

Information submitted by the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan with regard to implementation of the agreed conclusions on “Women’s economic empowerment in the changing world of work”

1. Strengthening normative and legal frameworks

- **What specific actions have been taken to enact, strengthen and enforce laws and regulatory frameworks that ensure gender equality and prohibit discrimination against women in the world of work?**
- **What specific actions have been taken to enact, strengthen and enforce laws and regulations that uphold the principle of equal pay for equal work or work of equal value in both the public and private sectors?**
- **What measures have been taken to enact, strengthen and force laws and policies to eliminate all forms of violence and harassment against women in the world of work and provide means of effective redress in cases of noncompliance?**

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

- Resolution of the Milli Majlis (Parliament) of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated 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 dated January 14, 1998 "On measures to increase the role of women in Azerbaijan"
- Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan No. 289 dated 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 dated September 26, 2000 "On the implementation of the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan No. 289 dated 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
- "Action Plan for Prevention of Sex Selection before Birth for 2020-2025" approved by the Order of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated February 24, 2020
- "Rules for raising awareness about the importance of family and marriage among young people, its negative consequences for early marriage and consanguineous marriage in order to protect and strengthen it" approved by the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan No. 213 dated June 23, 2020

- "Action Plan for 2020-2025 on the implementation of the Strategy for Children" approved by the Order of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan No. 2306 dated November 27, 2020
- Order of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan No. 2307 dated November 27, 2020 on approval of the "National Action Plan on Combating Domestic Violence for 2020-2023"

Current strategy, state program, national action plans supporting gender equality and women's (as well as 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 for the 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 for 2019-2030 of the Republic of Azerbaijan" 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 Sex Selection before 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
- The draft of National Action Plan on Gender Equality 2021-2025 was prepared with regard to the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Sustainable Development Goals and other international documents to ensure the implementation of paragraph 7.4 of the Development Concept "Azerbaijan 2020: Vision for the Future", agreed with the relevant authorities and submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers. On March 6, 2021, the Rules on development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of state programs were approved by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Cabinet of Ministers sent the draft document to the State Committee to prepare in accordance with this Regulation. The document is being processed in accordance with the new rules.
 - The draft on "National Action Plan for 2021-2023 to ensure women's employment in the Republic of Azerbaijan" has been prepared since May 2020. A working group was established, and online meeting was held to discuss the draft document with key executive government authorities and non-governmental organizations in April this year. After the meeting, the members of the working group provided feedback and suggestions, which are currently being revised on the basis of those comments and suggestions.

2. Strengthening education, training and skills development

- **What measures have been taken to mainstream a gender perspective into education and training programmes in order to facilitate the effective transition from education or unemployment to work?**
 - A subject on "Introduction to Gender" is included in the curricula of the faculties by the Department of Gender and Applied Psychology of Baku State University.
 - The subject curricula on "Life Skills" taught in schools covers the topics on the elimination of gender stereotypes in the training standards related to the formation of important life skills for students.
- 3. Implementing economic and social policies for women's economic empowerment**
- **What steps have been taken to promote decent paid care and domestic work in the public and private sectors?**
 - **What actions and investments have been made to support gender-responsive social protection and care infrastructure and services?**
 - **What specific measures have been implemented to promote women's entry? Re-entry and advancement in the labour market?**

Project on the "Establishment of a Community Family Support Club to support women's employment and micro-entrepreneurship"

The State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs, in cooperation with the Public Union "For a Healthy Life" and with the financial support of British Petroleum, launched a project entitled "Establishment of a Community Family Support Club to support women's employment and micro-entrepreneurship" in Tovuz since 2020. The project aims to develop micro-entrepreneurship among rural women, strengthen knowledge and skills in the field of entrepreneurship, increase employment opportunities and establish a Family Support Club in the community. 22 women in Tovuz region were provided with non-monetary support to start a business and strengthen existing businesses in 2020 within the framework of the project, and women were provided with equipment in accordance with the business plan.

On February 20th, 21st and 25th, the trainings were held on the topics entitled "Self-presentation skills", "Leadership development", "Gender equality and human rights", "Early marriage and domestic violence", "Finance Trainings on "Literacy", "Family Budget Management", "Business Organization and Management" for women who were selected in January 2021 and would be supported for their employment. 35 women and girls participated in the trainings.

At the same time Toyuz Women Resource Center was established in January 2021 within the project. On April 10, 2021, within the framework of the project, 38 women were provided with non-monetary support to start a business and strengthen existing businesses and also were provided with equipment in accordance with the business plan, with the participation of representatives of Tovuz District Executive Power, Public Union "For a Healthy Life" and BP.

In general, 60 women were supported and provided with equipment for business activities within the project in 2020-2021.

Project on "Promotion of women's participation in socio-economic life in rural areas"

The technical assistance project on "Promotion of economic and social participation of women living in rural and urban areas" in Azerbaijan, together with the United Nations Development Program, which started in 2011 and continues successfully could be given as an example.

