

**20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BEIJING DECLARATION AND
THE PLATFORM FOR ACTION**

NATIONAL REPORT

Republic of Azerbaijan

**The State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs of the Republic
of Azerbaijan**

Baku 2014

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CHAPTER 1: general background on gender equality and women empowerment

Significant progress and achievements were made in improvement of legislation to ensure women rights in the Republic of Azerbaijan and implement state policy in the above mentioned field after the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action.

The Republic of Azerbaijan joined the Convention for Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Optional Protocol of the Convention in 1995 and 2001 accordingly.

The Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On Guarantees of Equal Rights for Women and Men" was adopted in 2006. The definition of "gender based discrimination" was included according to the article 2.4 of the Law. It is in line with and was inspired by the definition of "discrimination against women" contained in Article 1 of the Convention.

Moreover, according to the Article 148 of the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan, all international agreements and Conventions that the Republic of Azerbaijan has ratified, are considered to be a part of its domestic legislation so that in the case of any discrepancy between the definition of "discrimination against women" as contained in Article 1 of the Convention and the definition of "Gender based discrimination" as contained in the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On Guarantees of Gender Equality", the definition in Article 1 of the Convention will be given superiority. Article 12(2) of the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan further provides that human rights and liberties listed in the Constitution shall be applied in accordance with international conventions ratified by the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan No 1058-IIIQ "On prevention of domestic violence" was adopted in 2010. Changed were made to a number of legislative acts according to this law.

- The Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On modifications to the Family Code" was adopted in November 2011. This law provides that the minimum age of marriage shall be 18 and shall be the same for women and men.
- Relevant changes were made of the Crime Code in November 2011 for prohibition of compulsory marriage of a woman and application of sanctions thereupon (according to the Law No 256-IVQD).

The Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on Social Service came into force since 2012. According to the para 16 of the I part of the article 94 of the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan, this law defines the legal, economic and organizational principles of state policy in provision of social services to persons living in difficult circumstances and regulates the relations in this field.

The Republic of Azerbaijan ratified a number of Conventions of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) to improve the situation of women and their families. In order to improve the employment conditions of women, the Republic of Azerbaijan ratified the ILO Conventions No 156 "Concerning Equal Opportunities and Equal Treatment for Men and Women Workers: workers with family responsibilities" and No 183 "On review of the Convention of 1952 on Maternity Protection".

In 2008, the Republic of Azerbaijan joined the Convention of the United Nations "On rights of persons with disabilities" and its Optional Protocol.

In addition, the following draft laws and regulatory documents were prepared.

- In order to strengthen the social protection of mothers with many children", a draft Law "On state support to families with many children" was prepared and submitted for adoption.
- According to the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On State Guarantees of Equal Rights for Women and Men", the State Committee on Family, Women and Children Affairs, as a relevant executive power ensuring the gender equality, prepared the draft "Rules for state control to ensure gender equality" and submitted to relevant authorities for adoption. The rules regulate the authorities and functions of the SCFWCA in ensuring gender equality, coordination between entities, rights and obligations of state officials responsible for gender issues, etc. The rules are based on the policy for the SCFWCA to become a strong central executive power in implementation of all necessary initiatives of the government in the fulfillment of obligations taken within the Convention by the member country, coordination and control of the implementation of policy and programs. The rules will support the enforcement of existing law and policies.

The SCFWCA periodically publishes special materials to increase awareness. As the central executive power for implementation of gender policy in the country, the SCFWCA organizes trainings for state officials responsible for gender issues and NGO representatives.

CHAPTER 2: Achievements in 12 fields of special concern of Beijing Platform

- Women and poverty

As known, women are among groups of population, who suffer more from the poverty in the world. At present, the poverty line is 6% in Azerbaijan. A number of measures are being taken in the Republic of Azerbaijan to completely eliminate poverty.

All national legislative acts ensure equal opportunities for all citizens not depending on their gender to make free choice of labour and employment. The demand in the labour market is based on qualification, experience and specialties without making any limitations for gender.

The article 16 of the Labour Code stipulates the equal opportunities and equal treatment not depending on gender, and inadmissibility of gender based discrimination and sexual violence.

Women account for 76.5% of employed people in several sectors of economy (education, healthcare, culture, social protection, etc.) – 67.1% in education and 54.3% in the sector of other utility, social and individual services. The State Budget mainly finances enterprises in these sectors of economy, where wages and salaries are relatively low. This factor had an influence on low average monthly wages of women compared to men in the Republic.

The legislation creates equal conditions for employment of men and women in the Republic of Azerbaijan. The principle of equal pay for men and women for work of equal value is met in enterprises, offices and organizations in the Republic and discrimination on the basis of sex in the payment of wages/salaries is not allowed.

The State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs organizes various vocational training courses for increasing employment of women as well. A project on “Support to technical-vocational education for women in regions” was implemented in Aghjabedi, Aghdam, Barda, Yevlakh and Tartar regions jointly with “The Third Sector” Public Union in 2012. The main goal of the Project is to support development of vocational education for women in the regions. The Project envisages the provision of economically and socially efficient technical-vocational education system and increasing interests of young girls in vocational education for meeting the development requirements of the economy in cadres with vocational education, as well as ensuring access of women to modern vocational education. The state of art in the sphere of vocational education for women in regions was studied, needs identified and a roundtable on the topic was organized in the first phase of the Project and vocational trainings were organized in the second phase.

