



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
29 January 2019

Original: English
English, French and Spanish only

Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Fourth periodic report submitted by Azerbaijan under articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant, due in 2018*, **

[Date received: 27 December 2018]

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

** The annexes to the present report are available for consultation from the Committee secretariat. They may also be accessed from the web page of the Committee.

GE.19-01333(E)



* 1 9 0 1 3 3 3 *

Please recycle The recycling symbol, consisting of three chasing arrows forming a triangle.



Introduction

1. This is the fourth periodic report submitted by the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan in accordance with the Article 16 and 17 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The fourth periodic report consists of the measures taken regarding the rights stipulated in the Covenant and information about the progress achieved by the use of these rights.

2. In accordance with the Order of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on 5 February 2018 No. 3643, the Working Group was established for the preparation of the present report composing of representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Interior Affairs, Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population, Ministry of Youth and Sport, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Ministry of Transport, Communications and High Technologies, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs, State Statistical Committee, State Committee on Property Issues, State Committee for Affairs of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons, State Committee on Standardization, Metrology and Patent, State Migration Service, State Security Service, State Agency for Public Service and Social Innovations under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Council on State Support to Non-Governmental Organizations under the auspices of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan and Azerbaijan Trade Unions Confederation.

3. The present report is about the implementation of the Concluding Observations (E/C.12/AZE/CO/3) of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of the regarding the third periodic report of the Republic of Azerbaijan and ensuring of the rights stipulated in the Covenant. The report has been prepared taking into account the Guidelines on treaty-specific documents dated 24 march 2009 regarding the text and form of the periodic reports.

4. The continuation of the occupation of the territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan by the Republic of Armenia remains as the biggest obstacle to the full and effective implementation of the rights recognized in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The implementation of four resolutions (822, 853, 874 and 884) adopted by the UN Security Council of the United Nations still has not been fulfilled in this regard. It should be emphasized that these resolutions reaffirmed the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan and demanded the withdrawal of occupying forces from the occupied territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

5. As a result of the Armenia's occupation policy, there are more than one million refugees and internally displaced persons living in the Republic of Azerbaijan and this situation creates serious impediments for ensuring of the rights and freedoms that are recognized in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to these people. Because of the occupation of the Nagorno-Karabakh region of the Republic of Azerbaijan and its seven districts surrounding that region by the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Azerbaijan does not guarantee the ensuring of the rights recognized in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in its occupied territories until the liberation of these territories and the complete elimination of the results of the occupation.

6. The Republic of Azerbaijan reaffirms its commitment of recognition of the rights of peoples to self-determination, freely determining their political status and freely ensuring the economic, social and cultural development.

7. Article 16 of the Constitutional Act on the State Independence of the Republic of Azerbaijan which is the one of the constitutional laws of the State reads as follows:

“The Republic of Azerbaijan builds its relations with other states in accordance with universally recognized norms of international law on the basis of the following principles: the sovereign equality of states, not to use of force or not to threaten to use of force, inviolability of state borders, peaceful settlement of disputes, non-

interference in the internal affairs of other states, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, equality of nations and their right to self-determination, cooperation of states, fulfilment in good faith of international legal obligations.”

8. The right of people to self-determination is of a particular importance for the people of Azerbaijan, who, by using this right through their sustained efforts, lawfully restored its independence.

9. Article 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan adopted at the national referendum on 12 November 1995 and came into force on 27 November of the same year, provides that it is the sovereign right of the people of Azerbaijan freely and independently to determine their destiny and establish their own form of government. The same Article further states: “The people of Azerbaijan exercise their sovereign right directly-by way of nation-wide voting – referendum, and through their representatives elected on the basis of universal, equal and direct suffrage by way of free, secret and personal ballot.”

10. The Republic of Azerbaijan is firmly convinced that the guiding principles of democratic societies – equality, rule of law, respect for human rights, freedom of choice, and tolerance – should be applied in the same degree to international relations. Such relations should be founded on the principles of the sovereignty, equality and territorial integrity of states, non-interference in internal affairs and peaceful coexistence.

11. Azerbaijan, further believes that the realization of the right of peoples to self-determination must not be used as a pretext for infringement of the territorial integrity, national unity or ethnic harmony of independent states. From this point of view, the right of peoples to self-determination should be given its original, true significance; that would not destroy, but on the contrary strengthen the national independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of States of which Governments advocate the interests of all members of their populations without distinction.

On Paragraph 5

12. The Academy of Justice continues to cooperate with the European Union and the Council of Europe in the framework of the projects of “Support for improving the efficiency of courts, improving training for judges and court self-government” and “Applying the European Convention on Human Rights and the case law of the European Court of Human Rights”, which were reflected in the Action Plan of Council of Europe for the years 2014–2016 for Azerbaijan. The Academy of Justice and UNICEF conducted several trainings on the topics of “International standards in the field of justice for children”, “Justice for children”, a seminar on the topic “International norms and rules in the field of juvenile justice”, a course with the participation of bailiffs “Juvenile justice”. In order to increase the potential of the Academy of Justice in conducting relevant trainings in the field of human rights protection (Integration of the European Convention on Human Rights component and the methodology of the European Human Rights education program for representatives of the legal professions (HELP) into curricula), the project of “Application of the European Convention on Human Rights and Case Law of the European Court of Human Rights “ has been implemented which is part of the Council of Europe Action Plan for 2014–2016 for Azerbaijan. During the implementation of this project, advanced training courses for lawyers have been conducted, and also trainings have been organized for HELP trainers for judges, lawyers and practicing lawyers in Baku, Ganja, Lankaran and Mingchevir.

13. It should be emphasized that Azerbaijan is in close cooperation with the European Human Rights Lawyers Training Program (HELP). The Lisbon network also made efforts to improve the HELP program website, where a national window was created. Trainings were held for judges of various courts of first instance with organizational support from the Council of Europe to study various articles of the European Convention on Human Rights, and “Ensuring women’s rights to access to justice”. With the joint organization of the Council of Europe and the Academy of Justice, advanced training courses have been conducted for employees of various courts, studying the 6th (right to a fair trial) and 14th (prohibition of discrimination) articles of the European Convention on Human Rights.

14. The Academy of Justice, in cooperation with the Judicial-Legal Council, the Council of Europe, UNICEF, organized courses: on the topic “Fight against human trafficking” for judges from courts of various instances; training trainers for judges and prosecutors; trainings on the 5th, 6th and 9th Article of the European Convention; “The consideration of criminal cases in cases of trafficking in persons and related crimes in a judicial order”; “New types of forensic examinations and modern technical capabilities of the Center of Forensic Examination”; “Issues of Judicial Ethics and the Code of Ethical Conduct”; with a joint organization with the Council of Europe in Ganja, a refresher course on the subject “Ownership under the European Convention on Human Rights”.

15. The International Committee of Red Cross, the Academy of Justice and the Penitentiary Service conducted trainings with the participation of international experts on the topic “Updated minimum standard rules for the treatment of prisoners”. With the support of the International Organization for Migration within the framework of the project “Support to the Academy of Justice of the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the creation of an e-learning platform”, an e-Learning Centre was organized, as well as with the aim of conducting distance learning sessions, along with the Academy in some regional (Shamkir, Goychay, Lenkoran), the Ministry of Justice provided for the installation of special equipment for videoconferencing. In improving the system of administration of justice, exceptional importance is attached to the study and application of the case law of the European Court of Human Rights. For this, various trainings are held with the participation of well-known experts; weekly seminars are held at the Supreme Court. Along with this, taking into account the great benefit of direct contacts with the judges of the European Court in this field, in recent years 20 judges of this Court visited our country, including 3 of its chairmen who conducted trainings and gave lectures.

16. At the same time, the focus is on the issue of practice by our judges and other lawyers in the European Court of Justice. Thus, over the past 3–4 years, 110 judges, prosecutors and lawyers visited the Strasbourg court with study visits. Currently, our candidates for judges are involved in practical training in the European Court of Justice.

17. Judges are referring to the appropriate provisions of the International Covenant while making decisions in the courts of the country. Sheki Court of Appeal’s decision can be given as an example in this context. The Court has referred to the paragraph 1 of article 7 of the International Covenant (right of everyone to the enjoyment of just and favourable conditions of work) in the civil case demand on the cancellation of the Jalut village (Oguz region) High School Order dated September 19, 2016, recovery of the work and payment of the unemployment period salaries.

On Paragraph 6 (Tables 1–12 are attached in annex)

18. “State Program on the development of official statistics in the Republic of Azerbaijan in 2013–2017”, has fully and successfully implemented. Particular attention has been paid to the improvement of the system of national accounts, further development of the statistical areas and the economic-statistical classification systems that are reflecting the socio-economic development of the country, the development of the statistical observations and methodology and programs of statistical figures in accordance with the international statistical standards, the development of the systems of quality management and metadata in statistical activities, the development of the integrated information system of the state statistical agencies as well as the “E-statistics”, the reduce of statistical workload of respondents via the application of modern methods of statistical surveys, the strengthening of employee potential of official statistics and the expansion of international relations while implementing the state Programme.

19. Required information for the observations on the implementation of economic, social and cultural rights has been obtained and published through the organized thematic statistical surveys (about 10), sent to the relevant users and posted on the website of the Statistics Committee in the framework of the State Programme. In the context of information regarding the ethnic identity or nationality that are mentioned in Paragraphs 11

and 15 of the Concluding Observations, it must be taken into account that such information are obtained from the census that are held in every 10 years in Azerbaijan as in many countries of the world. The last census in Azerbaijan was held in 2009 and its data is accessible and open to every user. The next census will be held in 2019.

20. “The State Program on development of the official statistics in the Republic of Azerbaijan in 2018–2025” was approved for the improvement and development of the statistics system in the country, further to keep the focus on the issues of preparation of official statistics in compliance with modern requirements and provision of the sustainability of reforms.

On Paragraph 7

21. In the period of her mandate, the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Republic of Azerbaijan has proposed the settlement of issues regarding the pupils studying in boarding-schools, who have lost parents and deprived of parental care, continuation of the education of young graduates from these schools, housing and employment of them. The activities of the “Graduates House” under the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population, as well as the State Rehabilitation Centre for Children with Special Needs are of great importance in this regard.

22. With the purpose of providing continuous education, individuals studying for master’s degree were offered the right on deferment from military service until they finish their education. With this purpose, amendments were made to the relevant Law.

23. The restoration of the positions of discharged workers in some cases, as well as the transfer of the copy of the relevant decree, employment history booklet, and the last sack, and also the sum of money instead of unused vacation, salary to be paid to the employee, and other payments to the persons, whose labour agreement is terminated, is provided in accordance with Article 83 of the Labour Code.

24. It should be noted that if the violation of a law is persistent and it is within the competence of the Commissioner for Human Rights, thus, the complaint shall be accepted for consideration. At the same time, we note that the grounds (the complaint may be lodged within one year after the applicant’s rights have been violated or from the day on which it is known to the applicant) set forth in Article 8.4 of the Constitutional Law are rarely applicable to refusal of considering the complaint.

On Paragraph 8 – Article 2 of the Covenant (Table 13 is attached in annex)

25. Representatives of over 50 nations live in a multinational and multi-confessional country like Azerbaijan. Guided by the Framework Convention on the “Protection of National Minorities” ratified by the Republic of Azerbaijan and national legislation, all segments of the population living in the country and each ethnic group has been ensured full enjoyment of constitutional rights and freedoms, and the prosecution and other cases of discrimination by state authorities towards them have not been registered.

26. Any non-discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity or nationality among asylum seekers, and the cooperation between UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the Ministry of Internal Affairs in the field of implementing additional forms of defence for the persons not officially recognized as refugees and people in need of protection is on a high level.

27. In its internal policy, the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan creates conditions for ethnic minorities, settled in the country and played a role in the formation of Azerbaijan’s ethno-genesis to live alongside Azerbaijanis and to enjoy all equal rights with them.

28. Registration and documentation of every person living in the Republic of Azerbaijan, which ensures the rule of law and declares its intention to build a lawful, secular, and

democratic state, shall not be conducted on national and ethnic affiliation, and the legislation does not establish such a norm. The absence of nationality information in identity documents (identity card, national passport, etc.) is positively assessed by international organizations as a clear example of non-discrimination in our country.

29. As a result of the referendum dated September 26, 2016, the Referendum Act of the Republic of Azerbaijan “On Making Amendments to the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan” was adopted. In the first sentence of Article 25 of the Constitution, the word “nationality” is replaced by “ethnic affiliation”, and the word “national” in the second sentence is replaced by the word “ethnic”.

