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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF
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The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the United Nations Office and other international organizations at Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and, with reference to the latter's Note Verbale Ref: HCDH/RRDD/WRGS dated 18 November 2015, has the honor to transmit herewith the information prepared by the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan regarding the UN General Assembly resolution 69/156 of 18 December 2014 entitled "Child, early and forced marriage".

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the United Nations Office and other international organizations at 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: 5 pages.



Geneva, 25 January 2016

Office of the United Nations
High Commissioner for Human Rights
GENEVA

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Information submitted by the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan on progress towards ending child, early and forced marriage (2006-2015) pursuant to GA Res.69/156

Legislation:

- In order to equalize the minimum age of marriage for women and men to 18, the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan 'On Amendments to the Family Code was adopted in November 2011.
- Relevant changes were made to the Criminal Code in November 2011 for prohibition of compulsory marriage of women and minors, and application of sanctions thereupon.
- The Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan No 1058-IIIQ "On prevention of domestic violence" was adopted in 2010. Changes were made to a number of legislative acts according to this law.
- The item on the development of a reliable mechanism for the improvement of legislation on gender-based violence and violence against children has been specified in Action Plan of the State Program on Poverty Reduction and Sustainable Development in the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2008-2015.

At present, monitoring groups established at the level of local and central authorities, as a mechanism to monitor gender-based violence and violence against children check the effectiveness of the measures taken, carry out measures for early identification of at-risk families and provide necessary support, investigation and analysis of the causes of violence, ensure proper coordination of activities on protection of victims of violence and provide assistance for them.

Activities:

Since 2006 the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs has been organizing different events with regard to preventing early marriage in all regions of Azerbaijan. Various TV and radio programmes on the same problem are regularly broadcast. "The special TV programs on reproductive health, selective abortion were shown in the framework of the joint project with UNFPA "It's worth thinking" The special posters related to preventing early marriage and women trafficking are regularly distributed in different parts of the country.

Since 2009 special TV program "Women and Society" have been broadcast on International Women's Day on regional TV channels. The following issues are main points of discussions:

1."The Implementation of State Women Policy in the Republic of Azerbaijan,

2. The law of the Republic Azerbaijan on "Providing gender equality".
3. Discussion of the project on Law on Domestic Violence",
4. Early marriages,
5. Reproductive health and existing problems,
6. Women trafficking.

The State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs in cooperation with the International Center for Social Research and with the support of UNICEF had prepared research related to child marriage in Azerbaijan, which displays the situation with early marriage in Azerbaijan. The analysis of reasons and results was included into the research in order to find out social-economic factors affecting the marriage age. This research had covered 4 districts of Azerbaijan: Baku-Absheron, Lankaran, Guba, Aghstapha.

Since 2012 within the framework of the project "The elimination of gender-based violence among internally displaced persons and asylum seekers/refugees" the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs together with United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), "Rational Development for Women's Society" conducted enlightenment campaign against domestic violence named "Say No To Violence Against Women". Society of Protection of Azerbaijani Women's Rights after D.Aliyeva carried out "CEDAW in action" enlightenment seminars-trainings during 2 days in order to inform population in regions of Azerbaijan in accordance with The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The training covered 4 districts of Azerbaijan.

Since 2008 The State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs together with United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), International Organization for Migration (IOM), Rational Development for Women's Society had been conducted 5-year project in order to reduce gender-based violence among community of refugees and internally displaced persons in Azerbaijan, 14 regions were covered in the framework of this project. The special leaflet "Early marriage:50 questions 50 answers" with the slogan "Say no to early marriage" was published and distributed among population.

On 25 November, 2014 the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs together with United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), International Organization for Migration (IOM), US Agency for International Development (USAID), Rational Development for Women's Society, Counterpart International organized conference on "Empowerment of women, the progress of society".

In 2013 the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and Rational Development for Women's Society implemented the project named "No to Early marriage" among refugees and internally displaced women and girls in Azerbaijan. In February 2015 within the framework of the project, "Support for Strengthening the Social Well-being of Citizens" the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs, and Regional Executive Powers organized awareness raising campaigns at schools on topics related to early marriages, girls' evasion from education, reproductive health.

