



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

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

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**Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under
article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms
of Discrimination against Women**

**Replies of Azerbaijan to the list of issues and questions in
relation to its sixth periodic report***

[Date received: 12 January 2022]

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



Constitution, legislative and institutional framework

Question 1

1. Pursuant to paragraph 2 under Article 25 of the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan, men and women possess equal rights and freedoms. The same article also states that the State shall guarantee the equality of rights and freedoms to everyone, irrespective of race, ethnicity, religion, language, sex, origin, property status, occupation, beliefs, and affiliation with political parties, trade unions and other public associations. It is also prohibited to restrict human and civil rights and freedoms on the same grounds.

2. Pursuant to Article 2.0.2 of the 2006 Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on gender equality (equality between men and women), gender equality shall mean that women and men have the same rights and equal opportunities to exercise those rights and enjoy social equality.

3. Pursuant to Article 6 of the 2006 Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on gender equality (equality between men and women), it shall be the responsibility of the State to eliminate all forms of discrimination on the grounds of sex, create equal opportunities for men and women, and give no preference to one sex over another in public administration and decision making.

4. Furthermore, pursuant to Article 19 of the same law, the State Committee for Family, Women and Children's Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan (SCFWCA) shall exercise control over ensuring gender equality and submit annual reports on the results of its relevant activities to the Milli Majlis (National Assembly) of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

5. Violation of the right of equality shall imply the responsibility enshrined in Article 154 of the Criminal Code.

6. The principle of prohibition of restriction of human and civil rights and freedoms irrespective of race, sex and other grounds has been also enshrined in the Criminal Code, Criminal Procedure Code, Code of Civil Procedure, Labour Code and other legislative acts.

7. Expenditures for the elimination of discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, age and other factors have been provided for in the 'Other economic services' clause of the Annex to the functional classification of budget expenditures of the Republic of Azerbaijan, approved under Decree #440, dated October 11th, 2018, of the Republic of Azerbaijan's Cabinet of Ministers.

8. Duties of the State in ensuring gender equality shall be performed at the expense of the budget of public agencies and local municipal institutions. Besides, grants are extended by the Agency for Public Support to Non-governmental Organizations under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Access to justice

Question 2

9. Pursuant to Article 20 of the law on lawyers and legal practice, a lawyer shall render, at the expense of the State and without any restriction, legal assistance for administrative detentions, suspects and the accused under criminal cases and people lacking sufficient money to pay for the corresponding service of barristers.

10. Provisions for free-of-charge (government-paid) professional legal assistance have been enshrined in the Code of Administrative Offences, Criminal Procedure Code, and the Code of Civil Procedure.

11. Pursuant to clause 3.1 of Decree #1403, dated July 16th, 2021, of the President of Republic of Azerbaijan, draft law and decree to enhance the scope of government-paid professional legal assistance to provide legal representation for and exercise the procedural rights of a person, lacking sufficient money to pay for the service of a barrister at civil court, have been designed and submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers.

12. Since 2019 till 2021, there were 23 cases in which provisions of the law on domestic violence prevention were applied in court decisions, with 16 cases referring to the law on gender equality (equality between men and women).

13. On December 13th, 2019, the SCFWCA, the Azerbaijan Bar Association, and the UN Country Team in Azerbaijan signed a tripartite memorandum of understanding on the provision of legal assistance to the victims of domestic violence. Under the memorandum, 91 women from low-income families received the corresponding assistance in 2020, and 156 women were supported since the onset of 2021.

14. Under the 2019–2023 State Program for the development of justice in Azerbaijan, it has been envisaged to write, with the involvement of international experts, a draft law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on free-of-charge legal assistance, to improve the provision of free-of-charge legal assistance to low-income sections of the population.

Women, peace and security

Question 3

15. The National Action Plan (NAP) has been drafted to implement the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security in the Republic of Azerbaijan.

National mechanisms for the advancement of women

Question 4

16. Measures for the empowerment of women in regional development have been provided for in the Action Plan for the 2019–2023 State Program on socioeconomic development of regions of the Republic of Azerbaijan, approved under Decree #500, dated January 29th, 2019, of the President of Republic of Azerbaijan. Those measures, to be taken by the SCFWCA, the Ministry of Agriculture, and the Ministry for Labour and Social Protection of the Population (MLSP), envisage employment growth among women, development of women-owned small businesses, enhancement of vocational training, improvement of financial literacy and ICT usage.

17. The National Action Plan (NAP) for Gender Equality has been drafted, negotiated with relevant authorities and submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers, to make arrangements for the implementation of clause 7.4 of the Azerbaijan 2020: Look Into the Future Concept of Development, and ensure compliance with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Sustainable Development Goals and other international documents.

18. 11 Child and Family Support Centres run under the SCFWCA. A new building of the Child and Family Support Centre (CFSC) was opened in Ismayilli, a provincial town in the north-eastern part of Azerbaijan, and a design documentation is prepared

for a new building of the CFSC at Guzanly (Aghdam district), in the central part of Azerbaijan.

19. SCFWCA, in cooperation with the UNDP, set up community resource centres in three administrative districts (Fizuli, Tartar, and Aghjabadi). Community resource centres help identify essential necessities of affected communities, including provision of socioeconomic rehabilitation support (involving, inter alia, business advisory services) with the key focus on women, children and people with disabilities.

20. SCFWCA and German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ) conducted training courses for gender focal points at public authorities on January 30th-31st and February 4–5th, 2020. The training covered a wide range of topics, such as ways to ensure gender equality, protection of women's rights, current gender policies, gender audit, national legislation and cooperation with international organizations in the relevant field(s), ways to combat sexual discrimination, etc.

21. SCFWCA, through the support of GIZ, implemented a three-phase project under the Good Governance for Local Development in South Caucasus program. Phase II of the project covered the period from July 3rd through July 28th, 2020, and involved training courses Gender Analysis for Gender Focal Points, attended by the people in charge of gender equality (deputies to heads of executive authorities for sociopolitical and humanitarian affairs), heads of department and other staff members of executive authorities, chairpersons of municipal institutions, local representatives of executive authorities in 67 administrative districts and towns in Azerbaijan. Phase III of the project implied the initiation of gender commissions at municipal institutions in 15 administrative districts and towns in Azerbaijan. The goal of setting up those gender commissions was to make systemic arrangements for municipal institutions to deal with gender issues and coordinate relevant operations with the SCFWCA.

22. SCFWCA, through the support of GIZ, conducted five online training courses Gender Analysis and Duties of People in Charge of Gender Issues, during October 2020, for people in charge of gender issues at public authorities, closed joint stock companies, and corporations.

23. SCFWCA, through the support of GIZ and in cooperation with the State Examination Centre (SEC) and Baku State University (BSU), prepared and published the Curriculum for Gender Equality in Civil Service in August 2021.

