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Replies of Uzbekistan to the list of issues in relation to its third periodic report*

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* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



I. General information

Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 1

1. The National Human Rights Strategy and the road map for its implementation were approved on 22 June 2020 after wide-ranging discussions on their provisions among government agencies and civil society organizations over the course of more than 18 months. The draft strategy was published on the regulation.gov.uz online portal, allowing for widespread dissemination and the submission of comments and suggestions.

2. The Strategy sets out the successes achieved and the existing shortcomings in the area of human rights, as well as the next steps to be taken to improve government policy, including by realizing economic, social and cultural rights.

3. The road map on implementation of the Strategy includes measures to improve legislation related to rights enshrined in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights:

- The development of a bill on equality and non-discrimination providing for: the introduction into law of the concepts of “discrimination”, “direct, indirect and multiple discrimination” and “grounds of discrimination”; full protection for citizens from possible discrimination in various spheres of public life; and the improvement of methods and means of protecting citizens’ rights
- The development and implementation of a poverty reduction programme as an effective factor in achieving economic and social rights, providing for the elaboration of a methodology encompassing the definition of poverty, the criteria used to determine it and methods of evaluation incorporating regional specificities
- The development of a draft business code providing for full codification of legislation on business activities and an overhaul of competition regulations for business, taking into account the transition of the national economy to a market-based economy
- The preparation of a bill on compulsory health insurance setting forth the legal basis, mechanisms and stages of introduction for compulsory health insurance and laying out the rights and obligations of persons subject to compulsory health insurance and the competent regulatory authority for legal relations in this area
- Improvement of the health insurance system, ensuring comprehensive coverage for the population with high-quality health-care services and, by 2030, reductions of the maternal mortality rate by one third, the infant and under-5 mortality rate by half and premature death from cardiovascular diseases, cancer, diabetes and chronic respiratory diseases by 30 per cent, among other targets

4. Article 3 of the International Treaties Act establishes that the international treaties to which Uzbekistan is a party, along with the generally recognized rules and principles of international law, form an integral part of the national legal system.

5. The Supreme Court, together with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United States Agency for International Development under the Rule of Law in Uzbekistan Partnership project, plans to hold a number of regional seminars on the application of the international covenants in court decisions for judges who try civil cases (292 judges), criminal cases (361 judges), administrative cases (245 judges) and economic cases (177 judges).

6. Item 5 of the road map on implementation of the National Human Rights Strategy provides that the plenum of the Supreme Court will adopt a decision on the application by the courts of the principles and rules of international law and the international treaties to which Uzbekistan is a party.

7. In the Strategy of Action for Development in Five Priority Areas of the Republic of Uzbekistan for the period 2017–2021, the second area is the rule of law and the further reform of the legal system, with a focus on strengthening the judiciary and ensuring reliable protection of the rights and legally protected interests of citizens.

8. As a body of the judicial community, the Supreme Judicial Council is responsible for helping to uphold the constitutional principle of judicial independence. The Council's tasks include the appointment of the most qualified specialists as members of the judiciary on the basis of an open and transparent competitive examination and the adoption of measures to prevent breaches of judicial inviolability and interference in the administration of justice by judges. The Council is empowered to appoint and dismiss judges, with presidential approval and with the exception of judges of the Constitutional Court and the Supreme Court, presiding judges and deputy presiding judges of the Military Court and judges of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, the provinces and Tashkent.

9. The Court Operations Support Department under the Supreme Court has been established to uphold the principle of judicial independence and allow for independent decisions on material and financial resources for the courts. The staff of the military courts have been transferred from the armed forces to the Supreme Court system.

10. A parliamentary commission on judicial independence has been established to carry out systematic monitoring of the implementation of legislation, with the aim of ensuring the independence of the judicial branch and of judges, performing a critical analysis of legislative issues and studying the existing situation with respect to independence of the judicial branch and of judges.

Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 2

11. Article 56 of the Constitution provides that trade unions, political parties, learned societies, women's organizations, veterans' associations, youth organizations, artists' associations, mass movements and other duly registered associations of citizens are recognized as voluntary associations.

12. Article 22 of the Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organizations Act contains a list of the documents required to officially register a non-governmental organization (NGO); these documents must be submitted to the registration authority, which examines them within one month of submission and in accordance with the requirements of the regulations on the procedure for the State registration of non-governmental non-profit organizations, approved by a government decision of 10 March 2014.

13. The registration authority, namely the Ministry of Justice or the regional departments of justice, verifies the accuracy of the documents related to the official registration of the NGO as regards their compliance with legislation. Following this examination, the decision is made either to complete or to refuse registration.

14. Article 25 of the Act establishes the grounds on which official registration of an NGO may be refused. The applicant is notified of a refusal decision in writing within three days of the decision being made. The decision of the registration authority to reject an application may be challenged in a court of law.

15. A working group headed by the Ministry of Justice is currently drafting a code on non-governmental non-profit organizations, taking into account best practices from abroad and national case law. An expert group of more than 20 representatives of NGOs has been involved in the drafting process.

16. In accordance with the policy outline on the improvement of rule-making, efforts have been made to systematize and harmonize the laws and regulations governing NGOs. The draft code is currently being refined taking account of academic and civil society assessments, a study of the problematic issues in this area and the proposals submitted by members of the expert group, government agencies and national human rights institutions. Once the code has been finalized, it will be presented for public debate following established practice.

17. As a result of the legislative measures taken, NGOs are becoming full-fledged partners of the State and their numbers are increasing accordingly. The development of NGOs has been characterized by their participation in all areas of public life; they take part in legislative activity, the development and implementation of government programmes and public oversight of the work of executive and administrative authorities and government officials.

18. In the past few years, the following efforts have been made to fundamentally overhaul the system to support, boost and develop NGO activity:

- The fees charged for the official registration of NGOs have been reduced fivefold and the fees for registration of their logos by two and a half times.
- The deadline for processing an application for official registration of an NGO has been reduced from two months to one month.
- NGOs are now exempt from more than 10 types of tax and other compulsory payments.
- NGOs may only be dissolved or prohibited or have their activities restricted on the basis of judicial decisions, and they may only be disbanded by decision of their own governing body or on the basis of a judicial decision.

19. In accordance with a decree of 4 May 2018, the requirements and procedures for NGO cooperation with government agencies have been greatly simplified:

- The procedure for authorization by the registration authority of NGO events has been replaced with a notification procedure.
- The procedure for audits and monitoring of NGO activities and the timing and frequencies have been specified.
- The types of reporting have been reduced and the format of NGO reports to be submitted to the registration, tax, statistical and other authorities has been simplified.

20. To simplify the registration process, NGOs may now register through the online portal e-ngo.uz.

21. On 16 April 2020, a decree was adopted on the establishment of a civic chamber attached to the Office of the President for the purpose of expanding public participation in government and social affairs and strengthening public oversight of government agencies and institutions.

Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 3

22. In Uzbekistan, systematic measures are taken with respect to the collection, compilation, analysis and evaluation of data on national development indicators and on the protection of human rights in all areas of society.

23. On 9 April 2019, a decision was adopted on additional measures to ensure open and transparent government and to improve the country's statistical capacity, providing for further enhancement of the Open Data Portal and the elaboration of a bill on official statistics.

24. The Census Act was adopted on 16 March 2020; a policy outline for the conduct of a national census in 2022 was adopted on 5 February 2019, specifying the goals and main objectives of the census, its preparation and implementation phases and the participants in these phases.

25. A decision on measures to further improve and develop the national statistical system, approving the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics for the period 2020–2025, was adopted on 3 August 2020.

26. In 2019, the State Statistics Committee published a statistical compendium entitled “Women and Men in Uzbekistan” and established an official website at <https://gender.stat.uz/>.

27. Work has begun on the development of a methodology for the collection of gender statistics, the establishment of a mechanism for interdepartmental coordination on gender statistics and the conduct of a national census in 2022, with a multiple indicator cluster survey of households to assess the situation of women and children in the country, including statistical data disaggregated by gender.

Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 4

28. In recent years, a series of large-scale reforms have been carried out in the country to prevent and combat corruption and eradicate the causes of corruption in all areas of the State and society.

29. A decree of 27 May 2019 on measures to further improve the anti-corruption system in Uzbekistan provides for the organization and implementation of the corruption-free sector project in higher education, with gradual introduction of the project into other sectors.

30. On 31 July 2019, a plan of action to improve legal knowledge and awareness among the public and foster intolerance to corruption in society was adopted. In 2019, the Office of the Procurator General organized more than 35,000 promotional events. The plan of action aimed at instilling in young persons a proactive outlook and a strong civic engagement to combat corruption was also approved on 31 July 2019. On 16 August 2019, a comprehensive programme of measures on the legal education of young persons with respect to combating corruption was adopted.

31. The Anti-Corruption Agency was established pursuant to a decree of 29 June 2020 on additional measures to improve the anti-corruption system in Uzbekistan.

32. In 2020, the Ministry of Labour visited 631 health-care facilities to study the local instruments regulating the health-care system. This action resulted in the identification of 4,896 individual violations of the law in the health-care system. Appropriate measures were taken in accordance with the law to address all the violations identified.

33. Item 37 of the road map on implementation of the National Human Rights Strategy provides for the elaboration of a health code, which will regulate all aspects of the work of health-care organizations.

34. Pursuant to a decision of 11 July 2017 on measures to radically improve the work of the internal affairs agencies in migration and citizenship processes, the migration and citizenship divisions have introduced the following measures to eradicate corruption in residency registration:

- An electronic system, allowing for remote interactions, to provide public services and regulate reception of the public for matters related to the passport system
- Integrated databases concerning permanent and temporary residence permits, registration of residence and exits, entries and stays in the country

35. On 28 August 2018, a decision was adopted on measures to improve the procedure for issuing permanent and temporary residence permits to foreign nationals and stateless persons. On 12 November 2019, a decree on measures to ensure good conditions for foreign nationals and stateless persons in the provision of public services was adopted.

36. A decree of 22 April 2020 on measures to reform the procedure for the issuance of permanent residence permits and the registration of residence provides for a progressive transition from an authorization-based system of permanent residence permits to a notification-based system of registration. The relevant amendments have been made to the Act on the List of Categories of Uzbek Citizens Subject to Permanent Registration in the City of Tashkent and Tashkent Province.

37. Article 120 of the Constitution and article 5 of the Procurator's Office Act provide that the procuratorial authorities exercise their powers independently of any government agencies, voluntary associations or officials, and are subject only to the law.

38. The principle of independence is enshrined at the constitutional level, through the specification of a procedure for the appointment and dismissal of the Procurator General; in turn, the Procurator General appoints and dismisses the deputy procurators general and the provincial, district and municipal procurators.

39. The decree of 27 May 2019 on measures to further improve the anti-corruption system in Uzbekistan provides for the drafting of a bill on career progression in the procuratorial

authorities and the establishment of a procuratorial council of Uzbekistan as a collegiate body helping to uphold the independence and transparency of the procuratorial authorities.

40. In accordance with article 106 of the Constitution and article 4 of the Courts Act, the judiciary in Uzbekistan operates independently of the legislative and executive branches, political parties and voluntary associations. Pursuant to a decree of 21 February 2017 on measures to fundamentally improve the organization and enhance the effectiveness of the court system, the Supreme Judicial Council was established to help uphold the constitutional principle of judicial independence.

41. In 2018, the parliament established a commission on the independence of the judiciary, whose main tasks include systematic monitoring of the application of legislation related to the independence of the judiciary and judges.

II. Issues relating to the general provisions of the Covenant (arts. 1–5)

Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 5

42. Uzbekistan submitted its nationally determined contributions (the country's climate commitments on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions) to the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change on 19 April 2017.

43. In accordance with these nationally determined contributions, the key commitment of Uzbekistan under the Paris Agreement is to reduce specific emissions of greenhouse gases per unit of gross domestic product (GDP) by 10 per cent from 2010 levels by 2030. The nationally determined contributions also include mitigation and adaptation measures and actions for the period up to 2030.

44. A strategy for transition to a green economy for the period 2019–2030, under which every ministry and department has been set climate change mitigation or adaptation targets, was approved by a presidential decision of 4 October 2019.

45. Implementation of the strategy by 2030 is expected to lead to:

- A reduction of 10 per cent in specific emissions of greenhouse gases per unit of GDP from 2010 levels
- A doubling of the energy efficiency indicator and a reduction in the carbon intensity of GDP
- The further development of renewable energy and an increase in its share of total electricity generation to 25 per cent
- The upgrading and ensured sustainability of industrial infrastructure through energy efficiency improvements of at least 20 per cent and greater adoption of clean and environmentally sound technologies and industrial processes
- A significant increase in water-use efficiency in all economic sectors, the introduction of drip irrigation over an area of 1 million ha and an increase of 20–40 per cent in crop yields

46. Pursuant to a decree of 30 October 2019 on approval of the policy outline for environmental protection in Uzbekistan for the period up to 2030, a national plan of action on the implementation of the Paris Agreement has been prepared and is currently being reviewed by the Government.

47. Work with the Adaptation Fund and the Green Climate Fund is ongoing. National communications on climate change have been successfully completed with support from the Global Environment Facility, UNDP and the United Nations Environment Programme.

48. To ensure rapid and targeted action to mitigate the consequences of the Aral Sea crisis, the Government has adopted a number of programmes intended to achieve ecological balance

and socioeconomic development in the Aral Sea region, at a cost of more than US\$ 11,375,000,000.

49. From 2013 to 2017, more than 500 projects to develop the Aral Sea region were completed, costing more than US\$ 6,248,000,000,000.

50. The measures adopted to improve socioeconomic conditions in the region between 2014 and 2017 resulted in the following achievements:

- To improve the public supply of clean drinking water, 73 water system installations were built or renovated and 130.1 km of water pipes and 160.3 km of the water supply network were laid down, ensuring the supply of clean drinking water to more than 150,000 persons.
- Outpatient health clinics with a capacity of 11,648 consultations per shift entered into operation.
- Measures to improve the investment attractiveness of the region led to the creation of 158,900 new jobs.

51. A fund has been established for the development of the Aral Sea region. In the past year and a half, the fund has received more than US\$ 16 million for the provision of drinking water and other public amenities, the improvement of housing conditions and social and communications infrastructure, enhancement of the fertility of reclaimed land and desertification control measures. In 2018, US\$ 86.5 million was allocated to the development of social and communications infrastructure in the Aral Sea region.

52. In rural Karakalpakstan, approximately 1,700 km have been added to the water supply network, water supply coverage of the rural population has increased almost fourfold and over 100 rural health clinics have been built or renovated and equipped with modern medical technology. In Karakalpakstan and Khorezm Province, eight district health clinics with housing for doctors have entered into operation. They have a capacity of 128 beds and 550 consultations per shift.

53. As a result, in Karakalpakstan, the number of birth defects has decreased since 2000 by a factor of 3.1 (from 352 to 114), the maternal mortality rate has decreased by a factor of 2.9 (from 38.8 per cent to 13.2 per cent) and the infant mortality rate by a factor of 1.3 (from 20.5 per cent to 16.3 per cent).

54. Under the State programmes for the development of the Aral Sea region implemented during the 2018–2021 period, it is planned to carry out a package of measures costing more than US\$ 5,128 billion. To reinforce targeted social protection, a new type of social benefit for families in need has been introduced; it is paid to persons living alone, pensioners, families whose breadwinner has a disability and other categories of low-income persons and families. The total amount of benefits and incentives paid each year exceeds US\$ 100 million.

Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 6 (a)

55. Income inequality in Uzbekistan decreased between 2010 and 2019. The relative income of the wealthiest families decreased from 8.5 times that of the poorest families in 2010 to 6.0 times in 2019, which demonstrates a reduction in income inequality. Details are available in the annex.

Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 6 (b), (c), (d) and (e)

56. This information is available in the annex.

Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 7

57. Item 12 of the road map on implementation of the National Human Rights Strategy provides for the elaboration of a bill on equality and non-discrimination, which in turn provides for: the introduction into law of the concepts of “discrimination”, “direct, indirect

and multiple discrimination” and “grounds of discrimination”; full protection for citizens from possible discrimination in various spheres of public life, irrespective of race, sex, language, religion, political opinion, national or social origin or property, class or other status; and the improvement of methods and means of protecting citizens’ rights.

58. In accordance with article 18 of the Constitution, all citizens of Uzbekistan have the same rights and freedoms and are equal before the law, without distinction as to sex, race, ethnicity, language, religion, social origin, beliefs or personal or social status.

59. In accordance with article 6 of the Labour Code, all citizens have equal opportunities with regard to the enjoyment and exercise of labour rights. The imposition of any restrictions or the granting of privileges in the sphere of labour relations on the basis of sex, age, race, ethnic background, language, social origin, property or employment status, attitude to religion, beliefs, membership of voluntary associations or other considerations unrelated to employees’ skills or the results of their work is unacceptable and constitutes discrimination.

60. Pursuant to article 4 of the Education Act, everyone is guaranteed equal rights to an education, regardless of their sex, language, age, race or ethnicity, beliefs, attitude to religion, social origin, occupation, social status, place of residence and length of residence in the territory of Uzbekistan.

61. Article 13 of the Health Care Act stipulates that the State provides citizens with health care regardless of age, sex, race, ethnicity, language, attitude to religion, social origin, beliefs or personal or social status.

62. The State guarantees protection from discrimination for its citizens, regardless of any illness they may have. Persons who violate this provision are held liable in accordance with the procedures established by law.

63. Item 17 of the road map on implementation of the National Human Rights Strategy provides for the implementation of the national policy outline on inter-ethnic relations for the period 2019–2021, to uphold the social and cultural rights of ethnic minorities.

64. Item 23 of the road map provides for the establishment of a parliamentary commission to monitor compliance with international human rights obligations; paragraph 63 provides for the adoption of a law on the rights of persons with disabilities; item 37 provides for the adoption of the draft Health Code and item 53 provides for the revision of the Housing Code to enshrine the principle of equal access to housing for all citizens.

65. The decriminalization of homosexuality has not been considered owing to the pressing need to combat the spread of HIV.

66. In 2019, approximately 3,800 advocacy groups were established to promote awareness-raising events held by the Ministry of Internal Affairs; they made more than 7,500 media appearances, including 2,600 online, 2,500 on television and 1,600 on the radio, and 1,000 appearances in print.

67. Moreover, over 24,400 round tables, more than 8,600 seminars and 15 conferences were held during the same period. Awareness-raising campaigns are held on the prevention of trafficking in persons and irregular migration through preventive interviews at airports, stations and border-crossing points. In these locations, 235,000 flyers and booklets have been distributed and 5,100 banners are on display. The action taken has reached more than 2.5 million citizens.

Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 8

68. The Act on Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men sets out the principal areas of government policy in relation to gender equality in all areas of society, the powers of State authorities and the involvement of civil society institutions in this domain. A Gender Equality Commission has been established.

69. As regards rule-making, pursuant to article 7 of the Act, a mandatory gender-based legal analysis of all laws and regulations has been introduced. In the Senate, a Committee on Women and Gender Equality has been established. The National Centre for the Rehabilitation

and Reintegration of Victims of Violence and the Prevention of Suicides and the Women's Business Centre were founded to support the provision of assistance for victims of domestic violence and to further strengthen guarantees of labour rights.

70. On 20 November 2019, a decision was adopted on measures to promote women's employment and further improve the system for developing female entrepreneurship, under which the following were approved:

- A programme of measures to promote employment for unemployed women in 2019
- A programme to refer unemployed women to different sectors of employment in 2019

71. Pursuant to a decision of 4 January 2020 on measures to improve the system for the protection of women from harassment and violence, regulations were approved on the procedure for the granting, enforcement and monitoring of protection orders for women victims of harassment and violence and regulations on the procedure for the completion of behaviour change programmes by the perpetrators of violent acts and persons with violent tendencies.

72. Guarantees of equal rights and opportunities for women and men in labour relations are enshrined in the Labour Code, the Employment Act, the Act on Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men and other laws and regulations.

73. Article 21 of the Act on Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men includes the following guarantees on women's labour rights:

- Equal opportunities for employment
- Equal pay for equal work and equality of treatment in the evaluation of the quality of work for women and men
- Equal opportunities for promotion

74. The Act also establishes the mandatory inclusion in collective agreements of provisions on gender equality in labour and employment, prohibiting discrimination against women in recruitment, promotion and remuneration.

75. Pursuant to the decision of 7 March 2019 on measures to further strengthen the guarantees of labour rights and support for entrepreneurial activities by women, prohibitions on the use of female labour in certain sectors or jobs have been repealed and Women's Business Centres have been established as business incubators, whose main tasks are the retraining of women on maternity or childcare leave and women facing difficult economic circumstances. Women who have successfully completed a special training programme on setting up a business receive subsidized loans for at least three years, with a six-month grace period and an annual interest rate of 8 per cent, paid for by the Public Support Fund for Women and Families and grants from international organizations.

76. Women in Uzbekistan are widely represented in social sectors of the labour market such as education, health and social services, culture and the arts, hospitality and catering. They account for 76.6 per cent of employees in health care, social welfare and sport and 75.6 per cent of employees in education, culture, art and science. In agriculture, forestry and fisheries, women account for 44.3 per cent of the workforce.

77. Women represent 5.4 per cent (8,105) of farm managers in Uzbekistan, with 36.3 per cent specializing in horticulture and wine-growing, 35.5 per cent in cotton-growing and wine-growing, 10 per cent in oil crops and gourd-growing, 7.7 per cent in vegetable-growing, 6.2 per cent in livestock rearing and 4.4 per cent in vegetable- and gourd-growing.

78. In accordance with the "Well-appointed Village" and "Well-appointed Mahalla" government programmes, the situation in more than 112,900 dwellings has been studied and more than 13,994 families living in difficult circumstances have been identified. To improve the economic situation of the women living in such families, 1,629 have received training in sewing and been given sewing machines; and 780 have registered as homeworkers.

79. Based on the tried-and-tested apprenticeship method of learning a trade, 5,604 women in the regions have begun practising a craft and 13,754 have been provided with homework. More than 800 small-scale sewing workshops have been established in the mahallas,

providing women with an opportunity to earn money and improve their economic situation without taking them away from their families and childcare obligations.

80. The rights of citizens to own real estate and participate in housing construction are enshrined in six official codes and eight laws, including the Pledge Act and the Mortgage Act, 29 presidential decisions and 44 government decisions.

81. Between 2012 and 2015, as a result of a targeted policy to allocate accessible home loans to rural residents with additional advantages for female borrowers, under a project for the construction of affordable housing through standardized projects in rural areas, women were registered as the owners of 4,300 (26.5 per cent) of the houses built as part of standardized projects in rural areas. This figure then doubled so that 52 per cent of subsidized housing loans allocated between 2018 and 2019 were issued to female applicants.

82. In 2018, the Public Support Fund for Women and Families paid the initial deposit for housing on a non-reimbursable basis to 1,600 women with disabilities who were in need of housing, to the value of 54,581,000,000 sum.

83. In 2019, the Fund paid the initial deposit for housing on a non-reimbursable basis to 1,576 women with disabilities and facing difficult life circumstances who were in need of housing.

84. Item 44 of the road map on implementation of the National Human Rights Strategy provides for the elaboration of proposals to achieve gender equality and prevent violence in all areas of social life.

85. With regard to women's representation in political leadership positions, presidential decrees and decisions concerning women's rights have been adopted, on subjects including gender equality, the protection of women from harassment and violence and improvement of the status of female entrepreneurship. For the first time in the country's history, a woman has been elected as the new President of the Senate. Following the most recent elections to the Legislative Chamber, the number of women doubled from the 2014 levels to 48 of 150 elected members (32 per cent).

