

Statement by

**Chairperson of the Committee on Democratic Institutions, Non-governmental Organizations and Citizens Self-Government Bodies of the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Director of the National Center of the Republic of Uzbekistan for Human Rights prof. A.Kh. Saidov
at the OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting 2019
(Warsaw, 16 September 2019)**

Mrs. Gísladóttir, Director of the OSCE ODIHR

Excellences, Heads of Delegations

Dear Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Currently, many reforms in Uzbekistan is being done to ensure the protection of human rights. I would like to highlight our successful partnership with the OSCE structure on human rights issues, as well as with the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.

In my short remarks today, I would like to indicate new trends in our activity on human rights issues.

First. For the first time in the history of the Uzbek parliament, it was elected a woman to be the **Chairperson of the Senate**, thus Uzbekistan became the **56th state with a female leadership in the chambers of Parliament.**

In March, we established new **Commission of gender issues**, which was headed by Chairperson of the Senate, and the **Committee on gender and women rights** in the Senate.

In the year of **40th anniversary of the CEDAW**, Uzbek parliament adopted two new laws – **Laws on equal rights and opportunities for women and men and on protection of women from violence.**

In accordance with the recommendations of the UN treaty bodies from September 1, the Uzbek legislative body established a **minimum age for marriage for men and women - eighteen years.**

With the aim of implementing recommendations by the UN treaty bodies and ILO to strengthen the guarantees of protection of women's labor rights, increase the access level to justice, the **Resolution of the President "On measures to further strengthen guarantees of labour rights and support for women's entrepreneurship"** was adopted.

The Concept on Strengthening the Family Institution is being implemented in accordance with which, more than **160 centers for women's social adaptation** (crisis centers) have been established.

On May 30, 2019, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sh. Mirziyoyev commanded to return 156 Uzbek citizens to Tashkent by special flight. Most of them were women and children that taken by fraudulently to the zone of armed conflicts in the Middle East. The humanitarian operation carried out in full compliance with fundamental international documents in the sphere of human rights protection, as well as on the basis of norms and principles of international humanitarian law.

Second. In the year of **30th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child**, President of Uzbekistan adopted a resolution **"On additional measures to further strengthen the guarantees of the rights of the child"**, which aims at ensuring the best interests of children.

The Government also approved the Special program to widely celebrate **the 30th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.**

The draft of the **National Action Program for the Protection of Children's Rights and the creation of favorable conditions for them** is under consideration by the Government.

Currently, according to the recommendation of the UN Committee of the Rights of Child, the institution of the **Child Ombudsman** has been established by Parliament.

Third. Priority attention is paid to deepening reforms in the judicial and legal field as a result of which, specific measures have been taken on incorporation of international

standards in the field of court independence and right protection to have fair court proceedings.

Legislatively increased **the minimum age limit for candidates for judges to 35 years.**

This September, we are also waiting the visit of the **Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers** Mr. Diego Garcia-Sayan to Uzbekistan.

The Concept of Improving the Criminal and Criminal Procedural Legislation of the Republic of Uzbekistan has been approved according to which, it is planned to remove legal gaps in the Criminal and Criminal Procedural Codes.

According to the recommendations of international partners, the Presidential decree was adopted on closing the detention facility “Jaslyk” in Karakalpakstan.

In order to implement the recommendations within the framework of the UPR and the UN treaty committees, the following have been adopted to **improve mechanisms for protecting the rights of prisoners:**

- the national preventive mechanism for the prevention of torture was established according to the Ombudsman + model.
- more attention will be paid to the state of health and nutrition of prisoners. The specialized hospitals have been established for the maintenance of sick prisoners and provide them with a qualified health care.
- the quantitative norms of dates, phone calls, parcels or transmissions and parcels have been increased.
- those convicted to imprisonment, serving punishments in penal colonies, will receive a pension;
- work on the development of a **new version of the Penitentiary Code** has been initiated.

