

UZBEKISTAN

Review and appraisal of the implementation by the Republic of Uzbekistan of the Beijing Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995)

Part 1: Review of achievements and challenges in improving gender equality and strengthening the role of women.

a) Uzbekistan is the largest country, in terms of population, in post-Soviet Central Asia. Roughly half of the population of the entire region lives in the Republic, more than 40% of whom are children under the age of 15, and 50.2% of whom are women.

At the beginning of the 1990s, the country, by world standards, had high rates of birth and of infant, child, and maternal mortality, as well as a great number of multiple-child families with a low average standard of living.

From the first days of independence of the Republic of Uzbekistan, its President and Government have focused on the problem of the legal, economic, and social protection of motherhood and childhood, the creation of conditions for the multifaceted development of women, and the enhancing of their role in society. The Republic of Uzbekistan in the conditions of a difficult transitional period, and despite limited financial means, has elevated concern for a healthy and happy motherhood and childhood to the level of state policy.

The Basic Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Constitution, contains provisions calling for the protection of the rights of women. Article 18 forbids any form of discrimination for gender, national, religious, or other reasons. In accordance with Article 46, women and men have equal rights, and Article 117 guarantees the right to elect and be elected to representative bodies.

The Uzbekistan was one of the first countries in Central Asia to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). In 2001 the Government approved and has been realizing a National Action Plan for implementing the recommendations of the U.N. Committee (CEDAW).

A turning point in the life of the women of the Republic was the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, dated 2 March 1995, "On Measures for Strengthening the Role of Women in State and Social Building of the Republic of Uzbekistan," in accordance with which a new position was created in the Republic, Deputy Prime Minister with responsibility for questions of the social protection of the family, motherhood, and childhood.

After the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, People's Republic of China, in 1995, the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan, in November 1996, drafted and approved

an Outline for the advancement of the status of women. The implementation of the Outline extended over two years, and the progress of its implementation was discussed by the Cabinet of Ministers every year, and the results of that year were summarized. Proceeding on the basis of the fundamental directions of the Beijing strategies of 30 March 1998, the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan approved the National Platform and Action Plan for improving the status of women.

The National Platform and Action Plan contains 10 priority targets aimed at improving the health, quality of education, and employment of women, as well as environmental protection and women's rights, which, if realized, will increase the participation of women in the social and economic transformation of society.

b) The realization of the National Platform and Action Plan has created conditions for significant progress in achieving real equality between men and women, the enhancement of the opportunities for women, the creation of favorable conditions for the development of the legislative and normative bases for solving the problems of women and for creating a national mechanism for securing equal rights and opportunities for women and men, and the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.

In the Cabinet of Ministers, a Joint Commission functions for the social protection of the family, motherhood, and childhood, whose members include ministries, departments, and social organizations. Each quarter, the Commission holds hearings on the results of state organizations and local executive bodies in realizing the National Platform and Action Plan for improving the status of women in the Republic, as well as the National Plan Action Plan for realizing the recommendations of the U.N. Committee (CEDAW).

c) Questions of gender equality are at the center of attention of all state, social, and nongovernmental organizations in the Republic. From the first days of its independence, the Republic began to give special attention to questions of gender equality. Thus an institute for monitoring current legislation of the Republic, attached to the Oliy Majlis of Uzbekistan, in 1998 prepared an expert report on current legislation and gender, and all newly adopted laws are also subject to an expert review of gender issues.

A U.N. Framework Program has been developed for development assistance (UNDAF) based on the general appraisal of the country and on the Millennium Declaration (the Goals of the Millennium Declaration) with the active cooperation of representatives of the Government and the agencies of the U.N. that are accredited in Uzbekistan, and in light of the overall connection to the Beijing Platform of Action and the results of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly and National Action Plan.

Focused efforts have been undertaken in the Republic to implement gender equality in all spheres of society in accordance with the following priority directions:

First direction: Creation of the legislative basis for protecting the rights and freedoms of women.

Second direction: Creation of an institutional structure to protect the rights of women.

Third direction: Implementation of national monitoring institutions for the protection of women's rights.

Fourth direction: Development of a women's nongovernmental movement.

Fifth direction: National campaign to inform the general population regarding the rights and freedoms of women.

d) Specific efforts are being carried out in the Republic to implement the U.N. Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, and the recommendations of the U.N. Committee for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women. A National Action Plan for implementing the recommendations of CEDAW has been developed and is being actively put into practice. The Women's Committee of Uzbekistan, together with the Ombudsman, has created an advisory-analytic council to put into place monitoring activities regarding the implementation of the Conventions, other international documents, laws, and the normative-legal acts of the Republic with respect to interests of women and children. In accordance with the results of the monitoring activities, discussions are being carried out regarding the current situation in the local areas. An analytic questionnaire for informational purposes and for the adoption of measures is being sent to the relevant ministries and departments, as well as to local executive bodies.

A bill has been prepared on state guarantees of equal rights and equal opportunities for women and men, which is being considered in the relevant ministries and departments.

e) From the moment independence was declared, Uzbekistan has been focused on creating and improving the legislative foundation for the protection of human rights and freedoms in the country in accordance with international norms. In entering the global community, the Republic of Uzbekistan, in accordance with the Constitution, has reiterated its recognition of the priority of generally recognized norms and international law.

As a full member of the U.N., Uzbekistan is a party to international agreements regarding human rights and interests, thereby obligating itself to observe and apply them in its governmental and legal practice. During the years of independence, the Republic of Uzbekistan has recognized around 70 international agreements on human rights, including the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Convention on the Political Rights of Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention concerning Discrimination in respect of Employment and Occupation, the Declaration on the Elimination of all forms of Intolerance and Discrimination on the basis of Religion or Belief, the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection, and Development of Children, the Convention concerning Maternity Protection, the Hague Convention on Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction, etc.

For the purpose of carrying out governmental policy with regard to women in accordance with the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, legislative, administrative, and other types of measures are being carried out in the Republic of Uzbekistan for the purpose of fully realizing it.

The legislative system of Uzbekistan regulating the rights of women is made up of the Constitution, the Family Code, the Code on Administrative Responsibility, the Civil, Criminal, and Labor Codes, the Citizenship Act, the Youth Act, the Education Act, the Health of Citizens Act, the Welfare for Disabled Persons Act of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Residential Policy Principles Act, the Employment Act, as well as a series of other legislative acts.

A bill has been prepared on governmental state guarantees of equal rights and equal opportunities for women and men, which is being considered in the relevant ministries and departments.

f) Beginning in 1997, every year governmental programs have been undertaken in the country which have been directed at gender perspectives and at concern for women. These programs are long-term in nature and are provided with supplemental budgetary financing, and for implementing the programs funding is also provided by social-based foundations and international organizations. Appropriations for programs promoting the development of gender equality increase every year. For example, expenditures on only one governmental program, confirmed by the resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers on 5 July 2002, No. 242, "On measures for realizing priority directions in improving the medical culture within families, strengthening the health of women, and giving birth to and raising a healthy generation," for the period 2002-2007, including all sources of financing, amount to 95 billion som and 122 million U.S. dollars.

g) Beginning in 1995, conferences and round-table discussions have been held regularly concerning gender perspectives and policy on women. In the last two years alone, four international conferences have been held on the participation of women at decision-making levels and on promoting questions of gender equality. In addition, work on gender questions has been undertaken in the Republic with the general population, leaders, and specialists at various levels.

In accordance with the plan for the monitoring and analytic activities of the Committees and Commissions of the highest legislative body in the Republic – the Oliy Majlis --, progress in implementing the legislative acts of the Republic, the Conventions, and other international documents in the area of guaranteeing women's rights and interests is being studied and discussed.

Questions regarding improving the situation of families, women, and children are discussed each quarter at the sessions of the Joint Committee for the social protection of the family, motherhood, and childhood in the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Each quarter, the Governmental Commission under the leadership of the Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Uzbekistan with the assistance of relevant ministries, departments, social organizations, and leaders of regional bodies, conducts hearings on the progress towards realizing the focused program of measures improving the medical culture in the family, strengthening the health of women, and giving birth to and raising a healthy generation.

h) On the territory of the Republic of Uzbekistan, no military or other conflicts or cases of foreign occupation have occurred.

i) Information and communications technologies (ICT), which are an aspect of globalization that is ubiquitous in the world and in Uzbekistan in particular, are exerting a marked influence on improvements of the rights and opportunities of women and girls, thus stimulating the process of gender equality. Areas involving communications -- telecommunications and information technology (IT) -- are undergoing dynamic development in Uzbekistan and are an excellent source of job-creation and employment. At the present time, energetic efforts are being made to attract women to these areas.

Achieving gender equality here will depend on many factors, including the degree of access to new technologies and the opportunity for advancement for women. One of the solutions to this problem is the creation of (a profiling) institution for the specialized education of women in the area of ICT.

In this context, within the Tashkent University of Information Technologies, a center has been founded for preparing women in the area of telecommunications and information technologies. The mission of the Center is to educate women in the area of telecommunications, information technologies, electronic government, and electronic commerce, which will permit them to obtain good jobs and to improve their standard of living. Specific targeted groups include women who have completed college and are seeking specialized education. The Center instructs more than 500 women each year, and the number of students will gradually rise.

It is planned to open branches of the Center in the regions, so that the Center will train both urban and rural women of Uzbekistan.

j) The Joint Committee for the social protection of the family, motherhood, and childhood of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan has taken on the function of coordinating the actions of state, social, and nongovernmental organizations for the advancement of gender equality, and the rights and opportunities of women. Joint programs for raising gender sensitivity in society with regard to questions of the rights and interests of women are being undertaken.

k) In the Republic, declared by the President of the Republic to be the social-economic goal of the year, questions of protecting mothers and children have tremendous significance. With regard to the declaration of the Year of Realizing Human Interests (1997), the Year of the Family (1998), the Year of Women (1999), the Year of the Healthy Generation (2000), the Year of Mother and Child (2001), the Year of the Older Generation (2002), the Year of the Makhallya (2003), the Year of Goodness and Charity (2004), appropriate corresponding state programs have been developed and approved in the country.

l) In order to actively attract men and boys to the process of achieving gender equality in the Republic, in 1993 a decade of human rights was declared, state and social-based legal clinics were set up, and seminars were conducted in all educational institutions, workers' collectives, ministries, and departments on questions of gender equality and the promotion of equal opportunities in all spheres of society.

The historical traditions and culture of Uzbekistan make it possible to resolve these questions without particular problems and difficulties.

Part 2: Progress in the implementation of critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform of Action and further initiatives and actions identified in the 23rd special session of the General Assembly of the U.N.

A framework, developed by President I. Karimov for building a socially-based state and a civil society, aims that are reflected in the basic law, the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, has imparted important impetus to the ongoing development of Uzbekistan.

The principles of equality between men and women are laid down in the Constitution. The necessary legislative foundation for realizing equality between the sexes has now been established.

The Republic of Uzbekistan was the first in Central Asia to join a series of Conventions regarding women's rights and interests, obligating itself to carry out policies of nondiscrimination against women and adopting for this purpose appropriate legislation to establish legal protections for women's rights and for the advancement of their status in society.

