



**International Covenant on
Civil and Political Rights**

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Human Rights Committee

**Consideration of reports submitted by States
parties under article 40 of the Covenant**

Uzbekistan*

Addendum

**Additional information received from Uzbekistan on the
implementation of the concluding observations of the Human
Rights Committee (CCPR/C/UZB/CO/3)**

[30 January 2012]

* In accordance with the information transmitted to States parties regarding the processing of their reports, the present document was not formally edited before being sent to the United Nations translation services.

Information on the implementation of paragraphs 8, 11, 14 and 24 of the concluding observations issued by the Human Rights Committee following its consideration of the third periodic report of Uzbekistan on implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (CCPR/C/UZB/CO/3)

Paragraph 8 of the recommendations

1. The Andijon events were investigated by an investigation group composed of highly qualified staff from the country's law enforcement agencies, and there is no reason to doubt their objectivity and impartiality.
2. Uzbekistan has on numerous occasions informed international organizations that an independent parliamentary commission composed of members of the Oliy Majlis (parliament) was established to look into the Andijon events.
3. In addition, high-level representatives of the diplomatic corps from the embassies of India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, China, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation and Tajikistan formed a working group to monitor the investigation into the tragic events in Andijon province.
4. Furthermore, this matter was fully discussed during the meetings between the group of experts of Uzbekistan and the delegation of the European Union, which took place from 11 to 16 December 2006 and from 1 to 4 April 2007. During these meetings, the European Union representatives heard reports on the outcome of the inquiry into the events in Andijon, including the proportionality of the use of firearms by law enforcement officials, received answers to their questions, and went to Andijon province, where representatives of the European delegation visited the sites of the terrorist acts, and were informed of the sequence of events.
5. At the end of the meetings, Mr. P. Oinonen, head of the European Union delegation, noted that, in their reports, the NGOs and human rights organizations had focused mainly on the consequences of the terrorist attacks, and had addressed the attacks by the gunmen to a lesser extent.
6. After the meetings, the European experts came to the unequivocal conclusion that the Andijon events were a serious terrorist attack against Uzbekistan.
7. The country's courts have considered six criminal cases in respect of 39 internal affairs officials and members of the military. They were found guilty of complicity and negligence in the performance of their duties, resulting in the capture by the terrorists of facility No. UYA-64/T-1, the patrol battalion of the Andijon provincial internal affairs service and a large stock of weapons. The guilty were sentenced to various terms of deprivation of liberty and punitive deduction of earnings, and were assigned to a disciplinary unit.

Paragraph 11 of the recommendations

Subparagraph (a)

8. The Further Training Centre for Lawyers has courses on international standards for fair trials and the importance of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment that include sections to teach criminal court judges, candidates for the position of judge and lawyers how to respond to allegations of torture

during preliminary investigations. Trainees receive the necessary information of the requirements of the Convention and the obligations of States arising from them.

9. The curricula include special lectures and practical exercises on how judicial inquiries can uncover violations of citizens' rights and freedoms arising out of article 235 of the Criminal Code, i.e. instances in which the investigating authorities have employed torture and other illegal or prohibited methods against suspects and accused persons. The judges undergo exercises in which they must scrupulously check complaints and applications from parties to judicial proceedings alleging that torture or other prohibited methods have been used on them in securing confessions. These exercises are organized by Supreme Court judges and qualified professionals in the field.

10. A seminar on human rights and freedoms, and implementation of the Covenant in legislation and law enforcement practice was held on 13 and 14 June 2011, in collaboration with the office of the United Nations Development Programme in Uzbekistan. The training session was conducted using interactive learning methods. The lectures included computer-based presentations, and the participants discussed human rights issues, participated in debates, studied the texts of international instruments, the committees' comments on the interpretation of specific rights and the texts of Uzbekistan's national reports on its implementation of the international treaties, and worked in small groups on case studies taken from the work of the Human Rights Committee.