General Collective Agreements were concluded between the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Azerbaijan Trade Unions Confederation and the National Confederation of Entrepreneurs” (Employers”) Organizations of the Republic of Azerbaijan on February 4, 2010 and March 6, 2012. There are certain clauses in these agreements on women employment, protection of women’s labour and inclusion of the subject of “Basis of Gender Policy” into the curricula of educational institutions. Relevant policy measures are being implemented in these spheres by those organizations.

Demand in work force was evaluated among private companies and other employers of Sabirabad region, which was selected as a pilot region within "Promotion of women participation from rural areas in social and economic life" implemented jointly by the SFWCA and UNDP. As the result of the survey, demanded specializations and skills were discovered and recommendations were made on trainings and skills that would increase the employment opportunities of women from the region. A number of trainings were held to increase the attention of banks, non-commercial organizations and private companies to the needs and interests of women from rural areas.

The level of non-formal employment in the economy was estimated through sample surveys done by the State Statistical Committee in 2005 and 2009. The ratio of non-formal employment to total employment was 5.0% (186.3/3704.5) in 2005 and 10.1% (410.1/4071.6) in 2009. The findings of the survey showed that the increase in non-formal

employment was higher among women. Thus, the ratio of women in non-formal employment to total employment was 32.7% in 2005, while the indicator increased to 61.9% (253.7/410.1) in 2009.

According to data of the State Statistical Committee, the number of persons who were entitled to the official status of unemployed by the employment service offices was 38.3 thousand persons on January 1, 2012. 43% of them were women. The average amount of unemployment benefit was equal to 190.9 AZN (238,6 USD). The average amount of unemployment benefits was equal to 190.9 AZN (USD 238.8).

The share of self-employment (people independently providing jobs for themselves, people working on individual basis, not paid family workers) in total employment did not change significantly in the period from 2003 to 2010 and constituted on average 66-68%. The share of persons employed in household farms in total employment increased year-by-year and their special weight in total employment increased from 27.4% in 2003 to 40.2% in 2010.

Special attention is given to strengthening social protection of workers with family responsibilities, including women in the Republic of Azerbaijan. For this reason, the Republic of Azerbaijan ratified ILO Conventions No. 156 “On Workers with Family Responsibilities” and No. 183 “On Maternity Protection (revised)” in 2010.

A targeted social assistance has been envisaged for low-income families in the Republic of Azerbaijan since 2006. It is a state support identified based on need criterion. If average monthly income of a household is less than the sum need criterion, a targeted social assistance is fixed for a family in the amount of the difference. According to the data by 1 April 2014, the number of women entitled to targeted social assistance was 286 602 people.

- *Education and vocational education of women*

The Government of Azerbaijan, conscious that education is the key to the advancement of women, has spared no efforts in ensuring that women continue their education.

Article 42 of the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Law “On Education” stipulate the right of all citizens to education. According to the Law “On Guarantees of Gender Equality” adopted by the National Assembly of the Republic of Azerbaijan in 2006, the state guarantees equal opportunities for women and men in all spheres of social life, including education.

A “State Program on reforms in the higher education system of the Republic of Azerbaijan for the 2009-2013 years” was approved on May 22, 2009. The Program provides for extensive policy measures like improving quality of higher education and improving quality control mechanism, organizing distant education, enhancing the network of higher education institutions, developing new mechanisms for involvement of students into scientific research, etc., which leads to improvements in access of women to quality higher education.

The Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan “On the use of the new funding mechanism for higher education institutions” dated February 10, 2010 is an

important step in ensuring quality of higher education in the country. The State undertakes financing of education of knowledgeable and talented citizens in higher education institutions of the country and thus, gave a strong impetus to improvement of the quality of higher education. Substantial measures have been taken in accordance with the Presidential Decree for implementation of training of specialists at state and non-state educational institutions of the country both on the basis of the state order on the account of the State Budget resources and by paid education form. A key policy of the Government is to give women and men equal opportunities of access to such training and specialization.

The position of Azerbaijan as one of the main players in the field of global energy and communication is increasing in the Caucasus region, Europe and the World. Sustainable socio-economic development of the country on the one hand and globalization, competition and integration processes in the modern World on the other hand increase the need for training of highly qualified specialists in all spheres for the Republic. Considering all these facts, the country's leadership attaches great importance to the development of education and focuses on it as one of the priorities of the state policy. Large state programs are implemented in this sphere.

The state guarantees the right of each citizen to compulsory general secondary education. Each learner has the right to free general education at state educational institutions.

The SCFWCA has also addressed the problem of early marriage and has even conducted a study on early marriages, together with the International Centre for Social Studies and the financial support of UNICEF. The study covered 4 regions of Azerbaijan and had as objective to analyze the causes of child marriages and their consequences in Azerbaijan.

An “Action Plan for the Southern region of the Republic (Lankaran city, Masally, Lerik and Astara regions) for the Elimination of Early Marriages” was designed and implemented by the SCFWCA in cooperation with UNICEF in the southern part of Azerbaijan.

Share of women holding a post of director in day secondary general educational institutions in 2011 increased from 26,5% to 28,4% compared to last academic year. Besides, the State Committee on Admission makes analysis of gender aspects of exams held every year.

In general, share of women in total number of directors and deputies in day general educational schools increased by 2,2%.

- Women and healthcare

The guiding policy document that is currently in force has been the National Reproductive Health Strategy (2008-2015). This document was signed on 30 January 2008, together with the Director-General of WHO, Dr. Chan, and the first lady of Azerbaijan, Hon Mehriban Aliyeva. The Ministry of Health has developed the National Strategy for the Protection of Reproductive Health of the Population of the Azerbaijan Republic with the support from the WHO, and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

The strategy is based on the situation analysis for 2005-2006, as well as results of the National Reproductive Health Strategy (2001-2006).