During 2014-2015 Children and Family Support centers of the State Committee for Family Women and Children's Affairs acting in 11 regions (Aghdam, Goranboy, Saatli, Sabirabad, Hajigabul, Gabala, Ismayilli, Zagatala, Shuvalan, and Zardab) discovered 20 cases of early marriages, 17 of them were prevented. Over the past 3 years the centers conducted 250 community mobilization activities and public meetings with the aim of preventing early and forced marriages. Enlightening letters were distributed to more than 30 thousand families with the help of local representatives of executive authorities and municipalities in each of the 11 regions. In addition, more than 2,000 copies of booklets have been published and distributed among the community population. In order to decrease the cases of early marriages in local positions, to strengthen the mutual activity of governmental institutions Children and Family Support Centers regularly organize roundtable. At the same time, these centers support non-governmental organizations working in this field.

On December 16, 2015, the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) co-organized an International Conference on "Strengthening of capacities to prevent early marriages". Before the conference, on 10 December, 2015 an event was organized by the State Committee and UNICEF with the participation of children in order to find out their opinions about child marriages and conduct active discussions with them.

Moreover, online survey on early marriages was conducted among the children and adolescents before the conference. During the event workshops on “The analysis of the main reasons of early marriages”, “How early marriages can be prevented? Who is responsible?” was held with the children. Children were divided into groups to work on above-mentioned issues and to give their recommendations. Finally, the recommendations provided by the children and result of the online survey were presented at the conference by two children. During the mentioned international conference held in Baku discussions took place on prevention of child marriages, measures to investigate the causes, development of protectoral mechanism, strengthening protection of victims of violence, rehabilitation, reintegration into society and coordination of activities for appropriate assistance and etc. Representatives of Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkey, the Islamic Republic of Iran, United Nations and Organization of Islamic Cooperation, as well as members of international agencies and diplomatic missions in Azerbaijan, and NGO representatives participated at the event. A video message “We say NO to child marriages” was featured and panel discussions were organized on “Strengthening the activities to end child marriage”, “Increasing opportunities for girls to acquire education and skills” and “Health information and services” during the conference as well. Furthermore, Baku Declaration was adopted on strengthening of capacities to prevent early marriages at the conference.

Besides the State Committee has conducted the following activities:

- The project titled “**Let’s get profit from experience of the elder persons**” has started in 2013. Since 2013 the meetings within the framework of the project have been held in all districts of Baku city and different regions of Azerbaijan. The project is still going on.
- In February 2015 the Committee in cooperation with the Ministry of Justice, National Council of Youth Organization and “Healthy family” medical center organized the conference “**Healthy family- healthy society- strong state**”. The main purpose of the conference was to raise awareness of young generation on amendments to the “Family Code” dated from 17 October 2014 regarding the necessity of medical examination before marriage.
- In August of 2014 the Committee started a new awareness raising project under the title “**Be for the healthy life style. Say No to early marriages**” focused on combating early marriages, protecting rights of mother and child, discussion the measures on improving mother’s and child’s health care, raising awareness of population on reproductive health and healthy life style. The project is going on in Baku and other regions of Azerbaijan.

- On 10 July 2015 the Committee started a new awareness raising project under the title **“Our power is in our unity!”** focused on propaganda of family values, healthy life style and consequences of harmful habits, tolerance and peace in family relations, combating domestic violence. The project is going on in Baku city and other regions of Azerbaijan.
- On 15 May - **International Family Day** the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs celebrates Family Holiday. Within the framework of this international day Committee usually holds a range of events, focused on integration of people with restricted physical abilities in society .During the last 8 years the celebration of Family Day was held in eight different regions of the country.
- One of the successfully implemented projects in this direction is the **“Azerbaijani Family” film festival**, conducted in cooperation with Heydar Aliyev Foundation and United Nations Population Fund. During the 6 years of this festival more than 170 films were introduced to the Committee. films from foreign countries as Russian Federation, Ukraine, Germany, Kazakhstan, and etc were among the introduced films as well.
- The Conference title **“The calls of present time: Institute of family and the unities of the religious values»** was held on 6 February 2015 within the framework of “Action plan on cooperation for 2015-2016” signed on February 6, 2015 between the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs and the State Committee for Work with Religious Organizations .

Published material

The booklets titled “Healthy life style. Say No to drugs, alcohol, and smoking”, “Consequences of blood relations” “Say No to Drugs!”, “Reproductive health”, “Medical examination before marriage”, “Do a test on AIDS! Keep yourself and your relatives safe!” “Family violence and child”, “Psychological climate of the family” “Take care and respect older persons”, “Don’t become a victim of human trafficking”, were prepared and published by the Committee. All these booklets permanently are distributed to participants in all awareness raising events organized by the Committee.