24. SEC, SCFWCA, and GIZ co-organized the training course Gender Equality in Civil Service: Current Situation and Challenges, since October 11th through 18th, 2021, for gender focal points at public authorities, and representatives of higher education institutions.

25. SCFWCA, in cooperation with GIZ and SEC, prepared the Guidelines governing the activity of people in charge of gender quality.

Question 5

26. New structural units – section for the protection of the rights of people with disabilities, and section for the protection of the rights of the child – were established under the Human Rights Commissioner (Ombudsman) of the Republic of Azerbaijan, to improve the activity and managerial functions of its Administration.

27. The Administration of the Human Rights Commissioner (Ombudsman) of the Republic of Azerbaijan has the authority to act in its assigned capacity as the National Preventive Mechanism, in accordance with the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT), and has the mandate to act as the Independent Mechanism under the Committee for the Rights of People with Disabilities since 2009.

28. The Administration of the Human Rights Commissioner (Ombudsman) conducted legal awareness-raising measures and training courses, encompassing gender equality, consequences of early marriage, skewed sex ratio at birth (sex-selection abortion), and family planning, for women living in rural and remote areas of Azerbaijan. Besides, the Administration carries out regular monitoring of girl/women students in the education system as part of their involvement in education and any employment activity that is thoroughly conducive to the elimination of economic dependence of female juveniles and women and their empowerment, as well stability in a family setting, decline in the number of divorces, thereby ensuring the rights of the child and putting an end to gender inequality in the society.

Temporary special measures

Question 6

29. Majoritarian voting is applied in the elections that are held in Azerbaijan. All electoral commissions, including the Central Election Commission (CEC), shall be composed of representatives of the political party that has majority in the Milli Majlis (National Assembly) (one third of the composition), as well as independent Members of Parliament (one third of the composition), and the minority political party/parties (one third of the composition).

30. Pursuant to the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on employment, the State shall provide extra support for the people in special need of social protection and facing difficulties to get employed, by opening additional jobs and establishing social enterprises, organizing and conducting specialized vocational training courses and introducing employment quotas for the people in question.

31. Promotion of inclusive employment is highlighted in the New Employment Strategy, approved by the Presidential Decree #602 dated October 30th, 2018.

32. Decree #213, dated November 22nd, 2005, issued by the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan, approved the Rules for the assignment of employment quotas for the people in special need of social protection and facing difficulties to get employed. According to the Rules, all entities, irrespective of their ownership and legal status, except for the enterprises where the quotas are not introduced, shall introduce quotas to make arrangements for the employment of the people in special need of social protection and facing difficulties to get employed.

33. The State Employment Agency under the MLSPP, in cooperation with employing agencies, carries out a payroll co-funding scheme to support people in special need of social protection and make arrangements for their employment.

34. The MLSPP and Regional Development Public Union of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation carry out Social connections project to make arrangements for the employment of vulnerable populations.

35. The MLSPP, the Central Bank of Azerbaijan, and the Azerbaijan Banks Association cooperate in the field of assistance with self-employment for vulnerable populations, particularly people with disabilities and women. The Azerbaijan Employment Support project is implemented to provide employment for vulnerable populations, in the framework of cooperation between the World Bank and the MLSPP.

36. Since 2019, the State Employment Agency under the MLSPP, the UNDP and UNFPA have implemented the project Addressing Rights and Well-being of Women with Disabilities and Veterans of the Karabakh Conflict. The projects aims to improve the well-being, protect the rights, support social integration of and expand income-

generation opportunities for women with disabilities and veterans of the Karabakh conflict in order to strengthen their social protection. Implemented in Baku (capital city) and two more administrative districts of Azerbaijan, the project operationalized the Inclusive Art School and provided equipment and materials and conducted vocational training and professional development courses for 136 beneficiaries, including 87 women, with 70 beneficiaries supported over the past 10 months.

37. In 2021, SCFWCA and the Ministry of Education (MOE) conducted online training courses Youth Unemployment Causes and Solutions with the aim of social protection of job-seeking and jobless youth, and young families.

38. The State targeted social assistance program is implemented in Azerbaijan to make arrangements for social protection of low-income families. In addition to supporting low-income families with social assistance, the State is actively involved in providing those families with enhanced opportunities to set up a small business and generate more income. With the latter purpose in view, beneficiaries of targeted social assistance are considered as people having pre-emptive rights in relation to the provision of self-employment opportunities for the jobless, in accordance with Article 24.9 of the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on employment.

39. Since January 1st, 2020, agricultural subsidies are registered in the e-agriculture system. Following the corresponding awareness-raising activities, 568,888 farmers, including 146,160 female farmers, have registered with the system in question.

40. 6.753 thousand AZN was extended as loans to 448 women entrepreneurs to finance agricultural projects during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

41. Association of Rural Women of Azerbaijan built a national network of 44 Women Development and Enterprise Groups in 16 administrative districts during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Overall, the groups unite 540 women entrepreneurs. Consequently, 36 groups already operationalized their activities, managing 120 small businesses in the agricultural, non-agricultural and service industries.

Stereotypes and negative experiences

Question 7

42. SCFWA implemented the project *Knowing Our Families*, to promote national and moral values as well as gender culture among the youth, make the youth better prepared for building a family and foster the feeling of family responsibility, and advocate role model families.

43. To educate the masses, SCFWCA prepared *Early Marriage, Gender Equality, Gender Equality in a Family Setting, Reproductive Health* promotional booklets and disseminated them to the general public.

44. Regional Youth Houses conducted training courses on the following topics: Family Values in Modern Life, Future Family in the Eyes of the Youth, Gender and Reproductive Health. Early Marriages, Gender Equality versus Sustainable Development Goals, Early Marriage and Valuing Daughters in a Family, Early Marriage and Gender Equality, Empowering Women and Girls in the Society, Combatting Violence against Women and Girls, Stereotypes against Women, and Unfinished Education, Early Marriage and Religious Marriage.

45. Decree #71 on the elimination of skewed sex ratio at birth, dated February 24th, 2020, issued by the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan, approved the 2020–2025 Action Plan on the Prevention of Sex-selection Abortions. SCFWCA, in cooperation with the Ministry of Health (MOH) and the MOE, carried out awareness-raising activities, covering juvenile and youth attendance of around 500 in nine

secondary and two vocational schools in both cities/towns and rural areas of Azerbaijan, to enhance the participants' level of knowledge about reproductive health, foster safe sex practices, and provide information about the consequences of abortion, particularly sex-selection abortions.

46. Pursuant to clause 7.4 of the Azerbaijan 2020: Look Into the Future Concept of Development, approved under Decree #800, dated December 29th, 2012, of the President of Republic of Azerbaijan, SCFWCA designed the 2020–2030 Strategy of the Republic of Azerbaijan on Children. Approved by the Presidential decree, the Strategy aims to bring the child protection system to full compliance with the requirements of the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan and principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, provision of equal opportunities for all children in the Republic of Azerbaijan, protection of the fundamental rights of the child, effective protection of the rights of the children in need for State care and their provision with social support services in line with modern standards. To materialize the Strategy, the 2020–2025 Action Plan on the implementation of the Child Strategy was designed and later approved by the Presidential Decree # 2306, dated November 27th, 2020.

