



24/11/08

RAP/RCha/AZ/II(2008)

REVISED EUROPEAN SOCIAL CHARTER

2nd report on the implementation of
the Revised European Social Charter

submitted by

THE GOVERNMENT OF AZERBAIJAN

(Articles 11 and 14 for the period 01/11/2004 – 31/12/2007)

Report registered at the Secretariat on 24/11/2008

CYCLE 2009

Second report
of the Republic of Azerbaijan
for the implementation of Articles 11 and 14 of
the European Social Charter (revised)

October, 2008

For the period **1 November 2004** to **31 December 2007** made by the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan in accordance with Article C of the Revised European Social Charter and Article 21 of the European Social Charter, on the measures taken to give effect to the accepted provisions of the Revised European Social Charter, the instrument of ratification or approval of which was deposited on **02 September 2004**

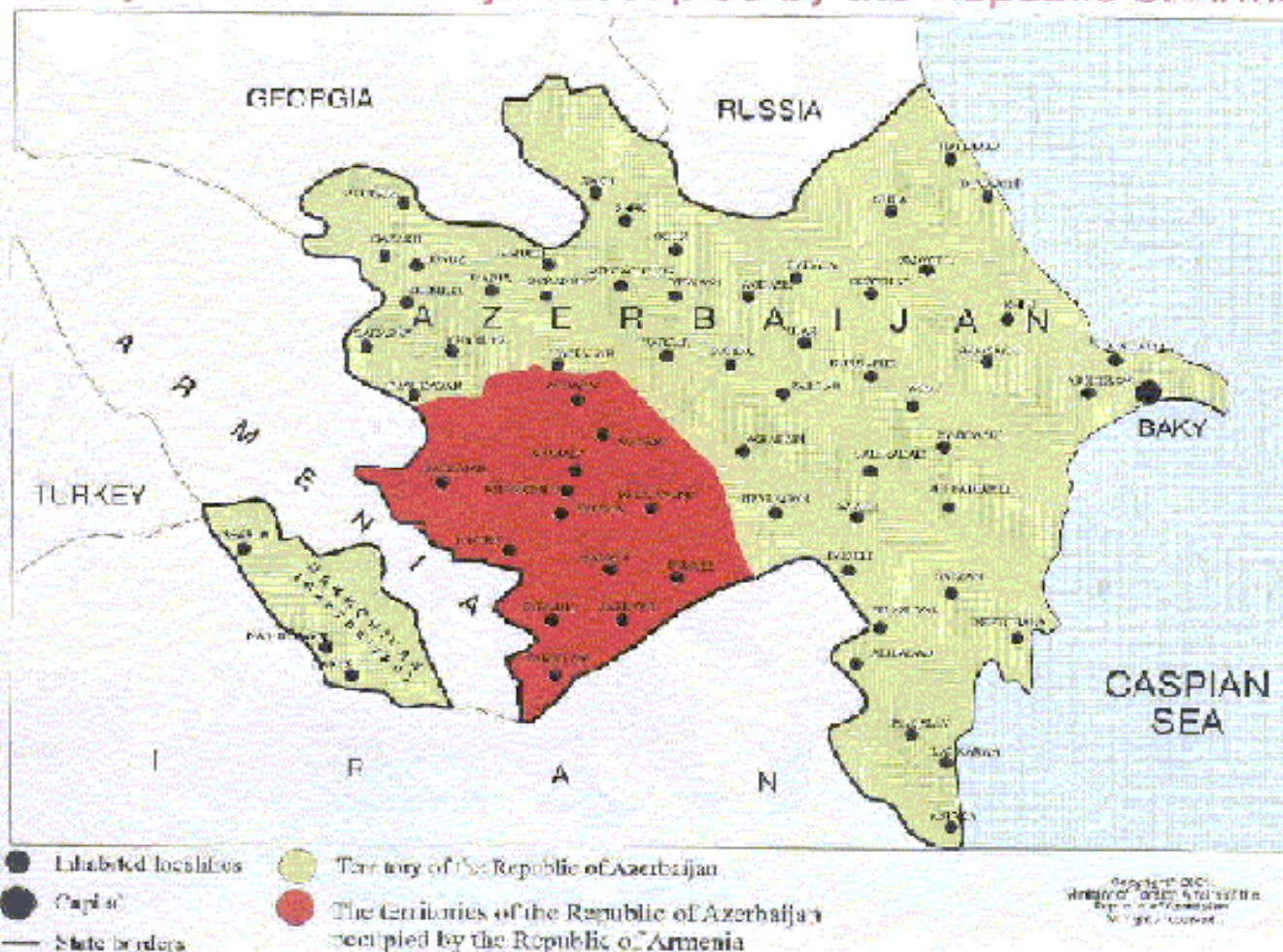
This report also covers the application of such provisions in the following non-metropolitan territories to which, in conformity with Article L, they have been declared applicable: **Republic of Azerbaijan**¹

In accordance with Article C of the Revised European Social Charter and Article 23 of the European Social Charter, copies of this report have been communicated the

- Azerbaijan Confederation of Trade Unions
- National Confederation of Employers' Organisations

¹ The Republic of Azerbaijan declares that it will be unable to guarantee compliance with the provisions of the Charter in its territories occupied by the Republic of Armenia until these territories are liberated from that occupation (the schematic map of the occupied territories is attached)

Schematic map of the territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan occupied by the Republic of Armenia



Contents

Article 11. The right to protection of health	1
<i>Article 11 § 1 to remove as far as possible the causes of ill-health.</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Article 11 § 2- to provide advisory and educational facilities for the promotion of health and the encouragement of individual responsibility in matters of health.....</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>Article 11 § 3 to prevent as far as possible epidemic, endemic and other diseases, as well as accidents.</i>	<i>23</i>
Article 14. The right to benefit from social welfare services	35
<i>Article 14 §1 to promote or provide services which, by using methods of social work, would contribute to the welfare and development of both individuals and groups in the community, and to their adjustment to the social environment;.....</i>	<i>36</i>
Families.....	41
The elderly	42
Young offenders.....	43
The youth	46
Persons with disability	49
Children, families, women, victims of domestic violence	51
Refugees	57
Persons freed from penitentiary facilities	58
<i>Article 14 §2 to encourage the participation of individuals and voluntary or other organizations in the establishment and maintenance of such services.</i>	<i>61</i>

Article 11. The right to protection of health

With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right to protection of health, the Parties undertake, either directly or in cooperation with public or private organizations, to take appropriate measures designed inter alia:

1. to remove as far as possible the causes of ill-health;
2. to provide advisory and educational facilities for the promotion of health and the encouragement of individual responsibility in matters of health;
3. to prevent as far as possible epidemic, endemic and other diseases, as well as accidents.

Information to be submitted

Article 11_§ 1 to remove as far as possible the causes of ill-health.

- 1) Please describe the general public health policy and legal framework. Please specify the nature of, reasons for and extent of any reforms.

The Republic of Azerbaijan ensures creation and continuous improvement of the relevant legislative framework in order to comply with the right to protection of health.

Protection of health is guaranteed by the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

“Article 41. Right to health protection

- I. Everyone has the right to health protection and medical care.
- II. The state take necessary measures for development of all health care facilities regardless of property types, ensures sanitation-epidemiological safety and creates opportunities for all types of medical insurance.
- III. Authorized persons concealing facts and cases posing danger for lives and health of people bear legal responsibility.”

On June 26, 1997 the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on “Protection of health of population” was adopted. In line with that Law, state health care system is mainly financed through the State Budget, as well as, compulsory medical insurance contributions, voluntary allocations from revenues of enterprises, entities and organizations, donations made by legal entities and individuals and other sources not prohibited by the Law. The citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan have the right to protection of health and provision with medical assistance. Stateless persons permanently residing in the Republic of Azerbaijan enjoy the same rights as citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan in terms of protection of health of population. In case of necessity of emergency medical interventions (accidents, traumas, poisoning and other diseases), primary and emergency medical assistance is provided to citizens by emergency medical service facilities regardless of their property type, as well as, persons who are obliged to render emergency medical care in line with the legislation. Specialized primary and emergency medical assistance is organized by emergency medical and ambulance-aviation services. Persons graduating from higher medical institutions of the Republic of Azerbaijan and getting doctor diplomas swear the

Hippocratic Oath. Doctors violating that Oath bear responsibility in line with the legislation.

On April 16, 1996 the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on “Halting spread of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)” was adopted. This Law takes into account heavy social and economic outcomes of disease caused by Human Immunodeficiency Virus that took pandemic character in the global arena and paves the legal basis to halt its spread in the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

On December 30, 1997 the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on “Radiation security of population” was adopted. This Law establishes legal framework for safe activity at areas within source of radioactive rays, protection of population from radiation dangers and ensuring of their health care.

On April 14, 2000, the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on “Immuno-prevention of infectious diseases” was adopted. This Law sets legal and economic basis of the state policy on immuno-prevention of infectious diseases in order to protect health care and ensure sanitarian-epidemiological safety of population of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

On May 2, 2000 the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on “Combating TB disease” was adopted. This Law defines legal and organizational basis for protection of population from TB and rights and duties of persons infected with TB.

On June 12, 2001 the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on “Psychiatric aid” was adopted. This Law regulates relations in rendering of psychiatric aid and defines rights and duties of legal entities and individuals in this sphere in the Republic of Azerbaijan.

On June 29, 2001 the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on “Narcological service and control” was adopted. This Law determines and regulates measures undertaken in Narcological service and control sphere in order to prevent drug abuse, its negative and social outcomes, as well as, damage to people subject to this disease and those around these people.

On December 23, 2003 the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on “State care to people contracted with diabetes” was adopted. This Law defines legal and organizational basis of state care to people contracted with diabetes and

regulates relations in prevention and treatment of this disease in the Republic of Azerbaijan.

According to the Order#27 of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated February 12, 2005 “Rules on confiscation, rendering harmless or liquidation of foodstuff unfit for consumption” was approved. Those rules were prepared as execution of the Decree#969 of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated October 23, 2003 on “Supplementary measures related to implementation of the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on foodstuff” and determines confiscation, rendering harmless or liquidation of foodstuff with expired consumption period and those that don’t meet standards and requirements according to results of relevant examinations and expertise revealed during the execution of duties by the Ministry of Economic Development of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ministry of Health of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Azerbaijan, State Customs Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan and State Agency on Standardization, Metrology and Patent of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The Law#109-IIQ of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated March 27, 2001 on “Protection of atmosphere” defines legal basis for protection of atmosphere and aims at execution of rights of the population to live in clean environment and get precise information on environment.

“The Water Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan” approved by the Law#418-IQ of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated December 26, 1997 regulates legal relations concerning use and protection of water facilities in the Republic of Azerbaijan.

According to the relevant legislation of the Republic of Azerbaijan medical services provided to the population by the state health care facilities are free of charge beginning from February 1, 2008. Persons within privileged groups (war participants, invalids and pregnant women), children under 14 in cases of hemodialysis and those with vital reference at the decision of doctors’ commission are served at polyclinics out of turn.

Currently, only private insurance mechanism is applied in existing health care system. Besides, it’s planned to introduce state medical insurance system in the future.

There are differences between state and private medical insurance mechanisms. Compulsory insurance of citizens is envisaged within the medical insurance applied by the government (compulsory medical insurance). At private insurance agencies insurance is voluntary. Therefore, number of persons insured at private insurance agencies is fewer and allocation of insurance risks lower compared to compulsory medical insurance. Moreover, private insurance agencies somehow choose people to be insured (young and healthier persons are preferred). State medical insurance cover all categories of people. State guarantee is applied to services included in the basic package of compulsory medical insurance. Medical services not covered by the basic package may be delivered through voluntary medical insurance system. According to the relevant legislation, private insurance agencies may offer different insurance packages (with different insurance payments).

General objectives of reforms in the health care system may be summarized as following:

to improve level and delivery of health care services to the whole population;
to increase flexibility and capacity of meeting of population's demands of the health care system;
to ensure protection from financial risks and fair distribution of burden related to financing.

Main strategic priorities of the health care system are followings:

Enhancement of management and regulation in the health care system; reform of health care financing system and transition to medical insurance principles; adjustment of medical staff to needs of patients; increase of efficiency in provision of health care services.

Improvement of management and regulation in health care system has following objectives:

- to create regulatory and responsibility structure on technical, administrative and financial issues at different levels of the system in order to ensure use of state guaranteed health care services packet;
- to ensure participation of stakeholders in preparation of the policy on definition and strengthening of patients' rights and responsibilities;
- to increase transparency and accountability through regular provision of data on status and quality indicators of health care system to different stakeholders.

With a view to achieving those goals, it's intended to strengthen capacity and evidences in the area of planning and guiding of reforms, prepare relevant condition for a contract system, define functional distribution between central and rayon levels and carry out regulating measures aimed at ensuring quality and safety of services.

Reform in financing system of health care service and shift to medical insurance principles may have a significant impact on outcomes resulted from function of health care system. In view of existing problems, policy on financing of health care system aims at following three objectives:

- Improve access to services for persons in particular need for social assistance and protect them from financial risks;
- Increase efficiency through clear and well defined administrative measures;
- Enhance the level of provision of quality health care services.

With a view to achieving those goals, relevant measures will be undertaken in following priority areas: creation of a Single Client/Payer system in the health care system; preparation of a base packet for state guaranteed medical services; change of base of financing system of health care service with medical insurance principles.

The aim of reforms in medical staff resources is to eliminate disbalance in distribution of medical staff throughout the country and their structural composition, as well as, deficiency of services in rural and remote areas and surplus of services in urban areas. With a view to achieving this, it's intended to improve access of the population to quality health care services, to focus education and continuous training of medical staff on medical and non-medical needs of patients in line with health care reform priorities and international standards, and to provide health car facilities with quality medical staff in all regions of the country.

Strategic priorities of the policy on staff resources will be directed at planning preparation of staff in the health care sector, creating incentives for work in remote areas, improving medical education and training focused on needs of patients, ensuring continuous education and developing medical science in order to obtain those goals.

Provision of medical services is carried out through different structures in the Republic of Azerbaijan. There are based on main categories of provision of

medical services: primary medical services, second and third pillar medical services, public medical services and medicines. Within the provision of primary medical services it's intended to improve access to broad range of quality preventive and treatment medical services, to move from a model preferring physicians with restricted skills to model resolving majority of problems within primary medical services, to strengthen prevention of diseases and health care of population, to shift from a vertical model with hierarchy of service provision to a more integrated model that gives priority to interest of patients, in order to resolve majority of health care problems. With a view to achieving those goals, strategic directions of reforms in primary medical services are followings: drafting of a model on service provision; definition of scale of services provided within primary medical services; development and planning of accessible primary health care network; and creation of suitable condition for primary medical services.

