



**International Convention on
the Elimination of All Forms
of Racial Discrimination**

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Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

**Combined tenth to twelfth periodic reports
submitted by Uzbekistan under article 9 of the
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National Centre for Human Rights

Tenth to twelfth periodic reports of the Republic of Uzbekistan on the implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

Tashkent, 2018

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I. Introduction

1. This report, which constitutes the combined tenth to twelfth periodic reports of Uzbekistan, is submitted under article 9 (1) of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, in accordance with the guidelines for the CERD-specific document to be submitted by States parties under article 9, paragraph 1, of the Convention, and covers the period from March 2014 to September 2018. It contains information on the implementation of the Convention since the submission of the combined eighth and ninth periodic reports of Uzbekistan and takes account of the concluding observations made by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination following its consideration of those reports.

2. The present report was prepared by the National Centre for Human Rights on the basis of information provided by more than 50 State bodies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). As part of the preparation of the report, on 7 September 2018 an international conference was held on the theme “Implementation of the United Nations International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination: international and national standards for the attainment of the priority objectives of State policy on inter-ethnic relations in the Year of Active Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Technology”, with the participation of Andrei Khanzhin, Adviser to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) High Commissioner on National Minorities. The report was also discussed at a session of the Committee on Democratic Institutions, Non-Governmental Organizations and Citizens’ Self-Governance Bodies of the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis, the parliament of Uzbekistan.

3. The Convention is being implemented in Uzbekistan through the conduct of a new programme of fundamental democratic reforms affecting all aspects of life in society without exception – sociopolitical, socioeconomic, spiritual and moral – as set out in the 2017–2021 Strategy of Action on Five Priority Areas for the Development of Uzbekistan, which is focused on: promoting the development of the State and society; safeguarding the rule of law and reforming the judicial and legal systems; further developing the economy; improving the social sector; and ensuring security, inter-ethnic harmony and religious tolerance and the pursuit of a mutually beneficial and constructive foreign policy.

4. In terms of implementing an open foreign policy and the principle of openness and transparency of reform, the most notable successes achieved in the country have been in the development of cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), international treaty bodies, United Nations special procedures and international NGOs working on human rights and freedoms.

5. In 2016, a memorandum of understanding was concluded between the National Centre for Human Rights and the United Nations Office in Uzbekistan. In 2017, Uzbekistan received visits from: the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein, which resulted in the adoption of an action plan for further cooperation with OHCHR, approved by the councils (*kengash*) of the Legislative Chamber and the Senate on 16 June 2017; the Secretary-General of the United Nations, António Guterres; Hugh Williamson, director of the Europe and Central Asia Division of Human Rights Watch; a delegation from the OHCHR Regional Office for Central Asia headed by Ryszard Komenda; and the United Nations Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, Ahmed Shaheed, which resulted in the adoption of a road map to ensure freedom of religion or belief, approved by the councils of the Legislative Chamber and the Senate on 4 May 2018.

6. The President of Uzbekistan addressed the seventy-second session of the United Nations General Assembly between 18 and 20 September 2017, putting forward initiatives aimed at ensuring stability and sustainable development in the Central Asian region and proposing the adoption of a special General Assembly resolution on that question. He also proposed the drafting of a United Nations convention on the rights of young persons and the adoption of a General Assembly resolution entitled “Enlightenment and religious

tolerance”. Following this visit, a road map was adopted and approved by a presidential decision of 27 September 2017.

7. From 13 to 18 April 2018, Uzbekistan received a delegation from the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, headed by Ambassador Lamberto Zannier, who commended the experience of Uzbekistan in the field of inter-ethnic relations, stating that such experience was of practical interest to OSCE. He noted that, through the implementation of the Strategy of Action, an effective system had been developed for the social integration of the members of all ethnic groups in a multi-ethnic society. The access by national minorities to schooling, which was provided in seven languages in Uzbekistan, was practically a one-off in Central Asia. That kind of practice was desperately needed in other countries of the region.

8. Over the reporting period, Uzbekistan participated actively in constructive dialogue and exchange of information with United Nations special procedures related to human rights and freedoms: more than 50 reports and documents were submitted to these entities concerning concrete implementation mechanisms for specific categories of human rights and freedoms. Special attention was paid to developing cooperation with international organizations such as the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Health Organization, the International Organization for Migration, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. Cooperation with OSCE, the European Union, the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, bodies under the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and others was an important aspect of the country’s interactions in the field of human rights.

9. In May 2018, a delegation from Uzbekistan took part in the thirtieth session of the Human Rights Council’s Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review in Geneva, at which the third national report of Uzbekistan was considered; this was followed by a briefing on the outcome of the review, held in Tashkent on 23 May and attended by members of the diplomatic corps, civil society organizations and the media. On 20 September 2018, the Council approved its recommendations, with more than 90 per cent of them being accepted by Uzbekistan.

10. Uzbekistan continued to adhere to international human rights standards: it ratified the ILO Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), and prepared the organizational and legal framework required for ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization Convention against Extremism was ratified pursuant to the Act of 3 April 2018; Uzbekistan proposed the United Nations General Assembly resolution “Strengthening regional and international cooperation to ensure peace, stability and sustainable development in the Central Asian region”, adopted on 18 June 2018. On 26 and 27 July 2018 in Washington, D.C., an Uzbek delegation took part in the Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom, hosted for the first time in the United States of America by Secretary of State Michael Pompeo and attended by representatives from over 80 countries. As part of the conference, a special briefing was held, entitled “A New Era for Religious Freedom in Uzbekistan”.

11. In February 2017, the ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations issued a report in which it welcomed the fulfilment by Uzbekistan of its obligations and the results of monitoring carried out between 2014 and 2016 with a view to combating child labour and forced labour during the cotton harvest; the 2017 comprehensive action plan of the Coordinating Council on Child Labour for implementation of the Decent Work Country Programme of the Republic of Uzbekistan was adopted, along with the plan of technical measures to implement the recommendations of the ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations regarding the implementation by Uzbekistan of ILO Conventions Nos. 105 and 182. On 4 October 2017, a range of measures to ensure citizens’ labour rights under national legislation was approved pursuant to a Senate decision, and the United States Department of Labor adopted a decision to lift the sanctions imposed on the country.

12. Significant efforts have been made to improve the legal framework that enables society to defend human rights by: enshrining in the Constitution the institution of public oversight of the activities of government bodies; establishing the Supreme Judicial Council of Uzbekistan; introducing reporting by the Government, executive authorities and the Constitutional Court to the parliament and the President on the observance of constitutional law in the country; granting the Ombudsman the right to bring cases before the Constitutional Court; and strengthening the legal status of the Central Electoral Commission.

13. The following laws have been adopted, among others: the Internal Affairs Agencies Act of 16 September 2016; the Procurator's Office Act (new version) of 29 August 2001; the Act on the Serving of Sentences of Administrative Detention of 9 January 2017; the Anti-Corruption Act of 3 January 2017; the National Security Service Act of 5 April 2018; the Public Procurement Act of 9 April 2018; the Administrative Procedures Act of 8 January 2018; the Anti-Extremism Act of 30 July 2018; and the Code of Administrative Procedure. The penalties applicable to law enforcement agencies for violations of the law have been increased, and a system has been set up to make such agencies accountable to the people, to citizens' associations and to State representative authorities.

14. The most significant achievement in terms of combating torture and other forms of violence is as follows: under a presidential decree of 30 November 2017 on additional measures to strengthen guarantees of the rights and freedoms of citizens during judicial investigations, information obtained through violations of procedural laws, including through the use of torture, has been declared inadmissible as evidence in criminal cases. Speaking at an event held in honour of Constitution Day (7 December 2017), the President emphasized that the use of torture or of psychological or physical coercion or other forms of violence against persons in detention or subject to criminal prosecution would not be tolerated under any circumstances in Uzbekistan. In his address to the Oliy Majlis on 22 December 2017, the President stated that officers who committed such acts and persons carrying out such acts "under orders" would be prosecuted without fail.

15. Efforts to fully ensure the rights and interests of persons held in pretrial detention facilities and penal institutions have continued. In the past 15 years, the number of inmates at places of deprivation of liberty has been cut by more than half. The incarceration rate is now 133 per 100,000 population. Pursuant to the Amnesty Act passed by the Senate on 12 October 2016, an amnesty from prosecution or punishment was provided for over 15,500 persons, and more than 2,800 people were released from places of deprivation of liberty. Under a presidential pardon, the sentences of 2,700 people were remitted, including over 900 who were released from places of deprivation of liberty.

16. Guarantees of the constitutional right to petition State bodies, including law enforcement agencies, have been strengthened. Pursuant to a presidential decree of 28 December 2016, presidential help desks and a presidential portal have been established for members of the public. On 11 September 2017, provisions were introduced into the Natural and Legal Persons' Petitions Act prohibiting the refusal to consider a petition on any matter, establishing mobile, individual and public reception sessions to address issues raised by citizens and providing for extensive use of real-time information and communication technologies, including in the form of confidential helplines, hotlines to State bodies and videoconferencing.

17. During the reporting period, Uzbekistan adopted a number of policy documents to prevent racial discrimination: in 2014, a national plan of action for implementing the recommendations made by the Human Rights Council and United Nations treaty bodies following their consideration of the country's national human rights reports for the period 2014–2016; in 2015, a national plan of action for implementing the recommendations made by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination following its consideration of the combined eighth and ninth periodic reports of Uzbekistan; and, in 2017, the 2017–2021 Strategy of Action on Five Priority Areas for the Development of Uzbekistan, section V of which, "Ensuring security, inter-ethnic harmony and religious tolerance and a balanced, mutually beneficial and constructive foreign policy", contains the first framework to be developed in Uzbekistan setting out priority areas for State policy in the field of inter-ethnic relations and the first State policy framework on religion. In addition, pursuant to a

presidential decree of 19 May 2017, the Committee on Inter-Ethnic Relations and Friendly Ties with Foreign Countries was established under the Cabinet of Ministers.

18. The annual State programmes adopted for the Year of the Healthy Child (2014), the Year of Attention and Care for the Older Generation (2015), the Year of Mother and Child Health (2016), the Year of Dialogue with the People and of Human Interests (2017) and the Year of Support for Active Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Technology (2018) contributed significantly to the intensification of the anti-discrimination measures recommended by the Committee. In order to increase the focus on the values enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a programme of events was approved, pursuant to a presidential decree of 5 May 2018, to celebrate the seventieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; the programme provided for measures to further improve the legislation on freedom of conscience and religious organizations, establish a post of ombudsman to defend the rights of children and young persons, draft a convention on the rights of young persons, prepare the draft United Nations General Assembly resolution “Enlightenment and religious tolerance”, host the Asian Forum on Human Rights and so forth.

19. NGOs and other civil society organizations, which now number over 9,000, have contributed actively to efforts to ensure inter-ethnic harmony. A law adopted in 2014, the Act on Transparency in the Work of State and Government Bodies, has ensured openness and transparency in the activities of State bodies and defined mechanisms to ensure the rights of citizens, NGOs and the media to gain access to relevant information. The adoption of the Social Partnership Act of 25 September 2014 helped to establish the legal framework and principles for interaction between State authorities and civil society organizations in the socioeconomic, cultural, humanitarian and other spheres. Increased public engagement has also been facilitated by the adoption of the Public Oversight Act of 12 April 2018, which defined the actors responsible for carrying out public oversight of the activities of State authorities and officials and the modalities for such oversight.

20. Every ethnic group residing in the country has established NGOs in the form of ethnic cultural centres that promote and preserve their languages, cultural traditions and ways of life. The Cabinet of Ministers Committee on Inter-Ethnic Relations and Friendly Ties with Foreign Countries coordinates the work of 138 ethnic cultural centres and 34 international friendship associations, providing them with comprehensive support and assistance.

21. Every year, the non-governmental Public Opinion Centre carries out a sociological survey, focused on reinforcing civic peace and social stability in Uzbek society and identifying trends in the development of inter-ethnic relations within the country. The survey carried out between 19 and 28 August 2016 in Tashkent, the Republic of Karakalpakstan and all provinces of Uzbekistan showed that 99.6 per cent of Uzbeks believed that peace and stability, inter-ethnic and civic harmony in society were the most important legacy and achievement of Uzbekistan since independence. It showed that the number of respondents (34 per cent) identifying ethnic discrimination in day-to-day life as the main reason for conflicts between people of different ethnicities was falling, compared with the 2015 data (42.6 per cent in 2015).

22. The media have become extremely important in ensuring plurality of opinion in society. Currently, television and radio programmes are broadcast in more than 15 languages, including Uzbek, Karakalpak, Russian, Kazakh, Tajik, Kyrgyz, Crimean Tatar, Uighur, Azeri, English, Korean, Turkmen, Tatar, Hindi and German, which helps to raise awareness of the lives and activities of members of the various ethnic groups in the country.

