



**Convention on the Elimination
of All Forms of Discrimination
against Women**

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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination
against Women**

**Sixth periodic report submitted by Uzbekistan under
article 18 of the Convention, due in 2019***

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Introduction

1. Over the period from 2016 to 2019, Uzbekistan implemented far-reaching reforms affecting practically all spheres of society and all categories of citizens living in the country. Underpinned by a strategy of action in five priority areas for the development of the Republic of Uzbekistan over the period 2017–2021, particular attention has been given to such priority measures as improving the development of the State and society; safeguarding the rule of law and ensuring further reforms of the judicial and legal system; developing and liberalizing the economy; strengthening the social services sector; ensuring security, inter-ethnic harmony and religious tolerance; and implementing an effective foreign policy.

2. Through continuous dialogue with a population of over 33 million people, measures have been taken to ensure the rights, freedoms and legitimate interests of citizens.

3. Over the past three years, more than 5,000 legal and regulatory instruments have been adopted, including four new codes, 162 Acts and 1,209 presidential Acts (340 decrees and 869 decisions), which have served as the legal basis for the liberalization and democratization of all areas of public and State life, for the sustainable and accelerated development of the economy and the social sphere and for improving the well-being of the nation. Uzbekistan has acceded to International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention Nos. 81, 87, 129 and 144 concerning freedom of association and protection of the right to form trade unions; forced labour; the implementation of international labour standards; labour inspection in agriculture, industry and commerce; and the Constitution of the International Organization for Migration.

4. Ensuring deep respect for women, the protection of the family and the rights and best interests of the child occupies an important place in the system of ongoing reforms in the country. Speaking at the 2019 session of the Senate, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, emphasized that in the current era of globalization, protecting the rights, freedoms and legitimate interests of women has become even more important and raising their socioeconomic, political and legal profile is an imperative of modern times. The President has set the priorities for enhancing the role and status of women in society: first, to ensure that women are represented in parliament and local representative bodies and that their views are taken into account in the preparation of bills and the drafting of the country's budget; second, to establish upper chamber parliamentary working bodies on gender equality issues; third, to expedite the adoption of gender equality legislation; and fourth, to enhance the role of women's non-governmental non-profit organizations in ensuring women's rights. At the proposal of the President, the Senate Committee on Women and Gender Equality was established, and a woman, T. Narbaeva, who had previously served as Deputy Prime Minister and Chairperson of the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan, was elected Chairperson of the Senate.

5. Since the consideration of Uzbekistan's fifth periodic report on the implementation of the Convention, consistent and systematic work has been ongoing to strengthen the social and legal status of women, which has been facilitated by the adoption of such policy documents as:

- The State programme on the year of mother and child health (2016).
- The national plan of action adopted to implement the recommendations of the Human Rights Committee following its consideration of the fourth periodic report of Uzbekistan on the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (20 August 2016).

- The strategy of action in five priority areas for the development of the Republic of Uzbekistan over the period 2017–2021, approved by a presidential decree of 7 February 2017 and aimed at implementing the State programme on the theme “Year of public dialogue and human interests” (para. 4.2.: “Improvement of the system of social protection and health care and increase in the social and political profile of women”).
- The national plan of action adopted to implement the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women following its consideration of the fifth periodic report of Uzbekistan on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (16 October 2017).
- The plan of practical measures (road map) for the promotion of the initiatives of the Republic Uzbekistan, launched at the seventy-second session of the General Assembly, on the implementation of arrangements reached following the results of negotiations with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (27 September 2017).
- The State programme on the implementation of the strategy of action in five priority areas for the development of the Republic of Uzbekistan over the period 2017–2021 during the year of support for active entrepreneurship, innovative ideas and technologies (dated 22 January 2018).
- The State programme on the implementation of the strategy of action in five priority areas for the development of the Republic of Uzbekistan over the period 2017–2021 during the year of active investment and social development, approved by the President on 17 January 2019.

6. The realization of women’s rights was also promoted by: the action plan for the further development of cooperation between Uzbekistan and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, approved by the chambers of the *Oliy Majlis* on 16 June 2017; the programme of events to celebrate the seventieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, approved by a presidential decree of 5 May 2018; the programme of measures for further deepening reforms and promoting a positive external image of the Republic of Uzbekistan, approved by the Prime Minister on 17 August 2018; the national Sustainable Development Goals and targets for the period until 2030, approved by a Cabinet of Ministers decision of 20 October 2018; the State programme on implementation of the proposals and recommendations from the Asian Forum on Human Rights held in Samarkand (dated 2 February 2019); and the programme of events to celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, approved by a Cabinet of Ministers decision of 17 July 2019.

7. As part of the implementation of these programmes, socially significant laws regulating the rights and freedoms of citizens have been adopted: in 2016, the Acts adopted included the following: the Parliamentary Oversight Act of 11 April 2016; the State Youth Policy Act of 14 September 2016; the Internal Affairs Agencies Act of 16 September 2016; the Act ratifying the ILO Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87) of 26 October 2016; the Act amending and supplementing the Trade Unions and Trade Union Rights and Safeguards Act of 28 November 2016; and the Social Services for Older Persons, Persons with Disabilities and Other Vulnerable Social Groups Act of 26 December 2016; in 2017, the legislation adopted included: the Anti-Corruption Act of 3 January 2017; the Protection of Children from Information Harmful to Their Health Act of 8 September 2017; and the Natural and Legal Persons’ Petitions Act (new version) of 11 September 2017; in 2018, the legislation adopted included: the Administrative Procedures Act of 8 January 2018; the Code of Civil Procedure of 22 January 2018; the Code of Economic

Procedure of 24 January 2018 and the Code of Administrative Procedure of 25 January 2018; the Act restricting the smoking of shisha pipes and electronic cigarettes in public places of 2 July 2018; the Mediation Act of 3 July 2018; and the Public Procurement Act of 9 April 2018; and in 2019 the legislation adopted included: the Protection of Victims, Witnesses and Other Participants in Criminal Proceedings Act of 14 January 2019; the International Treaties of the Republic of Uzbekistan Act of 6 February 2019; the Public-Private Partnership Act of 10 May 2019; the Electoral Code of 25 June 2019; the Act ratifying the Protocol to the ILO Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29) of 25 June 2019; the Personal Data Act of 2 July 2019; the Weapons Act of 29 July 2019; and the Patronage Act of 16 October 2019.

8. A significant contribution to the development of gender legislation adopted in Uzbekistan was made in 2019 by, inter alia: the Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men Act of 2 September 2019; the Protection of Women from Harassment and Violence Act of 2 September 2019; the Reproductive Health Act of 11 March 2019; the Act amending and supplementing article 15 of the Family Code of 28 August 2019; the Breastfeeding Support and Food Requirements for Infants and Young Children Act of 23 October 2019; and the Act amending the Labour Code to abolish restrictions related to the choice by women of previously prohibited forms of work and other gender asymmetry in labour legislation.

9. The following instruments were of great significance over that period: the presidential decree of 2 February 2018 on measures to radically improve support for women and strengthen the institution of the family; the presidential decree of 27 June 2018 on the adoption of a policy framework for strengthening the institution of the family in the Republic of Uzbekistan; the presidential decision of 2 July 2018 on measures to improve the system of social rehabilitation and adaptation and the prevention of domestic violence; the presidential decision of 7 March 2019 on measures to further strengthen guarantees of labour rights and support women's entrepreneurial activity; and the presidential decision of 3 October 2019 on measures to radically improve staffing policy and the civil service in the Republic of Uzbekistan. Over 15 presidential and governmental laws and regulations have recently been adopted on the legal status of women and the protection of the family as an institution.

10. Considerable attention has been paid to the development of civil society institutions and their active participation in public management and oversight of government agencies through the adoption of the following instruments: the Public Oversight Act of 12 April 2018; the presidential decree of 4 May 2018 on measures to radically enhance the role of civil society institutions in the democratic renewal of the country, which established an advisory council for the development of civil society under the authority of the President of Uzbekistan; the presidential decree of 2 April 2019 on measures to radically enhance the status of *mahallas* to deal with the problems experienced by the public; the presidential decree of 4 October 2019 on additional measures to enhance public monitoring of socioeconomic reforms and public engagement in implementing the country's democratic reforms, which provides for the adoption of a code on non-governmental non-profit organizations; the presidential decree of 4 July 2018 on measures for organization of the work of public councils in government agencies; the presidential decree of 22 August 2019 on measures to ensure transparency in budgetary data and active public engagement in the budgetary process; the presidential decree of 23 August 2019 on additional measures of State support for the civil society associations of persons with disabilities; and the presidential decree of 30 October 2019 on measures to support the work of the Civil Society Development Centre. Civil society institutions are being actively developed in Uzbekistan, and more than 9,000 non-governmental non-profit organizations have been established, of which about 400 are engaged in women's issues. Since April 2016, the women's organization known as "Center of Civil Initiatives Support" has received special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council.

11. Great importance has been attached to improving the legal status and activities of national human rights institutions. In particular, the Human Rights Commissioner (Ombudsman) of the *Oliy Majlis* and the National Centre for Human Rights of the Republic of Uzbekistan have had their rights significantly expanded; offices have been set up of a presidential commissioner responsible for the protection of the rights and interests of business entities and of a commissioner for the rights of the child, acting as a deputy human rights ombudsmen; and the system of education and training on human rights and freedoms is being improved, including through the establishment of the Academy of the Office of the Procurator General, the Higher School of the Supreme Judicial Council, and staff training courses on human rights and freedoms at the National Centre for Human Rights of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

12. During the reporting period, Uzbekistan expanded its cooperation with international organizations in the field of human rights: in 2017–2019, the country was visited by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, António Guterres; the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein; the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, Ahmed Shaheed; the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers, Diego García-Sayán; a delegation of Human Rights Watch and the Regional Office of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Uzbekistan was also visited by the heads of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Parliamentary Assembly, the European Union and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Since 2018, Uzbekistan has been a member of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Independent Permanent Commission on Human Rights, as well as a permanent participant in the high-level segment and meetings of the United Nations Human Rights Council. On 11 March 2019, the delegation of Uzbekistan headed by the Chair of the Women's Committee, Deputy Prime Minister Narbaeva, participated in the sixty-third session of the Commission on the Status of Women of the Economic and Social Council, at which the system of social protection, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for ensuring gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls were discussed.

13. Uzbekistan has reached a new level of development as a subject of international law and is an active participant in international standard setting in the field of human rights. On the initiative of Uzbekistan, the resolution entitled “Strengthening regional and international cooperation to ensure peace, stability and sustainable development in the Central Asian region” was adopted at the seventy-second session of General Assembly, and the resolution entitled “Enlightenment and religious tolerance” was adopted at its seventy-third session. Uzbekistan has also prepared a draft United Nations international convention on the rights of youth.

14. In 2018, Uzbekistan became a full member of the International Organization for Migration. By implementing the national plan of action for the implementation of ILO conventions and the country programme on decent work for 2017–2020, Uzbekistan has made significant progress in protecting the rights of adults and children from forced labour.

15. Uzbekistan has initiated deeper cooperation on human rights in Central Asia and in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. In 2018, the first Asian Forum on Human Rights in the 70 years since the establishment of the United Nations was held in Samarkand. The parliament of Uzbekistan has approved a “road map” for the realization of the “Samarkand spirit” of human rights. The first meeting of national human rights institutions of Central Asian countries was held in Tashkent to strengthen cooperation in the human rights sphere.

16. Between 2017 and 2019, more than 100 analytical papers and national reports on the implementation of the international covenants and conventions ratified by Uzbekistan were sent to international human rights bodies: the common core document forming part of the human rights reports (2017);¹ the fifth periodic report on the implementation of the provisions of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (2017);² the combined tenth to twelfth periodic reports of the Republic of Uzbekistan on the implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (2018);³ the fifth periodic report on the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (2018);⁴ the third periodic report for the universal periodic review (2019);⁵ the fifth periodic report on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the two national reports on the implementation of the Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child;⁶ the third period report on the implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (2019);⁷ and the report on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in the period following the Fourth World Conference on Women, Gender Equality and Women's Rights regarding the implementation of gender equality and the safeguarding of women's rights over the last 5 years (2019).⁸

17. The present report outlines not only Uzbekistan's achievements in further implementing the provisions of the Convention and the Committee's relevant recommendations in law and in practice, but also the prospects for forthcoming work to improve the status of women in society and the main areas for addressing problems related to achieving full gender equality in the country. In the process of preparing the report, account was taken of the Committee's requirements set forth in the United Nations document entitled "Compilation of Guidelines on the Form and Content of Reports to be Submitted by States Parties to the International Human Rights Treaties" in respect of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (pp. 90–99). Particular attention in the report is paid to the implementation of the Committee's recommendations in the context of each article of the Convention.

