



**THE OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN
RIGHTS OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN**

SUMMARY
of the initiatives undertaken within the World Programme for
Human Rights Education – first (2005-2009) and second phases
(2010 - 2014)

I. Introduction

Since its establishment the institute of the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Republic of Azerbaijan has been implementing various activities with regard to the promotion and protection of human rights. One sphere of this work is the conduction of educational work on human rights. The Commissioner considers that the education is the most effective tool to improve the situation of human rights in the country and advance the equality among all members of the society. It should be mentioned that from the beginning of the first phase of the “UN Decade for Human Rights Education”, OHCHR “World Programme for Human Rights Education”, UNESCO “Education for Sustainable Development” declared by the UNGA for the years 2005-2014 the Commissioner has built the work of the institute in accordance with its key directions and objectives. The main aim of this work was to raise awareness of people of the country about their rights, strengthen the respect to human rights, promote gender equality and eliminate discrimination among various strata of the population and facilitate the inclusiveness of educational work and development process. During the implementation of the human rights education, age-sensitive and gender thematic approach was applied. Mainly, in its activities the institute of the Commissioner was guided by the principles and methodology of the action plan conducted for the first and second phases (2005–2014) of the above-mentioned Programme. This document provides short information on the initiatives undertaken by the Commissioner Office during this period of time.

II. Activities of the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Republic of Azerbaijan on Human Rights Education

1. The first most important step for promotion of education on human rights in Azerbaijan was the establishment of the Legal Awareness Raising, Scientific-Analytical, Public Information and International Relations Department within the Commissioner Office. The main functions of this Department are raising legal awareness of population in order to prevent violation of human rights and freedoms, analysis of the cases of human rights and freedoms violations, ensuring public information, maintenance of the cooperation with the organizations engaged in protection of human rights, acting in the Azerbaijan Republic and abroad, as well as organization of the Commissioner's international relations.
2. Also, in order to facilitate people applying to the Commissioner, eliminate the necessity for the complainants to cover long distances and post service costs, accelerate the investigation processes on sites, and ensure more efficient awareness raising, with support of the United Nations Development Programme Regional Commissioner Offices were established in four regions of the Republic of Azerbaijan: in Guba (covering 6 districts), Shaki (covering 8 districts) Jalilabad (covering 9 districts), and in Ganja (covering 14 districts). These centers regularly receive complaints, carry out legal education among various strata of the population in the surrounding rayons and meetings with population by participation of the representatives of local executive powers, municipalities, law enforcement bodies, non-governmental organizations, communities and etc. The role of the regional centers of the Commissioner is very important in respect of realization of legal education events, trainings, seminars and conferences addressed to different groups of the population and covered all regions. With participation of the staff of four regional centers the activities were successfully maintained in all country districts.
3. In order to raise people's awareness on human rights as well as to contribute to the implementation of the UN World Programme for Human Rights Education (2005 - 2014), as well as the UNESCO Decade "Education for All" the Commissioner Office regular trainings, seminars, workshops, and roundtable discussions were organized. Most of these events had covered different regions of the country, including rural areas, settlements of the refugees and IDPs, ethnic minorities, as well as orphanages, penitentiary facilities and etc. The population was provided with trainings on such topics as the protection of human rights, fighting against trafficking in human beings, violence, drug addiction, HIV/AIDS and corruption, issues of the protection of the rights of inmates, detainees and consumers, entrepreneurs'

rights, ecological rights, women's rights, the rights of the children, disabled and old people, freedom of expression and freedom of consciousness. Many of the events were attended by the parliamentarians and other officials from appropriate ministries, local executive governments, municipalities, courts, and law enforcement agencies and representatives of the NGOs and mass media. Moreover, the activity of the Commissioner covers explanation of voting rights to population and education of participants on the election processes, on current Electoral Code, and international conventions adhered by our Republic. Thus, during election processes in the country, the Commissioner carries out enlightenment work on laws and rules on municipal, Parliamentary and Presidential elections among the society. Consultations on the topic "Right to vote and voting rules", other conferences and seminars were organized in the run-up to the parliamentary elections and people in different regions were trained to exercise their right to vote. At the same time, the Commissioner and the staff of the Commissioner's Office provide regular education on human rights and freedoms and on legal, psychological and medical aid to lonely and elderly people at the Ombudsman's Resource Center for Elderly People on the basis of the Education for All People. Furthermore, the Office carried out trainings on juvenile justice for police investigators and inspectors.