30. It is not permitted to restrict the rights of citizens because of social, racial, ethnic, religious and linguistic affiliation in any form when registering a birth. Thus, the birth of all children will be registered if the relevant documents are submitted for birth registration. Legal assistance is provided to parents who are unable to submit the necessary documents for the birth registration to receive these documents, and, if it is not possible, to apply to the judicial authorities to determine the fact of birth in court. At the same time, on the initiative of the Ministry of Justice, the state registration of birth was carried out in a mobile form directly in maternity hospitals in order to ensure the satisfaction of citizens. Also, employees of the Ministry of Justice regularly hold meetings with the population in the district (city) registration departments of the Republic and provide information about the significance and obligation of birth registration, as well as find the persons without the state registration of birth and provide them with relevant registration.

31. The legislation of the Republic of Azerbaijan forbids any discrimination, including national discrimination, in the field of employment and social protection of the population.

32. According to 1st part of the Article 16 of the Labour Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan, any discrimination by the factors not concerning citizenship, gender, race, religion, ethnicity, language, place of residence, property status, socio-economic origin, age, marital status, convictions, political views, relation to a trade unions or any other public associations, service position, as well as professional qualities, professional competence and the results of employee’s work, and determination of privileges and concessions on the basis of those factors directly or indirectly, as well as restriction of rights are strictly forbidden.

33. In accordance with the Article 6.2.1 of the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan “On employment” dated July 2, 2001, which defines the legal, economic and organizational basis of the state policy in the area of employment, as well as state guarantees in the field of citizens’ employment and social protection of the unemployed, all citizens, irrespective of their race, ethnicity, religion, language, gender, marital status, social status, origin, place of residence, property status, convictions, relation to political parties, trade unions and other public associations, are provided with equal opportunities in the right to choose work and employment freely.

34. There are no obstacles to ensuring the rights of Lezgins and Talysh ethnic minorities in the field of health in Azerbaijan. According to the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on “Population Health Protection”, healthcare services in public health institutions are free of charge and any person, irrespective of his ethnicity, religion, race or gender are guaranteed to have the right to use mentioned services. Thus, within the framework of large-scale public health reforms in the country, medical diagnostic centres, primary health care and hospitals, fully equipped with the most up-to-date medical technologies and medical supplies, meeting the international standards in the north, north-west, south and central regions of the country, enterprises were given to the use of the people. Thus, within the framework of large-scale public health reforms in the country, medical diagnostic centres, primary health care services and hospitals, fully promoted with the most up-to-date medical technologies and medical supplies, meeting the international standards, were given to the use of the people in the north, north-west, south and central regions of Azerbaijan, where ethnic minorities are located. Lezgin, Sakhur, Avar, Ingiloy, Jewish, and Mehseti Turks, Tats, Talyshs and Azerbaijani citizens of other nationalities, who live in these regions, are given the access to high-quality medical services.

35. In recent years more than 300 large healthcare facilities were built or repaired/rebuild by the Ministry of Health in the regions and capital of the country, including the areas of location of ethnic minorities. Implementation of the State Program adopted in the field of health care has been successfully continued. Ethnic minorities benefit from this program as well. New program concerning immunoprophylaxis of such priority areas of healthcare as diabetes, tuberculosis, and infectious diseases, and covering the next five years has been developed and approved by the Cabinet of Ministers.

36. As a result of the large-scale measures carried out in the country, including the regions where ethnic minorities live, epidemiological stability has been observed, manageable illnesses such as poliomyelitis, diphtheria, measles, and Rubella have not been discovered, and the decrease in other manageable infections has been noted. Ministry of Health paid special attention to the improvement of knowledge and professional skills of healthcare workers in the regions where ethnic minorities live. Over the last two years, 250 Azerbaijani medical workers have improved their qualifications in the leading clinics of foreign countries. 2 of them are the representatives of ethnic minorities.

37. The representatives of ethnic minorities have been awarded with honorary titles of “Honoured Doctor” and “Honoured Scientist”, “Progress” medal and “Honorary Decree” for their exceptional services in the development of Azerbaijani healthcare.

38. According to the Law of Azerbaijan Republic “On Education”, one of the basic principles of the state policy in the field of education is equality, in other words, the creation of opportunities for all citizens to get education on the basis of equal conditions, and provision of right to education. Also, the Law guarantees that every citizen, regardless of gender, race, language, religion, political convictions, ethnicity, social status, origin, or health condition, has the opportunity to education and is not exposed to discrimination.

39. There are no obstacles to ensuring the right to education for the representatives of Lezghin and Talysh minorities in Azerbaijan. At the same time, the representatives of ethnic minorities have not applied to the Ministry of Education for restrictions on their access to education. Representatives of minorities are taught in their mother tongue for 2 hours per week in general education. Also, a series of events are being held regularly at regular schools to preserve and develop the cultural heritage of ethnic minorities. So, roundtable discussions on “Protection of the rights of ethnic minorities”, “Protection of civil rights in our country”, “Human rights and multiculturalism” are held.

40. Along with the events held by the government for the protection and development of languages, cultures and traditions by all nations, living in Azerbaijan, specialized Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) carry out projects as well. The Council of State Support to Non-Governmental Organizations under the President of Azerbaijan Republic also provides financial assistance to specialized NGOs for the creation of films, which demonstrate the development of culture and language of ethnic minorities, collection of folklore samples, and ethnic identity. The Council allocated 314 thousand 310 AZN to 45 projects for ethnic minorities in the period of 2008–2017. At the same time, the financial support allocated to ethnic minority projects by specialized NGOs (mainly by NGOs representing these peoples) in 2013–2017 was:

- 2013 – 7 projects, 41 thousand AZN, 52 thousand 564 US dollars (with the currency rate for that period);
- 2014 – 4 projects, 36 thousand 200 AZN, 46 thousand 410 US dollars (with the currency rate for that period);
- 2015 – 4 projects, 30 thousand AZN, 28 thousand 585.04 US dollars;
- 2016 – 5 projects, 43 thousand AZN, 26 thousand 818.01 US dollars;
- 2017 – 3 projects, 17 thousand AZN, 9 thousand 849.93 US dollars.

41. Although the Council finances the projects, organized for ethnic minorities in all grant competitions, it also announces specialized competitions at different times. For example: the event called the “Protection of the national and ethnic diversity of Azerbaijan and the cultural heritage of ethnic minorities” held in 2008 and the “Development of the culture of the nation’s living in Azerbaijan” in 2013.

On Paragraph 9 – Article 2 of the Covenant

42. Due to the solving of social problems of refugees, internally displaced persons, or the people who want to get a “refugee” status (asylum), a complete juridical base which meets internationally accepted norms was established, 108 decrees and regulations were signed by the President of the country, Cabinet of Ministers adopted 379 decrees and regulations, and Milli Majlis adopted 34 laws. Two State Programs (in 1998 and in 2004) for the relevant fields and 2 Appendixes to them (in 2007 and in 2011) were approved. The implementation of “The State Program on the improvement of living conditions and increasing the employment of refugees and internally displaced persons” approved by the Order of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan No. 298 dated on July 1, 2004, and the annexes to this State Program approved by the Order of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan No. 2475 dated on October 31, 2007 and the Order No. 1346 dated on February 21, 2011 was successfully continued.

43. Liquidation of 12 tent camps and 3 settlements near the railroad, consisting of freight wagons was finished in 2007, liquidation of 16 Finnish-type settlements was completed in 2016, and the relocation of internally displaced families temporarily located on that territories to new build settlements was ensured. Overall, during the period from 2001 to 2017 97 modern settlements and housing estates consisting of multi-storeyed buildings, which have all social and technical infrastructure and a total area of 3.3 million square meters were constructed for the refugees and internally displaced persons at the expense of State Oil Fund and other sources in more than 30 cities and regions of the Republic.

44. A village of Jabrayil region, Cocuq Mercanli, which was freed from occupation, was restored, and 150 houses, school building, kindergarten, hospitals and post offices, and other necessary social and infrastructure facilities were built and put into operation in the village.

45. In new housing estates 153 schools, 59 culture centres, 60 healthcare facilities, 61 kindergartens, and 2 Olympic sports complexes were build, 745 km of road line, 985 km of water line, 1720 km of overhead power line, 487 km of gas line, 77 km of communication line, 49 km of heating line, 93 kilometres of sewerage lines, and 170 kilometres of drainage network were constructed, 850 power transformers of different capacity were installed. Thus, the housing conditions of 52,300 families or 265,000 refugees and internally displaced persons have been improved so far.

46. In accordance with the instruction of the First Vice President of the Republic of Azerbaijan measures are being taken to relocate 4 thousand internally displaced families temporarily settled in emergency buildings in Baku and Sumgait. Nearly a thousand families have been provided with new apartments. It is planned to improve the living and housing conditions of more than 4,000 families or over 20,000 internally displaced persons in 2018.

47. Like other structures of occupied regions education, health, culture and sports institutions continue to operate as well. This creates favourable conditions for ensuring the rights of internally displaced children. As internally displaced people are citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan, there is no restriction on their free use of the services of state structures acting on their temporary settlements. Internally displaced persons also benefit from some privileges. IDPs temporarily settled in private dwelling houses receive 36 AZN monthly benefits per month. The internally displaced persons living in compact settlements that are not provided with natural gas or meters, receive a monthly benefit of 20 AZN per month, and their utilities expenses are paid by the government directly to service providers. IDPs have the right to hold their positions during the reduction of staff and employees in departments and enterprises. At the same time, students who study at state-funded institutions of higher education and public schools paying tuition, are free to pay tuition and provided with free medical examination and treatment at state-owned medical institutions. Education of refugees and internally displaced persons is organized in accordance with the laws of Azerbaijan Republic. These individuals have the right to study at any school in the place of their residence as well as in schools for internally displaced persons.

**General Education Institutions for Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons
(At the beginning of an academic year)**

	2013–2014	2014–2015	2015–2016	2016–2017	2017–2018
Number of state public educational institutions for refugees and internally displaced persons (at the beginning of academic year) – in total	620	611	602	593	585
Students of these institutions – in total, one thousand people	78.1	81.3	84.1	90.1	95.0
Including:					
Boys	42.3	44.3	46.0	49.2	52.0
Girls	35.8	37.0	38.1	40.9	43.0

48. In order to increase the employment 24,000 IDPs have been given micro loan in the amount of 14.8 million AZN through Social Development Fund of Internally Displaced Persons and at the expense of World Bank and the Government of Azerbaijan, and so, 50,000 internally displaced persons benefited from these programs. Over the past 14 years the National Fund for Entrepreneurship Support provided 44.3 million AZN preferential credits to finance the investment projects of business entities of over 2,000 IDPs. Over the last 24 years 6.6 billion AZN was spent for solving social problems of refugees and internally displaced persons. 3.1 billion AZN of this sum belongs to state budget, 2.1 billion AZN to the State Oil Fund, 1.4 billion to international financial institutions and international humanitarian organizations operating in our country. As a result of the implemented measures, in the last 14 years the poverty line among internally displaced persons has decreased from 75 to 12 percent.

49. The project of “Great Return” program was prepared on the basis of relevant proposals received from 34 state bodies and 14 international organizations. A Working Group was set up to determine the damage caused to the occupied lands, settlements and other facilities, and material and cultural losses, suffered as a result of the military operations of the Armenian armed forces by the traditional market price based on International Valuation Standards. According to joint initial estimates of this Working Group and international experts, the amount of material and moral losses Azerbaijan has suffered is more than \$819 billion US dollars.

50. According to Article 69 of the Constitution of Azerbaijan Republic and Article 74 of the Migration Code foreigners and stateless persons may, in the Republic of Azerbaijan, enjoy all equal rights with the citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan, unless other case provided by law or by international treaties to which the Republic of Azerbaijan is a party. The rights and freedoms of foreigners and stateless persons permanently residing or temporarily staying in the territory of Azerbaijan Republic may be restricted only according to norms of international law and to the laws of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

51. The norms related to the legal status of foreigners and stateless persons in the Republic of Azerbaijan are set by the Migration Code of Azerbaijan Republic. In accordance with the relevant articles of the Migration Code, the right of foreigners and stateless persons to family reunification is guaranteed in the country. According to Article 3.0.11 of this Migration Code, by family members of a foreigner or stateless person we mean his/her wife/husband, children under the age of 18, adult children (above 18 years old) unable to work, parents under his/her custody, and according to the article 3.0.12 of this Code, by close relatives of a foreigner or stateless person we mean his/her father, mother, husband/wife, child, brother, sister, nephews, grandfather, grandmother, father and mother of a grandfather/grandmother, grandchildren, father-in-law, mother-in-law, brother-in-law and sister-in-law.

