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Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
GENEVA

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Information submitted by
The State Committee for Family, Women and Childre Affairs

1. Government agencies, non-governmental organizations and international organizations regularly implement a large scale campaigns to prevent early marriages and motivate girls for education, increasing their professional skills and strengthen self-reliance. The State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs and 11 Children and Family Support Centers under the Committee acting in the regions hold regular preventive activities for the group of girls who are at the risk of early marriages and for their families.

2. Since 2011 The State Committee on Family, Women and Children Affairs together with UNICEF has launched a program on “Social communication and behavioural changes” to prevent early marriages and the termination of schooling for girls in the south region of Azerbaijan. The program is being implemented with the participation of local executive power, law enforcement agencies, mass media and NGOs, teenagers and their parents. Special monitoring groups have been created in order to get information on early marriage cases in every village. In 2011-2013, this project was held in 9 selected villages of the south regions. Within the framework of the project, information and advocacy groups were created, consisting of active and influential women, religious figures, health and education workers and educators.

Early marriages

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>5138</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>479</td>
<td>388</td>
<td>312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Birth rate of girls (mothers) aged 15-17</td>
<td>4392</td>
<td>3236</td>
<td>2855</td>
<td>3296</td>
<td>2895</td>
<td>2809</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

In 2015 The State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs held a series of trainings named “I have rights” for secondary school students in Baku to inform children about early marriage and its consequences.
The State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs held an event dedicated to the International Day of the Girl Child at secondary schools in 2016-2017 to discuss the issues on the termination of schooling among young girls, issues on human trafficking, reproductive health, domestic violence, early marriage and its consequences.

The State Committee for Family, Women and Children Issues together with United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), International Organization for Migration (IOM), European Union (EU) and USAID started a "16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence Campaign" dedicated to combating violence against women.

3. According to the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan No 256-IVQD dated 15 November 2011 "On modification to the Criminal Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan", the Article 176- 1 was included to prohibit early and forced marriages. Sanctions are increased in this article for such offences with a person under marriage age. According to the amendments, forcing a woman to enter into marriage is punished by a penalty of two thousand to three thousand manats or imprisonment for the term up to two years. The same acts, committed in respect of a juvenile person - is punished by a fine ranging from three thousand to four thousand manats or imprisonment for the term up to four years. 3 facts of forced marriages were registered under the Article 176 of the of the Criminal Code during 2016.

The special monitoring groups on GBV and violence against children have been functioning under the auspices of the local executive powers in each region of the country since 2015 to boost coordination of GBV prevention and response efforts between and among different state institutions in accordance with Action Plan for the implementation of “State Program on poverty reduction and sustainable development for 2008 – 2015”.

"National Action Plan on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings of the Republic of Azerbaijan (2014-2018)" envisages the monitoring of children’s group out of school and child neglect, as well as measures for the rehabilitation of children from vulnerable group. In this regard, the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs regularly hold regular visits to school to check indicators of children's attendance and have discussion with parent and teachers on early marriages, drug addiction, smoking problems. In addition, The State Committee takes under control the families at risk groups and regular prophylactic work is held with them.

4. To improve collection, analysis and use of data on domestic violence, the Government of Azerbaijan has already established the country-wide on-line database on violence against women and the presentation ceremony of the mentioned on-line date bank was held on 4th October, 2017. Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population, the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs and local executive powers have access to this database. These agencies are considered to collect relevant data and enter it to
the database which includes information about the victim (including sex, age and relationship with the accused one), perpetrator, location and interim measures (protection order) and final judgments. Currently, measures are carried out jointly with the United Nations Population Fund in order to ensure better improvements of online data bank.

The State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs together with the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ) has launched a project on "Women's Rights" within the regional program "Support for legal approximation to European standards in the South Caucasus" since 2013. The "Women's Rights Guide" was prepared and published within the project. The book deals with issues such as women's rights in family relationships, marriage contracts, child rights, pensions and social benefits, human trafficking, reproductive health, domestic violence and so on.

5. Children and Family Support Centers acting under the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs conduct analyzes and monitorings of main family, women, and children' issues problems in the regions, implement projects and organizes awareness-raising activities on addressing existing problems. These Centers regularly conduct psychological work with families, victims of domestic violence, opened individual folders to collected information about these families and took appropriate measures in cooperation with the relevant agencies. The social workers of the Children and Family Suport Centers acting under the SCFWCA visited a 2709 families at risk groups.

More than 100,000 families were provided with letters containing information on the current legislation, parental responsibility, fines and criminal liability for parents who force their children into marriages within the framework of the campaign "Letter to the Family Head". Thus, 3884 out of 5132 applicants were women during the 2014-2017 years. Regular awareness campaigns are being carried out in the regions to increase women's public participation, increase their employment and strengthen their role in the family and society.

It should be noted that a number of measures are being taken to increase the employment of women in the regions. On Children and Family Support Center and executive power of Ismayilli district initiative, a branch of the Baku Sewing Factory was opened in Ismayilli and 56 women were provided with work and a tailoring courses were organized for women in this factory.