18. More than 60 government agencies and organizations, as well as civil society institutions, took part in the preparation of the report. A three-day seminar was held from 25 to 27 March 2019, with support from the United Nations Development Programme, on the theme "Enhancing the information and educational capacity of State officials and representatives of non-governmental non-profit organizations in preparing national reports and national action plans for the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women", with the participation of Committee member Lia Nadaria and other international experts. Following the seminar, a working group was established to prepare the present report and a list of qualitative and quantitative indicators on achievements in the area of

¹ https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=HRI%2fCORE%2fUZB%2f2017&Lang=ru

² https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CAT/C/UZB/5&Lang=en

³ https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fUZB%2f10-12&Lang=en

⁴ https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fUZB%2f5&Lang=en

⁵ <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G18/050/12/PDF/G1805012.pdf?OpenElement>

⁶ https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Countries.aspx?CountryCode=UZB&Lang=E

⁷ https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fUZB%2f3&Lang=en

⁸ www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/Gender/Beijing_20/Uzbekistan_ENG.pdf

women's rights. On 12 April 2019, with assistance from the United Nations Population Fund, consultations were held on the theme "Results of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Beijing Platform for Action in the Republic of Uzbekistan: achievements and challenges"; and on 26 September 2019, a round table was held in the Legislative Chamber on the theme "Enhancing the role and status of women in building society and nation-building: the experience of Uzbekistan and Germany". A parliamentary hearing on the report was held in the Legislative Chamber Committee on Democratic Institutions, Non-Governmental Organizations and Citizens' Self-Governance Bodies.

Implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Article 1. Definition of the concept of discrimination against women (recommendations 6, 8 and 10)

19. Article 18 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan reads as follows: "All citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan shall have identical rights and freedoms and shall be equal before the law, without discrimination by sex, race, nationality, language, religion, social origin, convictions, or individual or social status."

20. "Any privileges may be granted solely in accordance with the law and the principles of social justice."

21. Women and men have equal rights in accordance with article 46 of the Constitution. Almost all laws governing specific human rights contain provisions that enshrine the equality of human rights, irrespective of gender or other grounds, including in the Electoral Code, the Civil Code, the Family Code, the Labour Code, the Criminal Code and other laws.

22. The Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men Act was adopted on 2 September 2019, setting out for the first time definitions of direct and indirect sexual discrimination. Article 3 of the Act stipulates that "direct sexual discrimination means any distinction, exclusion or restriction aimed at the non-recognition of women and men's rights and freedoms in all spheres of society, including discrimination on the grounds of marital status, pregnancy, family obligations, as well as sexual harassment, different remuneration for equal work and qualifications"; "indirect sexual discrimination means the creation of a situation, provision or criteria whereby persons of one sex are placed in a less favourable position compared with persons of the other sex, including through narratives of gender inequality in the mass media, education or culture by establishing conditions or requirements with potential adverse effects on persons of one gender".

23. The above Act defines the main areas of State policy and the powers of the Cabinet of Ministers, the Gender Equality Commission, and the authorized body and other government agencies and civil society institutions to prevent and prohibit discrimination against women in various areas of society. Article 28 of the Act states that people who consider that they have been directly or indirectly sexually discriminated against are entitled to apply to the competent authorities or court. At the same time, no state duty is levied on such persons, and payment for legal services rendered by lawyers is covered, upon request, by the State in the manner prescribed by law.⁹

24. Legislative measures have been taken in Uzbekistan to eliminate discrimination against women in family and marital relations: on 29 August 2019, a law was adopted

⁹ See the Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men Act of the Republic of Uzbekistan in annex No. 3.

to amend article 15 of the Family Code, according to which, from 1 September 2019, the marriageable age for men and women was established at 18 years.

25. The prohibition of discrimination on the basis of sex and other grounds is enshrined in almost all laws adopted over the period 2016–2019, including: the Youth Policy Act of 14 September 2016 (article 22); article 8 (2) of the Internal Affairs Agencies Act of 16 September 2016; article 16 of the new version of the Natural and Legal Persons' Petitions Act of 11 August 2017; article 9 of the Code of Administrative Procedure of 25 January 2018; article 8 (2) of the National Security Service Act of 5 April 2018; article 19 (2), of the *Oliy Majlis* Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) Act of 14 March 2019 (new version), and article 4 of the Electoral Code of 25 June 2019.

26. The Reproductive Health Act of 11 March 2019 protects the reproductive rights not only of women, but also of men and minors, and proclaims equal rights and opportunities for women and men in the exercise of their reproductive rights and the right to make independent decisions regarding the birth of their children using safe and effective technologies.

27. The Protection of Women from Harassment and Violence Act of 2 September 2019 defines the concepts of sexual, physical, economic and psychological violence. The harassment of women is distinguished from other forms of violence as an action (or inaction) that diminishes women's human dignity and includes workplace harassment. In accordance with the Act, the entities involved in combating harassment and violence against women are not only law enforcement bodies, but also central and local executive authorities, education, labour and health authorities, women's and other non-governmental organizations, citizens' self-governing bodies and special centres to assist victims of harassment and violence.¹⁰ On 21 April 2019, the Prime Minister of Uzbekistan approved plans to implement the Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men Act and the Protection of Women from Harassment and Violence Act.

28. During the reporting period, the role of the legislature in ensuring the provisions of the Convention was strengthened and additional measures were taken by the chambers of parliament to monitor the situation in this area. On 11 October 2017, the Legislative Chamber established the Commission on Family and Women's Issues, which has taken a number of measures to raise deputies' awareness of the role and significance of the Convention in improving State policy in the area of women's rights and interests. On 27 November 2017, the report of the Deputy Prime Minister and Chair of the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan was heard regarding activities to implement the Convention and recommended improvements were formulated; on 21 May 2018, an international event was held on the theme "Women's participation in governance in the process of socioeconomic and institutional reforms"; and in May 2019 the Commission held discussions on the bill on equal rights and opportunities for women and men in Samarkand, Bukhara and Fergana and developed proposals for its finalization. Between 2018 and 2019, the Commission considered about 70 petitions concerning improvements to legislation, of which 4 were related to discrimination against women in the workplace and 2 were approved in court. In April 2019 parliamentary monitoring of the implementation of legislation on women's labour rights was carried out in Bukhara and Samarkand, which resulted in proposals for amendments and additions to the Labour Code.

29. On 5 April 2018, for the first time, the chambers of parliament considered a report on measures taken in Uzbekistan to ensure the protection of citizens' rights in various spheres of life, entitled "Uzbekistan: progress in the field of human rights";

¹⁰ See the Protection of Women from Harassment and Violence Act in annex 4.

in the section “Rights of women and children”, the role of the Women’s Committee of Uzbekistan in ensuring women’s rights was highlighted; following the consideration of the report, a road map was approved to bring its content to the world community and the population. The Public Foundation in the *Oliy Majlis* submitted 60 projects to protect the rights of women and ensure their full participation in the country’s public, political, social, economic and cultural life for the spiritual and intellectual growth of women.

30. The Senate Committee on Women and Gender Equality, which began its work in August 2019, put into practice a national platform for supporting and creating conditions for women’s participation in all spheres of society via the website www.gender-platform.uz, began preparing a gender equality strategy, and conducted a broad public information campaign to study the Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men Act and the Protection of Women from Harassment and Violence Act in Namangan, Djizak, Syr-Darya and Tashkent oblasts; in cooperation with the Legislative Chamber’s Commission on Family and Women’s Issues, over 150 petitions from women were considered; and parliamentary hearing were also held by the Women’s Committee of Uzbekistan and the Ministry of Justice on the implementation of the Convention.

31. Underpinned by the presidential decree of 8 February 2017 on measures to radically improve the system of dissemination of legislation and the presidential decree of 8 July 2018 on the approval of the policy framework for improving rule-making, the openness of parliament’s legislative activity has been significantly strengthened and modern information and communication technologies have been introduced into the law-making process. For public discussion of draft laws, a presidential decree of 22 January 2018 introduced the procedure for public petitions to the chambers of parliament and local *kengashes* (committees) of people’s deputies through a special web portal called *Mening fikrim* (“My opinion”). Since 1 January 2019, a single electronic system was launched on the Internet for the development and coordination of draft legislation for wide professional and public discussion, including bills prepared by the legislature as well as other government agencies and organizations.

32. A presidential decree of 9 January 2019 on radically improving the system to raise legal awareness and legal culture in society established the national legal portal known as “Advice.uz”, where information can be obtained on labour law; citizenship and immigration; the passport system; family relations; housing and community facilities; entrepreneurship; social security; and health and other legal issues. The government decision of 6 September 2019 on measures to further improve the system for providing legal information and legal assistance to the population established the non-governmental non-profit organization known as “Madad” to provide free legal advice and legal assistance to the population, and “Madad” legal consulting offices are gradually being established in each district (city).

33. In view of the provisions of the Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men Act, considerable attention is being paid to broad awareness-raising and advocacy activities to explain the State’s gender policy; training programmes on international standards and national gender legislation are being organized at all levels of education; and training programmes and seminars are being developed for adults and children on changing stereotypical notions of traditional roles for men and women on the basis of the norms of the Convention and the Act. During the reporting period, the procuratorial authorities carried out 5,061 awareness-raising activities on gender equality, women’s rights and the inadmissibility of violence against them, of which 552 were widely covered by the mass media.

34. Measures to improve human rights education have been strengthened in the country, helping to raise awareness of the Convention and the Committee's recommendations among parliamentarians, law enforcement officials and judges. Issues relating to women's rights and gender equality are studied at the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs as part of special courses, seminars and training courses; and the Centre for the Further Training of Legal Specialists teaches international and national mechanisms for the protection of women's rights. On 7 September 2016, an international round table was held on the theme: "Protection of motherhood and childhood – the basis of sustainable development of society: the experience of Uzbekistan"; On 22 November 2016, a forum of women's public organizations was held, organized by the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan; on 24–26 July 2019, a three-day training course was held on the theme "gender in law" within the framework of the "gender in law" project in conjunction with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), a five-day training course was held for teachers at the Tashkent State University of Law on the introduction of a gender dimension in all curricula, and a four-day training course was held for members of the Legislative Chamber on the gender analysis of legislation.

35. Non-governmental non-profit organizations take an active part in promoting women's rights. Since April 2016, the Center of Civil Initiatives Support, in conjunction with the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan and other national and international partners, has conducted a number of training seminars to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the Convention. Over the course of two years, the Women's Committee has carried out more than 40 training courses and 10 round tables, with the total number of participants exceeding 1,300. In 2018, a club of gender non-governmental non-profit organizations was established as an expert platform under the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan to implement programmes and projects aimed at enhancing the role and status of women.

36. The dissemination of gender information and training in Uzbekistan is carried out on the basis of the Legal Information Dissemination and Access Act of 7 September 2017, the presidential decree of 13 September 2017 on a programme of comprehensive measures to develop the book publishing and distribution system and promote a culture of reading, and the presidential decree of 9 January 2019 on radically improving the system to raise legal awareness and legal culture in society, which approved an outline plan for raising legal awareness in society and a road map for its implementation. A national legal portal with a national database of legislation of the Republic of Uzbekistan has been established.

Article 2. Implementation of State policy in the prohibition of discrimination against women (recommendations 12 and 40–42)

37. Uzbekistan is taking consistent measures for the practical realization of equality between women and men; it has adopted the Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men Act, which has defined the main thrusts of State policy to ensure gender equality in all spheres of society and has established the powers of government agencies and the forms of participation of civil society institutions in this area. The Act established the Gender Equality Commission, which: participates in the development and implementation of State programmes to ensure equal rights and opportunities for women and men; takes measures to improve the system of social and legal support for women, the protection of motherhood, fatherhood and childhood, and measures to increase women's public and sociopolitical activity on an equal basis with men; submits proposals to the Cabinet of Ministers on the adoption and abolition of temporary special measures to ensure the implementation of gender policy; coordinates the activities of government agencies, monitors and analyses the situation in this area, considers appeals and takes measures to restore

violated rights; and provides information on the status of the rights and opportunities for women and men in the *Oliy Majlis* of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

38. In accordance with article 7 of the Act, a mandatory gender and legal expert review of legal and regulatory instruments has been introduced in the area of standard-setting with a view to identifying inconsistencies in gender equality principles and possible risks of a discriminatory nature in the process of their application, and developing recommendations for eliminating the standards identified that permit direct or indirect sexual discrimination. With the support of the OSCE Project Coordinator, the National Centre for Human Rights has published a scientific and methodological manual on gender analysis of national legislation (2018) and has prepared draft methods for conducting gender analysis of bills and other legal and regulatory instruments.

