

**Relevant information of the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the request for a report on the implementation of the UN General Assembly resolution "Women in Development"**

**Strengthening and implementing gender-responsive poverty eradication strategies, including social protection systems, to help ensure an adequate standard of living for women and girls, especially in response to challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic;**

- As part of the campaign to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs and its 11 Child and Family Support Centers (CFSC) have implemented large-scale projects, awareness-raising events and campaigns on various fields. Within the framework of this activity, 3245 citizens were informed through the "Call to Families" awareness campaign, information leaflets were distributed to 1020 families, psychological support was provided to 361 people and online trainings were held for 834 children. As part of the "Family to Family" campaign organized by the Committee, 146 families provided assistance to 745 vulnerable families. The State Customs Committee and the "ASAN Volunteers" organization provided food assistance to 74 elderly people and lonely individuals, 340 people together with the Women's Resource Centers, and 145 families by the CFSC. With the financial support of the European Union and UNICEF, CFSC staff and ASAN Volunteers provided joint food assistance to 483 low-income and at-risk families living in communities where regional centers operate.

During the 44-day Patriotic War, the Centers provided psychological support to the families of martyrs. With the support of international organizations and as part of the "From Family to Family" campaign, 341 families temporarily leaving their homes and in need of appropriate assistance were provided with compensation, temporary shelter, food, warm clothing, bedding, hygiene items, diapers, vitamins, flu medications, heating devices, disinfectants. Children of the families were also involved in speech therapies, developmental classes and psychological support in the Centers.

Besides, the State Committee together with the "ASAN Youth Volunteers" Youth Organization and within the framework of the United Nations Children's Fund's (UNICEF) "Child Protection in Emergency" project conducted a psychosocial assessment of 200 war-affected families in Goranboy region, and provided psychological assistance to 80 children.

- Within the technical assistance project "Promotion of economic and social participation of women in rural areas" the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs jointly with the United Nations Development Program provided food assistance to 440 families in the project areas in connection with the coronavirus pandemic. Appropriate assistance was also provided by the Committee to families affected by the war.

**Promoting the transition of women from informal employment to formal employment, including access to decent work, improve wages, social protection and quality childcare.**

Women's Resource Centers (WRC) have been opened in 15 regions and cities within the projects "Promotion of economic and social participation of women living in rural and regional areas of Azerbaijan", "Economic support for entrepreneurship and employment" implemented by the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs in cooperation with the United Nations Development Program. WRCs provide business skills training for women in order to promote the transition from informal employment to formal employment, educate women in this area, and involve them in entrepreneurship. The aim of the projects is to increase the economic opportunities and skills of women and youth living in the regions for active participation in economic life, entrepreneurship and employment. Women's Resource Centers operate as a technical body that provides a wide range of services to women, including counseling, mentoring, networking, safe space, good communication, and advocacy.

In total, about 500 women have started entrepreneurial activities organized by Women's Resource Centers. 8,200 women were involved in various trainings and events.

In order to ensure the sustainability of the activities of the Women's Resource Centers, they were registered and operated as non-governmental organizations.

**Promoting and protecting women's labour and human rights in the workplace through targeted measures, including universal minimum wage, social protection and equal pay for work of equal value, reducing occupational segregation and gender pay gaps and ensuring collective bargaining and recruitment, retention and promotion of women ;**

- According to Article 35 of the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan, everyone has the right to work in a safe and healthy environment, to receive no less than the minimum wage set by the state for their work without any discrimination.

Articles 16 and 154 of the Labor Code prohibit any discrimination, including violations of the principle of "equal pay for equal work". It is inadmissible to reduce or increase wages in any form due to violation of this principle by allowing discrimination.

In October of 2006 Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On Ensuring Gender Equality" were adopted in order to conduct a more organized and consistent work on women and to improve the legal framework for ensuring equal rights in all spheres of public life. The law is based on the creation of equal opportunities for women and men in labor relations.

- In 2022, the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs and the Administration of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan held a conference on "Women's rights in the context of new socio-political realities." The topics such as "Gender equality and the impact of gender issues on social welfare", "Protection of the rights of women affected by the conflict", "Women's representation in the labor market of Azerbaijan", "The role of civil society in women's development", "Education as a key component of women's rights" have been discussed at the conference. At the end of the conference, representatives of the private sector who joined the "Support for Education of Young Girls" campaign were awarded by the Committee.

**Supporting women's entrepreneurship, expanding existing women-owned and -led micro, small and medium enterprises and facilitating opportunities for new women entrepreneurs:**

- In 2019, the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs held the International Forum on "Development of Women's Entrepreneurship: Experience, Opportunities and Achievements" consisting of 3 sessions.
- In 2019, a round table on entrepreneurship was organized by the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs and the Agency for Small and Medium Business Development.