52. The individuals who have obtained refugee status and who are registered in the State Migration Service have almost completely integrated into Azerbaijani society. Thus, 20 persons who have obtained refugee status have married with Azerbaijani citizens and have

children who are also the citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Most refugees and their family members have been provided with the place of residence and are the owners of their private apartments.

53. Moreover, according to Article 82 of the Migration Code, when foreigners and stateless persons (and family members arriving along with these persons) apply for refugee status they can be voluntarily placed in relevant centres of the State Migration Service till the issue of granting a refugee status is resolved, and in case they have already obtained a refugee status – till acquiring the work place and place of residence, but for no longer than 3 months.

54. At present, there are three such centres (in Baku, Yevlakh and Nakhchivan) under the jurisdiction of the State Migration Service. Foreigners and stateless persons who come to Azerbaijan to obtain refugee status are voluntarily accommodated in these centres if they do not have a place to live. Considering the experience of European countries, the centres have established international standards for asylum seekers.

55. Asylum seekers and members of their families receive accommodation in these centres three times a day with food, clothing and personal hygiene, etc. The necessary conditions have been created for them to learn Azerbaijani language and spend their leisure time with interest. In special rooms for children there are playground areas where sports equipment, toys, children's books, drawing kits, televisions, entertainment accessories, etc. Children can use the sport playground to entertain and play in the open air.

56. Asylum seekers placed in centres are entitled to leave the centre at any time. Persons placed in the centre have the right to apply directly to the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Republic of Azerbaijan (Ombudsman) with certain phone numbers on issues concerning them. The National Preventive Group of the Ombudsman's Office conducts regular monitoring of the conditions for the protection of human rights and conditions of detention.

57. As a result of measures taken by the State Migration Service to register stateless persons, 1,528 stateless persons during the period of 2008–2017 were admitted to the citizenship of the Republic of Azerbaijan under the relevant orders of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

- In 2008 – 49 persons;
- In 2009 – 65 persons;
- In 2010 – 91 persons;
- In 2011 – 104 persons;
- In 2012 – 161 persons;
- In 2013 – 196 persons;
- In 2014 – 186 persons;
- In 2015 – 181 persons;
- In 2016 – 117 persons;
- In 2017 – 378 persons.

58. The State Migration Service regularly conducts broader outreach activities in various regions of the country in the direction of preventing and reducing cases of statelessness, and also for registering stateless persons. Through the regional offices of the State Migration Service, with local executive authorities were held numerous meetings, counselling and the relevant work on registering the persons living without documents was accelerated. Currently, the State Migration Service continues to take appropriate measures to legalize stateless persons in the country.

59. "ASAN Visa" started its activity on 10.01.2017 under the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan No. 923 "On simplifying the procedure for issuing electronic visas and establishing "ASAN Visa" system" on 01 June 2016. ASAN Visa System (www.evisa.gov.az) is an official electronic visa portal administered by the State Agency

for Public Service and Social Innovations under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan. To date, more than 460,000 electronic visas have been issued to foreigners wishing to travel to Azerbaijan. Foreign citizens and stateless persons from 95 countries can apply for an electronic visa. An electronic visa is a single-entry, valid for 90 days with a period of 30 days in the country. Standard and urgent electronic visas are available. The standard e-visa processing period is 3 working days after the application date. The duration of the e-visa processing period, regardless of holidays and non-working days, is 3 hours. Applications can be either in a single or in a group (2 to 10 people) form. Currently, the portal is available in 7 languages: Azerbaijani, English, Russian, French, Spanish, Arabic and Persian.

60. Procedures of issuing visas to foreign citizens and stateless persons at international airports of the Republic of Azerbaijan:

No. 1803 is a decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan issued on 31.01.2018 “On improving the procedure for issuing visas to foreigners and stateless persons at international airports of the Republic of Azerbaijan” entered into force on 15.05.2018. Under the decree, ASAN Visa began issuing visas at Heydar Aliyev Airport of the Republic of Azerbaijan from 15.05.2018. To date, more than 9,000 electronic visas have been issued to foreigners at Heydar Aliyev Airport. Since 01.06.2018 ASAN Visa has started issuing visas at Ganja Airport of the Republic of Azerbaijan. From 14.06.2018 ASAN Visa will start issuing visas at the Gabala Airport of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Under the decree, ASAN Visa began issuing visas at Heydar Aliyev Airport of the Republic of Azerbaijan from 15.05.2018. To date, more than 9,000 electronic visas have been issued to foreigners at Heydar Aliyev Airport. Since 01.06.2018 ASAN Visa has started issuing visas at Ganja Airport of the Republic of Azerbaijan. From 14.06.2018 ASAN Visa will start issuing visas at the Gabala Airport of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Citizens and stateless persons of citizens of a number of foreign countries get visas through ASAN Visa at international airports of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Foreigners get their visas through self-service terminals or by approaching to ASAN points. While receiving a visa through self-service terminals, the foreigner first downloads the travel document information to the system via the scanner, and inserts the other information (purpose of visit, profession, and contact number) directly. Foreigner receives a visa upon payment. The visa issuance process takes about 2 minutes. At the visa points of ASAN Visa, the whole process is supported by ASAN Visa officers. With the visa received at the airport, citizens of the Republic of Turkey can stay in Azerbaijan for 60 days and citizens of other countries can stay for 30 days. Visa for Japanese citizens is free of charge.

61. Currently simplified visa regime is applied to the countries listed below:

1. Bahrain;
2. United Arab Emirates;
3. People’s Republic of China;
4. Indonesia;
5. Islamic Republic of Iran;
6. Israel;
7. Republic of Korea;
8. Kuwait;
9. Qatar;
10. Malaysia;
11. Oman;
12. Kingdom of Saudi Arabia;
13. Singapore;

14. Turkey;
 15. Japan;
 16. *United States of America (Only for US citizens traveling on New York–Baku flight, 30 (thirty) days visa is issued at Heydar Aliyev International Airport).
62. The list of countries eligible for “ASAN Visa”:
1. USA;
 2. Albania;
 3. Germany;
 4. Andorra;
 5. Argentina;
 6. Australia;
 7. Austria;
 8. Bahamas;
 9. Barbados;
 10. Bahrain;
 11. Belgium;
 12. United Arab Emirates;
 13. United Kingdom;
 14. Bolivia;
 15. Bulgaria;
 16. Bosnia and Herzegovina;
 17. Brazil;
 18. Brunei Darussalam;
 19. South Africa;
 20. Djibouti;
 21. Czech Republic;
 22. Chile;
 23. People’s Republic of China;
 24. Denmark;
 25. Ecuador;
 26. Algeria;
 27. Estonia;
 28. Finland;
 29. France;
 30. India;
 31. Honduras;
 32. Croatia;
 33. Indonesia;
 34. Jordan;
 35. Islamic Republic of Iran;

-
36. Ireland;
 37. Iceland;
 38. Spain;
 39. Israel;
 40. Sweden;
 41. Switzerland;
 42. Italy;
 43. Canada;
 44. Cyprus;
 45. Colombia;
 46. Republic of Korea;
 47. Costa Rica;
 48. Cuba;
 49. Kuwait;
 50. Latvia;
 51. Lithuania;
 52. Lichtenstein;
 53. Luxembourg;
 54. Hungary;
 55. Macedonia;
 56. Malaysia;
 57. Maldives;
 58. Malta;
 59. Mauritius;
 60. Mexico;
 61. Morocco;
 62. Monaco;
 63. Mongolia;
 64. Montenegro;
 65. Vatican;
 66. Nepal;
 67. Netherlands;
 68. Norway;
 69. Oman;
 70. Pakistan;
 71. Panama;
 72. Paraguay;
 73. Peru;
 74. Poland;
 75. Portugal;

76. Qatar;
77. Guatemala;
78. Romania;
79. San-Marino;
80. Serbia;
81. Seychelles;
82. Kingdom of Saudi Arabia;
83. Singapore;
84. Slovakia;
85. Slovenia;
86. Sri Lanka;
87. Thailand;
88. Trinidad and Tobago;
89. Turkey;
90. Turkmenistan;
91. Vietnam;
92. Jamaica;
93. Japan;
94. New Zealand;
95. Greece.

On Paragraph 10 – Article 3 of the Covenant (Tables 14–33 are attached in annex)

63. Ensuring gender equality, including the elimination of all forms of discrimination based on gender, creating equal opportunities for men and women in political, economic, social, cultural and other spheres of public life, the superiority of representatives of one gender in public administration and decision-making According to the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan of 2006 “On Ensuring Gender Equality” was defined as a state debt. The Republic of Azerbaijan is a party to almost all major international human rights instruments for the protection of women’s rights.

64. By early 2018, 50.1 percent of the total population of the country or 4 million 960.1 thousand people were women. The proportion of women in the economically active population (5012.7 thousand) is 48.6% (2439.5 thousand), life expectancy is 75.2 years (72.8 years for men and 77.6 years for women). Currently, the overall unemployment rate in the country is 5.0%, whereas this figure for women is 6.0% (4.2% among men). At present the overall unemployment rate in the country is 5.0%, whereas this figure is 6.0% (4.2% among men). Analysis of the gender division of the employed population shows that women are more educated than men (68.5% and 31.5% respectively), medical and social services to the population (73.1% and 26.9% respectively) and acted more in the field of recreation, entertainment and art (59.9% and 40.1%).

Employment and Unemployment Thousand people

	2005	2010	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Economically active population	4 380.1	4 587.4	4 688.4	4 757.8	4 840.7	4 915.3	5 012.7
Women	2 111.3	2 257.7	2 293.1	2 321.8	2 365.0	2 404.5	2 439.5

	2005	2010	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
People	2 268.8	2 329.7	2 395.3	2 436.0	2 475.7	2 510.8	2 573.2
Employed population	4 062.3	4 329.1	4 445.3	4 521.2	4 602.9	4 671.6	4 759.9
Women	1 957.6	2 101.7	2 153.5	2 183.7	2 226.8	2 263.4	2 294.2
People	2 104.7	2 227.4	2 291.8	2 337.5	2 376.1	2 408.2	2 465.7
Unemployed	317.8	258.3	243.1	236.6	237.8	243.7	252.8
Women	153.7	156.0	139.6	138.1	138.2	141.1	145.3
People	164.1	102.3	103.5	98.5	99.6	102.6	107.5
Of them:							
People who received the status of unemployed	56.3	39.0	36.8	36.2	28.7	28.9	33
Women	29.1	17.0	15.5	15.0	11.3	11.2	12.6
People	27.2	22.0	21.3	21.2	17.4	17.7	20.4

65. Currently, 2,658 women are serving in the internal affairs bodies of the republic (1,212 senior, middle and small command personnel, 1,447 civilian personnel), which is about 10 percent of the total number of personnel, which is accompanied by an increase every year. Women mainly serve in post-patrol, investigation, examination, human resources, passport, statistics, and international cooperation, and medicine, press, in preventive work with minors, in clerical work, in the “ASAN” service and in call centres. It should also be taken into account that the main areas of activity of the internal affairs bodies are the prevention of crimes and other offenses, the disclosure of committed crimes, the identification and apprehending of criminals, the protection of public order, as well as from the point of view of the uninterrupted function determined by law during the day, it is obvious that the number of women is less than the number of men.

66. Based on the “State Program for Poverty Reduction and Sustainable Development in the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2008–2015”, approved by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan No. 3043 of September 15, 2008, in 2013 a qualification statistical survey was conducted in cities and rural areas of the country titled “Against Human Violence”.

67. Taking into account the international experience for the purpose of statistical study of gender equality issues in the Republic of Azerbaijan, a system of complex statistical indicators covering 310 indicators was developed. Azerbaijani women are taking active part in the socio-economic and socio-political life of the country.

68. One of the most important issues that the state pays attention is the protection of women’s health. Currently, in the country 17 maternity hospitals, 137 women’s counselling centres, 250 children’s polyclinics and outpatient clinics that takes care of women’s health.

