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SUPPLEMENTARY HUMAN DIMENSION MEETING

FREEDOMS OF PEACEFUL ASSEMBLY AND ASSOCIATION, WITH EMPHASIS ON FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

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SESSION III: Enhancing the participation of associations in public decision-making processes

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**Mr. Moderator,
Ladies and gentlemen's**

The main Law providing the state guaranty to the Azerbaijan NGO activities is the Constitution of the country which was adopted in 1995. Pursuant to the Article 58 of the Constitution about the freedoms of association everyone has the right to establish any union, including political party, trade union and other public organization or enter existing organizations. Unrestricted activity of all unions is ensured.

During her term of office the Azerbaijani Ombudsman has built close relations with the civil society. So, regularly NGOs are created opportunities to raise their voice and problems, share their views in the conferences, round tables, trainings, seminars held with the participation of state authorities and international organizations.

In order to make this cooperation more effective, Council of Independent Experts was set up at the Ombudsman in 2003. Members of civil society organizations are represented at this Council. The Council is dealing with analysis of human rights situation in the country, making proposals for improving legislation, conducting monitoring and evaluation.

I would like to mention that, national Action Plan on Protection of Human Rights in the Republic of Azerbaijan and National Program for Action to Raise Effectiveness of the Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms in the Republic of Azerbaijan were approved with the Presidential Orders on December 28, 2006 and December 27, 2011.

I'd like to note that NGOs are actively involved into the implementation process of the state programs, national action programs and plans adopted in the field of the protection of human rights. For example, the paragraph 5 of the the Presidential Decree of 27 December 2011 on the approval of the National Action Program to Raise the Effectiveness of the Protection of human rights and freedoms in the Republic of Azerbaijan states that executive bodies indicated in the Program shall closely cooperate with the civil society institutions.

Simultaneously, according to some paragraphs of the NAP state authorities are obliged to build collaboration with the NGOs.

Joint programs with the NGOs are also taken into account in the program. For example, involvement of local NGOs dealing with human rights to the process of implementation of obligations under the international human rights treaties, to which Azerbaijan is a party to, involvement of public and NGOs into the correction of sentenced persons and application of public oversight procedures and study the relevant best practices, cooperation with NGOs and international organizations in fighting homelessness and in social rehabilitation of underage children.

The implementation of duties put forward in the NAP Program is carried out without any discrimination with participation of both government and civil society organizations, including operating jointly with other law-enforcement authorities, and providing dynamically the public activity and participation of population and using of NAPlan implementation experience.

Furthermore, the Azerbaijani Ombudsman jointly with the UN OHCHR launched range of awareness events in rural and urban areas of the country in order to increase professional capacities of the NGOs in preparation of the alternative reports to the UN specialized committees.

The NGOs for which the Ombudsman regularly organized awareness training submitted the alternative reports for the UPR process as one of the most important one among the new human rights mechanisms.

The Azerbaijani Ombudsman involves the NGOs to the process of drafting of UPR reports prepared jointly with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and then into the discussion of the proposals made by the UN HRC to Azerbaijan during the UPR.

At the initiative of the Azerbaijani Ombudsman the Working group on Business and Human Rights was established in the Ombudsman Office, which contains of the representatives relevant state authorities and NGOs. At the same time, UN Business and Global Compact and Guiding Principles on Business and Human rights were translated into the Azerbaijani language by the Ombudsman Office and spread among the civil society institutions.

The Azerbaijani Ombudsman office also successfully participates in implementation of the NAPlan for 2012-2015 years on "Promotion of the Open Government" approved by the Presidential Decree of 5 September 2012 as well as the NAPlan on "Fight against Corruption for 2012-2015".

The abovementioned national action plans were adopted with purpose of sustainability of measures taken towards human rights protection, improvement of the relevant legislative and institutional framework, compliance of the activities of state and self employment authorities with open government principles, extension the participation of the civil society in decision making processes and increasing the transparency, and fulfillment of international obligations undertaken by Azerbaijan.

Currently, Azerbaijan forwards to a new stage of development. The main goal of this step is to further effective promotion of human rights, bringing welfare of the population into compliance with decent and international standards, also getting new achievements in development of science, culture and all areas of public life.

New created situation of the world set new obligations. From the perspective of carrying out these new obligations and for determining the goals of the perspective development of the country until 2020 and their implementation, the country President approved the Order on Development Concept "Azerbaijan 2020: Look onto Future" dated 29 December 2012.

The chief aim of the Concept is to achieve the development stage characterized by sustainable economic development and high social welfare, good governance and rule of law, full promotion of human rights and freedoms and active participation of the civil society in public life of the country.

The goals of the Development Concept "Azerbaijan 2020: Look onto Future" shows once again that holding large scale measures covering all fields will further promote efficient promotion of human rights, increasing the social-economic situation of the citizens, in general.

Thank you for attention!