23. Great importance is accorded to the promotion and examination of the provisions of the Convention and to the education of young people in a spirit of tolerance and respect for national and universal human values and the preservation and development of history, culture, national traditions and customs. The formation of a harmonious and spiritually developed younger generation, devoted to the ideals of independence and defence of the national interests of Uzbekistan, ideologically immune to the dogmas of aggressive nationalism and extremism, is facilitated by the cultural and educational events regularly held by the Youth Union, the Women’s Committee, the Mahalla (Community) Foundation

and ethnic cultural centres, helping to ensure the right of all ethnic groups to preserve their own culture and identity.

24. For example, on 16 March 2016, the National Centre for Human Rights held a round table in honour of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination; on 16 November 2016, an international academic and practical conference was organized at Tashkent Islamic University on the occasion of the International Day for Tolerance; on 8 September 2017, the Committee on Inter-Ethnic Relations and Friendly Ties with Foreign Countries hosted an academic and practical seminar on the topic “Further improving inter-ethnic relations and friendly ties with foreign countries”; on 21 September 2017, an event marking the International Day of Peace took place, attended by representatives of the United Nations and UNESCO offices in Uzbekistan, the World Peace Bell Association from Japan, ethnic cultural centres and friendship associations; and, on 15 November 2017, an international academic conference was held on the topic “Development of ethnic groups in a tolerant Uzbekistan”.

25. The next challenges for implementation of the Convention in Uzbekistan concern the improvement of State regulation in the field of inter-ethnic relations by bridging gaps in the legal framework relating to the separation of powers and the coordination of the activities of different State bodies implementing ethnic policy, including at the local level; the formation of an effective system for basic and continuing training of personnel; and the expansion of research on ensuring inter-ethnic and interfaith harmony in society, along with the strengthening of international cooperation in that area.

II. Information on the measures taken to implement the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Committee’s concluding observations

Article 1

26. The rights of all individuals, without distinction as to race, ethnicity, language, religion or social origin, are guaranteed by the Constitution, laws and other legal instruments of Uzbekistan.

27. The preamble to the Constitution defines the goals of the people of Uzbekistan with respect to ensuring civic peace and inter-ethnic harmony based on the principles of adherence to human rights and State sovereignty, recognition of the primacy of the universally recognized standards of international law and provision of a decent life for all citizens of the Republic. In accordance with article 7 of the Constitution, the sole source of State power is the people of Uzbekistan, while in accordance with article 8 of the Constitution, the people of Uzbekistan is constituted by the citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan regardless of their ethnicity.

28. The principles of equality between citizens and prevention of discrimination are enshrined in article 18 of the Constitution, which provides that all citizens of Uzbekistan have the same rights and freedoms and are equal before the law, without distinction as to sex, race, ethnicity, language, religion, social origin, beliefs, or personal or social status. Special benefits must be established in law and must be in line with the principles of social justice. The implementation of these constitutional provisions is guaranteed by article 19 of the Constitution, which provides that citizens of Uzbekistan and the State are bound by reciprocal rights and responsibilities. The rights and freedoms of citizens enshrined in the Constitution and the law are inviolable, and no one may deny or restrict them except by order of a court.

29. The basic human and civil rights, freedoms and obligations enshrined in section II of the Constitution concern all citizens of Uzbekistan, regardless of ethnicity, and this applies to all personal, political, economic, social and cultural rights. The State guarantees the rights and freedoms enshrined in the Constitution and the law, ensuring that all persons

have the right to submit applications, proposals and complaints to the competent State authorities (art. 35) and to seek legal protection of their rights by filing appeals with the courts against illegal actions by State authorities, officials and voluntary associations (art. 44).

30. Foreign nationals and stateless persons in the territory of Uzbekistan enjoy rights and freedoms in accordance with the norms of international law. Uzbekistan is currently a party to more than 70 international instruments related to human rights and freedoms.

31. According to article 16 of the Constitution, no law or other legal instrument may conflict with the norms and principles of the Constitution; the basic principles of equality between citizens and prevention of discrimination are enshrined in almost all laws and ensured in practice by law enforcement.

32. Provisions on the prevention and prohibition of racial discrimination are found in the Civil Code, Code of Civil Procedure, Labour Code, Family Code, Criminal Code, Code of Criminal Procedure and Code of Administrative Procedure and also in the following laws, among others: the Citizens' Voting Rights Guarantees Act of 5 May 1994; the Health Care Act of 29 August 1996; the Education Act of 29 August 1997; the Courts Act (new version) of 14 December 2000; the Referendums Act (new version) of 30 August 2001; the Freedom of Information Act of 12 December 2002; the Pretrial Detention during Criminal Proceedings Act of 29 September 2011; the Natural and Legal Persons' Petitions Act (new version) of 11 September 2017; the Youth Policy Act of 14 September 2016; the Internal Affairs Agencies Act of 16 September 2016; and the Anti-Extremism Act of 30 July 2018.

33. The Political Parties Act of 26 December 1996, the Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organizations Act of 14 April 1999 and the Media Act (new version) of 15 January 2007 prohibit the establishment of political parties, media outlets and NGOs promoting war, violence and terrorism or religious extremist, separatist and fundamentalist ideas or disseminating information that incites national, racial, ethnic or religious hatred. The Criminal Code provides for penalties for offences such as: illegal organization of voluntary associations or religious organizations (art. 216); inducement to participate in the activities of illegal voluntary associations and religious organizations (art. 2161); violation of the legislation on religious organizations (art. 2162); violation of the rules on organizing or holding assemblies, rallies, marches or demonstrations (art. 217); violation of the rules on religious instruction (art. 2292); production, possession, dissemination or public display of material constituting a threat to public security or public order (art. 2441); and establishment, leadership or membership of religious extremist, separatist, fundamentalist or other prohibited organizations (art. 2442).

34. On the basis of the Committee's recommendations, a number of laws and other legal instruments have been adopted, aimed at reinforcing legal safeguards for the protection of the rights and freedoms of all categories of citizen, ensuring inter-ethnic and interfaith harmony in society and preventing aggressive nationalism and extremism, including: the Crime Prevention Act of 14 May 2014; the Youth Policy Act of 14 September 2016; the Internal Affairs Agencies Act of 16 September 2016; the Anti-Corruption Act of 3 January 2017; the Act on the Serving of Sentences of Administrative Detention of 9 January 2017; the Supreme Judicial Council Act of 6 April 2017; the Constitutional Court Act of 31 May 2017; the Act on the Presidential Commissioner for the Protection of the Rights and Lawful Interests of Business Entities of 29 August 2017; the Act amending the Act on the Human Rights Commissioner (Ombudsman) of the Oliy Majlis of 29 August 2018; the Dissemination of and Access to Legal Information Act of 7 September 2017; the Act on the Protection of Children from Information Harmful to Their Health of 8 September 2017; the Natural and Legal Persons' Petitions Act (new version) of 11 September 2017; the Administrative Procedures Act of 8 January 2018; the Act approving the Code of Administrative Procedure of 25 January 2018; the National Security Service Act of 5 April 2018; the Public Oversight Act of 12 April 2018; the Mediation Act of 3 July 2018; and the Anti-Extremism Act of 30 July 2018.

35. Presidential decrees have been adopted, inter alia, on measures to further enhance inter-ethnic relations and friendly ties with foreign countries (9 May 2017); approval of the Regulations on the procedure for granting political asylum in Uzbekistan (29 May 2017);

measures to enhance the effectiveness of State youth policy and support the work of the Youth Union of Uzbekistan (5 July 2017); measures to radically improve the work of the religious education sector (16 April 2018); measures to greatly enhance the role of civil society organizations in the country's democratic renewal (4 May 2018); a programme of events to celebrate the seventieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (5 August 2018); approval of the Regulations on the procedure for granting pardons in Uzbekistan (8 May 2018); and approval of the policy framework for improving rule-making (8 August 2018).

36. In addition, presidential decisions have been adopted on, for example, measures to improve the work of the Cabinet of Ministers Committee on Religious Affairs (16 April 2018); measures to fundamentally improve the system of criminal and criminal procedure law (14 May 2018); the effective organization of work to renovate sites of worship and pilgrimage, mosques and cemeteries (15 February 2018); additional measures to eliminate forced labour in Uzbekistan (10 May 2018); and approval of the rules for registration, re-registration and termination of the activities of religious organizations (31 May 2018).

37. The laws adopted during the reporting period have continued the legislative tradition of enshrining provisions on the inadmissibility of discrimination against any person, including on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, language or religion.

38. Article 5 of the Employment Act of 13 January 1992, as amended in 2014, emphasizes the need to ensure that all citizens, irrespective of sex, age, race, ethnicity, language, social origin, property or employment status, attitude to religion, beliefs, membership in voluntary associations or other circumstances unrelated to the professional qualities of employees or their performance, enjoy equal opportunities in exercising the right to work and free choice of employment.

39. Article 4 of the Citizens' Self-Governance Bodies Act (new version) of 2 September 1999, as amended on 23 July 2018, provides that citizens have equal rights to participate in self-governance, directly or through their elected representatives, irrespective of sex, race, ethnicity, language, religion, social origin, beliefs, or personal or social status.

40. Article 8 of the Freedom of Information Act of 12 December 2002, as amended on 18 April 2018, establishes that the State must protect the right of everyone to seek, receive, research, disseminate, use and store information. It is prohibited to restrict the right to information on the basis of sex, race, ethnicity, language, religion, social origin, beliefs, or personal or social status.

41. Article 8 of the Internal Affairs Agencies Act of 16 October 2016 provides that internal affairs agencies must protect the rights, freedoms and lawful interests of citizens, irrespective of sex, race, ethnicity, language, religion, social origin, beliefs, or personal or social status.

42. Article 22 of the Youth Policy Act of 14 September 2016 provides that any direct or indirect restrictions on the rights and freedoms of young persons based on sex, race, ethnicity, language, religion, social origin, beliefs or personal or social status are inadmissible and punishable by law.

43. Article 16 of the Natural and Legal Persons' Petitions Act (new version) of 11 September 2017 states that in the exercise of the right to petition, any discrimination based on the sex, race, ethnicity, language, religion, social origin, beliefs or personal or social status of a natural person, or on the type of ownership, location (postal address), form of legal incorporation or other circumstances of a legal person, is prohibited.

44. New provisions have been inserted in the Act on the Human Rights Commissioner (Ombudsman) of the Oliy Majlis of 29 August 2017 stipulating that in the consideration of complaints addressed to the Commissioner, any discrimination based on the sex, race, ethnicity, language, religion, social origin, beliefs or personal or social status of a natural person, or on the type of ownership, location (postal address), form of legal incorporation or other circumstances of a legal person, is prohibited.

45. Article 9 of the Code of Administrative Procedure of 26 January 2018 provides that administrative justice is dispensed on the basis of citizens' equality before the law and the

courts, irrespective of sex, race, ethnicity, language, religion, social origin, beliefs, or personal or social status, and for legal persons, irrespective of type of ownership, location, form of legal incorporation or other circumstances.

46. Article 8 of the National Security Service Act of 5 April 2018 states that the National Security Service must protect the rights, freedoms and lawful interests of citizens, irrespective of sex, race, ethnicity, language, religion, social origin, beliefs, or personal or social status.

47. A new provision has been inserted in article 235 (2) of the Criminal Code stipulating that the use of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment on any grounds stemming from ethnic, racial, religious or social discrimination is punishable by 5 to 7 years' imprisonment with forfeiture of the right to occupy certain posts or engage in certain activities.

48. Regarding the Committee's recommendation (para. 5), research carried out by law enforcement agencies, civil society organizations and academic institutions on the subject of incorporating in legislation a definition of racial discrimination that is in line with article 1 of the Convention has shown that the definitions enshrined in the Constitution and law of Uzbekistan are generally consistent with the article, with only two grounds for racial discrimination missing: "colour" and "descent". Enshrining these elements in the Constitution and law of Uzbekistan, given the inter-ethnic harmony prevailing in the country, is not of vital importance, especially since the concept of "colour" is included within the concept of "race", which means "a group of persons united by common descent and sharing certain physical characteristics: build, skin colour and so forth".¹ Anti-discrimination legislation is constantly being improved in Uzbekistan, drawing on the provisions of the Convention, other international human rights instruments, experience in other countries and the current situation in the area of inter-ethnic relations. The adoption of a separate legal instrument devoted to racial discrimination runs counter to the logic behind the organization of the country's legal system.

49. At the same time, study of the experience of other countries regarding the incorporation of article 1 of the Convention into legislation is ongoing, and public discussions on this and other matters raised by the Committee continue to be held, with contributions from international experts.