Programmatic areas outlined in the Strategy include:

- Maternal and child health,
- Reproductive choices (family planning and safe abortions),
- Sexually transmitted diseases (also cervical cancer), HIV/AIDS,
- Reproductive health of adolescents and young people,
- Gender based violence and sexual exploitation.

The State Program for protection of maternal and child health (2006-2010) is under the review at present and it is expected to be renewed soon.

As mentioned in the "Azerbaijan – 2020: vision into the future" development concept, "the state program on improving mother and child health for 2013-2020 will be adopted and measures taken to conduct preventive checkups and health surveys among children and teenagers. To strengthen the fight against infectious diseases, relevant measures will be taken to enable children to undergo immunological prophylaxis. A national action plan (2014-2020) to prevent and treat child disability will be prepared and children's medical institutions profiled in an effort to expand inpatient services. In order to make vitally important medicines physically and economically accessible to all categories of the population and improve the quality, effectiveness and safety of medicines, measures will be taken to create a unified database of medicines. Resolute steps will be taken to prevent the import of unlicensed and low-quality medicines. Healthcare personnel issues will continue to be in the spotlight, relevant procedures put in place to continuously improve the knowledge and skills of medical personnel, including training in foreign countries. Measures will be taken to create suitable conditions for doctors and medical personnel working in rural areas and financial remuneration established. Measures will be taken to assess the work of medical personnel on the basis of their performance.

To monitor public health, various electronic registers, the system of "electronic health cards" and a healthcare information system will be created."

There has been a considerable effort to improve access to quality health care services to women and men in both urban and rural areas, on a basis of equality. About 400 healthcare facilities were established in Azerbaijan during the last decade, 300 of which were established in regions. There are currently 412 hospitals in the Republic, 65 of them are central regional hospitals, 167 – rural area hospitals and 20 – maternity hospitals. At the same time, 35 private healthcare institutions are providing obstetrical services.

658709.3 thousand AZN (839333.10) USD were allocated from the State Budget to development of healthcare in 2012. Today, Azerbaijan is among the leaders in the Post Soviet area by the number of healthcare facilities and the quality of equipment.

A draft Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On Protection of Reproductive Health and Family Planning" stipulating legal basis for the protection of reproductive health, access to family planning services and implementation of reproductive rights was developed. The draft law provides for protection of health of mothers and children, free medical and consultation

service to pregnant and childbearing women, as well as to their children financed with the resources of the State Budget and rendering one-time free extra-corporal fertilization and embryo transfer services to families suffering from childlessness for a period of more than ten years, who need special care at state healthcare facilities with the resources of the State Budget. At the same time, the draft law regulates the right to reproductive freedom, the right to maternity protection and maternity, donation of reproductive cells, the right for keeping reproductive cells, the right to use of contraception, medical sterilization and other issues, as well prohibits a check-up for identification of the sex of a child and break-up of pregnancy for a sexual origin (selective abortions), except for cases of high probability of heritable diseases associated with sex. The law is expected to be adopted in near future.

As a result of such an expedient policy, considerable achievements were made in the sphere of protection of woman and child health. This has found its reflection on demographic indicators. Thus, child mortality cases decreased and life expectancy increased in the country. Natural increase of population was 13.5 persons per 1000 population in 2011.

At the same time, an achievement was made in reducing maternal mortality. However, certain problems associated with women and reproductive health continues to exist in Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan is a country with the highest rate of abortions among Central Asian countries and Turkey due to lack of information on contraception and limitations in access to family planning services. Abortion remains as the main method for controlling childbirth.

Furthermore, the number of live born boys exceeded girls within the last 4-5 years. Researchers explain this fact by selective abortions due to traditional preference of “boys”. Currently, there is a study underway on disturbance of gender relation of children born in the Republic of Azerbaijan jointly with the UNFPA.

- HIV/AIDS

Notwithstanding the fact that Azerbaijan is among the countries with low level of HIV prevalence, HIV/AIDS problem is always under the consideration of the Ministry of Health. Coverage of HIV testing of population, especially persons in groups of risky behaviour vulnerable to infection increased and 476 new cases of HIV infection were discovered and registered in 11 months of 2011. The implemented epidemiological surveillance once more proved the prevalence of HIV/AIDS epidemic among injected drug users.

The government understands the importance of raising awareness of population in solving problems and implements enlightenment of population various trainings in the spheres like reproductive health, fighting HIV/AIDS, family planning, etc.

Community meetings and trainings were held in more than 23 cities and regions of the Republic within the “Reproductive Health Initiative for Youth in the South Caucasus” implemented by the SCFWCA with support of UNFPA for youth, adolescents and women in refugee and IDP families, women with many children, children exposed to street life, young people in boarding schools, schoolchildren in upper classes, teachers, medical doctors, psychologists, representatives of mass media, sports leaders and representatives of religious organizations and NGOs. As a result of these meetings and trainings, opportunities for

revealing problems were created in remote regions, awareness of population on reproductive health was increased, activity of girls was enhanced, skills of youth for expressing their ideas were improved, their problems were identified and non-medical “Youth Friendly Reproductive Centers” were established.

In addition to HIV/AIDS survey among population, a survey was conducted on the drug-use, their results were analyzed and presented and recommendations for relevant agencies were prepared.

Regular trainings and seminars were held, promotional materials developed and disseminated on promotion of healthy lifestyle among children in need of special care, low-income, refugee and IDP children and their families using the services of “Youth Friendly Reproductive Centers” and Child and Family Support Centers of SCFWCA located in 11 regions.