Transition to health care system based mainly on primary medical services will allow second-pillar service providers to focus on specialized services taking from them the burden of provision of primary medical services. Re-definition of hospital services and adjusting of providers' network to health care needs of the population and efficient and effective models of services, focusing of attention of second and third pillar service providers on better access to quality medical services for cases that are not curable within primary medical service, directing of capacity and structures of service providers at provision of quality medical services on the most effective way are priority objectives. It's intended to restructure hospital services, increase efficiency of providers and create incentives for ensuring quality in service provision, in order to achieve those goals.

2) Please indicate the measures taken (administrative arrangements, programmes, action plans, projects, etc.) to implement the public health policy and legal framework.

The Azerbaijani Government and its relevant structures have been undertaken dedicated measures aimed at improving of health care services provided to the population of the Republic of Azerbaijan and implementing of reforms in health care system.

Budgetary funds allocated to medical services are being increased year by year in order to improve health care of the population. Thus, comparing the allocation of budgetary funds to health care for 2004 (82 mln. manats), in 2005, 2006 and 2007

amounts spent from the state budget were respectively, 125 mln. manats, 202 mln. manats and 358 mln. manats.

Special attention is given to implementation of State Programs adopted in health care.

As mentioned above, "State Program on diabetes", "Action Program on protection of maternal and child health care", "State Program on donor action on blood and blood components and development of blood services", "State Program on hemophilia and thalassemia heritable blood diseases", "Action Program on chronic kidney failure", "Action Program on immuno-prevention of infectious disease", "Action Program on provision of oncological patients with medicines against tumor" and "The order of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the supply of modern equipments to the Child Cardio Surgery Center of the Ministry of Health dated on November 7, 2008" have been adopted on priority areas of health care in recent years.

Furthermore, application rules of plastic health cards, as well as, medical examination cards for each new born child that will be helpful in their immunization, examination and treatment through state funds have been approved by the government.

For the first time, allocation of financial resources has been intended by the state for realization of programs and this figure amounted to 46,4 mln. manats in 2007.

"Registration paper of initial diagnosis of diseases included in State Programs" (single registration form) and "Guidelines on filling in registration paper of initial diagnosis of diseases included in State Programs" have been approved by the decree #100 of the Ministry of health dated October 24, 2007, guidelines prepared for application of the register, and trainings carried out in zones for heads of all city and rayon health care structures and professionals working in this sphere.

The detecting of diabetes patents has been improved due to measures carried out for implementation of "State Program on diabetes" approved by the Decree #101 of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated June 7, 2005. Due to this fact, the number of registered patients was increased from 62384 in 2005 to 67968 in 2006 and 75268 in 2007.

It's intended to establish prenatal centers and provide them with most modern equipment in 7 cities and rayons of the country (Republican Maternal Hospital, Nakhchivan, Ganja, Sheki, Guba, Lankeran, Sabirabad) within the "Action Program on protection of maternal and child health care". To this end, 21.3 mln. manats will be allocated by 2010. Reconstruction and repair works are already under way at the Republican Maternal Hospital and Maternal Hospital#2 in Ganja city and their completion is expected for 2008 . In 2007 1,3 mln. manats and 3,5 mln. manats were allocated for repair works and purchase of equipment, respectively.

Patients with hemophilia and thalassemia heritable blood diseases have been provided with free plasma and erythrocyte masses within implementation of the State Program on hemophilia and thalassemia heritable blood diseases.

Relevant changes were carried out in the structure of the Central Blood Bank, its material and technical basis improved and repair works begun in the framework of the "State Program on donor action on blood and blood components and development of blood services" in 2007. Voluntary blood donation actions were arranged in Ali-Bayramly, Sumgayit, Ganja, Mingachevir, Imishly, Siyezen, Khizi, Guba, Khachmaz, Gebele, Gusar, Ismailly, Shamakhy and Baku city, as well as, at many enterprises, entities and ministries. In 2006 more than 12 tons and in 2007 14 tons of blood was stocked up.

A total of 2,4 mln. manats were spent on 134 items of medicines for general use, bandage materials, as well as, medicines used in chemical therapy within implementation of the "State Program on provision of oncological patients with vital medicines against tumor". New equipment has been provided to X-ray and diagnosis department of the National Oncological Center, digital X-ray device installed, a mammography purchased that is currently under operation. Furthermore, computer tomography and atom magnetic resonance cabinets are functioning at full capacity. Capital repair works have been carried out, line strengthening device installed and new modern equipment provided at the ray therapy department. Mobile diagnostic complex has been acquired.

It's envisaged to allot more than 76 mln. manats by 2010 for realization of the Action Program on chronic kidney failure. Currently, out of 11 Dialyze Centers that are functional in the country, 9 belong to public sector and 2 belong to private sector. A total of 122 dialyze apparatuses are functional in Dialyze Centers, of which 88 have been installed at public and 34 at private facilities.

719 patients with chronic kidney failure are fully provided with hemodialysis sessions and relevant medicines through state funds. In line with the Decree# 2400 of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated September 21, 2007 on "Some measures related to creation of a modern kidney transplantation center at the Republican Urological Clinical Hospital", 6 mln. manats have been allocated from the Reserve Fund of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the Ministry of Health for complete refurbishment works and provision with modern equipment of the Republican Urological Clinical Hospital.

Significant measures are being carried out in the country against TB. DOTS program have already been successfully implementing according to recommendations of the WHO. Some repair and construction works have been carried out at TB facilities of the country through support provided by "Global Fund", German Bank for Technical Development, "GOPA" in recent years. Thus, the completion of construction works and provision with modern equipment of the National Reference Laboratory is under construction within the base of the Scientific-Research Institute of Lung Diseases is planned for 2008.

Quadrilateral agreement on operation of the National Reference Laboratory was signed among the Ministries of Health and Justice, International Red Crescent Committee and "GOPA" on February 7, 2007. It's envisaged to create a treatment network of multi-resistant form of TB and cure 50 patients with II group medicines through support of the "Green Light Committee" according to this agreement in 2008.

Large immunization measures are underway within the Action Program on immuno-prevention of infectious diseases. As a result of implemented immunization campaign, as well as, other preventive measures in 2007 incidences of German measles were decreased by 26 times, whopping-cough by 5 times compared to 2006 and cases of measles were not recorded.

Measures have been continued in line with paragraphs of the Action Plan related to the Ministry of Health aimed at implementation of "The State Program on development of communication and information technologies in the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2005-2008" (E-Azerbaijan). Thus, application of systems of "Electron health care carts" at facilities serving children less than 14 years of age and "Medical examination carts" at facilities serving citizens pertaining to obligate groups are underway. To this end, on April 27, 2007 a contract was signed between the Ministry of Health and "Bestcomp Group" company for procurement of equipment and software for organization of "Electron health care

cards of citizens" and "Medical examination cards" systems and relevant computers, software etc. have been purchased and installed. Pilot tests have been completed for application of "Electron health care cards" and "Medical examination cards" systems and staff who will work within that systems trained.

12 regional points equipped with modern medical appliances and reanimobiles were created and put into operation beginning from January 2001, in line with instructions of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan in order to render timely medical aid to people injured during traffic accidents, deliver them to specialized hospitals and ensure relevant medical services at in-patient facilities. In March, 2007 mini ATS was installed at Emergency medical aid station and "113" prefix opened. Publicity boards reflecting "113" prefix have been installed on motor highways throughout the country. With a view to improving quality of emergency medical aid provided to the population, additional 12 mln. manats were allocated according to the Presidential Decree#1972 dated February 20, 2007. That sum was spent on purchase of 150 "Mercedes" vehicles equipped with modern medical appliances. In 2007, 60,000 more application cases were recorded and 103,000 more patients provided with emergency medical assistance.

Dedicated measures have been carried out by the Ministry of Health in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population in order to strengthen control over definition of disability status in the country. A trend of annual decrease is observed in the number of disability. Thus, the number of disability awards decreased from 36861 in 2003 down to 21421 in 2007.

Within reforms in health care system Public Health Care and Reforms Center has been established in order to organize health care services in the country, define priority areas in elaboration and application of health care programs, regulate reforms in health care facilities, as well as, implement methodological justification of reforms carried out in financing of health care.

Status and operational indicators of material and technical base of health care facilities and their provision with medical staff in cities and districts of the country have been assessed by specialist of the Ministry of Health and recommendations prepared to make them efficient. In that case, inefficient small medical establishments situated in dilapidated accommodations with negligible weight in provision of medical services to the population were abolished and moved to central hospitals as departments and wards while keeping number of

beds in line with actual demand and in parallel, number of beds at central hospitals adjusted to actual needs.

As a result of undertaken measures, efficiency of utilization of beds was increased. Thus, while one bed was taken for 150,5 days in 2006, this figure amounted to 169,7 days in 2007. So, initial estimations suggested that over a year efficiency of utilization of beds increased by more than 12,7%.

Furthermore, in 2007 the number of patients treated at hospitals grew by more than 15400 number of patients applied to out-patient facilities by 612000 and number of patients undergone emergency surgeries by 2200 people in comparison with indicators of 2006. Above mentioned facts were results of increase in funds allocated to health care, strengthening of material and technical base of medical facilities, improvement in provision with medical equipment, medicines, bandage materials and foodstuff.

In view of implementing the Law on "Medical insurance" of the Republic of Azerbaijan, a Coordination Council consisting of authorized staff of relevant ministries has been established in line with the Order of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan in order to ensure introduction of compulsory medical insurance and set of documents on reforms in financing system of health care and introduction of compulsory medical insurance in Azerbaijan submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers.

Currently, relevant measures are underway to implement that project in pilot districts. Introduction of the project will be continued throughout the country depending on achieved results.

Moreover, pilot project on strengthening primary health care services and improving material and technical bases of health care facilities in Sheki, Gakh, Aghdash, Ismailly and Absheron districts was launched through the loans allocated by the World Bank aimed at supporting reforms carried out in health care system of Azerbaijan. Within the framework of that project, it's planned to strengthen material and technical bases of health care facilities, provide them with modern medical equipment and introduce new forms of management and financing in health care system, principles of medical insurance, family medicine system (that is an advanced form of primary aid) etc. in the above-mentioned districts.

Currently, it's become a priority to strengthen material and technical bases of health care facilities and provide them with modern medical equipment. In 2007, about 50 health care facilities were being constructed, thoroughly repaired and reconstructed. The Ministry of Health pays attention to purchase of modern equipment and devices. Only in 2007, more than 60 Ultra-voice examination equipment, 1 computer tomography, 1 atom-magnetic resonance device, 1 mammography, 2 digital X-ray devices, 1 digital angiography, 2 C-shape digital X-ray devices, 35 X-ray devices, more than 50 narcosis devices, about 60 artificial respiration units, 9 artificial kidney devices, 140 cardio-monitors, about 50 electromechanical surgery table, 70 coagulators, 80 surgery lighters, 45 autoclaves, 2 digital fluography (Mercedes), 4 laparoscopic devices and other valuable equipment have been purchased and delivered to health care facilities.

Above mentioned measures had a significant impact on scale and quality of health care services. Examination and treatment of some diseases that considered impossible up to now in public health care facilities were organized. Thus, already about 30 open cardio-surgeries have been carried out at the Scientific Surgery Center named after academician M. Topchubashov and etc.

Special attention is given to quality rather than quantity factor in preparation of medical staff and number of students admitted to higher and secondary medical education facilities decreased over the past years. Thus, while 1150 students were admitted to the Azerbaijan Medical University in 2005, now this figure amounts to 1020. It should be noted that, 70 out of the mentioned 1020 places were assigned for military medical faculty established since 2007 with a view to preparing professional medical staff for the Armed Forces of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Unlike previous years, speciality distribution processes carried out after 6th course for students of the Azerbaijan Medical University, as well as while giving appointments for employment of graduates were based directly on existing vacancies within medical structures. It's noteworthy to mention that in 2006 63% and in 2007 72% of graduates of the University were sent to regions to work at medical facilities.

The Ministry of Health gives priority to increase and improvement of professional skills of medical staff. The number of references to advanced training courses made by health care facilities was increased from 20% to 48%.

In 2007, actually 2817 people got through general and thematic advanced courses against the initial plan of 2542 at the Azerbaijan State Institute for Advancement

of Physicians named after A. Aliyev and the calendar plan was fully implemented.

Collaboration in medical education sphere with foreign countries is of great importance among measures aimed at strengthening international relations in health care. Thus, currently 29 Azerbaijani students get medical education on the basis of education contracts signed between the Ministry of Health and a number of Universities in the Republic of Turkey. In 2007, Azerbaijani specialists increased their experience in Germany in line with the agreements signed between the Scientific-Research Medical Institute named after academician M. Topchubashov and Surgery Clinic of Heidelberg University of Germany.

In 2007, 20 physicians with different specialities took part in training courses organized at leading clinics of Turkey, according to the contract on collaboration signed between the Ministries of Health of Azerbaijan and Turkey.

Rules on "Granting speciality degrees to medical staff" approved by the Order#54 of the Ministry of Health dated June 6, 2007. In line with the Order, process of creation of specialized commissions on specialities has been launched. In 2007, speciality degrees were granted to physicians representing 4 specialities ("Surgery", "Obstetrics and gynecology", "Pediatrics", "Therapy") twice. 27 out of 97 applied physicians got speciality degrees.

The Ministry of Health is implementing about 20 projects covering different areas of health care together with international organizations.

In 2007, the Ministry of Health arranged and organized a number of high level international scientific conferences and congresses, including, IX International Eurasian Congress of Surgeons and Gastroenterologists with 58 representatives from 17 countries in May, IV Congress of oncologists and radiologists of CIS countries with 1000 representatives from 16 countries in September and IV International Eurasian Congress of Pediatricians with about 30 representatives from 6 countries in October. Furthermore, the conference dedicated to Urgent Problems Related to Thalassaemia with representatives from 6 countries and other events have taken place.

In June-August 2007, the project on "Assessment of Psychological Health Care System" was implemented in Azerbaijan through technical and expertise assistance of the WHO, in line with the two-year collaboration agreement for 2006-2007 years signed between the Ministry of Health and the World Health Organization.

3) Please supply any relevant statistics or other information on the main health indicators and on health services and professions (for example WHO and/or Eurostat data).

