

Statement of the Head of the Delegation of the Republic of Tajikistan on the 56th session of the joint fourth and fifth periodic report on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

(Geneva, 30 September – 18 October 2013)

On behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Tajikistan, allow me to sincerely welcome all participants of the meeting and express my respect to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, and express my gratitude for the attention paid to the joint fourth and fifth periodic report on the “Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women”.

Cooperation with the UN Commission on Human Rights on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women is one of the priorities of the country. The recommendations received from this Committee are becoming the main directions for all state institutions and serve as the guiding principles of their work.

Respected Chairwoman, members of the Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Discriminations Against Women,

To present the report and answer the questions of the members of the committee, today our delegation is comprised of representatives of key institutions and facilities of the state power. These are: Mr. Ashurov M.K. – Head of Department of Constitutional Guarantees of Human Rights under the Executive Apparatus of the President of the RT, Mr. Rakhimov F.K. – First Deputy Minister of Education, Ms. Jobirova S.B. – First Deputy Minister of Health, Ms. Sharipova L.Sh. – Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Protection of the Population, Mr. Vohidov Kh. S. – Deputy General Prosecutor of the republic, Jonibek Kholiqzoda – representative of the Ministry of Justice, Ms. Solieva Zumrad – representative of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Also the Authorized Representative on Human Rights in Tajikistan, Mr. Zarif Alizoda and Member of *Majlisi Namoyandagon Majlisi Oli* (lower Chamber of the Parliament), Ms. Mukumova S.A. will participate in the session.

Respected Committee Members,

Tajikistan has steadily followed the principles of the General Declaration of Human Rights and has joined the seven main universal documents in the sector of human rights, in particular, the Conventions on the Political Rights of Women dated from December 20th 1952, on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women dated from December 18th 1979, the main articles of which have been integrated into the national legislature and have become part of the legal system of the country.

To fulfill the commitments made in accordance with the international legal acts, as of 2002, the Commission on Ensuring the Fulfillment of International Commitments in the area of Human Rights, as well as the Committees on Legislature and Human Rights of both Chambers of the Parliament, Department of Constitutional Guarantees of Human Rights under the Executive Apparatus of the President, Government Commission on Children's Rights, Interagency Commission on Fighting Human Trafficking, and Interagency Commission on Regulating Migration Processes and others have been functioning under the Government of the Republic.

Respected Committee Members,

After presenting the first, second and third reports and receiving the Committee's recommendations in 2007, the state structures and representatives of civil society have jointly developed a list of activities for the implementation of the UN Committee recommendations.

I would like to inform you about the achievements on implementing the Committee recommendations.

In 2013, the Law of the RT «On Violence Prevention» was passed. The main goal of the Law is to protect the rights of family members. This law identifies ways of providing victims of violence with legal, medical, and psychological assistance. Thirty-three crisis centers and three shelters have been established and have started functioning in the Republic in order to effectively implement the mentioned law. In a number of cities and districts of the republic offices for consulting and providing medical assistance for victims of domestic violence against women and children have been established and have started functioning on the basis of the maternity boards in hospitals. According to the Decree of the

MIA of the Republic of Tajikistan, agencies of internal affairs have introduced the positions of inspectors fighting against family violence. Currently, an interagency working group has been established consisting of representatives of state ministries and agencies and civil society for the development of the State Program «On Violence Prevention for 2014-23».

In 2010 the legal marriage age has been increased from 17 to 18 years.

The Government of the country plans to ratify the Faculty Protocol of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

I am happy to note that on April 25 2013, the Republic of Tajikistan has unanimously been elected as a member of the UN Commission on the Status of Women for the period of 2014–2018 at the renewed session of the Economic and Social Council of the UN (ECOSOC) in New York.

Starting from 2007, gender issues have been integrated in the statistical indicators of the country. In addition, the Statistics Agency under the President of RT has been issuing the «Men and Women» journal that contains statistical data analyses of all sectors.

Respected Committee Members,

RT condemns any acts that discriminate an individual based upon gender or that are directed at weakening or denying the recognition, use by women of their rights regardless of their family status based on the equality of men and women, human rights and main freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil, and any other spheres.