Article 2

50. For many centuries in the ancient land of Uzbekistan, members of different ethnic groups, cultures and religions lived together in peace and harmony. Hospitality, kindness, open-hearted generosity and genuine tolerance have always come naturally to the people of Uzbekistan and are the basis of the Uzbek mentality. Speaking at an event held in honour of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Uzbekistan Inter-Ethnic Cultural Centre on 24 January 2017, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev declared: "The age of independence has opened up a new phase in inter-ethnic relations in the country. One of the main priorities of government policy in Uzbekistan is developing a culture of tolerance and humanism, strengthening inter-ethnic and civic understanding and harmony, and educating the younger generation on that basis, in a spirit of love and devotion to their country. The atmosphere of friendship and solidarity reigning in the Republic is the most significant factor for maintaining peace and stability, increasing the effectiveness of the reforms implemented and bolstering the country's authority in the international arena." The President of Uzbekistan regularly makes public statements on the challenges and threats posed by intolerance and extremism and initiates the adoption of timely legislation on matters related to combating the propagation of nationalism, racism, extremism and terrorism.

51. As regards government policy, the following measures are being implemented to prevent discrimination in all its forms and on all grounds:

¹ See Russian dictionary, vol. III, p. 641.

- A ban on forming political parties based on race or ethnicity (Constitution, art. 57) and on establishing voluntary associations with the aim of promoting racial or religious discord (Voluntary Associations Act, art. 3)
- A prohibition on using religion for the purpose of inciting hatred, hostility or inter-ethnic discord (Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations Act, art. 5)
- Prevention of the use of the media for the purpose of promoting ethnic, racial or religious hatred (Media Act, art. 6)
- A ban on impeding citizens from exercising their right freely to choose their language of communication, education and training (State Language Act, art. 24)
- Promotion of equality between men and women in political and public life

52. Under the Uzbek legal system, there are penalties for offences against the equality of rights of citizens. Article 42 of the Administrative Liability Code provides for a fine for violating the rights of citizens freely to choose their language of education and training, for obstructing or restricting the use of a language and for showing disrespect towards the State language or other languages of the ethnic groups and peoples living in Uzbekistan. Article 1842 provides for penalties for illegal production, possession, import or dissemination of material of a religious nature, article 1843 for production, possession or dissemination of material promoting national, racial, ethnic or religious hatred and article 1793 for the violation of legislation on combating money-laundering and the financing of terrorism.

53. As stipulated in the Committee's recommendation (para. 6), the Criminal Code provides for liability for the commission of an offence with a racist motive, which constitutes an aggravating circumstance. It establishes specific penalties for the following offences when motivated by inter-ethnic or racial hatred or religious prejudice: murder (art. 97 (2) (j) and (l)); intentional grievous bodily harm (art. 104 (2) (g) and (h)); intentional moderate bodily harm (art. 105 (2) (g) and (h)); violations of equality of rights (art. 141); genocide (art. 153); terrorism (art. 155); incitement to national, racial, ethnic or religious hatred (art. 156); intentional destruction of or damage to property motivated by inter-ethnic or racial hatred or religious prejudice (art. 173 (2) (a)); and use of torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (art. 235).

54. Article 141 of the Code provides for the punishment of violations of equality of rights. Between 2015 and 2017, the courts heard 39 criminal cases against 69 persons concerning crimes related to violations of equality of rights.

55. Article 156 provides for liability for incitement to national, racial or religious hatred, defined as deliberate acts that offend national honour or dignity and are committed for the purpose of inciting hatred, intolerance or discord with respect to any group on national, racial or ethnic grounds, as well as for the direct or indirect restriction of rights, or the conferment of direct or indirect privileges, on national, racial or ethnic grounds.

56. Article 2441 provides for liability for the production or possession with intent to disseminate of materials containing religious extremist, separatist or fundamentalist ideas or calls for mob attacks or forcible evictions or materials aimed at spreading panic in the population.

57. In 2016, the courts heard the following cases: under article 97 (2) (j) and (l) of the Criminal Code (murder motivated by inter-ethnic or racial hatred), 1 criminal case against 1 person, who received a custodial sentence; under article 104 (2) (g) and (h) of the Code (intentional grievous bodily harm motivated by inter-ethnic or racial hatred), 1 criminal case against 1 person, who received a suspended custodial sentence; under article 156 (incitement to national, racial, ethnic or religious hatred), 17 criminal cases against 23 persons, of whom 1 received a sentence of community service, 1 a semi-custodial sentence, 17 custodial sentences and 4 suspended custodial sentences; and, under article 2441 (production, possession, dissemination or public display of materials constituting a threat to public security or public order), 298 criminal cases against 426 persons, including 295 cases resulting in guilty verdicts against 423 persons, of whom 12 were sentenced to pay fines, 22 were sentenced to community service, 4 were sentenced to short-term rigorous imprisonment, 20 received semi-custodial sentences, 331 received custodial sentences, 1

was granted amnesty and 33 received suspended custodial sentences, while the case against 1 person was dropped, 1 person received a compulsory treatment order and 1 case was referred for further investigation.

58. In 2017, the courts heard the following cases: under article 156 of the Criminal Code, 9 criminal cases against 25 persons, who received custodial sentences; and, under article 2441 of the Code, 373 criminal cases against 517 persons, with 368 cases resulting in guilty verdicts against 512 persons, of whom 27 were sentenced to pay fines, 22 were sentenced to punitive deduction of earnings, 91 received semi-custodial sentences, 288 received custodial sentences and 35 received suspended custodial sentences, while the case against 1 person was dropped, 4 persons received compulsory treatment orders and 1 person was acquitted.

59. Between 2014 and 2018, the Izhtimoi Fikr Centre carried out four comprehensive sociological studies (in 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018) on the topics “Uzbekistan – our common home” and “Multi-ethnic Uzbekistan” and four studies on the topic “Levels of religiosity in Uzbekistan” (in 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017). The surveys confirmed that the positive evaluation of inter-ethnic relations, which is typical of Uzbek public opinion, had remained stable. In other words, the respondents had not observed ethnic-based conflicts or abuses of rights on the grounds of ethnicity in the country. An absolute majority of Uzbeks considered inter-ethnic relations in the country to be very good (57.9 per cent) or good (39.4 per cent).

60. Keeping in mind the Committee’s recommendation (para. 9), Uzbekistan does not confine itself to the results of opinion polls in matters of inter-ethnic relations. To ensure that manifestations of racial discrimination are identified, improvements have been made to the mechanisms for receiving and examining petitions from citizens: presidential help desks and a presidential portal have been established, and hotlines and confidential helplines have been set up to all State bodies. An analysis of their operation showed that there were no complaints from citizens concerning racial discrimination. Despite this fact, additional anti-discrimination measures have been adopted in the areas of legislation, policy and awareness-raising, aimed at preventing manifestations of direct or indirect discrimination based on ethnicity.

61. For example, pursuant to a presidential decree of 19 May 2017, an interministerial body was established for the first time in Uzbekistan to coordinate the implementation of a unified government policy on inter-ethnic relations: the Cabinet of Ministers Committee on Inter-Ethnic Relations and Friendly Ties with Foreign Countries. This Committee is part of a group of bodies under the Cabinet of Ministers with responsibility for issues related to education, science, youth policy, culture, information systems and telecommunications. At the local level, work on inter-ethnic relations and friendly ties with foreign countries is coordinated by the Vice-President of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Karakalpakstan and the deputy chief administrators (*hokim*) of the provinces and the city of Tashkent responsible for relations with civil society and religious organizations.

62. As at 30 June 2018, 137 ethnic cultural centres were registered with the Committee on Inter-Ethnic Relations and Friendly Ties with Foreign Countries, of which 14 were nationwide organizations. In the Republic of Karakalpakstan, there were six ethnic cultural centres (four republic-wide, one municipal and one district). In the provinces, there were 100 ethnic cultural centres (78 provincial and 22 municipal or district). In Tashkent, there were 23 ethnic cultural centres (all municipal). Between 1993 and 2017, at the recommendation of the Committee (Uzbekistan Inter-Ethnic Cultural Centre), 127 citizens representing various ethnic groups and peoples of Uzbekistan received awards: 12 were granted honorary titles, 1 was awarded the Order of Fidokorona xizmatlari uchun, 3 were awarded the Order of Mehnat shuhrati, 62 the Order of Do’sstlik, 32 the Shuhrat medal and 17 a Certificate of Merit from the President of Uzbekistan.

63. Under the auspices of the Committee on Inter-Ethnic Relations and Friendly Ties with Foreign Countries, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) People’s Diplomacy Centre has been established in Uzbekistan, to promote the development of friendly ties with foreign countries in the SCO region. The Committee also publishes the O’zbekiston magazine. It maintains contact with partners in 18 countries worldwide,

including the Azerbaijan-Uzbekistan Friendship Association, the Federation for Friendship with the Peoples of Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States (Bulgaria), the British Uzbek Society (United Kingdom), the Vietnam-Uzbekistan Friendship Association, the Bonn-Uzbekistan Friendship Association (Germany), the Greece-Uzbekistan Friendship Association, the Egypt-Uzbekistan Friendship Association, the Indian-Uzbek Friendship and Economic Forum, the Union of Italian Provinces (UPI), the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, the All-China Association for the Promotion of Friendship (China), the Korean-Uzbek Association, the Poland-Uzbekistan Friendship Association, the Pakistan-Uzbekistan Friendship Association, the Avicenne Friendship Association (France), the Czechia-Uzbekistan Friendship Association and the Fukushima-Uzbekistan Friendship Association (Japan).

64. To date, contact has been established with 29 Uzbek emigrant and diaspora organizations abroad, based in 19 countries, including: the Cultural Society of Turkistan Compatriots in Germany, the Uzbek Cultural Centre (Israel), the Uzbek Cultural Centre (Kazakhstan), the Cultural Society of Uzbeks (Kazakhstan), the Cultural Union of Canadian Uzbeks, the Research Centre for Uzbek Language and Culture (China), the Osh Uzbek Society (Kyrgyzstan), the Umid Uzbek Compatriots Centre (Russia), the Turkistanian American Association and the Congress of Bukharian Jews of the USA and Canada (United States), the Uzbek Centre for Spirituality and Enlightenment (Tajikistan), the Centre for Cultural and Social Assistance to Turkistanis (Turkey), the AFOR French-Uzbek Association and the Safar Uzbek Cultural Centre (Estonia).

65. Jointly with the emigrant and diaspora organizations, the Committee on Inter-Ethnic Relations and Friendly Ties with Foreign Countries holds conferences, seminars, round tables, exhibitions, quizzes, concerts, Uzbek culture days and other events aimed at promoting Uzbek culture, the Uzbek language and the distinctive national traditions, customs and ceremonies of the Uzbek people, in order to maintain relations based on good-neighbourliness, equality of rights and friendship.

66. Implementation of the Committee's recommendation (para. 8). In order to ensure inter-ethnic peace and harmony, relations of trust have been built with neighbouring countries and favourable conditions have been created for the development of commercial, economic, cultural and humanitarian ties in the Central Asian region. During the reporting period, the following laws were adopted: the Act of 31 March 2017 on Ratification of the Agreement to Found the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Institute, the Act of 1 June 2017 on Ratification of the Strategic Partnership Agreement between Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, the Act of 4 October 2017 on Ratification of the Agreement between Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan on the Uzbek-Kyrgyz Border, the Act of 3 July 2018 on Ratification of the Agreement between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan on Specific Sections of the Uzbek-Tajik Border, and the Reciprocal Travel Agreement between the Government of Uzbekistan and the Government of Tajikistan, among others.

67. In Astana on 15 March 2018, the first consultative meeting between the Heads of State of Central Asia took place. It was attended by the Presidents of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan and the Chair of the Mejlis, the parliament of Turkmenistan. On 28 March 2018, the heads of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan signed a programme of cooperation for 2018–2019.

68. The President made his first State visit to Tajikistan on 9 and 10 March 2018 and signed 27 documents, including a joint statement on strengthening friendship and good-neighbourliness and the agreement on specific sections of the border between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. In 2017, flights between Tashkent and Dushanbe were resumed, service was restored on the G'alaba-Amuzang railway line, the Samarkand-Panjakent section of international highway A-377 was opened and approximately 10 crossing points in all provinces along the Uzbek-Tajik border began operating again.

69. Implementation of the Committee's recommendations (para. 25 and 26). National experts have continued to discuss issues related to ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention and of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. Since Uzbekistan is a party to the first Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, in accordance

with which citizens can submit individual complaints to the Human Rights Committee concerning instances of discrimination, including discrimination based on ethnicity, ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention is considered unnecessary. The question of whether to become a party to the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families will be decided as part of the drafting process for the future Labour Migration Act, Rights of Foreign Nationals and Stateless Persons Act and Entry into and Exit from Uzbekistan Act, among other laws. The question is included in a plan of action to enhance activities with respect to international agreements and international law for the period 2018–2021, approved by the Prime Minister on 9 January 2018.