Table 1. Main indicators of health care (as of the end of year)

	2004	2005	2006	2007
Number of physicians from all specialities, thsd. ¹	30,1	30,6	30,8	32,4
Per 10,000 of the population	36,6	36,8	36,6	38,1
Number of nurses, thsd. ¹	59,7	60,8	61,6	62,2
Per 10,000 of the population	72,6	73,1	73,2	73,1
Number of hospitals ¹	732	729	726	748
Number of beds in hospitals, thsd ¹	68,4	68,9	68,4	68,1
Per 10,000 of the population	83,1	82,9	81,3	80,0
Number of health care facilities providing out-patient and polyclinic services to the population ¹	1594	1595	1589	1692
Capacity of out-patient and polyclinic facilities (number of admissions for one shift), thsd	105,3	104,1	105,2	106
Per 10,000 of the population	127,9	125,2	125,1	124,6
Number of maternity welfare clinics, child polyclinics and out-patient facilities (those included in private and other facilities)	922	923	914	904
Number of beds (including, physician and gynecological beds) for pregnant and women recently confined women, thsd	7,4	7,4	7,4	7,4
Number of medical attendance-obstetrics points, thsd.	1768	1746	1741	1734

Source: State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan "Statistical yearbook of Azerbaijan" 2008

¹ including non-state medical establishments

Table 2. Number of children less than 16 years age with first time disability award

	2004	2005	2006
Children less than 16 years age with first time disability certification, thsd.	8,4	6,0	6,5
Per 10000 of children under 16 years of age	36,0	26,1	29,1

Source: State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan "Statistical yearbook of Azerbaijan" 2008

Table 3. Number of people of 16 years age and older with first time disability award

	2004	2005	2006
People of 16 years age and older with first time disability certification, thsd.	26,7	19,1	28,7
Per 1000 of people of 16 years of age and older	4,6	3,1	4,6

Source: State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan "Statistical yearbook of Azerbaijan" 2008

Table 4. Number of people with first time disability award in 2007

	2007
Children under 18 years of age with limited health status , thsd.	5,2
Per 1000 of children under 18 years of age	2
Those at 18 and more years of age , thsd.	21,4
Per 1000 of people at 18 and more years of age	3,7

Source: State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan "Statistical yearbook of Azerbaijan" 2008

Table 5. Number of population (as the end of year)

Years	Total number of population thsd.	including:		As a ratio to the whole population, in %	
		urban	rural	urban	rural
2004	8347,3	4298,3	4049,0	51,5	48,5
2005	8436,4	4356,6	4079,8	51,6	48,4
2006	8532,7	4397,6	4135,1	51,5	48,5
2007	8629,9	4464,8	4165,1	51,7	48,3

Source: State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan "Statistical yearbook of Azerbaijan" 2008

Table 6. General coefficients of birth, mortality and natural increase rates

Years	Person			Per 1000 of population		
	Birth	Mortality	Natural increase	Birth	Mortality	Natural increase
2004	131609	49568	82041	16,1	6,1	10,0
2005	141901	51962	89939	17,2	6,3	10,9
2006	148946	52248	96698	17,8	6,2	11,6
2007	151963	53655	98308	18,0	6,3	11,7

Source: State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan "Statistical yearbook of Azerbaijan" 2008

Table 7. Classification of population by age groups

(by the end of year)

	Thsd. persons				In %				Number of women per 1000 men by age groups of population			
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2004	2005	2006	2007	2004	2005	2006	2007
Total number of population	8347,3	8436,4	8532,7	8629,9	100	100	100	100	1034,1	1031,8	1029,2	1026,7
Including, at the age of:												
0-4	575,6	600,9	639,7	680,7	6,9	7,1	7,5	7,9	857,4	856,4	856,9	856,3
5-9	647,6	606,6	569,2	554,3	7,8	7,2	6,7	6,4	903,6	892,1	877,9	869,5
10-14	897,8	859,3	822,0	764,9	10,8	10,2	9,6	8,9	944,1	939,3	932,8	924,3
15-19	914,9	930,0	928,4	926,5	11,0	11,0	10,9	10,7	954,5	953,0	952,1	949,7
20-24	783,9	812,0	844,7	870,9	9,4	9,6	9,9	10,1	973,6	962,3	960,3	958,8
25-29	658,3	680,4	698,8	724,0	7,9	8,1	8,2	8,4	1054,0	1041,4	1019,7	1005,0
30-34	617,7	605,8	614,7	619,5	7,4	7,2	7,2	7,2	1114,0	1108,6	1104,4	1089,4
35-39	664,4	660,5	645,1	640,7	8,0	7,8	7,6	7,4	1124,7	1124,5	1119,9	1123,6
40-44	696,4	688,2	684,1	670,4	8,3	8,2	8,0	7,8	1098,2	1110,4	1123,9	1126,2
45-49	562,1	611,8	642,1	667,7	6,7	7,3	7,5	7,8	1067,3	1073,2	1074,6	1087,2
50-54	362,2	384,9	422,4	456,5	4,3	4,6	5,0	5,3	1075,6	1079,4	1089,0	1085,4
55-59	217,1	255,3	280,1	304,1	2,6	3,0	3,3	3,5	1113,9	1106,4	1099,7	1107,4
60-64	169,3	142,0	137,7	147,0	2,0	1,7	1,6	1,7	1195,8	1194,7	1196,2	1168,1
65-69	248,4	248,4	228,9	209,4	3,0	2,9	2,7	2,4	1281,0	1289,4	1279,9	1296,1
70 and older	331,6	350,3	374,8	393,3	3,9	4,1	4,3	4,5	1472,8	1456,5	1451,3	1444,4
Including, in total number of population:												
at able-bodied age	5439,5	5579,4	5709,9	5828,1	65,2	66,1	66,9	67,5	1020,2	1013,0	1007,3	999,8

Source: State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan "Statistical yearbook of Azerbaijan" 2008

Table 8. Life expectancy at birth (number of ages)

Period of calculation	Total number of population	Men	Women
2004	72,4	69,6	75,2
2005	72,4	69,6	75,1
2006	72,4	69,6	75,1
2007	72,4	69,7	75,1

Source: State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan "Statistical yearbook of Azerbaijan" 2008

Table 9. Main causes of mortality among population

Main causes	2004	2005	2006	2007
Number of deaths from all causes, person	49568	51962	52248	53655
including:				
from diseases of blood circulation system	28488	29392	29712	30355
from new reproductions	6105	6381	6517	6650
from diseases of respiratory organs	3208	3069	2860	3725
from accidents, poisoning and injuries	2249	2698	2686	3007
Number of deaths from all causes (per 100 000 of population)	605,5	628,2	624,6	634,1
including:				
from diseases of blood circulation system	348,0	355,3	355,2	358,8
from new reproductions	74,6	77,2	77,9	78,6
from diseases of respiratory organs	39,2	37,1	34,2	44,0
from accidents, poisoning and injuries	27,5	32,6	32,1	35,5

Source: State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan "Statistical yearbook of Azerbaijan" 2008

Table 10. Maternal mortality rate

Years	Person	Per 100000 live births
2004	34	25,8
2005	41	28,9
2006	51	34,2
2007	53	34,8

Source: State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan "Statistical yearbook of Azerbaijan" 2008

Table 11. Infant mortality rate

Years	Number of deaths among infants less than 1 years of age			Per 1000 live births		
	Both sex	Including		Both sex	Including	
		boys	girls		boys	girls
2004	1892	1113	779	14,4	15,4	13,3
2005	1580	893	687	12,7	13,6	11,6
2006	1882	1072	810	11,9	12,6	11,1
2007	1756	987	769	12,1	12,7	11,4

Source: State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan "Statistical yearbook of Azerbaijan" 2008

Table 12. Main causes of mortality among infants under 1 years of age

Main causes	2004	2005	2006	2007
Number of deaths among infants under 1 years of age from all causes, person	1892	1580	1882	1756
Including,				
from diseases of respiratory organs	995	809	766	712
from causes produced during prenatal period	283	301	333	321
from infectious and parasitic diseases	183	123	152	138
from congenital anomalies	170	138	369	270
from accidents, poisoning and injuries	30	29	37	26
Number of deaths from all causes among infants under 1 years of age (per 10 000 live births)	144,5	126,9	119,0	120,9
Including,				
from diseases of respiratory organs	71,7	65,9	54,1	49,1
from causes produced during prenatal period	25,2	21,3	21,8	21,7
from infectious and parasitic diseases	13,7	11,2	9,4	9,7
from congenital anomalies	13,2	11,3	17,4	21,2
from accidents, poisoning and injuries	2,0	2,2	2,3	2,1

Source: State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan "Statistical yearbook of Azerbaijan" 2008

Article 11§ 2- to provide advisory and educational facilities for the promotion of health and the encouragement of individual responsibility in matters of health

2) Please indicate the measures taken (administrative arrangements, programmes, action plans, projects, etc.) to implement the public health policy and legal framework.

In line with the Law on “Narcological service and control” of the Republic of Azerbaijan, individual control is implemented while observing treatment methods of narcological diseases defined by the relevant executive authority of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Treatment methods for narcological patients are applied taking into account status of and environment around a narcological patient.

Relevant state structures carry out measures aimed at promoting health care and instilling individual responsibility on health care issues. On August 3, 2005, a Collaboration Agreement on implementation of the project “Strengthening struggle against HIV/AIDS in Azerbaijan” was signed between the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan. That project was launched on January 19, 2006 at the order of the Ministry of Education. The National Concept Paper on “Education based on vital skills”, curriculums and teaching aids have been prepared in the framework of that project. Life skills education – is an approach serving creation and encouraging of healthy life-style through development of knowledge, behaviors and especially, skills with direct participation of students using different learning techniques.

The objective of subjects included in methodic aids is to form a conceived active lifestyle aimed at development of pupils, nation and the human, as well as, to instill skills and capacity necessary for decent living, while not undermining rights and interests of pupils. Following subjects dominate in health care part of the methodic aids: healthy lifestyle as a guarantee of longevity; normal sexual development is the basis of health; childlessness – as a result of sexually transmitted infections; early pregnancy, its medical and social aspects; prevention of early pregnancy; Let’s say “NO” to risky behaviors; negative impact of alcohol to different organs and the whole body; Let’s say “NO” to alcohol abuse; Let’s say “NO” to smoking.

Subject of the “Education based on vital skills” has been teaching as facultative course at I-XI classes of secondary schools 1 hour per week since academic year of 2006-2007 in line with order of the Ministry of Education.

Furthermore, within the subject of “Human anatomy, physiology and hygiene” included in the curriculum of IX classes of secondary schools topics on healthy life-style and protection from diseases are taught.

Specialists of AIDS combating center meet with teachers and pupils of secondary schools, awareness raising measures on HIV/AIDS are carry out, as well as, different booklets and calendars issued.

Health related articles are published and programs broadcast in mass media on regular basis in order to raise awareness of public.

Systematic measures are being implemented aimed at widely promoting physical culture and sport at education facilities by the National Physical Cultures Centre of the Ministry of Education. According to the schedule of mass sport events of the center, school, city (district), zone and national level games are held among pupils and universities.

Initial phase of the project “Reproductive Health Initiatives of the Youth in the Southern Caucasus” has been implemented by the State Committee on Family, Woman and Child Issues and UNFPA. That project was launched in November 2006 and lasted till February of 2007. The project covered 400 people at the age of 15-24 in Guba, Khachmaz, Sumgayit, Khanlar, Sheki, Masally, Imishly, Goranboy rayons and Mingachevir and Baku cities. Its aim was to organize effective activity of civil society and to raise skills and interests of broad public on ensuring sexual and reproductive health and rights of the youth. In February 2007, a final conference at national level dedicated to results of initial phase of public meetings held in regions of the country was organized.

3) Please supply any relevant statistics or other information, including on consultation and screening services in schools and for the rest of the population.

In line with the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on “Protection of health of population”, every woman is provided with free specialized medical care at state health care facilities during antenatal, prenatal and delivery periods. Immature persons have the right to be under free clinic control and get treatment at state child and juvenile health care facilities, to get education in the condition meeting sanitation requirements in line with rules defined by the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Azerbaijan and to receive nutrition under privileged terms and medical-social assistance in line with rules defined by the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

At schools annual prophylactic medical examinations are carried out, tuberculin tests implemented, fluorography check-ups undertaken and different immunization tours organized.

Article 11 § 3 to prevent as far as possible epidemic, endemic and other diseases, as well as accidents.

2) Please indicate the measures taken (administrative arrangements, programmes, action plans, projects, etc.) to implement the public health policy and legal framework.

Measures to prevent air and water pollution

¾ part of the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan is at the river Kura that is a drinking water source of the population. Majority of water coming to our country is formed in the territory of neighboring countries and there are limited water resources in order to meet demand of the population for drinking water.

Inflow of untreated waste water to the river Kura has a significant impact on its hydro-chemical regime and quality of water. Water basins have been polluted at

different levels due to trans-border pollution, their self-treatment process disturbed and they become dangerous sources for use.

To this end, the issues such as problem of limited water resources, their efficient use, prevention of pollution of water sources and provision of the population with quality drinking water at required level constitute priority directions of the state ecological policy.

Directions on a number of areas of sustainable development and relevant system of actions were defined and urgency of settlement of problems related to protection of water resources and their efficient use for the country was noted in the "National Program on ecologically sustainable social and economic development" approved by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated February 18, 2003.

To this end, it's considered necessary to organize protection and efficient use of water sources that is one of the main components of environment on the basis of sustainable development principles and to carry out measures aimed at realization of national and regional programs on management of water resources.

	2004	2005	2006	2007
Inflow of waste water to ground water basins (mln m³)	4817	4878	5164	5237
of which, amount of treated water (mln. m ³)	160	161	163	177

It's defined as a priority objective to efficiently use and protect water resources in the country, to detect sources and create resources of drinking water, to provide the population with quality drinking water, to construct sewerage systems meeting modern requirements and to install water treating devices.

To this end, different projects have been implemented in the country through support of international financial institutions and it's defined as an objective to provide the population with clean drinking water by 2010.

Funds have been allocated from the Reserve Fund of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan in order to settle issues arising from the Decree#2244 of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on "Some measures aimed at preventing pollution of the Caspian Sea" signed on June 20, 2007.

Inflow of untreated waste water from coastal areas mentioned in the Decree led to pollution of the Caspian Sea with harmful chemical substances and subsequently, degradation of its unique biological diversity. Implementation of relevant measures will contribute to decrease of anthropogenic influence and restoration of biodiversity and rest-recreation strip of the Sea.

To this end, water treatment facilities were purchased and brought from Turkey. Some of those facilities were installed in Bilgah, Buzovna and Merdekan settlements of Absheron district and 5 stations serving protection of ecological system of the Caspian Sea are already operational.

Currently, works are being moved towards Sumgayit city and some water treating facilities are installed at two inflow sources with the worst pollution and microbiological status in Pirshaghi settlement.

At the same time, it's planned to complete works on installment of water treatment facilities aimed at management of waste water formed and expected to be increased in the "Amburan" rest center and neighboring areas in the nearest future. All technological systems are being built underground in order to ensure conformity of the place to required standards and high esthetic needs.

