(Translated from Russian)

**Information on national practices in the implementation of existing law in the Republic of Uzbekistan on the promotion and protection of the rights of older persons**

**1. Legal frameworks for the support of older persons**

Uzbekistan supports and endorses all United Nations initiatives aimed at ensuring human rights and freedoms. It attaches great importance to ensuring the rights of all population groups, irrespective of ethnicity, language, religion, social origin, beliefs or personal or social status.

Human Rights Council resolution 24/20 on the human rights of older persons, which contains additional international standards pertaining to the rights of older persons, has been used as a basis for the social policy of Uzbekistan.

One of the priorities of Uzbek policy is the social protection of the most socially vulnerable groups, including older persons.

The social protection of older persons in Uzbekistan is in full compliance with international principles and standards and is implemented on the basis of the Constitution, the Health Protection Act, the Social Protection of Persons with Disabilities Act, the State Pension Act, the Family and Labour Codes, a number of presidential decrees and decisions of the Cabinet of Ministers.

The needs of specific groups of older persons are defined by the Constitution and by other legal and regulatory acts.

In accordance with article 39 of the Constitution, in Chapter IX, entitled “Economic and social rights”, everyone has the right to social security in old age, or in the event of loss of the capacity to work or the loss of a breadwinner, and in other circumstances prescribed by law. Pensions, benefits and other types of social assistance may not be lower than the officially established minimum subsistence level.

Clear guidelines and specific objectives regarding social protection were set out in the Presidential Decree of 19 March 2007 on measures to further improve and strengthen the social protection system, in the Decision by the Head of State of 30 May 2011 on additional measures to further strengthen the social protection of older persons living alone, pensioners and persons with disabilities for 2011-2015, and in other legal and regulatory acts.

Legislation on the rights of older persons applies to all groups of older persons, irrespective of sex, race, ethnic or religious affiliation, social status, etc.

**2. Policy support to ensure the realization of the rights of older persons**

The adoption of yearly State programmes aimed at supporting socially vulnerable sectors of society is crucial to the realization of all the human rights and fundamental freedoms of older persons.

With a view to enhancing the effectiveness and the role of State policy implemented for the social support of veterans and ensuring their active participation in consolidating the independence and sovereignty of Uzbekistan, building a State governed by the rule of law and engaging in sociopolitical and public life, the Nurony Foundation for the Social Support of Veterans was established in accordance with Presidential Decree No. 1655 of 4 December 1996 by Mr. I.A. Karimov. Under the Presidential Decree, the Foundation is a self-governing, self-financing, non-governmental, non-profit, and independently operating organization.

In order to further increase targeted social protection, to improve the standard of living and quality of life of older persons, pensioners and persons with disabilities living alone and also to strengthen the resource base of medical and social institutions, the following important policy instruments for the social protection of older persons and persons with disabilities were adopted:

* Decision No. 520 of 7 December 1999 by the Cabinet of Ministers on the programme of measures for 2000-2005 to strengthen targeted social protection for older persons, pensioners and persons with disabilities living alone;
* Presidential Decision No. 459 of 7 September 2000 on the programme of measures for 2007-2010 to further strengthen targeted social protection and social services for older persons, pensioners and persons with disabilities living alone;
* Presidential Decision No. 1542 of 30 May 2011 on additional measures for 2011-2015 to further strengthen social protection and social services for older persons, pensioners and persons with disabilities living alone.

With the aim of further increasing the care and attention paid to older persons and improving the social protection and material and moral support provided for them, President Karimov introduced a policy of giving every year a particular name. The initiative began in 1997, which was declared the Year of Human Interests. 1998 was named the Year of the Family, 1999 the Year of Women, 2000 the Year of the Healthy Generation, 2002 the Year of Protecting the Interests of Older Persons, 2004 the Year of Kindness and Compassion, 2005 the Year of Health, 2006 the Year of Charity and Health Workers, 2007 the Year of Social Protection, 2008 the Year of Youth, 2009 the Year of Rural Development and Improvement, 2010 the Year of a Harmoniously Developed Generation, 2011 the Year of Small Businesses and Private Entrepreneurship, 2012 the Year of the Family, 2013 the Year of Well-being and Prosperity, and 2014 the Year of the Healthy Child. Annual State programmes aim to provide social protection, targeted assistance and better care for the older generation and improved medical and health-resort services for older persons living alone.