39. In order to improve the system for the protection of human rights and freedoms, including those of women, since 2016 people's reception desks and virtual help desks have been established in the Office the President, in the Republic of Karakalpakstan, in the oblasts and in the city of Tashkent, and also in the districts and cities (except for cities under district jurisdiction); and the "Year of public dialogue and human interests" was created for systematic monitoring and control over the consideration of petitions and the prompt resolution of public issues. On 26 January 2018, Uzbekistan first adopted the Code of Administrative Procedure for administrative courts to consider disputes arising from matters of public law between government agencies and individuals, where necessary, in order to protect the violated or disputed rights or lawful interests of citizens and legal persons, including the violation of gender equality.

40. The Mediation Act of 12 June 2018 was adopted to introduce alternative ways of resolving conflicts arising from family and other legal relationships. It provides for a mediator to work on a professional, voluntary and confidential basis to settle emerging conflicts and controversies.

41. Judicial and legal remedies for protection against sexual discrimination may be applied by victims of discrimination, after the use of extrajudicial forms of protection of their rights, on the basis of Natural and Legal Persons' Petitions Act (new version) of 11 September 2017. Under the Act anyone may lodge a complaint with the State authorities in oral, written and electronic forms, in private interviews and at public and mobile help desks organized by officials, including group visits to their place of residence.

42. Issues related to discrimination and violations of women's rights are considered by the procuratorial authorities, the Human Rights Commissioner (Ombudsman) of the *Oliy Majlis* of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Presidential Commissioner for the Protection of the Rights and Lawful Interests of Business Entities.

43. In 2016, the Ombudsman received 9,057 communications, of which 4,598 were submitted by women. Following consideration of the communications, benefits and material assistance were awarded to 18 low-income families, 12 women were placed in employed, six persons with disabilities were provided with wheelchairs, four families were provided with construction materials for repairs, and 112 applicants received 77.2 million sum in maintenance. In 2017, the Ombudsman considered 9,074 communications, of which 4,637 were submitted by women. Following a review of the submissions, two apartments and six land plots were allocated to low-income families, assistance was provided to two families for housing repairs, material assistance was provided to 30 families, childcare benefits were allocated to 10 families and three referrals were made to preschools; and 55 maintenance payment were made to 55 applicants at a total cost of 83.5 million sum. In 2018, 10,832 communications were received, of which 5,716 were from women, during the consideration of which five citizens were placed in employed, three apartments and four land plots were

allocated, one female citizen was provided with assistance in the repair of housing, 11 families received material assistance, two families received childcare allowances, 108 applicants received support at a total cost of 152.7 million sum, and foreign currency funds equivalent to 58.3 million sum were paid to foreign nationals.

44. Over the period 2017–2019, the Council of the Federation of Trade Unions received 10,852 communications from women and considered 3,068 communications from non-union members. Following reviews of the communications, 354 submissions were made to employers, 124 lawsuits were instituted, the rights of 1,548 women were restored, and wages and other equivalent payments were recovered for a total of 737, 153,000 sum. Issues of equal rights of men and women before the law are under the scrutiny of the mass media, to which citizens apply with information on the status of gender equality. For example, between 2016 and 2019, Uzteleradiocompany received 2,653 communications from women, of which 1,126 (42 per cent) were on housing and communal services; 520 (19.6 per cent) on pensions and material assistance; 245 (9 per cent) on housing; 298 (11 per cent) on legal matters concerning the courts, the procuratorial authorities and internal affairs; 126 (4.7 per cent) on divorce and maintenance; and 338 (12.7 per cent) on media issues. Studying women’s media communications helps in researching public opinion regarding the work of government agencies and officials, as do open discussions involving civil society institutions on such television and radio programmes as *Axborot-24*, *Novosti-24*, *Mahalla*, Uzbekistan, *Zhamiyat va konun*, Parliament *Hayoti*, *Munosobat* and others.

45. In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of radio and television programmes covering the image of modern socially and politically active women, in particular a series of programmes about girl leaders who have been awarded the State prize named after the Uzbek poetess Zulfiya. The State channel “Uzbekistan” has regularly hosted discussions on gender equality and increasing the number of women at the decision-making level on the talk show known as “It’s important for us”. Currently, the Tashkent channel is broadcasting the “One woman’s day” programme, which transmits images of women who lead active lives and have achieved significant results in their professional and career development.

46. There are a number of women’s publications that are mainly aimed at female audiences. The range of issues for discussion covers not only traditional female topics (such as the home, family relations and fashion), but also a wide range of socioeconomic issues, including from a woman’s perspective. For example, in addition to the existing national publication *Saodat* (Happiness), the magazine *Dugonalar* (Friends) has been published since March 2018. Television channels have begun broadcasting the programmes *Oila* (Family), *Oila Davrasida* (In the Family Circle) and the well-known talk shows *Munosobat* (Attitude) and *Halk bilan mulokot* (Dialogue with the people), for which the main audience and the main speakers are women discussing issues of public life. It is gratifying, for example, that a programme for motorists is hosted by a female broadcaster and a great deal of information is provided to the female car-driving audience.

Article 3. Measures taken by the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan to enhance the role of women in society (recommendations 36–39)

47. New opportunities for women have emerged in Uzbekistan with the adoption of the strategy of action in five priority areas for the development of the Republic of Uzbekistan over the period 2017–2021. Under the strategy, State policy is being further improved to increase the level of education and economic activity of women and to strengthen their role in State and public administration. More than 15 decrees, presidential decisions, government decisions and 20 plans of joint activities with ministries and departments have defined measures aimed at reforming the field of women’s rights and interests. A decree on measures to radically improve support for

women and strengthen the institution of the family was adopted in February 2018. This decree has made it possible to fundamentally change the work of the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan, as well as that of a number of government bodies and public organizations. The decree improved the organizational structure of the Women's Committee and its local offices; determined priority areas for action and built the Committee's capacity with additional highly qualified experts, lawyers, analysts and psychologists in order to provide more qualitative and professional assistance to women as leaders, artists and young students and especially to women in difficult life situations; it established more than 46,000 women's grassroots organizations in ministries and departments, enterprises and organizations, citizens' self-governing bodies, military units, educational institutions and workplaces; and it established the Public Foundation for the Support of Women and the Family, which has expanded opportunities for the Women's Committee to provide effective and productive support to women in difficult life situations.

48. On 20 October 2018, the Cabinet of Ministers approved 16 national Sustainable Development Goals and 127 related targets for the period until 2030. A national set of indicators to monitor progress in achieving the Goals has been developed and approved. Of the 206 indicators, 32 are gender-related. The website www.nsdg.stat.uz was launched in 2018, reflecting the processes of achieving the national Sustainable Development Goals and targets in Uzbekistan.

49. By the presidential decision of 7 March 2019 on measures to further strengthen guarantees of labour rights and support women's entrepreneurial activity, the Gender Equality Commission was established under the Chairperson of the Senate. Its main tasks are to actively participate in the implementation of State policy aimed at ensuring gender equality.

50. On the basis of the Cabinet of Ministers decision of 20 October 2018 on measures to achieve the national Sustainable Development Goals and targets by 2030, a coordinating council for the achievement of the national Sustainable Development Goals was established, where all major ministries and agencies are represented.

51. In the process of preparing the report on the comprehensive review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action+25, the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan organized a series of consultations with governmental and non-governmental organizations, as well as joint discussions on the issues identified in the guidance note for comprehensive national-level reviews of implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Within the framework of its mandate as a national mechanism for the protection of women's rights and on the basis of memorandums of cooperation, the Women's Committee works closely with State and non-State organizations, political parties and the media to implement the Beijing Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

52. Government agencies are considering the accession of Uzbekistan to the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is under consideration by the Legislative Chamber, and the Ministry of Employment and Labour is studying the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families as well as ILO Convention No. 183 concerning the Revision of the Maternity Protection Convention (Revised), 1952.

53. In accordance with article 13 of the Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men Act, the powers of government agencies include the regular collection and analysis of statistical information on cases of direct and indirect sexual discrimination, the consideration of communications concerning

violations of equal rights for women and men, and the establishment of authorized officials at the level of deputy head for gender equality. The necessary changes are made annually to public reporting on statistics to improve the availability of data relating to the situation of women. In 2017, the State Statistics Committee published a statistical collection entitled “Women and Men of Uzbekistan” and the official website of the State Statistics Committee was set up: <https://gender.stat.uz>.

54. Work has begun on the following: the development of a methodology for the collection of gender statistics; the establishment of an interdepartmental coordination mechanism on gender statistics (interdepartmental commission); the conduct of a national census in 2022 to ensure an accurate calculation of the population, individual records and a detailed description of the population by sex, age, marital status, level of education, standard of living, employment, nationality, citizenship and other demographic, socioeconomic characteristics; the conduct of a household multiple indicator cluster survey to assess the status of children and women, including statistical data disaggregated by gender; and the improvement of the official website www.gender.stat.uz, which is a web-based database on gender statistics.

55. The system for maintaining statistics on the socioeconomic situation of families has been improved. The State Statistics Committee has published a statistical collection entitled “Family in Uzbekistan”. The local offices of the *Oila* centre have developed, and periodically fill in, a database on troubled families and exemplary families. Work is under way to create a single interdepartmental information database of the *Oila* centre in order to obtain timely information on families in difficult life situations.

56. Article 14 of the Act defines for the first time the legal status of authorized persons in the area of gender equality in government agencies. Their powers include: ensuring compliance with the principles of safeguarding equal rights and opportunities for women and men in the relevant area of activity; analysing the status of ensuring the use of temporary special measures and the implementation of gender policy and making proposals for the application of such measures; and carrying out ongoing information activities in cooperation with citizens’ self-governing bodies, non-governmental non-profit organizations and other civil society institutions.

57. Citizens’ self-governing bodies and non-governmental non-profit organizations exercise public oversight and monitoring of the situation with regard to the realization of women’s rights, provide assistance to families and women in difficult living conditions (low-income, large families, single-parent families, victims of harassment and violence), ensure that non-working mothers and mothers with children under 2 years of age receive material and other assistance, and resolve family conflicts. The *kengash* of citizens’ assemblies includes not only a specialist from the district (or municipal) women’s committee on work with women and the strengthening of spiritual and moral values, but also crime prevention inspectors and heads of educational institutions, rural health centres and family clinics).

Article 4. Special measures aimed at accelerating de facto equality between men and women (recommendations 14 and 18)

58. The Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men Act defines, for the first time, the concept of “temporary special measures to ensure the implementation of gender policy” as measures of a legal, organizational and institutional nature taken by government agencies to eliminate gender inequality and achieve specific goals to ensure de facto or fundamental equality between women and men.

59. Article 5 of the Act defines what is not considered to be sexual discrimination, namely: the establishment of differences governing relations related to the functions of childbirth and breastfeeding; recruitment for compulsory military service in the

manner prescribed by law; the adoption, on the basis of the Act, of temporary special measures to ensure implementation of gender policy; specific features of occupational safety and health for women and men related to the protection of their reproductive health; recommended professional qualifications based on the ability of only one specific sex to perform the duties concerned; the establishment of differences governing procedures and conditions in places of detention, the enforcement of sentences and other legal measures; and positive measures aimed at strengthening the social status of women in society and ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men.

60. Article 6 of the Act establishes that the State undertakes temporary special measures for the implementation of gender policy in order to achieve de facto equality between women and men, increase their participation in all spheres of society and eliminate and prevent direct and indirect sexual discrimination.

61. Under article 11 of the Act, the Cabinet of Ministers is entitled to establish temporary special measures to ensure the implementation of gender policy, and under article 12, the Gender Equality Commission is entitled to submit proposals to the Cabinet of Ministers on the adoption and abolition of such measures. As stated in article 13 of the Act, government agencies are entitled to take measures to promote equality between women and men.

62. The Act allows for the establishment of temporary special measures to implement gender policy in the civil service, taking into account the categories of employees' posts that provide for the establishment of a quota system for the replacement of posts by employees of the same sex. The quota may be introduced as a temporary measure and abolished once a balanced representation of women and men in government agencies has been achieved (art. 16).

63. In order to implement article 4 of the Convention, a study on the use of temporary special measures to improve the status of women in Uzbekistan was carried out by the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan, the Center of Civil Initiatives Support and the National Centre for Human Rights, with the assistance of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), and proposals for improving temporary special measures in all areas of women's participation in society were developed. Recommendations have been put into practice on the adoption of the Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men Act and on the establishment of the Women and Gender Equality Committee in the Senate; the State Statistics Committee has been given the function of collecting and analysing gender statistics; amendments and additions have been made to labour legislation aimed at realizing women's rights to voluntary choice and the use of the privileges and advantages granted by the Labour Code; the number of preschool and out-of-school education facilities to assist families with childcare has increased; measures have been taken for the balanced participation of women and men in the activities of political parties, for the establishment of a database on potential women's policies, for the introduction of gender education at universities, and for the introduction of a competitive system for the replacement of posts when hiring for the civil service; the Academy of State Administration under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan is training women leaders and candidates for executive and legislative posts; and scientific research on advancing the role and place of women in society has intensified.