The Republic of Azerbaijan is an only coastal state of the Caspian Sea to implement comprehensive measures aimed at prevention of pollution of the Sea. Continuation of those measures will lead to more purification of the Caspian Sea and the Absheron peninsula will be taken out of the list of sources polluting the Caspian Sea.

Funds have been allocated from the Reserve Fund of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan in order to provide a number of settlements using waters of the Kura and Araz rivers with ecologically pure water in line with Decree#2245 of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on "Some measures aimed at provision of the population with ecologically pure water" signed on June 20, 2007.

As a result of implementation of that Decree, water provided to 163,000 people will be purified in line with the norms of the World Health Organization through installment of modular water treating facilities in 100 villages with limited access to quality water. These facilities treat drinking water from phenols exceeding norms by 5-10 times, oil and oil products exceeding norms by 2-5 times, synthetic ground-active and suspended substances, heavy metals, other specific matters,

including intestinal bacillus (95000 intestinal bacillus in one liter of water is considered dangerous for people).

In the initial phase of implementation of the Decree, measures on provision of drinking water to more than 55000 people with limited access to quality water and those facing problems in terms of drinking water supply in 50 settlements of 8 districts (Yevlakh, Zerdab, Kurdemir, Imishli, Sabirabad, Saatly, Salyan and Neftchala) were completed.

Realization of that project is the initial phase of provision of the population with quality drinking water.

In 2005, analytical laboratories equipped with modern appliances were created and commissioned in Gazakh and Beylagan rayons in order to carry out prompt control over pollution level of trans-border rivers. 10-days bulletins are prepared based on results of monitoring carried out at those laboratories that operate at flexible regime and submitted to relevant state structures.

In recent years, growth rate of production, especially, increase of import of old vehicles into the country, lack of gas-treating and dust-retaining devices for rendering harmless to harmful matters discharged to air at enterprises and burning of waste at waste polygons led to acceleration of growth rate of harmful substances emitted to atmosphere. This, in its turn, creates severe problems for atmosphere and health status of the population. In 2006, 875000 tons of harmful substances emitted to atmosphere, of which, 344000 tons attributed to industrial waste and 531000 tons to gases emitted by vehicles.

	2004	2005	2006	2007
Emission of pollution substances into atmosphere, thsd. tons	975	1054	875	970
of which,				
From fixed sources	540	558	344	386
per capita, kg	66	67	41	45
From vehicles	435	496	531	584
per capita, kg	53	60	63	69

At the same time, it should be noted that gases emitted by vehicles are significantly increasing among polluters of atmosphere. Currently, there are more than 620,000 vehicles in the country, more than 50% of which is accounted for Baku city. At the same time, power engineering, chemical, oil-chemical enterprises, oil-processing plants, terminals and waste polygons play an important role in increase of waste emitted to atmosphere.

It's envisaged to increase technical status of vehicles, to adjust norms for emissions into atmosphere to European standards (Euro 3), to establish ecological control-measurement points, to arrange utilization of abandoned vehicles, to avoid traffic jams through application of new devices and equipments for traffic regulation, to enhance "pedestrian" zones in cities etc. to prevent air pollution with harmful gases emitted from vehicles in the framework of the implementation of the "Comprehensive Action Plan on improving ecological status in the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2006-2013".

With a view to implementing these measures, standards applied in the country concerning norms and methods to measure composition of harmful substances in gas emitted by vehicles should be changed and adjusted to "Euro 3, as well as, legal and regulatory acts adopted requiring vehicles produced in, imported to, transited via the country to comply with "Euro 3" standards.

Currently, compliance of harmful substances emitted by vehicles into the air with norms in place is carried out at examination points equipped with modern measurement devices and appliances provided by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, at diagnostic centres in Nakhchivan, Ganja, Sungayit, Lenkeran, Yevlakh, Sheki, Zaqatala, Balaken, Shemkir, Berde and Ter-ter towns, as well as, at permanent posts of traffic-patrol service on environmental control. With a view to strengthening control over technical condition of vehicles, it's planned to create same points in other administrative areas of the country and mobile groups at roadsides to carry out such services, as well as, equip all diagnostic points, guard-cars of traffic-patrol services and 19 permanent posts with devices that can measure norms in line with "Euro 3" and gas analysis equipment.

During activities undertaken by the State Traffic Police of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in 2006 11,255, in 2007 14,741 and in the first half of 2008 5,025 vehicles engines of which emit more harmful substances in used gases than existing norms and relevant measures taken.

With a view to defining compliancy of harmful substances in used gases emitted by vehicles driven in the country with existing norms, a joint Action Plan among “Autotransportservice” of the Ministry of Transport, the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources and Baku State Traffic Police of the Ministry of Internal Affairs was approved and introduced during June and July 2008. According to that plan, it’s envisaged to carry out relevant measures in Baku, Sumgayit, Ganja and Shirvan cities, Sheki, Yevlakh, Barda, Shemkir, Sabirabad, Tovuz, Jalilabad, Khachmaz districts, as well as at the State Traffic Police posts located in the gateway to the capital.

“Automatic traffic regulation system” has been established and introduced covering 103 crossroads in central streets of the capital with application of modern equipment and devices in order to eliminate delays in movement of vehicles, to prevent traffic jams and hence, reduce harmful substances emitted to the air by vehicles in Baku city by the Ministry of Internal Affairs. It’s considered that connecting technical management means in additional 150 streets with dense traffic circulation to this system through establishment of automatically regulated controllers will positively influence protection of the air in the city.

With a view to strengthening protection of trees and bushes not included in forest fund and defining measures on enlargement of green zones in cities, regular measures are being implemented to improve their register system. About 700 thsd. trees and bushes seedlings are allocated for upgrading and greening measures implemented in cities and districts of the country. At the same time, in the framework of activates under the motto of “Let’s each of us plant a tree” with the initiative of the President of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation Mrs. Mehriban Aliyeva, approximately 6 mln. trees and bushes (including forest fund areas) have been planted in all regions of the country.

Vaccination program and measures related to infectious diseases

In recent years, “Action Program on immuno-prevention of infectious diseases” has also been approved among state programs adopted by the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan and financial resources have been allocated for its implementation.

Moreover, some measures are undertaking in the framework of collaboration established with international organizations in the sphere of implementation of

immunization activities. Thus, as in previous years, an immunization week was organized in April 2008 throughout the country.

As a result of immunization measures carried out by the Ministry of Health, poliomyelitis was eradicated, a number of infectious diseases, including, diphtheria, tetanus, tularemia and anthrax are rarely recorded. Furthermore, in 2007, German measles decreased by 26 times, whooping-cough by 5 times compared to 2006 and measles are not recorded, as a result of immunization campaign and other preventive measures carried out in 2006.

Incidences of malaria were drastically increased since 1990 and reached its highest level in 1996. In that year, incidences of malaria amounted to 13,135. As a result of broad anti-epidemic measures carried out in the country, the epidemiological situation in terms of malaria has significantly improved and only, 110 cases were recorded in 2007.

An endemic disease of iodine deficiency pathology is significantly spread among the population. Studies carried out in 1998 revealed that level of iodine deficiency is 85-87% among children at of 8-14 years of age. In line with the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on "Iodization of salt with a view of mass prevention of iodine deficiency diseases" adopted in 2001, the Ministry of Health together with the UNICEF undertook a lot of measures and carried out broad awareness raising and communication campaigns within the framework of the "Program on iodine deficiency diseases and universal iodization of salt". Biological monitoring carried out among the population in 2007 revealed that undertaken measures led to significant improvements in this sphere.

Prevention of accidents

The Ministry of Emergency Situations, the Statute of which was approved on April 19, 2006 by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, leads measures on prevention of the population and areas from emergency cases and fires, prevention and eradication of results of emergency situations, ensuring of safety of the population in water basins and occupational safety in industry, mining and construction sectors, protection of enterprises, entities and facilities of strategic importance undergone natural, technogenic and terror risks, as well as, radiation, chemical and biological protection of the population.

Activities have been taken to prevent possible accidents and protect lives and health status of the population using services in beaches situated along coastal areas of the Caspian Sea. Control points have been established in coastal areas in order to eradicate detected violations; saving teams have been placed in beaches and provided with saving equipment etc. These measures, in their turns, created conditions for safe rest of the population.

Atomic (radiation) risk

The Republic of Azerbaijan ratified the Convention #15 of the International Labour Organization on "Protection from radiation" (1960). The Convention covers measures on limitation of impact of ionized radiation on employees during work process and definition of permitted level of radioactive substances to be undergone by human beings.

Temporary Sanitation Norms #2963-84 related to "Protection of the population from impact of electromagnetic area created in radio-technical facilities" defines hygienic requirements on transmitting-radio-technical, television, radiolocation, as well as, other facilities and devices that belong to different ministries, enterprises, entities and organizations and diffuse electromagnetic rays.

As a result of measures undertaken by the Ministry of Emergency Situations aimed at regulating safety of radioactive sources and materials, as well as, ensuring their protection according to the legislation, 10,872 kg radioactive wastes and 561 ray sources were berried and 21,852 kg laundry, special and individual dresses polluted with radioactive substances at different medical facilities deactivated in 2007. Moreover, regular measures are underway to prohibit import of industrial goods not meeting radiation safety norms into the country.

Noise

The Republic of Azerbaijan ratified the Convention #148 of the International Labour Organization on "Protection of employees from occupational risks derived from pollution of air, noise and vibration" (1977).

Furthermore, norms adopted on limitation of noise are applied to residential and public buildings, as well as, public places. Special rooms (radio, television

studios, concert and theatre halls, sport complexes) are not subject to those norms.

Sanitation Norms #3077-84 on "Permitted noise at rooms of residential and public buildings and civil construction sites" defines permitted level of noise that may pass from civil construction points, as well as, internal and external sources to rooms of residential and public buildings.

Sanitation Norms #1304-75 on "Sanitation norms on vibration permitted at residential buildings" defines permitted level of common and local vibration at residential and public buildings derived from internal and external sources.

Requirements of SNIIP #II-12-77 on "Protection from noise" include drafting of noise protection measures in order to ensure permitted level of noise pressure and noise itself at areas of industrial enterprises, production places of workshops and supportive buildings, rooms of residential and public buildings, as well as, construction sites of urban and other settlements.

GOST #12.1.036-81 on "Noise. It's permitted level at residential and public buildings" sets level of noise permitted at residential and public buildings.

"Norms on vibration and noise pollution negatively affecting environment and health of the population" approved by the Decree#796 of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated July 8, 2008 determines permitted level of noise and requirements on vibration at residential and public buildings, areas of civil constructions and other public places.

Asbestos

The Convention #162 (1986) of the International Labour Organization covers rules and recommendations on "Occupational safety norms during works with asbestos". Besides this, relevant state institutions are working on drafting normative-legal documents to forbid the use of asbestos in industry and construction fields.

Main legal and regulatory documents on construction of apartments are as following:

Azerbaijan State Construction Norms (AzSCN) #1.6-1 concerning "Rules on organization and implementation of construction works, and admission of completed constructions for exploitation" was approved by the Order #7 of the Azerbaijan State Construction Committee dated December 30, 1999.

Those rules are applicable for enterprises, buildings, facilities and their complexes that are under construction, reconstruction and enlargement process regardless of property type, financial sources and subordination, and define norms on commencement, organization, implementation of construction works at those sides, as well as, admission of completed constructions for exploitation.

Sanitation rules #42-128-4690-88 on "Sanitation rules on maintenance of residential areas" defines norms on sanitation cleanness of areas of residential places, as well as, collection, temporary keeping and removal of solid and liquid wastes.

Sanitation norms #2605-82 on "Sanitation norms and rules on insolation provision of residential, public buildings and residential areas" sets hygienic requirements for insolation and protection from sun of rooms and areas of residential and public buildings.

Sanitation norms #4723-88 about "Sanitation rules on installation and exploitation of central hot water supply system" are intended for enterprises and organizations drafting, constructing and exploiting central hot water supply system, and defines sanitation-hygienic during elaboration of other regulatory documents (state standards TN and Q etc).

Sanitation norms #2971-84 related to "Sanitation norms and rules on protection of the population from impact of electric areas created by electric air transmission lines of alteration current with industrial frequency" define main requirements for protection of the population from impact of electric areas created by electric air transmission lines of alteration current with industrial frequency and 330 kV and more tension, and their location near residential areas.

SNiP #2.08.01-89 on "Residential buildings". These norms and rules are intended for projection of residential buildings up to 25-storey block of flats, including, those for the elderly and disabled and dormitories).

SNiP #2.08.02-89 on “Public buildings and facilities”. These norms and rules are intended for projection of public buildings and facilities (including, those up with to 16-storey), as well as, buildings with public purposes being constructed adjacent to residential buildings.

SNiP #2.04.05-91 on “Heating, ventilation and conditioning” is required during projection of heating supply, ventilation and conditioning systems at residential, public and industrial buildings.

SNiP #II-4-79 on “Natural and artificial lighting” is used during projection of external lightening of rooms at buildings and facilities for different purposes, working places outside the buildings, working sides of industrial and agricultural enterprises, as well as, urban, rural and settlement areas under construction and reconstruction.

Requirements of SNiP #2.04.01.85 on “Internal water supply and sewerage systems of buildings” are considered during projection (construction and reconstruction) of internal and external cold and hot water supply, sewerage systems and gutters for outflow of water.

SNiP #2.04.02-85 on “Water supply. External network and facilities”. It’s necessary to use these norms and rules during projection of centralized uninterrupted external water supply to residential areas and economic facilities.

Requirements of SNiP #2.04.03.85 on “Sewage System. External network and facilities” should be considered during projection of centralized uninterrupted external public utilities systems at residential areas and economic facilities.

Sanitation norms #245-71 on “Projection of industrial enterprises” should be applied during projection of buildings and facilities of industrial enterprises, transport, communication, agricultural facilities, power stations, experimental-testing plants under construction and reconstruction.

In 2006, the Republican Center for Hygiene and Epidemiology considered projects of 279 residential and public buildings, of which, 18 cases were not agreed and sent back. In 2007, projects of 287 residential buildings were considered, of which, 28 cases sent back.

- 3) Please supply any relevant statistics or other information on the percentage of smokers in the general population, trends in alcohol consumption and the rates of vaccination cover for infectious and epidemic diseases.**

The share of smoking people in the population was 17,7% in 2007. According to information of the State Committee of Statistics of the Republic of Azerbaijan, number of patients with alcoholism and alcoholic psychosis were 19116 in 2004, 19403 in 2005, 18637 in 2006 and 19163 in 2007.