47. In the framework of a twining project, SCFWCA, Media Development Agency and Baku State University co-organized a four-day training course on combatting stereotypes in the mass media setting, since October 19th through 22nd, 2021, for the audience of 60 participants involving journalists and journalism students of Baku State University. Furthermore, the Committee contemplated a one-week summer school for students studying journalism at universities, and other events for journalists and social media bloggers.

48. SCFWCA prepared awareness-raising aids *Reproductive Health. Family Planning, Saying 'No' to Sex-selection Abortions, Let Us Acknowledge and Defend the Rights of Our Daughters*, and disseminated them through its web-site and social media accounts.

Gender-based violence (against women)

Question 8

49. The 2020–2023 National Action Plan (NAP) on the Prevention of Domestic Violence was approved under Decree #2307, dated November 27th, 2020, of the President of Republic of Azerbaijan. Part I of the Decree identifies SCFWCA as the coordinating authority for the implementation of NAP-specified measures. Pursuant to Part II of the Decree, the Committee shall annually give a report on NAP progress to the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan. NAP specifies measures in the following seven areas: refinement of the regulatory framework for combatting domestic violence, violence prevention advocacy, cooperation in the field of combatting domestic violence, provision of victims with care centres and shelters, detection and early identification of victims of violence, development of professional staff and the system for the effective protection of victims of domestic violence.

50. The first area of NAP activity covers the refinement of the regulatory framework for the prevention of domestic violence, establishment of interagency coordination mechanism for victims of domestic violence, and improvement of the current legislation to provide free-of-charge legal assistance for victims of domestic violence. Work is currently underway to draft the corresponding documents.

51. Meanwhile, pursuant to NAP, new Regulations were designed to govern the activity of monitoring groups for gender-based violence and violence against children, composed of representatives of relevant local executive authority in

accordance with the corresponding order issued by the head of the executive authority thereof.

52. To make arrangements for the implementation of NAP-specified measures, a hotline '860' has been launched to accept calls on grounds of domestic violence, in the framework of cooperation between SCFWCA and the UNFPA, and is operational since December 1st, 2020.

53. There are 10 non-governmental organizations that have undergone accreditation to provide social services for victims of domestic violence. These NGOs are primarily confined to Baku, Ganja, and Sumgayit, the three biggest cities of Azerbaijan. In addition, a shelter for vulnerable populations operates under the MLSPP.

54. From 2013, the MLSPP introduced the social order practice to outsource social services to non-governmental and not-for-profit organizations to ensure the protection of people facing economic hardships (and other difficulties). Under social contracts awarded in 2020, care centres for victims of domestic violence opened in one administrative district of Baku, the capital city, and two regional administrative districts, while a care centre for children affected by domestic violence was set up in Sumgayit.

55. In the framework of combatting domestic violence, Commissions for gender issues and combatting domestic violence started operating under all (10) municipal institutions of one administrative district of Baku, the capital city, to identify families at risk and carry out outreach work/preventive measures with them, and provide necessary psychological and legal assistance for victims of violence.

Question 9

56. There were 14,975 reported cases of crime against women over the past two years and nine months (5,706 cases in 2019, plus 5,176 in 2020, and 4,093 in January–September 2021), including 6,091 cases implying violence against women (2,269 in 2019, plus 2,067 in 2020, and 1,755 in January–September 2021). Consequently, 6,834 perpetrators were put on trial (2,480 in 2019, plus 2,414 in 2020, and 1,940 in January–September 2021). Overall, 2,955 crimes were committed on grounds of jealousy, family conflict and other domestic issues (1,026 in 2019, plus 973 in 2020, and 956 in January–September 2021).

57. In the course of professional development courses for the staff of internal affairs authority as well as educational and training courses for them at special schools, a particular attention was paid to the study and gaining experience in the field of practical aspects of human rights and freedoms involving the specifics of behavioural patterns of sexual minorities, victims of human trafficking and other vulnerable populations, and the techniques for the protection of those people, and the provisions enshrined in the relevant international legal tools and national legislation. Meanwhile, booklets, leaflets and other visual aids on relevant topics are prepared and disseminated to the staff of internal affairs authority.

58. Police officers are sent to training courses in different foreign countries, by the Council of Europe, OSCE, and other international organizations, with the purpose to improve activity in the field of protection of human rights and freedoms and introduce the corresponding international practice in Azerbaijan. In addition, Azerbaijan hosts seminars, workshops, training courses and conferences that are attended by international experts. Over the past two years, a total of 1,403 police officers were involved in training courses and exchange of experience programs on human rights, including gender equality, provision of legal assistance to vulnerable populations, and prevention of sexual and gender-based violence.

59. In 2020, SCFWCA launched the EU-funded twinning project Strengthening the capacity of the State Bodies and local level referral mechanisms to provide safety and support to the victims of domestic violence, with Lithuania and Austria acting as senior and junior project partners, respectfully.

60. In the framework of the project, a training course was conducted for the staff of law-enforcement and prosecution authorities and health sector, since May 17th through 21st, 2021, to contribute to better provision of help for victims of violence and effective treatment and rehabilitation work with perpetrators. Furthermore, the project organized training courses *Domestic violence indicators, referral guidelines, and risk assessment* for judges in 65 administrative districts and cities/towns, and produced four manuals on the following topics:

- Domestic violence indicators, referral guidelines, and risk assessment tools;
- Treatment of women's rights and domestic violence cases in compliance with European standards;
- Mass media campaigns to improve perception of gender equality among and disseminate gender-based violence data to journalists covering domestic violence issues;
- On the elimination of domestic violence: how can social relations and behavioural patterns change?

Human trafficking and exploitation of the prostitution

Question 10

61. The 2020–2024 National Action Plan (NAP) to combat human trafficking in the Republic of Azerbaijan was approved under Decree #2173, dated July 22nd, 2020, of the President of Republic of Azerbaijan. The NAP envisages 69 activities to be carried out by 32 government agencies, local executive authorities, specialized non-governmental organizations, higher education institutions, and commissions for minors and protection of their rights, in the following areas: refinement of the regulatory framework and institutional mechanisms in the field of combatting human trafficking; measures to prevent human trafficking; prosecution of crimes on grounds of human trafficking; social rehabilitation and protection of victims of human trafficking; improvement of assistance to and protection of child victims, suspected or potential child victims of human trafficking; enhancement of cooperation and collaboration; awareness-raising activities; coordination of support efforts and resources to combat human trafficking; etc.