At the same time, booklets on reproductive health, fight against AIDS and consequences of marriages between blood relatives were published; a video clip on consequences of selective abortions was shot and broadcasted in national and regional TV channels.

In addition to awareness –raising campaigns, the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs also carries out from time to time free medical tests for women from vulnerable groups of population, low-income families and children.

Azerbaijan Refugee and IDP Youth Organization carried out jointly with the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria a medical test among IDPs for HIV/AIDS prevention, volunteer, free and anonymous consultation within the Project for “HIV/AIDS prevention among Refugee and IDP Youth in Azerbaijan, Volunteer, Free and Anonymous Consultation and Testing for HIV Infection”.

- Violence against women

Law No. 1058-IIIQ of the Republic of Azerbaijan “On Combating Domestic Violence” was adopted on June 22, 2010. In order to ensure implementation of the Law, amendments were made to seven legislative acts and five new normative and legal acts were adopted. The scope of the law is very broad and covers violence perpetrated by a broad range of persons. It contains provisions for the provision of legal assistance and social protection to victims of domestic violence; preventive actions which need to be taken which include legal, social and informative actions.

The Government of Azerbaijan also conducted a first countrywide survey in 2008. The special National Survey Report on violence against women in Azerbaijan examined the prevalence, root causes and consequences of violence against women. The survey was initiated and organized in the framework of UNFPA’s Combating Gender Based Violence in South Caucasus Project\Azerbaijan in close cooperation with the State Committee on Family Women and Children Affairs.

In addition, the SCWFCA is implementing a project in Khachmaz region selected as a pilot region together with the UNFPA, International Migration Organisation and Azerbaijan

Lawyers Confederation with the support of the European Union for modeling a Support Centre for women subject to violence and their children.

Several concrete measures were taken in Azerbaijan to ensure the rehabilitation and social integration of victims of trafficking, including through the establishment of additional shelters.

The Government has also focused on its emigration and immigration policies, to ensure that they are not implemented in a discriminatory manner. The Government of Azerbaijan is sensitive to the fact that women who have been trafficked are victims of crime. As such it ensures through the implementation of its law against human trafficking, that they are not treated as criminals. The Government, through the National Action Plan, ensures that once they are identified, victims of trafficking are given immediate and adequate material, social, medical or psychological support. Since August 2012, allowances paid to victims of human trafficking in the course of reintegration have been increased from 200 AZN (equivalent of 255 USD) to 400 AZN (equivalent of 510 USD). All efforts are being undertaken to ensure and protect the right of victims to access remedies. All assistance is given victims of trafficking, both in terms of information as well as the means to enable them to claim criminal or civil remedies for the violations they have suffered.

The Government has taken measures that address the root factors, including external factors, that encourage trafficking in women and girls for prostitution and other forms of commercialized sex, forced marriages and forced labour in order to eliminate trafficking in women and with a view to providing better protection of the rights of women and girls and to punishing the perpetrators. It has also invested considerable effort in stepping up cooperation and concerted action by all relevant law enforcement authorities and institutions with a view to dismantling national, regional and international networks in trafficking. The Government has also allocated resources to provide comprehensive programs designed to heal and rehabilitate into society victims of trafficking including through job training, legal assistance and confidential health care and has taken measures to cooperate with non-governmental organizations to provide for the social, medical and psychological care of the victims of trafficking. Lastly, there has been considerable effort to develop educational and training programs and policies with special emphasis to the protection of young women and children. An awareness rising events are held periodically on the subject of domestic violence for the students of law faculties of higher education centers of the republic.

Following the last constructive dialogue and the recommendations of the Committee, efforts of the Government of Azerbaijan in its struggle against human trafficking have focused on:

- Implementation of the legislative measures to prevent trafficking and prosecute Traffickers;
- Increased measures to improve the economic situation of women so as to eliminate their vulnerability to trafficking;
- Formulation of comprehensive strategies to prosecute and punish offenders;

- Increased international, regional, and bilateral cooperation with other countries of origin, transit, and destination for trafficked women and girls to monitor migration patterns and strengthen state controls;
- Public awareness campaigns and training for law enforcement and border control officials;
- Comprehensive rehabilitative and reintegration programs for trafficked women and girls providing alternative opportunities for economic viability.

Human Trafficking

The law “On Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings” was adopted in 2005. A National Plan of Action for 2009-2013, which was approved by a Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, contains a number of measures for victims of human trafficking that includes:

- physical, psychological and social rehabilitation;
- provision of safe living conditions meeting basic needs accompanied with psychological and financial support;
- medical checkup and treatment, access to translation services, as well as consultation on their rights and responsibilities;
- protection of rights and interests in criminal cases;
- creating access to education;
- meeting security and protection needs;
- creating access to vocational training and labour market, etc.

The Government of Azerbaijan, having complied with its obligation to criminalize trafficking through the enactment of a specific law to combat human trafficking, its National Action Plan of Action is premised on its other obligations under Article 6 of the CEDAW Convention, namely:

- An obligation to quickly and accurately identify victims of trafficking;
- An obligation to investigation and prosecute trafficking cases with due diligence;
- An obligation to provide victims with support and protection;
- An obligation to provide special protection for child victims including girls; and
- An obligation to prevent trafficking

The National Plan of Action, with its above measures, seeks to fulfill the above obligations. It also seeks to ensure an effective system for mutual cooperation amongst agencies engaged in the fight against human trafficking.

In addition to the main law against trafficking, other amendments were made to the Criminal Code, such as the amendment brought in November 2011 to include the Article 176-1 to deal with cases of forced and early marriage.