86. In the local councils of peoples' deputies (*kengash*), women's representation is 25.6 per cent on average. More than 9,000 women currently work in the mahallas as specialists on working with women and promoting spiritual and moral values in families. There are 1,061 women presidents of mahallas.

87. For the first time in the history of the foreign service, a woman has been appointed ambassador (to Israel) and women are working as deputy heads of the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Mahalla and Family Support and other key ministries and departments. The Commissioner for Children's Rights is a woman.

88. Under article 70 of the Electoral Code, political parties are entitled to nominate 150 candidates for election as deputies, and at least 30 per cent of the total number of candidates nominated by any political party must be women.

89. There were 20,461,805 voters registered for the presidential elections of 4 December 2016, including 10,825,641 women, who thus made up approximately 50 per cent of the total number of voters.

90. Cooperation with political parties has led to the signing of memorandums and the adoption of plans of action for 2018–2019 on practical measures for the social and legal support of women. Five political parties (the Liberal Democratic Party of Uzbekistan, the People's Democratic Party of Uzbekistan, the Milliy Tiklanish Democratic Party of Uzbekistan, the Adolat Social Democratic Party of Uzbekistan and the Ecological Party) have more than 6,086 active female members. Currently, 120 of these women have been recommended for decision-making positions and 328 are undergoing preparation to stand as candidates for election as deputies.

III. Issues relating to specific provisions of the Covenant (arts. 6–15)

Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 9

91. In 2018, pursuant to a decision of 10 May 2018 on additional measures to eliminate forced labour in Uzbekistan, the State Labour Inspectorate carried out 1,126 monitoring interventions, identified 292 forced labour violations and imposed 291 fines. In 2019, among other activities, the Inspectorate put up 600 banners throughout the country, distributed 200,000 flyers with information on the inadmissibility of forced labour and carried out approximately 3,000 monitoring interventions and 7,000 outreach events at farms, with the participation of citizens, to raise awareness among workers and employers of the efforts being made to eliminate forced labour, of the provisions of the International Labour Organization conventions and of violations, and the penalties established in labour law for them, in the areas of employment and health and safety. In 2019, 259 forced labour offences were identified. In the first half of 2020, the Inspectorate carried out approximately 700 interventions to monitor the efforts being made to eliminate all forms of forced labour and identified 28 cases of forced labour.

92. During the 2019 cotton season, a national exercise was carried out jointly with the National Commission to Combat Trafficking in Persons and Forced Labour to monitor the efforts made to create favourable working conditions for cotton pickers and prevent the use of child and forced labour during the cotton harvest.

93. As part of the national monitoring exercise, which ran from 26 September to 31 October 2019, local working groups conducted 399 visits to randomly selected districts and cities in the country.

94. During these visits, 731 farms, 12 colleges, 1 academic lycée, 278 general education schools, 55 preschool institutions, 106 health-care facilities, 77 business entities (including 37 agro-industrial clusters), 56 regional administrations and 35 mahalla assemblies of citizens were inspected.

95. An examination of cases in which employees of State bodies, economic entities and public-sector institutions were recruited to harvest cotton revealed a total of 47 cases involving over 3,895 employees.

96. Following this monitoring exercise, it was concluded that 96.8 per cent of citizens who participated in the 2019 cotton harvest had done so voluntarily.

Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 10

97. Under article 37 of the Constitution, everyone has the right to work, free choice of work, fair working conditions and protection against unemployment in accordance with the procedures established by law.

98. Forced labour, except in execution of a court sentence or in other instances specified by law, is prohibited.

99. Articles 153–164 of the Labour Code regulate the establishment of pay guarantees and minimum pay and the introduction of changes to payment terms and schedules to ensure compliance with the principle of equal pay for work of equal value.

100. The new version of the Labour Code contains an article that establishes various pay safeguards, including:

- A ban on pay discrimination
- An established minimum pay rate
- Restrictions on payment in kind
- Established requirements in respect of payment terms and schedules

- The principles of non-discrimination and equal pay for work of equal value
- Wage guarantees to protect workers whose employers cease activities or become insolvent

101. In accordance with article 155 of the Labour Code, the monthly pay of a worker who has met the established monthly workload standards and fully discharged his or her work duties for a given period may not be lower than the amount established by law. On 1 February 2020, the wages of workers in public-sector institutions and organizations, pensions, scholarships, benefits and the financial assistance provided to deprived families were increased by a factor of 1.07. Since this date, minimum monthly pay has been set at 679,330 sum.

102. The Regulations of the State Labour Inspectorate state that one of the Inspectorate's principal tasks is to carry out State oversight and monitoring of compliance by organizations, regardless of their form of incorporation, and of the requirements established by law governing respect for and protection of citizens' labour rights, safe working conditions, and health and safety rules, including the timely payment of workers' wages in full.

103. The Inspectorate thus examined 3,933 cases concerning the non-payment of wages on time and in full in 2019 and 2,023 such cases in the first five months of 2020.

104. The Decree of 21 May 2019 on improving the procedure for setting the rates for pay, pensions and other payments has eliminated the interdependence between pay, pension payments and taxation, State duties, fines, fees and other payments.

105. The minimum wage has thus been replaced with:

- The minimum pay rate
- The reference calculation value (the current minimum wage)
- The reference pension value

106. The minimum pay rate is the monetary value of the monthly pay rate for the first step on the unified pay rate scale with a rate multiplier of 1.0.

107. The minimum pay rate is used in labour relations to determine the amount of the official salary, allowances, additional payments, emoluments, compensation for additional work and other types of incentive payments, in addition to deductions established by law and other payments previously established in relation to the minimum wage, and to determine a family's need for social support and the amount of unemployment benefits.

108. For all employers, regardless of their form of incorporation or labour relations, the minimum pay rate is a mandatory lower limit for the pay of a worker who has met the established workload standards.

109. The new version of the Labour Code contains an article providing for the establishment of the minimum pay rate.

110. The article states that the minimum pay rate is set by the President at least once a year, for the country as a whole, and that it is mandatory for all employers, regardless of the form of ownership or management.

111. The monthly pay of a worker who has met the established monthly workload standards and fully discharged his or her work duties as established in the work contract may not be lower than the minimum pay rate established by law.

Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 11

112. The Trade Unions Act of 6 December 2019 contains an article that, for the first time, defines such fundamental concepts as "trade union", "local (shop floor) trade union organization", "trade union branch" and "trade union association".

113. Article 8 of the Act states that "neither membership nor non-membership of a trade union may entail any restriction of legislatively established labour, other socioeconomic,

political or personal rights, freedoms or legitimate interests. It is prohibited to make the recruitment, promotion or dismissal of a worker conditional on membership or non-membership, or the joining or leaving, of a particular trade union.”

114. Article 12 of the Act establishes guarantees of non-interference in the activities of trade unions and their associations. It establishes the right of trade unions to form national federations or confederations and the right of the latter to form or join international trade union organizations.

115. The Act provides that trade union associations also enjoy trade union rights and, for the first time, sets out the fundamental principles of trade union activities: due process of law, voluntary participation, non-discrimination, independence and self-regulation, and transparency and openness.

116. In an extremely important step forward, the Act has streamlined procedures for the establishment and registration of trade unions. In addition, trade union branches and local (shop floor) trade union organizations may be established either with or without the status of a legal person. Only those with the status of a legal person are subject to State registration; those without such a status are registered by trade unions themselves.

117. State bodies, their officials and employers may neither found trade unions nor serve as members of their governing bodies. This provision is in line with the International Labour Organization Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98).

118. The Act also ensures protection for the property rights of trade unions. Trade unions are prohibited from providing financial support to employers’ associations and political parties.