11. The main aim of the seminar was to improve the Convention implementation mechanisms and the observance of international standards on the administration of justice in the work of the courts and the law enforcement agencies. During the seminars, the national experts considered implementation of the Convention and national legislation, the training of judges, standards in the administration of justice and the response of the courts to the use of torture in the justice system.

12. On 26 September 2011, the Further Training Centre for Lawyers and the Ministry of Internal Affairs Central Investigative Department held a round table on some of the issues involved in implementing the standards of the Convention against Torture in Uzbekistan's criminal legislation. The Committee's findings and recommendations were discussed and appropriate recommendations were made.

13. Together with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the Supreme Court Research Centre planned the organization in March 2012 of a training course for judges and law enforcement officials on the prevention of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Subparagraph (b)

14. The procedure for the admission and consideration of complaints concerning improper actions by law enforcement officers, including torture, is laid out in legislation. Specifically, under article 329 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, any statements, reports or other information concerning offences must be registered and resolved immediately and, if necessary, the legality of motives and validity of grounds for bringing a criminal case directly or through the inquiry agencies must be verified within a maximum of 10 days.

15. In addition, in accordance with the 2008 agreements of the Office of the Procurator-General on cooperation with the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Oliy Majlis (Ombudsman) and the National Centre for Human Rights, representatives of those organizations are invited to carry out an independent inquiry into any allegations of human rights violations by members of law enforcement bodies.

16. Furthermore, the investigation of complaints and reports concerning the use of unlawful methods by members of the law enforcement agencies is one of the mandatory

tasks of the special units for maintaining internal security (special staff of inspection units), which report to the head of the law enforcement agency. These units are independent, since combating, exposing and investigating crime are not part of their functions and they are not subordinate to anti-crime agencies and units.

17. There is also an interdepartmental working group, set up by Prime Minister's Order No. 112 of 24 February 2004 to monitor the observance of human rights by law enforcement agencies. The members of the working group include senior staff of the law enforcement agencies, the ministries of justice and foreign affairs, the National Centre for Human Rights, the Secretariat of the Office of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Human Rights (ombudsman), representatives of non-governmental and public organizations and others.

18. During its meetings, the working group considers applications, including those lodged with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, concerning unlawful actions of law enforcement officers, checks them and then adopts the appropriate decision. With the active participation of national institutions and the general public, it carefully examines communications from citizens concerning the use by law enforcement officers of torture and other degrading treatment. This is also one element of public monitoring of the criminal process and provides an independent assessment of the results of the investigation of applications and complaints about unlawful actions by law enforcement officers.

19. Furthermore, in order to prevent the occurrence of cases of unlawful treatment, the Procurator-General has passed an order making it obligatory to implement and comply strictly with the Convention in exercising procuratorial oversight of respect for human rights legislation. In this regard, the procuratorial authorities carry out checks on the legality of the detention of prisoners held in police cells every 10 days. In addition, the procuratorial authorities carry out monthly checks of those persons held in remand units, during which any complaints or statements received from prisoners on remand and convicts are verified. Where violations are found to have occurred, appropriate measures are taken.

20. The review shows that the procuratorial authorities registered 2,374 applications and communications concerning unlawful actions by law enforcement officers during the first nine months of 2011 (compared to 2,283 in the first nine months of 2010). Of those, 1,844 (1,824) concerned staff of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, 185 (185) staff of the State Tax Committee, 110 (101) staff of the Ministry of Justice, 67 (51) staff of the State Customs Committee, 57 (50) judicial staff, 22 (18) staff of the Department for combating tax and currency crimes and money laundering, 7 (15) procuratorial staff, 2 (4) staff of the National Security Service and 80 (35) staff of other bodies.

21. Of the total number of applications and communications registered, 130 (65) concern the use of torture and other degrading treatment. During the checks carried out as a result of the applications concerning law enforcement officials, 9 (6) criminal cases were brought under article 235 of the Criminal Code.