The meetings with the Small Business Act (SBA) Policy Assessment European Commission (EC), the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the European Education Foundation (EEF) were aimed at preparing a better assessment report. The main purpose of the meetings was to study entrepreneurship by leading experts and stakeholders of the country and discussions on the achievements in the field of women's entrepreneurship, as well as the exchange of experience and views, and to identify areas of activity.

At the same time, the event recommended increasing training and mentoring services for high-potential women entrepreneurs, building their activities on the basis of more advanced institutional achievements, taking into account the excellent information on high-potential women entrepreneurs.

- In 2019, the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs together with the Association for the Development of Women's Entrepreneurship in Azerbaijan held the II Forum on "New Opportunities on the Horizon: Green Light for Women Entrepreneurs" dedicated to the Global Entrepreneurship Week. The Forum included panels entitled "Story of Successful Women", "Development of Entrepreneurship in Art", "Tourism Business / Home Employment Development in Azerbaijan", "Women in Business: Advantages, Challenges and Opportunities", "The Role of Business Education in Promotion of Entrepreneurship in Azerbaijan" and "Bank Support mechanisms for Women". There were speeches on various topics on the panels and discussions were held around the topics.
- Since September 2020, the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs, with the support of the German International Cooperation Agency, has been implementing the project "Support to women's employment and micro-entrepreneurship in Goychay region". The aim of the project is to involve women living in rural areas in entrepreneurship, to develop micro-entrepreneurship among them, to strengthen their knowledge and skills in entrepreneurship, and to expand their economic opportunities to increase employment.

In 2020-2021, within the framework of the project, a Women's Resource Center was launched and 28 vulnerable women were provided with non-cash financial support to start a business and strengthen existing businesses, and the women were provided with equipment in accordance with their business plan in Goychay region.

- The Committee's Women's Resource Center in Tovuz was established under the project "Support to Women's Employment and Micro-Entrepreneurship" with the joint cooperation of the Public Union "For a Healthy Life" and the financial support of British Petroleum. Within the framework of the project during 2020-2021, 60 women were provided with non-cash financial support to start a business and strengthen existing businesses, and the women were provided with equipment in accordance with their business plan. Trainings and seminars are regularly organized there with the participation of local and international experts, in order to increase

women's activity, develop communication and leadership skills, and improve their knowledge in the field of finance and business.

- In April and August of 2021, the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs together with the Center for Youth Development and Career held events on "**Gender and Human Rights**" and "**Participation of women living in rural areas in economic and social life**" in 5 regions of Azerbaijan within the project "Our Equal Rights".
- A number of measures have been taken to strengthen the economic status of women in the country. **Azerbaijan Entrepreneurship Development Association Public Union** was established on October 26, 2017 on the initiative of women entrepreneurs operating in the country, with the support of the Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs, and the National Confederation of Entrepreneurs (Employers) of Azerbaijan. The main purpose of the Association, which operates as a non-governmental organization, is to develop women's entrepreneurship in Azerbaijan and to promote the idea of entrepreneurship among women. The Association aims to increase women's entrepreneurship in various areas of the economy, strengthen their capacity, study and disseminate best practices, support activities for sustainable development projects in areas that meet the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, protect the interests of women entrepreneurs, transparency and social responsibility, and supports the provision of business services, opportunities for effective cooperation and collective partnership.

To this end, the Association organizes local and international events, including forums and conferences, trainings and seminars, conducts research and sociological surveys, assessments and monitoring, information campaigns and awareness-raising campaigns to develop a conceptual framework for women's entrepreneurship.

**Preventing and eliminating all forms of violence, sexual harassment and discrimination against women and girls, including in the world of work and addressing the increasing gender-based violence during the COVID-19 period:**

- In 2015, heads of executive authorities of all districts have signed decrees to establish **monitoring groups for gender violence and violence against children** that are composed of representatives of relevant executive authorities and law enforcement agencies in 77 districts. As a reliable monitoring mechanism for gender violence and violence against children, local monitoring groups perform the coordination of functions in assessing the situation, checking the effectiveness of measures undertaken, identifying vulnerable families and providing them relevant support, studying and analyzing violence causes, and in particular, discussing grave violence cases, ensuring the protection of violence victims and providing them with relevant assistance.

As a continuation of the relevant measures, in 2020, the monitoring groups carried out preventive works, regarding to their work plans in accordance with their areas of activity, and took measures to eliminate the consequences of domestic violence, as well as violence against children.

The Committee also held regular meetings and consultations to increase their knowledge and skills, and instructed the heads and officials of the monitoring groups to investigate cases of

domestic violence and take the necessary legal and preventive measures within the regional executive authorities.