69. The overall share of women in Azerbaijan actively participating in the socio-economic life of the country, according to preliminary data, was 48.2 percent. 79.8 percent of the teachers’ in general educational institutions, 77.9 percent in secondary special educational institutions, 51.9 percent in higher educational institutions and 65.7 percent of doctors of the country are women. 46.0 percent of students in general education institutions, 65.3 percent of students in secondary special educational institutions and 48.2 percent of students in higher education are girls. Women play an exclusive role in the development of science. 56.0 percent of the researchers are women. Over the past 5 years, the number of women with Ph.D. degrees, as well as doctors of sciences has increased by 1.5 times. 8 of the actual members of the National Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan and 12 corresponding members are women. The share of women among entrepreneurs is 21.5 percent. 41.7 percent of those engaged in physical education and sports are women. The number of women deputies in the Parliament (Milli Majlis) is also growing. If in 1990 women accounted for 4.3 percent of all deputies and 10.7 percent in 2000, today the proportion of women in parliament reached 16.1 percent. In comparison with the first municipal elections in the last municipal elections, the number of women elected for

municipal elections increased 6.0-fold to 5236, and their share in municipalities was 35.0 percent. This figure was 4.0 percent in the first municipal elections. One of the factors that attract attention is the increase from year to year the number of women who receive a driver's license. Thus, if in the total number of women who got a driver's license in 2008 was 4.6 percent, in 2017 their number increased to 6.7 percent.

70. Special measures have been taken and implemented in Azerbaijan to reduce unemployment among women and furthering their economic wealth, especially in the regions.

71. By the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan of September 23, 2016 under the direction of State Agency for Public Service and Social Innovations (ASAN service) created "ABAD" (ASAN Support to Family Business) public legal entity. The purpose of creating a public legal entity "ABAD" is the active participation of citizens in the socio-economic development of the country, the development of small and medium-sized businesses, the promotion of employment and the implementation of socially-oriented projects for the formation of competitive households. The priority of activity of the public legal entity "ABAD" is to support the development of family business, especially women's art and agricultural activities. For the first time, 63 families in Masally, Balakan, Ismayilli, Shaki and Baku in the field of art, and 30 families in the field of agriculture were selected.

72. In accordance with the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan was established the Agency for the Development of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises under the Ministry of Economy in 2017. The mission of the agency is to promote entrepreneurship in Azerbaijan, as well as support of small and medium business. It is assumed that under the Agency will operate small and medium-sized business houses. The establishment of the agency contributes to the development of medium and small businesses, especially women's entrepreneurship in the regions of the country.

73. In 2011–2015, along with the United Nations Development Program, the Campaign "Promoting Women's Participation in the Social and Economic Life in Regions and Rural Areas" was successfully conducted. The project provides for increasing the level of knowledge of women in the business sector, improving the economic situation of women (in particular young mothers, single mothers and disabled women belonging to vulnerable groups), creating an enabling environment for women's business and social activities in rural areas. The purpose of these activities is to implement the recommendations of the UN Committee on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination, the Millennium Development Goals (Goals 1 and 3) and the fulfilment of the commitments undertaken by the Republic of Azerbaijan regarding Beijing Declaration and the Platform. For these purposes, as a result of the work carried out by the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs well-functioning Women's Resource Centres have been successfully established.

74. The Decree signed by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the establishment of the Council of State Support to Non-Governmental Organizations (Council) under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan of December 13, 2007, "issues of the family, women and children" also defined as one of the directions of state support for non-governmental organizations. Eight members of the Council one of the NGO representatives represent this area. All grants competitions announced by the Council include such areas as women's participation, gender equality, and women's rights in the regions, domestic violence, and women's employment problems. Since 2008, the Council has been providing financial assistance to NGOs and other technical and methodological assistance. Another priority area of the Council is the financing of NGOs projects on women's reproductive health, as well as the implementation of preventive measures for pregnancy, the protection of mother and child, in the field of "health care, health and the environment".

75. The financial support in the indicated directions to NGOs during the period 2013-2017 (award of grants) was as follows:

- In 2013, 25 projects amounted to 150 thousand 701 manat (193 thousand 206 US dollars according to the rate of that period);

- In 2014, 23 projects amounted to 175 thousand 500 manat (225 thousand US dollars according to the rate of that period);
- In 2016, 22 projects amounted to 207 thousand manat;
- In 2017, 19 projects amounted to 124 thousand manat.

On Paragraph 11 – Articles 6 and 7 of the Covenant (Tables 34–38 are attached in annex)

76. State Programs have been implemented in accordance with the Employment Strategy in order to ensure effective employment of the population through more efficient use of labour resources, creating the necessary conditions for the development of entrepreneurship, improving the institutional infrastructure aimed at strengthening the dynamic compatibility between supply and demand in the labour market. Within the framework of implementation of state programs it was possible to achieve significant progress in sustainable reduction of unemployment rate, strengthening the social protection of the unemployed and socially vulnerable groups of the population, and some progress has been made in the field of improving labour markets, improving labour resources qualitatively, increasing competitiveness and creating favourable conditions for economic activity.

Countrywide unemployment rate in general and among the youth, in percentage

Years	Total unemployment rate	Among them		
		15–24 years	15–29 years	15–34 years
2013	5.0	13.7	9.9	8.0
2014	4.9	13.5	9.7	7.9
2015	5.0	13.4	9.6	7.7
2016	5.0	13.1	9.4	7.6
2017*	5.0	-	-	-

77. As a result of the work carried out, the unemployment rate fell from 9.7% in 2003 to 5% in 2017. At the same time, according to the target indicators set out in the Strategic Roadmap on the prospects of the National Economy, it is proposed that more than 450,000 new job places will be created by 2025. Continuous social and economic policy conducted in the country will reduce the unemployment rate to the minimum level in the coming years. At the same time, according to the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan No. 2090 of April 16, 2007, “State Programme on the Education of Azerbaijani Youth in the Foreign Countries in 2007–2015” has been approved. Within the framework of the policy of turning of “black Gold” into “human gold”, educational costs of hundreds of Azerbaijanis were funded by the State Oil Fund at the leading educational institutions of the world’s leading countries. In order to finance the State Program for the amount of 205.5 million manat allocated by the State Oil Fund in the period from 2008 to 2017, more than 3,300 students were educated in higher education institutions of foreign countries.

78. In the development concept “Azerbaijan – 2020: Vision of the future” and in “Strategic road maps on national economy and main sectors of economy”, approved by the appropriate Decrees of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, formation of youth competitive personnel potential, encouraging of a healthy and active lifestyle of youth, the expansion of job opportunities and ensuring their integration into society was identified as one of the key priorities of the country’s socio-economic development.

79. In accordance with the implementation of the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan “on additional measures to ensure population’s self-employment” of April 7, 2016, the self-employment program is carried out to ensure self-employment of able-bodied people, especially for self-employment of youth by the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population. About 1400 family households have succeeded in implementing their business idea within the program. The work in this direction is under

way. In the course of 2017, 303 youth as participants in the program of “self-employment” in accordance with business plans were supplied with assets. Since 2018, within the framework of the implementation of the “Decent Work Country Program for the years 2016–2020”, the implementation of “Pilot subsidy program aimed at expanding the opportunities for decent employment of young people” will be launched with the support of the International Labour Organization.

80. As a result of measures taken over the past five years, the unemployment rate among youth aged 15–29 decreased from 11.8% in the country to 9.4% in 2016.

81. On the basis of the existing social and political stability in Azerbaijan, the successful implementation of reforms in the economic, social and other spheres, as well as employment, mainly taken measures to develop youth employment, was highly appreciated by international organizations.

82. The Law on “Unemployment Insurance” of June 30, 2017 was adopted. This Law, as a result of the annulment of an enterprise or the reduction of the number of employees or downsizing, regulates a certain monthly collection from persons who work in accordance with the labour contract and in the event of the dissolution of the employment relationship, regulates insurance payments from these funds. As part of the harmonization of the law (13 laws, 4 decrees, 9 decisions), 26 drafts were developed and submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers by a letter dated December 9, 2017.

On Paragraph 12 – Articles 6 and 7 of Covenant

83. By 1 January, 2018 year 5,649 and by 1 February, 2018 year 5,467 convicted persons serving sentences in penitentiaries were involved in socially useful activities. At the same time, during 2017, 202 new workplaces (by 01 February, 2018 year 237 new workplaces) were opened at new production areas created in prisons of the penitentiaries.

84. Convicted males over the age of sixty, females over fifty-five, persons with disabilities in groups 1 and 2, convicted under the age of 18 with physical disabilities, those who are pregnant for more than four months or convicted women who have children in orphanages in prisons, are allowed to work on a voluntary basis. In Legislation on the Execution of Crimes and Punishments does not provide for the participation of persons not engaged in labour activity and the application of administrative measures to them. Refusal to work or suspension of the work of employed convicts for unreasonable reasons is considered as violation of the rules for the enforcement of the sentence and entails of applying punishments to them or their involvement in financial responsibility.

85. The Labour Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan does not provide for provisions on the use of forced labour as an educational activity, as well as punishment to persons guilty of committing a crime.

86. Compulsory labour deemed under article 144-2.1 of the Criminal Code of Azerbaijan Republic – threat, force to implement certain work (render a service) by force or by threat of force, also by restricting the freedom of other person other than special cases determined under legislation has been estimated as criminal action and a person committing that crime is to be punished by depriving of freedom for certain period.

On Paragraph 13 – Articles 6, 7 and 9 of the Covenant

87. According to the Labour Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on “Labour Pensions”, pensioners are paid wages and pensions in full amount; it is not allowed to reduce wages due to retirement. Retirees, who are in labour relations, fully enjoy labour rights intended for other employees.

88. Regarding the difference in the definition of retirement age between men and women in the Republic of Azerbaijan, it should be noted that the additions and amendments to the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan “On labour Pensions” (in force since 1 July 2017) regulates this process. The age limit for men provided for in Article 7 of this Law, starting

from July 1, 2017, ending July 1, 2021 and for women from July 1, 2017 to July 1 2027, rises by 6 month every year. As a result, the difference in retirement age for men and women will be eliminated.

89. The Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan “On Amendments to the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on “Labour Pensions “of March 10, 2017 was adopted. In accordance with the law, the bulk of the labour pension was abolished and it was determined that by replacing the conditions for the appointment of a pension due to the return of the personal account of men who had reached the age of sixty-six years in the safety department of the personal account, and women who had reached the age of 60, if the pension fund was not less than the minimum the amount of pension, regardless of length of service, is entitled to a retirement pension. And in the event that it does not allow to provide in the provision of a pension not less than the length of retirement (except for persons who are given a pension because of the return before July 1, 2017) are entitled to a pension upon recovery As part of the harmonization of the same law, 13 laws, 2 decrees, 13 laws, 2 disposals, 4 draft resolutions envisaging changes to the relevant legislative acts that are in force coordinated with the relevant bodies are submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers.

90. Employees, pensioners and persons receiving education have the right to join trade unions and engage in trade union activities to protect their legitimate interests, labour, social and economic rights. Azerbaijan Trade Unions Confederation (ATUC), the legal successor to the Council of Trade Unions of Azerbaijan, was established in 1993 at the congress by the 25 regional and 1 territorial (Council of Trade Unions of Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic) councils. On February 24, 1994 the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan “On Trade Unions” was adopted. Trade unions in Azerbaijan is independent, social, non-governmental organizations which are carrying out their activities on the basis of the law “On Trade Unions” and the Regulations, voluntarily united on the basis of the principle of individual membership at the regional and national level. ATUC is a member of the International Trade Unions Confederation and the Global Union Federation. It unites about 1.5 million trade unionists. The Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan “On Trade Unions” provides for the following: Trade unions did not depend on state bodies, enterprises, political parties and public associations and do not give them a report. Any interference of state bodies and officials that are the cause of restriction of trade union rights or an impediment to the exercise of their legal activities within the framework of their statutes shall be prohibited. “Trade unions can organize and conduct strikes, rallies, street processions, demonstrations and other public events in accordance with legislation in force and to fulfil their statutory goals and objectives”.

On Paragraph 14 – Articles 6 and 7 of the Covenant (Tables 39–45 are attached in annex)

91. The Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan “On Insurance against Unemployment” was adopted on June 30, 2017 and approved by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on August 5, 2017 with a view to strengthening the social protection of the unemployed and job seeking citizens in the Republic. This Law, which entered into force on January 1, 2018, provides a wide range of opportunities for activities in the field of applied professional training, retraining and advanced training, the organization of public works, the labour exchange and fair, the wide application of self-employment projects, legalization of labour relations.

92. According to the amendments to the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan “On Labour Pensions”, this came into force on July 1, 2017, the minimum amount of labour pensions increases annually in accordance with Article 29.1 of the Law by indexing the average monthly nominal wage in accordance with increase an annual growth rate throughout the country.

On Paragraph 15 – Article 8 of the Covenant

93. According to article 270 of the Labour Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan, workers have the right to strike alone or with others. There is a right to strike by employees or trade union organizations, since the emergence of a collective labour dispute. Participation in the strike is voluntary. Persons who make others to take part or refuse to participate in a strike resorting to violence or threatening with violence or using financial dependency of a person are liable in accordance with the law.