Support services

- A special police institution - the Department on Struggle against Trafficking in Human Beings was established by the Decree No. 433 of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated August 1, 2006 at the Ministry of Internal Affairs with the aim of effective implementation of functions reflected in the First National Plan of Action, ensuring security of victims of human trafficking, delivering professional assistance to them, centralizing information on fight against human trafficking in a single center and its protection and implementation of the fight against human trafficking by a specially trained professional policemen and a police institution provided with the necessary equipment.
- The Resolution No. 81 of the Cabinet of Ministers dated May 20, 2011 approved the “Program on Addressing Social Problems Creating Conditions for Human Trafficking”. The aim of the Program is the elimination of social problems leading to human trafficking and the creation of necessary conditions for improving the welfare of victims and potential victims of human trafficking; the objective of the program is to ensure the social protection of vulnerable population groups that can be exposed to human trafficking, including children deprived of parental care, deprived children and adolescents, as well as citizens who have to leave boarding schools and other alternative care institutions because of age.
- Shelters for temporary residence of victims of human trafficking and Centre for assistance to victims of human trafficking (hereinafter: referred to as Assistance Centre) were created as special establishments to ensure their protection. Material and technical support to the shelters and the Centers are provided from the State Budget and other sources provided for by the legislation.
- A Child Shelter/ Reintegration Centre which caters for children and adolescents deprived of care and exposed to domestic violence and are identified as being potential victims of human trafficking, was established in January 2010. Another “Psychological and Social Rehabilitation Centre for children and youth who became victims of violence and crime” was established in 2011, as an initiative of the Ministry of Education and the Alliance of NGOs on Child Rights. The Centre provides legal and psychological support to children deprived of care and living in a harmful environment and who are at risk of human trafficking. There is a Hotline service, which is functioning as an information, and consultation service, which provide assistance to persons - victims of such a crime, especially women and children. A Child Hotline” service was also launched in February 2010 by the Ministry of Education to provide support including psychological support to children.

The Ministry of Education has also devised courses on prevention of human trafficking in the curricula of educational institutions and has further developed curricula for education of specialists working in the area of with human trafficking.

There is a link between poverty and the greater likelihood of being a victim of trafficking. Successful work against human trafficking requires careful analysis of its economic aspects, of poverty-related factors among others, on the supply side, but perhaps most particularly of the “pull” or demand factors in the destination cities or countries.

- Women and armed conflicts

As well known, as the result of non-declared war of Armenia against the Republic of Azerbaijan, 20% of our lands were occupied and the country had to give shelter to approximately 1 million IDPs and refugees.

The Government of Azerbaijan is sensitive to the protection needs of internally displaced persons, the majority of whom are women and children. It also addresses the specific risks and needs of different women, such as rural women and women with disabilities through different programs and policies. The Government has designed special policies and has paid particular attention to this group of women who are most marginalized and who may suffer from various forms of intersectional discrimination. The policy in place is designed to ensure them the opportunities to realize their potentials as full members of society, by providing them with equal access to education, healthcare, housing and employment. The Government also endeavors to include the perspective of displaced women when designing solutions, ensuring that their voices are not marginalized. The Government of Azerbaijan takes all appropriate measures to comply with the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement in its provision of protection and assistance to internally displaced women and girls, including by safeguarding them from gender-specific violence and ensuring their participation in assistance programs that takes into account their special needs.

No	Indicators	Number of IDPs
1	Number of IDP families provided with houses in new settlements	26294
2	Number of IDPs provided with houses in new settlements	131470
3	Number of women moved to new settlements	67210
4	Number of students in secondary education	140704
5	Number of students in vocational education	153571
6	Number of students in higher education (universities)	29482
7	Number of employed women, including:	84896
	In state enterprises	42686
	In private companies	42210
8	Parliamentarians	1

9	Number of students studying abroad	344
10	Number of participants of vocational training courses	385
11	Number of women involved in public works	139

- Women and economy

The Government of Azerbaijan is committed to ensure women's equality in all areas of economic and social life including cultural life. The Government not only ensures that women are free to develop their personal abilities and to choose economic activity according to their aspirations, but it is committed to create the necessary conditions for them to enjoy this economic independence.

Besides the Constitution and other national laws, which guarantee these rights, the policies of the State are also geared to ensure to women on a basis of equality with men the following social and economic rights:

- The right to an adequate food and to be free from hunger;
- The right to adequate housing;
- The right to social services and of access to basic public services;
- The right to protection against poverty and social exclusion;
- The right to water;
- The right to sanitation;
- The right to live in a healthy environment;
- The right to equal participation in cultural activities and to participate at all levels in the determination of cultural policies;
- The right to equal participation in recreational, leisure and sporting activities; and
- Authors' rights.

The State has focused on ensuring women's access to resources and opportunities in social and economic life. It has done so by promoting opportunities for women for self-employment, entrepreneurship, the development of cooperatives and starting one's business. In Azerbaijan, there are no direct or indirect discriminatory laws/regulations on the conditions for exercising a self-employed activity and on social security for the self-employed.

The State supports entrepreneurship development in Azerbaijan by creating a favorable business environment. Its legal basis is in conformity with international standards. For example, the Government has closely monitored the impact of its tax rules to ensure that it does not negatively affect women's income and do not interfere with their equal participation in economic life. In that context, the profit tax has been reduced to 20%; agricultural production has been exempted from almost all taxes; a system of online tax returns , “one-stop shop” system for registration of businesses and customs clearance have been put in place to create a favorable and user friendly business climate.