In realizing the National Platform and Action Plan for improving the status of women in Uzbekistan and for enhancing their role in society, it has been possible to encourage women's participation in the social and political life of the Republic. By realizing the governmental programs that have been adopted since 1997 and that have highlighted human interests, especially those of women, it has been possible to achieve yet another important addition to the development of the creative potential of women.

In this way, at the present time in the Republic, an active national mechanism for improving the status of women has been created at the legislative and executive levels, which has made it possible to take appropriate steps for achieving complete equality between women and men, by changing the traditional roles of both women and men in society and in the family.

Enhancing the role and status of women also promotes realization of the *National program for training employees (1997)*, which makes it possible to raise the intellectual level and professional training of women employees. In the Republic, a new version of the Education Act of the Republic of Uzbekistan is being successfully realized. Uzbekistan is one of very few developing countries whose general population has already achieved virtually complete literacy. In this regard, the great majority of the general population possesses not only elementary education but secondary and higher education as well. The high level of education of the general population is one of the greatest achievements of the country.

In the entire system of education of Uzbekistan, there are more than 6.5 million persons studying, 48.4% of whom are women, some of whom go abroad for specialized courses and advanced training.

In Uzbekistan, women have the same rights as men in all spheres of activity. At the present time, each girl when she reaches school age is obliged to attend school on an equal basis with boys and to receive a secondary education. After graduating from school, young women have a broad range of specialties and professions to choose from, which they may acquire in universities,

specialized secondary and vocational institutions. At the present time, every second specialist with higher or secondary education is a woman.

In view of the specific conditions underlying the vocation "woman as mother," the specialties in educational institutions available for young women who are choosing their future profession have been mainly teaching and medicine.

In the Republic, focused activity is being undertaken to support and develop the talents of gifted young people. In 1999, by a Decree of the President of the Republic of the Uzbekistan, a State Prize in the name of Zulfi was established, which is awarded to gifted young women up to 25 years of age who are studying in high schools, lycees, colleges, and institutions of higher learning, for exemplary behavior, rapidity of learning, erudition, initiative, and evidence of rare talent, as well as for special achievements in the areas of literature, culture, art, science, and education.

The preservation of the health of mothers and children is the most important indicator of the level of the social and economic well-being in a country.

Questions of reproductive rights and reproductive health care for women are also priorities for our country.

Furthermore, preserving the genetic base of the nation depends most of all on the health of women and mothers. This direction in the Republic is being guaranteed a material and technical basis that is quite developed: there exist obstetrical-gynecological and pediatric services, as well as scientific research institutes of obstetrics and gynecology, pediatrics, public health, and preventive medicine.

In recent years, in all the regions, centers for marriage and family have been created, along with screening centers and genetic consulting services. Multifaceted state programs have been developed and are being realized to protect the health of women in their childbearing years. The fundamental purposes of these programs are improving the systems responsible for the reproductive health care of the general population with the goal of preventing the birth of disabled children, developing networks of screening centers for women and children, developing systems of continuous education, providing advanced training for specialists, improving the level of knowledge of the general population in the area of reproductive health care, and enhancing international cooperation towards improving the reproductive health of women and giving birth to and raising children.

By a Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan, No. 32 dated 25 January 2002, "On additional measures for improving the health of women and of the younger generation," school curricula in the Republic include lessons on "Health" for pupils of first through fourth grades, "Principles for a healthy generation" for fifth through ninth grades, and "Principles for a healthy lifestyle and family" for ninth through eleventh grades. The causes of maternal and infant mortality are being studied and practical assistance is being afforded to local health public health authorities. Sixteen birth facilities in the Republic received the UNICEF certificate, "Child-Friendly Hospital," the activities of all maternity institutions in the Republic

have been brought into accord with the recommendations of WHO for perinatal care. As a consequence of the efforts that have been conducted, maternal mortality in the Republic has decreased and, as of 1 January 2004, was 32.2 in 100,000 live births, and infant mortality was 16.3 in 1000 live births.

Women's Committees at all levels are actively assisting public health bodies in protecting reproductive rights and reproductive health care, including the foundation "Soglom avlod uchun," social organizations and women's NGOs, which carry out active informational consultative work with women aimed at strengthening reproductive rights and the reproductive health of the general population.

Questions of the economic health of families and the employment of women require special attention.

A governmental and economic policy has been formulated in the Republic, exerting a positive influence on employment and the income of working women.

Today women are employed quite broadly in companies, on farms, and in organizations throughout the Republic.

As a result, women make up more than 44% of all the active labor resources of the country. Women work in all leading branches of industry, such as light industry, agriculture, transport, construction, communications, public education, public health, culture, and sport.

The state constantly is addressing its attention to this question, and legal guarantees have been established for mothers and working women for their social protection in industry and in the home.

All these guarantees are laid out in provisions of the Labor Code, decrees of the President, resolutions of the government, and other normative acts.

Standards governing the amount of weight that women are permitted to lift and to carry have been reviewed, a list of jobs involving hazardous working conditions in which it is prohibited to employ women has been approved, and the social protection of pregnant women and women with children has been assured.

Each year in the Republic, around 400,000 new jobs are created, around 40% of which are stipulated for and occupied by women.

The Government considers very important questions of enhancing motherhood, improving the qualifications of working women, creating the working conditions that they require, and encouraging them to work.

In recent years, the entrepreneurship of women has received a special boost, focusing essentially on the development of consumer products manufacturing and the service sector.

In the activity of the state, promoting the social protection of women has special importance.

In conditions of a transitional period, a strong social policy and strong social protection are among the basic principles guiding the general strategy of reform in the Republic.

Since 1994, the system of social assistance in Uzbekistan has undergone serious modifications connected with the transition from universal social protection to the assurance of reliable social guarantees and the support of the most vulnerable segments of the general population.

At the present time, social assistance to the general population of the Republic is furnished essentially within the framework of two substantial programs: one for families with children and one for disadvantaged families. For the purpose of stepping up the social assistance and reducing administrative expenses associated with providing it, a decision has been adopted in Uzbekistan that has no analogues in world practice. Since 1994, in the program of assistance to disadvantaged families, and since 1997 in the program of assistance to families with children, *funds appropriated from the state budget are distributed by bodies of local government – the makhallyas.*

Uzbek legislation contains standards that set special social and labor-related guarantees for specific categories of women. Among the standards are providing parental time off for the care of children up to the age of three; limiting the employment of women in hazardous and very hazardous working conditions; affording the possibility, upon a woman's request, of retiring at age 54.

The Republic has approximately one million retirees and disabled women, who are the focus of special attention and concern.

One of the most important directions in the activity of the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan and other social organizations is the spiritual, cultural, and physical development of women. Meetings with the creative intelligentsia are held, visits to historical and notable places are undertaken, the book holdings of agricultural libraries are improved, courses concerning the legal literacy of women are offered, constant attention is devoted to expanding the opportunities of girls, adolescents, and women, and for this purpose competitions, exhibitions, tests of knowledge, festivals, and other events aimed at enlarging the creative potential of women are held.

The results of the competition for the State Prize in the name of Zulfi are announced and the celebration of the winners takes place on the eve of International Woman's Day, March 8.

A priority in the state policy of our country is the development of mass physical culture and sport, especially among children and women. The activities of state and social organizations, the physical education of women, and the encouragement of women to take part in physical culture and sport occupy a special place.

At the present time, more than 3 million girls, adolescents, and women are engaged in popular amateur sports.

An important step in the development of the women's movement in Uzbekistan has been the creation of women's nongovernmental organizations. The Women's Committee actively assists and continues to develop a series network of women's nongovernmental organizations in the Republic. They have become an important force and have provided the Government with significant assistance in realizing its policy in the sphere of preserving motherhood and childhood and enhancing the role of women in society.

During the recent period, nongovernmental women's organizations have already received due recognition for their real and potential contribution to resolving women's problems as a means for initiating socially significant actions, for conducting gender-related research, and for effectively cooperating with foreign organizations. At the present time, more than 50 women's nongovernmental organizations in the Republic have united to form the alliance "Mekhr" (care).

Part 3: Institutional Development

a) National mechanisms for advancing gender equality and strengthening the role of women:

By the decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, dated 2 March 1995, "On measures for strengthening the role of women in the state and social building of the Republic of Uzbekistan," a new position of Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Uzbekistan was created, with authority over questions of the social protection of the family, motherhood, and childhood. Analogous positions have been introduced in all the regional structures of power. Attached to the Cabinet of Ministers, a Secretariat for the social protection of the family, motherhood, and childhood has been created, and analogous Secretariats function in the administrative bodies of the regions.

Thus in all structures of power from top to bottom the policy has been set to increase the number of women in decision-making positions.

b) An official duly authorized by the Oliy Majlis for human rights (approved in 1995) carries out his activity in accordance with the law of the Republic of Uzbekistan regarding human rights (Ombudsman, 1997). The institution of an authorized official for human rights (Ombudsman) is a parliamentary structure, which is supported with resources by the Oliy Majlis. The Ombudsman in accordance with the law has the power of legislative initiative. He cooperates with all national institutions, and also with nongovernmental and international organizations as well as foundations in the areas of assuring women's rights, advancing their interests, and promoting gender equality.

Beginning in 1997, the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan, together with the Office of Gender and Development, has been conducting training sessions and consultation sessions for employees in the ministries and departments and in regional executive bodies on the questions of equal rights and equal opportunities. At the same time, the gender sensitivity of employees of institutions of higher and post-secondary education, and of schools, lycees, and colleges is being raised.

Training sessions are being carried out with other target groups -- employees of law-enforcement agencies, religious figures and employees in the mass media and the nongovernmental sector.

c) The commission of the Oliy Majlis on problems of the family and women was approved at the first meeting of the Oliy Majlis of the second session, 6 January 2000. The Commission participates in developing and preparing bills. It works together with the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan, the scientific-practical center "Olia" (family), the foundations "Solgom Avlod Uchun" ("For a Healthy Generation"), "Makhallya," "Ekosan" ("Ecology and Health"), and the youth movement, "Kamolot."

d) The Institute for Monitoring Current Legislation of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan (approved in 1996) is a scientific research institution. It cooperates actively with all democratic institutions of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The Institute participates in decision-making through taking part in developing bills and conducting scientific and legal expert

assessments of bills. Funding for the Institute is carried out through budgetary appropriations, the targeted financing of scientific programs, and resources that are appropriated through the completion of jobs acquired through competitive bidding as well as jobs that are carried out by order of state bodies and administrations.

e) The State Committee on Statistics has created a system of gender-based indicators, which are derived through state statistical observation in the areas of demography and society, and through individual selective specialized research and sociological surveys.

In all, 176 indicators are included in this system, reflecting the various aspects of gender development and gender balance, not counting the differences in the methods of preparation of various indicators.

The fundamental sources of information were:

- forms of state statistical surveys and records of ministries, departments, companies, institutions, and organizations;
- selective surveys of households; and
- administrative registers of labor bureaus.

Underlying the structure of indicators are the most important characteristic features of gender development.

In accordance with their content, gender indicators may be grouped in 11 sections, each of which contains an extremely important aspect of gender development. They consist in blocks of indicators: demography, public health, education, culture, economic activity, science, economic conditions of life, social protection, children who have been deprived of the care of parents, housing conditions, crime, administration, and participation in political life.