119. The Trade Unions Act is in line with article 8 of the Covenant.

120. The draft code on non-governmental non-profit organizations has been brought into line with article 8 of the Covenant through the elimination of administrative barriers. In particular, the language of the draft code:

- Defines the principles of NGO activities
- Expands the legal structures for NGO incorporation
- Contains provisions to further enhance the process by which the governing bodies of NGOs are formed and the meetings of their boards of directors held
- Introduces a process for the digital registration, re-registration or liquidation of an NGO by the registering body, through a reduction in the number of documents required for registration or re-registration and streamlined procedures for registration, re-registration and liquidation in accordance with the Administrative Procedures Act
- Establishes a procedure for the registration of separate subdivisions of NGOs and abolishes the procedure for their certification
- Sets out the grounds on which NGOs may be refused State registration in accordance with the Administrative Procedures Act
- Streamlines the procedure for registering NGOs’ logos through a reduction in the time frame for considering applications and a shorter list of documents to be submitted

121. The draft code is at the final drafting stage and will soon be put forward for public discussion in accordance with the established procedure.

122. The bill on rallies, meetings and demonstrations defines and sets out the procedure for such gatherings. It also covers marches, pickets and flash mobs, which are defined as demonstrations.

123. Its articles 10 and 11 concern the exercise by citizens of their rights to hold rallies, meetings and demonstrations.

124. Under article 5 of the bill, the organization and holding of rallies, meetings and demonstrations is subject to restrictions:

- If the aim is to bring about violent change in the constitutional order, inflame ethnic, racial or religious hatred or spread propaganda in favour of violence or war
- If they disrupt the work of public bodies and organizations, enterprises and institutions
- If the aim is to knowingly spread false information designed to humiliate or degrade a person
- Vehicles may not be used at the site where a rally, meeting or demonstration is being held
- Persons may not participate in a rally, meeting or demonstration while in a state of intoxication from alcohol, narcotics or other substances or while using alcohol or psychotropic or other substances that impair reasoning and impulse control

125. With regard to strikes, the draft of a new version of the Labour Code has now been uploaded to the regulation.gov.uz portal. It contains a dedicated provision on the right of trade unions to call strikes.

126. Article 625 of the draft states that, if a collective labour dispute cannot be resolved through conciliation procedures or if an employer refuses to engage in such procedures or fails to comply with an agreement reached in the process of settling a dispute, workers may decide to strike as a last resort. Workers may not strike to settle a collective labour dispute in the circumstances stipulated in article 629 (1) to (3) of the draft.

Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 12

127. Information regarding the issues raised in paragraph 12 may be found in the annex.

Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 13

128. In accordance with item 37 of the plan of measures drawn up on the basis of the President's message of 24 January 2020 to the parliament, work has begun on the drafting of a social protection policy framework for submission to the Government in accordance with the established procedure.

129. Item 45 of the road map for the implementation of the National Human Rights Strategy concerns the development of a social protection policy framework to provide for, inter alia:

- The introduction of an improved system for paying social benefits
- The development of criteria for identifying deprived and low-income groups
- A review of the criteria for granting benefits and the creation of an open and fair system for setting such criteria
- An improved system for paying subsidies from the State budget to cover a portion of the down payment and/or interest on a mortgage granted on market principles to persons in need of better housing

130. On 28 December 2016, in order to further enhance the system of State support for older persons, persons with special needs and older persons living alone, a decision was adopted on additional measures to further enhance the system of State support for older persons and persons with disabilities, and a set of measures to further enhance the system of State support for older persons and persons with disabilities for the period 2017–2020 was approved.

131. The provisions of the Decision of 11 February 2019 on additional measures to strengthen the social protection of orphaned children and children deprived of parental care, which was adopted on 1 March 2019, include the following:

- An increase by a factor of 1.33 in the benefit paid for each child taken into foster care, which thus amounts to 820,000 sum

- The approval of a road map on strengthening the social protection of orphans and children deprived of parental care

132. Pursuant to a decision on additional measures to further strengthen safeguards of children's rights adopted on 22 April 2019:

- Children deprived of parental care have the right, until they reach the age of 18 years, to retain a housing unit in special-purpose municipal or communal housing stock in which they previously lived, for the full duration of the time they live in a Mehribonlik home or with a tutor or guardian, subject to the agreement of an agency of tutorship or guardianship
- Children receive all types of social services, regardless of their place of registration and citizenship
- The Office of the Deputy Human Rights Commissioner (Ombudsman), the Children's Rights Commissioner, was established
- There are plans to adopt a bill on the social protection of orphans and children deprived of parental care

133. The following have been adopted: a decision of 23 August 2019 on additional measures of State support for voluntary associations of persons with disabilities; a decision of 7 September 2019 on measures to further enhance medical and social care for children with rare, including orphan, and other genetic diseases; and a decision of 30 September 2019 on measures to improve the administration of the system and the selection of alternative forms of care to prevent child abandonment among children deprived of parental care, to strengthen the family as an institution and to improve the placement of orphaned children.

134. A programme of measures to improve and further expand medical coverage for women of reproductive age, pregnant women and children for the period 2019–2023 was approved pursuant to the decision of 8 November 2019 on those issues. A council for reproductive health promotion and maternal and child health care has been established under the authority of the Government, and its principal objectives have been defined.

135. A programme of measures to further enhance the system of State support for older persons was approved pursuant to the related decision of 28 May 2020.

Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 14

136. Under article 64 of the Constitution, the State and society support, take care of and educate orphans and children deprived of parental care, and encourage charitable activities in their interest.

137. The State takes steps to prevent all forms of exploitation and violence against children, identify and eliminate the causes and conditions that give rise to such exploitation and violence and provide the necessary educational, psychological, medical and legal assistance to exploited and abused children.

138. On 10 March 2020, a law amending the Family Code, the Code of Civil Procedure and the Children's Rights Safeguards Act was passed to establish additional safeguards for children's rights.

139. A policy framework for the development of the national education system of Uzbekistan for the period up to 2030 was approved by decree on 29 April 2019. One of the priorities of the policy framework is to launch a programme to prevent violence (bullying) among students at general education institutions, following the best practices of developed countries.

140. There are currently 356 children enrolled in special education schools, and 345 minors were successfully reintegrated with their families over the period 2019–2020.

141. The Office of the Commissioner for Children's Rights was established pursuant to a decision of 22 April 2019 on additional measures to strengthen safeguards of children's rights.

142. To carry out its mandated tasks and functions, the Office of the Children's Rights Commissioner has the right to regular and unimpeded access to facilities, services and bodies responsible for the care and protection of children, including educational, medical, police custody and penitentiary facilities.

143. Between March and August 2020, the Commissioner carried out monitoring visits to 33 Muruvvat and Mehribonlik children's homes and other specialized children's institutions in seven provinces and the city of Tashkent. Following this exercise, 10 opinions and recommendations to remedy violations that had been identified were submitted to the Office of the Procurator General, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Higher and Specialized Secondary Education and the Ministry of Education.

144. There are currently more than 28,000 Roma/Lyuli children registered in the country. Of these, 15,000 are cared for at home and 428 in preschools; and 12,000 study at schools, 98 at colleges and lycées and 12 at higher education institutions.

145. Special efforts have been made to ensure the social protection of the rights, freedoms and legitimate interests of Roma/Lyuli children: over 1,200 Roma/Lyuli children received the social assistance provided for by law in 2018 and 1,400 in 2019; 1,800 Roma/Lyuli children are currently receiving such social assistance.

146. More than 2,000 Roma/Lyuli children received passports in 2018, 2,100 in 2019 and 1,900 so far in 2020. In addition, 159 Roma/Lyuli persons were provided with employment in 2018, 209 in 2019 and 262 so far in 2020. A total of 13 deprived Roma/Lyuli families with children were given housing in 2018, as were 146 in 2019 and 5 in the first five months of 2020.

Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 15

147. In 2019, several texts were adopted to regulate title to real property. These include the Presidential Decision of 5 April 2019 on measures to further enhance the system of State registration of title to real property and the Government Decision of 28 January 2019 on additional measures to introduce modern and transparent mechanisms for the allocation of land plots and exercise of lifetime hereditary tenure over land plots for private housing projects. Under the latter Decision, regulations governing the mechanisms in question were approved. The Act on the Privatization of Non-Agricultural Land Plots of 13 August 2019 is based on the principle of gender equality.