In 2015, the Year of Care and Attention for the Older Generation, a State programme was adopted, with a budget of 2,246.5 billion sum, equivalent to US$ 229.6 million.

**3. Results of the implementation of the State programme for the Year of Care and Attention for the Older Generation**

In 2015, the core steps taken to support older persons were as follows:

* In order to provide better material support for the elderly, pensions were increased by 20 per cent for more than 2.75 million older persons. Over 12.888 trillion sum from the State budget were spent on pensions;
* In order to strengthen the targeted social protection and support of 61,000 veterans and home front workers of the 1941-1945 war (Second World War), 1.9 billion sum were provided as compensation to pay for utility services. A system was introduced to provide persons aged 100 years and over with a pension bonus amounting to 100 per cent of the minimum wage;
* In local communities (mahallas), towns and villages across the country, well-deserved honours were awarded to the self-sacrificing people who made an invaluable contribution to the Second World War victory over fascism;
* War veterans and home front workers were awarded commemorative medals in celebration of the seventieth anniversary of the victory, along with monetary rewards and valuable gifts. Various meetings and celebrations were held in their honour;
* In cooperation with local authorities, the Mahalla Foundation and other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and sponsors, the housing of approximately 10,000 older persons living alone and in need of social assistance was renovated;
* Under the slogan “Care and attention for all”, social campaigns were organized across all regions of the country, with a view to improving specialized medical services for veterans, pensioners and persons with disabilities. More than 215,000 persons were given a thorough medical examination and assisted with their health problems;
* Over 50,000 war veterans and home front workers, pensioners and persons with disabilities received free treatment in health resorts. Specialized medical assistance was given to 7,000 persons, while more than 5,000 underwent essential operations in modern clinics;
* The quantity and quality of medical services for elderly persons was increased and care services were organized for them;
* The resource base of specialized treatment facilities and social services providing medical and care services to the elderly was significantly improved;
* Under a 2015 investment programme, 141 medical institutions underwent renovation and repairs, at a cost of almost 495 billion sum. Funds from foreign financial institutes totalling US$ 25 million were allocated to supply them with modern diagnostic and medical equipment;
* The health resorts Turon, Khavotog Gulshani, Chimën, Sitorai Mokhi Khosa, Kosonsoy, Nurony, Tovoksoy, Takhiatosh and Marzhoy suvi, and the Sakhovat homes that provide medical and care services for the elderly, underwent building, reconstruction and capital repairs at a cost of 40 billion sum.

**4. Assessment and monitoring of the implementation of the rights of older persons**

In 2015, the Senate Commission conducted visits to all regions to monitor the activities of the Jokargy Kenes (parliament) of the Republic of Karakalpakstan and all provincial, district and city kengash (councils) with regard to the implementation of the State programme for the Year of Care and Attention for the Older Generation. On the basis of the results of the monitoring, the Commission issued recommendations to the heads of the kengash on the need to further improve the support provided by kengash for older persons, to expand the social and domestic services offered to them and to ensure the timely implementation of the State programme for the Year of Care and Attention for the Older Generation.

The monitoring revealed that the State programme, which was approved under the Presidential Decision of 18 February 2015, contributed to the implementation of a wide range of measures seeking to further improve the level and quality of life of older persons, to increase the scale of their material and moral support, and to enhance the social, pension and medical services available for elderly persons, particularly for veterans and home front workers of the Second World War.

In the first half of 2015, the Office of the Procurator conducted an assessment of the implementation of the State Pension Act by the Extrabudgetary Pension Fund operated by the Ministry of Finance and its subordinate units.

On the basis of the assessment of the measures taken to provide social protection for older persons, 211 actions were challenged as being unlawful, 435 recommendations were issued on eliminating the causes and circumstances that gave rise to an offence, administrative and disciplinary proceedings were instituted against 1,315 officials, 172 officials received warnings on the inadmissibility of infringing the law, 68 criminal proceedings were initiated on the basis of evidence of infringement of the law and 72 applications were made to the courts.