4. By the Commissioner it was increased the attention to science, provide young and experienced scientists with legacy and expand financial opportunities for staff members working in all spheres of the science, including humanitarian, natural and technical sciences. Moreover, social protection of scientific brainpower and implementation of national strategy for the development of science are significant issues. For attaining these targets appropriate funds are allocated. It is recommended to broaden and implement education and awareness-raising activities on human rights in compliance with "Awareness-raising on Human Rights" and "Education on Human Rights" declared by the UN General Assembly, the World Programme on Human Rights Education of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights as well as by decades of the UNESCO "Education for Sustainable Development". The measures taken for organization of education and training of staff in accordance with contemporary standards are agreed with contemporary and perspective economic development, scientific and technical process as well as bring changes to educational sphere.
5. Moreover, public hearings in relation to the implementation of the National Action Plan (NAP) on Protection of Human Rights in the Republic of Azerbaijan approved by the Presidential Decree of 28 December 2006 and National Program for Action approved by the Order of the President dated 27 December 2011, to Raise Effectiveness of the Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms in the RA were held in all districts of the country with participation of state bodies, their local offices, electoral commissions,

municipalities, NGOs, mass media and different strata of the population. Human rights NGOs, including the members of the Council of Independent Experts at the Ombudsman Institution were involved into the activity of these groups. The conduction of these hearings encouraged people to express their opinions and proposals freely, serve for strengthening the belief that all people have equal rights, providing freedom of speech, expression and assembly, as well as improving the democratic governance. Also, the hearings ensured the cooperation with all groups of population based on national priorities and their participation in development processes. One of the main results of public hearings is their mass character. At the same time, during the public hearings the complaints were investigated, the problems were brought to the attention of concerning state agencies, and in a lot of cases the problems were immediately solved on the spot. Each state agency responsible for implementation of the NAP periodically presents to the Commissioner the information on implementation of its duties. After gathering, analyzing and summarizing all received data, the Commissioner draw up the general information and submits the corresponding report and proposals to the state administration and the society. Furthermore, in order to discuss the implementation of the NAP provisions, the challenges in this regard and put forward appropriate recommendations, annual conferences with participation of representatives of responsible state agencies, international organizations, as well as representatives of embassies of foreign countries, NGOs, mass-media and others were held.

The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR) recognized the Ombudsman's activity in protecting and promoting women's rights and gender equality as one of the good practices and practical examples from across the OSCE participating States surveyed. The resulting information was reviewed and integrated into a Handbook on NHRIs' Role in Protecting and Promoting Women's Rights and Gender Equality in the OSCE Region, 2012.

6. Other best practice in this sphere is the organization of conferences and roundtables dedicated to human rights and important events. Among them the international conference entitled "Protection of Children's Rights in Emergencies and National Human Rights Institutions" and dedicated to the 20th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the "Child Year"; the roundtables on World AIDS Day and on Population Day; celebration of the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and others should be mentioned.
7. Within the implementation of the National Program for Action, the Commissioner organized systematic events on the provision and promotion of the right of women to education, protection of their health, including reproductive health, and prevention and elimination of violence against