The «National Strategy on Promoting the Role of Women in the Republic of Tajikistan for the years of 2011-2020» has been approved and a Plan of Action for this Strategy has been developed with the goal of promoting women, providing their rights, guaranteeing equal participation of men and women at the decision-making level, protecting citizen's rights, creating the conditions for the improvement of professional knowledge, and supporting and providing social protection for women. It is anticipated that the realization of this Strategy will provide an important incentive to increase the role of women in society.

Respected Committee members,

The Women and Family Affairs Committee with the support of our development partners has created a gender network on the integration of gender approaches in the work of the ministries and agencies of the Republic of Tajikistan in order to expand and strengthen the institutional mechanisms and promote gender equality at the sector level. With the support of our partners, 105 District Information Consultation Centers and one center on training specialists for these centers funded by local government institutions have been established under the Women and Family Affairs Committee.

With the goal of eliminating the traditional perceptions of the role of women, preventing discrimination of women, human trafficking, attracting girls into the education sector and preventing negative developments in the republic, the government structures together with international and local nongovernmental organizations has been systematically conducting conferences, round tables, seminars, trainings and other awareness raising activities with an extensive involvement of Mass Media.

Dear members of the session,

The problem of human trafficking in the world remains of great concern. The Republic of Tajikistan pays significant attention to this issue. In 2011, a Holistic program for fighting against human trafficking for the years 2011-2013 was approved in the Republic of Tajikistan.

In view of the activities undertaken by the Government of the country against human trafficking, Tajikistan has been excluded from the Checklist of the Overview on Human Trafficking, which is a positive indicator.

Draft Laws of RT «On Fighting against Human Trafficking» and «On Providing Assistance to the Victims of Human Trafficking» have been submitted for review of the Parliament of the country.

Furthermore, a draft Law on introducing amendments and additions to the Criminal Code of the Republic of Tajikistan has been developed with the aim of fighting against human trafficking, child prostitution and child pornography.

To strengthen the struggle against human trafficking in the country, a new National Plan on Fighting Human Trafficking for 2013-2014 has been approved

and a new Holistic Program on Fighting Human Trafficking for 2014-2016 is currently under development.

This year, the General Prosecutor of the Republic of Tajikistan has approved recommendations for the methodology of working with victims of human trafficking and witnesses of criminal cases related to human trafficking. The given recommendations are related to the provision of the safety of victims, their reintegration, social and consultation assistance services, and state guarantees of the procedural protection.

Starting from 2009, the Women and Family Affairs Committee, has been implementing the «Supporting Services for Girls of 10 to 18 years of age that have been the victims of sexual violence, brutality and trafficking». These Services include legal aid and toll-free helpline.

Dear Committee members,

Increasing the political participation of women and their involvement in the public sector is among the main priorities of the Government of the country.

In 2009, to improve the quality of in-service training, a Master's Study Institute under the Management of Civil Servants has been established, which has so far trained 90 women or 30 % of all graduates. In December 2011, the Women and Family Affairs Committee presented a report to the Government on the implementation process of the Law of the Republic of Tajikistan "On State Guarantees of Equal Rights for Men and Women and Equal Opportunities in the Exercise of such Rights".

After the presentation of this report in January 2012, fourteen gifted and capable women were appointed to leadership positions in a number of ministries and agencies.

By July 1 2013, the number of women in civil service at the central and local levels of state power is 4,343 (23,5%), which is an increase by 5 % compared to 2008.

The number of women in leadership positions in central agencies and their structures is 539, which is by 124% more than in 2007 (in 2007 this figure was

241); in local agencies of the public sector the number of women in leadership positions is 314, which is by 27% more compared to the same in 2007 (in 2007 this figure was equal to 248).

The Women and Family Affairs Committee and the Office of Civil Service undertake measures to train and prepare women for leadership positions in diplomatic services, including for positions of ambassadors and head of missions abroad; currently women do not hold these positions in the Republic of Tajikistan. There are 39 women that work in the diplomatic service system, which is more than in 2010 by 13 people or 33%.