In 2014-2015, the National Centre for Human Rights and the Association for Persons with Disabilities, with support from the United Nations Development Programme, monitored the right of persons with disabilities to have access to transport services, thereby drawing the attention of State bodies, transport organizations, the general public and the media to the need to establish a barrier-free environment for persons with disabilities, including older persons, and to develop legislative and other measures to improve the situation in this area.

In order to study the relationship between young persons aged 17-34 and the older generation, the Institute for Social Research, which operates under the Cabinet of Ministers and is supported by the United Nations Population Fund, conducted a special survey in October 2015. A total of 2,020 persons were surveyed across all regions of the country.

The results of the study confirmed the effectiveness of the measures implemented to support and encourage the older generation, to maintain the national mentality and traditions to promote a relationship between young and older persons characterized by respect for the older generation and to bring up a young and healthy generation that can profit from the advice and life experience of older family members. These measures need to be further strengthened and maintained.

**5. Participation of older persons in public life**

At present, in Uzbekistan, there are more than 2,873,000 persons over 60 years of age, 225,000 over 80, 44,000 over 90, 8,700 over 100, and also 3,109 Second World War veterans and 69,994 home front veterans.

In Uzbekistan, older persons actively participate in decision-making by:

* Working with NGOs addressing issues of cooperation with State bodies on socioeconomic and cultural development and on the drafting of legislation and other regulatory instruments;
* Working with clubs and associations engaged in the social protection and support of vulnerable population groups, information and education work with young people, women, persons with disabilities and persons living alone;
* Participating in the affairs of their own families by raising younger members of the family and by offering as much assistance as possible in running the household;
* The Nurony Foundation for the Social Support of Veterans of Uzbekistan actively participates in considering issues related to social protection for older persons and submits proposals on bills that have been drafted.

For example, in 2015, together with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, the Nurony Foundation participated in drafting and negotiating the bill on social services for older persons, persons with disabilities and other social groups, the bill on commercial care homes and residential homes for single persons and other legislation.

In order to promote awareness of events taking place in the country and to organize leisure activities for persons living alone, clubs and associations offer yearly subscriptions to local magazines and the website of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (www.mehnat.uz) contains information on the social protection of persons living alone.

**6. Participation of NGOs in supporting older persons and protecting their rights**

Civil society institutions actively participate in protecting the rights of older persons. On National Remembrance Day, 9 May, the Trade Union Federation awarded 2,990 veterans and participants of the Second World War material assistance in the amount of 300,000 sum each, or 897 million sum in total.

There are at present 4,254 enterprises that have spent 2.805 billion sum on providing 20,568 older persons with food products and medication, paying for their utility charges and repairing their housing. Cultural and entertainment events were organized at the Sakhovat and Muruvvat residential homes for older persons, with charitable assistance provided by sponsors. National trade unions contributed 55.4 million sum to these events.

Trade union organizations have opened wards for veterans and home front workers of the Second World War in 15 health resorts. Over the course of 2015, more than 10,000 war and home front veterans will be treated in these health resorts with funding from the State budget. Free and reduced-rate treatment will be provided in these health resorts for 6,000 working pensioners and labour veterans, and also for non-working pensioners who are chosen from among workers’ parents.

To date, 725 working pensioners have received free treatment in trade union health resorts, 2,038 non-working pensioners chosen from among workers’ parents have received treatment at a reduced rate and 1,454 labour veterans have received free treatment through collective agreements. A total of 3.387 billion sum was contributed for this purpose by trade unions and employers.

As part of the State programme, extensive work amounting to 30 billion sum is being carried out to build, reconstruct and implement major repairs to health resorts belonging to the trade unions. In particular, work is being carried out on the Turon health resort in Tashkent province, the Khavatog resort in Dzhizak province, the Chimën resort in Fergana province, the Sitorai Mokhi-Khosa resort in Bukhara province and the Kasansoy resort in Namangan province, and at the Ahmad al Farghani nursing home in Fergana province and the Chodak nursing home in Namangan province.

Under collective agreements concluded between enterprises, organizations and establishments:

* 15,000 persons approaching retirement will be awarded a one-off sum of money and valuable gifts before they retire;
* 14,000 persons of pre-retirement and retirement age will receive gifts on their birthday;
* 55,000 former employees of companies who are now pensioners will receive financial assistance. Employers and trade unions have contributed 13 billion sum for this purpose.