By the acts of the President, more than 4 **thousand individuals serving a sentence of imprisonment have been pardoned** as well as individuals who repented sincerely in their misdeeds and embarked firmly on the correct path.

Fourth. Uzbekistan has accumulated centuries-old historical experience of different denominations and different ethnic groups co-existing together. Since time immemorial,

over the period of countless millennia, various religions and beliefs co-existed on its territory. **2260 religious organizations of 16 different denominations** including: Islamic, Orthodox, Catholic, Lutheran, Baptist, full Gospel, Adventist and other Christian churches as well as religious communities of Bukhara and European Jews, Bahai, Krishnas and Buddhists operate in the country.

During the 73rd session of the UN General Assembly, at the initiative of Uzbekistan, an important document was adopted - **the Resolution “Enlightenment and Religious Tolerance”**. The Resolution stresses the importance of promoting education, peace, human rights, tolerance and friendship, as well as recognition of the importance of integration, mutual respect, human rights, tolerance and mutual understanding in order to strengthen security and peace in the world.

The Uzbek Parliament approved Road Maps for implementation of recommendation of Special Rapporteur Mr. A. Shaheed and the following measures have been implemented within their framework:

- the law on “Countering Extremism” has been adopted;
- the Provision on the procedure for registration, re-registration and termination of activities of religious organizations has been approved;
- the draft law on “Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations” has been drafted in a new edition;
- the procedure of providing reports by religious organizations to the registering body has been simplified;
- the right of elimination of religious organizations has been excluded from the powers of the registering authority, a judicial procedure has been established for termination of their activities.

The delegation of Uzbekistan also participated in the Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom in Washington D.C., during which achievements of Uzbekistan in the field of religious freedoms received a positive evaluation.

Fifth. The Republic of Uzbekistan has managed to make significant progress in protecting the rights of adults and children from forced labor.

Uzbekistan's implementation of its international commitments under the International Labor Organization conventions, including the recommendations they submitted following the monitoring of the cotton harvesting campaign, and the Country Program on Decent Work in Uzbekistan for 2017–2020 promoted positive assessments from international partners.

The legislation reinforces liability for violation of the requirements on the inadmissibility of the use of forced citizens, as well as the child labour. There have been introduced higher fines for repeating such kind of offenses.

In the year of the Centenary of the ILO, **Uzbekistan ratified 4 conventions:**

- No. 81 concerning Labour Inspection in Industry and Commerce (Geneva, 1947);
- No. 129 concerning Labour Inspection in Agriculture (Geneva, 1969);
- No. 144 concerning Tripartite Consultations to Promote the Implementation of International Labour Standards (Geneva, 1976);
- Protocol to ILO Convention No.29 Concerning Forced Labor of June 28, 1930 (Geneva, 2014).

The new system has been created to solve the problems of labor migrants at the state level. For this purpose, **Republican Commission on External Labor Migration** was created. In the structure of the Government, a **Department was established for the protection of the rights and support of citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan** engaged in temporary labor activities abroad. The measures taken for social protection and financial support for labor migrants.

Sixth. The country is carrying out large-scale work in the fight against human trafficking, comprehensive measures have been taken to prevent crimes in this area, which has made it possible to achieve positive results in ensuring the rights and freedoms of victims of trafficking in persons and to significantly improve the crime situation in the country.

In the **World Day against Trafficking in Persons**, the President of Uzbekistan adopted the **Decree “On additional measures to further improvement the system of combating trafficking in persons and forced labor”**.

The **National Commission to Combat Trafficking in Persons and Forced Labor** have been established that headed by the Chairperson of the Senate of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

It is noteworthy that for the first time the composition of the **National Commission**, in which the heads of several ministries and departments are represented, includes representatives of NGOs, which ensures the activation of civil society institutions in this direction.

The creation and functioning of territorial commissions to combat human trafficking and forced labor under the leadership of the heads of regions is envisaged.