Article 14. The right to benefit from social welfare services

With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right to benefit from social welfare services, the Parties undertake:

1. to promote or provide services which, by using methods of social work, would contribute to the welfare and development of both individuals and groups in the community, and to their adjustment to the social environment;
2. to encourage the participation of individuals and voluntary or other organizations in the establishment and maintenance of such services.

Article 14 §1 to promote or provide services which, by using methods of social work, would contribute to the welfare and development of both individuals and groups in the community, and to their adjustment to the social environment;

1) Please describe the general legal framework. Please specify the nature of, reasons for and extent of any reforms.

Social service right is regulated by the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Law on “Social service to the elderly” of the Republic of Azerbaijan and other legal and regulatory acts.

Social security right is defined as following in the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan:

“Article 38. Social security right

- I. Every person has the right to social security.
- II. First of all, this is the duty of family members to assist those in need for care.
- III. Every person upon reaching definite age, is entitled to social security for illness, disability, loss of breadwinner, loss of labour function, unemployment and in other cases envisaged by the Law.
- IV. Minimum level of benefits and social allowances is defined by the Law.
- V. The Government creates opportunities for promotion of charity activities, voluntary social insurance and other types of social security.

In case where citizens are dissatisfied with social services, they can address to higher bodies of relevant organizations. If citizens don't agree with decision of higher body or are disagreed with steps or inactiveness of authorized persons, they can apply to the court

In some cases, for example, for violation of legislation on social allowances, administrative punishment may be applied in line with the Code of Administrative Offences of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

“Article 53-4. Violation of legislation on social allowances:

53-4.1 A punishment at the amount of 35-80 folds of conditional currency unit is applied for not issuing decision on granting social allowances by the relevant

authority within the period set by the legislation, making decision on not granting allowances, not giving formal answer to applicants with indication of reasons of denial within the timeframe fixed by the legislation or answering without indication of reasons of denial.

53-4.2 A punishment at the amount of 30-40 folds of conditional currency unit is applied for not giving information by beneficiaries (their family members) to the relevant authority that may be reason to stop allowances.

In addition to citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan, foreigners permanently living in the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan and stateless persons can also benefit from the right to social security. The rights of foreigners permanently living in the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan and stateless persons are defined with relevant legal and regulatory acts.

According to the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on “Rules of considering applications of citizens”, applications made by citizens to government structures in the form of proposals, petition and complaints are a main way to implement and protect human rights.

“Article 12. Rules of considering applications of foreigners and stateless persons. Rules of considering applications of foreigners and stateless persons are regulated by this law, unless otherwise are envisaged in inter-states contracts adhered to by the Republic of Azerbaijan.”

Provision of citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan, as well as, foreign and stateless persons permanently residing in the Republic of Azerbaijan who reached 70 years of age with care, catering services, medical, social, psychological, legal and other assistances at social service facilities and homes is regulated with the Law#158-IIQ of the Republic of Azerbaijan on “Social service to the elderly” dated June 22, 2001.

It’s intended to strengthen scientific basis of social protection of the elderly that ensures their rights to social protection, protects their health status and supports their integration into the society, in the framework of the “State Program on strengthening social protection of the elderly for 2006-2008”

According to Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on “Social service to the elderly” and “Guidelines on provision of social and household services to the lonely elderly at their homes”, Social and household service departments of district

(city) Social Protection Centers of Population of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population of the Republic of Azerbaijan provide social and household services to invalids with I group disability status and the elderly above 70 years of age who live alone and don't have children or parents with legal obligations to take care of them residing in the same city and rayon (regardless of whether they live in different settlements). Invalids with II disability group and the elderly under 70 years of age in need for care of others are provided with services on the above mentioned terms at a referral of physician-advisory commissions or medical-social expert commission. Here, the term of same residential area refers to administrative territorial unit and residential area defined in line with an order of the National Parliament of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Provision of social welfare services is defined in following ways within the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on "Narcological service and control":

"Article 16. Social measures on narcological service

16.1 Social measures for ensuring objectives of narcological service are as following:

16.1.1 Provision of social care and protection of rights of children of narcological patients deprived of parental care;

16.1.2 Social protection and ensuring the rights of narcological patients and their families;

16.1.3 Implementation of measures for integration of narcological patients into society (provision of narcological patients with employment or vocational skills, as well as, temporary shelters to those without living place).

16.2 Social measures on narcological service are undertaken in line with a single state program adopted by a relevant executive authority of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

16.3 During voluntary treatment period (including, social-psychological rehabilitation period) narcological patients are entitled to all social provisions that are provided during treatment of other diseases.

16.4 Narcological patients with lost working capacity are awarded disability status and social provisions on terms envisaged for other patients, while taking into account their health status.

The main aim of the "Program on combating trafficking of drugs, psychotropic substances and their precursory, as well as, spread of drug abuse (2007-2012)" is to strengthen combating trafficking of drugs, psychotropic substances and their precursory, as well as, spread of drug abuse, to carry out

anti-drug promotion campaign, to prevent trafficking of drugs and spread of drug abuse through awareness raising measures, to bring back to healthy life drug addicts, to further improve treatment-rehabilitation activities, to undertake scientific and practical studies on leaning punishment measures and to develop international cooperation.

The Law # 499-IQ of the Republic of Azerbaijan on “Child rights” dated May 19, 1998 defines rights and freedoms of children in the Republic of Azerbaijan, main principles of state policy on children, duties of government structures, other legal entities and individuals in line with the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Convention on child rights and other international legal norms.

The Law # 919-IIIQ of the Republic of Azerbaijan on “Prevention of negligence and violation of rights of immature persons” dated May 24, 2005 regulates public relations triggered by prevention of negligence and violation of rights of immature persons and defines rights and duties of government structures in this sphere.

The Law # 353-IIIQ of the Republic of Azerbaijan on “Social adaptation of persons freed from penitentiary facilities” dated May 31, 2007 defines organizational and legal basis for implementing measures aimed at social adaptation of persons freed from penitentiary facilities into the society in line with cases and rules set by the legislation and regulates relations established in this sphere.

In line with the Law # 958-IIQ of the Republic of Azerbaijan on “Combating human trafficking” objectives of combating human trafficking include protecting persons and society from any types of human trafficking, revealing and preventing human trafficking, eradicating their results and achieving these aims by defining and eliminating causes of human trafficking, reducing risks of becoming victims of human trafficking, restoring rights and ensuring social rehabilitation of victims of human trafficking.

2) Please indicate the measures taken (administrative arrangements, programmes, action plans, projects, etc.) to implement the legal framework.

Relevant departments of government structures and their management to which social welfare entities are subordinated monitor implementation of provisions of the legislation related to delivery of

social welfare services. Social services provided by government structures are free of charge.

Relevant consulting, rehabilitation and support services are provided for groups of population in need for special care, including, youth, women, refugees, Internally Displaced Persons, disabled and persons freed from penitentiary facilities to ensure their employment rights.

According to the Law on Employment of the Republic of Azerbaijan, citizens are entitled to free consultations on professional orientation, vocational training, re-training and upgrading services at Employment Services in order to select type of employment, workplace and work regime.

Professional orientation rooms are operational within the structures of the General Employment Department of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Population situated in Baku, Ganja, Nakhchivan and Mingachevir cities. It's envisaged to create professional orientation rooms in other big cities and districts of the country.

Each year hundreds of jobseekers and unemployed citizens, including, senior level pupils at general secondary schools get professional orientation advice, as well as, comprehensive and large information on recent demands of employers at the labour market through professional orientation rooms. Furthermore, employment related questions of citizens are discussed in details at those rooms.

Jobseekers and unemployed citizens addressed to Employment Services in all districts (cities) of the country are also getting professional orientation and counselling.

In a view of high importance of professional orientation measures in future life and employment provision of the youth, "Methodical materials on organization of professional orientation" and "Multimedia test programs system on definition of professional orientation of jobseekers and unemployed citizens" were prepared within the project of "Development of National Social Protection System" jointly implemented by the Government of Azerbaijan and United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and successfully applied at Employment Services. Submitted methodical materials cover issues related to

organization and management of professional orientation at Employment Services.

These are consultants of Employment Services who provide professional orientation counselling to jobseekers and unemployed citizens addressed to Employment Services. Professional orientation counselling is arranged in two forms – group and personal professional advice. Being one of the main parts of professional orientation measures, professional counselling is provided using different methodical recommendation and assists citizens in finding decent place in life in the future.

Families

It has been decided to create a targeted social assistance system as an initial phase of reforms aimed at more efficient social protection of vulnerable groups that is one of the six priority directions of the Azerbaijani Government's strategy on poverty reduction outlined in the "State Program on Poverty Reduction and Economic Development in the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2003-2005" approved by the Decree #854 of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated February 20, 2003. Application of that system aims at strengthening social protection of underprivileged stratum of the population ensured by the government, defining poor and more indigent layer of the population and directing social assistance especially at those people.

As a first step in introduction of a targeted social assistance system, the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on "Targeted state social assistance" was adopted on October 21, 2005 in order to create a relevant legislative framework and the Decree #312 was signed by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated November 16, 2005 to ensure application of that Law. Furthermore, with a view to ensuring full-fledged operation of the system "Rules on application for social assistance, its definition, provision and refusal" and "Rules on calculation of average monthly income of a family" was approved by the Order #32 dated February 2, 2006, as well as, "Rules on calculation of income from subsidiary small-holding for getting a social assistance" by the Order #118 dated May 1, 2006 of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population prepared and introduced beginning from January 2007 the "Questionnaire for definition of relevant means to take underprivileged families out of poverty" in order to

enhance and improve quality of information on families, as well as, define main reasons behind their poverty status for involving them in more active social measures on the basis of data bank collected on families who applied for targeted social assistance to and were registered at social protection centers of population.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population drafted the “Program on social rehabilitation of underprivileged families” that covers 13 projects. The objective of this Program is to gradually take underprivileged families out of poverty through active projects using data bank on families collected at social protection centers of population. Submitted draft program includes active projects that cover employment, vocational training, social services, medical-social rehabilitation, ensuring of decent labour, support to shift from school to employment, family-farms and small business, in-kind aid, psycho-social assistance and other issues. This is a comprehensive approach towards definition and gradual withdrawal of underprivileged families from poverty.

According to information as of December 2007, 78,092 families were granted targeted social assistance, of which, 33,657 were multi-children families, 14,866 families with the disabled member and 6,600 IDP families. Per capita and per family average monthly sum of awarded targeted social assistance amounted to 17,38 manats and 81,03 manats, respectively.

The elderly

According to the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on “Social services to the elderly” and guidelines approved by the Board of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population and agreed with relevant authorities, as of January 1, 2008, social-household services departments of district (city) Social Protection Centers of Population of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population of the Republic of Azerbaijan provide services to 15028 invalids with I group disability status and the elderly who reached 70 years of age who live alone and don’t have children or parents with legal obligations to take care of them residing in the same city and district, as well as to invalids with II disability group (except for the lone elderly and invalids with infectious diseases or mental disorders in hard form) in need for care of others at a referral of physician-advisory commissions or medical-social expert commission.

As for January 1, 2008, 1120 the elderly and invalids live in boarding houses for the elderly and invalids with 1617 people capacity. Of which, 61 persons were taken in during 2007 at referrals of the Ministry and Office of Social Protection of Population of Baku city.

In urban areas and urban-type settlements 1 social service officer serves 12 people, while this figure amounts to 8 people in rural areas. Social service officers pay visits to houses of the lone elderly and invalids at least twice a week and buy necessary foodstuff, industrial and household appliances, do shopping, clean and wash items and equipment at home, assist to get pensions and benefits in time, take clothes and dresses to laundry, call a master and doctor, if necessary, buy medicines, render primary health care service at recommendation of physician, get courtyard cleaned, planted and harvest collected.

Young offenders

The basic, as well as, some social rights of convicts, especially immature prisoners at penitentiary facilities that considered as a vulnerable group are reflected in the article 10 of the Code on Execution of Sentences approved by the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated July 14, 2000. This article broadly covers such social rights of convicts as to serve sentence term in condition respecting human dignity, to do public works, to rest, to receive pension and social benefit, to get in-patient or out-patient health care services depending on medical referral, including, primary health care services, to take part in fulfillment of religious rituals, to get legal assistance, education and vocational training. It should be noted that immature convicts are provided with better conditions and privileges compared to other convicts in line with the Code on Execution of Sentences. First of all, they are provided with meals and dresses at the cost of government. Better food ration is defined for those convicts and they are involved less in public works. Convicts have the right to remit at least 50% of their salaries, regardless of all deductible amounts, received at correctional facilities to their individual accounts. Each year immature convicts can go out for a short period in the accompaniment of parents or protectors during leave time at the decision of the head of a correctional facility.

At the same time, the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on "Social adaptation of persons freed from penitentiary facilities" was adopted on May 31, 2006 in order to increase state assistance to people, including, immature persons freed from

from penitentiary facilities. In line with the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on “Making amendments to some legislative acts of the Republic of Azerbaijan” dated November 6, 2007 to ensure implementation of the above-mentioned Law, amendments were made to the article 175 of the Code on Execution of Sentences and specific duties set for management of penitentiary facilities with a view to preparing persons freed from imprisonment to the society, i.e. ensuring their social adaptation. A special structure – Department for social protection of convicts was created within the Penitentiary Service in line with the Order of the Ministry of Justice dated July 5, 2007 in order to more efficiently implement requirements of that Law and ensure rights, especially, social rights of convicts. The main objective of that department is to ensure social protection of convicts and assist in their social adaptation. The Penitentiary Service carries out regular controls to ensure the right to serve sentence in condition respecting human dignity in line with the legislation and assesses provision level with foodstuff and necessary goods in penitentiary facilities and correctional facilities where immature convicts serve their sentences.

With a view to ensuring more reliable protection of rights and freedom of immature convicts, the Committee of parents has been established at the Correctional facility according to the Order of the Ministry of Justice dated April 9, 2002 in line with the article 131 of the Code on Execution of Sentences of the Republic of Azerbaijan. This Committee takes an active part in restoring relations and social status between immature convicts and their parents or other legal protectors, encouraging them to get vocational training, developing their personal abilities, and rendering them moral and psychological assistance.

In line with the above-mentioned article of the Code on Execution of Sentences of the Republic of Azerbaijan, another public organization – Trustee Council consisting of representatives of government structures and non-governmental organizations has been established within the Correctional facility. Rules on organization of activity and operation of the Council were approved by the Order #16 of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated January 15, 2001. The objective and duty of the Council is to render assistance to management of the facility in ensuring rights and freedom of immature convicts in line with the legislation, involving them in public works and in other spheres. The composition of the Trustee Council has been approved by the order of chief of the Penitentiary Service and it has been operating for more than 4 years.