women. Also, there were conducted the discussions on the best strategy for different management methods between women and men, better carrier models for women and men, elimination of cases of violation of gender equality principles in research and innovations as well as provision of equal opportunities for women and men in all spheres. The Commissioner and the Institute's staff members together with the representatives of civil society organized educational seminars and trainings on women entrepreneurship, gender equality, domestic violence, human trafficking and early marriages. As a result, thousands of women received information on their rights what in its turn lead to the increase of their activity. Regular visits were paid to the prison for women of the Penitentiary Service. The legal educational events were organized there. Moreover, their problems, living and detention conditions, treatment, health, psychological state were studied; complaints were reviewed. The Commissioner attached importance to the issue of pardoning detained women. During previous years, women were also among pardoned prisoners. This also should be noted that on the motions of the Commissioner totally 409 prisoners were pardoned during the period of her term.

8. The XII International Baku Conferences of Ombudsmen held each year in Baku city with the participation of ombudspersons from different countries must be mentioned. Within the framework of these forums memorandums and declarations are adopted. These conferences were very useful in achieving goals with regard to more effective protection of human rights, created a space for exchanging of experiences. As a result, the conferences offered all necessary facilities in developing new methods of cooperation among human rights institutions of different countries.
9. The Commissioner pays attention to the spread of information via means of the mass media. First, it should be mentioned that the Commissioner Office conducted trainings and seminars for journalists with the aim to promote international legal acts as well as provisions of national legislation contributed to the enlightenment of the representatives of the media in the field of human rights. Traditionally, every year, on the occasion of 10 December – the International Human Rights Day, competitions of journalist articles in the theme of “Human Rights for everyone!” and the winners were awarded.
10. The daily activity of the Commissioner is regularly highlighted both in pro-governmental and oppositional newspapers. In general, more than 3.157 press-releases and 9.548 articles related to the Commissioner's activity were published. Besides, the statements that were addressed to the influential

international organizations are published in periodicals and sounded in radio broadcasts and TV programs.

11. Furthermore, the Commissioner Office conducted and disseminated various publications on human rights among civil society as well state agencies and officials. First, it should be noted that a rich library of legal literature on Human Rights was set up at the Commissioner Office. Upon the initiative of the Commissioner, the full version of the English-Russian-Azerbaijani and Azerbaijan - Russian-English glossaries of legal terms has been prepared for the first time. Also, the Office prepared and spread different leaflets, booklets, posters, including the posters with hotline numbers disseminated at schools (916) and police stations and books titled “Rules of Application to the European Court for Human Rights”, “The Rights of Under-Aged in the Penitentiary Institutions”, “Introduction to the Gender Theory”, “Appeal to the Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) if Your Rights are Violated”, “Your Fundamental Rights and Freedoms”, “Legal Status of Victim”, “Legal Status of Suspect”, “Legal Status of Special Accuser and Civil Plaintiff”, “Legal Status of Accused”, “Legal Status of Imprisoned Person”, “No to Torture”, “What you Should Know while Being Detained”, “What you Should not Forget when You are Arrested” and other. Besides, the books named “Human Rights and Good Governance”, “Police and Human Rights”, “Human Rights: a Manual for the Members of Parliament”, “Human Rights Defenders: Protecting the Right to Defend Human Rights”, “A New Chapter for Human Rights” and “Economic, Social and Cultural rights: Textbook for National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs)” were translated from the English language into Azerbaijani and published. Thus, 140 different publications, including translated materials have been published in total. At the same time publications were prepared regarding the role of the Commissioner in the state ruled by law, observance of human rights and the restoration of violated rights, thematic placards and posters were printed on human rights and video clips reflecting the ombudsperson’s activities were made. Several surveys on the protection of child rights were conducted within the frames of cooperation of the Commissioner with the UNICEF. Also must be mentioned that as a result of hierarchic education project conducted in schools, by the Commissioner initiative Child Rights Education centers were established in those schools.
12. The Commissioner conducted educational work also for employees of the Office. Thus, the Commissioner and the staff members of the Ombudsman Office have participated in numerous conferences, seminars and training courses on different aspects of human rights both in the country and abroad since it started operating in the country.
13. It is noteworthy to mention that the sphere of children’s rights is of utmost importance for the Commissioner. Thus, with the purpose of disseminating information on children’s rights at schools, there were held seminars on

human rights and child rights in the secondary schools in Baku within the framework of joint plan of action signed between Commissioner and the Ministry of Education for the implementation of the UN World Programme for Human Rights Education and the plan of action to be applied in primary and secondary schools.