Over the last three years, three women have graduated from the Diplomatic Academy; currently, two women are undertaking their training at this Academy.

At the moment, three women work in the capacities of chairwomen of cities and districts in the country. The number of women in the parliament has increased. In the Upper Chamber of the country's Parliament (*Majlisi Milli Majlisi Oli*), out of 33 members, 5 or 15 % are women, which is higher by two people compared to the previous calling (in 2005 this figure comprised of 3 people). In the lower chamber of the parliament (*Majlisi Namoyandagon Majlisi Oli*) of the Republic of Tajikistan, women constituted 19,4% of the total number (in 2005, 10 women or 17,5%). In addition, 517 women are representatives of the local, regional, city and district to the *Majlises*, which is higher by 3,5 times compared to 2005 (in 2005, 114 women), and 2,181 women are the representatives of *jamoats* and cities to the *Majlises*.

At the moment, there is a trend towards increasing the number of women judges in the RT, which is currently above 50% compared to 2008. Nine women hold the positions of regional, municipal and district Court Chairwomen.

The issue of women's right to citizenship is one of the key issues stipulated in the legislature of RT. Men and women are equal upon the receipt of citizenship. It is forbidden to infringe on their rights based on their racial or ethnic affiliations, social status, gender, education, and language, religious, political and other kinds of belongings.

Education is one of the main components of the assessment of the indexes of development, poverty, access to social benefits, and gender dimensions.

In the first years of the transition period of the Republic of Tajikistan, gender disparity in the area of education had increased dramatically, which required the close attention of and specific measures from the state. The further set of measures undertaken at the government level on improving the role and status of women had certain positive impacts and enabled positive changes in the education sector. Center of Gender Pedagogy has been opened under the Academy of Education of the RT with the main mission of supporting the promotion of gender equality ideas at all levels of education, beginning from pre-school level. An opportunity has emerged for conducting academic analysis, awareness raising and development of basic ideas and approaches of gender theory and its adaptation to the national historic and cultural context.

Temporary special measures to attract young women to obtaining higher education degrees, such as the quotas for young women, are systematically undertaken. Overall, from 1997 till 2013 academic years, the Presidential quota system has enabled 12,349 people to enter Higher Education Institutions, out of which 8,495 or 69% are young women.

In 2011-2012 academic year, 68,593 girls have completed their basic education (9 grades), which is by 5.4% higher than in 2008 (in 2008 the figure for girls was 65,074).

Moreover, in 2011-2012 academic year, 39,649 girls completed their general education (11 grades), which is more than in 2008 by 23% (this figure for girls in 2008 was 32,190).

It is necessary to note that despite the undertaken measures, there is still a problem of children dropouts from school in the country. In 2012-2013 academic year 2,672 children dropped-out of school, out which 1,172 or 43.8% were girls (1,458 boys).

With the goal of strengthening the sense of responsibility of parents for the education and upbringing of children, protection of children's rights and their interests, a Law of the Republic of Tajikistan has been passed "On the

Responsibility of parents for the upbringing and education of their children". In the course of executing this Law this year, administrative proceedings have been instituted in relation to 4,760 parents.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Improving the economic opportunities of women and their competitive power on the labor market as well as development of entrepreneurship is one of the main ways of achieving equality between men and women. With that goal in 2012, the Government of RT has developed and approved the "State Program of Training Specialists among Women and Promoting their Employment for the period of 2012-2015".

During the period of implementing this Government Program, it is anticipated to increase the number of employed women to 36,133 and, accordingly, to organize a targeted vocational training for 111,890 women.

The Government of the country pays special attention to the issue of professional learning of citizens through a State system of training, including through the development of Adult Learning Centers and professional-technical facilities. Short-term courses on vocational training on 48 subjects are facilitated at the Adult Learning Centers.

Compared to 2008, the provision of permanent employment for women has increased by 2.5 times.

To develop women entrepreneurship, and create work places, Presidential grants have been founded since 2006. From 2006 till present, the sum of issued grants is equal to 6 million and 300 thousand somoni and 1 million and 248 thousand US dollars. In the course of the realization of the Presidential grants in the country, 23 thousand women have benefited from them.