22. In particular, preventive policing inspector S. Tursunov of Shorchi district, Surxondaryo province, who was abusing his authority in order to obtain a confession of theft and evidence of guilt, illegally detained and tortured U. Khaiitaliev, a minor. The Surxondaryo province procurator's office brought criminal proceedings against Mr. Tursunov on 26 January 2011.

23. The court found Mr. Tursunov guilty of offences under articles 241¹, 227, paragraph 2 (a), 205, paragraph 2 (c), 234, paragraph 1, and 235, paragraphs 2 (a) and (e), of the Criminal Code and sentenced him appropriately.

24. Mr. U. Dzhaniybekov, deputy head of the internal affairs agency in Yangiyer, Sirdaryo province, in his office, together with senior detective S. Eshankulov, caused Mr. M. Babakulov bodily harm with a rubber truncheon, in order to obtain a confession of theft. The Yangiyer municipal procurator's office initiated criminal proceedings in this case on 12 March 2011, resulting in charges being brought on 10 June 2011 under articles 206, paragraph 2 (c), and 235, paragraphs 2 (a) and (c), of the Criminal Code.

25. Yangiyer municipal court found Mr. U. Dzhaniybekov and Mr. S. Eshankulov guilty of the above offences and sentenced them accordingly.

26. In all cases where examination of citizens' applications has ascertained the use of torture by law enforcement officers, the guilty parties have been charged under article 235 of the Criminal Code (use of torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment) and incurred penalties under the law.

27. The procuratorial authorities are continuing the systematic collection and analysis of information on all cases of use of unlawful treatment or punishment of citizens, including foreign nationals and stateless persons, throughout the country.

28. Moreover, doctoral students from the department of criminal procedure, in their research into the organization of an investigator's activities in searching for the accused, and civil suits in the criminal process, have analysed empirical material on judicial practice, including on detecting cases of torture and evidence obtained by means of physical or psychological pressure.

29. The Supreme Court is planning to conduct a review of judicial practice in such cases, as well as a study of judicial redress for the victims of torture at the end of the 2011–2012 period.

Subparagraph (c)

30. The Code of Criminal Procedure provides for an individual's rehabilitation, including its grounds and consequences, as well as the procedure for compensation and the restoration of other rights. In particular, under article 83 (grounds for rehabilitation), a suspect, accused person or defendant is acquitted and subject to rehabilitation in the absence of any event constituting the offence on which the criminal case, investigation or court case was based; where there are no constituent elements of a crime in his or her acts; or if he or she did not take part in committing an offence.

31. After rehabilitation, an individual has the right to compensation for loss of or damage to property and reparation of moral injury caused by unlawful detention, unlawful remand in custody as a preventive measure, unlawful suspension from duties in connection with the charges, or unlawful placement in a medical establishment (Code of Criminal Procedure, section 7, arts. 301–313). The Supreme Court is also planning, at the end of the 2011–2012 period, to examine judicial practice in respect of compensation for victims of torture.

Subparagraph (d)

32. On the basis of criminal procedural law, investigative units do in practice make audio and video recordings during investigations, of the questioning, the confrontation of witnesses, verification of evidence at the place of the offence, re-enactment of the offence, identification parades or the identification of other objects of significance to the evidence, and of the inspection of the scene of the event, among others.

33. In addition to this, the issue of fitting temporary detention cells, remand centres, police cells and prisons with audio and video monitoring equipment is currently being studied. In the long term, equipping those facilities with special technology would create an

additional barrier to prevent law enforcement staff resorting to unlawful treatment of parties to criminal proceedings.

Subparagraphs (e) and (f)

34. Over the period 2010–2011, 55 doctors from Ministry of Internal Affairs prisons were given certified training in workshops on the forensic aspects of determining biological signs of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

35. In order to prevent violations occurring in the law enforcement work of the internal affairs agencies, the Ministry's structural units and territorial authorities receive quarterly reviews and reports on the observance of the rule of law and human rights by the agencies' staff. These reviews are discussed by internal affairs staff throughout the country. In addition, such issues are reviewed on a regular basis at meetings of the Board of the Ministry of Internal Affairs; this has been done six times over the past 18 months.

