



**Permanent Mission  
of the Republic of Azerbaijan  
to the UN Office and other  
International Organizations  
GENEVA**

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The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and with reference to the request of Ms. Melissa Upreti, Chairperson-Rapporteur of the Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women and girls, has the honour to transmit herewith the information by the Government of Azerbaijan in order to inform the Working Group's thematic report to be presented at the 50th session of the Human Rights Council.

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights the assurances of its highest consideration.

Enclosure: 8 pages



Geneva, 4 October 2021

**Office of the United Nations  
High Commissioner for Human Rights  
GENEVA**

## ***I. Nature, modalities and trends of girls' and young women's activism***

### ***1. What is the normative framework related to participation of girls and young women in civic space and their activism?***

The most important legal documents in the field of women's rights in Azerbaijan:

- Resolution of the Milli Majlis (Parliament) of the Republic of Azerbaijan of June 30, 1995 "On accession to the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women"
- Order of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan No. 727 of January 14, 1998 "On measures to increase the role of women in Azerbaijan"
- Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan No. 289 of March 6, 2000 "On the implementation of the state women's policy in the Republic of Azerbaijan"
- Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan No. 176 of September 26, 2000 "On the implementation of the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan No. 289 of March 6, 2000" on the implementation of state women's policy in the Republic of Azerbaijan"
- Decision of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated 2000 on approval of the "National Action Plan on Women's Issues in the Republic of Azerbaijan"
- "Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on Ensuring Gender Equality (Men and Women)" No. 150-IIIQ of 2006
- "Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on Prevention of Domestic Violence" dated June 22, 2010, No. 1058-IIIQ

### ***2. What are the main features of girls' and young women's activism/participation in political and public life in your national context?***

***Please describe, in particular, in terms of:***

- ***Specific issues (thematic areas) on which girls and young women are mostly engaged***
- ***Political actors and authorities they mostly engage with***
- ***Levels of engagement (grassroots, local, national, international)***
- ***Main spaces for engagement (e.g. school, community, media, online platforms)***
- ***Cross-movements cooperation and solidarity***

As a result of the gender policy pursued in the country, the participation of women in all spheres of socio-political life, especially in decision-making, has increased.

#### **➤ Legislative bodies**

In 2005, women made up 14 (11.2%) women in the Milli Majlis (Parliament) of the third convocation of the Republic of Azerbaijan, while in 2020 there were 22 people (18.2%) in the Milli Majlis of the sixth convocation. A woman was elected as a chairperson of the Milli Majlis.

#### **➤ Executive bodies**

One woman has been appointed to the post of minister, the number of women deputy ministers has increased from 3 to 8, 3 ambassadors and 1 consul are women.

One of the deputies of most local executive authorities is a woman. In 2013, this number was 35 people, now it has reached 76 people.

➤ **Judiciary**

81 of the prosecutorial officials of the Republic of Azerbaijan are women, which is 7% of the number of prosecutors. There is an increase in the number of women prosecutors, currently 6 women prosecutors have been appointed.

The number of women judges is 78, or 14%.

➤ **Local self-government bodies**

In order to increase the number of women's participation in municipalities during the municipal elections in 2019, the Committee has implemented a number of measures in cities and regions. As a result, in the 2004 municipal elections, the number of women members of municipalities was 4%, while in 2019 it was 39%.

**3. What are the forms and modalities for girls' and young women's activism/participation in your national context? Please provide information about any structures in place (formal and informal) and how they operate?**

About 82% of employed women work in 5 sectors of the economy. In turn, 42.1% of all employed women work in agriculture, 18.2% in the trade sector, 11.7% in education, 6.1% in health and social services, and 3.5% in the processing industry. According to the current classification of statistics, there are 19 spheres of economic activity, and in 8 of these sectors of activity, women and in 11, men have a greater share. The number of women exceeded men in three activities - 54.8% in health and social services, 47.6% in education and 23.8% in recreation, entertainment and art.

As of January 1, 2020, the number of registered women entrepreneurs is 198,305. In 2012, this figure was 73,469. The number of women entrepreneurs has tripled in the last seven years.

If in 2012, women entrepreneurs accounted for 17%, in 2020 this figure reached 21.7%.

**4. What are the positive and inspirational examples of girls' activism in term of:**

- **Social mobilization and change**
- **Influencing policies and legislation**
- **Personal development and empowerment (of girls' and young women)**

Significant work has been done in Azerbaijan over the past decade to promote a culture of gender equality. The results show that compared to the last century, the activity of women has increased along with men in almost all spheres of public life, and the level of unemployment among them has decreased. Women in rural and urban areas already have almost the same opportunities.

Women's Resource Centers have been established within the framework of the project "Promotion of women's participation in socio-economic life in rural areas" implemented by the State Committee jointly with the UN Development Program, to improve the knowledge and skills of women living in districts and rural areas in their chosen field of business activity, and to increase their activity in all spheres of public life and social networks. At present, there are Women's Resource Centers in 10 districts. The centers serve as a technical body that provides a wide range of services to women, including counseling, mentoring, networking, empowerment, safe space, effective communication, and advocacy.