Dear members of the session,

Much attention is paid to the improvement of services in the health sector in the Republic of Tajikistan. A number of legal documents to promote the protection of health and reproductive health of women have been adopted in the country. Intensive work is conducted to raise awareness of the population on the

issues of reproductive health, family planning, women's hygiene, prevention of oncological diseases and sexually transmitted illnesses, including HIV/AIDS.

As a result of conducting preventive and awareness raising activities and a properly carried out family planning policy, the level of health service provision to mothers and children has increased and the abortions indicator has decreased from 113.9 per 1,000 live births in 2002 till 71 per 1,000 live births in 2013.

It should be noted that the indicator of maternity mortality is showing a decreasing trend: while in 2002 this indicator was at 49.6 per 100,000 live births, within just the six months of 2013 this figure has gone down to 37.2 per 100,000 live births. According to the adopted "Millennium Development Goals", the indicator for maternity mortality till 2015 will have to go down to 30 per 100,000 live births.

To raise the awareness and knowledge of the population about reproductive health issues with support from international organizations, Offices of psychological assistance to the victims of human trafficking, violence and discrimination, including people living with HIV/AIDs have been established and have been functioning in medical facilities.

According to the data of the Republican Center for fighting with HIV/AIDs, in 2013 5,144 cases of HIV infections have been registered, out of which 1,370 are women; this is more than in 2008 by 1,105 people.

In addition, the implementation of the Program of Prevention of HIV/AIDs transmission from mother to child is on-going. A protocol has been approved at the country level that includes pre-natal consultancy and testing for HIV, effective medical intervention allowing timely detection of HIV transmission from mother to child and full treatment of pregnant women with HIV infection.

Respected ladies and gentlemen,

Necessary measures have been undertaken in the Republic of Tajikistan to eliminate discrimination of women in rural areas in order to provide them with equal participation in the development of the agricultural sector and to benefit from such development, providing them with the right to access to relevant medical services, information, consultation, family planning services, access to credits for agricultural purposes, loans etc.

To provide equal access to land for men and women in 2008, a joint network has been created that is comprised of specialists of ministries and agencies of the RT. To improve the knowledge of these specialists, trainings and seminars on gender-sensitive issues in the agricultural sector have been systematically conducted.

It should be noted that gender issues have been reflected in the Agricultural Reform Program for the years 2012-2020.

As a result of the policy implementation, the number of women leading *Dehkan* farms has been increasing. In 2013 this figure reached 5,403 women, which is higher compared to 2008 by 2,708 women or by 49.8%.

Measures have been taken to eliminate discrimination of women in marriages and family relations and to protect children's interests. To strengthen the institution of marriage, the government together with representatives of the civil society has conducted awareness-raising activities among the population, including among the youth.

At the same time, it should be noted that in the last years the number of divorces has been steadily increasing in the republic. An analysis of this problem has found that mainly it is young families that fall apart. Among the main reasons for divorces is the unpreparedness of young individuals for family life, financial dependence of young families on their parents, migration, interference of relatives in the young couple's personal lives and family violence.

The issues of equality between men and women, protection of women's rights against violence and prevention of discrimination against women are among the priority areas of the work of the Authorized Representative on Human Rights.

Therefore, all of the above indicates the desire of the Republic of Tajikistan to steadily implement the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

Once again, I thank the Committee for its attention to hear about the position of the Republic of Tajikistan on the issues of implementation of the

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. At the same time, we plan to implement your recommendations on the report in our country.

Dear friends,

Using this opportunity, on behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Tajikistan, I would like to thank the UN Committee, the Deputy Chairwoman of the UN Committee, Ms. Violetta Neubar, for the organization and facilitation of the rehearsal training for the members of the Tajikistan delegation to present the government report on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women in our country.

I hope for a fruitful discussion of the presented report. We are open and prepared to respond to your questions for a constructive dialogue between the members of the Committee and our delegation.

I thank you for your attention.