Article 3

70. Uzbekistan condemns racial segregation and apartheid and makes every effort to prevent, prohibit and eradicate any policy of establishing and maintaining domination by one racial group of persons over any other racial group of persons and systematically oppressing them. Legislation and law enforcement are aimed at preventing racial segregation and apartheid, and a system of safeguards has been put in place to protect the rights of all citizens against this type of crime, based on implementation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

71. Article 153 of the Criminal Code makes genocide a criminal offence and defines it as the deliberate infliction of conditions of life calculated to bring about the physical destruction in whole or in part of any national, ethnic, racial or religious group, the forcible prevention of births or transfer of children from one of these groups to another group, or the issuance of instructions to carry out such acts. It provides that genocide is punishable by a prison term of from 10 to 20 years.

Article 4

72. In Uzbekistan, all propaganda based on ideas and theories of superiority of one race or group of persons of one particular national or ethnic origin is prohibited, as are organizations attempting to justify or promote racial hatred in any form. In accordance with article 57 of the Constitution, the formation and activities of political parties and other voluntary associations promoting war or social, ethnic, racial or religious hatred, or undermining the health and morality of the people, are prohibited.

73. In accordance with article 4 of the Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations Act of 14 June 1991, as amended on 18 April 2018, citizens of Uzbekistan are equal before the law, irrespective of their attitude to religion. Citizens' attitude to religion may not be indicated in official documents. Any restriction on the rights of citizens or conferment on them of direct or indirect privileges based on their attitude to religion, incitement to hatred or hostility, insult to the religious or atheistic sensibilities of citizens or desecration of sacred objects of worship is subject to the penalties established in law.

74. The Government fosters the establishment of mutual tolerance and respect among citizens practising different religions or not practising any religion, and among the religious organizations of the various faiths, and prohibits religious and other fanaticism and extremism and acts aimed at instigating and worsening tensions or fomenting hatred between different faiths.

75. The Cabinet of Ministers decision of 31 May 2018 approving the Regulations on the procedure for registration, re-registration and dissolution of religious organizations in Uzbekistan states that registration of a religious organization may be refused on account of its promotion of war or social, ethnic, racial or religious hatred, among other reasons.

76. Article 3 of the Political Parties Act of 26 December 1996, as amended on 18 April 2018, prohibits the formation and activities of political parties that seek to violently

overthrow the constitutional order, subvert the sovereignty, integrity and security of Uzbekistan, infringe the constitutional rights and freedoms of citizens, promote war or social, ethnic, racial or religious hatred, or undermine the health or morality of the people, or are based on ethnicity or religion.

77. The Media Act (new version) of 26 December 1997, as amended on 18 April 2018, prohibits the use of the media for the promotion of war, violence, terrorism, separatism or fundamentalism or the dissemination of information that incites national, racial, ethnic or religious hatred (art. 6). No non-governmental organization whose activities are outlawed may found a media outlet (art. 8). The registration of a media outlet may be declared invalid and its output may be suspended or terminated by court order (arts. 23 and 24).

78. In accordance with article 25 of the Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organizations Act of 14 April 1999, as amended on 25 April 2016, registration of such an organization may be refused if the founding documents of the organization state that its purpose is to violently overthrow the constitutional order, subvert the sovereignty, integrity or security of Uzbekistan, infringe the constitutional rights and freedoms of citizens, promote war or social, ethnic, racial or religious hatred, or undermine the health or morality of citizens, or if the name or insignia of the organization offends public decency or the national and religious sensibilities of citizens.

79. In accordance with article 216 of the Criminal Code, the illegal organization of voluntary associations or religious organizations is a criminal offence: the illegal organization or resumption of the activities of illegal voluntary associations or religious organizations, and active participation in their activities, is punishable by a fine of from 50 to 100 times the minimum wage, a semi-custodial sentence of from 2 to 5 years or a custodial sentence of up to 5 years.

80. In accordance with article 14 of the Freedom of Information Act of 12 December 2002, as amended on 18 April 2018, information security is being achieved in Uzbek society by creating a system to counter digital expansionism aimed at distorting national identity, alienating society from historical national traditions and customs, destabilizing the sociopolitical situation and disturbing inter-ethnic and interfaith harmony. National information security is ensured through efforts to counter the dissemination of information containing propaganda for war and violence, brutality or terrorist and religious extremist ideas, or aimed at fomenting social, ethnic, racial or religious hatred (art. 15).

81. The Counter-Terrorism Act of 15 December 2000, as amended on 25 April 2016, defines a terrorist act as the commission of an offence of a terrorist nature, including attempts on the lives of members of national, ethnic, religious or other groups of persons (art. 2). It seeks to prevent terrorism, inter alia, by banning the promotion of terrorism and the formation and activities of terrorist groups and organizations (art. 5). It prohibits the media from disseminating information that promotes or justifies terrorism (art. 20).

82. The Information Technology Act of 11 December 2003, as amended on 14 September 2014, requires website owners, including bloggers, to prevent the use on the Internet of information aimed at promoting war, violence or terrorism and of religious extremist, separatist or fundamentalist ideas, and the dissemination of information inciting national, racial, ethnic or religious hatred. Violations of this provision lead to access to the website being restricted (art. 12¹).

83. Pursuant to the National Security Service Act of 5 April 2018, the National Security Service prevents, detects and suppresses destructive activity aimed at promoting national, ethnic or religious hatred and threatening national interests and national security (art. 5).

84. In accordance with the Crime Prevention Act of 14 May 2014, internal affairs agencies identify persons involved in the activities of prohibited organizations and groups with a religious extremist orientation (article 10), while citizens' self-governance bodies take measures to suppress the activities of unregistered religious organizations, ensure that the right to freedom of religion is observed and prevent the imposition of religious beliefs on citizens (art. 21).

85. The Anti-Extremism Act was adopted on 30 July 2018. It takes fully into account the recommendations of the Committee (para. 6) and the Special Rapporteur on freedom of

religion or belief, Ahmed Shaheed. According to this law, extremism is the manifestation of extreme forms of action aimed at destabilizing the sociopolitical situation, violently overthrowing the constitutional order in Uzbekistan, violently seizing power and appropriating authority, or inciting national, racial, ethnic or religious hatred.

86. Extremist activity is activity related to the planning, organization, preparation or carrying out of acts aimed at: the violent overthrow of the constitutional order or violation of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Uzbekistan; the seizure or appropriation of power and authority; the formation of illegal armed groups or participation in them; engagement in terrorist activity; incitement to national, racial, ethnic or religious hatred in conjunction with violence or public calls to violence; the production, possession, dissemination or public display of materials constituting a threat to public security and public order, and the production, possession, dissemination or public display of the emblems or insignia of extremist organizations; the creation of civil disorder for reasons of political, ideological, racial, national, ethnic or religious hatred or hostility towards any social group; and public calls for the commission of such acts.

87. Article 6 of the Act prohibits, in the territory of Uzbekistan, extremist activity in all its forms and the use, when establishing legal entities, of names that are identical in meaning to those of extremist organizations or similar enough to cause confusion.

88. In accordance with article 7 of the Act, measures to prevent extremism include: improving legal awareness and legal culture among the population and fostering in society an attitude of intolerance towards extremism; issuing official warnings concerning the inadmissibility of extremist activity; instilling the concept of the inadmissibility of extremist activity by legal entities; prohibiting the import, production, possession, dissemination and public display of extremist materials; prohibiting the financing of extremism; suspending the activities of legal entities; and declaring organizations to be extremist.

89. In accordance with article 13 of the Act, the activities of a legal entity may be suspended by court order if it is declared by a State authority responsible for countering extremism to be involved in extremist activity. The court order to suspend the activities of the legal entity may be appealed under the established procedure. A list of legal entities whose activities have been suspended in connection with their involvement in extremist activity is published on the official websites of the Ministry of Justice and the Supreme Court. According to data from the Ministry of Justice, no court orders to dissolve or prohibit NGOs in connection with extremist activity were issued during the reporting period.

90. Citizens of Uzbekistan, foreign nationals and stateless persons who engage in extremist activity incur the penalties provided for by law. Persons may be exempted from punishment if they voluntarily renounce their participation in extremist activity, report this to the relevant State authorities and actively help to prevent serious consequences from ensuing and extremists from bringing their plans to fruition.

91. If the Supreme Court of Uzbekistan declares a regional, international or foreign organization (or its branches, subsidiaries or offices) registered outside Uzbekistan to be extremist, the activities of that organization in the territory of Uzbekistan are prohibited, it is dissolved, and its assets located in the territory of Uzbekistan are confiscated and become State property.

92. A prohibition on the activity of a regional, international or foreign organization entails: the annulment of its accreditation under the established procedure; a ban on the stay in Uzbekistan of foreign nationals and stateless persons acting as representatives of that organization; a ban on the conduct of any financial or other activity in the territory of Uzbekistan; a ban on the publication in the media in the territory of Uzbekistan of any materials on behalf of the organization; a ban on the dissemination of materials of the prohibited organization and of informational products containing its materials in the territory of Uzbekistan; and a ban on the organization of public events and on participation in them by representatives of the prohibited organization.

93. In accordance with article 184³ of the Administrative Liability Code, the production, possession with intent to disseminate or dissemination of materials promoting national, racial, ethnic or religious hatred results in a fine, for members of the public, of from 50 to 100 times the minimum wage and, for officials, of from 100 to 150 times the minimum wage, or administrative detention for up to 15 days with confiscation of the materials and the means of production and dissemination.

94. Furthermore, in accordance with article 189¹ of the Administrative Liability Code, the production or import into Uzbekistan with intent to disseminate, publicize or publicly display, or the dissemination, publicizing or public display of works promoting a cult of violence or brutality results in a fine, for members of the public, of from 50 to 100 times the minimum wage and, for officials, of from 100 to 150 times the minimum wage, with confiscation of the works promoting a cult of violence or brutality and of the means of producing, disseminating, publicizing and publicly displaying them.

95. In accordance with article 130¹ of the Criminal Code, the production or import into Uzbekistan with intent to disseminate, publicize or publicly display, or the dissemination, publicizing or public display of works promoting a cult of violence or brutality, committed after the imposition of an administrative penalty for the same actions, is punishable by a fine of from 400 to 600 times the minimum wage or compulsory community service for up to 360 hours or punitive deduction of earnings for up to 3 years.

96. In accordance with article 244¹ of the Criminal Code, the production or possession with intent to disseminate of materials containing religious extremist, separatist or fundamentalist ideas or calls for mob attacks or forcible evictions or materials aimed at spreading panic among the population, or the production, possession with intent to disseminate or public display of the emblems or insignia of religious extremist or terrorist organizations, is punishable by a fine of from 200 to 400 times the minimum wage or punitive deduction of earnings for up to 3 years or a non-custodial sentence of from 1 to 3 years or a custodial sentence of up to 3 years.

97. The dissemination in any form of information and materials containing religious extremist, separatist or fundamentalist ideas or calls for mob attacks or forcible evictions or materials aimed at spreading panic among the population, the use of religion for the purpose of disturbing civic harmony, the dissemination of defamatory and destabilizing falsehoods and the commission of any other acts directed against the established rules of conduct in society and against public security, or the dissemination or public display of emblems or insignia of religious extremist or terrorist organizations, is punishable by a fine of from 300 to 400 times the minimum wage or a semi-custodial sentence of from 3 to 5 years or a custodial sentence of from 3 to 5 years.

98. Article 244² of the Criminal Code provides that the formation, leadership of or participation in religious extremist, separatist, fundamentalist or other prohibited organizations is punishable by a custodial sentence of from 5 to 15 years.

Article 5

99. Pursuant to article 2 of the Citizenship Act, all Uzbek citizens are equal, regardless of the basis on which they acquired citizenship. Citizens are equal before the law, without distinction as to origin, social and property status, race or ethnicity, sex, education, language, attitude to religion, political or other opinions, type or nature of occupation, or other circumstances. Citizens enjoy equal rights in all spheres of economic, political, social and cultural life.

100. Article 4 of the Act stipulates that citizens of Uzbekistan are persons who were permanently resident in the country at the time of the Act's entry into force, without distinction as to origin, social or property status, race or ethnicity, sex, education, language, political opinions, religious beliefs, or type or nature of occupation, provided that they were not citizens of another State and manifested a desire to become citizens of Uzbekistan.

101. Right to equal treatment before the courts and all other organs administering justice. Pursuant to article 2 of the Courts Act of 2 September 1993, as amended on 23 July 2018,

the courts in Uzbekistan ensure the judicial protection of the rights and freedoms of citizens, as proclaimed in the Constitution and other national laws and in international human rights instruments, and the rights and legally protected interests of enterprises, institutions and organizations. The courts serve to ensure the rule of law, social justice, and civic peace and harmony.

102. All Uzbek citizens are equal before the law and the courts without distinction as to sex, race, ethnicity, language, religion, social origin, beliefs, or personal or social status. Enterprises, institutions and organizations are also equal before the law and the courts (art. 6).

103. Uzbek citizens, foreign nationals and stateless persons are entitled to judicial protection against any unlawful acts or decisions by State or other agencies and officials and any offences against their person, honour and dignity, personal freedom, property, and other rights and freedoms. Enterprises, institutions and organizations are also entitled to judicial protection (art. 9).