94. According to Article 281 of the labour Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan, it is prohibited to conduct strikes by employees in some areas of service vital for human health and safety, including air and railway transport management services. Other employees working in this field, as well as employees working in the oil sector have the right to strike. If collective labour disputes that have arisen in this sphere cannot be settled by methods of reconciliation by the parties, compulsory arbitration shall be applied. The compulsory arbitration is created by the relevant executive authority and acts on the basis of the charter approved by this body. The composition of compulsory arbitration in agreement with the conflicting parties is approved by at least 5 people individually. The relevant executive authority ensures a prompt and impartial examination of the dispute in compulsory arbitration. The decisions of the compulsory arbitration are binding on all parties to the dispute and must be immediately implemented. At the same time, it should be noted that, in accordance with Article 8 of the UN International Covenant “On Economic, Social and Cultural Rights”, the right to strike is ensured in accordance with the national legislation of each country.

95. Member Organisations of Azerbaijan Trade Unions Confederation

- 26 sectorial trade unions;
- Preliminary trade unions – 16901.

96. The number of trade union members – 1.5 million, out of them:

- Women – 52.3%;
- Youth – 20.9%.

On Paragraph 16 – Articles 12 of the Covenant (Table 46 is attached in annex)

97. On the implementation of Presidential Decree No. 2199 of July 13, 2016 “On additional measures to increase the accessibility of the business environment in the Republic of Azerbaijan and further improve our country’s position in international ratings” On approval of the Action Plan No. 2947 of June 2, 2017 in connection with the execution of the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, which is not influenced by the “Note” section of Article 308 of the current Criminal Code, therefore proposals have been put forward to the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan on introducing appropriate changes in the legislation to identify illegal acts of persons not subject to criminal liability, including illegal payments in connection with professional rules (for example: illegal payments in health care) as a crime or as an administrative offense.

98. Continuous awareness measures have been implemented by the State Committee on Family, Woman and Children Affairs on discord of early marriages, reproductive health and family planning in the cities and regions of the country.

99. The Law on “Reproductive health” has already been prepared by the participation of the Ministry of Health and has been presented to the Parliament (Milli Majlis). After collecting relevant recommendations for the draft law, emanating from public discussions, the work on the improvement of the draft law will be continued. Moreover, Ministry of Health has prepared a national strategy on reproductive health for the years of 2019-2025 in 2017 by support of the WHO.

100. On the part of the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs is regularly caring out awareness-raising activities in towns and villages of Azerbaijan on awareness of the consequences caused by early marriages of the population and reproductive health and family planning. The Ministry of Justice jointly with the National Council of Youth Organizations held a conference on “Healthy Family - Healthy Society - a Strong State” to promote the Law of October 17, 2014 “On Amendments to the Family Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan”. To determine the accessibility (urban and rural areas, gender, etc., taking into account the processing of information in the division) of health services to the public, the research methodology of the European Union Bureau of Statistics on EU-SILC has been examined and starting in 2018, it is planned to apply.

101. In the cases of necessity, the State Migration Service provided appropriate assistance to refugees and asylum seekers in the field of sexual and reproductive health. Thus, in 2017, two asylum seekers were provided with free medical assistance in this direction (during childbirth). In addition, refugees and asylum seekers are provided with free medical assistance related to reproductive health also by UNHCR Representative in Azerbaijan.

102. The project “Healthy Education - Healthy Nation”, which started to be implemented in 2014–2015 academic years and is aimed at ensuring the health and development of persons receiving education, continues to attract 3,748 pupils in 168 classes, 38 schools. Deputy Directors, teachers, parents, medical personnel of these schools were involved in special trainings, classrooms were equipped with the necessary equipment, and methodological support was provided to the project. Medical, pedagogical, psychological and sociological monitoring was carried out in 10 schools with the participation of 1301 pupils. The analysis showed that the motivation and cognitive activity of pupils increased in the schools covered by the project, the level of appropriation of educational materials increased, they have developed healthy lifestyle skills.

103. National Mental Health Centre of the Ministry of Health is a governmental agency responsible for inspection of all mental health services including psychiatric hospitals. Along with collecting mental health statistics, developing regulations and establishing new services, the National Mental Health Centre provides regular monitoring on observance of human rights in psychiatric hospitals. The inspection procedures carried out by the National Mental Health Centre are based on the provisions of the UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Law on Psychiatric Care of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

104. It should be noted that significant improvement of the living conditions have been achieved in psychiatric hospitals over reporting period. In fact the Ministry of Health rebuilt or renovated seven out of 10 psychiatric hospitals, including 17 buildings in the largest psychiatric hospital of the country. All these hospitals were equipped with new furniture, bed linens and other items providing comfortable conditions for service users. In addition, in-patients have been supplied with free food and medicines of sufficient quantity and quality.

105. Implementation of residency program, certification physicians and CME in health system increased the professional competency of psychiatrists as well as quality of their services. Mental health service users are treated in accordance with evidence-based clinical guidelines. Psychosocial rehabilitation programs have been launched in many psychiatric facilities. In this regard, significant efforts were undertaken to integrate clinical psychologists, social workers and occupational therapists into mental health system.

On Paragraph 17 – Article 2 and Article 13 of the Covenant (Tables 47–50 are attached in annex)

106. According to the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan “On Education” special state standards are set for the education of persons with disabilities. Special general education programs are defined and implemented to provide education, treatment, social adaptation and social integration of persons with disabilities and for people who receive education who need long-term treatment.

107. One of the state's tasks in the field of education is also to ensure that children with disabilities respectively are sent to special educational and social protection institutions. In the country, along with primary, general secondary and full secondary schools, there are special schools and boarding schools for children with disabilities, institutions for children in need of special care, schools for talented children, gymnasiums, lyceums and other general education institutions, at the same time there are a special classes functioning at secondary schools.

108. In order to expand opportunities for inclusive education for invalid people and children with disabilities, the "State Program for the Development of Inclusive Education for Persons with Disabilities in the Republic of Azerbaijan in 2018–2024" on the improvement of legislation in the field of education in accordance with international standards was approved by the Decree of the President of the State on December 14th 2017. The action plan for the implementation of the State Program for 2018 has been approved by the relevant order of the Ministry of Education. The Action Plan for the implementation of the State Program for 2018 has been approved by the relevant order of the Ministry of Education. At the same time, in accordance with the relevant order of the Ministry of Education, a Working Group was established to organize discussions and prepare relevant proposals, on issues related to the implementation of the State Program, prepared draft documents, the conducted studies and results of researches. The goal of the State Program is to ensure the involvement of persons with disabilities in education at all levels of education and to create an unhindered environment for this purpose.

109. Within the framework of the State Program, the implementations of the following measures are envisaged:

- Enhancement of the current legislation to ensure the involvement of disabled persons in inclusive education at all levels of education;
- Adoption of appropriate measures to adapt educational institutions and curricula to the needs of persons with disabilities;
- Preparation and improvement of pedagogical staff related to the organization of education of persons with disabilities;
- Establishment of database of people with disabilities involved in inclusive (integrative) education;
- Conducting propaganda and social educational work jointly with the relevant government offices on the need for social integration and the involvement of persons with disabilities.

110. A specialized musical educational institution for visually impaired children is functioning in Baku – school No. 38 for eleven years. At school more than 200 visually impaired pupils are trained in the specialty of piano, violin, perch, kamancha, garmon, drum, singing. There are 50 teachers in the school, including 24 people with eye disabilities of Groups I and II. Over 38 years of activity more than 1,000 pupils graduated from school. Many of them continue their education in music colleges and in higher educational institutions; act as teachers in children's music schools and singers in cultural institutions. The Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan constantly focuses on the performance of the school, meets the needs of these specific educational institutions, helps in solving the problems that have arisen. The school was equipped with musical instruments, equipment, textbooks, for the first time for the school were published textbooks of the Braille system in the Azerbaijani language.

On Paragraph 18 – Article 2 and 10 of the Covenant

111. Monitoring groups on Gender Violence and Violence against Children have been established at local executive authorities throughout all regions of the Republic. Monitoring groups are composed of representatives of local authorities. The main aim of the monitoring groups is to analyse and assess the situation, to identify families belonging to the risk group, to analyse and investigate the reasons of violence, and to take urgent measures to help victims of violence.

112. The State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs in cooperation with the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and United Nations Development Program annually hosts 16 day campaign against violence within the country. Within the framework of this campaign, awareness-building events are held in state and educational institutions and Women Resource Centres.

113. Monitoring the implementation of the recommendations on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, regulated by the Convention “On Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women” dated on 1979, which the Republic of Azerbaijan acceded to in 1995, was entrusted to the State Committee on Family, Women and Children’s Issues. One of the key points in the development of mechanism on the implementation of the provisions of the Convention was the establishment of the Coordinating Council composed of women working in social, educational, healthcare, and cultural and media fields, by the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs.

114. The National Coordinating Council for Sustainable Development was established on 7 October 2016 by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan. One of the Council members is the Chairman of the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs.

115. In general, during the last five years (2013–2017), 27,623 crimes against women, including 10,531 violence related crimes were registered in the republic. High level disclosure of mentioned crimes was 90–95 percent and 14 thousand 22 persons committing these crimes were prosecuted. 15 percent or every sixth of all crimes were committed on the basis of family/household conflict.

116. A relevant database was created in order to generalize and analyse crimes committed against women and children, as well as actions accompanied with violence, and especially to assess and control the current situation, taking into account demographic and criminal situation in the regions, and its systematization is also provided.

117. Proceeding from the international experience, with the purpose of improving the work carried out on prevention domestic violence “Methodological manual on additional measures to prevent domestic violence and administrative offenses against health” were prepared and sent to city and district police authorities for employees working with victims of domestic violence.

118. In 2013–2017 nearly 300 employees of the Ministry of Internal Affairs participated in various events in the field of prevention of domestic violence held abroad and in the republic by international and non-governmental organizations.

119. The court decree on providing the person suffered from domestic violence with long-term protection order was envisaged among resolutions of immediate execution in the new edition of Article 234 of the Civil Procedure Code, approved by the Law dated on December 30, 2016. Additionally, making amendments to Article 12.4 of the Law “On Prevention of Domestic Violence” in accordance with the Law dated June 30, 2017 it was found, that the court’s decision on issuing a long-term protection order is executed immediately. It should be noted that in the 2016–2017 six cases were brought to the courts under Article 158 (Violation of Law on prevention of Domestic Violence) of Administrative Violations Code, and, as a result of the investigation of these cases, four persons were charged by administrative penalty, and 2 other cases were closed. Provisions of the Law “On Prevention of Domestic Violence” have been applied in a number of civil and criminal cases investigated in the courts.

120. Topics such as “Violence against women and organizational mechanisms for combating violence against women at universal level”, “Women’s rights and violence related actions against women”, and “Methodology of Preliminary Investigation of Crimes against Gender Immunity and Gender Freedom of an Individual” were added to the program of training courses organized at the Academy of Justice. “The procedure for preventive registration of the persons committing domestic violence and carrying out of educational and preventive work with these persons” which determines the preventive registration of the persons who have committed domestic violence and carrying out of

educational and preventive work with these persons was approved in accordance with Decree No 206 of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated on 19 December 2011.

121. The preventive registration of the persons who have committed domestic violence and carrying out of educational and preventive work with these persons have the purpose of preventing domestic violence, creating normal relations in families, and eliminating domestic violence cases and legal, medical and social consequences resulting from mentioned cases.

122. The preventive registration of the persons who have committed domestic violence and educational and preventive work with these persons is carried out by local executive authorities. With the purpose of preventive registration of individuals who have committed domestic violence and carrying out educational and preventive work with these persons criminal prosecution which conducted the investigation related to cases of domestic violence, and local executive authorities send the information about these persons to the executive authority of the place of residence (birthplace) of these individuals.

123. With the purpose of preventing domestic violence the Council for State Support to Non-Governmental Organizations under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan allocates funds to the accredited NGOs, registered at the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population as “Non-governmental assistance centre” (asylums) in accordance with the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan “On Social Services”, and to NGOs implementing educating projects in this field. What is worth mentioning about the projects financed under the field of “Carrying out of campaigns against domestic violence and awareness-building activities, and initiatives to provide psychological and legal assistance to the victims of violence” is that the Council allocated 505,000 AZN (373 thousand 670.44 US Dollars) for 60 projects in this field in 2013–2017:

- 2013 – 5 projects, 30 thousand AZN, 38 thousand 461 US dollars (with the currency rate for that period);
- 2014 – 10 projects, 73 thousand AZN, 93 thousand 589 US dollars (with the currency rate for that period);
- 2015 – 14 projects, 136 thousand AZN, 129 thousand 585.51 US dollars;
- 2016 – 22 projects, 207 thousand AZN, 129 thousand 100.66 US dollars;
- 2017 – 9 projects, 59 thousand AZN, 34 thousand 185.06 US dollars.