Night general secondary school #45 of Khatai district of Baku city and Technical-vocational school are operating at the Correctional facility in order to ensure the

right of immature convicts to education and vocational training. As of June 1, 2008, out of 50 convicts at the penitentiary facility 3 persons had general secondary education and 3 persons vocational education, as well as, 47 people were involved in general secondary education and 13 people in vocational education on vehicle-craftsman profession. Necessary condition has been created at the facility in order to ensure normal pastime, rest and sport activity of convicts. There is also a computer classroom.

Besides all of the above-mentioned measures, involvement of public organizations in process of correcting convicts and meeting their social needs is in the limelight in line with the article 20 the Code on Execution of Sentences of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Deputies of the National Parliament of the Republic of Azerbaijan, scientific and art figures, representatives of public and non-governmental organizations, as well as, Ombudswoman of the Republic of Azerbaijan and other staff members pay regular visits to the Correctional facility, get acquainted with correctional process of convicts, render assistance, learn existing problems and take steps for their solution. In 2007, 14 government structures and non-governmental organizations paid 20 visits, and over the first 5 months of 2008, 7 different organizations paid 10 visits to the Correctional facility.

At the same time, on April 2006, the Ministry of Justice issued the Order #4-T to define rules concerning participation of the public in correction of convicts, including immature ones, as well as, implementation of public control over activities of facilities executing sentence terms. In lines with rules approved by that Order, a special body – Public Committee has been established. This body takes an active part in correctional process of convicts, pays visits to penitentiary, as well as, correctional facilities without any impediment and carries out public control over their activities. Members of the Committee are appointed for one year term by the Election Commission approved by the Order of the Board of the Ministry of Justice.

The legislation gives special attention to freeing process of convicts, including immature ones. First of all, freed convicts are provided with money to go home and foodstuff. In case freed convicts don't have necessary seasonal dresses and foot-wears, they are provided at the cost of state. When immature convicts are freed, management of the Correctional facility informs their relatives or they are sent to their homes in accompaniment of staff of the facility. Immature convicts without parents are sent to boarding schools by the Ministry of Education or handed over to protectors.

The youth

Beginning from 2006, the process of creation of “Youth houses” has been launched in line with relevant articles of the “State Program on the Azerbaijani Youth for 2005-2009” approved by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated August 30, 2005. The “Youth houses” are facilities to provide the youth with social services and their objective is to carry out dedicated measures aimed at effectively organizing free time of the youth, ensuring their cultural and esthetic education, as well as, normal operation of public unions of children and youth, rendering state care to creative and talented youth, supporting entrepreneurial activity, providing employment, creating suitable condition for active participation in the life of society, bringing up decent citizens, providing necessary information on different issues and raising skills. Currently, there are about 10 Youth Houses in districts and cities of the country and their creation process is underway.

Summer and winter rest or training camps are regularly organized in order to develop healthy lifestyle habits and improve integration of orphan and disabled children, teenagers and youth, as well as, those living in unsuitable condition into the society. In 2005, about 500 teenagers rested at camps during vacation through the support of the Ministry of Youth and Sport. In December of the same year, 80 orphan, lone, street and working children increased their life skills and rested at a winter camp in Shamakhy organized by the “Source of hope” Child Shelter (NGO) through financial support of the Ministry.

From July 25 to August 3, 2006, a summer rest camp was arranged for 50 young people with disabilities together with the “Lotos” Center for understanding disability and training. Participants of the camp took part in interesting intellectual and on-the-table sport games, as well as, workshops.

Awareness raising campaigns titled “Healthy family is the base of the society” were held in Shirvan, Aran, Lenkaran-Astara and Guba-Khachmaz regions over August-September of 2006. In the framework of the campaign, meetings were held with the youth, concert programs organized in selected districts of regions and printed materials distributed.

From 8 to 10 November, 2006, I Republican Creative Festival of IDP youth and teenagers was held in Baku city. In the framework of the festival, participants got

acquainted with Baku city. Winners were selected by a board of judges consisted of prominent art figures of the country and awarding ceremony of winners and Gala-concert was held in Musical Comedy Theater on November 10, 2006.

Awarding ceremony of winners of a national competition on articles promoting healthy lifestyle among young journalists was held in Baku Press Center on November 22, 2006. Winners on 5 nominations were awarded diploma of the Ministry and money prize.

The issue of provision of the youth with preferential mortgage loans has been settled in order to solve housing problem of the youth. Thus, the second article of the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on "Improving of mechanisms for provision of mortgage loans in the Republic of Azerbaijan" dated January 23, 2007 confirmed "Rules on provision of soft mortgage loans in the Republic of Azerbaijan". According to the Decree, young families will receive 35,000 manats soft loans with annual 4% interest rate for 30 years.

Training courses on prevention of drug abuse were arranged in Guba rayon for representatives of youth and sport departments and non-governmental organizations of the youth of Khizi, Siyezen, Devechi, Khachmaz, Guba, Gusar rayons on February 20-21, 2007 and in Agsu rayon for Shamakhy, Gobustan, Kurdemir, Agsu, Goychay, Ucar Zerdab, Agdash, Ismailly districts on February 27-28, 2007. The aim of these events was to organize the work of prevention of drug abuse among the youth at required level, broadly discuss undertaken measures and improve efficiency of anti-drug promotion and awareness raising campaigns.

A promotion campaign under the slogan of "Struggle against drug abuse and AIDS is to save morality" was held in Ganjabasar, Garabagh and Sheki-Zagatala regions over May-June, 2007. The objective of that campaign was to ensure implementation of relevant articles outlined in the "State Program on the Azerbaijani Youth for 2005-2009" approved by the Decree #982 of Mr. Ilham Aliyev the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated August 30, 2005, to promote healthy lifestyle among the youth and to carry out preventive measures among them against crimes, drug abuse, AIDS and other negative tendencies.

Delegation consisted of 15 children was sent to a summer camp organized by the Federal Education Agency of the Russian Federation at "Orlyonok" Russia Child Center in Tuapse city of the Russian Federation.

Training courses on prevention of drug abuse were arranged in Ganja city for representatives of youth and sport departments and non-governmental organizations of the youth of Yevlakh, Mingachevir, Ganja, Samukh, Khanlar, Dashkesen, Gedebey, Tovuz, Agstafa, Gazakh and Gedebey on August 20-21, 2007 and in Sheki town for Balaken, Zaqatala, Gakh, Gebele, Oguz, Sheki districts on August 27-28, 2007. The aim of these events was to organize the work of prevention of drug abuse among the youth at required level, broadly discuss undertaken measures and improve efficiency of anti-drug promotion and awareness raising campaigns.

A summer rest camp was organized for young invalids on August 3-17, 2007. The objective of the event was to raise awareness of problems faced by the disabled youth, to prioritize their adaptation into the society, to efficiently organize pastime and to enhance communication opportunities.

On September 30, 2007 the III National Competition among D-jays was held under the motto of "The youth vote for healthy lifestyle". The aim of that competition was to discover creative youth on different directions of art, to create condition for them by the state and to call them to be away from harmful habits.

The II Creative Festival-Competition of the IDP youth was held on October 9-11, 2007.

A promotion campaign under the motto of "Combating traffic in human and violence is duty of all of us" was organized in Guba-Khachmaz, Shirvan and Aran regions in October- November of 2007. To this end, awareness raising meetings were held among the youth, printed materials distributed and a concert program was organized in the selected district.

Exhibition of young disabled artists and photographs dedicated to December 3 - The International Day of Protection of Invalids was arranged together with the "Lotos" Center for understanding disability and training. In that event photos and drawings of about 50 invalids were exhibited. All participants have been provided with symbolic prizes and certificates at the end of the exhibition.

On December 15, 2007 a National Conference dedicated to combating AIDS was held. Besides Azerbaijani specialists, international experts also took part at the conference. A Resolution was adopted at the end of the conference.

Persons with disability

In the light of changes in social and economic life of the country, the Law on “Social protection of disabled” was adopted in 1992 to ensure comprehensive implementation of measures aimed at increasing care provided to disabled that are more vulnerable stratum of the population, protecting their social and economic interests, as well as, actively integrating them into the society. In different years the relevant legislative framework was improved with a view to realizing flexible and consecutive social protection measures for disabled.

In view of normal participation of people with disabilities in all spheres of public life, their medical, social and vocational rehabilitation, as well as, necessity to meet their social needs and interest, “Comprehensive Program on problems of invalids in the Republic of Azerbaijan” was adopted by the Order of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan in 1994 and “State Program on prevention of disability and rehabilitation of persons with disability for 1999-2002” was approved by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan in 1999.

The Social Protection Fund of Invalids was created in 1993 to improve measures in social protection of persons with disability. In 2002, the General Office of Social Protection of Disabled within the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population was established on the basis of that Fund. The structure of the General Office of Social Protection of Invalids consists of central office, 21 zone departments and the Nakhchivan AR Office of Social Protection of Disabled. Each year, the General Office of Social Protection of Disabled carries out financing of activities related to social protection of persons with disability (except for pensions and benefits) in line with the relevant State Program.

The objective of the State Program is to ensure social protection and consequently, integration into the society of invalids through comprehensively settling their medical, social and vocational rehabilitation issues. According to the State Program, financing of measures on social protection of invalids is carried out through compulsory state insurance funds.

Measures on social protection and medical rehabilitation of invalids cover all layers of persons with disability regardless of their categories. Preference is given to invalids who became disabled during defending territorial integrity of the country, while solving housing problems and providing with automobiles.

In the area of health care and medical rehabilitation of invalids – poor invalids in need of treatment were provided with financial aids to get treatment inside and outside the country and funds were allocated to purchase medicines with a view to improving provision of medicines to invalids getting treatment at the Republican Invalids Rehabilitation Center. 6 rehabilitation centers have been built and commissioned, and construction works completed in 1 rehabilitation and 1 sport-health care center in regions to strengthen restoration of health care and medical rehabilitation of persons with disability.

In the area of information provision on disability problem, creative works of invalids, organization of their pastime, sport and physical education – measures have been undertaken to create an information-inquiry system of invalids, personal information on more than 400,000 people with disabilities living in the country has been systematized and entered in database together with the Scientific Research and Education Center on Labour and Social Issues of the Ministry.

It became a tradition to organize annual national competitions on applied art, artistic-creativity, music and sport games among invalids in order to strengthen integration of invalids into society and discover talented persons with disability. More than 1230 talented invalids took part in such events arranged in 2007.

Special attention is given to organization of pastime of persons with disability. Over the past years rest of 1260 poor invalids living in Baku and Sumgait cities were organized in recreation zones in summer and opportunities created for persons with disability to attend different interesting theater performances and concerts, as well as, for disabled children to take part in Novruz and New Year holiday festivities. Financial aids have been provided to send invalids to international competitions through National Paralympic and Special Olympic Committees.

In the area of provision of material and technical assistance to invalids – annually, events are held in remarkable days and holidays, including, commemoration days of 20 January and Chernobyl tragedies, Novruz holiday, December 3 – The International Day of Invalids, anniversary of Victory Day of War in 1941-1945, September 15 – The Knowledge Day and one-off aids are provided to persons with disability.

In the area of solution of social and household problems of invalids – applicants with disability are provided with targeted material assistance at the decision of the relevant commission of Ministry.

In the area of assistance to solution of housing problem of invalids – over the given period, 20 residential buildings have been constructed and 420 invalids provided with new apartments and individual houses have been built for 108 invalids of Garabagh war veterans living in rural areas. 684 passenger cars were provided free of charge to war invalids during 2004-2007 by the Government.

Children, families, women, victims of domestic violence

The main task of the “State Program on handing over children in state child institutions to families (de-institutionalization) and alternative care (2006-20015)” approved by the Decree #1386 of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated March 29, 2006 is to elaborate practical mechanisms aimed at organization of social services for children. To this end, monitoring of operations of all boarding schools and child institutions were carried out, state child institutions and children living there evaluated, database created and relevant transformation plan established by the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Population and the State Committee on Family, Woman and Child Issues in September-November 2006.

It was envisaged to establish family based social service centres for children, to create general purposes schools, lyceums and gymnasiums at the basis of general secondary boarding schools, to change some boarding education facilities for children with limited health care status into rehabilitation centres and to take measures aimed at returning children in those facilities to their biological families in the framework of the project.

The State Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan on Family, Woman and Child Issues was established in February 2006. The number of staff of the central office is 62.

In line with the statute of the State Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan on Family, Woman and Child Issues, social welfare services to citizens are provided in following ways:

- to learn social problems faced by underprivileged families, refugee and IDP women, children, martyr families that lost their breadwinners, lone mothers, especially, disabled women and children, as well as, convicted women and raise issues at relevant state bodies related to their solution:
- to ensure provision of advice together with relevant state structures in implementation of entrepreneurial activities by women and creation of family farms;
- to prepare projects aimed at vocation training and upgrading of women and ensure implementation of measures together with relevant organizations and etc.

In 2007, "The National Action Plan on Family and Woman Issues" was prepared by the State Committee on Family, Woman and Child Issues together with the UNFPA. The Action Plan covers comprehensive measures to strengthen family relations, improve situations of families, implement child rights and create necessary condition for development of children. The objective of "The National Action Plan on Family and Woman Issues for 2008-2012" is to support creation of strong state and give rise to prosperity in the country through strengthening and developing family and inter-family relations on the basis of gender equality principles. With a view to achieving above-mentioned objectives, the Action Plan includes two directions –measures both on woman and family issues. Measures on family issues cover activities related to demographic problems, family planning, reproductive health etc. Woman issues envisage activities on participation of women in decision-making processes, as well as, political, economic and social life of the society.

Roundtables on domestic violence entitled "Human rights in inter-family relations" were organized in regions within the framework of National Comprehensive Program on "Combating everyday violence in democratic society".

Coordination Council has been established consisting of authorized staff on women issues at ministries and other governmental structures in order to efficiently organize activities on ensuring gender equality in line with the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on "Provisions of gender (women and men) equality" dated October 10, 2006 and recommendations of the Council of Europe.

Within the framework of the project "Preserving and developing national and moral values" lectures have been delivered at 4 higher education facilities of the country in collaboration with UNFPA and Gender Studies Center within the Western University in May, 2007. The objective of the project was to eradicate

gender based violence and early marriages, to raise awareness on international agreements and national legislation related to human rights with a view to protecting women and to ensure participation of women in social and political life of the country on equal basis as men. The second phase of the project was implemented in regions (Masally, Lenkeran, Yardimly, Lerik, Yevlakh, Ganja, Shemkir). The final conference of the project entitled "Human rights and gender dimensions in Islam" was held on July 4.

