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National report submitted in accordance with paragraph 5 of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 16/21*

Uzbekistan

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I. Methodology and consultation process

1. This report was prepared in accordance with the general guidelines of the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/DEC/17/119) and describes the development of the human rights situation in Uzbekistan, devoting particular attention to the implementation of the recommendations adopted in the course of the consideration of Uzbekistan's initial report, in December 2008, under the universal periodic review.
2. Following broad consultations with institutions of civil society, in August 2009 a national plan of action was adopted for the implementation of the recommendations of the Human Rights Council formulated following consideration of Uzbekistan's country report under the universal periodic review for 2009–2012. The plan of action lists 89 measures, time frames and more than 60 responsible agencies from among State bodies, educational institutions, non-governmental organizations and mass media outlets.
3. The National Centre for Human Rights was responsible for preparing Uzbekistan's second country report under the universal periodic review. Together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Centre compiled and analysed information and devised the approach for drafting the report.
4. The report was prepared in several stages:
 - (a) A working group was established which drew up a list of the most important questions requiring clarification in the report and sent them to more than 50 ministries, departments, agencies and NGOs active in promoting and protecting human rights;
 - (b) After collecting and analysing the initial factual material, the working group produced a preliminary draft country report and sent it to the relevant ministries, departments, agencies and NGOs for review;
 - (c) After analysing and systematizing the comments and suggestions received from interested departments, the working group elaborated the final version of the report.
5. On 28 July 2011, the National Centre for Human Rights together with the Ministry of Justice conducted a seminar on international legal cooperation between Uzbekistan and the United Nations in the area of respect for human rights. Gianni Magazzeni, representative of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, attended the seminar, which was devoted to the question of the implementation of the recommendations of the Council following consideration of Uzbekistan's country report under the universal periodic review.
6. In the course of the preparation of this report, two consultative meetings were held with the participation of representatives of ministries, departments and institutions of civil society, in which views were heard and comments and suggestions made on the draft second country report.
7. On 26 December 2012, a regular meeting was held at the Ministry of Justice of the interdepartmental working group to monitor the observance of human rights and freedoms by law enforcement agencies and other government bodies. In the course of the meeting, the draft second country report for submission under the universal periodic review was considered and approved.
8. The Legislative Chamber (the lower house) of the Oliy Majlis (the parliament of Uzbekistan) discussed the report on 28 December 2012.
9. The members of the Legislative Chamber and representatives of government bodies, NGOs and the mass media approved the report.

II. Improving the legislative, legal and institutional sphere

Implementation of recommendation No. 1

10. At the initiative of President Islam Karimov, a number of amendments were made to the Constitution with a view to further strengthening democratic reforms and the formation of civil society, democratizing State and administrative bodies, ensuring a better balance of power between the three branches of government (the President (Head of State), the legislature and the executive), and strengthening the role and influence of political parties in implementing socioeconomic, public and political reforms and renewing and modernizing the country.

11. The institution of the vote of no confidence in the Government was introduced. In the event of a deadlock between the Prime Minister and the Legislative Chamber, at least one third of the delegates of the Legislative Chamber, upon a proposal officially put forward on behalf of the President of Uzbekistan, may raise the question of a vote of no confidence in the Prime Minister for discussion in a joint session of the Oliy Majlis. A vote of no confidence in the Prime Minister is admissible if no less than two thirds of the delegates of the Legislative Chamber and of the members of the Senate vote in favour. The President then dismisses the Prime Minister. The entire Cabinet of Ministers also resigns.

12. Another amendment provides for the proposal of a candidate for Prime Minister by the political party which won the most seats in the election to the Legislative Chamber, or several political parties which won an equal number of seats.

13. In accordance with the amendment to article 96 of the Constitution, if the President in office is unable to perform his duties, his duties and powers will be temporarily vested in the President of the Senate, to be followed by presidential elections within three months, as required by law.

III. Progress towards promoting and protecting human rights

Implementation of recommendations Nos. 7 and 15

14. In the period 2009–2012, Uzbekistan continued to make major, targeted reforms and improvements to its judicial and legal system to ensure the rule of law and effective protection of the rights and interests of the individual.

15. The abolition of the death penalty (both in peacetime and in wartime) in January 2008 and the introduction in its place of life imprisonment and long-term imprisonment (except for women, juveniles and men over 60 years of age, as well as foreign nationals) was an act of the utmost importance.

