

**OSCE Annual Meeting on Human Dimension
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S P E E C H

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Dear Chairman!

Dear participants!

Let me briefly inform you about the reforms in Uzbekistan, which directly touch the issues of human rights and freedoms in the country during the period of 2008-2009.

Actually, we have already thoroughly discussed the newest tendencies in the sphere of human rights in Uzbekistan with Mr. Lenarchich, the ODIHR Director, during his last visit to Tashkent.

The year 2008 marked the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which had opened the modern epoch for the development of human rights protection and for international cooperation in this sphere. The year 2008 has been marked by the following significant steps in the sphere of human rights:

Firstly, the death penalty was totally abolished as of 1st January 2008. The Uzbek Parliament ratified the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which was about death penalty abolition. Thus, Uzbekistan has become the 62nd state to abolish the death penalty.

Also, it is of deep symbolic importance for us that 8 important international documents, in the sphere of human rights protection, were ratified by Uzbekistan in the year, which marked the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration. They include:

Two Additional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child;
ILO Convention 138 "On Minimal age for employment";
ILO Convention 182 "On Prohibition of the worst forms of child labour and on immediate measures to eliminate them";

Protocol on Prevention and Constraint of human trafficking, especially with women and children, which is seen as an addition to the UN Convention against transnational organized crime;

UN Convention against corruption, and others.

At the time being the Republic Of Uzbekistan has joined to 70 international documents concerning human rights issues, in the framework of the United Nations.

All the international documents, ratified by Uzbekistan, serve as basis for further improvement of state activities, including those of the legislative, executive and judicial branches of power, in the sphere of human rights protection. As practice shows, the international human rights standards assists to improvement of legislation, to correct the state policy on creation of conditions

for realization of particular categories of the rights of citizens, including the rights in the sphere of justice administration.

Secondly, the ‘habeas corpus’ democratic institution was introduced, which is being realized in practice. And we have been closely collaborating with the OSCE Project Coordinator in Uzbekistan.

Thirdly, the Uzbek Parliament adopted the Law ‘On Counteraction against Human Trafficking’ in April 2008. The Presidential Resolution ‘On Measures for raising the Effectiveness of Counteraction against Human Trafficking’ was adopted with the aim to realize the above-mentioned law. Besides, the National Plan of Actions on Counteraction against Human Trafficking was approved for the period of 2008-2010. The National Plan of Actions envisages:

elaboration of new normative acts,
carrying out sociological and criminological researches,
accomplishment of concrete measures on protection of witnesses and victims of human trafficking.

Along with this, the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers was adopted ‘On Establishment of the Republican Rehabilitation Centre on Provision of Help and Protection to the victims of Human Trafficking’.

Fourthly, the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan ‘On Guarantees of the Rights of the Child’ was adopted on recommendation from the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. The Law strengthened the whole complex of the rights of the child, determined by the Convention, and developed its provisions by giving the right for housing and the right for private property.

Fifthly, the new edition of the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan ‘On Social Protection of Disabled People’ came into force. The new edition considers international standards for provision of rights of disabled people. It gives us a high pleasure to inform you that in February 2009 the Uzbek Government has signed the UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled People.

Sixthly, the Constitutional Law ‘On Strengthening the role of Political parties in democratization of society’ came into force. It became a stimulus for the development of political pluralism and multi-party system in Uzbekistan.

Seventhly, on 1st May 2008 the President of Uzbekistan signed the Decree ‘On the Programme of Activities, dedicated to the 60th Anniversary of adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights’. Celebration activities involved wide spectrum state bodies, educational establishments, mass-media and NGOs during the whole year and gave a chance to realize the ideals and values, contained in the Document, in a new way.

I have to mention, that we are disseminating 15 titles of booklets from the series of booklets ‘Human Rights in Uzbekistan’ among the participants of today’s meeting. The booklets have been published to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Eighthly, the year 2008 was declared as the ‘Year of the Youth’ in Uzbekistan. Protection of the rights of the child and of the youth are of high priority directions in state policy, taken into consideration that 40 percent out of

the population of Uzbekistan are children under 18, and 64 percent out of the whole Uzbek population are the youth under 30.