148. Under the Act on Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men of 2 September 2019, women and men have equal access to the economic resources of society, including movable and immovable property, land, financial assets, credit, public funds and freely chosen business activities.

149. The rights of citizens to tenure and to participation in housing construction are established in 6 official codes and 8 laws, including the Pledge Act and the Mortgage Act, 29 presidential decisions and 44 government decisions.

150. In recent years, Uzbekistan has taken effective measures to ensure food security. With regard to essential, vital foodstuffs, Uzbekistan fully meets domestic demand for grain, salt, vegetable oil, eggs, sugar, potatoes, fruit and vegetables, gourds and grapes. The country produces over 70 per cent of the grain and eggs and over 100 per cent of the vegetable oil, milk, potatoes, vegetables, fruits, gourds, grapes, salt and sugar that it consumes (further information can be found in the annex). The system ensures food self-sufficiency of over 85 per cent. The rate of malnutrition has fallen.

151. Nevertheless, despite this significant progress in combating hunger, the prevalence of malnutrition in Uzbekistan, which has an obesity rate of 15.3 per cent, remains a concern. The typical Uzbek diet is low in protein and energy content. There has been a decrease in the number of people with anaemia. In 2018, the rate stood at 5,200 per 100,000 population, compared to 6,100 in 2015.

152. In this context, the following have been adopted and are being implemented:

- The Micronutrient Deficiency Prevention Act
- An outline plan and a package of measures for the promotion of healthy nutrition in Uzbekistan for the period 2015–2020

153. In 2018, the prevalence of anaemia was 11,100 per 100,000 children aged under 5 years and 2,800 per 100,000 pregnant women. The target is to halve the prevalence of anaemia by 2030, using the figures for 2018 as a baseline.

154. In implementation of State programmes, measures continue to be taken to improve nutrition through the provision of additional micronutrients, particularly for mothers and children, and multivitamin complexes for pregnant women. These include vitamin A supplements for children aged 6 months to 5 years, flour fortification and salt iodization. Each year, approximately 3.2 million children aged 6 months to 5 years (99.1 per cent of this age group) receive vitamin A supplements.

155. The Act on Support for Breastfeeding and Food Requirements for Infants and Young Children was passed to regulate relations in the area of support for breastfeeding and ensure compliance with established requirements for food products for infants and young children.

156. In 2018, the prevalence of stunting among the mid-year population of children aged under 5 years was 0.7 per cent; the prevalence of wasting among this population was 0.14 per cent; and the proportion of the population who were overweight through poor nutrition was 0.17 per cent.

157. The key targets for 2030 are to reduce, among children aged under 5 years of age, the prevalence of stunting by 20 per cent; the prevalence of wasting due to malnutrition by 20 per cent; and the prevalence of overweight due to poor nutrition by 20 per cent.

Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 16

158. Pursuant to a decree of 27 July 2018 on measures to further improve the system for protecting the rights and legitimate interests of business entities, a centralized government fund was established to compensate citizens and business entities for losses incurred as a result of the compulsory acquisition of land plots for State and public needs.

159. The Decree of 1 August 2018 on measures to radically improve the investment climate in Uzbekistan provides that:

- Decisions relating to the compulsory acquisition of land plots for State and public needs may be taken only after an open discussion with the persons whose land plots have been earmarked for acquisition and a cost-benefit analysis
- When land plots are acquired through the compulsory procedure, residential and industrial premises and other buildings and structures owned by citizens and business entities may be demolished once the owners have received full compensation equal to the market value of the real property and any losses incurred in connection with the acquisition
- Losses incurred by citizens and business entities as a result of an unlawful administrative measure by a State body or official must receive compensation from the State, principally from the extrabudgetary funds of the relevant bodies, with the sum subsequently recovered from the guilty party through the recourse procedure

160. Pursuant to a presidential order of 3 August 2019, the compulsory acquisition of land plots and demolition of items of real property owned by citizens and business entities for State and public needs takes place in the following stages:

- At the first stage, the chair of the Council of Ministers of Karakalpakstan or the regional administrator of a province or the city of Tashkent submits to the Government a compilation of information on the site of the planned demolition
- At the second stage, the Government draws up an urban planning report

- At the third stage, the report is submitted to the Prime Minister for consideration and the adoption of a decision

161. The Government Decision of 16 November 2019 on additional measures to improve the procedure for granting compensation for the compulsory acquisition and allocation of land plots and to safeguard the property rights of individuals and legal persons sets out the following compensation procedure:

- Compensation is paid by money transfer to the owner's bank account
- By agreement of the parties, if a land plot occupied by a building consisting of apartments (either with or without private entrances) is acquired, the owner is allocated an apartment located in the same or another district or city with a surface area not less than the surface area of the original apartment
- By agreement of the parties, if a land plot occupied by a free-standing dwelling (including unfinished structures that have been registered in accordance with the established procedure) is acquired, the owner is allocated a free-standing dwelling located in the same or another district or city with a total surface area not less than the surface area of the former dwelling and land and at least equivalent conditions
- If the land plot to be acquired is held through a title of possession, permanent use or temporary use, the title holder is allocated another land plot equal in surface area

162. By agreement of the parties, the level and size of other types of compensation may be reduced, and compensation in the form of a suitable additional land plot may be provided instead.

163. The decision of a State body to acquire or not to acquire a land plot or to demolish items of real property may be appealed through the courts.

Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 17

164. Pursuant to the Decree of 28 November 2019 on additional measures to improve mortgage lending mechanisms, a new procedure has been introduced to provide housing through mortgage lending based on market principles. In 2020, a target of 30,006 housing units (for families in need of better housing, labour migrants and young families in difficult social circumstances) was approved:

- Under the new procedure: 17,750 apartments (4.3 trillion sum)
- Under the old procedure: 12,256 apartments (2.4 trillion sum)

165. The Decree provides for new credit lines to commercial banks for a total of 8.0 trillion sum with 15 per cent interest, to be repaid over 20 years.

166. A government decision of 25 March 2020 provides for the payment of subsidies to 16,090 low-income persons in need of better housing. Of these persons, 2,890 will be military personnel, 10,800 persons in urban areas and 2,400 persons in rural areas.

167. With regard to the acquisition of completed and ready-to-move-in housing, of the 17,501 apartments constructed throughout the country, 1,206 have been sold to citizens, while 16,386 (93 per cent) remain unsold: 5,742 of 5,965 in Tashkent (96 per cent), 5,547 of 5,626 in Samarkand (96 per cent), 2,009 of 2,037 in Namangan (98 per cent) and 1,494 of 1,587 in Bukhara (94 per cent).

168. The Decision of 1 May 2020 on additional measures to improve housing conditions and further expand the mortgage lending market establishes a streamlined procedure for acquiring housing. In Andizhan Province, a pilot project was carried out to grant mortgages to individuals for the construction or reconstruction of single dwellings on land plots designated for housing construction; mortgages were granted to 300 families under the streamlined procedure based on the new system.

169. Where the client has opted to proceed without contractors, the main conditions of mortgage lending for the construction or reconstruction of single dwellings under the simplified procedure based on the new system are the following:

- The mortgage proceeds are disbursed to the borrower's bank account in instalments
- There is a six-month mortgage holiday for the construction period
- The interest and capital repayments are calculated on either an amortized or a non-amortized basis
- Income certificates issued by employers for at least the previous three months and evidence of other forms of income are used to determine the client's creditworthiness

170. There are no data on homeless people or people living on the street for want of housing, since the criteria for categorizing a person as homeless have not yet been developed.

171. Uzbekistan maintains a list of persons in need of housing, but these persons are not categorized as homeless, as they have temporary accommodation.

Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 18

172. Regulations governing the procedure for compiling the list of guaranteed levels of medical assistance covered by the State budget were approved by government decision on 30 September 2016. They cover emergency, primary, specialized and palliative medical care, including preventive medical check-ups for adults (up to twice per year), persons intending to marry, persons with socially significant diseases and persons of conscription age; and care for mothers and children, including screening and HIV counselling for pregnant women, care during childbirth and postnatal care.