36. National legislation fully provides for the protection of human rights and freedoms, including the right not to be subjected to torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment and punishment. This is enshrined in article 26 of the Constitution, which entirely reflects the provisions of article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Any violation of these provisions thus entails criminal responsibility. However, a study carried out by the Office of the Procurator-General shows that, despite the efforts made in the country to prevent law enforcement officials using violence and other illegal treatment of citizens, cases do still occur. The procuratorial agencies systematically collect and analyse information on all cases throughout the country of illegal treatment or punishment of citizens, including foreign nationals and stateless persons.

37. During the period of 2011 in question, about 2,000 training sessions and seminars were held for internal affairs staff to explain the norms, international standards and national legislation, including the Convention against Torture. For example, in the Ministry of Internal Affairs Fire Service Higher Technical College, 54 teaching hours have been allocated to the subject of human rights, including:

- A seminar on the reforms in the judicial and legal system, on 28 February 2011
- A seminar on the role of women in social development, on 4 March 2011
- A seminar on the necessities of the age and economic, social and cultural rights, on 14 March 2011
- A seminar on the rights of the child, on 4 April 2011

38. Retraining and further training centres for non-commissioned officers have lectures and training sessions on international human rights standards on their curricula. The centres in Samarkand, Tashkent and Olmalig (Tashkent province) have run seminars on legal knowledge of human rights for internal affairs staff, and combating trafficking in persons. Lectures on combating trafficking in persons and on other countries' experience in the area have been held for students of the further training centre of the Ministry of Internal Affairs Academy higher academic courses department.

39. Training sessions on the Convention against Torture were held in Sherobod internal affairs district office on 10 January 2011 and in Surxondaryo province internal affairs division on 11 March 2011. On 3 February 2011, the Ministry of Internal Affairs entry, exit and citizenship section held training sessions on international human rights standards. Training sessions on the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights were held in Buxoro province internal affairs division on 4 February 2011, in Kogan municipal internal affairs division on 23 February 2011, and in Gijduvon municipal internal affairs division on 5 March 2011. Sessions explaining the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil

and Political Rights, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women were held on 14 February 2011 in the internal affairs division and all the urban and regional internal affairs sections of Navoiy province, and on 16 February 2011 in the Protection Office, the Penal Enforcement Department and the penal enforcement colonies.

40. On 24 March 2011, the Tashkent Province Internal Affairs Department held staff training sessions on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The procuratorial authorities organized 116,442 activities on legislation in 2010 (32,677 in the first three months of 2011), including 97,877 (26,649) conferences, seminars and lectures, 21,565 (6,028) television and radio broadcasts, and articles in the press. Of that total, 12,890 (3,916) concerned the protection of rights and freedoms, including the prevention of torture and punishment of perpetrators.

41. The Ministry of Internal Affairs and its territorial units also made 1,483 statements to the media, organized 2,072 activities (seminars, conferences, round tables and presentations) for the public, issued 78 training manuals and teaching materials and 358 visual aids on the protection of human rights, including the prevention of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

42. On 1 June 2011, the Ministry of Internal Affairs held a press conference in the national press centre on the topic of the investigation of complex, serious and especially serious offences, the causes and conditions that lead to their commission, and how to ensure respect for human rights during investigations. The press conference was attended by Ministry staff and representatives of the media (television, radio and the press).

43. The use of evidence obtained under duress is prohibited in Uzbekistan. Specifically, article 17 (respect for the honour and dignity of the individual) of the Code of Criminal Procedure states that judges, procurators, and persons carrying out initial inquiries or pretrial investigations are under an obligation to respect the honour and dignity of persons involved in a case. No one may be subjected to torture, violence or any other cruel or degrading treatment.

44. Furthermore, article 22 (establishment of the truth), paragraph 2, of the Code states that only those details found, verified and evaluated in accordance with national criminal procedural legislation may be used to establish the truth. It prohibits the coercion of a suspect, accused person, defendant, victim, witness or other person involved in the case into giving testimony by means of violence, threats, infringement of their rights and other illegal measures.