The State Committee on Family, Woman and Child Issues and UNDP organized presentation of the report "Gender relations in Azerbaijan: Tendencies and Problems" on September 10, 2007. The report was prepared in collaboration with UNDP and the Committee through financial support of the Norwegian Government.

The State Committee on Family, Woman and Child Issues, the Ministry of Youth and Sport and the Ministry of Internal Affairs undertook measures on "Let's say NO to human trafficking and violence" in September-October, 2007. During the awareness raising campaign materials prepared by the State Committee on Family, Woman and Child Issues and the Ministry of Youth and Sport distributed among the population.

Furthermore, the Committee together with UNFPA organized workshops on "Domestic violence and human trafficking" "at a number of regional schools within the project "Let's say NO to violence against women".

Experts of the UNFPA and staff of the State Committee on Family, Woman and Child Issues carried out promotion and awareness raising campaign in Salyan, Neftchala, Jalilabad, Dashkesen and Khanlar districts within the project "Let's say NO to violence against women". The final conference of the project was held on November 23, 2007. Parliament members, authorized staff on gender issues at ministries and district executive powers of Baku city, as well as, representatives of non-governmental and international organizations took part at that conference.

The State Committee on Family, Woman and Child Issues of the Republic of Azerbaijan was appointed as a Central body on inter-states child adoption issues by the Decree #547 of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated March 12, 2007 on "Application of the Law#168-IIIQD of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated October 20, 2006 on "Making amendments to some legislative acts of the Republic of Azerbaijan".

Child and Family Support Centres created in Goranboy rayon and Azizbekov district of Baku city within the program “Community-based Support to Children” by the Save the Children organization of the USA were handed over to the State Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan on Family, Woman and Child Issues in July 2007 according to agreement signed between the Government of Azerbaijan and Save the Children organization of the USA on turn-over act of Child and Family Support Centres.

According to the Statute of the Child and Family Support Centres, they provide services to following persons:

1. children with physical and mental disability, as well as, with limited health care status and their families;
2. children without family care, as well as, abandoned and neglected children;
3. immature persons being at social risk and their families;
4. children in refugee, IDP and martyr families and their family members;
5. children at child institutions and their family members;
6. persons faced with violence;
7. persons freed from penitentiary facilities;
8. children with one parent;
9. underprivileged families.

Child and Family Support Centres provide following services:

1. psychological assistance and socio-psychological rehabilitation;
2. active therapy, including, vocational and art therapies;
3. personal therapy – teaching independent life skills;
4. legal and other advice on family, women and child issues;
5. trainings, workshops and awareness raising among the population;
6. organization of family support groups, as well as, mother and child groups;
7. measures on organization of efficient free time and cultural events;
8. meetings at homes;
9. youth clubs;
10. day services;
11. arrangement of relevant events aimed at vocational training, re-training of jobseekers and unemployed;

12. organization of courses on development of entrepreneurship and self-employment for children from underprivileged families and their families;
13. implementation of measures related to increasing competitiveness of children from underprivileged families and their families at the labour market, as well as, organization of folk applied art and self-employment courses;
14. organization of ICT and foreign languages courses;
15. arrangement of trainings on child rights and family relations.

The staff number at each centre is 14. They have higher education.

After submission of the last report from Azerbaijan to United Nations Child Rights Committee, a National Coordination Council was established within the State Committee on Family, Woman and Child Issues in line with recommendations of the United Nations Child Rights Committee. The objective of the Council is to coordinate activities of government structures, local NGOs and international organizations operating on child rights and issues in the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The Committee is preparing proposals on improving the legislation to increase responsibility of parents, to prevent violation of child rights by parents, to define standards on de-institutionalization and alternative care, protector, guardian and foster families, to protect rights of these families, to better organize child adoption and protect rights of children.

The State Committee on Family, Woman and Child Issues organized the II National Conference in collaboration with the UNICEF Azerbaijan Office, the organization "Save the children" and NGO Alliance on child rights in May, 2007. The event was dedicated to problems of children in need of special care and the draft National Action Plan prepared on proposals made by representatives of NGOs and state structures working with children with limited health capacity during the I National Conference was discussed.

With a view to publicly promoting "The State Program on handing over children from State Child Institutions to families (De-institutionalization) and alternative care in the Republic of Azerbaijan", seminars were held and awareness raising works carried out in Baku city and different districts of the country with the participation of state structures, NGOs and broad public and relevant materials prepared.

The Committee and the UAFA organization implemented the project “Parent participation” beginning from June, 2006 in order to learn demands of children in need of special care and their parents. Within the framework of the project, meetings, talk-shows and trainings on advocacy issues with children with limited health capacity and their parents organized and meetings arranged with parents of children in need of special care.

The State Committee on Family, Woman and Child Issues drafted the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on “Prevention of domestic violence”, improved it on the basis of comments received from relevant state structures and submitted the final version of the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on “Prevention of domestic violence” to the Cabinet of Ministers.

The State Committee on Family, Woman and Child Issues, the Heydar Aliyev Foundation and UNFPA signed the project “Combating violence against women in the XXI century” on January 16, 2008 in order to support comprehensive measures undertaken by the Azerbaijani Government with a view to preventing violence against women. The project will cover the period from January 2008 to September 2009 (20 months). The aim of the project is to create preventive, protective and rehabilitation service models for actual and potential victims of violence while taking into account international expertise and using modern service approaches, as well as, to carry out promotion campaign at national level with a view to changing information and stereotypes on possible services for victims of violence.

Baku city, Lenkaran, Ganja and Nakhchivan regions were selected as pilot areas for implementation of the project. It's intended to restructure Centers for Support to Children and Families (Shuvalan and Goranboy) at the auspices of the State Committee on Family, Woman and Child Issues in order to enable them provide social services to victims of domestic violence. Another important fact in the area of combating domestic violence is that not only victims of violence are being rehabilitated but also relevant works carried out with committers of violence to learn the reasons of violence cases and define relevant ways to eradicate them.

The National Action Plan on Human Rights in the Republic of Azerbaijan approved by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated December 28, 2006 covers measures related to protection of women's rights along with other rights. Within the Action Plan it's envisaged to strengthen combating violence, including domestic violence against women, to ensure legal protection

means, necessary compensation, rehabilitation, medical and psychological assistance, as well as, to carry out broad enlighten activities with a view to protecting women's rights.

Within the "National Comprehensive Program on Combating Eveready Violence in Democratic Society" approved by the Order of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated January 25, 2007, it's envisaged to elaborate different strategic plans, to protect women from violence committed against them, as well as, to draft proposals on preparation of Laws regulating implementation of the UN "Convention on Eradication of all forms of discrimination against women" with a view to preventing gender based and other kind of inequality, family violence and cruelty in society.

Furthermore, the Comprehensive Program covers different issues such as organization of social rehabilitation program for refugee and IDP women and children who undergone double violence, arrangement of re-training courses for decreasing unemployment level among women, preparation of curriculum on equality, especially, on valance against women in higher education institutions, definition of criteria of violence against women etc.

The National Action Plan on Family and Woman Issues for 2008-2012 broadly reflects measures related to combating violence, domestic violence against women, as well as, early marriage cases. The chapter dedicated to those issues includes measures on holding committers of violence responsible, improving legal and social-psychological protection of victims of violence and elaborating proposals related to eradication of causes of violence, including, domestic violence against women.

Refugees

The Republic of Azerbaijan takes regular relevant measures on improving social welfare of refugees and Internally Displaced Peoples (IDPs), as well as, integrating them into society.

"The State Program on improving living condition and employment of refugees and IDPs" approved by the Decree #298 of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated July 1, 2004 envisages implementation of comprehensive activities.

49 settlements with 16000 apartments covering 880000m² areas, 108 schools, 34 kindergartens, 42 medical facilities, 30 communication offices, roads and other communication lines (electricity, gas, water etc.) have been constructed for refugees and IDPs.

Over 2004-2007, 63838 refugees and IDPs have been provided with employment, of which, 44774 people as a result of allocation of land plots in new settlements, 2454 people as a result of newly created structures, 6828 people as a result of activities of the State Employment Service and 9400 as a result of construction works. Moreover, 2075 unemployed refugee and IDPs have been awarded unemployed status and unemployment benefits, 835 persons involved in vocational training courses meeting actual requirements of the labour market and 825 persons engaged in paid public works.

With a view to ensuring employment of IDPs, they have been provided about 50,000 ha of lands for temporary use from state and municipal reserve funds and 760 farms established covering 45,000 IDPs. Furthermore, 9 industrial enterprises and 14 agrarian-industrial enterprises and agricultural farms are operating at the auspices of the State Committee on Issues of Refugees and IDPs. These facilities provide employment to 1500 IDPs.

With a view to protecting health of IDPs, regular examinations are conducted, detected diseases treated and free medicines provided by the Ministry of Health and international humanitarian organizations at health care points created in areas densely populated by IDPs or through mobile medical teams.

Persons freed from penitentiary facilities

The General Employment Department of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Population undertakes relevant measures aimed at vocational training and employment provision of persons freed from penitentiary facilities that face challenges in finding job, in line with implementation of the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on "Social adaptation of persons freed from penitentiary facilities". During 2004-2007, 267 persons freed from penitentiary facilities were provided with employment.

Relevant activities are underway for construction of social adaptation centre with 30 people capacity in Baku city for provision of legal, psychological and information support to persons freed from penitentiary facilities.

3) Please provide pertinent figures, statistics or any other relevant information to demonstrate the effective access to social services (beneficiaries in total and per category of social welfare services, number and geographical distribution of services, staff number and qualifications).

As of January 1, 2008, 74 heads of departments, 71 senior consultants on privileges and other issues, 33 senior consultants on organization of social services at homes and 1,582 social service officers were involved in works on provision of services at homes to the lone elderly and persons with disability in 76 districts and cities of the country. 12,889 people that have been provided services at homes are above and 2,139 people below 70 years of age. 12,295 service recipients are women and 2,733 men. There are 1,009 I group invalids and 1,803 II group invalids among service recipients. Furthermore, 133 of them are invalids of the Great Patriotic War (1941-45). Majority of citizens from that category are veterans.

2 civil servants in each local structure and 21 civil servants at the central office of the Ministry of Youth and Sport of the Republic of Azerbaijan with higher education were specialized in provision of social services to youth.

62 civil servants with higher education provide counselling, recommendation and legal services to women, families and children at the State Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan on Family, Woman and Child Issues. 1250 applications in 2007 and 701 applications in January-June of 2008 related to different issues were considered at the Committee and relevant assistance provided.

A total of 138 civil servants with higher education, of which, 46 persons at local structures, 36 persons at departments and 56 persons at central office of the State Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan on Refugee and IDPs' Issues provide assistance, counselling and legal advice on different matters to refugees and IDPs. In 2007, 22758 people and in 9 months of 2008 18797 people addressed to the Committee and received relevant support.

The Commissioner Office on Human Rights in the Republic of Azerbaijan (Ombudswoman) with large authority on protection of human rights and freedoms out of court system was established in 2002. The Ombudswoman paves "the legal way" between government structures and population in order to

achieve more efficient protection of all rights and freedoms, including, social rights of citizens guaranteed by the Constitution and international legal norms. The Ombudswoman takes systematic measures on protecting social rights, improving quality of social services provided to and legal enlightenment of vulnerable group of the population.

66 civil servants with higher education provide services on protection of different rights of the population at the Commissioner Office on Human Rights in the Republic of Azerbaijan (Ombudswoman). During the function of the Commissioner, a total of 33660 applications, including 7900 applications in 2007 were received, of which, 95,6% were complaints and 4,4% petitions. Out of those complaints, 39,6% related to violation of civil rights and 60,4% economic and social rights. Applications were considered and necessary steps taken, as well as, applicants were provided with a number of legal advice.

In 2004, 237 mln. manats, in 2005 305 mln. manats, in 2006 346 mln. manats and in 2007 617 mln. manats were allocated from the state budget for measures on social protection of the population. Those funds were spent on payment of pensions and benefits, provision of targeted social assistance for underprivileged groups of the population, organization of social services for the disabled, lonely and elderly, medical rehabilitation of people with disabilities and financing of other activities.

Article 14 §2 to encourage the participation of individuals and voluntary or other organizations in the establishment and maintenance of such services.

1) Please describe the general legal framework. Please specify the nature of, reasons for and extent of any reforms.

The Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on “Non-Governmental Organizations (Public Unions and Funds)” (June 13, 2000, #894-1Q) regulates activities of non-governmental organizations at different spheres in the country.

“Article 22. Types of activity of non-governmental organizations

22.1 Non-Governmental Organizations can undertake any kind of activities not prohibited with the legislation of the Republic of Azerbaijan and not contradicting objectives stated in the Statute of a non-governmental organization inside and outside the country.”

A dialogue between state structures and NGOs involved in provision of social services is based on mutual cooperation. NGOs that are members of the National Non-governmental Organizations Forum and specialized in social sphere coordinate activities in the relevant field. NGOs involved in social sector discuss different problems related to social sphere, prepare comments and submit them to relevant state bodies at meetings held at least once a month. State structures also submit application in order to express their views on relevant problems to NGOs and to carry out researches or propose mutual cooperation. Such kind of cooperation is useful for both state structures and NGOs. This mutual cooperation format is further improving and forms state-NGO dialogue mechanisms.

The Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on “NGOs and Foundations” adopted on June 13, 2000 directly ensures activities of NGOs on equal treatment/opportunities basis. This Law regulates activities and system of relations of NGOs in civil way.

Furthermore, “The Conception of State Support to non-governmental organizations of the Republic of Azerbaijan” approved by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated on July 27, 2007 aims at creating stable and effective partnership system between state structures and NGOs, involving NGOs in solution of problems that are of high importance for state and society, and accelerating development of civil society. With a view to implementing the Conception, in 2008 255000 manats worth financial aid was allocated to the social projects by the State Support Council to Non-Governmental

Organizations within the auspices of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan for social projects.

Priority areas of state support to non-governmental organizations are as following:

- Social, physical and spiritual development of children, women and youth;
- Solution of problems of refugees, IDPs, invalids and veterans.

In many cases donor organizations directly supervise quality of services provided by NGOs. In Azerbaijan state, private and international organizations allocate funds to NGO sector as donor organizations. At the same time, NGO sector also carries out a public control over quality of all provided services. Being a unifying and coordinating NGO coalition, the National NGO Forum regularly monitors and evaluates services provided by about 500 members and other relevant non-member NGOs.

2) Please indicate the measures taken (administrative arrangements, programmes, action plans, projects, etc.) to implement the legal framework.

The Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan operates in collaboration with non-governmental organizations, international organizations and funds to provide vulnerable strata of the society with social services. Projects implemented during the reporting period had been mainly prepared jointly by state structures and non-governmental organizations.