104. Pursuant to the Courts Act, the Code of Criminal Procedure, the Code of Civil Procedure and the Code of Administrative Procedure of 26 January 2018, all cases are heard in open court. Hearings in camera are permitted only under the circumstances provided for by law. Legal proceedings are conducted in Uzbek, Karakalpak or the language of the majority population in the area concerned. Parties to the proceedings (including victims, witnesses, experts and specialists) who are not proficient in the language of the proceedings have the right to be fully apprised of the case, to participate in the proceedings through an interpreter and to address the court in their native language or a language of their free choosing. The judicial decisions adopted during the court proceedings are drawn up in the language in which the proceedings were conducted.

105. Implementation of the Committee's recommendation (para. 7). In 2016 and 2017, major steps were taken in Uzbekistan to ensure the effective independence and autonomy of the judicial system. The Supreme Judicial Council was established to help uphold the constitutional principle of the independence of the judiciary. In accordance with the Acts of 6 and 12 April 2017, the Constitution of Uzbekistan and the Courts Act were amended to establish that judges are appointed or elected for an initial 5-year term, a subsequent 10-year term and a further indefinite term of office. The age limits for judges were set at 70 years for the Supreme Court and 65 years for other courts. A department to facilitate the work of the courts was established under the Supreme Court. It is responsible for organizing logistical and financial support for the courts. Pursuant to a presidential decree of 13 July 2018, court decisions are to be published on the Supreme Court website, the presidents of provincial courts and their deputies are to hold briefings on the work of the courts and public commissions are to be created to help organize the judiciary in each of the country's regions. At the President's initiative, a commission was established under the Oliy Majlis to ensure the independence of the judiciary.

106. A programme of comprehensive measures to further improve the legal profession was approved pursuant to a presidential decree of 12 May 2018 on measures to radically enhance the effectiveness of the legal profession and strengthen the independence of lawyers. The programme provides for amendments to the Bar Act to eliminate the functions of the Ministry of Justice and its agencies under that law other than those connected with the registration of law firms and the issuance of licences to practise law and certificates to lawyers. The courts are now responsible for revoking lawyers' licences to practise on the basis of opinions of the Higher Qualification Commission.

107. Regardless of their ethnicity, all citizens are guaranteed the right to security of person and to protection by the State against violence or bodily harm, whether inflicted by government officials or by any individual, group or institution, through additional measures to combat torture based on improved legislation and law enforcement.

108. The Internal Affairs Agencies Act of 16 September 2016 emphasizes that internal affairs officers may not justify any illegal acts or omissions by invoking the necessities of service, cost efficiencies, the unlawful demands, instructions or orders of superiors or any other factors that are not in conformity with the law. They are forbidden from inciting, inducing or encouraging anyone, either directly or indirectly, to commit unlawful acts (art.

6). They are also forbidden from employing torture, violence or other cruel or degrading treatment and are under an obligation to halt any action deliberately intended to inflict pain or physical or mental suffering on another citizen (art. 8).

109. The Act establishes the right of individuals and legal entities to receive information about the activities of those agencies in general and about any activities that directly affect their own rights and interests (art. 9). It also establishes the right to reports offences and to receive essential medical and other assistance at the scene of an offence (art. 16). The Act defines the grounds and procedure for the detention by the internal affairs agencies of persons suspected of committing an offence. In particular, the Act stipulates that persons taken into custody have the right to make telephone calls or to inform a lawyer or close relative about their detention and their whereabouts, to be represented by a lawyer from the moment of apprehension, and other rights enshrined in the Code of Criminal Procedure (art. 18).

110. Article 235 of the Criminal Code (use of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment) was amended pursuant to the Act of 4 April 2018, which expanded the range of possible perpetrators by including not only acts committed by law enforcement officers, but also those committed by officials of other State bodies, or at their instigation or with their consent or acquiescence, for the purpose of obtaining from individuals or from third parties information of any kind or a confession, punishing them arbitrarily for an action that they have taken or coercing them into action of any kind. Article 235 (2) (b) of the Criminal Code (new version) establishes penalties for the use of torture on any grounds stemming from ethnic, racial, religious or social discrimination. According to article 15 of the Criminal Code, the offence has been reclassified from less serious to serious.

111. Implementation of the Committee's recommendations (para. 8). Penal institutions do not keep statistics on the race of prisoners, as, pursuant to article 8 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, all prisoners enjoy the rights and freedoms and bear the responsibilities established for citizens of Uzbekistan. The rights and responsibilities of convicted persons are determined in accordance with the procedure and conditions for the enforcement of the sentence concerned. At the initial investigation stage, the rights of all detained persons and persons held on remand, as set out in article 18 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, are respected equally, without distinction as to their alleged offences or their sex, race, ethnicity, language, religion, social origin, beliefs, or personal or social status. All complaints submitted by persons held on remand are recorded in the appropriate register and forwarded to the addressees. There have been no complaints of racial discrimination against detained persons or persons held on remand.

112. Implementation of the Committee's recommendations (para. 19). Foreign policy bodies, as well as law enforcement agencies, monitor the protection of the rights and lawful interests of Uzbek citizens abroad with a view to preventing trafficking in persons. In the countries with the largest influxes of Uzbek citizens, outreach activities and meetings are organized to stop them from falling into slave labour, and 24-hour telephone helplines have been set up. In 2017, around 50 such activities were organized. There were 1,830 communications received regarding trafficking in persons in 2014, 2,188 in 2015, 2,131 in 2016, 2,272 in 2017 and 400 in the first four months of 2018. There were 649 persons prosecuted under article 135 of the Criminal Code (trafficking in persons) in 2014, 551 in 2015, 510 in 2016, 405 in 2017 and 58 in the first four months of 2018. There were 1,187 victims of trafficking in persons in 2014 (774 men and 413 women), 904 in 2015 (600 men and 304 women), 664 in 2016 (326 men and 338 women), 440 in 2017 (180 men and 260 women) and 57 in the first four months of 2018 (27 men and 30 women). Appropriate assistance (social, psychological, medical and legal) was provided to 379 victims of trafficking in persons in rehabilitation centres in 2014 (278 men and 101 women), 418 in 2015 (229 men and 119 women), 287 in 2016 (119 men and 88 women), 458 in 2017 (313 men and 145 women) and 108 in the first four months of 2018 (91 men and 17 women).

113. Article 32 of the Constitution sets out citizens' political rights, including the right to participate in elections (to vote and to stand for election on the basis of universal and equal suffrage); the right to take part in the conduct of public affairs at any level; and the right of equal access to public service.

114. Citizens' electoral rights are embodied in the Constitution, chapter XXIII of which is entirely devoted to the electoral system, and in the Referendums Act of 30 August 2001, the Presidential Elections Act of 18 November 1991, the Act on Elections to the Oliy Majlis (new version) of 29 August 2003, the Act on Elections to Provincial, District and Municipal Councils of People's Deputies of 5 May 1994, the Citizens' Voting Rights Guarantees Act of 5 May 1994 and the Central Electoral Commission Act of 30 April 1998, among other laws.

115. All citizens, regardless of their social origin, race or ethnicity, sex, language, education and personal, social or property status have the same electoral rights. Under Uzbek law, at least 30 per cent of the candidates put forward for election to the office of deputy must be women. Citizens have the right to vote from the age of 18 years. Citizens declared by a court to lack dispositive capacity or held in places of deprivation of liberty pursuant to a court sentence may not be elected or participate in elections. In all other cases, there may be no direct or indirect restriction of citizens' electoral rights. The website of the Central Electoral Commission (<http://elections.uz>) contains information on the legal basis for the principle of citizens' equal electoral rights, in the sections entitled "News", "Legislation" and "For Voters".

116. The Act amending certain articles of the Constitution of Uzbekistan – articles 32, 78, 93, 98, 103 and 117 – was adopted in 2014. It broadens the Commission's powers in distributing funds to support the participation of political parties in elections. The Administrative Liability Code was amended to include such articles as "Illegal interference in the work of the Central Electoral Commission, its subordinate electoral commissions and referendum commissions".

117. The Presidential Elections Act was amended in December 2015 to reduce the number of signatures required for the nomination of presidential candidates from 5 per cent to 1 per cent of all voters; enshrine the notion of election campaigning; institute a "day of silence", whereby campaigning is not allowed on the day of the election and the day prior to the start of voting; define the types, forms and methods of election campaigning; ban the publication or divulging of the results of opinion polls and election forecasts five days prior to the start of voting and on election day itself; and establish polling stations at remand centres.

118. Voters of all the ethnic groups and peoples living in Uzbekistan actively participate in elections. In 2014, more than 18.4 million voters (88.94 per cent of all those on the electoral roll) took part in the elections to the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis and to the provincial, district and municipal councils of people's deputies.

119. In the run-up to the 2016 presidential election, information on the race itself and candidates' manifestos was made available not only in Uzbek, but also in Karakalpak, Russian, Kazakh and Tajik for the benefit of the different ethnic groups living in Uzbekistan. The presidential candidates were given free print space in the Tajik-language newspapers *Ovozi tojik* and *Ovozi Samarkand* and the Kazakh-language newspaper *Nurly jol*. In all, the presidential race received media coverage in 17 languages. The Korean-language publications *Kore Sinmun* and *Tkhonil – Edinstvo* and the Armenian-language publication *Apaga* also reported freely on the election process. The ballot papers and candidate lists were printed in Uzbek, Russian and Karakalpak.

120. Implementation of the Committee's recommendations (para. 14). Research on the representation of the country's main ethnic minorities in State bodies shows that there are no legal restrictions or obstacles to their access to public service. In this regard, the composition of relevant State and public bodies reflects that of the population at large. All citizens, regardless of their ethnicity, have free access to public service, including in the law enforcement agencies. Article 25 of the Internal Affairs Agencies Act of 16 September 2016 stipulates that the internal affairs agencies must hire, appoint, promote and transfer citizens without distinction as to sex, race, ethnicity, language, religion, social origin, beliefs, or personal or social status. The National Security Service Act of 5 April 2018 also stipulates that the National Security Service must hire, appoint, promote and transfer citizens without distinction as to sex, race, ethnicity, language, religion, social origin, or personal or social status.

121. For example, the headquarters of the Ministry of Internal Affairs employs members of all of the country's main ethnic groups, including 287 Karakalpaks, 105 Tatars, 25 Kyrgyz, 449 Tajiks, 176 Russians and 597 Kazakhs. The employees of the local subdivisions of the internal affairs agencies include 2,421 Karakalpaks, 163 Tatars, 183 Kyrgyz, 1,855 Tajiks, 161 Russians and 2,724 Kazakhs. Members of various ethnic groups occupy decision-making positions in general education schools, including the posts of head teacher and deputy, as follows: 1,256 Tajiks, 1,140 Karakalpaks, 912 Kazakhs, 207 Russians, 200 Kyrgyz, 161 Turkmen, 93 Tatars, 27 Koreans, 10 Uighurs, 7 Armenians, 7 Iranians, 4 Ukrainians, 4 Azeris, 3 Turks, 1 Jew, 1 Georgian, 1 Gypsy, 1 Ossetian and 1 Dungan.

122. Rights to nationality, freedom of movement and residence within the country, and to leave any country, including one's own. All Uzbek citizens have the right to citizenship, pursuant to article 21 of the Constitution, and the right to freedom of movement within Uzbekistan and to enter and leave the Republic subject only to such restrictions as are established by law, pursuant to article 28.

123. To provide better conditions for the public and eliminate bureaucracy and corruption in the exit visa application process, a presidential decree of 16 August 2017 stipulated that, beginning on 1 January 2019, biometric passports would be introduced for Uzbek citizens leaving the country, and there would be no more need to apply for stickers authorizing departure (exit visas). Responsibility for handling citizens' applications for biometric passports has been assigned to a new structure composed of the Migration and Citizenship Documentation Service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the consular administration of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. New versions of the Regulations on the passport system and the Procedure for citizens exiting the country have been adopted.

124. Pursuant to a presidential decree of 22 January 2018, the ban on employing citizens who do not have a temporary or permanent residence permit (*propiska*) was lifted; proceedings may no longer be brought against employers who hire citizens without a residence permit; a notification procedure was introduced for the registration of citizens who move to the capital from other regions for seasonal work (in construction and agriculture, for example); the time limit by which a citizen has to register at their current address was extended (to 10 days); and a residence permit is no longer a prerequisite for access to public services (such as education and medical treatment).

125. A presidential decree of 29 May 2017 approved the Regulations on the procedure for granting political asylum in Uzbekistan to individuals and their family members seeking asylum and protection from persecution or from a real threat that they might become victims of persecution in their country of nationality.