The State Committee on Statistics in view of the demands of users of various types, in cooperation with social organizations and departments, has published a series of statistical collections devoted to the status of women and men in Uzbekistan in accordance with a wide range of indicators employed in statistical practice.

State statistical bodies are carrying out statistical work in collaboration with other state bodies and juridical persons, who are obliged to cooperate with bodies of state statistics in carrying out programs of statistical work.

The fundamental indicators of gender statistics are:

- political organizations: Government and Oliy Majlis, regional and local legislative and executive bodies;
- economic organizations: ministries, departments, companies, and organizations;
- scientific and research organizations: universities, research institutes, and organizations that study the market and public opinion;
- social organizations and private persons: women's organizations, labor unions, the mass media, NGOs, entrepreneurs, and citizens;

- International organizations: both those situated on the territory of the Republic of Uzbekistan as well as those abroad.

Questions of monitoring the advancement of gender equality are also included in the mandate for the National Center for Human Rights of the Republic of Uzbekistan (established 1996).

The Center acts directly in defense of the rights and interests of women, and it advances a policy of gender equality. It prepares national reports on the implementation of international documents and conventions of the U.N., and it cooperates with all democratic institutions of the Republic, foundations, and international organizations, that are accredited in the country.

A large role in the development of gender equality is also played by such nongovernmental organizations as the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan, the foundations "Soglom avlod uchun," "Sen yolgiz emassan," "Children's Foundation," the young people's movement, "Kamolot," and others. They actively participate in realizing programs that are directed at enhancing the role of women in society and at transforming women from objects of "social protection" into actively participating individuals. These organizations carry out important work in opening centers for the social protection of families, promoting intellectual development, raising the level of the social and economic protection of single women who are raising children and disabled children, and creating new jobs in factory-based educational centers.

An important role in generating young women leaders is played by the "Children's Parliament," which helps children and adolescents to develop the ability and the capacity to participate in social life in a constructive and self-aware manner.

Part 4: Main challenges and actions necessary to overcome them

ANNEX I

GOALS AND TARGETS IN THE AREA OF DEVELOPMENT, AS SET OUT IN THE MILLENNIUM DECLARATION (2000)

Goal one. Eliminating extreme poverty and hunger

Target 1. At the present time, the Government of Uzbekistan, representatives of PRUN in Uzbekistan, together with the relevant ministries, departments, and organizations have completed work on drafting a Development Assistance Framework of the U.N. for Uzbekistan, aimed at 2005-2009. This document is based on priorities that are designated as Millennium Development Goals and is associated with the priority directions of development for the country in recent years. This document lays out a program of actions involving cooperation with international financial institutions that are devoted to raising the standard of living of the general population, improving its health, fostering the development of women and children, and reducing the portion of the general population that consumes less than 2,100 calories daily, from 27.5% in 2002 to 17% in 2015.

Target 2. The overall amount of housing stock in the Republic at the beginning of 2003 was 360.9 million square meters of total space (total space is the sum of the space constituted by living rooms, kitchens, lavatories, corridors, and balconies), of which the private housing stock amounts to 354.8 million square meters. Urban housing stock amounts to 141 million square meters of total space, but rural housing stock amounts to 220.8 million square meters. At the present time, a single resident of the Republic is furnished with housing amounting to 14.3 square meters of total space. In urban housing stock, this amounts to 15 square meters, and in rural housing stock 13.8 square meters. At the beginning of 2000, this indicator stood at a total of 13.6 square meters per person, -- 14.4 square meters in the city, and 13.1 square meters in rural areas.

It is without doubt a special feature of the country that approximately 96% of all families live in individual housing, i.e., the majority of residents in the country are the owners of their residences.

Goal two. Guaranteeing universal elementary education

Target 3. By the Education Act and the National Program for Training Employees (1997) of the Republic of Uzbekistan, mandatory secondary education was stipulated, the first stage of which is elementary education (I-IV grades). Universal secondary education *assures the reception of systematic knowledge of the foundations of science, develops the need for mastering knowledge, lays the basis for fundamental academic, scientific, and general cultural knowledge, for spiritual and moral qualities on the basis of national and general human values, and for work skills, creative thought processes, a conscious relationship to the surrounding world, and the choice of a profession.*

Goal three. Promoting equality between men and women and expanding the rights and opportunities of women

Target 4. Inequality between the sexes in the area of elementary and secondary education in the Republic of Uzbekistan *does not exist.*

Goal four. Reducing child mortality

Target 5. In the Republic of Uzbekistan, the question of safeguarding the health of mothers and children has been raised to the level of state policy. At the present time, more than 40% of the general population of Uzbekistan is made up of children under 14 years of age, and one-quarter of the general population are women of childbearing age. The basic purposes of state programs directed at safeguarding motherhood and childhood are:

- improving the system of reproductive health care for the general population;
- developing the state program "Screening mother and child";
- developing a system of continuous education, raising the level of qualifications of specialists and the level of knowledge in the general population in the area of reproductive health care, and improving medical culture;
- enlarging international cooperation in improving the reproductive health of women, and the giving birth to and the raising of children; and
- strengthening the material and technical basis for institutions of childhood and maternity.

In order to reduce mortality among children of less than 5 years of age, in conjunction with such international organizations as WHO, UNICEF, and Project Hope, the following programs are being realized:

- safe maternity;
- encouraging and conducting outreach for breast-feeding;
- integrated authority for childhood diseases;
- vitamin A supplements for children;
- eliminating iodine-deficit conditions; and
- eliminating iron-deficit conditions.

As a result of these and other measures that have been carried out in the Republic, mortality has been reduced among children of less than 5 years age, from 46.8 per thousand in 1991 to 22.5 in 2003.

Goal five. Improving maternal care

Target 6. The reduction of maternal mortality in the Republic from 65.3 in 1991 to 32.2 in 2003 was achieved as a result of focused work in expanding the network and improving the work of primary medical health institutions and of centers of reproductive health for women, girls and adolescents, providing them with audiovisual and instructional materials, creating learning centers of reproductive health for women, girls and adolescents; diagnosing extra-genital illnesses in women and encouraging the use of contraceptive devices, providing contraceptive means free of charge to the general population (if in 1991 the percentage of women using contraceptive means was 13%, by 2003 this indicator stood at 62.3%), strengthening outreach

among the general population for the advantages of observing an interval between births, and providing warnings concerning pregnancy and births for young and elderly women as well as those that have given birth frequently.

Goal six. Combatting HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases

Target 7. On 19 June 2002 a national program for preventive measures against HIV/AIDS was adopted for the years 2002-2005. In the Republic, a joint project "Cooperation on a multi-sector effective response to HIV/AIDS, drug addiction, and sexually transmitted diseases (STD) in Uzbekistan" is being carried out.

The fundamental policy of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the fight against the spread of HIV infection is directed at mobilizing preventive measures among intravenous drug users (IDU). In the Republic, 230 confidential centers have been opened and begun work, where disposable needles are exchanged and condoms and informational materials are distributed for IDU. The purpose of opening and operating the confidential centers for IDU in Uzbekistan is to reduce the rate of spread of HIV, to ensure that IDU have access to information and to consultations regarding questions of HIV/AIDS/STD, to provide access to medical institutions, and to reduce the demand for narcotics. Confidential centers carry out their activities free of charge, and the fundamental principles of their work are anonymity and confidentiality.

In the coordination, planning, and administration of activities for the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS, drug addiction, and STDs, the Government of Uzbekistan has received assistance from UNAIDS, and representatives of UNFPA in Uzbekistan also assisted in this work.

In the Republic, a network of anonymous telephone services has been created, where people can call for information or for consultations regarding questions of HIV/STD, and a network of offices is functioning that observe strict confidentiality, where it is possible to obtain consultations without difficulty both before and after testing. Internet programs are being developed, but they have not yet received wide distribution because of the lack of development in the information networks in the local regions. In the Republic, several official web pages have been registered that are devoted to questions of HIV/AIDS.

Target 8. In the Republic, epidemiological inspection regarding malaria is being strengthened with special emphasis on preventing the spread of tropical malaria, reducing the transmission of local three-day malaria among the general population in the southern districts bordering on Tajikistan, through improving the quality of the employees and strengthening the material and technical basis of parasitological work, and engaging the anti-malarial efforts of donor organizations.

Epidemiological inspection is being strengthened for all infectious diseases that are registered on the territory in question and for other exotic diseases which might be transmitted from other countries, thus making it possible to reduce the vulnerability and mortality of all age groups.

Goal seven. Ensuring environmental sustainability

Target 9. From the moment independence was gained in 1991, Uzbekistan has set about developing national approaches to the transition to sustainable development. In this context, the recognition of the imperative nature of ecological components to sustainable development is connected to the necessity of accounting for such "framework conditions" as present and potential water and earth resources, and documented reserves of minerals and raw materials.

In the Nukus Declaration, adopted by the heads of the five Central Asian states in 1995, support was affirmed for international Conventions and Agreements on the problems of the environment and of sustainable development, each country announced its acceptance of the necessity to transition to sustainable development and to achieve sustainability in the region, and it was recognized as a necessity to create national and regional institutional structures to promote sustainable development.

In accordance with the recommendations of the UN conference on the environment and development (Rio, 92), the Nukus Declaration, and obligations undertaken by Uzbekistan in connection with joining Conventions on the environment, the appropriate structures have begun to be formed in the Republic: national commissions on problems of climate change, on preserving biodiversity, on the struggle with desertification, and on reducing the use of non-renewable resources. The creation of these structures was an organizational measure to ensure the effective participation of the Republic in achieving sustainable development in the region and in the global community and in improving interagency coordination of plans and practical actions for solving ecological problems and achieving sustainable development.

In 1997 the Government decided to form a National Commission of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Sustainable Development (NCSD, by a resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers dated 11/12/1997, No. 510).

An Outline (1998) and a Strategy of sustainable development in the Republic of Uzbekistan (1999) have been developed and adopted by the Government of the Republic. Principles have been worked out for the "Agenda for the 21st Century for the Republic of Uzbekistan" (2000). Basic programs have been laid out, the development and realization of which will make possible the formation of the social and economic conditions for a transition to sustainable development.

Target 10. In Uzbekistan, 5,204 water pipes are used, including 332 units in urban centers and 4,872 units in rural areas. The isolated length, as of the beginning of 2003, was: 13,400 kilometers of water pipes; 47,200 kilometers of street water-pipe networks, and 5,800 kilometers of water pipes within apartments and houses.

Approximately 31% of the potable water supply in populated areas of Uzbekistan comes from surface waters, and the remaining proportion is obtained from subterranean water sources.

The main water arteries of the Republic, the Amudarya, Syrdarya, Zarafshan and other rivers of medium and low flow rates, for all practical purposes have become useless for supplying drinking water as a consequence of the complete qualitative exhaustion of the river flow. The

main pollutants of reservoirs are collection-drainage waters of high mineral content as well as industrial and residential effluent.

A series of powerful regional systems has been created in the Republic having an interdistrict and interregional significance having water pipes of great length for delivering water from distant sources, where the quality of the generated water either is already within prescribed norms or can be improved using water purification measures.