45. During assessment of the evidence, the testimony of a person suspected of having committed the offence or recognition of guilt by the accused may be used as a basis for prosecution only if supported by all the evidence. The facts established by the testimony of a suspect or accused person, as well as other evidence, must be verified and assessed in connection with all the circumstances of the case, both in the case of recognition of guilt, and where the accused denies guilt (Code of Criminal Procedure, art. 112, "assessment of the testimony of a suspect or accused person").

46. Moreover, the plenum of the Supreme Court, in its decision of 19 December 2003, entitled "Application by the courts of laws that guarantee the right of suspects and accused persons to a defence", stated that evidence obtained by methods that violate human rights, including the use of torture, cannot be accepted in criminal cases.

47. Furthermore, the decision adopted by the plenum of the Supreme Court on 24 September 2004 on certain issues arising in the application of criminal procedural law relating to the admissibility of evidence provides that testimony, including confessions,

obtained by the use of torture, violence or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, or by deception or other unlawful methods, is inadmissible evidence.

48. Clarification issued by the plenum of the Supreme Court on the application of legislation is mandatory on the courts, other bodies, enterprises, institutions, organizations and officials applying the legislation concerned (Courts Act, art. 21, para. 3). In its decisions, the Supreme Court, in turn, refers to the provisions of international instruments, including human rights instruments.

49. Where, in the course of the trial, the defendant claims to have confessed under torture or other treatment, the court is obliged, if there is reason and sufficient grounds, to initiate a criminal case (Code of Criminal Procedure, art. 321). The reason and grounds for the institution of criminal proceedings may be statements by individuals; communications from businesses, agencies, organizations, public associations and officials; communications from the media; the detection of information or traces indicating the crime directly by the person conducting the initial inquiry, the investigator, the procurator or the court; or a confession. In addition, the grounds for bringing a criminal case include information pointing to the existence of indicia of a crime (Code of Criminal Procedure, art. 322).

Paragraph 14 of the recommendations

50. A study of international practice in respect of the detention or remand in custody of the perpetrators of crimes showed that, in the countries of the former Soviet Union, the judicial procedure of using remand in custody as a preventive measure also existed in the criminal procedural legislation of countries such as Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, Ukraine and Estonia.

51. The study examined relevant legislation from other countries that includes judicial control over the pretrial procedure, as well as the universally recognized principles and norms of international law, which establish that the rights and freedoms of the individual are inviolable and no one is entitled to deny or restrict them without a court decision. A comprehensive analysis was made of the legislation and judicial and legal practice of a number of States (Azerbaijan, England, Armenia, Germany, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, the United States, France and others).

52. In addition, on 18 June 2011, the Supreme Court research centre on the democratization and liberalization of judicial legislation and the independence of the judicial system sent to the Ministry of Internal Affairs policy note No. TM/7-83-10 of 15 June 2011, on the results of the study of the use of the institution of habeas corpus.

53. The Supreme Court research centre prepared analytical information on national legislation on the length of temporary detention of suspects or accused persons. After the adoption of the Act amending certain legislation in connection with the transfer to the courts of the authority to order remand in custody, a series of seminars was held to explain the provisions of the Act. Many of the participants, especially lawyers, believed that, in accordance with international human rights standards, the period of detention should not exceed 48 hours. The 72 hours established in the Code of Criminal Procedure is not consistent with international standards. That view is still held by academics, judges and lawyers. It should be noted that the international instruments employ such terms as “promptly”, “within a reasonable time”, “without delay” (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, art. 9, Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (European Convention on Human Rights), art. 5). An analysis of the legislation of a number of countries shows that the total period of detention (including any extension decided by the court) does not, as a rule, exceed five days.