124. There are rules in the Criminal Code which provide prevention of domestic violence including protection of women. More specifically, criminal liability was established in Article 108 of the Code for sexual violence, in Article 125 for incitement to suicide, in Article 126 for intended bodily harm, in Article 127 for intended non-grievous bodily harm, in Article 128 for intended minor bodily harm, in Article 133 for torture, in Article 149 for forceful rape, in Article 150 for sexual assault, in Article 151 for sexual abuse, in Article 152 for carnal knowledge or other sexual activities with a person under the age of 16, in Article 153 for acts of sexual abuse, in Article 164 for violation of labour rights of a pregnant woman or a woman or a man holding custody of a child under the age of 3 years, in Article 176 for forced marriage.

On Paragraph 19 (Tables 51–64 are attached in annex)

125. According to the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan “On Amending the Family Code” dated on November 15, 2011, minimum marriageable age for women have been increased by one year and reached 18 years, and so became equal with men’s age. According to Article 10.2 of the Code, if there are valid reasons, the relevant executive authority of the territory where the persons wishing to marry and who have not reached marriageable age live, may, at their request, allow the decreasing of marriageable age not less than by 1 year. And in accordance with the Article 11 of the Code, marriages between the persons who have not reached marriageable age are not allowed.

126. The statistical data on marriages registered in 2011–2017 with the participation of the persons, whose marriageable age was decreased by no more than 1 year with the permission of the relevant executive authority are presented in the table below:

	Years						
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
The number of marriages registered with the participation of the persons, whose marriageable age was decreased	122	301	402	365	323	274	318

127. With the purpose of educating the population, especially young people about early marriages and the consequences of such marriages the special significance is attached to the discussions during the events, carried out by the State Committee for Family, Women and Children's Issues. In this regard, in the cities and regions of Azerbaijan within the framework of the project named "Let's say NO to an early marriage for the sake of healthy life" in 2014–2016 and "I choose life" educating project in 2016–2017, the events had been held in colleges with the participation of expert doctors.

On Paragraph 20 – Articles 6, 7 and 10 of the Covenant

128. The "National Action Plan for the fight against human trafficking in the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2014–2018" has been approved with the Order of the President of Azerbaijan Republic dated on July 24, 2014 for the purpose of ensuring the continuity of measures taken in the field of combating human trafficking, improving the normative legal base and institutional mechanisms, increasing efficiency in the cooperation of state bodies and ensuring the fulfilment of international obligations in this field by the Republic of Azerbaijan. The Action Plan stipulates the improvement of "The rules of the national referral mechanism on victims of trafficking in human beings", "Guidelines (indicators) for the identification of victims of trafficking in human beings", "The rules for the establishment, financing and functioning of special institutions for the victims of human trafficking, as well as the rules on the control of their activity", "The Regulation on assistance fund for victims of trafficking in human beings", "The Program on eliminating of social problems leading in human trafficking" and other relevant normative legal acts. In addition, the Action Plan stipulates the implementation of monitoring and verification measures with the participation of representatives of relevant government agencies in order to prevent illegal migration, forced labour and human trafficking, and its identify victims and potential victims, taking actions in the direction of identification and elimination of cases leading to human trafficking, taking measures to strengthen the control over labour migration, taking relevant measures to identify the victims of human trafficking and forced labour, as well as the children, foreigners or stateless persons being victims of human trafficking within the Republic, strengthening the fight against human traffickers (individuals or legal entities) attracting migrants to forced labour, conducting of the prosecution of any case indicating on exploitation concerning trafficking in human beings, and strengthening the measures against laundering of money or other property (any money, obtained directly or indirectly as a result of trafficking in human beings, movable or immovable, tangible or intangible property, legal documents confirming property rights).

129. The topics such as "Women as subjects of human trafficking and domestic violence", "The Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings", and "International Law (European Law) on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings" were included into the program of training courses, organized for judges, judge candidates and justice personnel at the Justice Academy.

130. For the purpose of enhancing the proficiency in the field of determining the victims of human trafficking and enforced labour and providing an assistance for them, employees of the Head Department for Combating Human Trafficking of the Ministry of Internal Affairs attended 172 seminars, conferences, round tables, trainings, as well as bilateral and

multilateral meetings held in the republic in 2013–2017 with the support of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and international organizations, and, at the same time, within the projects carried out by the international organizations they participated in exchange of experience in Germany, Austria, Hungary, Romania, Moldova, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Georgia, United States, Belarus, Russia, Poland, Ukraine, Belgium, Serbia, United Arab Emirates, Malaysia and France, and took part as trainers in the educational courses organized on a relevant topic. Regular workshops with the experts from the United Nations, International Migration and International Labour Organizations, OSCE Project Coordinator in Baku, employees of International Centre for Migration Policy Development, as well as experts from law enforcement agencies of the United States, and the representatives of embassies of this country and the embassy of the United Kingdom in Azerbaijan had been held, and the prospects of cooperation had been discussed.

131. Prevention of human trafficking and forced labour, protection of victims and awareness building activities in the relevant field was highly valued in the annual report of the US Department of State dated on June 30, 2017, as well as in relevant documents of the Council of Europe, OSCE and other influential international organizations. In the last five years the Republic of Azerbaijan had risen from the 2nd group of the list to the 2nd group of countries and had kept this position in the past period. According to the estimates of US Department of State, Azerbaijan had been able to be included in the list of the 1st group of countries.

132. As a result of operative-preventive measures, carried out during the period of 2013–2017, 569 cases of human trafficking, 28 cases of enforced labour, and 59 cases concerning illegal activity with documents with the purpose of human trafficking were registered, 45 criminal groups and 2 organized groups were neutralized, 152 persons, including 121 women and 31 men, were brought to court.

133. Collection of normative legal acts, statistical information and other necessary materials prepared for informing our citizens living abroad and protecting them against the threats of human trafficking were sent to the diplomatic missions and consulates of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

134. During the period of 2013–2017, 191 out of 314 victims of human trafficking were reintegrated into society, each of 261 victims was placed in asylum for victims of human trafficking and was provided with necessary assistance, 114 victims were employed, and 163 were sent to professional courses. 305 people were provided with lump sums, and 205 others were provided with means by the Assistance Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings. As a result of implemented preventive measures, 186 victims were returned to their families, 218 victims were provided with medical assistance, 253 victims were provided with legal and psychological assistance by the Centre for Assistance to Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings under the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population. To provide social services to the victims, 212 of them were directed to non-governmental organizations, and all victims were provided with solicitor during the preliminary investigation and trial. 103 more victims have been assisted during obtaining an identity card and birth certificate.

135. The State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs regularly held awareness building events to educate population, especially young people, about trafficking in human beings and its consequences:

- Large-scale awareness project named “Don’t become a victim of trafficking in human beings!” for senior high school students and college students in 2015–2017;
- In 2013–2014 among the topics discussed during “The place and role of modern family in the development of society” project carried out for the representatives of 26 Sectoral Trade Union Associations of the Confederation together with the Trade Unions Confederation of Azerbaijan with the purpose of improving the legal awareness of the population and increasing public control were discussions on a trending topics such as human trafficking;

- The project named “Don’t become a victim of trafficking in human beings!” and organized by the Committee, is presented to the participants of the events and libraries of the institutions, where these events are held.

136. Labour Relations Monitoring Centre under the “ASAN service” was established in 2017 with the purpose of protecting of labour rights of citizens in the field of construction, ensuring the use of social safety nets, strengthening the control over labour relations registration, and organizing monitoring using modern innovations. An “Analytical Monitoring System” including a system of analytical recognition, which carries out the creation of the electronic register of multi-apartment buildings, currently constructed by the State Agency, and the individuals and legal entities, engaged in the construction of mentioned facilities, as well as the identification of employees was established. In order to prevent unofficial labour relations 43 mobile monitoring events were carried out since September 2017 until today in currently constructed multi-apartment residential buildings.

137. Within the framework of measures taken against human trafficking, NGOs have an effective cooperation with government authorities. Head Department for Combating Human Trafficking of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and National Coordinator conduct extensive awareness building activities with specialized NGOs. NGOs are provided with financial assistance to fund the asylums established by the NGOs, as well as to conduct activities against human trafficking. It is worth mentioning about the projects financed on “Combat against human trafficking”, that during the period of 2008–2017 the Council of State Support to NGOs under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan allocated 562 033 AZN (256 002.89 US dollars) to 78 projects concerning the “Combat against human trafficking”: During the period of 2013–2017, the funds allocated by Council to finance the projects of NGOs with the purpose of combating human trafficking were as follows:

- 2013 – 13 projects, 76 thousand 400 AZN, 97 thousand 948 US dollars (with the currency rate for that year);
- 2014 – 4 projects, 28 thousand AZN, 35 thousand 897 US dollars (with the currency rate for that year);
- 2015 – 8 projects, 73 thousand AZN, 69 thousand 556.93 US dollars;
- 2016 – 7 projects, 71 thousand AZN, 44 thousand 280.90 US dollars;
- 2017 – 16 projects, 104 thousand AZN, 60 thousand 258.41 US dollars.

On Paragraph 21 – Articles 6 and 7 of the Covenant

138. Protection of right to work and social rights of migrant workers is in the limelight in the Republic of Azerbaijan, and is one of the major areas which contribute to improvement of the legislation in force. The current national legislation extends equal social rights and right to work both to migrant workers and citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Both of them enjoy equal rights in education. Migrants are entitled to reunite with their family members by inviting them to Azerbaijan. Besides, if a migrant is married to a citizen of the Republic of Azerbaijan this migrant is entitled to be employed without any special permission. According to the legislation in force, any form of discrimination against migrant workers is forbidden, and their social and cultural rights are recognized in the Republic of Azerbaijan.

139. Irrespective of their status, all the migrants are entitled to apply to state authorities and courts of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and no legal limitations are provided for this case. According to the legislation of the Republic of Azerbaijan, aliens and stateless persons are entitled to apply to a court if they are faced with long delays in obtaining response on submitted application for a visa, or denied consideration of their visa application, or deprived of residence/ temporary residence (or extension of a term of residence), or if a residence/temporary residence permit is revoked.

140. Article 292 of the Labour Law specifies that a worker is entitled to apply for restoration of his/her rights if they are violated. In this case, a worker should apply to the State Labour Inspection under the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population.

Labour agreements stipulate that if a claim deserves consideration a special commission is set up to try to resolve a dispute before it is taken to a court, and a labour union should apply to this commission. At the same time a worker whose rights are violated is entitled to appoint a representative to apply to a competent authority to settle the matter as well as to file a formal charge against all the institutions that made decisions on the matter. Any claim filed by a migrant worker should be settled within the frames of the legislation in force just the way it is meant to be done for citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

141. According to article 10 of the Law on “Courts and Judges” of the Republic of Azerbaijan, citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan, aliens and stateless persons who reside in the Republic of Azerbaijan are entitled to enjoy rights and freedoms specified in the Constitution and other laws which guarantee legal persons protection of their legitimate rights and protection against any violation of law as well as legal defence during lawsuits. Nobody is to be denied legal defence in a trial. According to part II of article I of the law on “Institution of legal proceedings against enactments, acts (or acts of omission) violating rights and freedoms of citizens”, aliens and stateless persons are entitled to address to an appropriate court as it is provided for by this law, unless otherwise specified by intergovernmental agreements the Republic of Azerbaijan is party to. Constitutional Article 8 on “Ombudsman of the Republic of Azerbaijan” states that an ombudsman investigates complaints of citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan, aliens, stateless and legal persons about violation of their rights. A complaint of a person whose rights have been violated can be lodged with his/her consent via a third person or a nongovernmental organization (NGO). If there is no possibility to do it (if a person whose rights have been violated is no longer alive or he/she is in the state of disability), a complaint can be lodged by a third person or an NGO without the consent of a person whose rights have been violated.

142. The Migration Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan was validated on June 2, 2013. Section IV of the Migration Code details set norms of relationships in the field of Labour migration, while article 75 of the Code specifies rights of migrant workers. Terms of the same legislation in force equally apply to both migrant workers and citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan both when it comes for labour conditions and remuneration of their labour, except for the instances specified otherwise in the Labour Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Furthermore, the Labour Law is to settle migrant workers’ those labour issues which cannot be resolved with the use of the Migration Code. Article 9 of the Labour Law details basic rights of employees under an employment contract. It also specifies the right to apply to a court to defend one’s labour rights and to get legal defence.