14. The Commissioner gives continuous attention to the dissemination of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the conduction of educational events on children's rights and discussions on the problems encountered by them. The Commissioner and Office personnel visited and held meetings with schoolchildren, refugees and internally displaced persons, children institutions as well as correction centre of the Ministry of Justice and considering their age provided them with information on their rights. The awareness raising activities were also implemented among place of residence of minorities. In addition, the Commissioner and office personnel carried out a series of training courses on the "Convention on the Rights of the Child", "Protection of Children's Rights in Azerbaijan" in different districts with the participation of personnel of local executive power bodies, representatives of the commissions on affairs of adolescents and protection of their rights, courts, police departments, prosecutor offices, educational and health institutions, municipalities, caregivers of children institutions, and members of civil society organizations and children. It should be noted that Ombudsman Office has good experience in terms of training and legal awareness activities on child rights.

Starting from 2010, with the support of Ministry of Education, Ombudsman Office has realized Hierarchic Education Project on Child Rights in Baku secondary schools and districts schools and it is still being applied. As a result of the project by the initiative of Ombudsman Ministry of Education provided computers to some of those schools and Child Rights Education Centers were established therein. Educational manuals titled "The Selected Topics Regarding Hierarchic Child Rights Education" were prepared under the editorship of the Commissioner. In another educational supply, which is called "Children's Rights for All", the selected provisions on children's rights enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan, UN Convention on the Right of the Child were visually indicated with different pictures that creates great opportunities for the children to learn their rights. Various activities were taken up within the frame of the "Child Year", including trainings and round table discussions with NGOs, state bodies, and international institutions, meetings with children with disabilities, detained children, as well as schoolchildren of all over the country.

Each year the Commissioner proposes to conduct "Child Rights Month Long Campaign" all over the Republic from October 20 to November 20. Seminars and round tables on children's rights, early marriages, elimination of violence against children, reproductive health, and on healthy lifestyle, art, thematic articles and painting competitions and other events were conducted by the

Commissioner Office and its regional centers, respective state agencies, local executive powers at high and secondary schools, orphanages, and boarding schools with active participation of children themselves. Besides, in cooperation with the UNICEF, the Commissioner carried out seminars on “Human Rights Begin with the Child Rights” and set up Resource Center for Children’s Rights and School of Leaders at the Ombudsman Office. Trainings on child rights and healthy lifestyle were conducted in Child Creativity Centers situated in Baku and regions. As a result of the monitoring and trainings conducted in these centers special rooms were allocated for Child Rights Education and it was agreed with Directors of Child Creativity Centers to conduct a series of trainings on child rights for teenagers, parents and staff of the center.

15. During the reported period, wide contacts have been established with state authorities, NGOs and the public. In order to make this cooperation more useful and targeted, an independent consulting body, the Council of Experts, has been set up under the Commissioner Office and the Commissioner was designated as an institution carrying out the coordination of its activity. Besides state authorities, pro-governmental and opposition-minded NGOs have been represented in the Council, activities of which are directed at analyzing the provision and situation of human rights in Azerbaijan, as well as international conventions, making proposals on improving legislation, conducting monitoring and evaluation as well as taking joint measures.
16. The Commissioner has implemented successful work on education on human rights together with various state agencies. Thus, the Commissioner Office and the Ministry of Internal Affairs had effective cooperation in providing human rights and freedoms and restoring protected and violated rights over the past years. Regional workshops were held under the schedules approved by the Commissioner and the Ministry of Internal Affairs, with the participation of the heads of police departments in Baku and in the districts for ensuring human rights and freedoms and joining efforts in this regard. In accordance with the agreement between Commissioner and the Ministry of Internal Affairs, a complex of measures has been carried out to provide information on national legislation and international acts on human rights, prevention of violence and tortures against prisoners. The Commissioner, who always pays attention to the education of police officials, prosecutors, investigators, judges, delivers lectures on the topic of “The Commissioner’s role in protection of human rights and liberties and restoration of the violated human rights and liberties, directions of activity, including practice and work conducted in this field” at the trainings organised with the purpose of dissemination of culture of non-discrimination approach and non-violence.
17. The Commissioner recommended cooperating and joining efforts for successful implementation of the “National Action Plan on the Promotion of