To date, more than 34,000 persons of pre-retirement and retirement age have received valuable gifts and financial assistance.

Electric appliances manufactured in Uzbekistan, amounting to 1.5 billion sum, will be given to 2,000 older persons living alone and in need of social assistance. The reason for such gifts is to reduce the burden of housework on older persons and to improve their standard of living.

In honour of National Remembrance Day, the Trade Union Federation provided each person who played a role in the Second World War with a one-off payment of 300,000 sum. The total expenditure amounted to 904 million sum.

Across the country, tourist excursions will be organized for 1,120 older persons to historical cities and sites of Uzbekistan. Trade unions have contributed 120 million sum for this purpose. Over the course of six months, tourist excursions have been organized for 1,243 older persons to the cities of Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva, Tashkent, Kokand, and Shahrisabz. A total of 175.5 million sum has been spent for this purpose.

The Mahalla Charitable Foundation is also heavily involved in caring for the older generation.

For example, at 9,153 local meetings, more than 29,000 events on spirituality and prosperity, and more than 13,000 cultural and sports activities, were organized for war and home front veterans.

In order to improve the social situation of participants in the Second World War, 520 war and home front veterans were provided with television sets manufactured in Uzbekistan.

Fourteen varieties of food and non-food products were distributed free of charge to 9,835 war and home front veterans and nine varieties to 144,622 persons in the care of social services. Assistance was also given to 8,932 needy older persons living alone in renovating their places of residence. Free bedlinen was given to 5,730 older persons living in the Sakhovat and Muruvvat residential homes, personal hygiene items to 3,940 and clothing to 4,310.

Furthermore, in cooperation with regional offices of the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Mahalla Foundation gave financial assistance to 2,460 war and home front veterans, older persons living alone, pensioners and persons with disabilities.

Domestic help was provided for 5,910 older persons in order to improve their living conditions and the birthdays of 1,975 older persons were celebrated.

Activities were organized under the slogan “Keksalar duosini olaylik” (Be blessed by the elderly) for older persons living in the community. A total of 191,800 people took part in these activities, which involved 12,345 older persons living alone and in need of social support being given furniture, clothes and other items. In addition, 2,974 older persons in need of social support, persons with disabilities and older persons living alone were given food products.

Under the slogan “Hech kim mehr va e’tibordan chetda qolmasin” (No one to be left without care and attention), excursions were organised for 22,970 veterans of the Second World War and the labour front, older persons and persons with disabilities living alone: 4,650 went to Bukhara, 6,470 to Samarkand, 3,925 to Khiva, 4,723 to Tashkent and 1,202 to Kokand, while 2,000 older persons were also taken to other cities.

In the educational establishments of over 6,000 communities, 6,408 events were conducted on the themes “Meeting of three generations” and “Qarisi bor uyning parisi bor” (Older persons are the angels of the house). Over 715,000 people took part in these events.

With a view to implementing the State programme for the Year of Care and Attention for the Older Generation, 6,573,000,000 sum were allocated by the Mahalla Foundation and its regional offices in the first half of 2015.

The Nurony Foundation for the Social Support of Veterans of Uzbekistan was established by the Presidential Decree of 4 December 1996. The Foundation is instrumental in putting into effect a strong social policy, which involves showing respect for veterans, persons with disabilities and older persons and creating a conducive social environment for them by providing them with material and moral support and medical assistance.

Under the Presidential Decree of 1999, 9 May was designated National Remembrance Day. It was established to perpetuate the memory of all the sons of the Uzbek land who fought for the freedom of the Fatherland and died in battle against fascism during the Second World War and to show the deepest respect for persons of the older generation, who made an invaluable contribution to the spiritual and moral upbringing of the younger generation.

The Republic prepares special events for this holiday every year. In 1995, shortly before the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the victory in the Second World War, a book was issued on the initiative of the President, entitled *Khotira* (Remembrance), in 36 volumes, commemorating the names of 450 Uzbek soldiers who had fallen; Uzbekistan was the first of the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) to produce such a publication. In 1999, Remembrance Squares were established in Tashkent and regional centres, where the names of the dead and missing during the war years are inscribed in gold letters.