Systems of this type of already being used. Thus for improving the water supply in the Bukhara, Navoi, and some regions of the Samarkand district, the Damkhodzhin water main has been put into operation with a capacity of 260,000 cubic meters/day obtaining water from the Zarafshan interregional subterranean fresh waters in the Samarkand district.

The supply of drinking water to the general population is continuing to be developed in accordance with documents from the Government, according to which by 2005, 85% of the rural general population will be supplied with drinking water.

At the present time, the proportion of rural towns that are supplied with drinking water is 78%, as opposed to 52% in 1990.

Social and nongovernmental organizations of the Republic are making efforts to provide the general population of regions that have suffered ecological disaster, the Autonomous Republic of Karakalpak, and the Bukhara, Dzhizak, Khorezm, and Syrdarin regions, with water pumps, water purification filters, and bottled water.

For improving the water supply to the general population of the Republic, a series of projects is being realized to develop the infrastructure of villages with the assistance of foreign investment and loans.

Target 11. In Uzbekistan there are no slums.

Goal eight. Forming a global partnership for development

Target 12. The financial system is regulated by the Budgetary System Act of the Republic of Uzbekistan, dated 14 December 2000, and other legislative acts. The discussion and adoption of the state budget is carried out on the basis of a budgetary survey based on questionnaires that are required for receiving budgetary appropriations.

In accordance with the questionnaires of the recipients of budgetary funds, the Ministry of Finance prepares a draft state budget and submits the budgetary message to the Cabinet of Ministers, which after discussion submits it to the Oliy Majlis. The state budget is approved by the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Budget-related resolutions of the Oliy Majlis and of the Cabinet of Ministers are open for inspection.

Target 15. The level of foreign indebtedness of the Republic of Uzbekistan according to criteria of the World Bank is viewed as acceptable, and in the long term significant changes are not

expected. In this context, it is essential to note that due to the budgetary policy that has been followed, for the purpose of preventing excessive foreign indebtedness, the size of foreign loans is limited to the amount of expenditures required to service the state foreign debt, including the liquidation of the fundamental debt, payment of interest, commissions, etc.

Target 16. In the first years of independence, under conditions of the transition to a market economy in Uzbekistan, employment levels fell. Taking into account the difficulties of this transitional period, local programs are being carried out in local areas to provide rational employment to the general population by 2010.

Legislation of the Republic sets out a far-reaching system for protecting women in the labor market. State labor agencies without charge assist unemployed women in securing jobs. In addition, guarantees of material support are also provided for paying unemployment benefits and stipends during periods of professional training and retraining, supplying material assistance to unemployed women with children, paying for the labor of women employed in public-sector work, assigning quotas of jobs for women in companies, and providing assistance and advice during the job search, professional training and retraining. In 2003 alone, of 197,760 unemployed women, 139,074 were provided with work, and the remainder was sent to temporary, paid public-sector employment.

In the Republic of Uzbekistan focused efforts are underway with regard to expanding the opportunities of the general population to receive work in developing countries. At present time, the agency for foreign employment migration is actively cooperating with the Republic of Korea for training and employment in South Korea, which is making it possible for young people of Uzbekistan to receive good and productive jobs. The youth movement, "Kamolot," together with regional governmental bodies, has prepared and is realizing a program for providing employment to young people.

Target 17. The state joint-stock company, Uzpharmsanoat, together with the Ministry of Public Health, has prepared a list of medicines and their quantities that are necessary for the health of the general population. Special attention is being paid to making medicines and dressings more available and producing them on the basis of local raw materials -- ingredients of medications prepared in the Republic, medicinal plants, local medicinal and other materials -- which makes it possible to lower the prices of such production.

Target 18. Together with international donor organizations, information technology is the focus of large-scale development in the Republic, access of women to the advantages of new technologies has increased, many women's organizations and educational institutions are connected online, and work in this direction continues.

Annex II.

Specific targets for expanding the rights and opportunities of women and gender equality

1. Beijing Platform of Action (1995)

80. b) In the Republic of Uzbekistan, in accordance with the Education Act and the National Program for Training Employees, universal 12-year education is provided free of charge to children, and significant amounts of state grants are appropriated for the education of boys and girls in institutions of higher and secondary specialized education in general education.

81. a) In the Republic there are no illiterate women. Special attention is paid to raising the educational level of rural women and promoting the continuing of their studies after they receive a general education. Disabled women are educated without infringing on their right to education, and women who have relocated within the country for any reason receive education at the location of their temporary place of residence.

81. b) On the basis of Article 41 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Article 4 of the Education Act, and Clauses 3.1 and 3.2 of the National Program for Training Employees, boys and girls have equal rights and opportunities in receiving general education.

106. i) In the resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers adopted in 1993, "On an integrated solution to the problems of improving the health of the younger generation," priorities were established for integrating elements of reproductive health care services into the network of primary-care medical institutions. In addition, these provisions were strengthened in the documents of the Cabinet of Ministers, No. 32, "On supplemental measures for strengthening the health of women and of the younger generation," adopted on 25 January 2002 and, No. 242, "On measures for realizing the priority directions of increasing the medical culture in families, strengthening the health of women, and the birth and raising of a healthy generation," adopted on 5 July 2002, as well as state programs that are adopted each year.

In 1998, by decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, a state program was launched to reform the system of public health, stipulating a step-by-step approach to the creation of a national model of public health.

One special feature of the national model is the priority given to preventive medicine and implementation of a healthy style of life, the raising of a generation that is physically and morally healthy as well as harmonious in development, and the encouraging of general population to take responsibility for their own health.

The state program for reforming public health takes into account the medical, social, economic, and ecological conditions of Uzbekistan and is based on the principle of a step-by-step transition from a state-controlled to a mixed and privately-based system of financing for public health and of the creation of conditions for the social protection of the general population.

In the state program, a series of priorities are stipulated that require immediate implementation. They are the reforming of the primary-care team concept of medical assistance, the creation of a guaranteed, state-run, effective system of emergency medical assistance, the improving of the system of financing for public health, the creation of a sustainable and competitive nongovernmental sector of public health, the provision of stable public health epidemiological conditions in all regions of the country, and the ongoing improvement of medical assistance to mothers and children.

For implementing the state program by the Ministry of Public Health, the network of public health centers is being restructured. In place of the previously existing cumbersome five-step system, a two-step system is being created of primary-care medical assistance, consisting of rural medical centers and central regional hospitals.

This process of rationalization is being achieved by replacing the previously existing ineffective rural regional hospitals, out-patient clinics, physician's assistants, and obstetric centers with a contemporary form of primary-care medical assistance -- rural medical centers where a general practitioner physician works. In recent years, 857 rural medical centers have been constructed and put into operation in Uzbekistan. Another 769 were renovated on the basis of previously existing medical institutions. Today a total of 1,626 rural medical centers are already functioning. By 2005, it is expected that in Uzbekistan 2,800 rural medical centers will be functioning and they will be equipped with the medical equipment that is necessary for providing a broad range of services.

In the Republic, focused efforts are being directed at protecting the health of women of childbearing years, prolonging the interval between births, discouraging early and close-relation marriages, preventing unwanted pregnancies, increasing the qualifications of medical employees, and strengthening the material and technical basis for maternity and children's institutions.

106. d) In the Republic, in 2001, a Republican Center of Reproductive Health for Adolescents was created along with its branches in the regions, which encourage the development of positive attitudes among adolescents toward reproductive health. Medical examinations of adolescents are carried out, diagnosed patients are given treatment, and consultations are organized for young people regarding questions of reproductive health as well as other confidential questions. Various textbooks, booklets, and brochures directed at improving the knowledge of young people of a healthy lifestyle and the health of families are being prepared and distributed.

106. w) In the Republic questions of women's and children's health have been raised to the level of state policy. Every year all children and women of childbearing age are examined at public expense, and diagnosed patients are added to preventive medicine registers and are treated. These questions are discussed each quarter in meetings of regional administrations of public health, local governmental bodies, meetings of the joint commission on the social protection of the family, motherhood, and childhood of the Cabinet of Ministers, and sessions of the governmental commission on promoting a healthy generation.

The foundation "Soglom avlod uchun" is distributing iron supplements to women and children suffering from anemia. The state joint-stock company, Uzpharmsanoat, has organized the

production of 21 brand-name anti-anemia, iodine- and iron-containing preparations, immune modulators, and other medications.

Informational work is being conducted among the general population regarding correct nutrition for children. Underweight children are seen by pediatricians and treated.

The Government of the Republic together with the Asian Development Bank is realizing the project, "Improving nutrition for mothers and children in Asian countries during a transitional economic period," in the amount of 1.2 million U.S. dollars. In accordance with this project, flour is being enriched with an iron-vitamin complex and iodized salt. At the present time, the Global Alliance for Nutrition is carrying out an evaluative mission in the Republic for obtaining a grant for the Republic aimed at continuing the enhancement of flour produced in the Republic.

143. i) The Republic of Uzbekistan has joined the Convention on preventing or limiting the use of specific kinds of everyday weapons, which might be considered capable of inflicting extraordinary injury and having non-selective effects. The provisions of the Convention came into effect in the Republic of Uzbekistan on 3/29/1998. Protocol II is presently being discussed in connection with the introduction of amendments regarding the prohibition or restrictions of the use of mines, booby-traps, and other devices.

193. a) In accordance with Article 18 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, all citizens have the same rights and freedoms and are equal before the law without distinction of sex, race, nationality, language, religion, social origin, belief, or personal or social position.

In accordance with Article 6 of the Labor Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan, all citizens have equal opportunities to possess and to make use of their right to work. The establishment of any restrictions or advantages in the area of labor relations as a function of any circumstances not connected to the concrete qualities of workers and the results of their work is inadmissible and amounts to discrimination.

193. c) Women constitute 9.5% of the members of the highest legislative body in the Republic, the Oliy Majlis. In addition, women are represented in district, regional, and municipal councils of people's deputies, as well as in organs of civil self-government (makhallya committees). At the beginning of 2004, women constituted approximately 25% of those in leading positions.

At the end of 2004, in Uzbekistan, elections will be held for the bicameral parliament, and at the present time preparations for these elections are actively underway. In addition, the Women's Committee of the Republic and its territorial branches are engaged in the effort to develop leadership qualities among women and girls, and cooperation with political parties for the advancement of women is being organized.

230. b) In May 1995, the Republic of Uzbekistan joined the U. N. Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women.

230. i) In 1992, the Republic of Uzbekistan joined the U.N. Convention on the Rights of Children.

In the country, a package of measures is being realized that is aimed at implementing the Conventions in the area of women's and children's rights.

279. a) In the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Education Act provides for universal and equal access to elementary education on the parts of girls and boys.

1. Outcome document of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly U.N. (2000)

67. c) According to Education Act of the Republic of Uzbekistan, girls and boys receive free elementary education.

68. b) According to the basic law of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Constitution, women and girls are optimally protected by law from discrimination in accordance with sex.

79. b) In the Republic of Uzbekistan, questions of protecting reproductive rights and reproductive health care are elevated to the level of state policy.

95. f) The Education Act guarantees free secondary education to all citizens. The level of literacy in Uzbekistan is 99.2%.

3. Goals, targets, and indicators of the millennium (2000)

Goal 2. The Education Act guarantees free elementary education to all citizens. In Uzbekistan, at the legislative level, the complete literacy of the general population is assured, and girls and boys have equal opportunities and rights in receiving elementary school education in its full extent.