Ninthly, starting from 2008, a number of legislative as well as organizational and legal reforms have been accomplished in Uzbekistan, concerning the institution of advocacy. The Chamber of Advocates have been created. The Chamber is an independent professional association, which carries out a wide spectrum tasks, directed at social protection of advocates, their support and education, representation and protection before the state. Introduction of the administrative responsibility measure for those, putting obstacles in the way of realization of the activities of advocate, may be seen as a guarantee of the legal status of advocates.

Tenthly, the Government adopted resolution on provision of state support to the national human rights institutions, including the Parliamentary Ombudsman and the National Human Rights Centre of the Republic of Uzbekistan, which had been established according to the Paris principles, the Vienna Declaration and the Programme of Actions.

It is necessary to note, that the Republic of Uzbekistan gives a priority attention to realization of international obligations in the sphere of human rights. Promotion and provision of human rights, as well as their support and protection are of priority directions of the state policy of the Republic of Uzbekistan starting from the moment of proclamation of state independence. The state policy in the sphere of human rights is being realized in the framework of the fundamental principles and measures, elaborated by the United Nations Organization. Based on this, Uzbekistan established close relations with UN Charter and Conventional bodies, as well as with UN special mechanisms.

In 2008 three new national reports of Uzbekistan were produced according to the new rules. They were submitted to the UN Human Rights Committee, Committee on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women and the Committee on Elimination of Racial Discrimination. It is expected to submit the Third National Report of the Republic of Uzbekistan on realization of the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in 2010.

The First Report of Uzbekistan in the framework of the Universal Periodic Review was produced in 2008, which was submitted according to the article 15 (a) of the Attachment to the UN Human Rights Council Resolution 5/1. The Report was considered during the Third Session of the Working Group of the UN Human Rights Council on 12th December 2008. Altogether 55 states participated in discussion of the Report, and majority of them admitted significant progress in the sphere of human rights in Uzbekistan. They highly marked the quality of the submitted Report.

There is an established practice of adoption of national plans of actions on realization of recommendations from the UN Conventional bodies. And in 2009 the National Plan of Actions on accomplishment of the UN Human Rights Council recommendations after consideration of the Report of Uzbekistan within the framework of the UPR was elaborated. More than 40 state bodies and NGOs participated in the process of its elaboration and discussion. In August

2009 the National Plan was approved by the Interdepartmental Working Group. The National Plan contains important activities, directed at further improvement of legislation, concerning the juvenile justice, protection of human rights in extreme situations, fight against crime and terrorism, provision of eco-safety and etc.

Within the framework of realization of the National Plan of Actions we are ready for the cooperation with the ODIHR.

In 2009 Uzbekistan has been cooperating not only with the conventional bodies of the UN but also with European structures on human rights, it took part on the 6th meeting of the Subcommittee "Uzbekistan-EU" on justice, internal affairs, human rights and attendant matters (July, 2009) and on the meeting of the Council of Cooperation "Uzbekistan-EU" which was held on the 14th of September in 2009.

The important direction is carrying out of the national monitoring of realization of promotion and protection of human rights and freedoms. It includes procedures of parliamentary control of realization of the laws adopted by Uzbek Parliament as well as monitoring of international conventions ratified by the Republic of Uzbekistan. The Parliament carried out the monitoring of the Convention against tortures, Convention of rights of the child and others. Monitoring activity is becoming effective practice of the activity not only of the Parliament but also other state bodies which on the base of it adopt decisions on protection of human rights and freedoms.

The government of Uzbekistan considers that the proclamation of the 2009 by the UN as the Year of Education in the sphere of human rights is a logical continuation of the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It promotes improvement of the methodology and methodic of educational process and activity from the point of view of the involvement of various groups of population.

In 2008- 2009 informational-educational activity was going on. With the technical assistance of the different bodies of the UN the publication of international documents on human rights was continued. In 2009 with the technical assistance of the UNICEF there were published Additional Protocols to CRC ratified by Uzbekistan in December, 2008, there was prepared electronic book "Rights of the child: collection of international treaties". Publication of these books was aimed at better understanding of the principles of CRC and provisions of the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On guarantees of the rights of the child" and raising of the responsibility of the state bodies for the realization of all children's rights. Within the framework of informing of population on the provisions of the Law "On guarantees of the rights of the child" there was published scientific commentary to it.

