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Sustainable development: towards the achievement of sustainable development: implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including through sustainable consumption and production, building on Agenda 21

Promotion and protection of human rights

Letter dated 22 February 2021 from the Permanent Representative of Uzbekistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to convey to you information on the measures taken by the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan to ensure the rights and freedoms of women within the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

I would appreciate it if you could circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the General Assembly under agenda items 19 (a) and 72.

(Signed) Bakhtiyor **Ibragimov**
Permanent Representative



Annex to the letter dated 22 February 2021 from the Permanent Representative of Uzbekistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Russian]

Information on the measures taken by Uzbekistan to ensure the rights and freedoms of women within the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Uzbekistan has systematically and consistently ensured that the rights of women and girls are upheld, promoted and protected while also taking into consideration its national interests and the generally recognized principles and norms of international law.

The Republic of Uzbekistan has undertaken far-reaching reforms as part of its strategy to promote development in five priority areas in the period 2017–2021.

Over the past four years, Uzbekistan has pursued a new era of openness and constructive cooperation in all aspects of socioeconomic activity and public life in the Republic.

The Government's priorities include increasing the sociopolitical engagement of women, increasing their representation in governmental and public entities, and ensuring their economic independence by creating new jobs, including in modern industrial enterprises and in rural areas.

Twenty-four legislative acts have been adopted to this end, including two laws, six presidential decrees and decisions, and 16 government decisions.

In 2019, in accordance with a decision of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the President of the Senate (upper house) of the Oliy Majlis (parliament) of Uzbekistan established the Gender Equality Commission of the Republic.

The Senate of the Oliy Majlis has established the Committee on Women and Gender Equality, whose main task is to formulate proposals for implementing State policy aimed at ensuring gender equality, improving legislation and exercising parliamentary oversight in this area. The Committee has been systematically monitoring compliance with laws in this area.

The Ministry for Mahalla and Family Support has been established with priorities that include providing comprehensive support for women. The Women and Family Support Fund has also been established with the aim of providing extensive support to women, promoting their role in family and private business and craft trades, and equipping them with the knowledge and skills that are in demand in the labour market.

A national women's public council, to be headed by the President of the Senate of the Oliy Majlis, is being established at the initiative of the President of the Republic.

One of the main priorities before the aforementioned council, along with providing comprehensive support to women and girls, will be to coordinate the implementation of the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Beijing Platform for Action and the national action plan.

A number of amendments and additions have been made to national laws with a view to intensifying efforts to prevent violence against women and domestic violence and combating outdated customs and practices.

The Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men Act, which sets out State policy priorities and describes the mandates for government agencies with regard to gender equality, and the Protection of Women from Harassment and Violence Act, which was drafted with input from civil society institutions and international organizations, have been adopted.

All laws and statutory instruments now undergo a mandatory gendered legal analysis aimed at bringing legal provisions into conformity with the principles of gender equality and identifying ways in which their application could result in discrimination.

Uzbekistan has acceded to all major international instruments providing legal, social and economic protection for women against any form of discrimination and harassment.

A strategy for achieving gender equality in Uzbekistan by 2030 has been developed, in line with national Sustainable Development Goals, to ensure that women and men enjoy equal rights and opportunities in social, economic and political life.

The list of jobs for which the use of female labour was prohibited in full or in part owing to adverse working conditions was repealed on 1 May 2019.

The number of women in political and leadership roles has grown noticeably, as has the number of women active in all areas, and Uzbekistan is gradually moving towards the achievement of gender equality.

Following the elections in 2019, women accounted for 32 per cent of deputies in the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis and 25 per cent of deputies in the Senate and councils of peoples' deputies (*kengash*), which is almost double the previous figures on record. Uzbekistan is now ranked thirty-seventh among the world's 190 national parliaments for the number of women deputies.

Particular attention is being given to women's employment. During the past four years, more than 620,200 women have been placed in employment and 106,000 women have received assistance in launching their own businesses.

Uzbekistan has introduced a system of entrepreneurial training and preferential loans for women entrepreneurs.

Women's business centres have been established to promote regional female entrepreneurship. More than 61,500 women were trained in short-term vocational courses in these centres in 2020. As a result, despite the pandemic, the number of women entrepreneurs has increased by 2,744 to 172,700.

The Republic's commercial banks have opened special lines of credit for women entrepreneurs. In the last four years, more than 327,000 women have received preferential loans totalling 7.4 trillion sum (\$740 million) for the development of women's entrepreneurship.

Approximately 1.4 trillion sums (\$140 million) have been earmarked from the Reconstruction and Development Fund of Uzbekistan for women entrepreneurs in 2021.

A new system has been in place since 2020 to expand educational opportunities for girls in need of social assistance. In particular, 950 girls from low-income families have been admitted to full-time departments at institutions of higher education in Uzbekistan on the basis of a State grant. In 2021, the number of quotas will reach 2,000.

Measures are being taken to prevent various forms of violence against women.

Pursuant to a presidential decree of 2 July 2018 on measures to improve the system of social rehabilitation and adaptation and prevent domestic violence, rehabilitation and adaptation centres have been set up in 190 districts/cities.

Their main goals are to provide urgent medical, psychological, social, pedagogical, legal and other assistance to persons in difficult social situations, facing family problems or domestic violence.

In order to provide financial support for these centres, the Women and Family Support Fund allocated 981.6 million sums (\$98,100) in 2020 alone. The Public Foundation in the Oliy Majlis has awarded State grants totalling 461 million sums (\$46,100) to 15 organizations for the implementation of projects to combat violence and harassment against women and girls.

Efforts are being made to improve the operation of these centres in the light of international practice.

In order to protect the victims of domestic violence, the Government has adopted a decision on measures to improve the system for the protection of women from harassment and violence. Regulations have also been approved which define the procedure for the issuance of protection orders for women subjected to harassment and violence, and the procedure for designating corrective programmes to change the behaviour of perpetrators of violence.

Within the Ministry of Internal Affairs, 360 female inspectors have been assigned to work with women in need of legal and social assistance.

In order to provide prompt and high-quality support to women who have been victims of harassment and violence, standard operating procedures were developed and implemented in 2020 on the joint response to gender-based violence for law enforcement, health and psychosocial workers.

A “helpline-1146” has been set up to provide legal advice and psychological assistance to women who have been subjected to harassment and domestic violence.

Supported by the Gender Equality Commission in conjunction with the United Nations Population Fund, legal and psychosocial counselling has been provided to women and families in difficulty during the pandemic in response to calls received through the hotline, and 180 women survivors of gender-based violence have received the necessary support.