Open Government for 2012-2015”. State bodies were addressed to collect data about structural divisions working in the sphere of provision of information, their duties and staff members. On the basis of collected information appropriate list was conducted and placed on the site of the Institute. The brochure “Know your rights and use them!” prepared with regard to the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan “On Access to Information” and disseminated in the regions among media representatives. The data base on press service of state bodies holding information was developed.

18. Fostering dialogue, cooperation, networking, and information-sharing among relevant stakeholders the Commissioner conducted consultations with experts on the means of mass media, heads of journalists’ organizations, newspaper editors and other media representatives; discussed future cooperation issues. During the meetings, the Commissioner recommended to take following measures:

- conduct joint awareness-raising trainings in the regions;
- prepare and publish appropriate educational programs and modules;
- train journalists;
- pay more attention to training and specialization of representatives of mass media, they professional conduct;
- implement legal awareness-raising and advocacy activities for officials, journalists and local population in the capital and regions;
- develop executive mechanisms for provision of information surveys;
- place broad information on the activities in the web-pages of state bodies;
- creation of electronic register in state bodies;
- active participation in awareness on use of e-government services;
- improve the work of information structures as well as electronic resources in the state bodies holding information;
- conduct analysis regarding development of appropriate legislation;
- organize TV and radio programs;
- establish Working Group consisting of representatives of state bodies, mass media and journalists; prepare its regulations and action plan; define specialized speaker on information issues;
- develop sustainable cooperation;
- conduct regular meeting and work as live network.

By the way, the evaluating of activities considered in the National Program for Action to Raise Effectiveness of the Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms in the Republic of Azerbaijan has demonstrated that majority of state bodies holding information carried out the mentioned recommendations.

19. Considering the proposal of the Commissioner, by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the date June 18 was approved as Human Rights Day. Accordingly, each year the date from 18 May till 18

June is declared by the Commissioner as “Human Rights Month-long campaign” and a range of events are carried out within the framework of this month-long campaign by the different state institutions and NGOs. In the end, the activities are summarized and delivered to the public.

20. The Commissioner contributed to the advertising and efficient implementation of Universal Periodic Review (UPR) that is the recent mechanism in human rights field. The complementary report under UPR was prepared by Commissioner and submitted to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. Moreover, the Commissioner was involved in the preparation and presentation of state official report. The Commissioner pays close attention to follow up the recommendations under UPR. The Working Group guided by the Commissioner coordinates the activity on follow up the recommendations under UPR. Regular meetings are held by the Commissioner for discussion on the fulfillment process of recommendations with the participation of respective state bodies and the civil society. As a result, in accordance with the recommendations under UPR, several activities, such as amendments to the legislation are being implemented, as well as the cluster discussions will be organized and recommendations will be prepared. This is noteworthy that active participation of the Commissioner in UPR mechanism and measures realized in this direction were assessed as the best practice.
21. It is important to mention that at the end of each year the Commissioner for Human Rights prepares and submits annual reports on the work, including the activities on the implementation of the World Programme for Human Rights Education, carried out within the year to the state and provides appropriate recommendations for improving all aspects of human rights in Azerbaijan. The Annual Report is being discussed at the Parliament, published in the media and placed on the website of Commissioner for the public awareness.
22. In accordance with the Commissioner’s mandate, in March of each year, an annual report of the Commissioner on provision and protection of human rights in the country is sounded in the Milli Mejlis (Parliament). The report is being based also on an extensive work carried out in human rights education. This should be noted that the Commissioner has put forward more than 400 recommendations, including the recommendations enshrined in the annual reports, basing on the analyses of the received complaints and appeals, and up to 60% of them have been implemented.
23. Generally, the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Republic of Azerbaijan is implementing systematic work in order to promote the main directions of the World Programme for Human Rights Education. Various trainings, seminars, conferences, round-table discussions and publications