62. The Guidelines (indicators) for the identification of victims of trafficking in human beings were approved under Decree #131, dated September 3rd, 2009, of the Republic of Azerbaijan's Cabinet of Ministers. The Guidelines aim to implement immediate measures to detect victims in an easier way and protect their rights, and enhance the efficiency in human trafficking counteraction carried out by internal affairs, state security, prosecution, customs, border and migration authorities, and foreign diplomatic representations, other government agencies, and non-governmental organizations of the Republic of Azerbaijan, including, inter alia, the arrangements for the staff of relevant authorities to get knowledge and skills that are necessary for the identification of victims of human trafficking.

63. One of the methods for the identification of victims is a proactive approach that includes the following measures:

- Strengthening of measures to coordinate the exchange of data among relevant government agencies for the sake of identification of victims within a short space of time;
- Implementation of integrated measures by law-enforcement agencies to identify victims of human trafficking at the ports of exit and entry and other points;
- Raids into public catering, entertainment and other facilities that are suspected of offering sex services, to identify relevant victims, on condition of complying with human rights and freedoms and requirements of the current legislation;
- Monitoring of construction sites, bazaars, station-houses (terminals) and other facilities falling under the same category (in relation to human trafficking);
- Raids into underground labour exchanges that have higher concentration of migrants;
- Monitoring of postings in the mass media, on internet, etc.;
- Whenever obtained by labour and social protection of the population, education authorities, healthcare facilities, and non-governmental organizations, any information about any person who is a victim or presumed victim shall be immediately communicated to the special police service.

64. The measures are focused on identifying the victims of human trafficking within a short period. Consequently, three victims identified in 2019 and one victim identified during the first nine months of 2021 were subjected to exploitation in 2019 and 2021, respectfully, without any such identification in 2020.

Question 11

65. The Care Centre for Victims of Human Trafficking operates under the State Social Protection Fund of the MLSPP, to render assistance in the protection of the rights and interests of victims of human trafficking, provide medical and psychological aid and other help for them, and make arrangements for their social rehabilitation and social reintegration, bringing them back to normal. The Centre prepares and carries out an individual social rehabilitation plan for every single victim of human trafficking, composed of a set of measures that are not against their will but rather in compliance with their human and civil rights enshrined in the legislation, and offers legal assistance to victims of human trafficking to rehabilitate their rights.

66. Meanwhile, the Centre provides psychological aid for victims of human trafficking and members of their families to heal them from psychological trauma, and makes arrangements for their medical rehabilitation, i.e. treatment to restore the affected or lost functions, and renders assistance in professional development and retraining of, finding employment for and providing accommodation to victims of human trafficking.

67. Measures are underway to get everything arranged for the construction of care centres in four regional cities/towns and administrative districts to provide social, psychological and legal rehabilitation for victims of human trafficking, and people at risk for exposure to human trafficking.

68. Pursuant to the law on combatting human trafficking, a victim of human trafficking shall mean a person who has been or is presumed to have been affected by human trafficking. Given that people of easy virtue (women involved in prostitution) are potential victims of human trafficking, the following measures are carried out to prevent them from becoming a victim of human trafficking:

- Designing and implementation of programs aimed at addressing social issues that are conducive to human trafficking;
- Reinforcement of legal and social protection of women and children;

- Involvement of potential victims of human trafficking in socially useful work, and securing employment for them;
- Organization and implementation of awareness-raising and advocacy activities to inform potential victims of human trafficking of impending threats versus government-provided protection measures, as well as administrative, penal and other activities to counteract human trafficking;
- Establishment and effective use of the system of social, legal, pedagogic and other measures aimed at detecting and eliminating the causes and circumstances that are conducive to child abandonment and homelessness;
- Detection and probation of children failing to attend school, and implementation of measures to get them back on track to education;
- Designing and implementation of special programs in education institutions, children's homes, boarding schools, and other establishments that are in charge of taking measures to prevent the abandonment of juveniles and violation of their rights.

Participation in political and public life

Question 12

Number of women in executive positions

| | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 |
|---|------|------|------|
| Vice President | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Minister ¹⁾ | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Deputy Minister | 6 | 8 | 8 |
| State Committee Chairwoman ²⁾ | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| State Committee Deputy Chairwoman | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Head of (local) Executive Authority ³⁾ | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Deputy Head of (local) Executive Authority | 79 | 76 | 72 |
| Ombudsman ⁴⁾ | 2 | 2 | 2 |

¹⁾ Minister of Culture and Tourism of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic

²⁾ Chairwoman of the State Committees for Family, Women and Children's Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic

³⁾ Head of Executive Authority of Absheron Administrative District

⁴⁾ Ombudsman of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic

* In 2021, a woman was appointed the head of executive authority of Sadarak Administrative District of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic.

Gender statistics of judges¹⁾

| Year | Number of people | | Gender distribution, % | |
|------|------------------|-----|------------------------|-----|
| | Women | Men | Women | Men |
| 2018 | 84 | 487 | 15 | 85 |
| 2019 | 78 | 460 | 14 | 86 |
| 2020 | 93 | 475 | 16 | 84 |

¹⁾ Data obtained from the web-site of the judicial system of the Republic of Azerbaijan edilmişdir (http://courts.gov.az/judges_list).

69. Furthermore, 22 women became Members of Parliament following the elections to the Milli Majlis (National Assembly) on February 9th, 2020. In total, representatives of 11 political parties were elected to the current convocation of the 125-seat unicameral legislature, with chairwomen leading the Committee for Family, Women and Children's Affairs, and the Culture Committee.

Nationality

Question 13

70. Since 2019 till October 21st, 2021, some 1,127 people, including 616 women (a total of 1,163 if their children are counted) became citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan following the issuance of the corresponding decrees by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Citizenship was granted to 185 people, including 84 women (a total of 188 if their children are counted) who had been considered stateless (without any valid or invalid document certifying their citizenship of any country, stateless status or identity). Besides, 35 people, including two women (a total of 39 if their children are counted) were under the protection of the Office of the UNHCR in Azerbaijan.

71. To facilitate the naturalization of the stateless people living in the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on citizenship of the Republic of Azerbaijan underwent the corresponding amendments and alterations with the Law of Azerbaijan Republic #980-VQD, dated 1 February, 2018. Pursuant to those changes, it shall be decided by court if a person who has arrived in the Republic of Azerbaijan by January 1st, 2006, with a former USSR (Soviet Union) passport or another document, and permanently resided there, without citizenship of any country and any valid document certifying their identity, is not a citizen of any country and lives in the Republic of Azerbaijan on a permanent basis, in cases stipulated in the international agreements to which the Republic of Azerbaijan is a party to.

72. The State Migration Service has taken, within its mandate and authority, a series of important actions following a commitment to carry out measures, within three years to come, to make arrangements for the naturalization of 545 stateless people residing permanently in the Republic of Azerbaijan, undertaken by a delegation from the Republic of Azerbaijan in the framework of the high-level segment on statelessness as part of the 70th session of the UNHCR Executive Committee that was held in Geneva on October 7th, 2019. Since the date of undertaking that commitment, the following annual data is available on the people of the above-mentioned category to whom citizenship of the Republic of Azerbaijan was granted:

- Throughout 2020 – 51 people, including 25 women (no child);
- January 1st – October 21st, 2021 – 38 people, including 25 women (no child).

