**Inputs for the Report on Human Rights, Transformative Actions and the UN Sustainable Development Goals**

1. **What steps has your State taken to accelerate progress towards fulfilling the eights SDGs that have the most direct environmental linkages (SDGs 2, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15)?**
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3. **What special actions is your State taking to fulfil the commitments to “leave no one behind” and to prioritize actions “to reach the furthest behind first” in terms of achieving SDGs 2, 6, 7, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15?**

By the Order of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated April 15, 2020, the Commission chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister was established to ensure the efficient use of water resources in the country, improve water management and coordinate activities in this area. Moreover, by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated July 27, 2020, the Action Plan for 2020-2022 was approved to ensure the efficient use of water resources.

The National Water Strategy of the Republic of Azerbaijan is under elaboration. The strategy sets short-, medium- and long-term goals for the country's water security for 18 years. Data on water resources are also being digitized. An “Electronic Water Management” information system has been established which will enable to monitor water resources trends on a daily basis. Daily information on water assets will be included by relevant organizations with automated tasks by the system. Data from automated stations will be transmitted directly to the information system.

Azerbaijan manages transboundary water basins based on principles enshrined in international law. In this regard, in 2000, the UN Economic Commission for Europe ratified the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes. Azerbaijan is the only country in the South Caucasus region that has acceded to this Convention. Taking into account that no country with a common water basin with Azerbaijan has acceded to this convention, the management of common waters with these countries is carried out in accordance with the requirements of national legislation in the absence of a mutual agreement.

The Law on Efficient Use of Energy Resources and Energy Efficiency and the Law on Use of Renewable Energy Sources in the Generation of the Electricity has been passed to favour renewable energy production and energy efficiency. Azerbaijan has set a goal to increase the share of renewable energy sources in electricity production to 30% by 2030.

Steps to restore and rebuild the liberated territories include the use of renewable energy sources in line with global goals, as well as the application of clean energy technologies. Azerbaijan announced its intention to create a "net zero-emission" zone in the liberated territories by 2050. A great return to the liberated territories and the application of “smart city” and “smart village” approaches, as well as the creation of “green energy” and “green agriculture” will directly contribute to mitigation initiatives. The idea of smart villages envisages small communities using the latest technologies like digital connectivity, automation, and renewable energy to maximize economic development.

Under the State Program on Traffic Safety for 2019-2023 activities such as creating bicycle lanes and promotion the use of environmentally sound transport is envisaged. Imported electric motor vehicles are exempted from VAT, since 2019. Along with the import, the sale of electric vehicles, as well as the import of electric chargers for these vehicles are exempt from VAT for a period of 1 to 3 years from January 1, 2022. Import of hybrid cars with a production date of 3 years and an engine capacity of no more than 2,500 cubic centimeters are also exempt from VAT for a period of 1 to 3 years from January 1, 2022. One of the initiatives is the use of compressed natural gas (CNG) in public transport.

The twining project funded by the European Union, “Modernization of the National Environmental Monitoring System of Azerbaijan based on the best EU practices” supported the development of air quality management and monitoring systems.

In 2018, the National Strategy for Improving Solid Waste Management in the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2018-2022 was adopted. One of the main results expected from the implementation of the National Strategy is the improvement of processes for the collection, transportation, processing and neutralization of solid waste. The Action Plan to Reduce the Negative Impact of Plastic Packaging Waste on the Environment in the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2019-2020 was approved. The plan includes measures to improve plastic packaging waste management and to expand the use of alternative packaging materials. Both documents contain the introduction of Extended Producer Responsibility mechanism.

Wide use of alternative sources and energy efficient technologies, harmonization of national economy with Reduce – Reuse – Recycle principle and use of smart waste management technologies are the topics of particular importance in the country. Polyethylene bags up to 15 microns thick were banned in the country from January 1, 2021, and import, production by entrepreneurs, as well as sale or transfer to the consumer in trade, catering and other service facilities of disposable plastic mixing rods, forks, spoons, knives, plates and cups from July 1, 2021.

"National Priorities for Socio-Economic Development: Azerbaijan - 2030: National Priorities for Socio-Economic Development" has been approved. “Clean Environment” and "Green Growth" are the priorities out of total five for the next decade. The document sets an important task to ensure a high-quality environment and "green growth" that will respond to global climate change and ensure a healthy environment for the population in a country with a rapidly growing economy. The formation of a sustainable and healthy environment will also make an important contribution to the implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals stemming from the “Transformation of Our World: Agenda for Sustainable Development 2030”.

The Republic of Azerbaijan acceded the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal in 2001. In order to execute the obligations under the Convention, the Procedure for Documentation of Hazardous Waste and the State Strategy on the management of hazardous waste were developed and approved.

For the effective management of solid waste generated in the territory of Baku, in 2008 “Clean City” Open Joint Stock Company was established, the Balakhani landfill was rehabilitated to dispose of solid waste, which poses serious problems for the capital's environment. In total, 26 special cells have been built at the landfill to neutralize waste, and about 10 million tons of waste have been disposed of in the construction area. At the same time, a special cleaning device has been installed in order to clean the wastewater collected at the landfill. Biogas from the decomposition of organic waste is used to generate electricity through a special generator with a capacity of 2 MWh.

The Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants was ratified by the Republic of Azerbaijan in 2003. The Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer and corresponding Protocol amendments were ratified by the Republic of Azerbaijan in 1996.

Climate change mitigation issues were described in several state programs as State Program on social-economic development of the regions of the Republic of Azerbaijan, draft National Forest Program on the protection and sustainable development of forests in the Republic of Azerbaijan, State Program for the development of the industry in the Republic of Azerbaijan, Strategic roadmap for the production and processing of agricultural products in the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Mainstreaming of climate change is important part of state policy in Azerbaijan. In the run-up to the Paris Agreement, Azerbaijan submitted its Nationally Defined Contributions (NDC) and as a contribution to global climate change prevention initiatives committed to achieving a 35 percent reduction in the GHG level by 2030 compared to the 1990 base year. Azerbaijan’s updated NDC is expected to be released by the end of 2022. Azerbaijan announced the country's new goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40% by 2050 and create a net zero-emission zone in the liberated territories – Karabakh and Eastern Zangazur.

To contribute to the global effort on the mitigation of climate change risks Long Term Long Emissions Development Strategy was drafted. The document outlines the legislative, policy, and programmatic measures aimed at the reduction of GHG emissions over the course of 50 years, with minimizing the expected socio-economic effects of these measures.

Azerbaijan has also developed and implemented its Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMA), which primarily target three key sectors: energy efficiency in buildings (retrofitting), transport through the modification of transport fleet (introduction of hybrid cars) and eco-driving, and oil industry through capturing and use of associated gas. In the direction of modernization of hydro meteorological services, 25 automated hydrological, 4 complex automatic marine stations were installed and put into operation. Two latest generation Doppler meteorological radars have been installed to improve the early warning system for dangerous weather events.

In the framework of the 26th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 26) in Glasgow, UK, Azerbaijan by supporting international efforts to reduce the effects of climate change and adapt to climate change joined the initiatives such as Glasgow Leaders Declaration on Forest and Land Use, Green Network Initiative - One Sun, One World, One Network, Increasing Ambitions for Climate Change Adaptation and Sustainability, Global Ocean Alliance, Glasgow Achievements, International Achievements, 100% and the Global Transition from Coal to Clean Energy.

Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Azerbaijan is cooperating with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to bring the development of the fishing and aquaculture sector in line with international standards and best practices. In order to develop aquaculture in the Republic of Azerbaijan, protection and efficient use of biological resources of the Caspian Sea, the "Rules for the implementation of aquaculture" were approved. The purpose of this rule is to ensure the transition of the population from passive fishing to aquaculture, which is an active type of socio-economic activity.

Azerbaijan joined the Bonn Challenge with the commitment of bringing 667 thousand acres forest land into restoration by 2030. Mass tree planting campaigns are being held across the country as part of the "Green Marathon" campaign organized by the IDEA Public Union and the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources. In total, more than 1 million trees were planted during this campaign.

1. **Are there any good practices that you would like to highlight?**

Azerbaijan has benefited from close cooperation with the European Union in the framework of the European Neighborhood Policy and the Eastern Partnership. In 2019, Azerbaijan joined the Eastern Europe Energy Efficiency and Environment Partnership (E5P), with further EU support in the energy sector. The 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement are relevant focus areas within the Partnership, which has launched three flagship projects in which Azerbaijan has participated actively. Improving the quality, safety and efficiency of services provided in cities and villages of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the application of information technology in their provision, as well as ensuring the effective use and management of available resources for these services are among the main priorities of sustainable development in urban and rural areas. By the order of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated April 19, 2021, a working group led by the Ministry of Digital Development and Transport was established in connection with the development of the concept of "Smart City" and "Smart Village". The draft concept is currently being developed and is being agreed.

Within the framework of the implementation of the "State Program of socio-economic development of the regions of the Republic of Azerbaijan in 2019-2023", it is planned to implement "Smart Village" projects.At the same time, this issue is reflected in the "National Action Plan for 2020-2022 to the promotion of open government" approved by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated February 27, 2020. The concepts of "Smart City" and "Smart Village" will be applied in the liberated areas. The foundation of the first smart village (Zangilan district) has already been laid. The project will cover 5 components: housing, manufacturing, social services, "smart agriculture" and alternative energy.

**8. How could increasing gender equality contribute to more rapid progress towards SDGs 2, 6, 7, 10, 12, 13, 14 and 15?**

Increasing gender equality directly affects the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (2, 6, 7, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15).

Over the recent years the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs organized numerous events which addressed contribution of increasing gender equality towards achievement of mentioned SDGs. International Forum on Women's Entrepreneurship Development, Conference on the Role of Religious Communities in Protecting Women's Rights; Gender and Leadership Trainings; Forum for Women Entrepreneurs; conferences on "Women's rights in the context of new socio-political realities” and "Participation of women living in rural and regional areas in economic and social life", projects to support women's employment and micro-entrepreneurship have been among these events.

In 2019, the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs jointly with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Global Environment Facility conducted trainings within the project "Kura II: Strengthening integrated water resources management in the Kura River Basin through the implementation of cross-border coordinated activities and national plans." The purpose of the trainings was the integrated management of water resources, the involvement of women in the work carried out in this area and ensuring gender equality, the efficient use of water resources.