173. Mental health monitoring activities, prevention and diagnosis of mental disorders and the provision of treatment, care and sociomedical rehabilitation for persons with such disorders form a key component of State health-care policy.

174. A decision on measures to radically improve the psychiatric care system was adopted on 16 March 2018, and a decision approving the policy framework for the development of mental health services in Uzbekistan for the period 2019–2025 was adopted on 13 February 2019.

175. The measures for which these decisions provide are geared towards further strengthening and improving the effectiveness of the mental health care system and ensuring greater coordination and closer cooperation among public, voluntary and international organizations in connection with the introduction of further modern measures in the area of mental health care, whether they concern prevention, diagnosis, treatment or rehabilitation.

176. A national policy framework for the development of mental health services in Uzbekistan for the period 2019–2025 has been approved.

177. In 2019, outpatient psychiatric care was provided by 14 neuropsychiatric clinics and 6 clinical units in psychiatric hospitals, with a capacity of 2,085 consultations per shift. A total of 2,827,798 consultations took place. In all, there were 359 neuropsychiatric (psychotherapeutic) units in 2019.

178. Inpatient care is provided by 13 psychiatric hospitals (4,685 beds), 12 neuropsychiatric clinics (3,119 beds) and 2 multidisciplinary medical institutions (40 beds). In all, there are 8,007 beds offering round-the-clock care in psychiatric facilities and their subdivisions.

Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 19

179. Uzbekistan actively supports and participates in efforts to achieve the targets of the Fast-Track strategy to end the AIDS epidemic by 2030 and the 90-90-90 goals. There are currently 54,000 persons living with HIV in Uzbekistan, according to estimates produced using Spectrum (2018 version), although the number registered is 42,425.

180. In recent years, progress has been made in taking action to combat the spread of HIV/AIDS, with the adoption of the Presidential Decision of 25 January 2018 on measures to further enhance the system to combat the spread of HIV in Uzbekistan for 2018 and the Presidential Decision of 22 June 2018 on additional measures to combat the diseases caused by HIV and prevent hospital-acquired infections.

181. In accordance with international best practices, a robust network of low-threshold services has been set up in the country to provide preventive services to groups at high risk of contracting HIV, via the national network of help points and confidential clinics.

182. The country is actively working to expand access to preventive services for vulnerable groups and the range of such services. Interventions are carried out among injecting drug users as part of the harm reduction programme implemented via the help points (more than 130).

183. In Uzbekistan, improving the prevention and treatment of socially significant diseases, including tuberculosis, is a priority of State policy and the work of health-care facilities. The Tuberculosis Prevention Act, which establishes a legal framework for the implementation of social, medical, sanitation, disease control and other measures to prevent, detect and treat tuberculosis and to provide outpatient observation and rehabilitation for tuberculosis patients, has been in force since 11 May 2001.

184. The fundamental pillars of improving the provision of tuberculosis care are set out in the relevant policy framework and were put in place pursuant to the State Programme to Combat Tuberculosis in Uzbekistan for the period 2011–2015.

185. The Presidential Decision of 13 February 2019 on measures to improve the system for providing specialized care for tuberculosis and lung disease was adopted to improve tuberculosis and lung disease services.

186. The implementation of a whole range of extensive measures to combat tuberculosis led to a 17.6 per cent reduction in the incidence of tuberculosis per 100,000 population between 2011 and 2019 and a 6.8 per cent reduction between 2015 and 2019.

187. In 2019, the morbidity and mortality rates per 100,000 population, two key epidemiological indicators, were 43.6 and 1.2, respectively.

Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 20

188. A national model for reproductive, maternal and child health is being implemented in Uzbekistan. The mother and child protection policy pursued in Uzbekistan has been rated highly by the World Health Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund and the United Nations Population Fund.

189. The Reproductive Health Act of 11 March 2019 sets out the concept of "reproductive health", the main features and principles of its protection by the State and safeguards for the realization of citizens' reproductive rights. The Act contains a dedicated provision, article 11, on the protection of women's reproductive rights, which states that the protection of women's reproductive health includes: ensuring that women receive accurate and complete information about their reproductive health and methods of fertility treatment and contraception; ensuring that they have access to reproductive health services; and providing reproductive health consultations and services in a confidential manner.

190. Primary health-care facilities offer gynaecological consultations, and central multidisciplinary clinics operate health centres for girls. In addition, a national reproductive health centre and 14 regional reproductive health centres also contribute to the promotion of reproductive health. Citizens receive medical assistance to help them to select methods of contraception in line with the state of their health, their age and their individual circumstances and are warned about possible adverse effects. Contraceptives are provided free of charge to all who wish to receive them, following a consultation in an outpatient clinic setting.

191. On 11 March 2020, the World Health Organization declared the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) to be a worldwide pandemic. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic situation in

Uzbekistan and the disease control measures that have been put in place, modern methods of contraception have been procured within the established time frames.

192. To improve the medical knowledge of citizens, in particular adolescents, medical professionals visit mahallas, educational facilities, enterprises and institutions to discuss reproductive health issues and distribute illustrated materials. Reproductive health standards have been approved and specialist service providers trained.

193. In 2019, in one pilot region, training was provided to 60 girls who volunteer as coaches and 25 nurses who work with them. The project has so far shown excellent results, and the volunteer coaches are playing an active role at health centres for girls. Volunteering guidelines have been approved. An interactive training method for adolescents, entitled “Taking the Safe Route”, is being implemented on an ongoing basis.

194. Maternal and child mortality rates have fallen by a factor of more than three as a result of the timely and consistent development of a legal framework and the implementation of a package of dedicated programmes on strengthening maternal and child health, which are aimed at improving the medical knowledge of families, strengthening women’s health and enhancing the resource base of children’s and obstetric facilities.

195. A decision has been adopted on measures to further develop the system of maternal and child health care in Uzbekistan for the period 2016–2020, providing for measures to reduce maternal mortality and mortality among premature infants with underdeveloped organs. Pursuant to this decision, prothrombin complex concentrate has been procured centrally, with budget financing, and is successfully being administered at all obstetric facilities in the country. This has helped to reduce maternal mortality from haemorrhage by a factor of almost four over the period in question. Medication for lung maturation has also been procured centrally, with budget financing, for premature infants with underdeveloped organs. This has made it possible to reduce mortality among such infants by a factor of more than three.

196. There are 68,151 ethnic Roma/Lyuli persons in Uzbekistan.

197. Of these, 21,278 live in Samarkand Province, 14,127 in Kashkadarya Province, 8,603 in Surkhan-Darya Province, 6,948 in Bukhara Province, 6,220 in Andizhan Province, 4,271 in Djizak Province, 2,442 in Navoiy Province, 1,652 in Namangan Province, 46 in Syr-Daria Province and 2,564 in the city of Tashkent.

198. In Uzbekistan, Roma/Lyuli citizens are provided with everything that they need. They live as equals alongside persons belonging to other ethnic groups.

199. The town of Oltinko’l, a modern residential development in Djizak Province, provides a clear example of the measures taken in Uzbekistan to protect the rights and freedoms of persons belonging to ethnic minorities. In 2020, 460 new houses and service facilities were built in Oltinko’l, in addition to a textile mill providing 500 jobs. There are currently 939 families living in the town. Of these, 301 families, consisting of 1,225 persons, belong to the small Roma/Lyuli ethnic group. They live alongside persons belonging to other ethnic groups, including Uzbeks, Tajiks, Kazakhs, Kyrgyz and Tatars.

Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 21

200. On 5 September 2018, a decree on additional measures to improve the national education governance system and a decision on measures to introduce new governance principles to the national education system were adopted to further enhance the national education system through the introduction of new governance mechanisms and quality standards. Under the decision, the main tasks of the Ministry of Education were set out, and its updated organizational structure and a programme of measures to further enhance the national education system of Uzbekistan for the period 2018–2021 were approved.