Article 5. Measures aimed at eradicating prejudice against women (recommendation 16)

64. In order to strengthen the scientific basis for combating prejudices and outdated customs in Uzbekistan, two important documents have been adopted: the presidential

decree of 2 February 2018 on measures to radically improve support for women and strengthen the institution of the family, aimed at improving the activities and capacity of the Women's Committee and the establishment of the *Oila* research centre under the Cabinet of Ministers for research on women's problems and practical assistance to families; and the presidential decree of 2 July 2018 on measures to improve the social rehabilitation and reintegration system and prevent family and domestic violence.

65. In 2019, the parliament adopted amendments to the Criminal Code, which increased the criminal liability for inducing women to commit suicide. The problem of domestic violence was one of the reasons for increasing the punishment for such a crime. Major steps have also been taken to eliminate outmoded national customs and traditions that hinder the advancement of women, and article 8 of the Family Code has been amended to state that, in the absence of appropriate norms in the legislation regulating family relations, local customs and traditions shall be applied that do not contradict the principles of Uzbek law.

66. In order to eradicate early child marriage, the wording of article 15 of the Family Code has been amended to state that the marriageable age for men and women is 18 years. If there are good reasons, in exceptional cases (pregnancy, childbirth, or adjudication of a minor to be fully competent or emancipated), the *hokim* of the district or city of the place of State registration of the marriage may, at the request of the persons wishing to marry, lower the marriageable age, but not by more than one year. The proportion of early marriages has fallen sharply due to the consistent government policy and the measures taken jointly with non-governmental organizations. In 2016, the average age of first marriage among women was 22.6 years, while for men it was 26 years.

67. The Protection of Women from Harassment and Violence Act was adopted on 2 September 2019. It goes beyond the concept of "domestic violence" and regulates relations for the protection of women against harassment and violence in the home, at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere. The Act aims to establish an atmosphere of intolerance in society towards any manifestation of violence against women. It clearly describes a number of concepts, such as "harassment", "violence", "psychological violence", "physical violence", "sexual violence", "economic violence", "victim of harassment and violence", "protection order" and others, and provides for the adoption of measures to correct the behaviour of those who are prone to committing or have committed violence, for which it is planned to develop and approve a targeted programme. Provision is made for the operation of hotlines for victims of harassment and violence, the procedure for their work has been defined, and the concept of special rehabilitation centres has been introduced, of which 165 have been opened and 9,000 women have applied to these centres on various issues.

68. During the reporting period, the procuratorial authorities carried out 1,180 awareness-raising activities on gender equality, women's rights and the inadmissibility of violence against them, of which 166 were widely covered by the mass media.

69. In recent years, serious attention has been paid to eradicating such relics of the past as the holding of multi-day and costly family events (weddings, wakes, etc.), which lead to great economic difficulties and material expenditure and have a negative impact on the standard of living primarily of poor, large families. Streamlining family ceremonies and preventing inequality between different families has been widely discussed in society, leading to the adoption by the Senate on 14 September 2019 of regulations governing the procedure for weddings, family celebrations, anniversaries and memorial ceremonies, which from 1 January 2020 include new rules for holding the above events without waste, taking into account the national traditions and customs of the people.

70. Women's non-governmental non-profit organizations are active in the area of combating domestic violence: many have set up helplines and social services bureaux, conduct consultations with lawyers and psychologists in rural areas, open shelters and small operations in the form of social enterprises, and offer professional courses for particularly vulnerable segments of the population (such as victims of domestic violence arriving in temporary shelters; victims of trafficking; women released on parole from places of detention; and women in difficult life situations). Over 200 innovative schools have been established to prepare young people for family life. Every year, non-governmental non-profit organizations take part in the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence campaign, which is held on 25 November at the initiative of the United Nations General Assembly on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

Article 6. Measures aimed at suppressing all types of traffic in women and exploitation of prostitution of women (recommendation 20)

71. In accordance with the Anti-Human Trafficking Act of 17 April 2008, government agencies work to protect the rights and lawful interests of citizens who are victims of human trafficking and, together with non-governmental organizations, facilitate their return to the country. A national commission to combat human trafficking and forced labour was established by presidential decree of 30 July 2019 on additional measures to further improve the system for combating human trafficking and forced labour. It comprises a subcommission on combating trafficking in persons, headed by the Minister of Internal Affairs, and a subcommission on combating forced labour, headed by the Minister of Employment and Labour. The national commission is entrusted with coordinating the activities of national and regional authorities, citizens' self-governing bodies and non-governmental non-profit organizations in combating trafficking in persons and the use of forced labour; and the President of the *Jokargy Kenes* of the Republic of Karakalpakstan and the *hokims* of oblasts, districts (municipalities) and the city of Tashkent are entrusted with leading the regional commissions established to address this issue.

72. The office of national rapporteur on combating trafficking in persons and the use of forced labour was established as the Chair of the national commission. The rapporteur submits annual reports to the President on the current situation in the country and in the world regarding trafficking in persons and the use of forced labour, the steps being taken to prosecute and punish the perpetrators of such crimes and the support being provided to trafficking victims. Bills have been drafted amending the Anti-Human Trafficking Act in order to define a mechanism for the identification of trafficking victims in accordance with international standards. Additions have also been made to the Criminal Code on the liability for allowing child and forced labour.

73. In the first seven months of 2019, the Investigation Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs referred 44 criminal cases to the human trafficking court, in accordance with article 381 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. In 2018, 155 such cases were referred to the court. Under this category of cases, 88 persons (222 in 2018) were prosecuted and 391 persons were prosecuted for trafficking in women, of whom 254 are serving sentences in detention facilities.

74. Over the period 2016–2019, with the assistance of the diplomatic and consular agencies of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 69 victims of human trafficking were returned home (two from Azerbaijan; four from Dubai (United Arab Emirates); six from India; three from Oman; 16 from Kazakhstan; two from Kyrgyzstan; two from Turkey; three from China; 12 from the Russian Federation; four from Tanam (Eritrea); four from Malaysia; and six from Shanghai (China).

75. Internal affairs officials identify women engaged in prostitution or soliciting and brothel keepers, and take measures to identify persons with skin and venereal diseases, who are referred to dispensaries for treatment. Persons deported from other States, with whom individual preventive work is done on an ongoing basis, are placed on a preventive monitoring list. Banners, posters and leaflets on this issue are distributed to the population in all regions with the aim of preventing crimes related to trafficking in persons and raising public awareness of the methods used by those engaged in this activity. In order to detect and prevent trafficking in persons, law enforcement agencies have set up hotlines, whose numbers are constantly published in the media.

76. As part of the prevention of human trafficking and forced labour in the country, consistent measures are being taken to regularize external labour migration: a presidential decision of 5 July 2018 was adopted granting legal entities the right to hire citizens abroad from 1 September 2018 under a licence from the Ministry of Labour; 200 billion sum have been allocated to a fund set up to support and protect the rights and interests of citizens working abroad; Cabinet of Ministers decisions were adopted on 25 March 2019, 23 August 2019 and 12 September 2018, approving the authority of the External Labour Migration Agency of the Ministry of Labour and regulations on the procedure for hiring and using foreign labour in the country; pre-departure orientation centres have been established for citizens working abroad; and Uzbekistan is making preparations for the ratification of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and other international instruments.¹¹

Article 7. Measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life (recommendation 22)

77. Women in Uzbekistan participate fully in the country's political and public life by exercising their right to vote and stand for election and by participating in the area of public service and in the activities of women's and other non-governmental organizations. These rights are governed by the Electoral Code of 25 June 2019, the Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men Act of 2 September 2019 and other statutory instruments.

78. Article 4 of the Electoral Code provides that citizens have the same electoral rights, without distinction as to their sex, race, ethnicity, language, religious conviction, social origin, beliefs, personal or social status, education, or type or nature of occupation. In accordance with article 18 of the Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men Act, women and men have equal right to vote for representatives, and to be elected to policy-making bodies. When political parties nominate candidates for deputies to the Legislative Chamber and local *kengashes* of people's deputies, equal rights and opportunities are ensured for women and men, and, in accordance with article 19, equal rights and opportunities are ensured for women and men in establishing the composition of the Central Elections Commission and the oblast, district, municipal, okrug and precinct election commissions for elections and referendums.

79. According to article 70 of the Electoral Code, political parties are entitled to nominate 150 candidates for deputies, and the number of women must be at least 30 per cent of the total number of candidates nominated by a political party.

80. Under article 117 of the Constitution of 4 September 2019, citizens declared by a court to be lacking in legal capacity or persons serving court sentences in places of deprivation of liberty may not be elected. Furthermore, citizens who have been

¹¹ For more details, see articles 6 and 7 (paras. 87–105) of the third national report on the implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

declared legally incompetent by a court or persons serving court sentences in places of deprivation of liberty for grave or particularly grave crimes may not participate in elections. In all other case, there may be not direct or indirect restriction of citizens' rights. Article 9 of the Code of Criminal Procedure states that convicts held in detention facilities for crimes that do not pose a great danger to society, and for less serious offences, have the right to participate in presidential elections, elections to the Legislative Chamber of the *Oliy Majlis*, elections to the oblast, district and municipal *kengashes* of peoples' deputies, and in referendums.

81. Over the period 2018–2019, a number of laws and regulations were adopted to improve the country's electoral system. Under the presidential decrees of 4 October 2018 and 6 November 2018, a programme was adopted to improve electoral legislation and law enforcement practice; a training centre for electoral legislation and modern technology was established within the Central Elections Commission structure; an information system for managing the electoral process and using the single electronic voter list was introduced; and information on the addresses of citizens' permanent and temporary residences was collected for the establishment of the single electronic vote list by 1 April 2019.

82. The Electoral Code establishes rules for compiling voter lists, which include the names of citizens who have reached 18 years of age by or on the day of the elections and who permanently or temporarily reside in the area covered by the polling station at the time the list is compiled, with voter lists being compiled on the basis of the single electronic vote list. Citizens are provided with the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the voter list, including through the official website of the Central Elections Commission. Any citizen has the right to report errors or inaccuracies in the voter lists to the precinct election commission, which are checked and corrected within 24 hours, or to provide a written reasoned reply to the rejection of an application. The actions and decisions of the precinct election commission may be appealed in court in accordance with the procedure established by the Code on Administrative Procedure (articles 27, 29 and 30).

83. There were 20,461,805 voters registered for the presidential elections of 4 December 2016, including 10,825,641 women, who made up approximately 50 per cent of the total number of voters. A total of 17,951,667 people, or 87.73 per cent of the total number of voters, voted out of the citizens included in the voting list. According to the Central Elections Commission, more than 20 million citizens will take part in the 2019 parliamentary elections, of whom about 11 million are women. The five political parties have nominated 750 candidates for the Legislative Chamber, of whom 310 (41.3 per cent) are women, which is 10 per cent more than in the 2014 elections. The Legislative Chamber and the Senate, on the recommendation of the *Jokara Kenesh* of the Republic of Karakalpakstan and the Tashkent city *kengash* of people's deputies, elected 17 members of the Central Elections Commission, 7 of whom are women.

84. In order to ensure the exercise by women of their constitutional right to participate in the elections to be held in December 2019, an agreement on cooperation between the Central Elections Commission and the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan has been signed, under which a series of training sessions are being held for staff of the local offices of the Women's Committee to improve their knowledge of electoral law.

85. The Women's Committee of Uzbekistan, together with political parties, has signed memorandums and adopted action plans for the period 2018–2019 aimed at implementing practical measures for the social and legal support of women, their professional, spiritual and intellectual growth, and raising their social and sociopolitical profile. Five political parties (the Liberal Democratic Party of

Uzbekistan, the People's Democratic Party of Uzbekistan, the *Milliy Tiklanish* Democratic Party of Uzbekistan, the *Adolat* Social Democratic Party of Uzbekistan and the Environmental Party) have contributed more than 6,086 women to the talent pool. Training is being carried out in conjunction with the Academy of State Administration to develop their managerial and leadership skills. To date, 120 of them have been recommended for management positions, and 328 of them are being trained as candidates for deputies during the election process. More than 336 meetings with the active participation of women were held at the local level under the slogan "Start becoming a deputy".