On the occasion of the seventieth anniversary of the victory in the Second World War, anniversary medals were struck bearing the words “Ikkinchi zhakhon urushidagi Galabaning 70 yilligi”. Medals and monetary awards to the value of 700,000 sum were conferred in triumphal and ceremonious settings in all regions of the country. Those who were ill and confined to their homes received special attention: such veterans were visited at home by representatives of State and social organizations and by sponsors and given special presents in honour of the day.

Jointly with the Ministry of Defence, the Centre of Spirituality and Enlightenment, the Women’s Committee and the youth organization Kamolot, the Nurony Foundation organized educational events under the title “Progress, debt, steadfastness”. Over 8,900 meetings were held between representatives of the older generation, including veterans, and young people in educational establishments, colleges, military units and academies.

The day before the holiday, the regional offices of the Nurony Foundation organized free tours of monuments and historic sites for 7,000 veterans, jointly with local authorities. Older persons from various regions of the country visited the historic monuments and sites of Tashkent, Samarkand, Bukhara, Shiva, Qarshi and Shahrisabz. In Tashkent, they laid flowers at the foot of the Mourning Mothers statue on Mustaqillik Maydoni (Independence Square).

The Nurony Foundation and its local branches organized visits to disabled war veterans and older veterans living at home with congratulations and presents of festive food, medicines and valuable mementos to mark the day.

Under the 11-point State programme for the Year of Care and Attention for the Older Generation, every veteran of the Second World War was provided with free television sets with both analogue and digital reception and with mobile telephones manufactured in Uzbekistan.

The Nurony Foundation conducts activities to provide material and moral support for war veterans and labour front veterans, on the basis of agreements between the Foundation and the social organizations that are its social partners.

In collaboration with the Ministry of Defence and the Nurony Foundation, the Vatanparvar organization provided every participant in the war with gifts of food, at a total cost of 274 million sum.

The joint-stock company Dori-Darmon prepared 6,763 special medical kits for war veterans and labour front veterans, at a cost of over 105 million sum, which it delivered to the regional offices of the Nurony Foundation for individual distribution to the recipients.

To mark National Remembrance Day, the Central Council of the Nurony Foundation distributed medicinal products free of charge to war and labour front veterans living in Sakhovat and Muruvvat homes in the Republic of Karakalpakstan and in Andijon, Kashkadar and Fergana provinces, at a total cost of 9 million sum.

The Central Council and the regional offices of the Foundation provided material assistance valued at 187 million sum to provide social and material support for war and labour front veterans.

The recently adopted Social Partnership Act strengthened the legal basis for cooperation between the State and non-profit NGOs, promoting active cooperation between them and involving NGOs in the provision of social services to older persons, with a view to promoting the well-being of the public. It seeks to facilitate the further improvement of social protection procedures and develop the social services system or, in other words, to create the conditions for providing better support for older persons, pensioners, persons with special needs, women and families with children.

**7. Conclusions and proposals**

Experience has shown that an even better understanding of the lifestyle, activities, requirements, interests, outlook, aims and values of older persons and the influence of age-related factors on their behaviour and way of life is required. Modern-day needs call for a broad and multifaceted examination of the social aspects of ageing from the point of view of such disciplines as sociology, gerontology, social psychology, social demographics, anthropology, philosophy and cultural studies. At a time of global change affecting the whole world and our country, more research must go into the ageing process, people’s individual development, relations between the generations and the reality of old age, set against the level of development of the State and society. It has become essential to develop a complex social system that takes into account the ageing of the population and the potential of older persons.

It is crucial, from both the academic and the practical point of view, to undertake a new assessment of the existing social situation as regards gerontology and explore ways of determining more precisely the social status of older persons. It will also be important to examine how other countries put educational resources into policies relating to older persons and what educational models are in place for them.

The need to provide the older generation with care and attention makes it all the more important to improve the effectiveness of measures taken to that end. Research into the potential of older persons, and the prospects for their social protection, will be of great academic and practical importance.

In the interests of further improving the system for the protection of the rights of older persons in Uzbekistan, it is essential to:

* Ensure that State bodies, civil society organizations and the public at large are better informed about the provisions of international and domestic law on the rights of older persons;
* Incorporate the knowledge acquired into programmes for the education of parliamentarians and senators, regional administrators, social workers, NGO representatives and local government bodies;
* Develop regional and local plans of action to support older persons and persons living alone.