201. In accordance with a decision of 26 November 2019 on measures to create “modern schools”, phased measures are being implemented to strengthen the resource base of general secondary education institutions in line with international best practices and the requirements

of modern society, which will, in turn, create favourable conditions in which young people, including those living in remote and rural areas, can receive quality education.

202. Work is under way to increase the number of educational institutions through public-private partnerships. The number of non-State general education institutions has increased sixfold since 2016.

203. An “online school” system has been developed and implemented to give students the opportunity to make progress in general education subjects remotely, by following their lessons on television.

204. Efforts are being made to develop a national curriculum for general secondary education and to streamline the number of subjects and the student workload. Improvements are being made to the elective curriculum system for students in higher grades.

Reply to the issues raised in paragraphs 22 and 23

205. In recent years, Uzbekistan has adopted several laws and regulations on gender equality.

206. A decision of 7 March 2019 on measures to further strengthen safeguards on labour rights and support women’s entrepreneurship, the Act on Protection of Women from Harassment and Violence and the Act on Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men, both of 2 September 2019, constitute an important legal framework for the protection of the rights of women in Uzbekistan. Great emphasis is placed on ensuring that women have access to education at all levels.

207. There are currently 149,578 women/girls enrolled in higher and secondary education, representing 31 per cent of all students at these levels. Of these, 32,907 (22 per cent) are married and 13,462 (9 per cent) work when they are not studying. The necessary arrangements have been made to enable them to study at educational institutions.

208. Since 2017, many higher education institutions have reintroduced distance learning in various disciplines. Distance learning is intended to benefit students who combine work and study. It also gives young women the opportunity to pursue higher education by combining their studies with childcare and other family responsibilities. In the 2018/19 academic year, the gender balance was in women’s favour: the ratio of women to men on distance learning courses was 2.03 (67 per cent women and 33 per cent men).

209. The number of female students enrolled on master’s degree programmes increased by 27.5 per cent over the period 2017–2019. There were 1,632 women/girls enrolled on such programmes in 2017, 2,706 in 2018 and 4,488 in 2019. In the 2020/21 academic year, a quota of special State-funded places was allocated for women/girls seeking admission to higher education institutions. From the 2020/21 academic year, in addition to the general quotas of State-funded places on in-person undergraduate courses, there is a 4 per cent quota of such places for women who have been recommended by the Ministry of Mahalla and Family Support.

210. Women currently account for 41 per cent of staff in the higher and specialized secondary education system. The women working in the system include 460 post-doctoral degree holders, 430 holders of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy and 2,080 holders of other doctoral degrees. In addition, 2 university presidents, 14 university vice-presidents and 40 faculty chairs are women.

211. Article 4 of the Education Act of 29 August 1997 stipulates that “everyone is guaranteed equal rights to education, regardless of gender, language, age, racial or ethnic origin, beliefs, attitude towards religion, social origin, occupation, social status, place of residence or length of residence in Uzbekistan”.

212. There are no restrictions on admission to general secondary education institutions, including with regard to gender identity.

213. The Act on Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men of 9 March 2019 establishes safeguards to protect women’s rights in the area of education (arts.

26–27). Item 44 of the road map to implement National Human Rights Strategy provides for the preparation of a gender equality strategy in Uzbekistan for the period 2021–2025 with the aim of achieving gender equality in all areas, improving mechanisms to protect women from violence and increasing the participation of women in politics and decision-making.

Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 24

214. Uzbekistan takes consistent measures to preserve the cultural sites in Bukhara and Samarkand. Uzbekistan has a total of 2,079 historic buildings and 4,308 archaeological sites.

215. On 19 December 2018, a decision on measures to radically improve the protection of tangible cultural heritage sites was adopted. In accordance with this decision, the Department of Cultural Heritage was established under the Ministry of Culture, and a road map to radically improve the protection, conservation, scientific study, promotion and rational use of tangible cultural heritage sites for the period 2019–2021 was approved.

216. The same decision states that sites in Uzbekistan that have been added to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage List for their historical and cultural value are deemed to be specially protected historical and cultural sites. Plans for construction and redevelopment work at such sites must be approved by the Department and the UNESCO World Heritage Centre.

217. Pursuant to the Government Decision on the protection of sites in Uzbekistan that have been added to the UNESCO World Heritage List, which was adopted on 9 June 2018, a road map for improving the protection of such sites was approved.

218. In Uzbekistan, general secondary educational institutions provide instruction in line with the requirements of the State curriculum, and in seven languages (Uzbek, Russian, Karakalpak, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Tajik and Turkmen). This matter is addressed in detail in the combined tenth to twelfth periodic reports submitted by Uzbekistan under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.¹

Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 25

219. Uzbekistan has taken the necessary steps to make cultural sites accessible.

220. Rules for museum visitors have been drawn up in accordance with the Regulations on the procedure and conditions for visiting the country's museums.

221. During Museum Week, which is held from 2 to 8 September each year, admission to the country's museums is free of charge. Every Tuesday and Friday, children and accompanying parents (or persons in loco parentis) are admitted to the country's museums free of charge in order to expand children's and adolescents' access and exposure to cultural and historical heritage and their opportunities to learn about such heritage.

222. On 1 August 2018, a decision on measures to lay the groundwork for the development of a public-private partnership in the cultural and artistic sector was adopted to further develop the sector, expand the network of cultural and artistic institutions, strengthen their resource base and organize quality public services.

223. On 26 August 2018, a decision was adopted on measures to ensure the innovative development of culture and art in Uzbekistan, improve the resource base of cultural and artistic institutions, encourage the public to visit such institutions and integrate the country into the global cultural space. The outcome of the decision included the adoption of a road map for the innovative development of culture and art in Uzbekistan for the period 2018–2020.

224. Pursuant to paragraph 14 of the Decree of 26 May 2020 on measures to further enhance the role and importance of culture and art in the life of society, since September

¹ https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fUZB%2f10-12&Lang=en.

2020, the first Sunday of each month has been an “open door” day, when admission to State museums is free of charge.

225. Pursuant to a presidential decision adopted on 28 November 2018, a policy framework for the further development of national culture in Uzbekistan was approved in order to preserve the high spiritual values and spiritual heritage that the people of Uzbekistan have forged over many centuries.

226. Attitudes towards scientific progress and research have been transformed in recent years. A project on strengthening the inclusive science, technology and innovation system in Uzbekistan is being implemented for sustainable development purposes in cooperation with UNESCO.

227. UNESCO specialists have prepared a science, technology and innovation profile of Uzbekistan, which sets out recommendations on the main ways of attracting investment in the area of science, technology and innovation, further strengthening infrastructure in this area and ensuring equal access to the results of science and innovation among all segments of the population.

228. The development of the Internet in Uzbekistan has brought about a significant increase in the participation of citizens in public and social affairs.

229. The transparency of the parliament’s legislative activities has been strengthened on the basis of a decree of 8 February 2017 on measures to radically improve the dissemination of legislation and a decree of 8 August 2018 approving the policy framework for improving rule-making. In accordance with a presidential decree of 22 January 2018, a procedure was introduced to enable the public to make submissions to the chambers of the parliament and to local councils of peoples’ deputies through a special portal entitled *Mening fikrim* (“My opinion”), thereby facilitating public discussion of draft legislation.

230. Pursuant to a decision of 28 April 2020 on measures to mainstream the digital economy and e-government, two State institutions, the e-Government Project Management Centre and the Digital Economy Research Centre, were established and the following were approved:

- The structure of the e-government system
- A list of priority projects for the development of information technology and telecommunications over the period 2020–2022
- A road map for the introduction of digital technologies to the agricultural and water management sectors over the period 2020–2021

231. The TechnoBus project, a mobile technology education platform, is being implemented in remote areas of Uzbekistan to train gifted young people who have an interest in areas important to national development. A separate project is being implemented to develop a “smart cane”, a device that uses electromagnetic sensors to detect obstacles and measure distances and relays this information to the user through special signals or vibrations.