Target 3. One of the fundamental targets of the state is manifesting concern for the younger generation, and the creation of all necessary conditions for enhancing the role of women in society. In this connection, the law of the Republic establishes appropriate standards, and the Government of the Republic is undertaking specific measures to further the realization of equality between men and women, and to enlarge the rights and opportunities of women.

Target 4. Inequality between the sexes does not exist at any level of education.

In 2002, the ratio of girls to boys was 47.8% in preschool institutions, 49% in general education schools, 35.3% in academic lycees, 40.9% in professional colleges, and 38.9% in institutions of higher learning. A decline in the percentage of female students in institutions of higher learning is associated with specific conditions connected to the creation of families and the birth of children, essentially at the ages from 18 to 22.

At the present time, for every 1000 workers approximately 990 have education. As of 1 January 2003, 9,333,000 persons were employed in branches of the economy, including 4,102,400 or 44% women. In the nonagricultural sector of the economy, 6,287,000 persons were employed, including 2,814,000 women. In the Republic, the percentage of women employed in the nonagricultural sector is 44.8%.

Women account for 9.5% of the members of parliament.

Goal 5. Target 6. Questions of increasing the protection of motherhood and childhood have been elevated to the level of state policy. By realizing targeted measures in the area of protecting motherhood and childhood it has been possible to significantly improve the indicators that characterize the situation with regard to motherhood and childhood. Thus, over the years of independence, the rate of infant mortality has declined from 38.1 to 18.3 in 1,000 live births. Maternal mortality has declined from 42.8 to 33.5 in 100,000 live births, and the number of abortions over the last 12 years has been reduced in Uzbekistan by a factor of three. The percentage of mothers giving birth at ages younger than 20 in Uzbekistan is 4.7%. The divorce rate for the past 12 years has been reduced 1 1/2 times to 9.2 per 100 marriages.

In order that the younger generation of Uzbekistan be protected from deleterious practices and serious diseases, special attention in the system of education is given to preventing HIV/AIDS, STD, and other diseases. For pupils in the later grades, public campaigns are being carried out devoted to the Worldwide Day for combatting drug use and the Worldwide Day against HIV/AIDS.

In AIDS centers, on a voluntary and anonymous basis, any citizen can obtain testing for HIV/AIDS, along with pre- and post-test consultation.

The Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan has approved, "A strategic program to combat the spread of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the Republic of Uzbekistan" for 2003-2006, in the preparation of which all sectors of the economy including the system of public education took part.

Annex III

Beijing Platform of Action

Strategic Goals

A. WOMEN AND POVERTY

I. Policy and the mechanism of social support for children and their families

The central link of the Uzbek model of a step-by-step transition to a market economy is a strong social policy.

This means that the transition to a market economy is not a goal in itself, but rather that all economic, demographic, and political transformations are directed at creating conditions of life and activity that are worthy of man.

The strategy of development is oriented to the needs of people, and the creation of conditions for developing their abilities and improving their welfare, presupposes above all the targeted social protection of the most vulnerable sectors of the general population and the creation of conditions in which all citizens that are capable of work can manifest their creative capacities and by their work secure a dignified existence for themselves and their families.

The main directions for realizing this strategy in Uzbekistan are:

- providing citizens with the guaranteed constitutional rights of the freedom of economic activity, entrepreneurship, and labor, as well as the freedom to choose one's profession and area in which to work.;
- the targeted character of social protection, and a differentiated approach to various sectors of the general population;
- targeted social support of the most vulnerable sectors of the general population; and
- the introduction of a powerful mechanism for the motivation of labor.

These measures of social policy must foster conditions for reconciling the parts of society, for strengthening of the material and social well-being of families, and for creating acceptable conditions for raising children.

But in the Republic, there is direct social support of children on the part of the state. State concern and social support of children in Uzbekistan begins long before the birth of a child and continues until he or she comes of age. The most widely used measures in this direction are stable payment of benefits, guarantees, and subsidies, established by the Government for mothers, children, and their families. Among them are:

[Table]

Provision of assistance to families with children in the first grades of school

Number of first-grade pupils receiving free sets of school supplies for September 1, thousands of persons

average cost of a set, in som

number of children from disadvantaged families, receiving the package of winter clothes, thousands of persons

average cost of one package, in som

a) benefits:

- for pregnancy and birth in the amount of the average wage earned during 126 calendar days, issued at the place of work;
- one-time (at the birth of the child at double the amount of the minimum wage);
- for care of a child until he or she reaches two years of age in the amount of 1.5 times the minimum wage;
- for care of a disabled child up to the age of 16;
- to persons disabled from childhood;

b) exemption from taxes;

- taxes for all income received in the amount of four times the nontaxable minimum (single mothers with two or more children less than 16 years of age, on 30% of all income received by them; widows and widowers having two or more children up to the age of 16 and not receiving a pension due to the loss of a breadwinner, on 30% of all income received by them; one of the parents raising a disabled child living with him or her from childhood and requiring constant care, on 30% of all income received by them);

c) material assistance to children;

- annual free distribution to all first graders of free sets of school supplies;
- annual distribution of sets of winter clothing to pupils in the first grades from disadvantaged families;

d) assistance to mothers with children;

- since 1999 the right to a shortened work week is guaranteed by law, but preserving the established amount of pay to women who work in the public sector and have children less than three years of age.

Another form of social assistance to children is state assistance to disadvantaged families in the form of designation and distribution to them of financial benefits as a carried out since October 1994 through citizen self-governing organs, the makhallyas.

[Chart]

Basic structure of the system of state assistance to families

Type of assistance:	Material aid in the form of issuing monetary benefits		
Category of families:	Disadvantaged families	Families with children up to 16 years	
Size of benefit:	1.5 to 3 times the minimum wage	with 1 child – 50%	of
		with 2 children – 100%	mini-
		with 3 children – 140%	mum
		with 4 children – 175%	wage
Period of payment:	Monthly – for 3 months	Monthly – for 6 months	
	If the material circumstances of the family do not improve, then the benefit is extended for another period.		
Determined by:	A gathering of the village, group, or makhallya (hereinafter termed ‘self-governing body’) in an open vote based on the declaration of the family, the investigation report, or the needs of the family as established by a special commission.		
Conditions necessary for taking the decision:	Unswerving adherence to the principle of social justice: ensuring appropriateness of the material assistance being provided, and providing it to families that actually need it; preventing a dependent relationship on the part of individual families toward measures taken for the social protection of the general population; strengthening the sense of responsibility in the family for the material well-being of members of the family especially children; creating for them the conditions that are necessary for a well-rounded physical and spiritual development; and raising the educational and professional level.		
Issued by:	Branches of the People’s Bank at the place of residence of the family from special accounts of the self-governing bodies on the basis of lists identifying the recipients of material assistance and the amount.		
Sources of financing:	Funds from local budgets, companies, and organizations, social and charitable foundations, extra-budgetary sources, voluntary contributions of citizens, and others. Funds from state republic budget, local budgets, and extra-budgetary sources.		
Monitoring of the effective use of the funds dispursed:	Ex officio, the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Karakalpakistan, leaders of the districts, regions, and cities, and the Inspection Administration of the Ministry of Finance. Ex officio, the Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic, Ministers of Finances and of Labor, and the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of		

the Republic of Karakalpakstan, leaders of the districts and of the city of Tashkent.

The makhallya is a citizen's self-governing body that arose historically and that actively assists the development of social infrastructure of the territory, attracting for this purpose on a voluntary basis the financial support of enterprises and organizations. It is not for nothing that the people say, "God is high up, the emir is far away, but the makhallya is right here and it helps." And this is in fact the case. It is much easier and more effective for families to turn to their makhallya for assistance, where everyone knows them, than to try to solve their problems at higher levels. The more so since, in recent times, measures are being actively implemented in social life for increasing the role of self-governing institutions and for resolving questions related to the consequential transfer to them of individual functions of the self-governing organs of the state. Makhallya committees discuss questions of improving the material welfare and residential conditions of citizens, assisting in the employment of the general population, and providing active assistance to underprivileged families, disabled persons, the elderly, and children.

A focused system of state social assistance is unique in the sense that it is based on objective decisions that have been set out by makhallyas. To distribute social assistance, a special commission has been formed of respected citizens and representatives of state bodies, which evaluates the level of welfare of a family and drafts a decision regarding the provision of assistance and its amount.

The evaluation of the commission is announced at a gathering of citizens living in the makhallya in question, which takes a decision regarding the provision of assistance through an open vote.

Since January 1, 1997, the local bodies of self-government have been granted new functions for keeping records, determining the degree of need, and designating and issuing benefits to families with children, which earlier were carried out by enterprises and social welfare bodies.

As the famous scholar and specialist in social problems, K. Griffin, has noted, "This flexible and inexpensive system is based on a long (traditional, historic) development and consequently has the faith of local people... Practice has shown that the people who have been designated by makhallyas as poor tend not to belong to any one single vulnerable group and may simply have a low income, lower than the minimum wage."

The existing system of assistance to underprivileged families is to a large extent directed at providing assistance to families with children, most of all families with many children. Approximately 80% of the recipients of benefits are made up of underprivileged families with children. The amount of benefits ranges from 1.5 to 3 times the minimum wage. The procedures for approving and issuing benefits to underprivileged families and families with children of up to 16 years of age have many things in common. In this regard, receiving one type of benefit does not represent an obstacle to receiving another type. It is important to note that minors from underprivileged families go to children's camps free of charge at the expense of the state.

The main source of financing for paying material assistance to underprivileged and needy families with children are funds of the national and local budgets.

Using the "Makhallya" system is an innovative and effective method for delivering targeted social assistance to needy sectors of the general population of Uzbekistan. It represents a sufficiently flexible mechanism for providing social assistance only to those families that actually need it, i.e., it provides objectivity. In addition, this system raises the degree of responsibility of the executive bodies at all levels to the full extent and promotes the prompt implementation of the obligations that it has, and it also makes it possible to continuously monitor the social assistance provided to needy families and the improvement of their material situation.

[Table]

Average amount of material assistance and benefits to families with children

Average monthly amount of material assistance

Average monthly benefit to families with children

Som

The experience of recent years shows that totality of the measures implemented for the social support of children, women, and families acts in opposition to poverty and makes it possible to restrain the excessive differentiation of the general population according to income. In addition, the growing economic activity of the general population and the sustainability of economic growth will promote the improvement of the standard of living for all sectors of the general population of the Republic.

B. EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL TRAINING OF WOMEN

B.1 Ensuring equal access to education

The principles of building underlying the targets and avenues of development of all parts of the system of education in the Republic are set down in the fundamental legislative acts of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Thus in Uzbekistan the Education Act and the National Program for Training Employees Act have become fundamental to the basic reformation of the educational system of the Republic. They set out the central goal as the construction of a national system of education.

The national program for training employees is a unique concept of developing education in Uzbekistan, and it contains a far-reaching state policy for the development of human potential at a high level. The realization of the national program is carried out in three steps:

- the first (1997-2001) is the creation of the legal, personnel, scientific and methodological, as well as financial and material conditions with regard to preserving the positive potential of the existing system of training employees;
- the second (2001-2005) is the full-scale realization of the national program, its correction taking into account the cumulative experience of its implementation, the development of a labor market, and the real social economical conditions; and
- the third (2005 and succeeding years) is the improvement and ongoing development of a system for training employees on the basis of the analysis and application of the cumulative

experience in accordance with the perspectives of the social and economic development of the country.