16. The introduction in 2008 of the institution of habeas corpus was a major development. Since then, the courts have refused to allow the application of a measure of restraint in more than 700 cases.

17. A reform of the Bar helps ensure equality of procedural rights between the prosecution and the defence in criminal proceedings, establishes penalties for impeding the activities of lawyers and strengthens the role of lawyers in protecting the legitimate rights and interests of the individual. The Miranda rule was introduced into legislation and law enforcement practice.

18. As a result of a gradual, phased liberalization of criminal legislation, approximately 75 per cent of the offences categorized as serious or especially serious were reclassified as less serious or minor. As a result, in the past 10 years the number of inmates in places of deprivation of liberty has declined by more than half. Uzbekistan has one of the lowest incarceration rates of the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States and Europe: 166 per 100,000.

19. In accordance with the amendments made to criminal procedural legislation and adopted in 2011, the Pretrial Detention during Criminal Proceedings Act shortened the period of investigation and detention.

20. A reconciliation body is in operation. It ensures that criminal responsibility is not incurred by persons who have committed criminal acts which do not constitute a public danger and who have provided full compensation for the material and moral damage caused to the victims. The body's effectiveness, and its echo in ancient Uzbek traditions of mercy and forgiveness, have been the basis of its gradual extension. Today the body permits reconciliation in connection with 53 different criminal acts. Thanks to the introduction of the reconciliation body, more than 130,000 citizens have been absolved of criminal responsibility during the reporting period.

21. With a view to enhancing democratic reforms in the judicial and legal field, in 2012 seven acts were adopted to ensure the rule of law, the effective protection of the rights, freedoms and legitimate interests of citizens, a liberalization of criminal, criminal procedural and administrative legislation, a strengthening of judicial control over pretrial proceedings and an extension of the scope of habeas corpus.

22. A new version of the Legislative Instruments Act establishes qualitatively new and more effective mechanisms for ensuring the legality and validity of legislative instruments and their conformity with the law and the requirements of socioeconomic, public and political reforms.

23. The Act on Amendments to Legislative Instruments in connection with the Ongoing Reform of the Judicial and Legal System establishes democratic judicial regulations governing the application of procedural coercive measures for the removal of an accused person from office and committal to a medical institution, excludes the right to prosecute from the competence of the court and requires the procurator to announce an indictment during judicial proceedings.

24. These provisions, which implement generally recognized principles and norms of international law in the area of civil rights and freedoms, clearly strengthen judicial oversight of initial inquiries and pretrial investigations, expand the scope of habeas corpus in criminal proceedings, ensure the implementation of the basic functions of the court for guaranteeing a fair trial and the independence, objectivity and impartiality of the court and reinforce the principle of adversarial proceedings.

25. The Act on Amendments to the Criminal Code and the Administrative Liability Code is directed at further improving criminal and administrative legislation by stiffening penalties for crimes and other offences against public morals and preventing acts which promote a cult of hatred, cruelty and pornography.

26. The Act on Amendments to the Elections to the Oliy Majlis Act and to the Elections to Regional, District and Municipal Councils of People's Deputies Act guarantees freedom of choice and the development of electoral legislation.

27. The Act is designed to ensure further democratization of an independent, unique electoral system, in particular a more transparent and open electoral process and a more effective mechanism for election campaigning and the activities of election commissions. Legislative innovations are a reflection of the fact that elections are a key aspect of a

country's democratic legal norms, an integral part of a State based on the rule of law and an essential aspect of the expression of the will of the people and direct participation by citizens in the administration of the affairs of State and society.

28. Ten laws have been adopted which have special importance for effectively addressing the task of further strengthening democratic market reforms and liberalizing the economy and making it more competitive.

29. The Act on the Protection of Private Ownership and Guarantees of the Rights of Property Owners, which is designed to strengthen the protection of private property, establish a system of effective guarantees for its inviolability, ensure further guarantees for the rights of property owners and set favourable conditions for the effective functioning of private ownership in the economy, serves to promote the ongoing development of the country's market economy. Entrepreneurs have been given additional legal guarantees for the protection of their lawful right to own property (ownership rights and the use and disposal of one's property); this helps attract additional business investments, expand economic activities and increase production and income.

30. The Competition Act, the Act on Private Banking and Financial Institutions and Guarantees for their Activities, the Act on Procedures permitted in Business Activities and the Free Enterprise Act (new version) establish the most favourable possible conditions for business activities and the granting of concessions and guarantees, including through State support.