Furthermore, the institution of the **National Rapporteur on combating trafficking in persons and forced labor** was established for the first time. The functions of which are entrusted to the chairperson of the National Commission.

Seventh. Exact measures have been taken on prevention and resolute combat against corruption, which has a serious damage on the state and society development, which undermines people's trust in justice. In addition, 1,177 officials who have committed similar crimes have been brought to criminal responsibility.

The State Anti-Corruption Program for 2019-2020 has been adopted and the structure of the **Republican Interdepartmental Commission on Anti-Corruption** has been renewed in order to increase efficiency of the anti-corruption system as well as create the most favorable business climate. Parliamentary anti-corruption committees have been established, which should contribute to strengthening the combat against corruption in state institutions of all levels. The establishment of commissions in the structure of local representative bodies to combat corruption is envisaged.

Eighth. **Human rights culture in society is one of the important conditions for ensuring the observance and protection of the rights of citizens, and strengthening the rule of law.** In recent years, significant work has been carried out in the country to fundamentally reform the national legal system, form a legal culture in society and train qualified legal personnel.

Last July Uzbek Parliament has approved the National Action Plan on realization of the **UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training**.

The Government also approved the creation of **Human Rights Training Course** at the National Centre for Human Rights, in which representatives of government bodies and civil society institutions will be trained in national reporting and follow-up process on international human rights standards.

Dear colleagues,

Uzbekistan enters to a new level in its development and has initiated international agreements. As part of the celebration of anniversaries in November 2018, the **Asian Forum on Human Rights** was held in Samarkand, which was organized for the first time in 70 years of the creation of the UN on the Asian continent.

I would like to highlight the personal participation of the Mrs. I. Gísladóttir, Director of the OSCE ODIHR, and H.E. G.Tsereteli, President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in the work of the Forum. During the Forum, there was signed the **Memorandum of Understanding between the OSCE ODIHR and the Parliament of Uzbekistan.**

During the Forum, the **Samarkand Declaration on Human Rights** was adopted, which was approved as a document of the 73rd session of the UN General Assembly. The Parliament of Uzbekistan approved the “Roadmap” for the implementation of the “Samarkand spirit” of human rights, where it is emphasized once again that there are no civilizations and states where the ideas of freedom, equality, and protection of human rights would not be of primary importance.

During the 72nd session of the General Assembly, Uzbekistan initiated the development of the **UN International Convention on the Rights of Youth**. We have prepared an initial draft of the Convention as well as we began to discuss it with our partners.

This October in cooperation with the **Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission** of the Organization Islamic Cooperation and the UNHRC office, we will organize the International Seminar on *“Importance of promoting and protecting the rights of youth for building peaceful democratic societies and sustainable development”* in Tashkent.

We reaffirm the nomination of our candidate for election to the Human Rights Council for the period 2021-2023.

Uzbekistan has prepared document «**Voluntary pledges and commitments pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/251**».

We have also begun work on preparation of **National strategies on human rights** development as well as National action plans (“roadmaps”) on business and human rights.

Uzbekistan attaches great importance to co-operation with OSCE structures on human rights issues. Over the past year, visits have been made by OSCE delegations, in particular, the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, the OSCE ODIHR Director, and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. And representatives of Uzbekistan also take part in OSCE events.

The OSCE provides active assistance in the examination of draft laws, especially, the recommendations of the OSCE ODIHR have been taken in the development of the new **Electoral Code of Uzbekistan**.

The OSCE Project Coordinator in Uzbekistan are being implemented joint projects that aimed at improving the activities of state bodies on human rights and promoting civil society institutions as well as conducting educational programs on human rights

This December, Uzbekistan will hold regular elections to the parliament and local representative bodies, which will be held in accordance with new **Electoral Code** and international election standards.

We are waiting a full-fledged observation mission of OSCE ODIHR and other international organizations.

Thank you for your attention!