86. In order to increase women's political participation, the People's Democratic Party of Uzbekistan, where the number of women stands at 240,000, or 49 per cent, has conducted more than 100 training sessions attended by more than 1,500 women. Over 170,000 women participated in more than 6,000 local council meetings. More than 8,000 women members of the party aged 25 to 50 years have taken part the contest entitled "The most active woman of the People's Democratic Party of Uzbekistan" over the last five years, and 2,000 women have been included in the party's talent pool for participation in the electoral programme. Women acting as district and city leaders, chairpersons of women's committees and district party councils, among other roles, have participated in more than 100 contests.

87. It is stipulated in the Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men Act that the State will take all appropriate measures to ensure that women have equal opportunities to men, without any discrimination, to occupy positions as heads of government agencies in accordance with their abilities and professional training. Access to public service is provided on the basis of a competition to fill a vacant post (article 16). The personnel departments of State agencies have the obligation to provide competition commissions with information not only on the education and professional training of the individuals participating in the competition, but also on the ratio of women to men in the civil service positions in question. Similar information is provided by the personnel departments of government agencies with regard to certification and job advancement for government employees so that steps are taken to ensure equal rights and opportunities for women and men.

88. By a presidential decree of 3 October 2019, additional measures were taken to improve personnel policy and the civil service: the concept of "civil servant" was defined; the civil service was reformed on the basis of open competitive selection of candidates for office; a talent pool was established at all levels with the wide involvement of gifted young people in this area, including women; and an open portal of vacant civil service positions was established. The decree established the Civil Service Development Agency and the Civil Service Development Support Fund under that Agency, and approved a programme of priority measures to radically improve personnel policy and the civil service system, which provides for the adoption of the State Civil Service Act and the civil service development strategy until 2030, which addresses issues of gender equality in this area.

89. The presidential decree of 28 October 2019 approved regulations on the Civil Service Development Agency and defined its powers to ensure the rights of civil servants, to issue instructions for the improvement of their work and to announce warnings about the inadmissibility of violations of employees' rights, as well as the main tasks of government agency personnel departments regarding the introduction of a transparent procedure for the selection and placement of personnel and the creation of equal opportunities for career growth.¹²

¹² For more details, see the report of Uzbekistan on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, pages. 37–40, 2019: www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/RCM_Website/Uzbekistan.pdf.

Article 8. Measures to ensure the participation of women in international cooperation

90. The Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men Act stipulates that the State will take all appropriate measures to ensure that women have equal opportunities to men, without any discrimination, to represent the State at the international level and to participate in the work of international organizations.

91. According to information from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, interdepartmental regulations governing the Ministry's personnel policy are developed pursuant to the requirements of the Basic Law of the State. The procedure for the selection and placement of personnel in the Ministry's system is based on approved rules and principles of competitive selection, which are the same for all citizens of Uzbekistan. These documents make no distinction between male and female representatives. All citizens have equal rights and opportunities for employment with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, provided that they meet the requirements in terms of professional competence and personal qualities.

92. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has the necessary conditions and prerequisites for the career development of women in diplomatic positions. As at August 2019, there were seven female diplomats working in senior positions at the central office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, including the head of the Directorate-General for Bilateral Cooperation and the heads of departments and divisions. The total number of women working in various diplomatic positions is 14.

93. The total number of girls at the University of World Economy and Diplomacy in the 2018–2019 academic year was 77 (of those studying for undergraduate degrees, 23 were in international economics and management, 16 in international relations and 20 in international law, with 18 studying for postgraduate degrees). In the 2017–2018 academic year, 94 girls studied for undergraduate degrees, including 26 in international economics and management, 8 in international relations and 23 in international law, with 19 studying for postgraduate degrees. The total number of girls in the 2016–2017 academic year was 68 (of those taking undergraduate degrees, 24 were in international economics and management, 8 in international relations and 23 international law, with 13 studying for postgraduate degrees).

94. There are 228 women in working at the University of World Economy and Diplomacy, including 6 in leadership positions. The mechanism for promoting and training women and upgrading their skills for leadership positions is the same as for men, in accordance with their qualifications.

95. Working in various spheres of society, women take an active part in the work of international organizations; it has become a tradition for women leaders, scientists and specialists to speak at international forums and other events related to human rights; they are members of Uzbekistan's delegation to sessions of international treaty bodies considering the country's national reports, meetings of the high-level segment, the Human Rights Council, European regional organizations, OSCE and the European Union; and they participate in international seminars on the right to education, health care, work and employment, protection of the rights of national minorities and human rights in the justice system, among other issues.

Article 9. Granting women and men equal rights in acquiring, changing or regaining citizenship

96. Article 2 of the Citizenship Act of 2 July 1992 establishes that citizenship of the Republic of Uzbekistan is equal for all, regardless of the basis on which it was acquired. Citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan are equal before the law, without distinction as to origin, social and property status, race or ethnicity, sex, education,

language, attitude to religion, political or other opinions, type or nature of occupation, or other circumstances. Citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan enjoy equal rights in all spheres of economic, political, social and cultural life.

97. Pursuant to the Act, neither the marriage of a citizen of the Republic of Uzbekistan to a person of foreign nationality or to a stateless person, nor the dissolution of such a marriage entails any change in the citizenship of the spouses. A change in the citizenship of one spouse does not entail any change in the citizenship of the other spouse. The residence of a citizen abroad does not entail termination of Uzbek citizenship.

98. The acquisition of citizenship is conditional upon: (a) the renunciation of foreign citizenship; (b) continuous residence in the Republic of Uzbekistan over the previous five years (this rule does not apply to persons wishing to become citizens if they were born in Uzbekistan and can prove that at least one parent or grandparent was born there, and if they are not citizens of other States); (c) lawful means of subsistence; and (d) recognition of and compliance with the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan. In exceptional circumstances, these requirements may be waived by the President for individuals who have rendered outstanding service to the country or achieved high distinction in science, technology or culture, or who practise professions or hold qualifications of interest to the Republic of Uzbekistan.

99. An application for citizenship is rejected if a person: advocates a forcible change in the constitutional order of the Republic of Uzbekistan; is a member of parties and other organizations whose activities are incompatible with the constitutional principles of the Republic of Uzbekistan; or has been convicted and is serving a prison sentence for acts prosecuted under the laws of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Article 19 of the Act stipulates that citizenship of the Republic of Karakalpakstan is terminated: (a) as a result of renunciation of citizenship; (b) as a result of loss of citizenship; (c) on grounds stipulated by international treaties; (d) on other grounds. Termination of Uzbek citizenship entails termination of citizenship of the Republic of Karakalpakstan.

100. According to article 21 of the Citizenship Act, Uzbek citizenship may be lost: (a) as a result of a person's entry into military service for a foreign States or its security service, police, judiciary or other State or government bodies; (b) if a person permanently residing abroad fails to register with the consular for three years without a valid reason; (c) if citizenship was acquired on the basis of knowingly false information or counterfeit documents; (d) if a person has caused substantial harm to the interests of society and the State by engaging in activities for a foreign State or by committing crimes against peace and security; and (e) if a person has acquired the citizenship of another State. Uzbek citizenship is withdrawn from the date of issuance of a presidential decree.

101. Preliminary consideration of citizenship issues is carried out by the Commission on Citizenship Issues under the President. At the Main Directorate of Migration and Citizenship of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and at the local level, citizens apply through the "electronic queue" system, a bot service "@mvafrbot" developed in the Telegram messenger which provides an opportunity for consultations. Pursuant to a presidential decree of 11 July 2017, and in conjunction with the UNICON.UZ State Unitary Enterprise, an electronic system for "registration at place of residence" was implemented on a one-stop interactive government services portal, which was launched in test mode on 1 September 2019 via the website www.gumiog.uz. According to data from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the number of women who received a travel permit sticker for the period 2016–2019 was 596,436, and the number of women who received Uzbek citizenship was 4,558. A new version of the Citizenship Act is currently being drafted to take into account the provisions of the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, the Convention on the

Reduction of Statelessness, the European Convention on Nationality and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Article 10. Measures to eliminate discrimination against women in education (recommendation 24)

102. The State ensures the creation of equal rights and opportunities for women and men in the exercise of the right to education at all levels of education, including preschool, general secondary, specialized secondary vocational and higher education, as well as in retraining and further training and participation in scientific and educational activities. During the reporting period, the Ministry of Preschool Education was established and the procedures were reviewed for organizing the activities of the Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of Higher and Special Secondary Education. In a presidential decision of 8 May 2019, the framework was approved for the development of the preschool education system in the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030 and a road map and indicators were defined for assessing the qualitative performance of that framework; in a presidential decree of 29 April 2019, the framework was approved for the development of the national education system in the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030, as well as a road map for its implementation in 2019; in a presidential decree of 11 July 2019, steps were taken to reform management in higher and secondary special education based on best international practices; and, on 8 October 2019, the framework was approved for the development of higher education in the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030, as well as a road map for its implementation in 2019.

103. In accordance with the Education Act, everyone, regardless of sex, is guaranteed the right to education in both State and non-State educational institutions and, in accordance with article 26 of the Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men Act, the creation of equal opportunities in education is consistently ensured and guaranteed: there are equal rights and opportunities for access to all types of education and gender education for citizens through the introduction of gender topics in various educational programmes; curricula and textbooks are regularly monitored for compliance with the principle of non-discrimination on the basis of gender.

104. As at 1 July 2019, there were 9,774 preschool educational establishments (5,211 in 2017): 5,767 State preschools, 65 departmental preschools and 3,942 non-State preschools. Of the latter, 753 were private preschools, 419 were operating under public-private partnerships and 2,770 were family preschools. To date, the largest preschool education coverage in the country is in the city of Tashkent, with 130,479 pupils (81.4 per cent); the Republic of Karakalpakstan, with 68,848 pupils (45.6 per cent); Navoi oblast, with 37,721 pupils (50.5 per cent); Syr-Darya oblast, with 30,785 pupils (47.9 per cent); Bukhara oblast, with 66,669 pupils (47.8 per cent); Fergana oblast, with 128,658 (44.1 per cent); Namagan oblast, with 86,493 pupils (39.6 per cent); Andijan oblast, with 96,199 pupils (39.5 per cent); Surkhan-Darya oblast, with 49,924 pupils (22.5 per cent); Kashka-Darya oblast, with 81,453 pupils (29.6 per cent); and Samarkand oblast, with 104,722 pupils (33.2 per cent).

105. As at 1 August 2019, a total of 1,104,488 children aged 3 to 7 years (553,898 girls and 550,950 boys) were enrolled in the preschool education system. Of these, 483,726 girls and 485,551 boys were in State preschools, and 70,172 girls and 65,399 boys were in non-State preschools. The total number of children in preschool aged 3 to 4 years was 251,568 (126,887 girls and 124,861 boys); 275,221 children were aged 4 to 5 years (137,672 girls and 137,549 boys); 277,057 children were aged 5 to 6 years (138,651 girls and 138,406 boys); and 301,002 children were aged 6 to 7 years (130,688 girls and 150,314 boys).

106. The national education system has 9,904 general education schools (335 State specialized schools with in-depth study of individual subjects). In the 2016–2017 academic year, the total number of students in the general education schools of Uzbekistan was 4,808,058, of whom 2,350,917 were girls. In the 2017–2018 academic year there were 5,248,484 students, of whom 2,559,944 were girls. In the 2018–2019 academic year, there were 5,821,861 students, of whom 2,840,166 were girls. Additional education is provided in the country by the 211 *Barkamol Avlod* extracurricular education centres teaching over 140,000 children. The centres have a total of 5,054 study groups in various areas.

107. In the 2019–2020 academic year, 624,458 young people were enrolled in higher and specialized secondary education: out of the 424,171 students enrolled in higher education, 190,877 are girls, and out of the 200,287 students enrolled in specialized secondary colleges and academic lycées, 36,946 are girls.

108. There are 373,473 students at the country's universities, 168,470 of whom are girls. There are 123,352 first-year students (of whom 62,104 are girls); 106,016 second-year students (of whom 50,168 are girls); 72,521 third-year students (of whom 28,821 are girls); 65,640 fourth-year students (25,360 of whom are girls) 3,666 fifth-year students (of whom 1,269 are girls); and 2,288 sixth-year students (of whom 778 are girls).

109. In the field of higher education, since 2017, many higher education institutions have re-established correspondence departments for various specialties. Distance learning is designed for students who combine study with work. For young women, this form of education will provide opportunities for higher education, combining education with childcare and other family responsibilities. Since the 2018–2019 academic year, a positive gender trend can be observed: the parity index for women and men in distance learning is 2.03 (67 per cent girls and 33 per cent boys).