Regular and systematic policy implemented towards improvement of business environment and formation of national entrepreneurs in the Republic of Azerbaijan created a basis for ensuring sustainable economic development. Entrepreneurship development is one of the main components of economic policy in the Republic of Azerbaijan. Comprehensive policy measures are being carried out for developing the state-entrepreneur relations and improving the state regulatory mechanism, legislation concerning the business environment and mechanisms for the state support to entrepreneurship through learning from the international experience in this sphere.

At the same time, policy measures concerning entrepreneurship development issues are reflected in certain state programs approved within the socio-economic development policy implemented in the country, especially in the State Program for Poverty Reduction and Sustainable Development in the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2008-2015, the State Program for Development of Regions in the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2009-2013 and the State Program on a reliable provision of the population of the Republic of Azerbaijan with food products in 2008-2015.

Financial support to entrepreneurship is continuing. The State also supports the development of knowledge and skills of women entrepreneurs.

A layer of entrepreneurs was formed in Azerbaijan society as a result of broad economic reforms carried out in recent periods and the entrepreneurship activity started to play an important role in social development and created favorable basis for development of entrepreneurship.

The National Fund for Entrepreneurship Support was established for provision of a financial support to development of entrepreneurship, especially of small entrepreneurship and enhancement of economic activity of population and concessional financing mechanisms for entrepreneurship turned to be a real source for satisfying the need of small and medium business in financial resources.

Besides, III Forum of Women Entrepreneurs was held on 14 November 2012 in Baku city jointly organized with the SPEKA within UNECE. A meeting was held in Baku city on 15 November 2012 with the participation of SPEKA member-countries. The chairmanship of the event was given to the Republic of Azerbaijan. The countries discussed during the meeting the development of women entrepreneurship, existing problems here and their solution. Finally, the Baku Statement was adopted.

The State Committee of Family, Women and Children Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan and UNDP are jointly implementing a project "Promotion of women from rural areas and regions in economic and social life". The main purpose of the project is to help women living in rural areas and regions to get involved in entrepreneurship activity, while increasing their activity. The project supporting Azerbaijan in implementation of its liabilities taken within Millennium Development Goals and Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action has been implemented since 2011. Awareness campaigns were organized within the project on enforcement of Gender Equality law in Azerbaijan.

- Women's participation in decision-making

The representation of women in the National Assembly has increased from 11% (13 deputies out of 125) in the 2005 elections to 16% in the last elections of 2010 (20 women out of 125 deputies).

The awareness raising campaign held in the regions of the Republic in the eve of the municipal elections of 2009 may be demonstrated as a positive example. Thus, the representation of women at municipal level has increased from 4% to 26.5%. Currently, 4137 municipality members and 302 municipality heads are women.

There are 3 women deputy ministers out of 20 ministries of the country (the Ministries of Economic Development, Culture and Tourism and Health); the chairperson of one State Committee out of 10 (the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs), the chairperson of one State Commission (the State Students Admission Commission), rectors of 3 higher education institutions (Azerbaijan Architecture and Construction University, Baku branch of Moscow State University and Azerbaijan Teachers Institute). The Deputy Prime Minister of Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic is a woman and so is the Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsperson) of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Ombudsperson of Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, the chairperson of the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs of Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, the Vice-President of the State Oil Company.

68 heads of executive powers have a woman deputy.

The number of women civil servants was 8115 in 2010. According to statistical information for January 1, 2012, the number of women civil servants was 7976, and the number of men 20565. The number of women NGOs was 186 in 2010. The number of women entrepreneurs was 4315 in 2009 population census.

Representation of women at ministries and state committees in 2011 is shown below.

N	Organisation	Share of women (%)	Share of women in management positions (%)
1.	Ministry of Health	79.5%	37%
2.	Ministry of Taxes		3.4%
3.	Ministry of Communication and Information Technologies	32.3%	9.7%
4.	Ministry of Internal Affairs	--	-
5.	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	19.4%	5.1%
6.	Ministry of National Security	21%	
7.	Ministry of Economic Development	34.2%	25.6%
8.	Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources	22.6%	13.8%
9.	Ministry of Transport	11.6%	5.4%
10.	Ministry of Defense Industry	39.8%	29.2%

11.	Ministry of Agriculture	31.8%	16.7%
12.	Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of Population	60.8%	24.8%
13.	Ministry of Industry and Energy	23.7%	58.5%
14.	Ministry of Youth and Sports	37.2%	19%
15.	Ministry of Defense		
16.	Ministry of Emergency Situations		
17.	Ministry of Justice	18%	16.6%
18.	Ministry of Finance		
19.	The State Committee on Deals of Azerbaijanis living abroad	26.6%	5%
20.	Ministry of Education	68,1%	41,3%
21.	State Committee for Work with Religious Organizations	31.5%	N/A
22.	State Committee for Securities	40.8%	30.7%
23.	State Statistical Committee	53.7%	21.7%
24.	State Committee on Deals of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons	93.4%	4%
25.	State Customs Committee	9.1%	8.5%
26.	State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs	76.4%	70%
27.	State Committee on Land and Cartography	24.6%	9.9%

Equal rights are guaranteed to men and women for representing the Republic of Azerbaijan in foreign countries.

Heads of 8 Inter-Parliamentary Working Groups out of 79 functioning in the National Assembly of the Republic of Azerbaijan are women. Heads of Working Groups for Azerbaijan-France, Azerbaijan-Georgia, Azerbaijan-India, Azerbaijan-Switzerland, Azerbaijan-Luxembourg, Azerbaijan-Egypt, Azerbaijan-Moldova, and Azerbaijan-Serbia Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation are women deputies. At the same time, heads of Delegations of the National Assembly of the Republic of Azerbaijan to OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and to Parliamentary Union of the Organization of Islamic Conference are women.