## **II. *Enabling factors and good practices***

1. *What solidarity and support frameworks are available in your national context to enhance girls' and young women's activism? Please provide concrete examples on any positive role of:*

- *Legal/policy and institutional frameworks*
- *Social, cultural, religious institutions*
- *Collaborative initiatives, human rights and/or women's movements*
- *Technological infrastructures/means*
- *Other frameworks*

The State Committee has taken the following measures to increase the socio-political activity of women:

- In order to increase the role of women in decision-making, to support peace initiatives initiated by local women and processes aimed at resolving conflicts at the local level, the State Committee together with the Women's Institute - Women's Issues Research Association and with the support of the Swedish "Kvinna till Kvinna" Foundation held a conference on the subject dedicated to the 10th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325.
- Conferences on "Women and Development", "Increasing Women's Leadership and Strengthening Women's Participation in Decision-Making in Azerbaijan", "Strengthening Women's Participation in Local Self-Government and Decision-Making" were held in Baku and the regions, and diplomas were presented to the winners of the Women's Leadership Awards.
- Within the framework of mutual cooperation, a round table on "Ensuring Gender Equality and Promotion of Women" was held together with the delegation representing the Republic of Belarus. As part of the 16-day Action Campaign, a conference entitled "Women's Empowerment, Progress in Society" was held. Together with the United States Agency for International Development, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Development Program, the International Organization for Migration, Counterpart International, and the Women's Society for Rational Development
- Since 2012, the State Committee and the Public Union "Women for Municipal Development" with the financial support of the United States Agency for International Development have implemented a project called "Women's

to raise awareness about CEDAW, increase the participation of women candidates in municipal elections, public advocacy to promote women's leadership and strengthen gender policy in Azerbaijan. Within the framework of the project, training seminars on "Increasing women's leadership and strengthening their participation in the decision-making process in Azerbaijan" were held for women in the regions in 2013-2015.

- A conference entitled "Strategies for the promotion of women's leadership in local government" was held in order to support the activities of newly represented women in municipalities. The conference provided an opportunity for women members of the municipality to discuss and share strategies to strengthen their leadership skills. In addition, the specific problems faced by women municipal leaders and various strategies to strengthen their leadership potential in local politics were widely discussed by the conference participants in working groups based on international experience.
- The State Committee implemented the "Support" Mentoring Program for members and chairpersons of municipalities together with the German Organization for International Cooperation. Within the framework of the "Support" Mentoring Program (2012-2015), booklets "Be Active" and "Effective Communication" were prepared, published and distributed to the population. 50 people in 2012, 100 people in 2013, about 250 people in 2014, 400 people in 2015, 750 people in 2016, 450 members of the municipality, chairperson, community representatives in 2017, in total, about 2,000 people have benefited from this program.
- On May 30, 2018, the State Committee held the "Women's Fifth Forum dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the suffrage of Azerbaijani women" and adopted the Resolution of the Forum.
- During September 2019 the trainings on "Gender and Leadership" were conducted in order to increase the leadership potential, knowledge and skills in the implementation of state policy on gender equality, as well as protection of citizens' rights and freedoms in the relevant area, for the Deputy Heads of Local Executive Powers for Socio-Political and Humanitarian Affairs, employees of the Department for Analysis and Socio-Political and Humanitarian Affairs and Forecasting of Socio-Economic Development in the regions.
- Every year, the Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan holds advancement courses for representatives of local executive authorities and local self-government bodies (municipalities).

## ***2. What are the ways the State promotes and supports girls' participation/activism?***

***Please provide concrete examples and good practices with respect to measures taken by the State, in particular:***

- *To address discriminatory social norms, gender stereotyping and stigma against girls' public participation and activist roles*

- *To ensure gender and age-responsive protection from attacks against girl activists*
- *To assess and support girls' evolving capacities to fully and freely participate in all spheres of public decision-making*

The State Committee has carried out extensive awareness-raising activities together with relevant government agencies among various segments of the population to promote a culture of gender equality, eliminate gender stereotypes, and properly explain gender roles in the context of human rights.

- Over the past five years, about 500 informational programs have been produced on radio and television about the importance of overcoming gender stereotypes, highlighting the benefits of women's active participation in social, economic and political life. More than 100 articles were published in newspapers and magazines in Azerbaijani, Russian and English. Promo materials on this topic were broadcasted and videos were shown on the official social networks of the State Committee. Seminars and trainings were held on "The role of the media in overcoming gender stereotypes in society".
- Round tables on "Gender aspects and the role of communities in a tolerant society", "Women's rights and gender stereotypes in Azerbaijan" were organized with the participation of government agencies, experts and community representatives.
- The State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs together with the State Committee for Work with Religious Organizations held events for various groups on "Attitudes towards violence against women in Islam", "The role of religious communities in the protection of women's rights".
- The State Committee has monitored media coverage of gender issues twenty times in the last five years. Official appeals were made to the National Press Council, the National Television and Radio Council of the Republic of Azerbaijan regarding the results of the monitoring, as well as trainings were held to increase the knowledge and skills of journalists in this field.
- A two-day international seminar on "Gender Issues and Media" was held in the framework of joint cooperation between the State Committee and the European Union's TAIEX (Technical Assistance and Information Exchange) program. 4 sessions were held within the seminar on "Promotion of gender equality in the European Union through the media", "The most successful examples of balanced and stereotypical portrayal of women in the media of Azerbaijan and the European Union", "Promotion of balanced and stereotyped portrayal of women in domestic and gender-based violence", "The next steps to be taken in the field of promoting gender equality in the mass media and through the mass media in Azerbaijan".
- In January 2019, a 3-day training on "Gender Equality in the Media" which was organized by the Council of Europe and the State Committee was carried out by international and local experts for media representatives and 4th year undergraduate, graduate and doctoral students of the Faculty of Journalism.