Article 11. Measures to eliminate discrimination against women in employment (recommendation 26)

110. Equal rights and opportunities for women and men in the area of labour relations are safeguarded in the Labour Code, the Employment Act, the Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men Act, and other legal and regulatory instruments.¹³

111. Article 6 of the Labour Code reads: “All citizens have equal opportunities in terms of the possession and exercise of labour rights. The imposition of any restrictions or the granting of privileges in labour relations on grounds of sex, age, race, nationality, language, social origin, property or official status, attitude to religion, beliefs, membership of public associations or other circumstances unrelated to a worker's professional qualities or the results of his or her work is not permitted and constitutes discrimination.

112. Differences in the area of work resulting from the requirements of that type of work or from the State's special concern for persons in need of greater social protection (women, minors, persons with disabilities and others) do not constitute discrimination. A person who considers that he or she has been subjected to discrimination at work may apply to the courts for the elimination of discrimination and for compensation for material and moral damages.

¹³ For detailed information on the State policy of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the sphere of labour employment, including on women, see paras. 84–105 of the third national report of Uzbekistan on the implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

113. Every citizen has the exclusive right to use his or her capabilities for productive and creative work and to engage in any activity not prohibited by the law. Voluntary unemployment cannot serve as a basis for prosecution. Everyone has the right to freely choose his or her place of work by direct contact with the employer, through the intermediary of labour agencies, free of charge, or through private employment agencies.

114. The following guarantees of women's labour rights were established under article 21 of the Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men Act: equal opportunities in matters of employment; equal wages (remuneration) for equal work and an equal approach to the evaluation of the quality of work of women and men; equal opportunities in promotion, retraining and professional development; equal opportunities in the termination of a labour contract with employees owing to changes in technology, or organization of production or work, or a reduction in the volume of work, resulting in changes in the number of employees, the nature of the work or liquidation of the enterprise, institution or organization, in accordance with affirmative action established by law; the introduction and development of social protection and family support accessible to women and men with children, and the creation of an enabling work environment for pregnant and lactating women; safe working conditions that sustain the livelihood and health of women and men, including safeguarding the reproductive function; prevent unacceptable treatment leading to disparagement in labour relations or the creation of discriminatory working conditions; equal conditions for women and men to combine work and participation in public life with family obligations, including by creating and expanding a network of child-care facilities that provide an opportunity to work.

115. The Act also makes it obligatory to include provisions in collective agreements to ensure gender equality in employment and occupation, excluding discrimination against women in recruitment, promotion and remuneration.

116. Forced labour, namely, coercion to perform work under the threat of any punishment, including as a means of maintaining labour discipline, is prohibited. Work is not deemed forced labour when it is required under a legislative act, as part of military or alternative service, during a state of emergency, under a final sentence of a court, or in the other cases prescribed by law. Additional measures have been taken to eliminate forced labour, especially in the health and education sectors, where most women work. A Cabinet of Ministers decision of 10 May 2018 provides for the detection of all cases of forced labour involving work to improve public amenities and green spaces, waste paper collection and seasonal work in agriculture, the application of strict disciplinary and other measures against officials who have directly or indirectly allowed forced labour to occur, the monitoring of government agency activities and the strengthening of public oversight in this area.

117. A presidential decision of 7 March 2019 on measures to further strengthen guarantees of labour rights and support for women's entrepreneurial activity, which strengthens guarantees of women's labour rights, established that, as of 1 May 2019: prohibitions on the use of women's labour in certain industries or professions were lifted; a new list of recommended industries or professions that may have a negative impact on women's health was approved; if a father uses at least three months' leave to care for a child, one of the parents is entitled to an additional month of parental leave with the payment of benefits in the manner prescribed by article 234 of the Labour Code; one of the parents raising a child under the age of 2 years, owing to the breaks taken for rest and meals, as well as the feeding of the child during work, is entitled to establish, in agreement with the employer, the break time taken during the day; an employer is prohibited from terminating an employment contract concluded for an indefinite periods in connection with the attainment by a woman of retirement age, in connection with the legal entitlement of a woman below 60 years to a

retirement pension, or prior to the expiration of a fixed-term employment contract; and in court proceedings regarding violations of the equal rights of men and women, women may request the legal assistance of a lawyer paid for by the State.

118. In 2019, presidential and governmental decrees and resolutions were adopted to provide employment for the population: a presidential decision of 5 March 2019 determined State-commissioned employment for the population, the organization of new jobs in 2019 to employ 64,000 citizens in vacant jobs and 46,000 jobs for persons in need of social protection, and the allocation of subsidies and grants from the State employment fund to employers, the unemployed and vocational training institutions for retraining and retraining the unemployed, especially citizens returning from labour migration, as well as women and girls from poor families; a Cabinet of Ministers decision of 13 May 2019 introduced the organization of training for middle-level specialists and workers in vocational colleges, and for the unemployed, especially young people, in non-State vocational training centres; and under a Cabinet of Ministers decision of 9 July 2019, the procedure for issuing temporary employment cards to self-employed citizens was introduced from 1 September 2019, granting them the right to record their length of service and to receive benefits. This category of citizens includes persons who are not registered as individual entrepreneurs and do not use the labour of hired workers in their work. Most often these are women engaged in tutoring their children at home, caring for children, the sick and older persons, performing housekeeping or cleaning duties or doing agricultural work on farms.

119. The Women's Committee of Uzbekistan has developed a designated programme for the employment of women, especially girls in need of assistance and in difficult social situations in the context of each mahalla. In 2018, a total of 9,936 women were provided with jobs, and in 2019 there are plans to provide jobs for 13,000 women. In partnership with the Central Bank, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Banking Association and the *Tadbirkor Ayol* Association, 167 training workshops were held and 22,190 women participated in their work. In cooperation with the Public Foundation for the Support of Women and the Family, work has been organized on the broad involvement of women in family and private enterprise and in home-based work, without being away from the family or child-rearing. Work has begun on training women in entrepreneurship skills and allocating them microfinance loans worth 100 billion sum per year.

120. To encourage the hiring of women, 131,074 new jobs were created in 2018, including 29,785 in enterprises and organizations, 8,679 in small businesses, 3,664 in the cottage industry, 8,967 in family businesses, 62,335 in silkworm breeding and 18,623 in other sectors. Forty thousand new jobs were created in 2019. To date, almost 30,000 women have been placed in jobs.

121. By a presidential decree of 7 March 2009, women's entrepreneurship centres are being established with the resources of the Public Fund for the Support of Women and the Family in the form of business incubators. The main tasks are to retrain women who have been on childcare leave and have found themselves in difficult economic situations. Women who have successfully mastered a special training programme are granted concessional loans for at least three years, with a six-month grace period and at an 8 per cent annual interest rate provided from the Fund and grants from international organizations.

122. Women in Uzbekistan are widely represented in such public sectors of the labour market as education, health and social services, culture and art, the hotel business and public catering. They account for 76.6 per cent of all employment in health, social security and sports, and 75.6 per cent in education, culture, arts and science. In agriculture, forestry and fisheries, women account for 44.3 per cent of workers.

123. The office of the Commissioner for the Protection of the Rights and Lawful Interests of Business Entities under the President of Uzbekistan, in accordance with the Act of 29 August 2017, has to date considered 3,198 communications, 493 of which (15.4 per cent) were from women entrepreneurs. Decisions were found in favour in more than 100 of the communications (20 per cent), 228 clarifications of a legal nature were provided (46 per cent), and the remainder were referred to the jurisdictions of other organizations.

Article 12. Measures to eliminate discrimination against women in health care (recommendation 28)

124. Considerable attention has been paid in Uzbekistan to improving public administration of the health-care system, fundamentally changing the attitude of medical institutions to patients and creating a modern innovative model for providing medical services to the population. Measures have been taken to improve the activities of the Ministry of Health and develop the private sector and traditional medicine. Presidential decisions were adopted, including on combating the spread of HIV infection (25 January 2018), on radically improving the system of psychiatric care (16 March 2018) and on emergency medical services (16 October 2018). In 2019, the presidential decisions adopted included such issues as the framework for the development of the mental health-care service for 2019–2025 (13 February 2019), social support for people with hearing and speech problems (18 March 2019) and improving endocrinological assistance to the population for 2019–2021 (19 April 2019).

125. The Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men Act safeguards the following: equal opportunities for women and men in exercising their rights to health, including skilled medical care, accessible health services, family planning and the protection of reproductive rights; the implementation of health-care strategies and programmes, taking into account the different needs of women, especially during pregnancy, birth and the postnatal period, granting free services to women where necessary; the strengthening of reproductive health; and the prevention of direct and indirect discrimination based on sex (article 27).

126. The Reproductive Health Act of 11 March 2019 established the concept of “reproductive health”, the main areas and principles for its protection by the State, and guarantees of the exercise of citizens’ reproductive rights. Under article 6 of the Act, the State guarantees citizens: protection of reproductive health and the exercise of their reproductive rights; the availability and continuity of reproductive health services; to take decisions on family health without discrimination, threats or violence; non-interference in their private life, the protection of personal and family secrets; and the provision of free primary health care.

127. The reproductive rights of citizens, based on article 10 of the Act, include: independent decision-making on the birth of their children using safe and effective reproductive technologies; obtaining reliable and complete information on their reproductive health; access to safe methods of birth control and use of contraception; medical and preventive services and protection from means that pose a threat to health, including the use of scientific experimentation; obtaining medical, social and psychological assistance, and information in exercising their reproductive rights; and the use of assisted reproductive technologies.

128. The Act establishes a separate article 11 on the protection of women’s reproductive rights, which states that the protection of women’s reproductive health includes: obtaining reliable and complete information about their reproductive health, methods of treatment of infertility and contraception; ensuring access to reproductive health services; and obtaining medical consultations and services on reproductive

health issues, while respecting confidentiality. Women have the right to treatment for infertility and reproductive health care before pregnancy, during birth and in the postnatal period, with modern treatment methods and social protection from the State.

129. A medical intervention during pregnancy is carried out with the written consent of both spouses and, in the absence of a spouse, with the consent of the woman herself, or that of her parents or other legal representatives in the case of a minor or incapacity. The refusal of a medical intervention, with an indication of the possible implications, is registered in the medical documents and certified in writing by the pregnant woman or, if this is not possible, by her spouse or relatives, and, if it is impossible to obtain a written refusal of the medical intervention, in the conclusions of the consultation team of doctors. Women may not be forced into pregnancy, to undergo abortion or to use contraception.

130. In accordance with the law, an induced termination of pregnancy is carried out at a woman's request, up to the twelfth week of pregnancy and at any time during the pregnancy if there are medical reasons threatening the life of the pregnant woman. Medical institutions are obliged to inform the woman who has decided on an induced termination of pregnancy, or on refusal to terminate the pregnancy for medical reasons, of the possible negative consequences for her health.

131. It is not permitted, without the consent of a citizen or his or her legal representative, for persons to divulge information subject to patient confidentiality to whom it has become known in the course of training or the performance of professional, official and other duties, except in cases established for the purposes of the examination and treatment of a citizen unable to express his or her will because of his or her condition; in the event of a threat of the spread of infectious diseases; or at the request of agencies of inquiry, investigation and prosecution, as well as a court, in connection with an investigation or court proceedings.

132. Special training courses for the retraining and further training of staff at the *Oila* "Family" centre are used to train specialists from the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan and from mahallas in reproductive health issues, and great importance is attached to improving the work of maternity schools, which make a significant contribution to the health of pregnant women and the preparation of their family members for the birth of a child. As part of the regional programme entitled "Health care in Central Asia", measures have been taken to improve the work of maternity schools in pilot primary health-care institutions, and 110 trainers (doctors, visiting nurses and birth attendants) have been trained. The National Centre for the Reproductive Health of the Public works with adolescents for the introduction of youth-friendly health services, the prevention of marriage and childbirth at a young age, and the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV infection, among young people. The Centre works actively with adolescents on the country's "safety route", through which 400 colleges were covered between 2015 and 2019, with information transmitted through public service announcements, exhibitions, role-playing games, competitions and quizzes.

133. Improving the quality of family planning services and the choice of contraceptive methods makes it possible to reduce the frequency of unwanted pregnancies and the risk to women's health, the rate of maternal and child mortality, the number of pregnancies among adolescent girls and prevent sexually transmitted infections and HIV infection. In 2019, the number of women who terminated their pregnancies was 4.2 per 1,000 women of childbearing age. In 2018, the maternal mortality rate per 100,000 live births was 22.9 at eight months, and 20.7 per cent in 2019. Women of childbearing age have access to contraceptives free of charge. The State pays for the procurement of contraceptives. Primary health care in local areas provides the combined oral contraceptive pill, the progesterone-only pill, the coil and

injectable contraceptives. In 2019, a total of 999,870 coils were purchased; 126,664 cycles of the combined oral contraceptive pill; 126,660 cycles of the progesterone-only pill; and 569,670 bottles of oral contraceptives.