54. However, the general case in most countries is a 48-hour period of detention, and so, given the growing use of information technology in law enforcement, it would be desirable

to reduce the period to 48 hours. It is also recommended that the period of detention should be calculated not “from the moment the detainee is handed to the militia or other law enforcement body” but from the actual time of the person’s detention. Criminal procedural legislation fully meets international standards in its definition of the grounds and procedure for the detention for 72 hours of a person suspected of having committed an offence. This period may be extended by the court for a further 48 hours, after which it is decided whether a criminal case will be brought against the detainee and whether preventive measures should be taken or the person released from custody.

55. In exceptional cases, the court may decide to apply remand in custody as a preventive measure against a detained suspect. The suspect must, however, be charged within 10 days of the day of detention, or the preventive measure is overturned and the person released from custody (Code of Criminal Procedure, art. 226).

56. The procedure for application of the institution of habeas corpus was introduced with the adoption of the Presidential Decree on the transfer to the courts of the authority to order remand in custody, which entered into force in January 2008. Thus, since 2008, the authority to order remand in custody as a preventive measure has been transferred from the procurator to the courts. This has been an important factor in protecting the constitutional rights, freedoms and integrity of the individual.

57. In 2010, the procuratorial authorities submitted 17,013 applications to the courts for remand in custody as a preventive measure; 92 of the applications were denied. However, the policy note on the results of the study of the use of the institution of habeas corpus produced by the Supreme Court research centre on the democratization and liberalization of judicial legislation and the independence of the judicial system has been sent to all the Ministry of Internal Affairs structural units and territorial authorities for consideration and proposals for national legislation.

Paragraph 24 of the recommendations

58. In 2010 and the first nine months of 2011, no cases of threats, intimidation or attacks on journalist “human rights defenders” were being investigated by the procuratorial authorities, the National Security Service or the internal affairs agencies. The Ministry of Justice has no information on entry into Uzbekistan being refused to representatives of national or international organizations, nor of deprivation of liberty, physical assault, harassment or intimidation of journalists and human rights defenders. This issue does not actually fall under the department’s mandate.

59. In 2010 and the first three months of 2011, no cases of threats, intimidation or attacks on journalists were brought or examined by the internal affairs agencies, the National Security Service or the procuratorial authorities. The entry of foreign nationals is governed by the procedure for entry into and exit from Uzbekistan of foreign nationals and stateless persons, approved by Cabinet of Ministers Order No. 408 of 21 November 1996.

60. Paragraph 1 of the procedure stipulates that, under Uzbekistan’s legislation, foreign nationals, including citizens of the States members of the Commonwealth of Independent States and stateless persons, may enter and leave the country on private and official business, for tourism, leisure, study, work or medical treatment and for permanent residence.

61. Furthermore, under the Non-Governmental, Non-Profit Organizations Act, the Ministry of Justice accredits foreign staff of representations and branches of international and foreign NGOs and non-profit organizations, as well as dependent members of their families.

62. In addition, particular attention is paid to developing the media and ensuring transparency and freedom in their activities. An appropriate legal and regulatory framework has been developed, including the generally accepted international norms and principles on media regulation, the basis of which is provided, firstly, by the Constitution, and then by the following legislation: the Media Act, the Act on guarantees and freedom of access to information, the Act on principles and guarantees of freedom of information, the Act on protection of the professional activities of journalists, the Advertising Act, the Telecommunications Act, the Information Technology Act, the Publishing Act and the Communications Act.

63. Systematic and continuous work has been put into building up the information infrastructure, the result of which is a significant increase in the quality and quantity of media products. There are now about 1,200 print and electronic media, more than 60 per cent of which are available outside the capital, as well as 90 publishers and more than 1,300 print shops. The number of non-State media has grown, and they now account for more than 50 per cent of all television and radio channels. In addition, the introduction and widespread use of modern media technologies and digital equipment has improved the quality of broadcasts by many State and non-State television and radio studios.

64. The further improvement and strengthening of the media's activities is still a constant focus of attention in the process of democratization and liberalization of society, and the building of a democratic State governed by the rule of law. Thus, issues related to further strengthening the self-reliance and independence of the media, introducing market mechanisms into the area of information, increasing the effectiveness of activities, protecting the economic interests of the parties to the information market, establishing additional economic preferences and others, were important features of President Islam Karimov's report, "The concept of further deepening democratic reforms and developing a civil society in the country", announced at the joint session of the Legislative Chamber and the Senate of the Oliy Majlis on 12 November 2010.