The Chairpersons of the Racism and Xenophobia sub-committee of the Equality and Non-Discrimination Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the Cultural, Educational and Social Affairs Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation and Parliamentarian coordinator of the PACE Campaign of "Fight for Violence against Children" to Azerbaijan are women deputies of the National Assembly.

91 persons out of 271 diplomats working at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan are women.

The number of diplomats working at diplomatic missions of the Republic of Azerbaijan abroad is 406. 49 of them, including one ambassador are women.

In close cooperation with USAID, Counterpart International, SCFWCA implements a "Women Leadership in Self-Governance" project in the Women's Participation Program aimed at promoting women's political leadership and encouraging women's participation in political process.

Women empowerment and institutional facilities

The SCFWCA plays a leading role in ensuring gender mainstreaming in all national policies and programs and in the development of relevant action plans. This is done mainly through the encouragement of training of relevant professionals within the public service on gender equality issues, the support of the development of research on gender-related issues, the promotion of data collection and gender-disaggregated statistics and the organization of relevant training workshops, roundtables, seminars, and conferences with the participation of international experts. SCFWCA also participates in a number of multidisciplinary committees under other ministries, dealing with issues such as family, children, violence against women, trafficking, social inclusion, and employment and contributes substantially in ensuring a gender perspective in the formulation and implementation of relevant policies. During the reporting period, the Government has developed much stronger ties with women's organizations by involving them in relevant spheres of policy formulation and decision-making processes.

The resources, both financial and human of the SCFWCA have been on the increase in recent years as illustrated by the following tables:

Table 1: Financial resources

Years	SCFWCA budget (USD \$)	Additional resources to gender budgeting (USD \$)
2010	1271861	571208
2011	1280011	657950
2012	1311775	835288

Table 2: Human resources

Years	Number of SCFWCA staff	Number of departments
2011	68	7
2012	76	9

Two new Departments were open in 2012, namely:

- Department on work with the Regional Centers
- Department on Information and Social-Analytical research,

SCFWCA currently has 11 regional Family and Children Support Centers with 73 employees. There are 5 more regional centers, which will be established in the framework of the project with Heydar Aliyev Foundation and UNFPA.

Gender focal points were appointed in all state entities. These people periodically participate in the trainings on women rights and gender equality.

- Human rights of women

The discrimination against women is prohibited with the legislation of the Republic of Azerbaijan. According to the Article 3 of the Law "On Guarantees of Equal Rights for Women and Men", all forms of gender-discrimination are prohibited. The para 2 of this article is the addition to the definition of discrimination in the national legislation. "The following is not considered as gender-based discrimination:

3.2.1. special concessions, privileges and additional benefits for women defined by the Labour Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan;

3.2.2. compulsory military (alternative) service prescribed exclusively for men by the law;

3.2.3. legally fixed different retirement and marriage ages for women and men;

3.2.4. According to the Article 15 of the Family Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan, limitation of the right of a husband to prosecute a claim for divorce;

3.2.5. imposition of different sentences and imprisonment regimes based on person's gender

3.2.7. specific work or services that can be performed only by woman or by man. At the same time the article 8, 10 and 14 of the Law are added for the application of discrimination definition. These articles regulate the duties of an employer in prevention of gender discrimination, announcement reflecting gender discrimination and gender discrimination in the activity of education entities.

In addition, "Azerbaijan 2020: Future Vision" Development Concept was adopted. Measures to focus on gender equality in the country, prevent cases of gender violence, promote women at work, extend her chances to get management positions are envisaged in the semi section "Gender equality and family development" of the concept.

- Women and mass media

As in other fields, there is a progress in mass media as well. For example, the number of articles and programs on women and gender problems increased.

“Genderology” (“Gendershunasyg”) magazine and “Gender” information bulletins were published in 1998-2001. It must be noted for information that there is online female magazine in the country. Azerbaijan Female Journalists Association was established in 1999 and has activity since that date. Azerbaijan Gender Information Centre is the first information-analytical, library and data center. The Centre was established in 2002. At present more than 40% of journalists are women. Editors-in-chief and founders of some newspapers and magazines, including information agents are women in Azerbaijan. The Committee held a training “Gender violence and its prevention” for the representatives of media and mass media in 2011. The SCFWCA and UNESCO held trainings for journalists on the subject of gender equality. Journalists from the regions also participated in the trainings.

- Women and environment

Ecological awareness among young generation, formulation of ecological culture and ecological thinking, conservation and transmission of national and moral and universal values to future generations, education of youth to respect adults and take care of juniors are the functions of a woman in the family as one of the most active and obvious moments in the globalizing world.

A number of Resolutions, Decrees, Laws, etc. were adopted to ensure legislative framework of ecological activity in the Republic. The laws on protection of environment, ecological safety, protection of atmospheric air, codes of water, land, forest, etc. may be held up as an example. The law “On access to information on environment” ensures equal rights to men and women living in the Republic.

The role of women is significant in ensuring the environmental sustainability. It must be noted that most leading NGOs having activity in the ecological field in the country and having close cooperation with the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources are led by women. They are sensitive to environmental problems and closely participate in actions for their solution.

The main purpose of ecological policy implemented in the Republic of Azerbaijan is to ensure protection, efficiency and sustainable development of existing ecological systems, economic capacity and natural resources to meet needs of current and future generations. In order to realize it, women also participate in development of the use of natural resources.

3 members out of 18 are women in the Public Ecological Council under the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources established for preparation of projects, proposals, programs and implementation of other events in the fields of environmental protection and enhancement, ecological safety and efficient use of nature in the territory of the Republic.