For the purpose of supporting this level and improving the effectiveness of the educational system in the Republic of Uzbekistan, great significance is attached to the ongoing development of educational structures, by involving the general population in all forms of education and child-rearing while preserving the constitutional rights of citizens to education.

At the same time, a system of monitoring has been created and is successfully functioning for monitoring the observance of the rights of women and children and for realizing the Convention regarding women's and children's rights.

The state system of continuous education in Uzbekistan includes:

- preschool education of children from 3 to 6-7 years of age;
- mandatory school education; 4-year elementary, 9-year incomplete secondary and 2-year complete secondary or 3-year professional or academic education;
- secondary specialized education as a postgraduate form of education, coming into effect step by step in connection with the introduction of mandatory 3-year professional or academic education;
- higher education consisting of 2 degrees -- Baccalaureate and Masters.

There are also various forms of retraining and advanced training of employees after the completion of education within the framework of the overall system.

Basic structure of the system of education in Uzbekistan, in accordance with the National Program for Training Employees

	Education after doctoral studies and scientific work	
Post-graduate Education		
Doctor of sciences	Doctoral programs	
Candidate of sciences	Graduate programs (3 years)	
Higher education	Professional programs of higher education (medicine, length of education, up to 12 years)	Masters (2 years)
Masters (universities, institutes)		Programs of General [sic]
Bachelor		Professional colleges (3 years)
Secondary specialized Certificate of completion of Academic lycee	Academic lycees (3 years)	
15(16)-17(18) Years		
Professional education		
Diploma after professional college		
Certificate of completion of General secondary school	General secondary school (5 years)	
11(12)-15(16) years		
General secondary education		
7-10 (11) years	Primary school	
5-6 (7) years	Kindergarten	
Preschool education 3 years	Day nursery	

At the present time in the Republic there are 9,791 general education day schools, where 6,241,000 pupils study, half of whom are girls.

B. 2 In the Republic of Uzbekistan, in accordance with the Education Act, all citizens are provided with free secondary education, and complete literacy of the general population, including women, is guaranteed. Uzbekistan is one of the few developing countries whose general population has virtually total literacy, the indicators of which continue to rise to their very limits. If the level of literacy of the general population of Uzbekistan was 97.7% in 1991, it was already 99.3% in 2003.

B.3 The measures that have been taken in the Republic in the area of developing education and child-rearing could not but exert an influence on the educational potential of the nation. A high level of education in the general population is characteristic of Uzbekistan and is one of the greatest achievements of the country.

Women in Uzbekistan have equal rights with men in all spheres of activity. At the present time, each girl reaching school age, just as in the case of each boy, is required to attend school and to receive a mandatory ninth-grade education. After the completion of school, girls have a wide choice of specialties and professions, which they may obtain in institutions of higher, secondary specialized, and professional technical education.

At the beginning of 2003, 144 graduate programs were functioning in the country, including 83 in scientific organizations and 61 in institutions of higher learning, in which 2,900 graduate students were studying, including 1,300 women (45%). There are 78 doctoral programs, the next degree, including 43 in scientific organizations and 35 in institutions of higher learning, in which 287 doctoral students were studying, including 114 women.

B.4 In the system of education and of professional training, nondiscriminatory approaches have been developed for the education of girls. In addition, children with limited potential have not been ignored. Their education is carried out in schools and in boarding schools for intellectually disadvantaged children, the deaf, the hard of hearing, the blind and those with poor vision, children suffering with the consequences of polio and cerebral palsy, and those with serious speech defects. These children receive education extending over a longer time, i.e., they require a specialized method of education and the correction of defects. In the process of elementary education in general-education subjects and vocational training, intellectually challenged children receive professional-labor skills for specific professions. Along with this, vocational education is one of the most important means of correcting the moral upbringing and the intellectual development of abnormal children.

Schools and boarding schools have been opened for children who have delayed psychological development (schools, grade equivalents) but full intellectual potential. Rapidity of exhaustion, delays in development, and a deficit of necessary linguistic capacities result in the fact that in the general schools they join the ranks of the chronically unsuccessful pupils. Boarding schools help bring these children into the rhythm of life of the school and help them satisfactorily master the curriculum. As a result, to the extent that their development is remediated, some of them are transferred back to the general schools, while others remain in boarding schools until they receive their incomplete secondary education over an extended term of education.

In Uzbekistan, 85 schools are in operation for children having deficits either of intellectual or physical development with 19,800 pupils, and three special schools (with 5,800 pupils, including 600 children and adolescents with slight and serious forms of tuberculosis, and 5,200 children with various diseases).

B.5 A great deal of attention in the Republic is paid to the supplementary education of children and adolescents, the multi-branch network of which includes art and music schools as well as schools of arts, children's libraries, children's sport schools, and various circles that promote their educational and cultural growth. A system has been being created for organizing the leisure time of children and adolescents, having the following characteristics:

- accessibility;
- extracurricular educational work in groups in extended-day general educational schools and non-school institutions, reducing the risk factors for children and adolescents; and
- organization of government-supplied nutrition for children from underprivileged families in extended-day general education schools, in particular to promote children's health.

The reconstruction of the educational system, of its individual links and elements, with the purpose of bringing it into line with the requirements of the times, give it a flexible, adaptive

character, as well as the ability to adequately react to contemporary and future requirements in the development of a system of training employees.

B.6 A new kind of network of institutions of secondary specialized and professional education began to function in the 1997/98 academic year. At the present time in Uzbekistan, 846 institutions of secondary specialized, professional education are functioning with 527,800 student places, in which 570,300 pupils are studying, 50 percent of whom are girls. The transition to a 12-year educational program with the stipulation of the last 3 years as education in two types of educational institutions -- academic lycees and professional colleges -- will make it possible to completely involve the graduates of ninth grades in completing their education.

A wide network of organizations and institutions has also been designed for improving the qualifications, training, and retraining of specialists, and in so doing assisting with the education of women throughout their lives.

C. WOMEN AND PUBLIC HEALTH

C.1 In 1996, the Protection of the Health of Citizens Act was adopted in the Republic of Uzbekistan, Article 18 of which was devoted to protecting the health of families. In state therapeutic institutions, all primary-care services in women's health care are provided free of charge. By a resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan, dated 25 January 2002, No. 32, "On supplementary measures for strengthening the health of women and of the younger generation," sources of financing were stipulated for purchasing contraceptives, where purchase through the state budget amounts to 10% of the demand, the subsequent annual increase in the share being covered by the state. The principal donor for providing all forms of contraceptives is UNFPA, the U.N. Population Fund.

C.2 For the purpose of expanding knowledge and raising the medical culture of the general population, especially among young people in questions of reproductive health, and improving the organization of systematic work for providing information to broad sectors of the general population, a targeted program of measures is actively being realized, which was affirmed by a resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers on 5 July 2002, No. 242, "On measures for realizing priority directions of improving medical culture in the family, strengthening the health of women, and of giving birth to and raising a healthy generation." In accordance with this program, regional commissions have been created which put into practice a package of measures for creating healthy families and strengthening the health of women.

C.3 On July 19, 2002, by decision of the Extraordinary Anti-Epidemiological Commission of the Republic of Uzbekistan, No. 3, a national program was adopted for the prevention of HIV/AIDS for 2002-2006. The program envisions developing legislation concerning groups characterized by risk behavior, conducting scientific research work, training specialists, assuring safety in blood transfusions, conducting educational programs for preventing HIV infection and drug use for broad circles of students, preparing young leaders for education according to the principle, "equal to equal," protecting the legal rights of people with HIV infection and members of their families, and improving the material and technical basis for specialized organizations. Measures to carry out this project are reconciled with the package of measures for combatting the epidemic

that was set out in the state strategic program. This program includes a series of measures for fighting the spread of HIV/AIDS. In the Ministry of Public Health, a working group has been created to develop a national policy and strategy for preventing the vertical transmission of HIV infection from mother to child.

C.4 One of the most priority aspects of the state program dated 5 July 2002, No. 242, "On measures for realizing priority directions in improving the medical culture in families, strengthening women's health, and giving birth to and raising a healthy generation," is supporting research and the distribution of information regarding women's health care. In this connection, public health bodies have received significant assistance from social and nongovernmental organizations. Informational educational events and campaigns are being carried out which include using interactive methods. These questions are broadly discussed in the mass media through the creation of specialized radio and television training courses, talk shows, and broadcasts. In all academic institutions, a 16-hour academic program has introduced a specialized elective course, "Fundamentals of a healthy lifestyle." Centers of reproductive health are being created in the local regions, which are actively visited by young people who receive diverse information regarding their health, their reproductive rights, and their reproductive health. Informational materials are published in large editions.

C.5 The government of Uzbekistan each year is systematically increasing the resources for women's health care. Thus, for example, for the realization of only one state program dated 5 July 2002, No. 242, "On measures for realizing priority directions in raising the medical culture in families, strengthening women's health, and giving birth to and raising a healthy generation," counting all sources of financing, 95 billion som and 122 million U.S. dollars were appropriated.

The Government is actively trying to attract international donors for realizing goals in the area of women's health care and children's health.

D. VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

D.1 Questions of preventing violence against women are included in the National Platform and Action Plan for improving the status of women in Uzbekistan and constitute one of its 10 priorities. In addition, the National Action Plan is also actively being realized in accordance with the recommendations of the CEDAW Committee. State bodies together with social, nongovernmental, and international organizations are conducting a series of seminars, round table discussions, conferences, and meetings, the topic of which is increasing the legal literacy of women and raising gender sensitivity in civil society with regard to violence against women. From 2000 to 2003, in the Republic a program of the women's foundation U.N. -- UNIFEM -- is being put into practice for increasing the information available to specific groups in the general population. They are young people, women, employees in the media, law-enforcement employees, religious figures, and other groups engaged with preventing violence against women.

D.2 The Government, internal affairs offices, and the general prosecutor's office of the Republic, yearly study the situation regarding the observance of laws regulating the rights of women, and in this regard materials of general applicability are considered at coordinating meetings of law-enforcement bodies. The analysis of these materials indicates that, if facts implicating

discrimination come to light, prosecutors' offices in all regions, together with social and nongovernmental organizations as well as organizations of self-government in the localities implement a series of measures designed to restore women's rights.

As a result of the measures that have been put in place, the number of cases of illness and mortality in women has fallen, in 2003 by 43.6% in comparison with 2002, and the number of indictments for committing violence against women has increased.

Of those cases making it to court in this category, every third conviction is punished by incarceration.

D.3 The illegal migration of citizens, as one of the forms of violation of human rights and freedoms, has taken on the form of traffic in persons, and under the conditions of a global economy this has become a problem for the entire world community.

In Uzbekistan, the migration that takes place is essentially work-related, and it is carried out in accordance with appropriate contracts that are concluded in the agency attached to the Ministry of Labor responsible for questions of work-related immigration and the social protection of the general population of Uzbekistan.

