism.

Some projects have been implemented jointly with the UNHCR throughout the country, including also high schools for over 10,000 IDPs, to improve public awareness about domestic and gender-based violence, and protect the rights of children and women, in particular. These include the Project for "Empowering Women in Situation of Displacement" which includes gender equality, prevention of domestic violence, increasing the representation of IDPs in society, as well as economic incentives for small and medium-sized businesses.

Ombudsman has addressed some competent bodies with regard to the issues related to employment of women, allocation microcredit and other financial resources to expand economic opportunities of women, to organize income-generating activities for them, expand access to basic social services, including education and medical services. Also, she has run awareness trainings in the concerned areas; and has sent motions to the authorities in charge about to eliminate impediments faced by women entrepreneurs engaged in both small and large entrepreneurship in urban and rural areas, which resulted at overcoming of the problems.

Enhancing the empowerment of women is a prerequisite for their full enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The Commissioner is working to ensure equality and active participation of women in decision-making processes, to develop their leadership skills, to educate them how actively participates in municipal elections in 2019 and parliamentary elections in 2020.

For summing up, I would like to note that the Commissioner activity in the field of gender equality and women’s rights was evaluated as a good practice by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI), in their report submitted in the 62 Session of the UN Women in New-York highlighting her awareness campaigns on prevention of early marriages, infant and maternal mortality; AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases as well as encouraging to reproductive health of women and family planning.

**Thanks for your attention!**