11 female staff of the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources was awarded in line with the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan with Progress medal and Civil service honors medal for their services in environmental protection in Azerbaijan.

- Girls

Concrete steps are being taken to ensure the protection of the rights of girls in the country. A fight against early marriage could be an obvious example.

According to the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan No 255-IVQD dated 15 November 2011 "On modifications to the Family Code", minimum marriage year for women was extended to 18 years.

According to the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan No 256-IVQD dated 15 November 2011 "On modification to the Criminal Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan", the Article 176-1 was included to prohibit early and forced marriages. Sanctions are increased in this article for such offences with a person under marriage age.

These modifications to the legislation have special significance to prevent cases of early marriage. The surveys showed that in most cases early marriages of girls happen with the agreement of their parents.

The State Committee on Family, Women and Children Affairs held a presentation "Analysis of the situations on early marriage in Azerbaijan" devoted to the results of a study held for early marriages. The International Social Surveys Centre held surveys on the problem of early marriage in Azerbaijan organized by the State Committee on Family, Women and Children Affairs with the financial support of UNICEF. The survey covered 4 – Baku-Absheron, Lankaran, Guba and Aghstafa regions of Azerbaijan. The purpose of the survey was to analyze the causes and results of child marriages in Azerbaijan. Since October 2010, a social communication project is being implemented within the given project with the purpose to change early marriage behaviour.

At present, the State Committee on Family, Women and Children Problems is implementing together with UNICEF the Action Plan to prevent cases of early marriages in the southern regions of Azerbaijan (2012-2013).

Chapter 3: Gender statistics

Gender statistics provide valuable data when it is classified to evaluate progress ratio, especially in order to highlight the disproportion among vulnerable groups such as young people, adults, national minorities and persons with disabilities.

The existence and use of statistics on gender depend on current demand. The demand usually is subject to the followings:

- Legal framework and enforcement mechanisms necessary for data processing and use
- Inclusion of gender indicators into national plans, as well as monitoring and evaluation systems
- The culture of developing a fact-based policy, i.e. policy formulation to direct and monitor government policy and program papers and level of confidence of decision makers in statistic facts
- Confidence in national statistics system and the quality of processed data
- Demand of donors and development partners in data and data sharing processes

There is certain demand in Azerbaijan for gender statistics in view of undertakings of internationally agreed liabilities such as Beijing Platform for Action and Millennium Development Goals (MDG).

The attention to processing of gender data strengthened Later, and the SSC chairman approved the reorganization with the establishment of the Population and Gender Statistics department in 2013 with the UNFPA support.

Relevant needs of data users should be clear to make gap analysis and prepare recommendations to improve the situation. In recent times the established gender indicators system in Azerbaijan meets the demand on a national scale.

Recommendations are given for further development of this system before checking existence of data.

The State Statistics Committee has established a national gender indicator system with the participation of the SFWCA and Ministry of Economic Development. The system adopted by the SSC management consists of more than 250 indicators grouped on 12 subjects (the names of relevant indicators on each subject are indicated in brackets)

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Population (48) | 7. Science (3) |
| 2. Households (20) | 8. Time management (28) |
| 3. Education (87) | 9. Fish management (1) |
| 4. Employment and unemployment (34) | 10. Forest management (1) |
| 5. Health (22) | 11. Household farms (5) |
| 6. Social protection (1) | 12. Breach of rights/crimes (7) |

Agreement on priority indicators is a significant step towards bringing up an efficient gender statistic system. At present, this system is a wide framework, which still lacks some subjects. Lacking indicators will be developed in next years and included to general gender data.

Chapter 4: Main issues and their solutions

The priority direction of the policy implemented in the country is to ensure social and economic development, increase education level and improve healthcare services provided to the population, including women.

The Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan has solved a number of problems and made achievements in gender equality. In addition, it must be noted that the unresolved conflict in Azerbaijan and problems arising from it have an impact on women.

The Government of Azerbaijan is sensitive in the field of social protection of internally displaced persons, the majority of whom are women and children. It also addresses the specific risks and needs of different women, such as rural women and women with disabilities through different programs and policies. The Government has designed special measures and has paid particular attention to this group of women who are most marginalized

and who may suffer from various forms of in the field of economic activities. The policy in place is designed to ensure them the opportunities to realize their potentials as full members of society, by providing them with equal access to education, healthcare, housing and employment. The Government also endeavors to include the perspective of displaced women when designing solutions, ensuring that their voices are not marginalized. The Government of Azerbaijan takes all appropriate measures to comply with the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement in its provision of protection and assistance to internally displaced women and girls, including by safeguarding them from gender-specific violence and ensuring their participation in assistance programs that takes into account their special needs.

The following issues are planned for implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action:

- Increasing gender budgeting
- Development of the National Action Plan on guarantees of gender equality
- Ensuring balance between employment and family responsibilities of women to increase their education and professional advancement
- Concrete steps to increase women's employment
- Strengthening the fight against early marriages, selective abortions and other harmful traditional practices
- Development of female entrepreneurship
- Increase of the number of women on decision making level
- Special measures for women in need of special care (women with disabilities, women living in poverty, rural women, IDP and refugee women, etc.)
- Ensure reproductive rights through inter alia adoption of the respective draft law
- Strengthening the work on fight against HIV/AIDS
- Strengthening the educational activities in the regions in family planning
- Adoption of the National Action Plan to combat domestic violence
- Increasing the number of shelters for victims of violence
- Strengthening the work for enforcement of the Resolution 1325
- Increasing the number of legal awareness campaigns among refugee women
- Systematic research on women's issues
- Improvement of gender statistics