For the purpose of preventing cases of the illegal migration of women, self-government bodies, Women's Committees, together with employment offices in the localities, are studying the opportunities for providing women with jobs, and unemployed women are put on the welfare rolls and are taught professions. In self-government civil bodies, centers of social protection for families are being created in which jobs for women are organized.

In addition, in the localities, crisis centers have been organized for women which provide consultative, legal, and psychological assistance to women in need of protection. Ascribing the appropriate significance to the danger of negative events which may arise in cases of the illegal migration, law-enforcement bodies are also taking measures so as to react promptly to the criminal aspects of migration processes of citizens, and to improve the efforts made in counteracting the illegal transport of persons and the violations of law that accompany this.

Uzbekistan has joined the Convention on the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others, (by resolution of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan, dated 12/12/2003). Efforts are underway with regard to the ongoing development of legislation.

At the level of the Government, the work of state, social, and nongovernmental organizations and the media is being coordinated with regard to preventive measures to be taken against the illegal transport of persons.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan is studying cases of the detention of our citizens abroad, and preventative activities are being carried out.

Over the past two years, a review has been carried out of licenses and re-registration of tourist agencies.

An active informational-educational effort is being carried out in the media.

Seminars and training sessions for employees of law-enforcement agencies and the border-protection services are being carried out. In addition, international experience in efforts regarding this question is being studied and used.

E. WOMEN AND ARMED CONFLICTS

The Government of Uzbekistan is undertaking all measures for stability and peace in the Republic, and our country is not among those countries considered to be in a post-conflict situation.

E.1 On the territory of the Republic of Uzbekistan, over the past 10 years, there have been no armed or other conflicts or cases of foreign occupation.

E.4 In recent years, more than 130 women, employees in the area of culture, have been awarded state prizes and honorable mentions of people's and honored artists, honored cultural workers, and honored artistic figures. For the purpose of encouraging and bringing out creatively gifted young people, in 2000 a state prize, "Nikhol," was established, and artists of the Republic performed as ambassadors of peace on the stages of many countries, reflecting credit on their country and calling on the people of the earth to live in peace and harmony.

F. WOMEN AND THE ECONOMY

Inasmuch as women constitute a significant portion of the labor potential of the country, their effective placement in employment has great significance. By the beginning of the 1990s, Uzbekistan had inherited a system of irrational and ineffective employment, the characteristic features of which were high levels of hidden unemployment, and quantitative and qualitative disturbances in the balance between the availability of jobs and the demand for them. For this reason, alongside new developments, in the Republic it has been necessary to solve age-old problems that have accumulated over the years in the area of employment.

Support for the real monetary income of the general population has been fostered by the periodic review, mandated by law, of the minimum wage, pensions, stipends, and benefits. In 2003, in comparison with 2002, the minimum wage increased by 26.5%, and the average pension by 11.6%.

Significant influence on the standard of living of the general population is exerted by peculiarities in the demographic situation characteristic of Uzbekistan. With respect to the high birthrate (which is displaying a marked tendency to decline), one cause is the large numbers of children per family in the general population, as a result of which the working-age population bears an increased economic load.

In these conditions, the wages of women are a palpable factor influencing the budget of families and permitting an increase in their prosperity. In Uzbekistan, the average size of a family is 5.5 persons. To maintain a family on the wages of one working member of the family is difficult, which prompts increasing numbers of women to attempt to supplement the family budget by participating in social production.

According to data of a statistical survey of the working conditions and everyday situation of women, carried out by the State Committee on Statistics, the fundamental reason for employment of 55% of the women in the survey was cited as the necessity of earning money for the family, 14% wanted to be materially independent, and another 11% were working to fulfill the necessary length of service on the job for a pension.

In addition, the necessity for women to carry out obligations associated with managing households and raising children largely determines the character of women's employment. Almost 60% of the women in the survey wanted to work part-time, or in flexible regimes, 21% wanted to leave their job, and 14% preferred working at home.

The social orientation of the reforms being carried out in the Republic, the emphasis on the economic activity of the general population, and the realization of its work-related potential set the stage for new approaches to assuring employment, including that of women.

In the economy of the Republic, in 2000, 3,955,100 women were employed, which constituted 44% [of all employed persons]. The highest degree of participation of women was noted in non-industrial areas: public health, culture, art, science, and technical work (the percentage of women in them ranged from 70% to 86%).

Although they have a high level of education (in 2000, the percentage of specialists having higher specialized education among employed women was 18.0%, men 17.3%), women are noticeably behind in professional careers. Among supervisors, the percentage of women is 24.4%, there are markedly few women in the higher bodies of government and administration, but among specialists the percentage of women is 57.9%.

In the non-working general population, in Uzbekistan, a significant proportion turn out to be women of working age who have responsibility for caring for minor children (essentially these are women from 20 to 30 years of age). This temporary distraction from employment results in the fact that there is far less opportunity for women who are mothers to increase their professional experience, level of education, and qualifications, than is the case with men. And this makes the situation of women even more difficult on the labor market, where the supply of women's labor in general is greater than the demand for it.

Market reforms being carried out in the Republic are not only creating specific difficulties for women in the sphere of work but they are also opening for them new areas for applying their strengths and abilities. The law of Uzbekistan guarantees men and women equal opportunities for realizing their economic rights.

At the present time in Uzbekistan, several programs are being carried out to instruct the general population in market skills and provide direct support for small businesses, including technical assistance. Programs that are oriented towards women include instructing them in market skills and explicating their rights and opportunities. In the Republic, free access to resources, specifically to financial resources, is being discussed as an important condition for the development of entrepreneurship in general and for women in particular. In this connection, in Uzbekistan, normative legal acts have been adopted which are directed at improving the financing of small and midsize businesses.

For the purpose of stimulating the activity of commercial banks towards increasing their resources that are directed at providing credit to small and midsize businesses, the revenues of commercial banks that are received from loans to small and midsize businesses are exempt from taxes for a period of up to five years. With the same purpose in mind, on 1 April 2000, floating rates with monthly corrections were established for refinancing in the Central Bank, based on the dynamic effect of inflation, supply, and demand on the monetary markets, but commercial banks, taking into consideration this dynamic, have been advised to lower their interest rates on credits made available to micro-level manufacturing as well as small and midsize companies.

Lending to entrepreneurs has been drastically simplified, which is reflected in the documents for lending adopted in 2000, such as "The procedure of micro-lending by commercial banks to individual entrepreneurs and peasant farmers, who are undertaking economic activity without incorporating, in national and international currency," and "The procedure for lending by commercial banks to farmers as well as to owners of small and midsize businesses, in national currency."

In the Republic, active efforts are underway to attract unemployed women into the area of entrepreneurship. The Republican Palace of Goods Producers and Entrepreneurs, the Association of Professional Women of Uzbekistan, the Women's Committee of the Republic are engaged in increasing the economic and legal knowledge of women, and they are organizing seminars and training sessions for women entrepreneurs, "How to start your own business," "How to create a business plan," "Fundamentals of marketing and management," and others. In the association "Tadbirkor ayol," seven credit associations are functioning, which provide credit to entrepreneurs who are starting their own business.

The Ministry of Labor and Social Protection is organizing instructional programs according to the method "Usto-shogird" (instructor-pupil). Instruction is provided essentially to young graduates of general education schools in more than 30 professions and is financed by funds from the Foundation to Assist Employment. Women are also instructed in accordance with this method.

F.5 According to the Labor Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan, adopted in 1996, in the Republic there is no professional segregation and discrimination in the employment of women, and women have equal rights with men in hiring.

F.6 Promoting a balanced distribution of jobs in industry and the rational distribution of family functions between spouses are among the most important aspects of gender equality in contemporary society.

In Uzbekistan at the legislative level, real mechanisms have been created to attract women into the economy, but also to protect their interests within the family, makhallya, and society.

The laws of Uzbekistan assure women, in conditions of equality with men, the right of work, of education, of the same opportunities in hiring, of a free choice of a profession, and of social protection in the event of retirement, unemployment, illness, or disability.

In the economy of the Republic, the percentages of women and men at the beginning of the new century were 44% and 56%. The level of economic activity of women is generally lower than that of men, the traditional areas of women's work being education, public health, culture, art, science, and technical work (the percentage of women ranging from 70 to 86 percent).

G. PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN EXECUTIVE BODIES AND IN DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES

G.1 In the Parliament of the Republic, women make up more than 9.5% of the members, in bodies of state administration more than 24%, and in juridical bodies 21%.

G.2 At the present time in the Republic within the framework of approved state programs, efforts are being made to increase the activity of state and territorial bodies directed at enhancing the opportunities of women to participate in decision-making processes. Cooperative efforts have been undertaken with nongovernmental and international organizations in this direction.

H. INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS FOR IMPROVING THE STATUS OF WOMEN

H.1 In 1995, in the Republic, work was done for creating a national mechanism to improve the status of women. By decree of the President of the Republic, a new position was instituted of Deputy Prime Minister, responsible for questions of the social protection of families, motherhood and childhood. This position, in accordance with the decree, will be occupied by the chairman of the Women's Committee. Analogous positions have been established on the regional level. Work to strengthen the national mechanism is continuing.

H.2 An institute for monitoring current legislation in the Republic of Uzbekistan has carried out a gender-related expert study on current laws -- they are all drafted in accordance with international standards, and all newly adopted laws go through a mandatory gender-related expert review.

Gender aspects are taken into account in all state projects and programs to be adopted.

H.3 The most important directions of improving gender statistics in Uzbekistan are:

- continuing to work to implement international standards, including methods of statistical observation;

- developing publications and distributing them on the basis of progressive international standards;
- organizing statistical observations in the following areas:
 - gender equality in entrepreneurship;
 - working conditions and the everyday life of working women;
 - access of women and men to land, equipment, and credits, as well as the participation of women in making decisions;
 - the use of free time of women and men;
 - training sessions for specialists in programs of gender-related research and progressive informational technologies of gathering, processing, and distributing information, as well as raising the technical level of statistical work in the area of gender;
 - studying the international experience regarding the statistical characteristics of election results in light of gender principles;
 - studying the experience and methods of the evaluation of the unpaid domestic work of women, etc.

I. THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN

I.1 Uzbekistan has subscribed to a series of U.N. documents of a general character, which include the principle of equality between men and women and which prohibit discrimination against women, and to a series of U.N. documents regarding the specific rights of women. In connection with this and with the purpose of bringing the laws of the Republic into accord with international documents, a series of new laws and normative legal acts was adopted, guaranteeing the equality of men and women in all areas.

Practical activity in the study of human rights shows the necessity of deepening this process through the practical realization of a series of measures directed at forming a new kind of legal thinking and at raising the legal consciousness and legal culture of citizens. Proceeding from this position, the question has been raised regarding the establishment and implementation of an academic course in "human rights" in various kinds of educational institutions. Questions of the protection of women's rights and the advancement of women's interests are actively pursued by nongovernmental and noncommercial organizations. A center for the study of human rights and humanitarian rights has published popular informational brochures in the series "Human Rights," "In Service of Human Rights," and has published the books, "Woman. Law. Society" and "Woman; Her Rights and Freedoms." The Women's Committee of Uzbekistan, together with the Ombudsman, has monitored the U.N. Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, and according to the results of the monitoring an analytic report is being prepared and will be presented to local governmental bodies and the Cabinet of Ministers for informational and planning purposes.