- In 2020, the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs, with the support of the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ), provided technical assistance to the establishment of **Gender Commissions in municipalities** in 15 regions and cities of the country. The mission of the commissions is to carry out systematic work on gender issues in municipalities and coordinate activities with the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs in this direction.
- In 2019, the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs, in cooperation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) held trainings in schools in Baku and one of the schools in Sumgayit within the project "Prevention and response to sexual and gender-based violence among IDPs, refugees and asylum seekers". The training was attended by IDP women and men from 6 districts. Participants were informed about the Law on Ensuring Gender Equality, the Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence, as well as the rules for applying in case of domestic violence, defense mechanisms, protection orders, women's rights, gender equality, marriage contracts, and early marriages. The Committee's and GIZ's co-published Guide on Women's Rights, the Committee's Book on Health for Women with Disabilities, the Committee and UNHCR's joint publication on Preventing Domestic Violence, and booklet on "Trafficking in women" was distributed to the participants.
- In 2019 the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan together with the United Nations held a round table entitled "Stop Violence against Women and Girls". The aim of the event is to raise awareness at the local, national, regional and international levels to promote gender-based violence as a human right.
- The State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs conducted trainings on "Gender and Leadership" for local government officials to increase their leadership potential, as well as their knowledge and skills in protecting the rights and freedoms of citizens and implementing state policy in the field of gender equality. The trainings covered topics such as "Gender: international and local legislation, state women policy, domestic violence, early marriage", "Leadership and governance, leadership of women, communication strategy, and public awareness".
- The Council of State Support to Non-Governmental Organizations under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, "Zafar" Public Union for Support to the Families of Martyrs and the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs implemented a joint project for IDPs entitled "Support to Elimination of the Negative Consequences of Domestic Violence".

Within the framework of the project, educational meetings were held in schools for teachers, students and parents. During the awareness-raising meetings, participants were informed about the negative legal, medical, social consequences and protection mechanisms of domestic violence.

- On July 2, 2020 the State Committee for Family, Women and Children's Affairs, within the project "Economic and social participation of vulnerable displaced persons and local populations in the South Caucasus" implemented by the German Society for International

Cooperation, on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, conducted a training on "Gender and early marriages".

The purpose of the training is awareness-raising of population about gender issues, early marriages, their prevention, existing international and national legislation, as well as the importance of the participation of community members in preventing such negative situations. The participants were also informed about the activities of the Committee and the directions of the state policy. 30 participants (women, men and youth) from 4 regions joined the training.

- The State Committee for Family, Women and Children's Affairs together with the Gazakh Branch of the Youth Development and Career Center implemented a project called "Our Equal Rights". The training provided information on gender equality, existing local and international legislation in this area. Employees, volunteers, members and students of the Youth Development and Career Center participated in the training. In total, 50 participants joined the training.

**Providing equitable and universal access to affordable and quality health care services, including sexual and reproductive health, for women and girls in order to achieve the realization of the right to the employment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, particularly in context of HIV/AIDS and COVID 19.**

The State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs, together with the Ministry of Health, held an event entitled "Combating prenatal sex-selection" for youth and adolescents in Masalli, organized by the Masalli District Executive Power and the Masalli Youth Development and Career Center.

**Events held by Child and Family Support Centers (CFSC) in 2021:**

Enlightening trainings were held on the topic "Selective abortions" for volunteers of the State Committee at Shuvalan CFSC, and "Stop Prenatal Sex Selection!" by Hajigabul CFSC. The trainings were about the damage to babygirls, mothers and, most importantly, the demographic situation in society caused by prenatal gender selection.

An enlightening online training was held on the topic "I want to live, too!" by Goranboy CFSC with the participation of school teachers.

Zardab CFSC organized an educational event entitled "Combating prenatal sex-selection". The event was attended by villagers and employees of medical centers.

Saatli CFSC held an enlightening event "Let's protect our health". The event focused on reproductive health and family planning.

Zagatala CFSC held an enlightening event for young people and adolescents on "Complications of reproductive health and early marriage" in cooperation with the Central District Hospital.