The aim of the project is to increase the economic opportunities and skills of women and youth living in rural and urban areas for active participation in economic life, entrepreneurship activities and employment. Within the project, 9 Women Resource Centers were opened in Bilasuvar, Salyan, Sabirabad, Neftchala, Masalli, Zagatala, Gusar, Khachmaz, Baku and Khazar districts between 2011-2019. These centres aim to support the establishment of a network of economically active women living in rural and district settlements across the country and to increase the business and social opportunities of rural women. Women's Resource Centres operate as a technical body that provides a wide range of services to women, including counselling, mentoring, networking, empowerment, safe space, good communication, and advocacy.

In total, 6,200 women and young people participated in the trainings and events. "Start and grow your own business" trainings were organized with the participation of 300 rural women, according to the ILO methodology. As a result of the trainings, a total of 400 businesses were opened.

"Supporting women's employment and micro-entrepreneurship in Goychay region and establishment of Women's Resource Center"

Since 2020 the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs together with the German Cooperation Organization is implementing the project "Support to women's employment and micro-entrepreneurship in Goychay region and the establishment of a Women's Resource Center". The aim of the project is to support the economic and social opportunities of rural women.

Women's Resource Center was established in Goychay region, non-monetary assistance and technical support (goods and materials, equipment, furniture, accessories, etc.) was provided to 28 women for the establishment of business entities and the development of existing business entities within the framework of the project.

In November-December 2020 trainings were held on "Gender and human rights", "Self-presentation skills", "Leadership", "Domestic violence and early marriage", "Financial literacy", "Business organization and management" in Goychay region with the participation of women involved in the project. The aim of the trainings is to create a network among women, increase their knowledge of gender, human rights, self-presentation skills, financial literacy, business organization, management and leadership,

as well as to ensure their activity. On April 2 and 5, 2021, Goychay Women Resource Center organized trainings for women hairdressers in order to support micro-entrepreneurship within the project.

On April 7, 2021 in the framework of the project at the Goychay Women Resource Centre training was organized on "Support to women's employment and micro-entrepreneurship in Goychay region and the establishment of the Women Resource Centre" for women who were provided with support, in order to help them for developing the local breeds of livestock to reach high productive breeds and encouraging the female dairy farmers and cattle breeders to revive traditional cooperative practices in feeding, vaccinating, owning and raising local livestock.

On April 8, 2021, Goychay Women Resource Centre organized trainings to improve the professional skills of women engaged in tailoring, weaving and handicrafts, whose employment was supported within the project.

4. Addressing the growing informality of work and mobility of women workers

- **What measures have been implemented to promote the transition from informal to formal paid employment for women?**

On July 31, 2019, an event entitled "Involvement in formal labour and increasing the level of economic activity of women" was held in the Women Resource Center of Khazar district. The purpose of the event is to strengthen women's entrepreneurial activity, improve their knowledge on employment on the basis of taxes and employment contracts.

5. Managing technological and digital change for women's economic empowerment

- **What specific actions have been taken to support women's access to skills development and decent work in emerging fields? Including science, technology? Engineering and mathematics?**

Currently, the number of girls studying in economics, management, technical and technology specialties is increasing every year.

The number of girls in the "economics and management" specialty group among students of state and non-state higher education institutions has increased 8.5 times and in the "technical and technological" specialty group 6.6 times over the past 8 years.

The number of girls studying at the bachelor's level in the group of technical and technological specialties in the country is close to 9,000. The number of girls pursuing a master's degree in this specialty reaches 2,000. In the 2019/2020 academic year, the number increased and approached 3,000.

On 8 April 2011, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) announced the establishment of an international "Girls in ICT Day", which is held every year on the fourth Thursday in April in Azerbaijan as well. 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.

6. Strengthening women's collective voice, leadership and decision-making

• What specific efforts have been implemented to support women's participation and leadership in trade unions, workers' organizations and employers' organizations?

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 "Achievements, Prospects" 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.
- a round table on "Ensuring Gender Equality and Promotion of Women" was held together with the delegation representing the Republic of Belarus within the framework of mutual cooperation. 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 Leadership in Local Government" in the regions of the country. The project aims 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 in charge for Social 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).

At present, there are 2,116 commissions dealing with gender and women's issues in trade union structures, including 8,569 men and women. In a small number of organizations, 818 officials have been appointed to deal with these matters.

"Legal Advice" hours were organized in labor collectives, 683 seminars, round table discussions, etc. were held dedicated to women and gender issues. About 13,000 trade union members took part in these events.