65. Along with the other legislative proposals, the concept advanced the idea of adopting an act to guarantee State support for the media. Proposed by the head of State, the act is a logical continuation of all the State measures adopted since the first days of independence to support the activities of the media, and in fact includes a definition of the legal, economic and institutional foundations of State support for the media and is aimed at guaranteeing the citizen's right to have access to objective information and freedom of expression, and ensuring the independence of the media.

66. State support for the media means, first of all, legal, economic, social, organizational and other State contributions to strengthen and develop the information industry and its infrastructure. State support covers a wide spectrum of active assistance and support, namely the provision of economic preferences, the establishment of a preferential tax regime for media production, including a preferential value-added tax rate, concessional postal charges, a special investment regime and exemption from professional tax, reductions in printing costs and further training for staff.

67. Moreover, State support for the media includes measures to create favourable social and other conditions, ensuring political, ideological and cultural diversity, freedom of thought and expression, independent media structures, as well as the citizen's right to seek, receive, transmit, produce and distribute information. The legislative concept also includes certain tax, customs, financial and other benefits and preferences for those media structures (publishers, distributors, print houses), which, for objective reasons, are not able to offset their costs through advertising, sales, etc.

68. Indeed, the economic aspects of the State contributions to promote the media do reinforce the quantitative and the qualitative growth of both the press and the electronic

media. Relevant experience from some leading foreign countries is proof of this. In particular, Great Britain has a zero value-added tax rate on printed products, compared to a standard rate tax of 17.5 per cent, while in Italy the rate for printed products is 4 per cent, against a standard rate of 36 per cent. In Germany, the value-added tax rate for magazines and newspapers is 7 per cent, while the standard rate is 15 per cent. Practice thus shows that providing State economic preferences and benefits to the media in the above countries leads to growth in their quality and quantity.

69. In order to meet its goals, Uzbekistan has opted to implement reforms to deepen the democratization processes in the media. Analysis of the developments in national media, the implementation of international legal norms and democratic standards in the activities of the country's media and other aspects of the liberalization of information shows their great importance in the process of formation of a law-based, democratic society. Uzbekistan has adopted more than 10 laws, more than 20 statutory instruments and other regulatory documents governing the activities of the media:

- Information Technology Act (7 May 1993), 2000, 2002
- Publishing Act (30 August 1996)
- Act on guarantees and freedom of access to information (24 April 1997), 2000
- Act on protection of the professional activities of journalists (24 April 1997)
- Media Act (26 December 1997), 2002, 2007
- Advertising Act (25 December 1998), 2008
- Telecommunications Act (20 August 1999), 2004, 2005
- Act on principles and guarantees of freedom of information (12 December 2002)
- Copyright and Related Rights Act (20 July 2006)

70. It is interesting to note that, since their adoption, almost all of these acts have been amended, supplemented and even revised. This shows that the emergence of new trends and circumstances in social development and the media has led to improvements to legislation, and the process continues.

71. The Journalists' Code of Conduct, adopted at the national media forum in September 2008, addresses the moral and ethical side of journalists' activities. The non-State media sector is already functioning well at the current stage of development in the area of information, fundamentally new forms of mass communication have appeared, and the Internet is becoming prevalent. Thus, the emergence of a wide range of actors in the information landscape creates real conditions both for the formation of a coherent media space in the country, and for determining the level of maturity of the domestic media, from the perspective of accepted international norms and standards.

72. Expert groups have been set up to draft legislation on openness in the activities of the State authorities and Government, television and radio broadcasting, the economic bases of media activities, guaranteed State support for the media, amendments to some legislative acts on the media and access to information, and on amendments to the Telecommunications Act. These documents are being drafted taking account of the generally recognized principles and norms of international law.