On Paragraph 22 – Article 11 of the Covenant (Tables 65–66 are attached in annex)

143. Article 29 of the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan states that nobody is to be dispossessed of their own property without a proper court decree. Appropriation of a private property for state needs can be implemented when a private owner is fully reimbursed. Norms of appropriation of a land for state needs are specified in the Civil Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Meanwhile, the Law on “Appropriation of Lands for State Needs” specifies a list of state needs to serve as a basis for the appropriation of a land. It also specifies the lands fall under appropriation, rights of owners whose lands subject to appropriation, legal defence of appropriation cases, rules of calculation and reimbursement of expenses, statements and rules of holding meetings on land appropriation issues, arrangement of moves, other rules and procedures of appropriation of lands for state needs.

144. According to UNICEF and WHO mutual monitoring, Azerbaijan has succeeded in realizing activities planned under the Millennium Development Goals. Thus, 95% of the water supply systems in cities, 78% of the water supply system in rural areas and 87% of the water supply system in the entire country have been improved so far. Drinking water supply projects of Azerbaijan show that 49,8% of the population of the Azersu service area are users of a centralized water supply system, 66,9% of Azerbaijan and 81,5% of Baku enjoy continuous drinking water supply. Today 81.5% of the population of the capital of Azerbaijan enjoys continuous drinking water supply. In 2005, 1,560,000 residents of Baku

used a centralized water system, whereas today, total of 2,410,000 Baku people are supplied with drinking water.

145. Sanitary arrangements related to population's access to an individual disposal system and a sanitary piping network is accomplished in compliance with the legislative decrees in force. Planned state programs on "Social and Economic Development of Districts of the Republic of Azerbaijan" and "Social and Economic Development of Baku City and its Suburbia" are aimed at constructing the same water supply system and sanitary piping network in districts as in the capital of the country. 3,510 km long sewage collector (piping network and sewage conduits) has been installed as a part of projects aimed at the development of the Absheron peninsula and districts (Khachmaz, Gusar, Khızı, Saatli, Sabirabad, Zardab, Lankaran, Bilasuvar, Guba, Gusar, Shamkir, Tovuz, Shamakhi, Hajigabul, Ganca, Shaki, Gyoychay, Aghdash, Gabala, Lerik, Jalilabad, Gadabay, Dashkasan, Ujar, Kurdamir, Ismayilli) of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

146. Azersu provides training courses on protection of water resources and minimizing of the impact of waste disposal on water streams, thus raising the level of expertise of its employees to modern standards. A training centre has been established and courses provided to this purpose according to the planned schedule. In 2014–2017, Azersu hired experts trained more than 10 000, 400 employees in 310 fields. Besides, in compliance with an agreement concluded between Azersu and SUEZ, the French state company, 2,000 people were certified in more than 90 training courses held in 2015–2016. Efforts in this direction will be continued.

On Paragraph 23 – Articles 10, 11 and 13 of the Covenant (Tables 67–69 are attached in annex)

147. On December 29, 2012, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan issued a decree No. 800, thus validating "Azerbaijan 2020. Outlook for the Future" development concept has a marked impact on social and economic development of Azerbaijan. This development concept is aimed at expediting the fulfilment of new priorities which fit a new economic environment. Besides, upon thorough analysis of current economic environment in the country, a "Strategic Roadmap of the National Economy and Its Major Sectors" has been planned to further current economic policy and reforms. The roadmap was approved by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on December 6, 2016. The government of Azerbaijan successfully pursues policies for fiscal steadiness, stable monetary economics, privatization, reforms of state enterprises, development of human capital assets, creation of favourable business conditions, improvement of legal basis for small and medium sized enterprises, favourable and efficient access to financial resources of small and medium scale business entities, enhancement of access to foreign markets, encouragement of inventors, creation of competitive sectors of economy, facilitation of agricultural production access to local and foreign markets, encouragement of increase in important local replacement for imports, enhancement of foodstuff safety, employment rate increase in rural areas, promotion of Azerbaijani exports, transit trade profit increase and etc.

148. The economy of Azerbaijan has grown considerably for the last 15 years due to successful implementation of a number of state programs, strategies, development concepts, action plans, and roadmaps. The gross domestic product (GDP) has grown 3,6 times for this period of time. In 2017, GDP of the private sector grew up to 83.8%.

149. For the last 15 years, poverty rate has reduced from 46.7% to 5.4%, number of the poor has decreased from 550.5 thousand (550500) to 527.6 thousand (527600), i.e., it has reduced to 4.2% as a result of the implementation of state programs on "Reduction of Poverty and Economic Development" (2003–2005), "Reduction of Poverty and Sustainable Development in the Republic of Azerbaijan for the Period of 2008–2015", "Social and Economic Development of Regions of the Republic of Azerbaijan" (2004–2008), "Social and Economic Development of Regions of the Republic of Azerbaijan for the Period of 2009–2013", "Social and Economic Development of Regions of the Republic of Azerbaijan for the Period of 2014–2018" as well as the government's successful social and economic policy.

150. Maintained stability has resulted in improvement of business and investment environment, diversification of economy, development of regions and entrepreneurship, considerable improvement of social and economic status of the population. Thus, minimum wage rate rose by 14.4%, average pension rate increased by 8.6 %, average monthly pay rose by 6.9 % from 2003 to 2017. As a result of the government efforts aimed at the improvement in social protection and living standards of the population of Azerbaijan, income of the population rose by 9.8 times and reached 49162.9 million manats in 2003–2017.

151. In 2011–2015, within the framework of the “State Program on Reduction of Poverty and Sustainable Development in the Republic of Azerbaijan”, the State Committee on Statistics did a poll on living standards of forcibly displaced people. Results of the poll were published on the committee’s web page.

152. In July 2017, at a Forum held by the UN Economic and Social Council, Azerbaijan, in compliance with a plan introduced by the UN, delivered a report on 6 Goals of Sustainable Development and to be yearly revised 17 targets.

153. Statistics on asylum seeking and refugee status given people who live on the poverty line has been obtained. The Azerbaijan office of the UN High Commissioner on Refugees renders humanitarian assistance to people under patronage of the UN High Commissioner monthly. Besides, the office renders humanitarian aid to needy refugees and asylum seeking people once a month on National Holidays.

154. Enrolment of foreigners and stateless persons is carried out on the basis of international agreements the Republic of Azerbaijan is party to. Foreigners and stateless persons should pay for their education in compliance with an agreement concluded with a university/college in which they eager to study.

155. For the last few years, the government has adopted a number of legislative acts providing people with ample opportunity to get higher education. The government policy of giving grants to the best students has been continued. Tuition fees of university, college and vocational school students, whose parents has fallen, become handicapped or missed in action while protecting territorial integrity, independence and Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan, are paid by the government of Azerbaijan (the number 347, March 18, 2014 decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan). In 2015, on the initiative of the Ministry of Education, “Maarifchi” credit fund was established to give grants and issue long-term loans to indigent families enabling them to pay for higher education of their children.

156. Higher and vocational tuition fees of orphan students under the age of 18 and students under age of 23, who live without parental custody, are paid by the government (amendment to the law on “Orphan Children and Children Who Have No Parent Custody”). Furthermore, since 2016, besides first-year students, those who take a master’s or a doctor’s degree have also been granted deferment of the military service. University entrants have been offered another opportunity to take admission tests. Thus, university entrants can take admission tests twice a year: in summer and in winter (the February 8, 2017 decree of the Cabinet of Ministers). A few amendments have been adopted to the RA “Law on Education” to make education more accessible to people. Amendments to the “Law on Education” give university entrants an opportunity to be enrolled to a pre-entrance course of a university they try to enter. Entrants who are enrolled to a pre-entrance course of a university and successfully complete it passing final tests will be given easier admission requirements. General education school students are entitled to be enrolled to colleges of vocational education without taking admission tests. High school graduates are enrolled to colleges on the basis of results of high school finals.

157. Penitentiaries 1, 2, 7, 10, 11 and the correction facility have their own general education schools. During 2016–2017 academic years, 752 convicts were taught 15 subjects (the Azerbaijani language, the Russian language, literature, algebra and the beginning of analysis, geometry, computer science, history, history of Azerbaijan, human and society, geography, basic principles of economy, biology, physics, chemistry, basic principles of law). 170 convicts took finals arranged by representatives of the State Examination Centre of Azerbaijan. Convicts were given high school diplomas by the State Examination Board

of the Republic of Azerbaijan. During the academic year of 2017–2018, 752 convicts studied at 6 general education schools.

158. According to Article 42 of the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan, every citizen has the right for education, especially free compulsory comprehensive education. According to Article 44 of the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on “Education” the citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan have the right to receive education and advanced training abroad at any level of education as much as foreign citizens possess the right to receive education and advanced training in the Republic of Azerbaijan on the basis of quotas established by the state pursuant to international agreements with the Republic of Azerbaijan and direct agreements concluded by educational institutions, associations, legal entities and individuals at any level of education. The procedures and terms of education for the citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan to receive education abroad and for foreign citizens to receive education in the Republic of Azerbaijan, as well as recognition of educational documents is regulated on the basis of procedures established by the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan. According to the legislation children of migrants, as well as labour migrants have right to free secondary education.

On Paragraph 24 – Article 15 of the Covenant

159. The Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan guarantees everyone’s rights and freedoms. So, in accordance with the article 25 of the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the state guarantees equality of rights and liberties of everyone, irrespective of race, ethnicity, religion, language, gender, origin, financial position, occupation, political convictions, membership in political parties, trade unions and other public organizations. Rights and liberties of a person, citizen cannot be restricted due to race, ethnicity, religion, language, gender, origin, conviction, political and social belonging. In accordance with the article 30 of the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan, everyone has the right for intellectual property. Copyright, patent rights and other rights for intellectual property are protected by law. In accordance with the article 31 of the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan, everyone has the right to live in safety. In accordance with the article 46 of the Constitution, everyone has the right to defend his/her honour and dignity. Dignity of a person is protected by state. Nothing must lead to humiliation of dignity of human being. In accordance with the article 47 of the Constitution, everyone may enjoy freedom of thought and speech. Nobody should be forced to promulgate his/her thoughts and convictions or to renounce his/her thoughts and convictions. Propaganda provoking racial, ethnic, religious and social discord and animosity is prohibited. In accordance with the article 51 of the Constitution, everyone is free to carry out creative activity. The state guarantees freedom in literary-artistic, scientific-technical and other kinds of creative activity.

160. In accordance with the article 6 of the Law dated 21 December 2012 of the Republic of Azerbaijan “on Culture”, everyone living in the Azerbaijan Republic is provided with rights and freedoms, principles and norms of international law in the field of culture. The state guarantees to carry out the rights and freedoms of everyone in the field of culture, irrespective of gender, race, language, religious and political belief, ethnicity, social position, social origin, health opportunities, and membership in other public organizations. In accordance with the article 7 of the present law, the right to participate in cultural life in the Republic of Azerbaijan is guaranteed by the state. Everyone is fully free to define his/her cultural identity and lifestyle conforming to it, to choose creative activity, to create cultural wealth, to use equally of cultural values. In accordance with the article 43 of the present law, restriction of fundamental human and citizen rights and freedoms isn’t allowed in the field of culture, irrespective of race, ethnicity, religion, language, social origin, occupational position, belief and membership in other public organizations.

161. In accordance with the article 45 of the Law dated 5 June 1996 of the Republic of Azerbaijan “on copyright and related rights”, holders of copyright and related rights, as well as competent state bodies and organizations that collectively manage property rights shall have the right to require the termination of the actions which infringe or create a threat to infringe copyright and related rights.

162. In accordance with the article 165 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan, illegal use of copyright or related rights objects, that is edition under a name or different way in assignment of authorship of another's scientific, literary, art or other product, its illegal reprinting or distribution, as well as compulsion to co-authorship and as a result of these acts damage caused was in significant size leads to the criminal responsibility.

163. In accordance with the article 185 of the Code of Administrative Offences of the Republic of Azerbaijan, infringement of copyright and related rights, if a damage caused by this is insignificant, leads to the administrative responsibility.

164. The Code of Administrative Violations of the Republic of Azerbaijan that came into effect on March 1, 2016, specifies that people are equal under law, and person who committed an administrative offence is answerable for it, notwithstanding his/her race, ethnicity, religion, language, gender, origin, fortune, rank, views and etc. No one is neither to be made answerable for the grounds specified above, nor escape liability because of them. Besides, the Criminal Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan specifies that any action taken in order to cause ethnic, racial, social or religious strife and hatred between citizens of Azerbaijan by reason of race or with intent to lower ethnic dignity, or restrict rights of citizens, or achieve superiority over anybody because of their ethnicity, race or religion inflicts penalty. Crimes committed by reason of racial prejudice or hatred is not characteristic of Azerbaijan.