7. Strengthening the role of the private sector in women's economic empowerment

- **What efforts have been undertaken to encourage private firms and institutions to mainstream gender equality considerations in policies and practices?**

- **What action has been taken to increase investment and support for women entrepreneurs?**

Measures taken to eliminate gender disbalance in the labor market and support women employment;

- In different years, the President approved the "Vision 2020 Development Concept", "Strategic Roadmaps for the National Economy and Key Sectors of the Economy", the Employment Strategy for 2019-2030 and the Action Plan for its implementation. These documents envisage measures to increase women's employment, support entrepreneurship among women, strengthen women's vocational training in rural areas, expand startups, and increase the number of kindergartens.
- As a result of positive trends in the country's labor market, the number of girls studying in specialty groups such as economics, management, technics and technology is increasing year by year, which in turn has led to an increase in the number of women in relevant employment.
- In October 2017, women entrepreneurs, the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs, the Ministry of Economy and the National Confederation on Entrepreneurs (Employers) organizations established the Association of Women Entrepreneurs of Azerbaijan. The National Fund for Entrepreneurship Support of the Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Azerbaijan lists women as one of the most vulnerable groups eligible for low-interest government loans for business development (along with "youth" and "refugees"). Over the past 16 years, the Entrepreneurship Development Fund under the Ministry of Economy has provided 79.1 million manat in loans to more than 4,347 women entrepreneurs, as well as 6,797 new jobs have been created due to soft loans provided to women entrepreneurs. Despite these efforts, the share of women entrepreneurs receiving low-interest government loans was lower than that of men.
- 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.
- The State Committee, the United Nations Development Program and the Population Fund conducted an analysis on "Men and Women in the Private Sector: Opportunities and Challenges".
- The Agency for Small and Medium Business Development of the Republic of Azerbaijan with the participation of foreign experts held trainings, seminars, round tables, conferences, exhibitions and other educational events in Baku and the regions in order to educate entrepreneurs, increase their knowledge and skills, raise their professional training level. Up to 30% of the participants in these events were women. The Women's Entrepreneurship Development Association of Azerbaijan is

also represented in the Public Council, which consists of 15 business associations and non-governmental organizations under the Small and Medium Business Development Agency. Within the framework of cooperation with the Association, a number of measures have been taken to involve women in activities and promote entrepreneurship among them. There were 88 women out of 422 entrepreneurs and managers who passed a training course on business management in Germany within the framework of the "German-Azerbaijani Joint Program for Professional Development of Managers in the Business Community of Azerbaijan" jointly implemented by the Government of Azerbaijan and Germany and coordinated by the Azerbaijan Small and Medium Business Development Agency.

- The State Committee, together with the Association of Women Entrepreneurs of Azerbaijan, has implemented a number of projects to integrate women prisoners into society and ensure their employment.
- The State Committee together with the Azerbaijan Microfinance Association conducted trainings on "Financial Literacy" and "Start and Develop a Business" within the project "Training of Women Specialists and Development of Women Entrepreneurs in the Regions of Azerbaijan". The main purpose of the "Financial Literacy" trainings is to provide the necessary knowledge about the basics of financial literacy, and the main purpose of the "Start and Develop a Business" training is to support women in small and medium enterprises in creating business ideas and business plans.
- In order to provide a general analysis of women's and girls' economic and employment opportunities in the private sector, as well as to identify positive and negative factors, a survey was conducted on "Barriers to women's participation in the economy" among selected focus groups in 4 regions of Azerbaijan within the project jointly implemented by UNDP, UNFPA and the Committee. The survey was conducted among deputy executive heads of Guba, Sheki, Gabala, Saatli regions, focus groups consisting of unemployed men and women of those regions and directors of private sector enterprises. In order to help unemployed women living in the regions to find suitable jobs in the private sector and start their own businesses, the respondents answered questions about the problems women face when looking for work, ways out, current prospects, and equal employment rights for women and men.
- The State Committee, the Ministry of Economy, the National Confederation of Entrepreneurs (Employers) held an international conference on "Development of Women's Entrepreneurship: Problems and Prospects." The purpose of the conference is to increase women's entrepreneurship, protect their rights and ensure decent work, to cooperate in the field of educational projects in the areas arising from the requirements of modern times and the labor market, to identify perspectives.
- In 2018, the State Committee together with the Embassy of the Swiss Confederation in the Republic of Azerbaijan, the United Nations Development Program, and the UN Population Fund presented the Gender Assessment Report entitled "Women in the Private Sector in Azerbaijan: Opportunities and Challenges". The main purpose of the

gender assessment study was to identify factors influencing women's participation in the private sector economy, including contributing to the efforts of government agencies, the private sector and civil society organizations to expand women's economic empowerment. The main objectives of the assessment were to identify and analyze gender-based factors that prevent women from accessing employment opportunities, providing decent jobs and building successful careers in the private sector. The assessment also analyzed gender-based factors affecting men's participation in the private sector economy.

- On June 21, 2019, International Forum was held on "Development of Women's Entrepreneurship: Experience, Opportunities and Achievements" dedicated to the development of women's entrepreneurship. The International Forum continued in 3 sessions. Session 1: "Women's Entrepreneurship as the Most Important Factor to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals", Session 2: "Support and Networking of Women's Entrepreneurship through Information and Communication Technologies", Session 3: Creating Good Conditions for Entrepreneurship Development in Rural Areas.
- According to the relevant Order of the President dated April 7, 2016 "On additional measures to ensure self-employment", 6.0 mln. manats were allocated to the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of Population from the reserve fund of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan envisaged in the 2016 state budget in order to assist the population in self-employment. Pursuant to the mentioned Order, 1767 unemployed citizens in 76 districts were involved in the training process. As a result of the project, 322 out of 1281 participants are women who succeeded in the defence process.