In the Republic, broad-based work has been organized to increase the legal literacy of the general population with the assistance of nongovernmental organizations.

I.2 The Parliament of the Republic, state bodies, and prosecutors' offices are conducting a systematic examination of questions of assuring equality and nondiscrimination in accordance

with the law and in practical activity, and measures will be taken in accordance with the facts of any violations.

I.3 Raising the legal and juridical literacy of women in the Republic is the goal of state, social, and nongovernmental organizations.

In Uzbekistan, 1993 to 2003 was declared the decade of human rights. In the framework of the decade, the legal literacy of the general population was raised through discussions and the organization of juridical centers, training seminars, conferences, roundtable discussions, etc.

J. WOMEN AND MASS MEDIA

J.1 One of the 10 priority directions of the National Platform and Action Plan is the creation of an accurate positive image of women in the mass media. In the Republic, state, social, and nongovernmental organizations are carrying out a series of training sessions for instructing journalists on questions of gender equality and for raising their gender sensitivity. Invited to the training sessions have been journalists from the countries of the near and far abroad, who shared their experiences and methods, taking into account gender-related problems and aspects in strategies and programs of sustainable development.

J.2 The Association of Journalists, together with the Foundation for the Development of Journalists of the Republic have carried out systematic work to raise the gender sensitivity of journalists and to create a balanced and non-stereotyped image of women in the mass media, by introducing a section in newspapers and journals as well as radio and television broadcasts.

K. WOMEN AND THE ENVIRONMENT

K.1 For the purpose of strengthening the role of women in decision-making processes in the area of environmental protection and sustainable development, in the National Action Plan to improve the status of women of Uzbekistan, questions of environmental protection are introduced as individual priority directions, and measures of state, social, and nongovernmental organizations have been developed and are being realized with regard to this question. Examples are ecological forums, show competitions, roundtable meetings, and other events. The purpose of these events is to focus the attention of the public on the protection of the rights and interests of women and children, to create a contemporary ecological world view on the basis of informing the public regarding questions of ecology, to improve their knowledge, popular traditions, and contemporary family rituals, and to master the fundamentals of sanitation and hygiene.

At meetings, questions are discussed regarding the everyday life and working conditions of women, their employment, ways to avoid a negative influence on women and children from injurious ecological factors, water supply, ecologically pure food, the role of women in decision-making, and the use of natural resources.

K.2 An Outline (1998) and Strategy for sustainable development in the Republic of Uzbekistan (1999) have been developed. Basic programs to promote the formation of the social and economic conditions for the transition to sustainable development have been developed. The

program of actions for preserving the environment of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 1999-2005, and the measures required for its realization, confirmed by the resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers, dated 20 October 1999, No. 469, reflect the following essential directions:

- the creation of favorable conditions for the survival of the general population (including women);
- the rational use of natural resources for the purpose of assuring sustainable development; and
- deepening international cooperation.

K.3 In the area of environmental protection, Uzbekistan cooperates with various international organizations. Work is going forward essentially in nine sectors: air quality, chemical safety, climate and health, the role of ecological factors in disease, industrial safety, health protection at the workplace, radiation safety, water, and sanitation.

L. GIRLS

L.1 In the National Platform and Action Plan for improving the status of women in Uzbekistan, among 10 priority directions, "the rights of girls" was assigned a special priority direction and, in accordance with it, much coordinated work is being done by state, social, and nongovernmental organizations. Citizenship is one of the basic rights of girls. The generation of the transitional period, including girls, is the first new generation to have the right to citizenship in the full meaning of the word.

In all types and forms of education, beginning with preschool, girls and boys receive the same education, study the foundations of general knowledge aimed at the formation and expansion of their world view, and participate in the social and political life of the collective. The fundamental priority of instruction and education is a system of continuous education, beginning with preschool, aimed at raising a healthy, well-adjusted generation of girls and boys.

More and more girls are gaining access to the Internet, they are studying foreign languages in depth, and they are traveling abroad within the framework of international programs of instruction.

In Uzbekistan, an effective system has been created for the legal provision of the rights of children who have been deprived of their family environment. If there are no parents or surrogate parents, the right of the child to be raised in a family is assured by the agency that administers guardianship (Articles 173-193 of the Family Code). Governmental bodies take over the protection of the rights and interests of children in the event of the death of the parents, their incapacity, prolonged absence, or disinclination to raise their children or to defend their rights and interests, including the refusal of parents to take their children to educational and therapeutic institutions, or institutions engaged in the social protection of the general population, as well as in other cases where parental guardianship is absent.

In conditions of accelerating scientific and technical progress, in accordance with the Education Act of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the state takes upon itself the responsibility for affording girls from all families in equal conditions the opportunity to receive a 12-year free education, irrespective of nationality, race, belief, social origin, place of residence, etc.

L.2 The traditions and culture of Uzbekistan have always respected women and mothers, and for this reason the girls of Uzbekistan have the conditions for their harmonious general physical and cultural education.

According to research that has been conducted with young parents, there are no prejudices regarding the question of giving birth to children according to gender, such as these prejudices existed with their parents. The change in ideas regarding this question can be explained by the fact that, first of all, with each year the authority and influence of mothers increases not only in the eyes of children are also with regard to the parents of the husband, who take into account the opinion of the woman.

L.3 National legislation of Uzbekistan in the area of children's rights, including girls, from the very beginning of state independence has been formulated on the basis of international standards. The rights of the child in the Republic are regulated by such normative acts as the Constitution, the Family, Civil, Labor, Administrative, and Criminal Codes, laws such as the Citizenship Act, the Education Act, the Youth Act, and many others.

The legal status of girls and their rights are regulated in accordance with generally recognized international norms. As is the case with the rights of adults, the rights of children are regulated in the assumption of gender equality of boys and girls, as having a full measure of rights regardless of their racial, national, and social origin. Each girl has the right to education, to the choice of a specialty and to the preservation of health, honor, and respect for her dignity.

In Uzbekistan, the public learns about the demands and real opportunities of girls through the publication of specialized, popular, and scientific literature devoted to the special features of the development of girls and their psychology, and special calendars are published for girls and women. The Ministries of Education and Public Health and the scientific-practical center "Oila" (family) publish a series of books for parents, adolescents, girls, young men, and other adolescent groups. In addition, special events are carried out in residential settings in the makhallyas, where special attention is paid to the differences in the upbringing of girls and boys, taking into account their demands, tastes, individualities, and personal characteristics.

L.4 The laws of Uzbekistan assure equal conditions to girls and boys in the area of education, acquisition of skills, and professional training.

L.5 In 2001, the Republic of Uzbekistan presented the first-ever report to the UN Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, regarding implementation of the UN Convention of the same name. At the present time in the Republic, the Action Plan for the implementation of the recommendations of the CEDAW committee is being actively carried out. In 1998, the Family Code, which was subjected to international expert review, was adopted, and all the provisions of the Code correspond to the norms of international rights. The laws of Uzbekistan assure equal conditions to girls and boys in the area of public health and nutrition. In the Republic there is no discrimination in the area of public health and nutrition.

L.6 The laws of Uzbekistan prescribe criminal punishments for the economic exploitation of child labor.

L.7 In Uzbekistan, the elimination of all forms of violence against girls is accomplished in the following directions:

1. Legislation: the Family Code regulates the rights and obligations of parents with regard to their children;
2. The assessment of the readiness of girls for school instruction: during the selection period for school, children are subject to testing, in which, in addition to psychophysiological readiness, the family environment of the girl is also examined. If anxiety and psychological depression are discovered in a girl, pedagogues and school psychologists conduct focused work with the parents of the child.
3. Introducing the position of school psychologist in all academic institutions;
4. In the Republic, the implementation of the UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women is monitored, and according to the final results of the annual monitoring, there were no cases of violence against girls.

L.8 Creating a new system of education with the purpose of training young people for the future increases the significance of policy and programs in the area of education, and fosters the development of human potential, social unity, and economic development.

The global success of educational work is an achievement due to the fact that young people, including girls, are capable of preserving their health both in the present and in the future. This goal includes creating a safe and healthy environment for pupils and their mastering knowledge and skills, thus fostering a healthy lifestyle.

Public health education not only provides a specified amount of knowledge, but it also in a certain sense provides the basis for fostering an understanding of the development of life skills in girls, expanding their opportunities and confidence, and helping them to avoid many illnesses. Precisely this kind of education gives girls knowledge and understanding regarding the creation of families, healthy lifestyles, reproductive health, and reproductive rights.

For the purpose of improving the economic, political, and legal knowledge of girls within the framework of school programs, subjects such as basic economics, spirituality, enlightenment, the foundations of healthy families, and computer technology are taught.

Girls obtain the skills and capacities that are necessary in the new society, where resourceful and creative personalities are required. Today girls freely study foreign languages and obtain technical and medical skills which foster their development. Today girls are distinguished by the development of their personal qualities and life skills.

The best way to make girls active citizens lies in encouraging their participation in processes of decision-making in all stages of decision-making and in all spheres, including in the family, the school, and society. In this process, an active role is played by both state as well as social organizations -- the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan, the all-republic scientific-practical center "Olia" (family), the youth movement "Kamolot," the foundation "Makhallya", and others.

Their activities are based on the following priorities: protecting the interests of the young generation, especially girls, and addressing questions of the growth of their social, economic, legal, political, and spiritual literacy. In addition, at the initiative and with the support of these structures, special academic, vocational courses have been created whose main goal is to prepare girls for independent lives and, in parallel, to increase their literacy and enlightenment regarding essential questions of the present day, especially their medical, reproductive, legal, and political literacy. Schools of female political leadership are in operation.

L.9 In a sovereign Uzbekistan, more than ever before the role of the family has become clear in the development of society and the upbringing of a spiritually developed and physically healthy generation.

Today, the family has even greater significance in the thorough education and upbringing both of boys as well as girls. The family fosters the health and well-being of girls and inculcates communication skills. The family preserves rich and deeply significant national traditions and harmonizes them with general human values, while providing for its own stability through emphasizing the sacred quality of the family and marriage to the young generation. Research shows that the development of such general capacities as communication skills, critical thinking, the ability to analyze, to settle conflicts, and to work in a team, produce a favorable effect on the behavior of girls as well as on their health and capacity to withstand any kind of negative influence. These skills and capacities, as a rule, are acquired and are developed on the family hearth.

Each child, boy as well as girl, lives and is raised by parents in a family. The family and the parents secure the interests, the all-rounded development, and the respect for the human dignity of their child.

According to the Family Code, the obligation to raise and develop children in Uzbekistan is borne by parents, and in the case of children without parents, by state guardianship bodies. Parents are obliged to maintain their minor children. Parents who do not carry out their obligations to maintain their minor children, by decision of the court, are required to pay child support for the child.

Clear evidence of the fact that in Uzbekistan the question of the strengthening of marital and family relations, the rearing within the family of a harmoniously developed personality, and the formation in it of a citizen of a democratic state can be seen in the creation in 1998 of the scientific-practical center "Oila" (family). The "Oila" center and its local bodies aim at strengthening the family, propagating the spiritual moral values of the family, forming a healthy family, and increasing the legal literacy of the members of the family.