73. Applications of 83 stateless people, falling under the same category, for citizenship of the Republic of Azerbaijan have been proceeded in due course to execution and are being processed.

74. The Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan commissioned the State Migration Service with the task of coordinating measures to set up the task force for statelessness issues in the Republic of Azerbaijan, to eliminate statelessness cases in the country; according to that task, the task force for statelessness issues was initiated in September 2020, in the composition involving representatives of the State Migration Service, in its capacity as a coordinating agency, the Ministry for Internal Affairs, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the State Security Service, the Foreign Intelligence Service, the Office of the UNHCR in Azerbaijan, and the Administration

of the Human Rights Commissioner (Ombudsman) of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The newly created body is fully operational and convenes meetings on a regular basis.

Education

Question 14

75. In order to study the possible reasons for the low inclination of women to engineering, the misconception against women becoming engineers and the existing stereotypes in society that engineering is more suitable for men than women, the Institute of Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan implemented a project *Gender balance and career guidance in engineering* in 2020–2021. The project surveyed schoolchildren, their parents and non-engineering students. The study involved 3,500 students from 44 secondary schools, 3,000 parents and 200 students from eight higher education institutions.

76. An ICT summer camp for girls *Imagine* was organized by the MOE with the financial support of UNESCO. Within the framework of the camp, educational excursions were organized to ICT and various specialized institutions.

77. MOE was awarded a diploma and an award for its support in promoting the IT field among women. *Azerbaijani Women in ICT – Femmes Digitales (AWIC)*” organized the *2nd AWITA 2018* ceremony (Women in IT Award).

78. Azerbaijan Technical University’s (AzTU) project *Enhancing the participation of female students of engineering for sustainable development* submitted for the UNESCO *Participation Program for the Member States for 2020–2021* has become a winner. The aim of the project is to encourage women to study engineering and enhance their interest in this field.

79. In the event of unexcused absences, local education authorities and territorial executive bodies annually update the lists of children (including girls) living in a particular area. The head of the educational institution informs the district/city executive authority and police department for further communication with the child’s guardian or family. A formal request is made for assistance in preventing the child from skipping education, thus ensuring that the child receives education. In addition, local education authorities regularly monitor schools in the regions and check student attendance.

80. Awareness-raising talks are held among students of secondary schools in the regions about the importance of family and marriage, the consequences of early marriage and negative consequences of marriage between relatives. Government agencies and school administrations provide all necessary assistance and create conditions for girls to study and have a profession.

81. In 2020, the number of girls under the age of 18 with disabilities who study on a paid basis in higher education but the tuition fees were paid from the state budget was 238, and 139 in secondary professional education. In 2021, these figures were 310 and 206, respectively.

Question 15

82. According to Decision #611s of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan, dated November 24th, 2016, *Azerbaijani language* (mode of instruction), *Azerbaijani language* (state language) and *Mathematics* for primary grades have been prepared as part of a *Reserve textbook* project by the Institute of Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Gender equality and inclusion are taken into account in the textbooks, which were introduced in the 2020/2021 academic year. Thus, three out of

six characters selected in the *Mathematics* textbook are girls and the other three are boys. At the same time, the textbooks focus on the role and activities of women in society. Also, the *Azerbaijani language* (mode of instruction) contains special texts and stories about national female heroes.

83. In general, before publication, textbooks are evaluated on a variety of criteria, including one of the key ones, *Ensuring a sensitive approach to gender, race, ethnicity and religion*. Over the past five years, control over comments and suggestions with a view to the above criteria has been strengthened and specialists involved in this activity.

84. MOE has provided mentors of state institutions, as well as teachers of general education institutions with training courses on gender equality, human rights and the rights of the child, child development, and social, psychological and pedagogical work with children with disabilities, and fundamentals of child protection, child and adolescent psychology, and development, implementation and monitoring of individual development plans. In addition, the Centre for Methodological Support and Professional Development of the Institute of Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan has prepared materials for teachers on gender equality in the classroom.

85. The content of relevant subjects and out-of-school activities taught at the general education level includes topics related to the prevention and elimination of gender-based sexual choice, messages about gender stereotypes, elimination of gender discrimination, and the image of women in leadership positions. With these recommendations in mind, work is currently underway to include topics such as gender equality, prevention and elimination of gender-based sexual choice, elimination of sexual discrimination, gender stereotyping, domestic violence, human trafficking and early marriage in training courses on the *Formation of a healthy socio-emotional environment at school*, *Fundamentals of school management*, *Fundamentals of child psychology*, and *Application of modern learning theories to the teaching process*, which will be introduced in the next academic year.

86. The subject *Life Skills* taught in schools covers topics related to the elimination of gender stereotyping in the training standards related to the formation of important life skills in students.

Employment

Question 16

87. The population of the country increased by 0.3 percent since the beginning of this year and reached 10,145,081 as of 1 September 2021. Women account for 50.1 percent of the population. In 2020, the share of women in the economically active population was 48.9 percent and in the employed population 48.2 percent.

88. One of the priorities of the government's employment policy in the Republic of Azerbaijan is to expand women's employment opportunities in the labour market.

89. The 2019–2030 Employment Strategy of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the 2020–2025 Action Plan for its implementation were approved by Decree#602 of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, dated October 30th, 2018. The main goals of the strategy are to reduce unemployment among women to minimum, achieve decent working and productive employment conditions for women.

90. The strategic roadmaps for the national economy and key sectors of the economy approved by Decree#1138 of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, dated December 6th, 2016, envisage measures to increase women's employment, strengthen their vocational training, increase the number of women working in non-

agricultural sectors, ensure greater participation of women in SMEs, create additional women empowerment opportunities, enhance the role of women in the social life of rural areas, develop incentive mechanisms for women's entrepreneurship and other measures. These measures are being implemented now.

91. A *My School* program is being implemented in Azerbaijan within the framework of cooperation between the State Employment Agency and the United Assistance to Azerbaijan (UAFA). The program will contribute to the sustainability of preschool education. As part of this project, which aims to support women's involvement in the self-employment program, 43 women have completed *Start a Business* training courses prepared on the basis of UAFA's preschool education methodology. In total, the project will support 150 women in establishing preschool education centres.

92. An *Employment Support* project is being implemented jointly by the State Employment Agency and the World Bank. The project aims to expand the self-employment program based on the best practices and involve those registered as unemployed, including persons with disabilities, martyr families, the IDPs, those receiving targeted state social assistance, women, youth and other vulnerable groups, in self-employment programs at the expense of the World Bank by providing them with access to the labour market and decent employment. To date, 3,050 people, including 1,073 women, have completed the training. The project was launched in 2020 and will last until 2025. The plan is to provide assets to a total of 22,000 citizens.