The aim of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation established in May 10, 2004 in the token of national leader of Azerbaijani people Heydar Aliyev is to learn rich heritage of great leader, to support implementation of large-scale programs aimed at prosperity of the country and welfare of the population, to preserve national and spiritual values, to assist in implementation of measures on wide promotion of our culture, to support different programs and activities, projects ensuring development of science, education, culture, health care and sport, to serve for bringing up of children and youth as healthy, comprehensively enlightened citizens and persons loyal to national-cultural values, to assist in realization of measures aimed at increasing international prestige of Azerbaijan. One of the main objectives of the Foundation is to provide support to children and teenagers at

child institutions and boarding schools, children from refugee, IDP and underprivileged families, as well as, those with different morbidity.

In the framework of the Program on “Development of Child Institutions and Boarding Schools” 30 child institutions have been thoroughly repaired, provided with new equipment, new supportive buildings constructed and utility services improved. Furthermore, libraries were established at facilities, they were provided with relevant teaching materials and literature, computers are installed at many child institutions and boarding schools and classrooms adjusted to interactive teaching methods. Regular trainings are carried out at facilities to create relevant condition for full-fledged development of children.

The Heydar Aliyev Foundation is implementing mass events, festivals, competitions and supporting self-operating collectives within institutions in order to teach patriotic feelings to teenagers at child institutions and boarding schools, as well as, to ensure effective pastime and rest of children.

The Heydar Aliyev Foundation arranges regular charity events for children without parental care. In the framework of those events, the Foundation sends different gifts to infant and child institutions, as well as, organizes entertainment events and concert programs for children without parental care and suffering different illnesses.

Each year the Foundation arranges New Year and Novruz festivities for children with special attainment at schools, studying at child institutions and boarding schools, as well as, children from refugee and IDP families, orphans and those without parental care. Furthermore, gifts are sent to child institutions and boarding schools at Sacrifice and Ramathan holidays.

Each year within the project “Support to education” the Heydar Aliyev Foundation donates bags and schools appliances to pupils going to first class representing refugee and IDP families forced from their place of permanent residence as a result of aggression committed by Armenia to Azerbaijan. Moreover, new manuals and teaching materials are sent to Azerbaijani pupils going to first class at Georgian schools and to schools in Gakh, Zagatala and Balaken districts where classes are carried out in Georgian language. Within that project, reconstruction of pre-school education facilities (first level of education) has been carried out and 9 kindergartens have been thoroughly repaired and provided with modern equipment.

In 2004, presentation of the project “The highest level care for diabetic children” was organized in Baku by the Heydar Aliyev Foundation, the Azerbaijan Diabetes League and the Danish company “Novo Nordisc”. The main objective of the event was to attract attention of local and foreign companies to protection of health of children and intensify participation of the International Diabetes Federation in solution of problems of diabetic children. In the framework of the implemented project, diabetic children under 14 years of age in the country were provided with sufficient amount of insulin drugs and syringe-pens in 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007 years.

Since 2004 the Heydar Aliyev Foundation began implementing the project “Towards life without thalassemia”. One of the main objectives is to attract attention of public, foreign countries and the International Thalassemia Federation to finding solution to the problem. Within the project construction of the Thalassemia Diagnostic Centre was completed and provided with modern equipment, the aim of which is to treat and carry out diagnosis of thalassemia disease. It’s planned to develop volunteer donor service to provide children suffering from thalassemia with safe and quality blood, to raise awareness of the population to halt spread of thalassemia, to carry out prognosis of disease through prenatal diagnosis and to train high quality staff in the country by increasing cooperation with a number of states combating thalassemia in the framework of the project.

Health care facilities are reconstructed in the capital and regions at the initiative of the Foundation. Over 4 years, the Foundation received more than 5000 medical related applications and close relations were established with health care facilities, as well as, necessary measures taken to render assistance. During 2004-2005, more than 350 patients were undergone surgery at different medical facilities of the country and about 30 patients sent abroad for treatment and examination.

Cooperation agreement and project documents were signed between the Heydar Aliyev Foundation and UNDP aimed at ensuring access of blinds and persons with low visibility capacity to ICT in December 2005. The project has been in implemented at the National Boarding School for blind children and those with low visibility capacity located in Narimanov district of Baku city. The project served for binding blinds and persons with low visibility capacity to life, ensuring their obtainment of knowledge and information through ICT, increasing their employment and on the whole, improving life style of such people. It was implemented in two phases. The first stage focused on defining ICT need of blinds and preparing separate project for elimination of digital differences. To this end,

surveys, discussions and exchange of experience were conducted, as well as, types of equipment to be purchased defined. In the second stage, a model ICT class was created at boarding schools for children with low visibility capacity. Works carried out in this stage include purchasing and installing necessary equipment for children with physical defects, localizing software, ensuring access to internet and preparing special education-training programs. In the third stage, audio library was prepared; training centres were established; voice recording studio was installed for change library stock into audio format; books with Brail print type and audio books were restored through that studio; computer centre was established providing services such as access to internet and information technologies, full-fledged training courses, finding and obtaining information on internet; as well as, teachers and trainers to be involved in training courses were prepared.

In October 2008, foundation of the Child Cerebral Palsy (CCP) Rehabilitation Centre was laid down in Baku city at the initiative of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation that will allow for examination and treatment of children with modern methods that suffer from cerebral palsy. CCP that is intended for children in need of special care is being constructed on the basis of the memorandum of understanding signed with the "Uralsib" financial corporation of Russia in November 2007. It's envisaged to construct, provide with equipment and maintain the rehabilitation within the project.

The Heydar Aliyev Foundation attaches special importance to integration of people with disability into the society, discovery and development of their talent, as well as, appreciation of their work. The World Intellectual Property Organization granted prizes to 15 inventor invalids at the presentation of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation in October 2007.

In 2005, the Heydar Aliyev Foundation get the Psycho-neurological child institution repaired and fully equipped it with training appliances made abroad, inventories, bed clothes, modern medical equipment and medicines. In view of necessity for special centre for examination and treatment of children, the Foundation initiated construction of Psycho-neurological Child Centre within the Psycho-neurological child institution in 2008. Active therapy, massage and check-up rooms provided with modern equipment, as well as, sleeping and dining rooms will allow rapid restoration of health status of children treated at the centre.

A number of non-governmental organizations operate in Baku and other regions to provide community based rehabilitation services to children with limited health

capacity and disability in Azerbaijan. 7 rehabilitation centers (“Mushfig” – in Garadagh rayon, “Rainbow” – in Baku city, “Origamy” – in Baku city, “Healthy child world” – in Ismailly district, “Murad” – in Sheki town, “Regional child fund” – in Ganja city and “Caspian mental health” – in Sumgait city) are operational established by NGOs within the Mental Health Initiative of the Open Society Institute. The above-mentioned rehabilitation centers cover children with disability and their parents in areas where they operate.

At the same time, organizations such as Save the Children, World Vision, UNICEF, UAFA are undertaking following activities for integration and protection of rights of children with disability:

- Assistance projects to child institutions and boarding houses;
- Relevant works with staff of institutions;
- Organization of enlightenment activities;
- Implementation of relevant projects on de-institutionalization.

Moreover, other non-governmental organizations also take active measures to provide services to persons with disability.

The Azerbaijan Association of Blinds takes part in elaboration and implementation of relevant comprehensive programs on social protection of the blinds together with government and local self-managing structures, and undertakes activities on formation of the blinds as personality, meeting of their moral needs and ensuring of economic education.

Within the framework of the project “Application of Braille alphabet for participation of the blinds in elections”, the blinds are provided with regular support to independently participate in voting process. Publication of voting bulletins with Braille alphabet is supported by the government.

Regular training courses on use of voice-computers are conducted through assistance of the project “Organization of resource and training center for the blinds”. The project is supported by the Ministry of Communication and Information Technologies.

The “Invalid Women” Association takes an active part in solution of social problems and protection of rights of invalid women living in Azerbaijan and supports their integration into the society through provision of social and psychological services.

In 2003, through the “Umid” Charitable Organization 1700 children were provided with gifts, on December 25, 2003 1600 disabled and refugee women in Gazakh rayon and in 2004, 3000 disabled and refugee women in Agstafa, Gazakh and Tovuz rayons (through Gazakh regional office) were provided with warm dresses and blankets, as well as, school appliances. Families of thousands of invalid women living in Baku, Siyezen and other regions were provided with garments, warm blankets and hygienic appliances through support of “ADRA” and “UMKOR” humanitarian organizations. Campaigns and supports in that direction are continued. In general, results of workshops and seminars on different issues arranged by staff of organizations for invalid women living in regions pave the way for their integration into the society and strengthening their capacity.

Vocational training courses (hairstylist, dressmaker, weaving with hook, weaving, computer, English language) were arranged for women with disability in the framework of the project “Organization of vocational training courses” supported by the OXFAM organization. Invalid women showed their handcrafts and found potential buyers at exhibitions of handcrafts organized many times in different regions of the country. Although gained income was small, it supported solution of social problems of families of invalids. Provision of women and girls who participated in courses with employment is an indication of sustainability of the project.

Legal clinic and psychological assistance center has been operating for 7 years within the project “Organization of legal assistance center”. Through support of both centers, women and girls with worse psychological status benefit from the project, turn back to normal life and become suitable members of the society.

Workshops have been organized and awareness raising campaigns conducted on protection from diabetes among diabetic patients in the framework of the project “Living with diabetes” implemented by the Azerbaijan Diabetes League through support of the Open Society Institute/Relief Fund. Patients are going through regular examinations and provided with medicines in order to get protection from diabetes.

The project “Sweet life” has been implementing in order to efficiently organize summer vacation of diabetic children. Annually, 30 children are involved in the project implemented through financial support of the Ministry of Youth and Sport.

More than 100 diabetic children have been involved in drawing courses organized for 6 months through support of the project “Dreams in drawings”. A competition

was held and winners awarded in the framework of the project. Some children participated in the project organized their own exhibition. Gained income supported improvement of social condition of their families.

Persons with disability receive regular legal assistance within the project "Provision of legal consultation service to invalids" by the Union of Invalid Organizations. More than 700 applications were considered and relevant assistance provided during the project that lasted for more than a year.

Within the project "Enlightenment activities on elimination of physical obstacles and understanding of disability", the Union of Invalid Organizations together with concerned state structures (Baku city executive power, executive bodies in regions) carried out an awareness raising campaign on elimination of physical obstacles for persons with disability. As a result, special entrances for invalids were established in about 20 facilities and schools. The duration of the project was 6 months and number of participants amounted to 200 people. The project had an important role in integration of invalids into the society.

The Society "Towards International Collaboration of Invalids" provided material and moral support to lonely invalids, as well as, those living at invalid homes through organization of social services by financial support of the UN Young Volunteers Program in the framework of the project "Organization of services at homes". The project is continued together with other structures.

Legal, medical and psychological assistance provided free of charge to the elderly by the Resource Centre of the Elderly established within the NGO "Woman and Development Centre" in 2001, encourages those people into active life-style. The centre mainly covers elderly women from refugee, IDP, martyr families and those that live alone. Events dedicated to remarkable days are organized at the Resource Centre of the Elderly to ensure more efficient pastime of the elderly.

NGO Alliance on Child Rights that was established in 2002 includes 85 NGOs. The Alliance covers following directions of social services:

- Implement protection of child rights;
- Carry out awareness raising measures on different areas;
- Work with children at boarding school;
- Assist in solution of problems those leaving boarding schools;
- Support settlement of challenges of children with disability in different areas;
- Facilitate dissolving of issues of children in contradiction with the Law;

- Protect rights of children that became victims of violence;
- Arrange inclusive education;
- Establish different type of social rehabilitation centres.

In May-October 2006, the Alliance implemented the program “Support from child to child and mentoring services for immature persons in contradiction with the Law in 11 districts of Baku city.” The objective of the program was to create efficient monitoring and guiding mechanisms in order to organize rehabilitation and full integration into the society of immature persons under risk and prevent their isolation from the society. Within the program close cooperation was established among “Commissions on issues and protection of rights of immature persons” within the Executive Powers of districts, police inspectors dealing with children, psychologists and deputy heads on education issues working at schools and NGOs involved in child issues. During the implementation of the program, a mechanism was elaborated and tested for timely identification of children in contradiction with the Law and ensuring their full integration into school, family and society through conducting psycho-sociological rehabilitation works among them.

The clinic renders legal assistance on applications coming from Baku and all districts of Azerbaijan. Moreover, different Police Departments give regular information on children violated the Law to the Clinic. As a result of legal activities implemented by the clinic children committed different crimes undergo alternative punishment rather than imprisonment. At the same time, the clinic arranges seminars on legal enlightenment at general secondary schools of Baku city.

In August 2007 a Memorandum of Cooperation was signed among the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Azerbaijan Resident Office of UNICEF, Baku Office of OSCE and NGO Alliance on Child Rights. Within the memorandum, the Alliance established the “Social Rehabilitation Centre of Children and Youth” for the first time as a pilot project in order to carry out preventive measures among and apply alternative education activities for immature persons in contradiction with the Law, committed less grave, grave crimes and other offences, as well as, those that are difficult to get educated in Narimanov district of Baku city through support of Ministry of Internal Affairs, UNICEF, Baku Office of OSCE and the British Embassy to Azerbaijan and in cooperation with the Centre for Child Rights of Essex University of the Great Britain. The Centre covered 25 children committed different offences. Children are sent to the Centre at the decision of court and “Commissions on issues and protection of rights of immature persons” within the

Executive Powers. Psychologists, pedagogues, social workers and sport teachers function at the Centre. Different courses and circles are arranged for children involved in the centre. A Coordination Unit was established consisting of authorized representatives of the Executive Power of Narimanov district, district Police Department, district Prosecutor's Office, district court, the Child Rights Clinic and the Social Rehabilitation Centre of Children and Youth. The Unit meets regularly and conducts discussions on children involved in the Centre. It's planned to establish similar centres in Khatai, Nizami and Yasamal districts of Baku city in the nearest future.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population is taking relevant measures on ensuring development and rights of lonely and disabled children and youth together with UNICEF, UAFA, Open Society Institute, Mushfig, Azerbaijan Diabetes League, Azerbaijan Association of Blinds, Union of Invalid Organizations, International Federation of Deaf Persons, Azerbaijan Society of Deaf Persons, Special Olympic Committee, Young Invalids Society and other organizations.

3) Please provide pertinent figures, statistics or any other relevant information to demonstrate the participation of the voluntary sector to the provision of social services, as well as the effective access of individuals to these services.

73 organizations on solution of problems of refugees, IDPs, invalids and veterans, 121 organizations on legal protection and 191 organizations on child and youth issues were registered at the relevant state structure.