31. At legislative level, the principle was introduced of the primacy of the rights of entrepreneurs in interaction between business entities and government, law enforcement and oversight bodies; any contradictions in legislation must be interpreted in the entrepreneur's favour. Regulations have been introduced which prohibit routine fiscal auditing of small businesses for three years after their registration and limit subsequent audits of conscientious, stably employed taxpayers.

32. Special attention is given to pursuing a consistent policy of gradually ensuring complete guarantees for the rights set out in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, to which Uzbekistan acceded in 1995.

33. The implementation of the provisions of the Covenant in Uzbekistan at the legislative level, guaranteeing the exercise of economic, social and cultural rights; the adoption of State programmes and national plans of action to support socially vulnerable sections of the population and implement the recommendations of United Nations treaty bodies, as well as the practical implementation of adopted laws; the creation of bodies to oversee and monitor the enjoyment of human rights, including socioeconomic and cultural rights; the conducting of large-scale awareness-raising, educational and publishing activities; the involvement of NGOs and international organizations in assisting programmes to help various categories of citizens, including children, women, persons with disabilities, the elderly and low-income families.

34. The Family Business Act establishes the legal basis for the development of this very important form of small business and private entrepreneurship in various sectors of the economy, and it considerably strengthens judicial guarantees in that regard. This form of business activity, which is fully in line with national traditions and the objective realities of the economy, also serves to create jobs, raise the standard of living of the population and reinforce the economic basis and stability of the family.

35. In its work, the parliament gives priority attention to job creation and income growth. To that end, it reviews on a yearly basis job creation and employment programmes introduced by the Cabinet of Ministers. The programmes call for comprehensive and interconnected measures to promote jobs for the population by harnessing the potential of

various regions and branches of the economy, rational use of labour resources, account being taken of demographic factors and structural transformations in the economy, and comprehensive assistance with the development of effective forms of employment and the promotion of free enterprise.

36. In 2013 it is planned to create 972,700 new jobs by launching major new industrial projects, renovating and expanding existing enterprises and promoting small, private and family businesses, the services sector and greater opportunities for home-based work, including in cooperation with large enterprises. A major part of home-based jobs will be organized in regions with traditional centres of national craftsmanship.

37. In the period 2009–2012, the legal basis for the enjoyment of social, economic and cultural rights was reinforced significantly. The parliament adopted the Consumer Credit Act, the Microfinancing Act, the Copyright and Related Rights Act, the Courts of Arbitration Act, the Act on the Prevention of Iodine Deficiency Disorders, the Charity Act, the Guarantees of Children's Rights Act, a new version of the Social Protection of Persons with Disabilities Act, the Museums Act, the Suppression of Trafficking in Persons Act, the Act on the Conservation and Use of Archaeological Heritage Sites and other normative instruments for the protection of civil rights and freedoms.

IV. Implementation of recommendations adopted in response to the first universal periodic review

Development of a legislative basis (implementation of recommendations Nos. 1 and 6)

For information on the implementation of recommendation No. 1, see part II

38. Parliamentary hearings have been in wide use since 2010. During the reporting period, reports of ministries and departments have been heard on compliance with obligations in the framework of the realization by Uzbekistan of the Millennium Development Goals and the implementation of the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention against Torture and other instruments.

39. In the context of the implementation of the outline plan for further strengthening democratic reforms and promoting civil society, the following bills have been drafted and are undergoing a public, international expert assessment: a new version of the Administrative Liability Code, a parliamentary oversight bill, a ministry of internal affairs bill, the public monitoring bill, a bill on the transparency of the activities of government and administrative bodies and a social partnership bill.

40. In the period 2008–2012, Uzbekistan ratified the following international agreements:

- (a) The Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (Paris, 17 October 2003);
- (b) The ILO Convention concerning Minimum Age for Admission to Employment (No. 138) (Geneva, 26 June 1973);
- (c) The ILO Convention concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour (No. 182) (Geneva, 17 June 1999);
- (d) The United Nations Convention against Corruption (New York, 31 October 2003);

(e) The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (New York, 15 November 2000);

(f) The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (New York, 25 May 2000);

(g) The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict (New York, 25 May 2000);

(h) The International Convention against Doping in Sport (Paris, 19 October 2005);

(i) The Convention abolishing the Requirement of Legalisation for Foreign Public Documents (The Hague, 5 October 1961);

(j) The WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (Geneva, 21 May 2003).