134. The Breastfeeding Support and Food Requirements for Infants and Young Children Act of 23 October 2019 elevated the protection of the rights, freedoms and legal interests of pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers, infants and young children to the level of a State policy. It defines specific measures to support and promote the breastfeeding of children and to create the necessary conditions for this by the State Inspectorate of Sanitary and Epidemiological Surveillance under the Cabinet of Ministers.

Article 13. Measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the economic and social spheres

135. Under the Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men Act of 2 September 2019, women and men have equal access to the economic resources of society, including movable and immovable property, land, financial assets, loans, public funds and freely chosen types of business activity.

136. The rights of citizens to own real estate and participate in the construction of housing are enshrined in six codes¹⁴ and eight Acts, including the Pledge Act and the Mortgage Act, 29 presidential decrees and 44 decisions of the Cabinet of Ministers.

137. In accordance with the Social Services for Older Persons, Persons with Disabilities and Other Vulnerable Social Groups Act of 26 December 2016, social services are provided to socially vulnerable categories of women and men in the following forms: social support and advisory services; social services for home care; social services for day care and/or short stay institutions; and social services in residential institutions.

138. A system has been set up in Uzbekistan to raise the standard of living and provide State support to socially vulnerable citizens and the population, including women. The following types of social assistance are provided: (a) pensions and old-age and disability benefits; (b) benefits for the loss of a breadwinner, temporary incapacity to work, loss of employment and in the event of an injury at work; (c) lump-sum maternity grants; (d) benefits paid to low-income mothers caring for children under 2 years old, and to low-income families with children under the age of 14; (e) material assistance to low-income families; the monthly provision, free of charge, of a range of basic food products and toiletries to older persons and persons with disabilities living alone and in need of nursing care; the provision of cash grants for the payment of utilities to certain categories of socially vulnerable population groups (combat and home-front veterans of the 1941–1945 war, persons with categories 1 and 2 disabilities, older persons and persons with disabilities living alone and in need of nursing care, and others); (f) Exemption from paying parental fees to children from low-income families attending State preschool institutions; (g) lump-sum material assistance for victims of human-caused and natural emergencies; the provision of prescription drugs free of charge to persons in designated beneficiary categories undergoing outpatient treatment; and exemption from payment for food for persons in designated beneficiary categories undergoing hospital treatment and for patients suffering from illnesses included in lists approved by government decisions.

139. According to a presidential decree of 12 December 2018, with effect from 1 January 2019, pensions are paid in full to pensioners remaining in employment and are calculated on the basis of 10 times the minimum wage. Since 1 March 2019, mothers of children with disabilities since birth receive a social benefit that is paid

¹⁴ Land Code, Civil Code, Housing Code, Family Code, Administrative Liability Code and Tax Code.

until the children reach retirement age, in cases where they do not complete the necessary period of pensionable service. Measures to reduce to 12 per cent contributions to the universal social fund and to abolish mandatory contributions to State special-purpose funds, levied on the turnover (revenue) of legal entities, have created conditions enabling businesses to accumulate additional funds.

140. By a decision of 30 September 2019, the Cabinet of Ministers approved regulation governing the procedure for establishing the list of guaranteed medical care covered by the State budget, which includes the following types of medical care: emergency, primary, specialized and palliative care, including preventive medical examinations of adults no more than twice a year and persons getting married; care for persons suffering from socially significant diseases and persons of conscription age; assistance to mothers and children; the screening of pregnant women; HIV counselling; and delivery and postnatal care.

141. Under the law, there are no differences in wages between men and women for work of equal value. As stipulated by the Labour Code, the monthly salary of workers who have satisfactorily discharged their work duties may not be lower than that established by law for the first step on the unified wage rate scale (in December 2018 this was 501,900 sum). The average nominal monthly wage in Uzbekistan over the period from January to December 2018 was 1,822,000 sum, a 25 per cent increase over that for the same period in 2017. At the same time, sustained measures are being taken to increase the wages of employees of medical, educational and scientific institutions, organizations in the sports and fitness domain and other areas with a large proportion of women employees. The presidential decree on improving the procedure for determining wages and other payments of 21 May 2019 introduced three ways of determining payments from 1 September 2019: (a) the minimum wage: 577,170 sum (the minimum payment that employers must pay to their employees); (b) the basic calculated amount: 202,730 sum; and (c) the basic amount of pension calculation: 202,730 sum (to establish the amount of pension calculation, allowances, supplements and compensation).

142. Recently, priority measures have been taken to address the housing needs of socially vulnerable categories of citizens, including orphans and children without parental care. A Cabinet of Ministers decision of 12 September 2017 was adopted to give effect to the right of young families to obtain homes in apartment buildings of the Youth Union of Uzbekistan, through the provision by commercial banks of mortgages on easy terms, with repayment periods of 20 years, including a five-year grace period with no repayments and no initial deposit, and an interest rate equivalent to a 50 per cent refinancing rate. By a presidential decree of 2 February 2018 on measures to fundamentally upgrade work in support of women and to strengthen the institution of the family, targeted local-level programmes were approved for the construction of affordable decent housing for women living in precarious circumstances, including women with disabilities and low-income mothers raising children in single-parent families. Pursuant to a Cabinet of Ministers decision of 11 September 2019, there were 1,064 homes built for young families in 2019 and another 2,116 housing units are still under construction.

**Article 14. Measures to eliminate discrimination against rural women
(recommendation 30)**

143. The necessary legal, social and economic conditions have been put in place in Uzbekistan for the social and economic development of all regions of the country as well as the Republic of Karakalpakstan. Priority is accorded to efforts to deepen the reform process in all sectors of the economy and the social sphere, to improve the management of land and water resources, to introduce modern communications technology, and other such undertakings.

144. A presidential decree of 23 October 2019 approved the strategy for the development of agriculture in the Republic of Uzbekistan for the period 2020–2030, aimed at implementing State policy to ensure food security and establishing a modern system of public administration in agriculture. It also introduced a quarterly hearing by the Senate and the Legislative Chamber of the work on the implementation of the strategy and adopted a road map for its implementation that provides for consistent legislative and other measures to protect the rights of citizens in the agricultural sector, primarily socially vulnerable groups, the development and implementation of a framework for sustainable rural development for the period 2020–2030, the publication of an annual report on agriculture and the approval of new areas for public investment in agriculture (such as food security, the development of public-private partnerships and a rural development programme).

145. Under the *Obod Qishloq* programme, which has received allocations of 4,865 billion sum, improvements are being made to the living conditions of 1.7 million people in 159 districts and 478 villages of the country, through the construction of 214,240 individual houses and 1,187 apartment buildings; the laying of 3,145 km of water-supply lines, and 709 km of gas mains; the construction of 5,476 km of roads; and the building of 1,466 public amenities, among other facilities. In carrying out the *Obod Mahalla* programme, steps have been taken to upgrade 116 mahallas, thereby improving the living conditions of over 496,000 people, and 1,111 billion sum have been allocated for the implementation of the programme.

146. The country's banks have opened special concessional credit lines for women entrepreneurs. The Association of Women Entrepreneurs and regional branches of the People's Bank and the Microcredit Bank are jointly implementing projects entitled "Well equipped to take life in our hands" and "Women entrepreneurs: prosperity of the family business" in each region of the country. In the first half of 2019, the commercial banks of the Republic of Karakalpakstan allocated 1.35 billion sum in preferential loans for the development of women's entrepreneurship in remote regions of the country, 712,500,000 sum to Khorezm oblast and 2.5 billion sum to Tashkent oblast. Loans worth 7 billion sum have been allocated to women entrepreneurs throughout the country.

147. In 2017, the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Uzbekistan concluded a memorandum of cooperation to support women entrepreneurs and farmers. As part of women's employment activities, co-working centres are being established to assist women in training for a given profession and place them in work. The total number of women working in the Ministry of Agriculture in 2019 was 417 (13.7 per cent), of whom 6 were in managerial positions (1.1 per cent). The total number of rural women farm heads and managers in the agricultural sector in 2018 was 9,371 (6.2 per cent); in 2019 that number was 8,650 women (5.6 per cent).

148. Rural women's problems are promptly identified by State executive and administrative bodies, which compile targeted lists of women in need of assistance or in difficult circumstances, including women with disabilities, and provide them with social, legal, psychological and financial support.

149. The Public Foundation for the Support of Women and the Family, with a charter capital of 300 billion sum, allocates funds to provide housing for the most vulnerable women: it has paid initial contributions for 1,691 women, amounting to 54,581,000,000 sum. In 2019, a total of 1,600 reduced-price homes were provided for women in need, and 980 women were provided with wheelchairs, orthopaedic appliances, walkers and hearing aids. To improve the health of 260 women, 1 billion sum were allocated from the Foundation for treatment free of cost.

150. Every day the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan receives oral, written, electronic and personal communications and visits from citizens, including rural women, to address their problems. In 2019 alone, the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan received about 4,000 communications, of which more than 1,600 were related to the protection of their rights. In conjunction with the Supreme Court, measures are being taken to ensure the participation of representatives of the Women's Committee in investigative and judicial proceedings in which women are involved. Representatives participated in more than 1,000 legal proceedings, including proceedings for 734 women who were first time offenders with minor children, and their sentences were reduced under the guarantee of the Women's Committee. Preventive work has been carried out with 33,000 troubled families on the verge of divorce, resulting in a normalization of the situation for 22,000 families and the prevention of more than 27,000 family break-ups. The civil registry offices have established "family universities", where work is being done to prepare young people for family life.

151. Pursuant to a presidential decision of 2 July 2018 on measures to improve the system of social rehabilitation and adaptation and prevent domestic violence, rehabilitation and adaptation centres have been set up in the country's regions to provide victims of domestic violence with psychological, legal and social assistance. To date, more than 160 centres out of 200 have begun operating in the regions, to which more than 15,000 women and girls have applied. On 29 August 2019, a national rehabilitation and adaptation centre was established to provide methodological assistance and coordinate the work of the regional centres, to which 1,712 women have applied, with 434 receiving psychological support, 303 medical care, 377 legal assistance, 271 job placement assistance, 99 help in obtaining credit and 487 families assistance in achieving reconciliation. A hotline with the number 1146 was launched by the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan, by means of which every day an average of 180 to 200 women and girls in difficult situations receive the assistance they need.

152. Significant attention is being paid to the further development of women's sports in the country's regions. Pursuant to a Cabinet of Ministers decision of 29 January 2019 on the broad dissemination of narratives promoting a healthy lifestyle in Uzbekistan and the involvement of the population in physical culture and mass sport, a policy framework was approved for the development of physical culture and mass sport in Uzbekistan for the period 2019–2023. Since October 2018, a system of sports activities has been established covering "Youth Week", "Women's Week", "Neighbourhood and Older Person's Week" and "Education Week", with more than 6,000 mass sporting events held throughout the country and attended by more than 611,000 people.

Article 15. Equality of women and men before the law (recommendation 32)

153. Under the Family Code, family relations are regulated on the basis of the principle of the voluntary nature of the marital union of a man and a woman, the equality of the spouses' individual and property rights, the settlement of family issues by mutual consent, the priority of raising children within the family and of children's well-being and development, and protection of the rights and interests of minors and non-working members of the family.

154. All citizens have equal rights in family relations. Any direct or indirect restriction of rights, or the establishment of direct or indirect privileges upon entering into marriage or interference in family relations on the grounds of sex, race, nationality, language, religion, social origin, beliefs, individual or social status or other circumstances are prohibited. The rights of citizens in family relations may be restricted only on the basis of the law and only to the extent necessary to protect

morals, honour, dignity, health, rights and lawful interests of other family members and other citizens.

155. Property acquired by the spouses during the marriage, as well as property acquired prior to the registration of the marriage with the common funds of the future spouses, is their common joint property, unless otherwise provided by law or the marriage contract. The spouses enjoy equal rights to common property, including in cases where one of them was occupied with housekeeping, childcare or for other valid reasons did not have independent income or other income. The rights of spouses to own, make use of or dispose of property that is the joint property of members of large and small (*dekhkan*) farms are defined by the laws on large and *dekhkan* farms. The division of property on large and *dekhkan* farms is performed according to the rules stipulated in articles 223 and 225 of the Civil Code.

156. In 2019, a number of documents aimed at regulating rights to immovable property and based on gender equality were adopted, including the presidential decision of 5 April 2019 on registration of the right to immovable property, the Cabinet of Ministers decision of 28 January 2019 simplifying the procedures for granting land plots, and the Privatization of Non-Agricultural Land Plots Act of 13 August 2019.