- A competition is held once a year to eliminate gender stereotypes and to encourage journalists who are active in the field of women and children's rights, and outstanding journalists were awarded.
- In order to increase the knowledge of students of higher education institutions on gender issues, the subject "Introduction to Gender" is taught in all faculties of universities. The Department of Gender and Applied Psychology operates at Baku State and Western Caspian Universities. As a result of teaching the subject "Introduction to Gender" in all faculties of universities, 17989 students studying at the bachelor's level have acquired scientific knowledge on gender issues.
- In 2018-2019 the State Committee organized "Meetings of Women Leaders" with 10 and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students. The purpose of the meetings is to share their experiences with students and give valuable advice to women in leadership positions, who are distinguished by their activities in the socio-political, socio-cultural and scientific life of the country.

**3. What are the particular issues and platforms, if any, in which the State encourages girls and young women's engagement? How is the diversity of girls' activism and inclusion in all human rights activism initiatives ensured (e.g. gender equality, disability, environment, LGBTI issues, etc)? Please share specific positive practices.**

Discrimination on the basis of sexuality is inadmissible in the legislation of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The legislation provides for criminal liability for this act (Article 154 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan).

According to Article 17 of the Law, persons who have been discriminated against on the basis of sex shall be compensated in accordance with the legislation of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The State Committee launched a project together with the German Society for International Cooperation on "Women's Rights" in 2013 within the regional program "Support for a legal approach to European standards in the South Caucasus."

The book "Guide to Women's Rights" was prepared and published within the project. The topics on women's rights in family relations, human trafficking, domestic violence, etc. are reflected in the book. Training seminars were held for the women, and the book was distributed to the participants in order to promote and disseminate the book among women living in the regions.

**5. What are the achievements at the national level in the implementation of laws, policies, plans and/or programs and practices relevant to promoting girls' and young women's engagement/activism? Please provide examples of good practices and any innovative initiatives taken, and lessons learnt.**

Current strategy, state program, national action plans supporting gender equality and women's (including girls') rights

- "Strategic roadmaps for the national economy and key sectors of the economy" approved by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan No. 1138 dated December 6, 2016
- "State Program of socio-economic development of the regions of the Republic of Azerbaijan in 2019-2023" approved by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated January 29, 2019
- "Employment Strategy of the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2019-2030" approved by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated October 30, 2018.
- "Action Plan for the Implementation of the Employment Strategy for 2020-2025" approved by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated February 13, 2020
- "Action Plan for Prevention of Sexual Abuse of Children until Birth for 2020-2025" approved by the Order of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan No. 71s dated February 24, 2020
- "Strategy of the Republic of Azerbaijan on Children for 2020-2030" approved by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated June 2, 2020

### **III Challenges and structural barriers**

*1. What kind of gender and age specific barriers are affecting girls' and young women's participation/activism in your national context? Please indicate concrete examples of direct and indirect as well as formal and informal factors posing threats and risks for girls and young women engaging in the public space (examples of these can include stereotyping based on gender and age, restrictions on freedom of expression, speech, assembly, liberty, etc. legal restrictions to capacity to provide legal consent, legal age of marriage, etc.)*

According to Article 25 of the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan, men and women have the same rights and freedoms.

According to Article 47 of the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan, everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression.

According to Article 49 of the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan, everyone has the freedom to assemble freely with others.

According to Article 34 of the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan, everyone has the right to marry upon reaching the age provided by law.

***5. What are the particular concerns that may arise with respect to girls' and young women's access to technology and other infrastructures? How does the digital divide impact girls' activism?***



All necessary conditions are created for the production, dissemination and application of new knowledge and technologies as a result of the innovation policy implemented by our state. Founded by the International Telecommunication Union in 2011, each year the fourth day of the fourth week of April is traditionally celebrated in Azerbaijan as "Girls' Day in ICT", as in many countries. The purpose of the "Girls in ICT" Day is to attract girls to the field of information and communication technologies, to stimulate their activities in this sector.

The number of women using computers in Azerbaijan increased compared to previous years and amounted to 76.8%. The total number of Internet users in the country is 79.8%. As for the gender distribution in this area, 76% were women and 83.7% were men. The share of women using mobile phones was 70.8%, and the share of men was 77.3%.