On Paragraph 25

165. No non-governmental organization (NGO) can operate in the Republic of Azerbaijan unless it is registered in the Republic of Azerbaijan. It is important that neither registration nor activity of any type of NGOs has been impeded in Azerbaijan. According to the Law on "State Registration List of Legal Entities" only commercial legal entities as well as foreign subsidiaries of legal entities or their missions should apply for the registration in Azerbaijan. A foreign subsidiary of an NGO or its mission should conclude an agreement with the Ministry of Justice.

166. According to the State register list, about 20% of NGOs registered in Azerbaijan are engaged in human rights, others are partially engaged in human rights, the others are engaged in economic, social and cultural rights. There are stable relationships between government institutions of Azerbaijan and social organizations. A Social Committee that functions as social control within the system of justice and consists of social institutions, representatives of NGOs is a good example of these relationships. Besides, adopted on November 12, 2013, law on "Social Participation" entitles society to participate in adoption of laws on a par with the government of Azerbaijan. Social Councils, which mostly consist of NGO representatives, have been founded to operate under Central and local authorities. Government institutions have held "social hearings" on different subjects. Since 2013, any amendment, which is meant to regulate activity of NGOs, has been discussed with NGOs prior to its adoption. All comments and proposals of NGOs have been reflected in legislative acts. Representatives of international organizations and foreign NGOs as well as foreign diplomats have been invited to hearings.

167. One of the most important directions in the field of the development of civil society is the improvement of the working environment by providing a wide range of electronic services to non-profit organizations and especially NGOs. For example, the NGO is currently working on expanding e-services, as well as over electronic treaty registration of data of the state register of legal entities, changes in constituent documents of non-commercial organizations, as well as grants, donations and services. The decree of the head of state "On measures to facilitate electronic services for NGOs" signed on November 20, 2013. Under the decree the Ministry of Justice was established an electronic information system "Individual electronic window". The system itself is the basis for the exchange of information between NGOs, between NGOs and state bodies and the provision of electronic services. Within the framework of this system, for each NGO which is the main function for them an "Individual Electronic Cabinet" was established to receive documents

electronically, submission answers on their basis, their systematization and storage, registration documents for grants, etc. The “Individual Electronic Office” contains information on the state register for each NGO, here the organization can post information about its activities, members, projects, grants, donations, information on events and meetings, announcements and statistics, as well as can also conduct its electronic chancellery. As at 01.03.2018, 182 979 documents and other various types of information were placed in this system.

168. By Presidential decree of 27.04.2016 the next “National Action Plan for the Promotion of an Open Government for 2016–2018” was approved, according to this Plan, on September 9, 2016, a Government-Civil Society Dialogue Platform on Open Government Initiative was established to promote an Open Government with the participation of the representatives of the government agencies and NGOs. The appropriate Memorandum was signed by the creators and participants of the Platform. Within the framework of the Open Government Initiative, the Platform works with representatives of international organizations and the private sector in the field of civil society representation, information exchange, development of e-government, monitoring of the National Action Plan. Participants of the Platform take part in the discussion of changes in legislation, in the resolution of economic and social issues in various spheres of public life, in the implementation of amnesty acts, monitors penitentiary institutions, participates in test exams for state institutions, in examinations for the selection of judges, etc., are part of the observational group.

169. In order to address gaps in legislation regulating the activities of NGOs, with a view to improving the rules of conducting a register of legal entities, to clarify the requirements for the constituent documents of December 17, 2013, amendments were made to the Laws “On State Registration and the State Register of Legal Entities” and “On Non-governmental Organizations (public unions and foundations)”. In the process of adopting these laws, international standards, the experience of European states, as well as the opinions of the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe of 2011 and the relevant decisions of the European Court of Human Rights were taken into account. As part of these changes, the requirements for ensuring transparency in the activities of NGOs were defined, the provisions of the legislation on the abolition of NGOs were revised and alternative measures were implemented of this annulment (administrative responsibility, termination of function). It should be noted that in some cases the administrative responsibility set out in the legislation applies not only to NGOs but also to all legal entities. In practice, administrative responsibility towards NGOs is used as a preventive measure and its existence is mainly preventive in nature. For example, from 2016 to the present day (March 2018) there has been no case of bringing NGOs to administrative responsibility.

170. The new amendments made to the laws “On Non-governmental Organizations (public unions and foundations)” and “On Grants” on October 17, 2014, cannot be considered as any restrictions on the activities of NGOs. The adopted amendments were primarily aimed at ensuring transparency in the use of funds received from external sources and increasing financial discipline in their activities. With funding NGOs, it is necessary to take into account the fact that they must ensure transparency in their activities in accordance with the legislation. NGOs are participants in monitoring in the field of combating of the legalization of money or other property acquired through financing through crime and terrorism.

171. Among others the measures to create favourable conditions for the activities of NGOs was signed the decree of the Republic of Azerbaijan of October 21, 2016 “On application of “one window” principle in the procedure of grant issuing by foreign donors in the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan”. According to the Decree, from January 1, 2017, the principle of “one window” in the procedure of grant issuing by foreign donors in the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan is applied. The coordinating bodies on the principle of a “single window” are the Ministry of Economy (regarding commercial organizations), the State Committee for Work with Religious Organizations (regarding religious organizations) and the Ministry of Justice (regarding other non-profit organizations and physical persons), the application of the “one window” principle relieved the donor from the need for a direct appeal to two state bodies, and the coordinating state

body took upon itself the implementation of all actions aimed at registering the grant. An important innovation aimed at improving the working conditions of NGOs is that the donor was released from the obligation to apply personally to the relevant state bodies. As a result of amendments to the legislation it was established that the right to register a grant is granted not only to the donor, but also to the recipient.

172. Another significant result of the implementation of the “one window” principle was a significant reduction in the number of documents required for submission to the relevant state body, as well as a significant reduction in the time frame for considering the issue of obtaining rights to donation. In particular, consideration of the issue of obtaining rights to donation reduced 2 times. At the same time, Azerbaijan actively cooperates with international organizations in this field. At present, the main sources of funding of the country’s NGOs are internal donors. Grants received by public unions are not taxed and grants are exempt from taxation. According decree of the Republic of Azerbaijan of October 21, 2016 “On application of one window principle in the procedure of grant issuing by foreign donors in the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan”, the registration of grants is carried out by foreign donors (or recipient) in the manner of granting grants in the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the principle of “one window”. Registration documents for a “one window” can be provided by donors or recipients.

173. There are 3 forms of financing NGOs from the State in Azerbaijan:

- Providing grants and financial assistance by means of a competition;
- Granting direct subsidies (to creative organizations);
- Social Orders.

174. There are several specialized state institutions in Azerbaijan that provide grants to public associations through the state budget. In addition, nine state institutions (mainly Ministries and Committees, as well as the Commission on Combating Corruption) provide grants to public organizations and physical persons.

On Paragraph 26 – Article 15 of the Covenant

175. As a result of the military aggression of Armenia, 20 percent of the territories of Azerbaijan were occupied, contrary to the norms of international law and the laws of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Azerbaijanis living on a full basis in their places of residence were mass expelled, or by other compelling actions were driven out, more than 20,000 people were killed and more than 50,000 were injured and disabled as a result of large-scale and systematic armed attacks aimed at destroying the civilian population of Azerbaijan as a national and ethnic group. As a result of the occupation, more than a million people, living for over 20 years under the conditions of refugees and IDPs were victims of ethnic cleansing and genocide against Azerbaijanis by Armenia, were deprived of elementary human rights.

176. According to data of the State Commission on Prisoners of War, Hostages and Missing Persons (www.human.gov.az), from February 1, 2018, the number of people missing as a result of Armenia’s armed aggression against the Republic of Azerbaijan amounted to 3,875 people. 3165 of them are military personnel, and 710 are civilians. While 67 people among the civilian population were missing, minors (23 underage girls), 265 women, 326 elderly (166 women). Information was received about the capture and hostage of 871 missing persons, testimonies were obtained. 602 of them are military personnel, and 269 are civilians. While out of 877 people, 29 missing minor children (7 adolescent girls), 98 women, 113 elderly people (64 women). During the conflict, 1,450 people were released from hostages and captures. 356 of them are military personnel, 1,094 are civilians. At the same time, 221 children (79 adolescent girls), 281 women and 222 elderly (101 elderly women).

177. In violation of the requirements of Article 53 of the Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949 “On the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War”, as well as article 4 of the “Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict” of 14 May 1954, as a result of war crimes committed by the Republic of Armenia more than

900 settlements were looted, burned and destroyed, 6 thousand industrial, agricultural enterprises and other objects were eliminated, 150 thousand residential buildings with a total living area of more than 150 million square meters destroyed, 4,366 objects of social culture and at the same time 695 medical centres were liquidated. In the occupied territories, agriculture field, water management, hydro-technical installations, all transportation and communication links were completely wrecked. As a result of the destruction, the country's economy suffered more than \$60 billion in losses (www.economy.gov.az). During the armed aggression, 927 libraries, 464 historical monuments and museums, more than 100 archaeological monuments, 6 state theatres and concert studios seized in the territory of Azerbaijan were destroyed. More than 40,000 precious jewels and rare exhibits were stolen from the looted museums. Currently, the main focus is on the effective implementation of new principles and existing means of international criminal law for the purpose of prosecuting and punishing criminals who have committed war crimes against the Republic of Azerbaijan and its citizens.

178. Djulfa cemetery on the territory of the Djulfa region of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic refers to the period of the Albanian state. Elements of decoration on the tombstone are symbols of the Christian era of Albanians. At the same time, the sculptures of the ram in the cemeteries are historical monuments of this cemetery, inherent to the period "Kara Koyunlu" of Azerbaijan. These sculptures belonged only to Azerbaijan and cover the 14th century. Such sculptures can be found in all regions of Azerbaijan. Deformations on monuments located in cemeteries are the result of natural processes, rather than human intervention. The assertions of Armenians about the destruction of this cemetery by Azerbaijanis are groundless. Thus, Djulfa is a tectonically active area. Earthquakes and other natural processes that occurred over the decades led to the destruction of tombstones in many graves. At the same time, there is an analogous situation in the Muslim cemeteries of that period and the more ancient period. On the contrary, in the occupied territories by Armenia, 7 world, 206 republican, 333 local and 100 archaeological monuments and in general the Shusha city preserve of Azerbaijan were almost completely destroyed.

179. It should be noted that the cemeteries and houses in the occupied village of Kerki of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic were completely destroyed, residential and administrative buildings belonging to Azerbaijanis in Nagorno-Karabakh and surrounding areas, "Tombs" historical monuments located in the territory of the Mammadbaily village of Zangilan region related to the period of XIII and XIV centuries; "Maiden Tower" in the vicinity of the Amirkhanly village; "Tomb" in the Khasali village were mass dismantled; the precious monuments belonging to the ancient residential area of "Shahri-Sharifan" and located underground on the right bank of the Hakari River, near the village of Sharifan, were completely destroyed and conveyed to Armenia and Iran as building materials. Furthermore, 10 regional cultural centres, 18 village clubs, 500 village clubs and cultural houses, 691 village libraries, 22 museums, 85 music schools, 4 theatres, 4 photo galleries of 9 regions, 33 cities located in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan were destroyed by Armenians and important historical exhibits were transported to Armenia.

180. There were 300,000 historical and cultural monuments, more than 500 cemeteries belonging to the ancient Irevan Khanate of Azerbaijan existed in the territory of Armenia were completely destroyed, the geographical names were made Armenian. Armenians make changes to historical books of churches belonging to ancient Albanians in the territory of Iran. The entrance doors from the east in these churches are cementing, instead, new doors are opening that are similar in the Armenian churches. Thus, after the restoration of the ancient Albanian church in the village of Mukumbar in 2002, located about 40–42 km from Tabriz, the Iranian press was informed as if it were an ancient Armenian church.

On Paragraph 27

181. Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights was signed by the Republic of Azerbaijan in 2009. The inter-state approval is required for the ratification of the Optional Protocol.

On Paragraph 28

182. The Concluding Observations (E/C.12/AZE/CO/3) adopted at the 15th session of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights regarding the third periodic report of the Republic of Azerbaijan, held from April 29 to May 17, 2013, was translated and distributed among state bodies and non-governmental organizations.

On Paragraph 29

183. The “Common Core Document” submitted together with relevant periodic reports to the UN Human Rights Treaty Bodies was updated based on the Guiding Principles for the Reporting of International Human Rights Treaties (HRI/GEN/2/Rev.6).