126. Implementation of the Committee's recommendations (paras. 18, 20 and 21). The Citizenship Act was amended on 23 September 2016 and a presidential decree amending the Regulations on the procedure for reviewing matters relating to Uzbek citizenship was adopted on 7 March 2017. According to these provisions, citizenship may be withdrawn if there is credible evidence that a citizen has entered military service for a foreign State or its security service, police, judiciary or other State or government bodies; or if a person has caused substantial harm to the interests of society and the State by engaging in activities for a foreign State or by committing crimes against peace and security.

127. Article 17 of the Citizenship Act lays down the procedure for acquiring Uzbek citizenship, stipulating that foreign citizens and stateless persons may be granted Uzbek citizenship after submitting an application, regardless of their origin, race or ethnicity, sex, education, language, attitude to religion or political and other opinions. The acquisition of Uzbek citizenship is conditional upon the renunciation of foreign citizenship, continuous residence in the territory of Uzbekistan for the previous five years, having a lawful means of subsistence, and recognition of and compliance with the Constitution of Uzbekistan. Foreign citizens may apply for Uzbek citizenship once they have submitted proof that they have renounced foreign citizenship, that is, once they have acquired stateless person status. Since 2016, 1,730 stateless persons have been granted Uzbek citizenship pursuant to presidential decrees; 113,295 foreign nationals were registered temporarily with the internal affairs agencies in the first five months of 2018.

128. Implementation of the Committee's recommendations (para. 21). A consolidated list of the laws and regulations drafted and adopted in accordance with the recommendations of international organizations and the provisions of international instruments was prepared in accordance with a presidential decree of 8 August 2018. In addition, a series of bills regulating internal and international labour migration and formalizing the legal status of foreign nationals, stateless persons and refugees is being drafted on the basis of relevant international texts. The possibility of ratifying the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the Optional Protocol thereto is also under discussion.

129. The rights of foreign nationals, stateless persons and refugees are regulated by article 41 of the Constitution of Uzbekistan, the Education Act (art. 4) and Cabinet of Ministers Decision No. 169 of 4 August 2008 on the procedure for enrolling and instructing foreign nationals in educational institutions in Uzbekistan. There are currently 36 children of foreign nationals enrolled in general education schools within the country's education system and 751 foreign nationals studying at its higher education institutions.

130. Right to marriage and choice of spouse. Traditionally, a great deal of attention has been devoted in Uzbekistan to the protection of the family and the rights and interests of children, young persons, women and older persons. Articles 461 and 1411 have been introduced into the Administrative Liability Code and the Criminal Code under the title "Violation of privacy", thus providing for penalties for the collection and dissemination, without a person's consent, of information about his or her private life if it contains a personal or family secret. Pursuant to a presidential decree on measures to radically improve support for women and strengthen the institution of the family, which was adopted on 2 February 2018, the Women's Committee and its local branches were given the task of providing targeted support to women in difficult circumstances, finding them work and preventing violations of their rights; the position of specialist on women's affairs and strengthening the institution of the family was created; the Oila (Family) Centre for Applied Research, with its local subdivisions, was established under the Cabinet of Ministers; and approval was given to a comprehensive programme to support women and strengthen the institution of the family.

131. A presidential decision on measures to improve the social rehabilitation and reintegration system and prevent family and domestic violence was adopted on 2 July 2018. This led to the establishment of the National Centre for the Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Victims of Violence and the Prevention of Suicides, an NGO, while regional centres with the same mission are gradually being set up. In addition, work has been set in motion on a bill on the prevention of domestic violence; the accountability of the procuratorial bodies for all incidents of domestic violence has been strengthened; and approval has been given to a programme of practical measures to improve the system for social rehabilitation and reintegration and the prevention of domestic violence.

132. The right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. Believers are currently served by an appropriate number of religious organizations. There are 2,242 religious organizations and 16 faiths. There are no legal restrictions on the time frame for registration or number of religious organizations.

133. Article 8 of the Act on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations defines religious organizations as voluntary associations of citizens established for the purposes of communal worship and the performance of religious services, rites and rituals, such as religious societies, religious educational institutions, mosques, churches, synagogues, monasteries and so on. A religious organization may be established at the initiative of 100 or more Uzbek citizens aged over 18 years who are permanently resident in Uzbekistan. Religious organizations acquire legal entity status and are able to operate after registering with the Ministry of Justice of Uzbekistan or its local bodies under the legally established procedure.

134. All religious organizations, including the Muslim Board of Uzbekistan, the Russian Orthodox Church, Jehovah's Witnesses, the Voice of God Church, Buddhists and the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, have equal rights and are equal before the law. The central administrative bodies of religious organizations are entitled to produce, export, import and disseminate items of religious significance, religious literature and other

written materials of a religious nature under the legally established procedure. Religious literature is published by Tashkent Islamic University and the Imam al-Bukhari International Centre, as well as by the Bible Society, which imports and publishes religious literature in various languages.

135. In 2017, the Bible Society of Uzbekistan presented a complete translation of the Bible into Uzbek. The Russian Orthodox Church may also import consignments of religious literature and church paraphernalia on preferential terms. The Tashkent Eparchy imported a total of 81,640 copies of religious books in 2016, under 318 separate titles. In 2017 it imported 10,053 copies, under 332 titles.

136. The Consultative Council on Religious Education in Foreign Religious Educational Institutions was established pursuant to a presidential decree of 13 August 2018 on a package of measures to establish additional conditions for receiving education in foreign religious educational institutions. It is made up of members of the Committee on Religious Affairs and the Committee on Inter-Ethnic Relations under the Cabinet of Ministers.

137. There are 13 religious educational institutions in Uzbekistan, of which 11 are Muslim and 2 Christian. They include four higher education institutions: Tashkent Islamic University, the Mir-i Arab Higher Madrasa (in Bukhara), the Tashkent Orthodox Seminary and the Tashkent Protestant Seminary. Citizens of Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan study alongside Uzbek citizens at the Tashkent Orthodox Seminary.

138. A presidential decree on measures to radically improve the work of the religious education sector was adopted on 16 April 2018 to provide for measures to strengthen religious tolerance, preserve national and cultural values and promote pilgrimages to the country. It is aimed at ensuring continuity in the religious education system in Uzbekistan, from the early stages (secondary-level special Islamic educational institutions and madrasas) right up to higher and further religious education. The International Islamic Academy of Uzbekistan has been established as an offshoot of the Islamic Academy of Uzbekistan and Tashkent Islamic University with regional branches in Karakalpakstan and in the provinces of Samarkand, Namangan and Surxondaryo and its own further training centre. The Academy runs the Ziyo Media Centre, which promotes the country's religious and scholarly heritage and the true humanistic goal of religion, and the School of Hadith Science, an institution for higher religious education. The Vaqf Charitable Foundation has been set up under the Muslim Board of Uzbekistan to finance the reconstruction of mosques and other buildings. An information analysis centre for the study of religious and social processes has been established under the Cabinet of Ministers Committee on Religious Affairs to ensure the early identification of negative influences on religious and social stability.

139. Right to establish associations and trade unions. The legislative framework safeguarding the activities of NGOs consists of 200 legal and regulatory instruments, including the Constitution of Uzbekistan (chap. XIII), the Civil Code, the Voluntary Associations Act, the Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organizations Act, the Voluntary Foundations Act, the Private Property Owners' Associations Act, the Citizens' Self-Governance Bodies Act, the Act on the Election of the Chairs of Citizens' Self-Governance Bodies, the Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organizations Safeguards Act, the Charitable Activities Act and the Social Partnership Act.

140. As at 1 January 2018, there were 9,205 registered NGOs, including 30 offices and branches of foreign and international NGOs.

141. The State pursues a policy of social partnership with civil society organizations and provides NGOs with financial assistance in a transparent, targeted and democratic manner. Over the last nine years, the Public Support Fund under the Oliy Majlis has awarded over 60 billion sum in subsidies, grants and social service contracts to support NGOs and their implementation of various social projects.

142. A presidential decree of 28 December 2016 on measures to further enhance the work of the Nuronni Foundation for the social support of the veterans of Uzbekistan and another of 3 February 2017 on measures to further improve mahallas were adopted to

strengthen cooperation between State bodies and civil society organizations. The National Council for Coordinating the Activities of Citizens' Self-Governance Bodies was established in accordance with the latter decree. Its local branches were formed, and a programme of comprehensive measures to further enhance the activities of citizens' self-governance bodies was approved. In 2017, the Youth Union of Uzbekistan was set up to facilitate cooperation between youth organizations and State bodies. A presidential decree of 5 July 2017 on measures to enhance the effectiveness of State youth policy and support the work of the Youth Union of Uzbekistan was adopted to provide for the establishment of a system to offer full support to all young people, irrespective of their ethnicity. A presidential decree on measures to greatly enhance the role of civil society organizations in the country's democratic renewal was adopted on 4 May 2018 to guarantee citizens' freedom of association.

143. The role of trade unions in public monitoring is being enhanced. The various forms, spheres and methods of such monitoring have been enshrined in the Constitution, the Labour Code and the Act on Trade Unions, Their Rights and Guarantees for Their Activities (new version) adopted in November 2016. Pursuant to article 4 of the Act, neither membership nor non-membership of a trade union may entail any restriction of citizens' legally guaranteed labour or other socioeconomic, political or individual rights. It is prohibited to make the employment, promotion or dismissal of a worker conditional on membership or non-membership, or the joining or leaving, of a trade union.

144. Uzbekistan has a unique system of NGOs consisting of 138 ethnic cultural centres, 14 of which have the status of national ethnic cultural centres. The centres include the Azeri National Ethnic Cultural Centre, the Armenian Ethnic Cultural Centre, the Jewish, Kazakh and Kyrgyz centres, the Association of Korean Cultural Centres, the Wiedergeburt German Cultural Centre, the Świetlica Polska Polish Cultural Centre, the Russian Cultural Centre, the Tajik National Ethnic Cultural Centre, the Turkish Ethnic Cultural Centre, the Turkmen National Cultural Centre, the Uighur Cultural Centre, and the Slavutykh Ukrainian National Cultural Centre. There are 6 ethnic cultural centres in the Republic of Karakalpakstan, 23 in the city of Tashkent and 95 in the provinces. They cater for Arabs, Bashkirs, Belarusians, Bukharan Jews, Bulgarians, Chinese people, Crimean Tatars, Dungans, Greeks, Georgians, Lithuanians and Tatars.

145. The Committee on Inter-Ethnic Relations currently has 34 associations for friendship with the following foreign countries: Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bulgaria, China, Egypt, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, India, Indonesia, Iran, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Korea, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Malaysia, Pakistan, Poland, Russia, Slovakia, Thailand, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Switzerland, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, the United States and Viet Nam.

146. Economic, social and cultural rights. Citizens' rights to education, health care, employment, housing and social security are the focus of serious attention. Every year, presidential decrees are adopted to increase wages, grants, pensions and benefits, substantially raising citizens' income levels. Positive structural changes, economic expansion and employment programmes have ensured a growth rate of 113.5 per cent in per capita real aggregate income. A presidential decree issued on 2 September 2017 gave legal entities the right to obtain foreign currency at banks and individuals the right freely to exchange foreign currency with no restrictions, with effect from 5 September 2017. Pursuant to the decree, a requirement that exporters must sell their foreign currency proceeds was repealed.

147. A presidential decision was adopted on 12 September 2017 on additional measures to support low-income groups of the population. The decision provides for targeted local social support programmes for such groups in 2017–2018, with microcredits at advantageous interest rates for the purchase of tools and equipment for self-employment, and non-reimbursable grants to poor families for the purchase or repair of housing and for the purchase of household appliances or the payment of medical services.

148. Under the State Programme for 2018, the notion of the "consumer basket" is to be defined in accordance with international practice, and the minimum wage, pension and

benefits are gradually to be brought into line with the established subsistence level (para. 139).

149. There have been improvements in the legal regulation of employment and labour relations in Uzbekistan. The Labour Code and the Employment Act now contain a list of persons benefiting from additional guarantees for job placement, including human trafficking victims, persons released from penal institutions, young persons, persons with disabilities and persons approaching retirement age. Refusal to hire such persons incurs liability. There are additional guarantees for job placement in other countries, and a system has been put in place to monitor the implementation of the annual job creation programmes and to develop local programmes. A presidential decree of 24 May 2017 authorized non-State bodies to offer job placement services to Uzbeks, including abroad, with effect from 1 June 2018.

150. A programme of comprehensive measures has been approved to accelerate the development of entrepreneurial activity, ensure full protection of private ownership and improve the business climate in Uzbekistan. The Office of the Presidential Commissioner for the Protection of the Rights and Lawful Interests of Business Entities was established pursuant to a presidential decree of 5 May 2017. It operates on the basis of the Act of 29 August 2017. Legislation has been enacted to establish administrative and criminal liability for violations of the right to work and of occupational health and safety regulations and coercion of a person to work by administrative decision (Criminal Code, arts. 148 and 257; and Administrative Liability Code, arts. 49, 491, 50 and 51).