93. The State Employment Agency under the MLSP provided 35,079 women with jobs in 2019 and involved 2,631 women in the self-employment program. 1,977 women were involved in vocational training. In 2020, 31,272 women were provided with jobs, 3,193 women were involved in the self-employment program, 451 women received vocational training and 29 women were provided with social jobs.

94. In 8 months of 2021, 56,788 people were employed, including 13,223 women. 4,071 women were involved in paid public works, 80 people were involved in co-financing programs, 84 women received vocational training, 1,646 women were involved in self-employment. 843 women received unemployment insurance benefits.

95. In order to ensure gender equality, a draft amendment to the Labour Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan was prepared in connection with the application of the International Labour Organization's Convention No. 183 on Revision of the 1952 Convention on the Protection of Motherhood (revised). According to the proposed amendment, men whose wives are on maternity leave are granted paid leave for a period of 14 calendar days on the eve of the day of birth.

96. Consistent reforms are underway in the country to eliminate the differences in the average salary of men and women. In particular, the reforms in the field of salary increase in 2019 were aimed at increasing the share of the minimum wage in the average wage and eliminating the gap between the average wages of women and men. In 2018, the average salary of women accounted for 54 percent of the average salary of men, while in 2019 it reached 63 percent.

97. In order to increase the responsibility of family members during the pandemic, the SCFWCA carried out the following activities in 2020/21:

- Online meetings on psychological problems in families during the pandemic and ways to resolve them;
- Events entitled *Promotion of family values*, with the support of the MOE (for about 500 students, parents and teachers of nine higher and secondary education institutions);
- Measures to benefit from the experience of equal division of responsibilities in families living together for 60 years;

- Online events entitled *Equal Rights* organized jointly with the SCFWCA and Youth and Career Development Centre.

98. The SCFWCA conducted an analysis entitled *Risks and problems in family relations in a pandemic* in order to study interpersonal relationships in families as a result of social isolation measures and the application of a special quarantine regime in the country in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Question 17

99. The World Bank provided technical assistance to Azerbaijan in 2020 in “removing legal barriers to women’s employment in Azerbaijan”. The technical support envisaged measures to expand women’s employment opportunities, ensure gender equality and work in higher paid areas, protect women’s rights in accordance with international labour standards. With this aim, the plan is to abolish the List of about 700 professions (positions) and jobs envisaged under the Labour Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan and a relevant decision of the Cabinet of Ministers prohibiting women’s employment, and instead approve the lists of prohibited workplaces and harmful factors for pregnant women and women with children under one year of age in accordance with international standards. Also, in order to eliminate the sharp difference between the average monthly wages of women and men in the country, which is considered as indirect discrimination by ILO experts (in 2018, the average monthly wages of women were 360.8 manats and of men 670.2 manats; in 2019, women received an average of 534.3 manats and men 846.5 manats), changes are being introduced to the national legislation.

Health

Question 18

100. Activities to prevent maternal mortality target three main groups: 1) awareness-raising among future parents, 2) increasing the knowledge and skills of health workers on normal and pathological pregnancies, births, as well as complications of pregnancy, 3) improving the logistics of medical institutions in the regions.

101. The special commission for the analysis of maternal mortality and sub-commissions for the investigation and analysis of non-fatal pregnancy complications under the MOH continue their activities. As a result of the analysis, priority areas and topics have been identified and training courses organized to improve the knowledge and skills of medical staff. Over the past three years, many medical facilities in the regions, especially in remote areas, have been re-supplied, new medical facilities have been built, including those in Baku, the capital city, and maternity wards have been supplied with the latest equipment.

102. In order to reduce maternal and infant mortality, the implementation of training programs for health workers continued during the pandemic in 2019–2021. In particular, clinical guidelines for primary healthcare in obstetrics and gynaecology have been updated, guidelines for the prevention and management of complications have been developed, courses on neonatal resuscitation have been organized for more than 700 obstetricians, neonatologists, paediatricians and midwives in more than 20 cities and districts, courses on Advance Life Support in Obstetrics (ALSO) and Paediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS) have been organized; the Third and Fourth Azerbaijan-Turkey Advanced Training Courses on Neonatology have been organized; an international conference and training course on neonatal care have been organized to improve the knowledge and skills of midwives and nurses working in maternity hospitals.

103. The Commission of the MOH for the Improvement of Neonatological Services annually analyses perinatal deaths, identifies their causes and takes measures to strengthen the capacity of medical institutions and medical staff to prevent their recurrence.

104. MOH regularly conducts public awareness campaigns on healthy pregnancy, nutrition and physical activity during pregnancy, and reproductive health through social media networks, YouTube and television. About 20 booklets have been published, information boards and banners displayed on more than 50 social networks, seven videos posted on CESD's YouTube channel and more than 100 educational lectures arranged for health workers on TV channels on subjects such as reproductive health, normal pregnancy, healthy nutrition during pregnancy, physical activity during pregnancy, etc. Special sections on Reproductive Health have been designed in mobile applications for future mothers and pregnant women.

105. A series of educational videos on reproductive health, antenatal care, healthy pregnancy and prevention of maternal mortality has been prepared and printed awareness materials distributed through outpatient clinics. Live and e-training courses for more than 400 medical workers were organized in 2020–2021 on subjects such as normal and pathological pregnancy, reproductive health, pregnancy and COVID-19, etc. Seven virtual training courses were developed and posted on <http://www.ecourses.az> portal.

106. EBMG and MD Reference portals and mobile application contain more than 100 clinical guidelines and methodological recommendations on obstetrics and gynaecology, including pregnancy, prevention and treatment of complications in obstetrics, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of sepsis, congenital heart defects and other diseases in newborns.

107. In 2021, on an order of the MOH, CESD, the Azerbaijan Medical University, the Institute of Retraining of Doctors started the process of updating methodological recommendations and clinical guidelines on improving obstetrics and neonatology services, and this process will be completed by the end of the year.

108. Clinical guidelines obtained from the Duodecim Society of Finland were translated in 2019–2021 and made available to primary healthcare providers. Thus, the EBMG portal (<http://www.ebm.az>) contains about 50 clinical guidelines on pregnancy, prevention and management of complications in pregnancy, medical interventions to prevent maternal mortality and other measures. MOH's CESD supported the Clinical Guidelines for Evidence-Based Medicine portal and provided electronic access to more than 900 clinical guidelines and instructions for tens of thousands of healthcare professionals.

109. In 2019–2021, numerous training courses on prevention, diagnosis and treatment of diabetes, high blood pressure and infections during pregnancy were organized in gynaecological clinics, maternity hospitals, maternity wards of hospitals operating in Baku and the regions, educational seminars and screenings conducted among pregnant women, and awareness-raising booklets distributed. Seminars on family planning, reproductive health, abortion prevention, safe abortion, early pregnancy, etc. for pregnant women and women preparing for pregnancy were held in primary healthcare facilities and methodological recommendations provided. In addition, screening and awareness-raising activities on blood pressure, early diagnosis and prevention of venous diseases of the lower extremities were continued in medical institutions, malls, and ASAN service centres in Baku and the regions in 2019 and 2021.