157. The Protection of Women from Harassment and Violence Act of 2 September 2019 sets out additional safeguards for the protection of women's rights against economic violence, which include: forms of violence carried out in the home at the workplace and elsewhere; action (or inaction) against women that results in restrictions to their right to food, housing and other conditions necessary for normal existence and development; and restrictions on the exercise of the right to property, education and work. In accordance with article 18 of the Act, the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan operates a 24-hour toll-free hotline throughout the country to provide timely assistance and advice to women in the event of violations of their rights.

158. The equality of women before the law is ensured by the procuratorial authorities. Over the period 2016–2018 and the first half of 2019, 516 checks were carried out on the implementation of legislation to support and protect women's rights. In relation to non-compliance, 735 objections and 647 proposals were submitted to eliminate violations of the law, their causes and underlying conditions.

159. There were 2,233 appeals concerning women's rights, of which 1,392 were resolved directly by the procuratorial authorities, 305 were granted and 276 women's rights were restored. The procuratorial authorities supported 14,657 lawsuits on women's affairs (4,936 in 2016, 4,656 in 2017, 3,160 in 2018 and 1,905 in 2019), of which 13,868 were upheld (4,675 in 2016, 4,531 in 2017, 2,954 in 2018 and 1,708 in 2019). In total, 1,044 court rulings were challenged, with losses amounting to 1,862,000,000 sum (there were 276 rulings in 2016 costing 749 million sum; 273 rulings in 2017 costing 342 million sum; 265 rulings in 2018 costing 362 million sum; and 230 rulings in 2019 costing 409 million sum). Administrative proceedings were instituted against 112 persons for violating women's rights, 1,016 persons were disciplined, 106 lawsuits were filed with the civil courts, two criminal cases were instituted for gross violations of the law, and the rights of 1,928 women were restored.

160. In 2016, the following cases were heard under the Criminal Code: 51 cases (55 persons) under article 103 (inducement to suicide); 73 cases (87 persons) under article 110 (torture); 357 cases (427 persons) under article 118 (rape); 33 cases (38 persons) under article 121 (coercing a woman to enter into sexual relations); 26 cases (28 persons) under article 126 (polygamy); 18 cases (31 persons) under article 130-1 (preparation, import, distribution, advertising or demonstration of products that promote a cult of violence or cruelty); 382 cases (542 persons) under article 135 (trafficking in persons); 29 cases (79 persons) under article 136 (forcing a woman

into marriage or obstructing a woman's entry into marriage); and one case (two persons) article 141 (violation of the equal rights of citizens).

161. In 2017: 30 cases (37 persons) under article 103; 35 cases (44 persons) under article 110; 269 cases (334 persons) under article 118; 5 cases (11 persons) under article 121; 33 cases (34 persons) under article 126; one case (10 persons) under article 1251 (violation of the law on marriageable age); five cases (six persons) under article 130-1; 295 cases (401 persons) under article 295; one case (one person) under article 103(1) (inducement to suicide); and 23 cases (46 persons) under article 136. In 2018: 28 cases (33 persons) under article 103; 37 cases (48 persons) under article 110; 144 cases (173 persons) under article 118; nine cases (11 persons) under article 121; 18 cases (18 persons) under article 126; and eight cases (18 persons) under article 136.

162. In 2019 (nine months): 18 cases (22 persons) under article 103; 12 cases (22 persons) under article 110; 90 cases (126 persons) under article 118; one case (three persons) under article 121; one case (one person) under article 126; two cases (eight persons) under article 130-1; 85 cases (116 persons) under article 135; 11 cases (27 persons) under article 136; and five cases (six persons) under article 1411 (violation of privacy).

163. In 2017, the Ombudsman monitored the rights and freedoms of persons held in young offenders' institutions and general regime penal colonies for women. Following the monitoring operations, the Ombudsman's proposals were taken into account in the regulations for the Central Penal Correction Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, approved by the presidential decision of 11 August 2017 on measures to radically improve the work of the internal affairs agencies with regard to the enforcement of custodial sentences. They were also incorporated in the internal regulations for temporary detention facilities of the internal affairs agencies, approved by a Ministry of Internal Affairs decree of 14 August 2017. In 2019 the Ombudsman sent analytical information to the Senate on the monitoring of Penal Colony No. 21 for Women, following which the Defence and Security Committee of the Senate rendered judgment No. 07-126 of 12 July 2019 on addressing the gaps identified and on the adoption by the Office of the Procurator-General of measures follow-up measures to the investigation of Penal Colony No. 21.

164. In accordance with the regulations on the exercise of the functions of the national preventive mechanism by the Human Rights Commissioner (Ombudsman) of the *Oliy Majlis* of Uzbekistan, approved by the chambers of the *Oliy Majlis* on 19 August 2019, 15 monitoring operations were conducted in the first half of 2019 in 10 colonies and five remand centres (Surkhan-Darya, Kashka-Darya, Namangan, Fergana, Andijan, Navoi and Tashkent oblasts). By an Act of 14 March 2019, the Ombudsman is empowered to take measures to prevent torture and other forms of violence against persons, including women, in places of detention and to study the conditions of their detention, hold confidential meetings with them, consider their appeals, take immediate action to stop illegal acts (and omissions) by the administration and make proposals to improve their work. These rights may be exercised in all places where people cannot leave of their own free will. In order to strengthen the protection of women's rights and legitimate interests, a council on family matters and women's rights has been established within the institution of the Ombudsman.

165. Recently, special attention has been paid to monitoring respect for the rights of women in detention facilities as a percentage of the total number of convicted persons: in 2016, women accounted for 4.4 per cent; in 2016, 4.5 per cent; in 2018, 4.8 per cent; and in 2019, 4.3 per cent. The total number of communications from female inmates received by the Central Penal Correction Department was as follows:

99 in 2016; 388 in 2017; 959 in 2018; and 1,569 communications have been received since the beginning of 2019, of which only one concerned the unlawful conduct of a prison officer. This submission was the subject of an official investigation by the Tashkent oblast internal affairs department; the inmate's arguments were thoroughly checked and no violations were found.

166. Monitoring operations of women's rights are regularly undertaken by the Central Penal Correction Department staff: there were six in 2016; six in 2017; five in 2018; and four since the start of 2019. The penal colony is visited on a weekly basis by the special procurator for oversight of Tashkent oblast, who conducts interviews with the convicted women on personal matters.

Article 16. Measures to eliminate discrimination against women in matters relating to marriage and family relations (recommendation 34)

167. The Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men Act states that the family, motherhood, paternity and childhood are protected by the State, women and men have equal rights and responsibilities in family relations, and family relations are based on: voluntary marriage and the prevention of forced and early marriage; equality of personal and property rights and responsibilities of spouses; the settlement of intra-family conflicts by mutual consent; equality of rights and responsibilities with respect to domestic work; the maintenance, upbringing and education of children employment; and protection of the rights and interests of minors and non-working members of the family. Parents have equal rights to receive an allowance to care for infants and family members with disabilities, and both parents are entitled to paid leave in connection with the birth of a child. The duration of such leave may be divided between the parents at their discretion, with parents taking partial leave. Domestic work cannot be used as a basis for direct or indirect gender discrimination and is carried out equally between women and men.

168. An important role in the protection of the institution of the family and women's rights was played by the presidential decree of 2 February 2018 on measures to radically improve support for women and strengthen the institution of the family, which defines, first, the priority areas of the activities of the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan to provide assistance to women and families in difficult social situations and the responsibility for improving the situation of women with disabilities, implementing measures for the employment of women, developing family entrepreneurship and reducing crime among women; second, the introduction by citizens' assemblies, since 1 April 2018, of specialists working with women and strengthening spiritual and moral values in families; third, the Cabinet of Ministers set up the *Oila* centre for applied research, which, together with its local-level units, is exploring ways of strengthening the institution of the family; fourth, the responsibility for civil registry offices has been transferred from the justice authorities to the district (municipal) *hokims* under the jurisdiction the chairpersons of the women's district (municipal) committees; fifth, special training courses have been organized to prepare young people for family life; sixth, a public fund to support women and families in difficult life situations was established; seventh, women's clinics for adolescent girls and women of childbearing age have been established within family clinics and rural health centres; and eighth, a programme of comprehensive measures has been approved to support women and strengthen the institution of the family.

169. By a presidential decision of 12 June 2018 on measures to further improve the system of civil registration, the civil registry offices were placed under the jurisdiction of the district (or municipal) *hokims*, who exercise general supervision over their activities, and the deputy *hokims* – chairpersons of the district (or municipal) women's committees – who are responsible for strengthening the

institution of the family, preventing divorces and registering births and marriages; a programme of measures to improve the work of the civil registry office was approved, and the state duty was abolished for notarial certification of marriage contracts and alimony payment agreements, and consideration by the courts of cases to establish paternity and filiation of a child; the system has been streamlined for recording women of childbearing age and pregnant women from the early stages of pregnancy to the birth of a child; an inventory was conducted of unregistered births and deaths up to 1 July 2019; children who have not had their births registered were identified; digitization of the civil registry offices will be completed by 1 January 2022, with the introduction of an identification number upon the registration of the birth certificate of the child; and violations of the law on civil registry offices have become administrative offences.

170. A presidential decision of 27 June 2018 approved the framework for strengthening the institution of the family in the Republic of Uzbekistan and a road map for the implementation of the framework. Tangible results include the establishment of a statistical database on the situation of families, women and children; The local offices of the *Oila* centre and the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan have developed a database on troubled families and exemplary families, on the basis of which families in difficult life situations are monitored. Pursuant to the Mediation Act of 3 July 2019, a system of family mediation has been established as an alternative way of settling family conflicts and disputes and providing practical assistance in improving the situation in conflict families. It is based on the premise that family conflicts and disputes should not be resolved by members of a conciliation commission violating the right to privacy or violating the principle of confidentiality of citizens who do not yet have modern methods of settling conflicts and disputes in families, and therefore, do not have modern methods of family mediation. The *Oila* centre has begun to train its staff and specialists working with families in mediation technologies.

171. The *Oila* centre has conducted more than 10 scientific studies on pressing issues related to strengthening the family, including the causes of family break-ups and the level of readiness of girls and boys for family life. A new model of innovation school has been created to prepare newlyweds for family life. Since the start of 2019 there have been 96 schools operating in the country's regions, where about 6,000 couples getting married have been trained; regulations for the selection and holding of the national contest *Ibratli Oila* ("Model Family") have been developed.

172. By the presidential decision of 22 April 2019 on additional measures to further strengthen guarantees of the rights of the child, an equal age of marriage for men and women was established at 18 years, with article 15 of the Family Code was amended accordingly; the State Statistics Committee was instructed to post statistical information on motherhood and childhood on the website "stat.uz"; and the Ministry of Justice was instructed to ensure the functioning of the electronic data exchange system with civil registry offices on births and deaths.

173. To prevent domestic violence, the Protection of Women against Harassment and Violence Act was adopted on 2 September 2019. It defines the concepts of "sexual violence", "physical violence", "economic violence", "psychological violence", "harassment" and "protection order" (article 3). A victim of harassment and violence has the right to: apply to the relevant authorized bodies, organizations or court with a statement that harassment and violence has been committed against her or threatened to be committed; receive free legal advice, economic, social, psychological, medical and other assistance in special centres, including through a toll-free telephone line; apply to the internal affairs bodies with a request to issue a protection order, and if the conditions of the protection order are violated, inform them thereof; apply to the court with a request for compensation for material damage and moral harm owing to

the harassment and violence committed, and be exempt from paying State duties. Information on victims of violence, and on persons who have committed violence or are inclined to commit violence, is entered into the unified electronic database of the State Statistics Committee; if necessary, practical assistance is provided in filing a statement about the violence; the following measures are applied to the person who has committed the violence: compensation for the costs of treatment, consultations, placement of the victim in a special centre for assistance, material damage and compensation for moral damages; restrictions on the right of the person who committed the violence to keep and bear arms or a prohibition against owning and bearing arms (except for service firearms).

174. When considering a protection order that has been issued, if indications of an offence under the Criminal Code are identified, the case file is forwarded to the relevant law enforcement agency for a decision on criminal prosecution. In cases of violence, and at the request of the victim of the harassment and violence or her legal representative, accommodation is provided in special centres for up to 30 days, which can be extended if necessary. If a victim of violence is accommodated in a special centre, her job is kept open and the time spent in the centre does not constitute grounds for expulsion from an educational establishment owing to missed classes.

175. For those who find themselves in a difficult life situation, the Ministry of Internal Affairs system has the 24-hour helpline 1102 and the telephone number 102 to receive reports and statements from citizens about crimes and incidents, in addition to the official website of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (iiv.uz/en). Work has begun on the development of instructions for preventive monitoring of persons registered with the internal affairs agencies, including persons against whom protection orders have been issued or decision taken to restrict access and establish special requirements regarding their conduct.