prepared in accordance with international conventions and domestic legislation serve for awareness-raising of population, increase of attention towards them and solution of their problems. The Institute organizes wide-scale and planned events addressed to the issues of children, disabled people, women, older persons, military servants, refugees and IDPs as well as those promoting the fight against AIDS and drug addiction. A series of events with involvement of local and central executive power bodies, civil society institutions, mass media, facilities and organizations were conducted. As an important part of legal awareness-raising the education on human rights was developed in higher and secondary education facilities and schools.

The awareness-raising of children, teenagers and young people on human rights was continued in the “Leadership school” functioning within Azerbaijan Children and Youth Peace Network – the Commissioner’s resource center on child rights.

Systematic legal awareness-raising activities as well as meetings with local population were organized in cities and rayons, settlements and villages covered by regional centers of the Commissioner located in Ganja, Shaki, Quba and Jalilabad.

On “May 5 – European Day on the Protection of Human Rights of Persons with Disabilities” and “December 3 – International Day of Persons with Disabilities”, appropriate events were conducted in Boarding house for war veterans and rest-house for young people with disabilities.

Children’s paintings competition on the topic “Me and my rights” is regularly carried out in connection with “December 10” – International Human Rights Day. The winners are awarded with certificates and presents.

Discussions regarding the priority issue of the European Union – “Business and Human Rights” were conducted with the participation of state agencies and non – governmental organizations. During discussions, the state of ensuring labor and free entrepreneurship rights were analyzed, recommendations were prepared, and joint working group was formed. This experience was positively assessed at the II European Parliament Ombudsmen Summit. Educational work was continued in settlements of IDPs. Events in school and pre-school facilities were conducted, meetings were organized. During visits to military units and unions, meetings with staff members and awareness-raising activities were conducted. Recommendations were provided to young soldiers taking oath. The activities covering prisoners were the following: visits to penitentiary facilities, including meetings with women and underage detainees, personal conversations with detained people, explanation of their rights to prisoners, and provision of legal consultations to them and their family members.

In order to increase the efficiency of legal education, the Institute prepared various publications on human rights, thematic leaflets, journals, brochures, booklets and reminder cards and disseminated them among population.

Informational bulletins are prepared and placed at the official website due to the work of Editorial-Publication Council functioning at the Commissioner.

For educating children on child rights basing on human rights, such educational materials as “Selected Topics of Hierarchic Education on Child Rights” and “Child Rights for Everyone” were published and provided to educational facilities. “ABC book on Child Rights” was reedited, and the material titled “Convention on Child Rights” was prepared.

The work on preparation of Azerbaijan-Russian-English and English-Russian-Azerbaijan dictionaries of legal terms, words and phrases has been already concluded and they were published for the first time.

Furthermore, the collections of lectures delivered at the Baku State University during teaching the courses on “Human Rights” and “Introduction to Gender” were also prepared.

The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights supports the translation to Azerbaijani and publication of the material “Human Rights in the administration of Justice: A facilitator’s Guide on Human Rights for Judges, Prosecutors and Lawyers”.

Upon the Commissioner’s initiative, more than 20 books, manuals and textbooks, were translated from foreign languages into Azerbaijani and disseminated as a practical resource among wide audience of readers as well as specialized libraries.