151. Since 2016, affordable housing has been built to the latest design standards for rural dwellers. In 2017 alone, more than 18,000 comfortable houses were built in rural areas. In accordance with a presidential decree of 20 April 2018, a housing amnesty was announced. This was a one-off, countrywide measure to recognize individuals' ownership rights over property constructed on unlawfully occupied land or without a construction permit.

152. On 26 April 2018, the Cabinet of Ministers issued a decision approving the Regulations on internal affairs centres for the rehabilitation of homeless persons. They set out the criteria for declaring a person to be homeless and provide for measures to place such persons in rehabilitation centres so that they can receive legal, social, psychological, medical and other assistance.

153. Measures to realize citizens' rights to participate in cultural life and engage in physical culture and sport. The efforts made to develop culture and sport and to substantially improve public policy in this area include: the establishment of the Ministry of Culture, the State Committee on Physical Culture and Sport and the Fund for the Development of Culture and Art, pursuant to a presidential decree of 15 February 2017; the approval of a programme of measures for the further development and refinement of the cultural and artistic spheres in Uzbekistan for 2017–2021, pursuant to a presidential decision of 31 May 2017; the adoption of measures to enhance the work of museums and theatres and young people's aesthetic education; and the approval of a programme for the further improvement of physical culture, sport and sports medicine, and for the effective use of existing sports facilities and the construction of new ones, pursuant to a presidential decision of 3 June 2017.

154. Implementation of the Committee's recommendations (para. 10). An analysis of Uzbek legislation shows that the legal framework in place to protect human rights and freedoms makes no distinction between citizens on the basis of their race, language or ethnicity. Over the reporting period, public bodies did not receive a single complaint of racial discrimination from a citizen. It can thus be concluded that there is currently no need in Uzbekistan for framework legislation on the rights of ethnic minorities. Individuals who are not ethnic Uzbeks are not seen as members of a national minority, but as fully fledged citizens who form part of the people of Uzbekistan. This also applies to members of the Luli/Roma community, who lead a traditional way of life, but also have all the legal and other opportunities to realize their human rights and freedoms. The country has adopted national action plans to improve the lives of all members of society, including the Luli/Roma community. Separate statistics are not kept on the realization of these citizens' rights. In implementation of the Committee's recommendations (paras. 11 and 12), a study

was carried out of the petitions filed by citizens with State bodies over the reporting period, including petitions filed through the President's help desks and portal. It showed that no complaints were received from Luli/Roma or Meskhetian Turks regarding violations of their rights and lawful interests.

155. Implementation of the Committee's recommendations (para. 12). Systematic efforts have been made in Uzbekistan to strengthen reproductive health. A State programme for the early detection of congenital and hereditary diseases for 2018–2022 was approved pursuant to a presidential decision of 25 December 2017. The programme will make it possible to introduce generalized prenatal ultrasound checks, and thus reduce the number of children born with congenital developmental defects. Thanks to the availability of a wide range of contraceptives and increased awareness of methods of preventing unwanted pregnancies, abortion has ceased to be a method of birth control in Uzbekistan. Induced abortions have been legalized in the country and are performed at medical facilities in the first 12 weeks of pregnancy. In recent years, the abortion rate has fallen from 39.9 to 5.0 per thousand women. It is thus inaccurate to claim that women are sterilized without their free and informed consent. Sex education and the reproductive health of teenagers are the focus of extensive awareness-raising and educational activities. Over the reporting period, 16,022 meetings, 77,908 lectures and 620 seminars were organized and a range of media events conducted, including 123 television programmes, 248 radio broadcasts and the launch of 70 publications.

156. Implementation of the Committee's recommendations (para. 16). Article 4 of the Education Act stipulates that everyone is guaranteed equal rights to an education, regardless of their sex, language, age, race or ethnicity, beliefs, attitude to religion, social origin, occupation, social status, place of residence and length of residence in the territory of Uzbekistan.

157. The national education system has seven languages of instruction: Uzbek, Karakalpak, Russian, Tajik, Kazakh, Kyrgyz and Turkmen. All students may be taught in their native language, regardless of their ethnicity and the language in question. At the beginning of the 2017/18 academic year, in addition to schools in which Uzbek was the language of instruction, Karakalpak was the language of instruction in 365 schools in the national education system (103,838 pupils), Russian in 903 schools (523,819 pupils), Tajik in 245 schools (61,082 pupils), Kazakh in 378 schools (50,686 pupils), Kyrgyz in 90 schools (7,430 pupils) and Turkmen in 44 schools (9,617 pupils). Over the reporting period, no foreign nationals or stateless persons filed complaints regarding violations of their rights to receive general secondary education, undergo further training or use their native language.

158. Members of the following major ethnic groups are employed in the national education system: 14,391 Karakalpaks; 12,295 Tajiks; 8,148 Kazakhs; 7,264 Russians; 2,271 Kyrgyz; 1,686 Turkmen; 1,407 Tatars; 537 Koreans; 125 Armenians; 115 Ukrainians; 69 Uighurs; 61 Azeris; 45 Turks; 30 Iranians; 12 Germans; 10 Belarusians; 7 Jews; 6 Georgians; 4 Greeks; 4 Lezgins; 3 Laks; 3 Chechens; 3 Chuvash; 1 Gypsy; 1 Ossetian; 1 Latvian; 1 Hungarian; and 1 Mari.

159. With regard to the Committee's recommendations (para. 17), significant attention is devoted to alleviating the impact of the Aral Sea environmental disaster, providing social and economic support to Karakalpaks and promoting the cultural development of the Karakalpak people. To this end, the Comprehensive Programme of Action for Mitigation of the Consequences of the Aral Disaster and the Restoration and Social and Economic Development of the Aral Region for 2015–2018 and the Uzbekistan Environmental Monitoring Programme for 2016–2020 are currently being implemented. A programme of additional measures for the social and economic development of the Republic of Karakalpakstan and the further improvement of its population's quality of life was approved in accordance with a Cabinet of Ministers decision of 17 January 2017. The Aral Sea Region Development Programme for 2017–2021 was approved by presidential decree on 18 January 2017. It provides for the creation of 14,600 permanent jobs through comprehensive programmes to develop the regions of the Republic of Karakalpakstan. A vocational training centre for unemployed persons is being built in Nukus with grant funding. On 1 February 2018, a new kind of social benefit was introduced for needy

inhabitants of the Aral Sea region. It consists of a one-off payment of between two and five times the minimum wage for single persons, pensioners, families with babies with disabilities and other disadvantaged segments of the population and families. On 1 February 2017, special reduced fares were introduced for rail and air passengers who are residents of Karakalpakstan. Pursuant to a presidential decision of 16 August 2018, a pilot project is being conducted to introduce a specialized multidisciplinary preschool institution with rehabilitation centres for children from the Aral Sea region with physical and mental developmental defects.

160. There are more than 100 environmental NGOs in the country. They include: Ecosan, an international non-governmental charitable foundation working on environmental and health issues; the Fund for Saving the Aral Sea; and the Fund for Aral Gene Pool Protection, a non-governmental charitable foundation. They have spent US\$ 125,000 on furthering their aims.

161. In accordance with a prime ministerial instruction of 13 January 2018, approval was given to a road map for the creation of a multi-partner trust fund for the Aral Sea region under the aegis of the United Nations. Following an assessment of the needs of the region and donor capacities, the Ministry of Economic Affairs worked with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to prepare an integrated strategy for the Aral Sea region in conjunction with donor organizations.

162. The Central Asia Climate Change Conference took place in Almaty in January 2018, and the problems facing the Aral Sea region were discussed at the event. On 2 February 2018, the President of Uzbekistan chaired a meeting devoted to assessing the measures that had been taken to address the situation and protect the environment and identifying the current challenges in that regard.

Article 6

163. Judicial and non-judicial legal remedies against violations of citizens' rights, including those involving racial discrimination, are set out in such legislative instruments as the Civil Code, the Code of Civil Procedure, the Code of Administrative Procedure, the Courts Act, the Procurator's Office Act, the Internal Affairs Agencies Act, the Natural and Legal Persons' Petitions Act, the Act on Appeal to the Courts of Actions and Decisions Violating Citizens' Rights and Freedoms, the Act on the Human Rights Commissioner (Ombudsman) of the Oliy Majlis, the Act on the Presidential Commissioner for the Protection of the Rights and Lawful Interests of Business Entities, the Bar Act and the Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organizations Act.

164. Article 1 of the Courts Act stipulates that the judicial system consists of the following courts empowered to administer justice in Uzbekistan: the Constitutional Court; the Supreme Court; the military courts; the civil and criminal courts of the Republic of Karakalpakstan; the civil and criminal courts of the provinces and the city of Tashkent; the economic and administrative courts of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, the provinces and the city of Tashkent; the interdistrict, district and municipal civil courts; the district and municipal criminal courts; the interdistrict, district and municipal economic courts; and the district and municipal administrative courts.

165. The Code of Administrative Procedure of 26 January 2018 represents an important step forward for the protection of citizens' rights and lawful interests, whatever their ethnicity. The Code governs the manner in which administrative cases concerning violated or disputed rights, freedoms and lawful interests of citizens and legal persons are heard and determined through administrative proceedings.

166. Justice in administrative cases is dispensed on the basis of citizens' equality before the law and the courts, irrespective of sex, race, ethnicity, language, religion, social origin, beliefs, or personal or social status, and for legal persons, irrespective of type of ownership, location or other circumstances. Administrative proceedings are conducted in Uzbek, Karakalpak or the language of the majority population in the area concerned.

167. The courts hear cases brought to challenge official legal and regulatory instruments; decisions and acts or omissions by State administrative bodies, other organizations authorized to carry out administrative and legal work and citizens' self-governance bodies and their officials when they are not in conformity with legislation and violate the rights and legally protected interests of citizens or legal persons; acts or omissions by electoral commissions; refusals to provide a notarial service or enter information into the civil register, or acts or omissions by a notary or an official of a civil registration body; and appeals against a refusal to grant State registration or failure to do so within the prescribed time frame; and other cases that fall within their competence.

168. The burden of proving the legality of a contested act by the administrative authorities, decision by a citizens' self-governance body or act or omission by their officials lies with the bodies or officials concerned. Those bodies and officials are also required to substantiate the facts on which they base their objections.

169. Participants in proceedings can apply for preliminary measures of protection if, prior to the court decision on a case, there is a clear risk of a violation of the rights, freedoms and lawful interests of the applicant or the person on whose behalf the application was submitted, or if the protection of the rights, freedoms and lawful interests of the applicant will otherwise be hindered or rendered impossible.

170. Once a decision on a case brought to annul an official legal or regulatory instrument has entered into force, the court transmits it to the official journals of the State bodies in which the contested instrument was published, and the decision must promptly be published in those same journals.

171. The person concerned may submit to the court an application or complaint with a view to having a decision by an administrative body, citizens' self-governance body or officials of such a body annulled, or an act or omission by them declared unlawful, if he or she believes that this decision or act or omission: violates his or her rights and legally protected interests; creates obstacles to the realization of his or her rights, freedoms and legally protected interests; results in the imposition of unlawful obligations on him or her; or creates other obstacles to activities in a particular area.

172. Once the court has established that a decision or part of a decision or an act or omission that has been appealed is not in conformity with the law and violates the applicant's rights and legally protected interests, it decides whether to annul the decision or part of it or to declare the act or omission unlawful. In such cases, the court obliges the body or official concerned to adopt a decision or perform certain acts in accordance with the law or remedy the violation of the applicant's rights, freedoms and lawful interests by other means.

173. Pursuant to a presidential decree of 28 December 2016 on measures to radically overhaul the system for processing petitions from natural and legal persons, the existing system of remedies available to citizens was supplemented with the network of presidential help desks and the presidential portal. They are now operational in the Republic of Karakalpakstan, the provinces, the city of Tashkent and every district and town. Since September 2016, more than 1.5 million petitions have been submitted via the presidential portal. The figures show that the largest number of petitions concerned housing and utilities (108,000), followed by employment (67,000) and the fairness of court judgments in civil cases (39,000). Reports that many petitions received concern infringements of the rights of ethnic minorities are thus inaccurate. The websites of State bodies offer new possibilities for processing communications. In particular, the website of the Ministry of Justice (www.minjust.uz) now has a section entitled "Ministry of Justice Portal". Citizens who do not use the Internet can get in contact via the telephone helplines. The judicial authorities can be reached by calling the number 1008.

174. The 2017 Natural and Legal Persons' Petitions Act regulates in detail the non-judicial procedure for filing complaints regarding human rights violations. Petitions to State bodies may be submitted as applications, proposals or complaints in the State language or other languages. Under the Act, there may be no discrimination in the exercise of the right to petition, and all natural and legal persons are entitled to appeal to a higher authority or directly to the court against an unlawful refusal to accept or consider a petition. Petitions

may not be transferred without good reason to other State bodies for consideration or referred to the bodies or officials whose decisions or acts or omissions are being challenged.