110. In 2021, awareness-raising was conducted in the field of maternal and child health and booklets such as *Pregnancy home card*, *Pregnancy anaemia*, *Pregnancy*

nutrition pyramid, Spinal curvature in children, What is child abuse?, Environment and children, Reproductive health, Hello, mom! were distributed.

111. In February–May 2021, more than 10,000 girls and boys were given educational lectures (face-to-face and online), explaining the possibilities of having a healthy family in the future, maintaining reproductive health and observing the rules of hygiene. Also, a manual on reproductive health was revised and made available to teachers.

112. During full-time education in 2019 and 2021 (when there were no pandemic restrictions), half-day seminars on reproductive health and family planning covering more than 30,000 children from over 1,500 secondary and boarding schools of the country and more than 5,000 parents were held in cooperation with the MOH, MOE, UNFPA, UNICEF and Hopeful Future Social Initiatives PU, and awareness-raising booklets distributed.

113. The CFSC under the SCFWCA hold regular awareness-raising events on family planning with the participation of community members.

114. UNFPA has developed an online training course for doctors called “Virtual Contraception” covering 12 areas. These courses have been uploaded onto the e-learning platform on the CESD website. Doctors completing the courses are provided with international certificates.

115. From June 7th to October 20th, 2021, medical services in the field of obstetrics and gynaecology were provided to 909 women living in border villages as part of a project on the provision of mobile services on sexual and reproductive health (CRS) with the support of the UNFPA, Compulsory Medical Insurance and TABIB. During the examinations, the women were informed about the use of modern contraceptives.

Economic and social benefits

Question 19

116. In January–February 2019, the *Youth Inc.* Entrepreneurship Program with support from AzerTurkBank OJSC and in partnership with the SCFWCA, the Azerbaijan Women Entrepreneurship Development Association, the WoWoman Azerbaijan organization, the Yunus Social Business Centre operating within ASUE and INNOLAND Incubation Centre, held a competition involving 161 female entrepreneurs above 16 years of age and determined winners in five nominations.

117. In order to increase the knowledge and skills of female entrepreneurs in the field of corporate governance, training courses *Corporate governance and its role in the effective operation of the company* were held in 2019. In addition, business projects implemented under the *Gender-Based Economic Support for Women* project, co-financed by the European Union and the UNDP and supported by the Agency, were provided with necessary equipment. Representatives of the Agency, who successfully completed the training organized within the framework of the EU’s *Support for the Development of Entrepreneurship in Rural Areas* in 2019, conducted training courses for women in the regions of the country.

118. In February 2020, more than 130 women interested in entrepreneurship participated in training courses *Entrepreneurship and Starting a Business* held in four regions of the country. In addition, 25 women possessing weaving skills and interested in working from home were identified in two regions of the country, provided with relevant materials and equipment related to weaving and sewing, and received support with the sale of their products.

119. Training course *Plan Your Future* and *Social Media Marketing* were held for women entrepreneurs in the regions and *Success Story* documentaries featuring women who started and expanded their businesses were shown. In addition, in order to increase the knowledge and skills of women entrepreneurs, training courses were delivered *Business plan development*, *Human Resource Management*, *Fundraising and work with government programs*, *How to sell a service or product*, *Rules for electronic document exchange between tax authorities and taxpayers*, and other topics.

120. During the pandemic, many women entrepreneurs benefited from the country's general support for their activities. One of the activities undertaken to promote women's entrepreneurship has been the launch of a *Development of Women's Entrepreneurship* section on the official website of SMEDA. Information about the work done in this area is regularly published in it. The Women's Entrepreneurship Development Association is actively represented on the Agency's Public Council. To date, more than 30 percent of entrepreneurs in Baku and regions of the country have benefited from various measures and support mechanisms implemented by the Agency to educate entrepreneurs, increase their knowledge and skills, and facilitate their access to markets and financial resources.

121. 451 entrepreneurs and managers, including more than 30 percent women, benefited from the Agency's German-Azerbaijan Joint Program for Professional Development of Managers in the Azerbaijani Business Community implemented in partnership with the Agency to provide SMEs with international experience.

122. In 2019–2020 and six months of 2021, the Entrepreneurship Development Fund provided AZN 338.5 million in soft loans to 3,027 business entities, including AZN 23 million to 255 women entrepreneurs. During this period, 873 jobs are to be created due to soft loans provided to women entrepreneurs. In particular, in the first six months of 2021, 39 women entrepreneurs were provided with AZN 4 million in soft loans. There are plans to create 193 jobs.

| Year | Loans extended | | | Including loans for the development of women-owned businesses | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|---------------|---|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| | Number of projects | Total loan amount (mln AZN) | Jobs (people) | Number of projects | Total loan amount (mn AZN) | New jobs (people employed) |
| 2019 | 1573 | 175.0 | 5363 | 142 | 13.8 | 538 |
| 2020 | 908 | 126.9 | 2725 | 74 | 5.2 | 142 |
| 2021 (Jan. – Sep.) | 1152 | 60.9 | 1796 | 96 | 5.1 | 228 |

123. The 2019–2023 Action Plan of the State Program on the Socioeconomic Development of the Regions of the Republic of Azerbaijan contains clauses on the continuation of measures to increase women's employment, as well as the development of small business, improving vocational training, financial literacy and information technology skills, as well as supporting the sale and exhibition of women's handicrafts and consumer goods, and supporting the involvement of vulnerable groups, especially low-income families, women, youth and persons with disabilities, their integration into the labour market, and relevant government agencies have implemented activities in this direction. In addition, various unions and public associations, including the Azerbaijan Women Entrepreneurship Development Association, the Azerbaijan Rural Women's Association and the Ganja Women Entrepreneurs Public Union, have been established and are operating to support the participation of women in society and their initiatives.

Rural women

Question 20

124. According to the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, dated September 5th, 2018, On expanding the use of electronic services in the field of labour, employment, social protection and social security, a centralized electronic information system of the MLSPP consisting of 18 subsystems, *e-social* web-portal was launched and an *Employment* subsystem as created. The *Employment* subsystem provides a register of the unemployed and job-seekers, a register of employed people, a database of vacancies, as well as electronic employment services. Using this system, every unemployed and job-seeker can apply for vacancies both in their neighbourhood and in the country as a whole, while employers and entrepreneurs have transparent access to the workforce on a single website.

125. A Sustainable and Operational Social Security Agency and DOST Centres have been established under the MLSPP in order to provide 155 types of services, including those related to labour, employment, social protection, disability, rehabilitation, etc. in a transparent and efficient manner through the application of innovative solutions. By 2025, a total of 17 DOST centres and 55 branches will be established in the capital and regions.