In 2008 in cooperation with the ILO IPEC there were published in Uzbek language "Collection of the basic conventions and recommendation of the ILO", which include 30 documents of ILO, and Handbook for parliamentarians "Elimination of the worst forms of child's labour: practical guidelines on the application of the ILO Convention 182" prepared by ILO and IPU.

Both books were published with great circulation and were disseminated among the deputies and senators of the Parliament, representatives of trade unions, Chamber of commodity producers, ministries, mass media, educational institutions and other governmental and non-governmental organizations.

For the purpose of full realization of the ILO's conventions, promotion of measures against forced child's labour, its any forms and kinds as well as with the end of coordination of the activity of the ministries, departments and local state bodies, strengthening their cooperation with international organizations there was elaborated the National Plan of Actions with the wide participation of state bodies and non-governmental organizations. The document was supported by UNICEF, UNDP, ILO.

NGOs are of great importance in development of civil society and law state, carrying out socially important functions, working in spheres such as educational services, care of children and women, disabled and ill persons, social assistance etc. There has been created the National Association of NGOs and nowadays it is successfully functioning as well as the Public Fund for support of NGOs.

The Resolution of the Council of the Legislative Chamber and Senat of Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On measures on strengthening of support of NGOs, other institutes of civil society" adopted in summer, 2008 is the further step of the state in development of cooperation and support of the institutions of the civil society. According to it there is functioning Public Fund for support of NGOs and other institutions of civil society, funds of which are formed from state budget and other free-will sponsor funds, including grants from international organizations and financial institutions. Decisions to support NGOs will be defined by Parliamentary Council which consists of deputies and senators as well as specialists - experts.

In accordance with the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan on the 60th anniversary of Universal Declaration of Human Rights there has been carried out public control of the structures on protection of human rights of the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Internal affairs and General prosecutor. Public control was organized with the participation of Association of Advocates, national institutions on human rights, NGOs. The results of critical analyzing of the activity of these structures were widely lighted up in mass media and concrete suggestions on improvement of the activity of these bodies were given to the administration of these structures. In different regions of Uzbekistan in may-august 2008 there were organized 40 "round tables" with the participation of NGO and these structures, during which there were discussed the results of the public control.

OSCE Coordinator of Projects in Uzbekistan is realizing a number of projects together with the Department on human rights of Ministry of Internal affair.

At present the Republic of Uzbekistan pays great attention to the protection of human rights in the conditions of world financial – economical crisis. The state policy is aimed at non-admission of decreasing of the living

standards, protection from negative factors of world financial – economical crisis, promotion of normal life as the ground for all human rights.

Within the framework of its obligations on International Covenant on economical, social and cultural rights Uzbekistan pays great attention to the economical welfare of its citizens. In particular, at present there are being adopted active measures on protection of the population from the influence of world financial–economical crisis. Within the framework of the adopted by the Government **“Crisis-proof Programme on prevention and neutralization of the consequences of the world economical crisis for 2009-2012”** there are realized special measures on protection of the rights of owners, private enterprise and small business, increasing the employment of population, decreasing of prices for the basic products and consumer goods.

2009 is proclaimed in Uzbekistan as the Year of the Development and Welfare of the village and it is not accidentally. The majority of population in Uzbekistan (50 %) live in rural area and further prosperity of the country depends on the future of the village. In the State Program on the Year of the Village approved by the government there are provided for concrete measures on improvement and strengthening of the legislative basis for promotion of human rights and interests of the rural population, creation of necessary conditions on development of financial - economical grounds of the rural development, improvement of medical service for the population, improvement of the quality of education for the rural youth, etc.

Dear Chairman and the participants of the conference, I would like to bring your attention to the cooperation of state bodies and institutions of civil society with the representative offices of international organizations, in particular, with UNDP, UNICEF, ILO, ICRC, OSCE, Fund of F.Ebert, Fund of K. Adenauer, Embassy of Federative Republic of Germany, German Society of technical assistance and others.

Cooperation with the international organizations and foreign partners is of great importance for bringing national legislation, law-enforcement practice, informational- educational activity into conformity with international standards of human rights.

Thank you for your attention!