175. NGOs also protect human rights and can appear in court as legal representatives and receive and consider communications from citizens.

176. Implementation of the Committee's recommendations (para. 22). In August 2017, the Act amending the Act on the Human Rights Commissioner (Ombudsman) of the Oliy Majlis was adopted to bring the Ombudsman's legal status and activities into line with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (Paris Principles). The Act granted the Ombudsman the right to raise issues before the Constitutional Court, participate in its hearings and file applications and claims with the courts on behalf of citizens without paying the official fee; to submit ad hoc reports on various aspects of human rights and freedoms to the chambers of the Oliy Majlis and request that communications by representatives of State and government bodies be heard by its committees; to request the heads of State bodies and other organizations to take measures to remedy violations of the legislation on human rights and freedoms that are identified, as well as the causes and contributing circumstances; to petition the appropriate bodies to prosecute persons whose acts are established to have violated human rights and freedoms; to request the appropriate bodies to remedy violations of the legislation on human rights and freedoms that are identified, as well as the causes and contributing circumstances; and to submit proposals regarding the drafting and adoption of laws to be considered by entities with the right to initiate legislation, as well as to take part in sessions of the chambers of the Oliy Majlis and make proposals on bills under discussion.

177. The Ombudsman has also been granted unimpeded access to persons remanded in custody and relevant institutions in order to study the conditions of their detention, and the right to hold confidential meetings and conversations with them and receive communications from them. The Ombudsman's regional representatives are entitled to report annually on their work to protect human rights and freedoms to the Jokargy Kenes, the parliament of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, and the councils of people's deputies in the provinces and the city of Tashkent. The Ombudsman now has an online portal, at www.ombudsman.uz, and a direct telephone line that citizens can call to make oral complaints and receive legal advice. Over the period 2014–2018, the Ombudsman did not receive any complaints from citizens, foreign nationals or stateless persons regarding violations of the principle of equality and non-discrimination, including any complaints regarding the provision of redress to victims of racial discrimination.

Article 7

178. Policies on inter-ethnic relations are implemented holistically, through the use of a range of legal and organizational mechanisms for effective cooperation among State bodies, civil society and ethnocultural organizations with a view to preventing the spread of ethnic exceptionalism, aggressive nationalism and disrespect for the values of other ethnic groups.

179. According to article 4 of the Children's Rights Safeguards Act of 7 January 2008, the basic goals of State policy include preventing discrimination against children, familiarizing children with the historical and ethnic traditions and spiritual values of the peoples of Uzbekistan and the achievements of world culture, and instilling in them an attitude of tolerance and pacifism.

180. In accordance with article 5 of the Act on the Protection of Children from Information Harmful to Their Health of 8 September 2017, the State has an obligation to prevent unlawful negative influences on children's psychological development, the manipulation of children and the dissemination of information that could prompt them to act antisocially. It is also obliged to prevent such offences and develop criteria and mechanisms for identifying information harmful to children's health. The information prohibited in that regard includes information that defends or justifies violence and cruelty or that incites violence against people or animals (art. 16).

181. International human rights instruments are disseminated through the preparation and publication of compendiums of international human rights treaties and books on the incorporation of international treaties into national legislation and the publication of explanatory material on the essence and meaning of international human rights standards. More than 100 core international human rights instruments have been translated into Uzbek and published in large runs in close cooperation with such international partners as UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF, OSCE and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

182. Uzbekistan has a network of educational institutions that conduct basic training and refresher courses for legal specialists and law enforcement officials. It includes Tashkent State Law University, the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Institute of the National Security Service, the Centre for the Further Training of Legal Specialists, the Academy of the Office of the Procurator General, the Academy of Public Administration attached to the Office of the President and the University of World Economics and Diplomacy attached to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

183. Uzbekistan has an effective system to ensure ongoing further training for employees of State bodies at various levels who are involved in implementing policies on inter-ethnic relations and securing inter-ethnic harmony in society and to raise awareness of the country's policies on inter-ethnic relations among the leaders and activists of ethnic cultural centres and associations for friendship with foreign countries. Teachers at schools that do not use Uzbek as the language of instruction undergo further training in their subjects at provincial refresher and further training centres for teaching staff. The country boasts significant experience in organizing further training on the languages studied in the country's general education institutions and abroad for those employed in the national education system. Each year, dozens of teachers of Russian language and literature improve their professional skills at higher education and further training institutions in the Russian Federation.

184. Higher education establishments set up centres for harmonizing inter-ethnic relations, inter-ethnic friendship clubs and tolerance schools, where the Convention and the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action are discussed, and also host conferences, round tables and workshops on various topics, at which the provisions of the Convention are explained.

185. Tashkent State Law University regularly holds events to raise awareness of the Convention. On 18 May 2018, for example, the essence and content of the Convention was explained at an information session for first- and second-year students, and a film promoting international solidarity was shown to more than 900 students. On 5 April 2018, a round table on the theme "Racism and nationalism: no place in our society" was held at Tashkent Law College. More than 60 of the College's students and teachers participated. In 2017 and 2018, Tashkent State Law University published textbooks on international criminal law, international law, the rights of the child and medical law in order to facilitate the teaching of the Convention and the Durban Declaration and Plan of Action.

186. The curricula of the Academy of the Office of the Procurator General include a module entitled "International friendship", which covers the Convention. Academic and practical articles on these issues are published in the gazette of the Office of the Procurator General and address the theoretical and practical aspects of human rights implementation. In the first six months of 2018, the Academy carried out 3,679 actions to raise awareness of human rights protection, 906 of which received media coverage (392 on television, 172 on radio, 308 in print publications and 27 on the Internet).

187. The Convention is studied at the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs as part of its courses on human rights. These courses include "International law" (46 hours) for fourth-year day students (400 people), and "The organization of the human rights activities of the internal affairs agencies" (36 hours) and "International cooperation in the fight against crime" (36 hours) for members of the officer corps at the Academy's Leadership Training Faculty (32 people). The Convention was also covered as part of the legal training provided at the Professional Training Faculty in the 2017/18 academic year (for around 600 to 800 people). In addition, the Convention is taught at the Faculty for the Further Training of Officers of the Internal Affairs Agencies (approximately 2,000 employees) as part of the

staff training days scheduled in accordance with the Ministry of Internal Affairs plan (every 15 days) and the routine classes (between 8 and 16 hours) that form part of basic training for future officers (every 2 to 3 months).

188. The Centre for the Further Training of Legal Specialists under the Ministry of Justice trains legal professionals, including judges, candidates for the position of judge, lawyers, judicial officials, notaries, civil registry office workers and legal consultants, on national legislation and international instruments in the field of human rights. They study the concluding observations of international treaty bodies, including the Committee, Human Rights Council documents, and international conventions and national plans of action for their implementation. A specialized course entitled “International standards for the administration of justice” has been introduced. Students who take the courses “Judicial ethics” and “Professional ethics for lawyers” learn about the Convention and other international instruments. Over the last three years, more than 30 titles have been published in over 15,000 copies in total.

189. On its official website, www.madaniyat.uz, the Ministry of Culture uploads information and statistics on its work in preventing ethnic, racial and religious hatred and hostility in society and on days celebrating other national cultures held in Uzbekistan and Uzbek culture days held abroad. People from different countries and faiths participate in international competitions and festivals such as Sharq taronalari, Boysun bahori, Nurli navolar, Silk and Spices, Eastern Rose and Iste’dod. Over the last two years, foreign cultural and artistic figures have performed in the country’s theatres and concert halls. On 23 and 24 January 2017, the “Uzbekistan – our shared home” event took place at the Uzbekistan international conference centre. State theatres stage and show plays on such issues as the prevention of terrorism, extremism and threats to information security. The plays currently being performed include *Dildagi dog* (A Stain on the Heart) at the Mukimi State Music Theatre of Uzbekistan, *Chegarachi* (Border Guard) at the Surxondaryo Provincial Music Theatre, *Bahodir* at the Djizak Provincial Music Theatre, *Rasolat kurbonalri* (Victims of Violence) at the Namangan Provincial Music Theatre and *Zalolat* (The Abyss) at the State Youth Theatre of Uzbekistan.

190. Each year, the Bureau of the Council of the Federation of Trade Unions of Uzbekistan approves a programme of measures to strengthen the role of trade unions in promoting national values and making educational and cultural activities more effective. As part of the programme, cultural and educational events take place in companies, organizations, institutions and ethnic cultural centres on such themes as “Inter-ethnic and civic harmony – our achievement”, “The basic principles of ethnic policy in Uzbekistan” and “Measures to guarantee security, inter-ethnic harmony and religious tolerance”. In 2017, 312 seminars were held to raise awareness of the Convention among trade union members. Their 73,040 participants included public administrators, education and medical professionals, secondary school students and civil society representatives.

191. Ethnic cultural centres perform an important awareness-raising role geared towards strengthening inter-ethnic harmony in Uzbekistan. For example, the Turkmen National Cultural Centre carries out spiritual, social and educational work for the Turkmen diaspora in Uzbekistan, develops and preserves its national culture, language and spiritual and historical-material values, and cooperates with other ethnic cultural centres, social organizations, creative groups and cultural and artistic institutions to ensure the peaceful development of civic harmony and inter-ethnic relations. There are 45 Turkmen schools in Uzbekistan, of which 42 are Turkmen-only schools and 3 mixed. The Turkmen Cultural Centre celebrates the national holidays Navruz and Mustaqillik and participates in a festival to celebrate cultural traditions and national cuisine, academic and practical conferences and regular seminars. It also celebrates Turkmenistan Flag Day and Turkmenistan Neutrality Day.

192. The legislative framework established in the country offers effective guarantees for the independent and free development of the media. There were 499 digital media outlets in Uzbekistan in 2017, of which 395 were websites, 100 television and radio stations and 4 news agencies. Some 14.7 million citizens are Internet users, and half of them access the Internet via mobile web services.

193. As fostering a culture of tolerance and humanism and strengthening inter-ethnic, inter-faith and civic harmony in society are among the main priorities of public policy, in 2014–2018, the National Television and Radio Company broadcast programmes across all national and regional television and radio stations in 15 of the languages used by the country's ethnic groups and peoples. The television channels operated by the National Television and Radio Company currently broadcast television programmes and video clips produced by creative teams in neighbouring countries that depict the lives of the Kazakh, Kyrgyz and Tajik peoples.

194. Stories and reports are produced and broadcast on television and radio stations such as O'zbekiston, O'zbekiston 24, Yoshlar, Toshkent, Mahalla, Madaniyat va ma'rifat and Dunyo bo'ylab, as well as on local television and radio stations. They form part of current affairs programmes such as *Axborot 24*, *Taxlilnoma*, *Novosti 24*, *Xabarlar*, *News24*, *Davr*, *Davr hafta ichida*, *Poytaxt*, *Diyor yangiliklari*, *Viloyat yangiliklari*, and *Xabar*, as well as the programmes *Yagona oilada*, *Ranginkamon*, *Didar*, *Chinsen*, *Naupir*, *Uzbekiston-umumiy yimiz*, *Maurit*, *Shanarok*, *Oltin xalqa*, *Payomiruz*, *Chashmi dil*, *Armug'on*, *Vse dlya vas*, *Ekho planety*, *Bagri keng diyor*, *Kutluk makan*, *Billur chashma*, *Arayli o'ngr*, *Namaste Hindiston*, *Qoraqalpok elinda*, *Bir osmon ostida*, *Pod odnim nebom*, *Elomon*, *Mexrangez*, *Shukrona*, *Matnaviyat sarchashmasi*, *Chaman*, *Maxsus reportaj*, *Xalkaro press klub* and *Ikki yul orasida*.

195. There were more than 100 independent television and radio outlets as at 1 June 2018. The National Electronic Media Association cooperates with the Committee on Inter-Ethnic Relations and the Muslim Board of Uzbekistan with the specific purpose of exploring such concepts as “inter-ethnic harmony”, “tolerance” and “humanism and universal human values”. Such issues receive extensive coverage on the programme *Xayrli oqshom*, broadcast on the Sevlimi television channel, and on *Zamon* and *Inson qalbiga yo'l*.

196. Journalists and journalism students of many ethnicities, including Uzbeks, Russians, Tajiks, Karakalpaks, Tatars and Uighurs, study at the Centre for Retraining Journalists. They take part in internationally funded training projects for journalists, including on “The role of the media in strengthening security and stability in society” (principles and framework for conflict-sensitive reporting), “The role of the media in preventing terrorism” and “Capacity-building for journalists in media education”. As part of these projects, journalists receive training on inter-ethnic and inter-faith relations, preventing hate speech in the media and investigating unlawful activities. The Centre works actively alongside the Uzbekistan-Germany Friendship Association and the Azeri Cultural Centre and coordinates their involvement in nominating journalists for prizes, and awarding those prizes, as part of the Oltin kalam national competition.