**Promoting and protecting women's and girls' right to education and ensuring their safe and equal access to and participation in education throughout the life cycle and at all levels, given the prolonged suspension of educational activities during the COVID-19 pandemic and readdressing the attrition of women and girl students;**

- In 2021, the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs, the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences (ANAS) and the Women's Council of ANAS jointly organized a conference on "Women scientists at the forefront of the fight against COVID-19." The event provided information about the achievements of women in science, technology and innovation. At the same time, the results of the Committee's research on the COVID-19 pandemic were presented to the participants.
- On May 18, 2021, the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the State Agency for Vocational Education under the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Azerbaijan Women's Entrepreneurship Development Association held a joint awareness-raising event on "Preparing girls for career choice". The event was attended by senior students of Orphanages #1 and 2, SOS Children's Villages.
- On October 11, 2021, an event dedicated to the 120th anniversary of the Girls' School (established with the initiative and financial support of the great Azerbaijani philanthropist Zeynalabdin Tagiyev) and International Girls Day was held at the initiative of the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs, the Ministry of Education and the Institute of Manuscripts of ANAS named after Mohammad Fuzuli. The purpose of the event is to continue the historical charitable traditions of Azerbaijan and to support young people, especially girls, to benefit from modern educational opportunities. The event was attended by representatives of the private sector, as well as historians, government agencies and civil society. The event provided information about the importance of girls' equal development, education, economic and social life, protection of their rights in the development of society and the exceptional role of the Girls' School created by Z.Tagiyev in this direction. The event supported and presented certificates to 14 female students from low-income families who achieved high results in the entrance exams to higher education institutions in 2021 within the framework of the "Support to Young Girls Education" Campaign.

**Integrating a gender perspective into climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programs and providing adequate resources to ensure the full and equal participation of women in all levels of decision-making and implementation in these areas:**

- **"Early recovery and ensuring community resilience of vulnerable groups in Fuzuli-Horadiz, Agjabadi and Tartar regions of Azerbaijan" project**

Since the II Karabakh War and the COVID-19 pandemic, the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs and the UNDP Office in Azerbaijan met the most important needs by launching a program of early recovery and community resilience as soon as possible in order to establish a working group on initial rehabilitation, conduct rapid assessments and address the acute needs of the affected areas.

As part of the Community Resilience and Sustainability Program, UNDP Azerbaijan is committed to reach out to the most vulnerable people by establishing "Community Resource Centers (CRCs)" in Fuzuli, Agjabadi and Tartar districts affected by the war and provide basic services that are very important in terms of time.

The Resource Centers help identify the most urgent needs of affected communities and focuses on women, children and people with disabilities, providing socio-economic rehabilitation

support to those most affected, including housing, psychosocial and business counseling services.

Community meetings were held in January-February of 2021 to identify and prioritize key needs. In August-September of 2021, trainings on "Effective communication skills", leadership, problem solving, stress management, teamwork and other topics were held in Fuzuli, Tartar and Agjabadi districts, in order to increase the knowledge and skills of local executive authorities, rural executive representatives and municipal members.

Innovative professional courses in graphic design, web programming and content management were held at Community Resource Centers.

In the framework of the project "Early recovery and ensuring community resilience of vulnerable groups in Fuzuli-Horadiz, Agjabadi and Tartar regions of Azerbaijan" in 2021 in Agjabadi, Tartar, Fuzuli Community Resource Centers 275 people applied for business, 559 people for legal, and 370 people for psychological support.

- 3 projects have been implemented and completed on construction of irrigation water line for agriculture in Horadiz, and gravel covering of road surface in Gazakhlilar and Ahmadalilar villages, within the framework of the project on **"Early recovery and ensuring community resilience of vulnerable groups in Fuzuli-Horadiz, Agjabadi and Tartar regions of Azerbaijan"**.

- **Trainings held on the topic "Women and Water"**

In 2019, the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs jointly with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Global Environment Facility conducted trainings within the project "Kura II: Strengthening integrated water resources management in the Kura River Basin through the implementation of cross-border coordinated activities and national plans."

The purpose of the trainings was the integrated management of water resources, the involvement of women in the work carried out in this area and ensuring gender equality, the efficient use of water resources. The trainings were also attended by housewives working in various institutions.



**Improving and systematizing, the collection, analysis and dissemination of high quality, accessible, timely, reliable disaggregated data, with a focus on women's employment, informal employment, access to decent work and social protection, entrepreneurship, and unpaid care and domestic work through time-use surveys and satellite accounts to assess the contribution of such work to national income.**

#### **National Action Plan for Ensuring Women's Employment in the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2022-2024**

Currently, work is underway on the draft "National Action Plan for 2022-2024 to ensure women's employment in the Republic of Azerbaijan" prepared by the Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs. The main goals and objectives of the Action Plan are to increase women's access to education and provide social and financial support for completing education, increase women's access to the labor market, identify and eliminate gender-based factors that prevent women from building successful careers in the private sector, to provide them with decent jobs, develop mechanisms to support the involvement of women in new production and services in the private sector, develop entrepreneurship, especially small and medium enterprises, as well as individual entrepreneurs providing economic incentives, improving the competitiveness of women in the labor market, developing entrepreneurship and self-employment among them, providing vocational training and additional education for unemployed and job-seeking women etc.