126. The State Employment Agency under the MLSPP took a number of measures in 2020 to increase the competitiveness of women in the labour market, develop entrepreneurship and self-employment opportunities, and provide vocational training and additional education for unemployed and job-seeking women. During the vocational training courses organized by the Agency, 451 women were trained as cooks, confectioners, make-up artists, carpet-weavers, tailors, hairdressers, etc. during the year.

127. Also, 3,200 out of 12,600 people involved in the self-employment program in order to encourage entrepreneurship and start a business in the future were women.

128. Within the framework of the FAO-Azerbaijan Partnership Program's *Women's Economic Empowerment* project, 277 women farmers were provided with about 50 online and field training courses to increase their knowledge and skills in various areas of agriculture.

129. On October 15th, the International Rural Women's Day, a conference *Economic Empowerment of Women in Agriculture* was organized by USAID, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization and the Public Association of Rural Women of Azerbaijan. The conference was joined by more than 50 rural women's organizations and informal groups, and discussed issues of cooperation between the public and private sectors to increase the economic sustainability of rural women.

Women living in difficult conditions

Question 21

130. The SCFWCA has implemented a project together with the UNDP to ensure the initial recovery and community sustainability of vulnerable groups in three regions of Azerbaijan since January 2021, and Community Resource Centres have been established in these regions. Resource Centres provide employment and self-employment support services to vulnerable women.

131. In 2021, with the support of the MOE, online events *Domestic violence as a factor affecting the psychological climate of the family* and *Let's say NO to domestic violence!* were held for students, parents and teachers of state higher and secondary

education institutions. During the events, the students were informed about domestic violence, types of violence, mechanisms to help victims of violence, and the existing legal framework in this area.

Climate change and disaster risk reduction

Question 22

132. A number of sector and general analyses have been conducted to ensure that policies and programs on climate change at the national level include gender prospects, and relevant recommendations have been developed.

133. The Climate Change and Gender section of the Country Program report prepared within the framework of the *Readiness* Project (1) in cooperation with the Green Climate Fund and implemented jointly by the UNDP and the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources (MENR) contains ways of women and children adapting to climate change, recommendations for participation in decision-making on disaster risk reduction processes and awareness-raising on climate change.

134. MOE's webinars on climate change discuss the effects of this phenomenon on women and children who are more sensitive to climate change and the role of women in reducing the concentration of greenhouse gases. They emphasize the special role of women in energy saving and efficient use of energy both as the main user in the household and the educator of the next generation, and in the formation of the "green thinking" mentality.

135. Gender aspects are covered in the Action Plan for agricultural development contained in the Government's *Strategic Vision and Road Map for Azerbaijan* (preparation and approval of rational physiological norms, based on which a system of regular analysis and assessment of current and future food needs is developed).

136. A study on the development of a document to assess gender and socioeconomic well-being is underway with the support of the MENR, FAO Azerbaijan-United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization and *EcoSfera* Socio-Environmental Centre. The main purpose of the study is to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the project area and surrounding communities from a gender and socioeconomic perspective to determine the causes and consequences of land degradation neutrality.

137. '*Environmental protection*' was one of the topics that were discussed at the Fifth National Forum of Azerbaijani Children held on November 18th, 2021.

Marriage and family relations

Question 23

138. Resolution#213 of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan, dated June 23rd, 2020, approved the Rules for raising awareness among young people about the importance of family and marriage, the negative consequences of early marriage and consanguineous marriage in order to protect and strengthen it.

139. In order to prevent early marriages, the MOH conducts public awareness campaigns in the relevant regions of the country every year. Within the framework of these activities, booklets and leaflets are prepared and distributed, providing information about early marriage and its short and long-term negative impacts on mental and physical health, the negative impact of premature births and abortions on health, especially on reproductive health.

140. In 2019–2021, more than 700 secondary school teachers, police officers, social workers, school psychologists and employees of NGOs working in the regions underwent 2-day live and virtual training courses on the prevention of violence against children, and early marriage. An e-course was developed and posted on <http://www.ecourses.az> platform.

141. In 2019–2021, half-day seminars on reproductive health, early marriage, children's rights and human trafficking were organized in more than 800 schools for 10–11th grade students in six districts of the country and several districts of Baku. Awareness-raising and incentive banners *No to Early Marriage!*, *Reproductive Health, Safe Abortion*, etc. were developed and distributed to the general public and health workers.

142. In 2019, 367 early marriages were registered, while in 2020, this figure improved significantly to 165 registered cases. In order to prevent such violations, monitoring is carried out in secondary schools and awareness-raising campaigns such as *We say no to violence!*, *Able to defend yourself*, *We must know our rights*, *Early marriages lead nowhere*, *Early marriages and negative consequences of incest*. In order to inform the population, electronic posters such as *Marriage under-18 is a marriage of children!* are put up in Baku Underground stations.

143. In order to help address psychological problems in families during quarantine and social isolation, the SCFWCA held online meetings on psychological problems in families during the pandemic and ways to address them. These were also joined by psychologists. A total of 2,600 people benefited from the online meetings.

144. According to the Order of President Ilham Aliyev declaring 2020 a *Year of Volunteers* in Azerbaijan, the Committee is implementing a project called *Family Volunteers*. The main purpose of Family Volunteers is to promote a healthy lifestyle, a strong family model, disseminate positive life examples and stories through the transfer of knowledge and experience, and contribute to the effective organization of family leisure. One of the project goals is to support people affected by armed conflicts, natural disasters, fires, epidemics and other emergencies. The goals of *Family Volunteers* also include provision of relevant services to address the difficulties and problems faced by vulnerable groups, including low-income families and young people, as well as social, psychological and moral support.

145. 492 crimes against the sexual immunity and sexual freedom of minors were committed in 2019–2020 and nine months of the current year (rape, acts of sexual violence, coercion into sexual acts, sexual intercourse with a person under the age of 16, immoral acts, child prostitution and/or involvement in immoral acts) (in 2019 there were 168, in 2020 – 177 and in 9 months of the current year – 147). For these acts, 369 people (in 2019 – 130, in 2020 – 147 and in nine months of the current year – 92) were brought to justice (the legislation does not contain a separate provision on early marriage).

146. In 2021, the MOE and the State Committee for Work with Religious Organizations held an event to inform students and teachers of state higher and secondary education institutions about the “negative consequences of early and consanguineous marriage”. Social videos designed to prevent early and informal marriages and to inform the population about this topic were distributed on social networks. Awareness-raising activities are regularly carried out in Women Resource Centres (11 regions) operating in various districts of the country to prevent unofficial marriages.

147. The Family Code provides general norms for the protection of the rights of women with disabilities. According to the Article 82.1 of the Code, able-bodied adult children are obliged to support and provide care for their disabled parents in need of

financial assistance. According to this code, a spouse who does not have an independent income due to household, childcare or other valid reasons during the marriage also has the right to common property. Chapter 14 of the Code provides for the obligation of an able-bodied person to provide financial assistance for the taking care of a disabled person.