41. With a view to improving the human rights situation in the country and complying with the recommendations of the United Nations treaty bodies, Uzbekistan is successfully implementing national plans of action in a number of areas, including:

(a) The national plan of action for 2010–2012 to implement the concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination;

(b) The national plan of action for 2008–2010 to implement the provisions of the ILO Convention concerning Minimum Age for Admission to Employment (No. 138) and the ILO Convention concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour (No. 182);

(c) The national plan of action for 2008–2011 to implement the concluding observations of the Committee against Torture following consideration of Uzbekistan's third periodic report on the implementation of the provisions of the Convention against Torture;

(d) The national plan of action for 2008–2010 on the prevention of trafficking in children;

(e) The national plan of action for 2009–2012 to implement the recommendations of the Human Rights Council following consideration of Uzbekistan's country report under the universal periodic review;

(f) The national plan of action for 2006–2010 to implement the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child;

(g) The national plan of action for 2010–2014 to implement the concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women following consideration of Uzbekistan's fourth periodic report on implementation of the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the tasks of the internal affairs agencies.

B. The rights of women (implementation of recommendations Nos. 9, 10 and 29)

42. On 3 August 2010, the Cabinet of Ministers approved the national plan of action for giving effect to the concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women formulated following the consideration of Uzbekistan's fourth periodic report. In the view of the Government of Uzbekistan, safeguarding the

rights of women and reducing and, if possible, eliminating discriminatory practices by raising public awareness of individual rights and obligations, thereby helping to promote greater respect for women in society, is an effective and reliable policy.

43. The text of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women has been translated into the State language and published in large numbers (in the State language and in Russian) in order to make rural women more aware of their rights. A vast information and education campaign has been organized for rural women to explain the articles and provisions of the Convention. Training courses have been held to familiarize rural women with their rights.

44. Mechanisms at all levels of government are involved with the dissemination of information on the provision of consultative services on questions relating to the status of women as well as monitoring policies and programmes for gender mainstreaming and assessing their results. Gender equality has been achieved in a number of key sectors of society, including with regard to the number of men and women who have completed secondary school and have been admitted to universities and institutes.

45. Uzbekistan has undertaken to incorporate the goals of the Millennium Declaration into the country's development programmes and to meet the MDGs for 2015, including Goal No. 3: "Promote gender equality and empower women".

46. All activities of government bodies and voluntary associations are directed at overcoming entrenched stereotypes about the traditional roles of men and women in society. Efforts focus on eliminating deeply-rooted patriarchal stereotypes. Events include "Woman of the year" contests, the poetess Zulfia competition, campaigns for healthy lifestyles, the "Style.uz Fashion of the Week", the "Golden Leopard" international film festival and exhibitions of contemporary national and international artists.

47. Special women's newspapers, journals and other publications have been put out, radio and television broadcasts devoted to women's issues have been launched, and a common programme for the involvement of civil society in a discussion of gender issues has been devised for all types of media, the aim being to improve the status of women in today's society and protect their honour and dignity.

48. In Uzbekistan, trafficking in women and the sexual enslavement of women and girls is regarded as a form of violence and a grave violation of women's rights, and it is a punishable offence. Public opinion recognizes that trafficking in persons is a criminal transboundary activity the suppression of which calls for concerted efforts by the international community as a whole. The Government advocates close cooperation with other countries (in particular with regional partners) on combating that terrible phenomenon.

49. The Committee of Women of Uzbekistan, together with government bodies and NGOs, including the NGO Istikbolly Avlod, is making a concerted effort to raise the awareness of young girls and women of the problem of trafficking in women for sexual exploitation. There have been a number of broadcasts on the subject on radio and television, including talk shows and live transmissions featuring questions and answers on the topic. Discussions, seminars and round tables are held in higher educational institutions and at the workplace to explain the risks of illegal labour migration.

50. A collection of documents and State programmes has been compiled on empowering women and advancing their interests. In 2009, presidential decisions were issued on additional measures for protecting the health of mothers and children and promoting a healthy generation and on a programme of measures for 2009–2013 to strengthen and enhance the effectiveness of work conducted to improve the reproductive health of the

population, ensure the birth of healthy children and promote a physically and mentally sound generation.

51. In Uzbekistan, women make up 48 per cent of the working population. The main areas of employment of women are in health care, education, culture, science, industry, agriculture and entrepreneurial and farming activities. More women are becoming involved in politics. Today one out of four political parties has a “women’s wing”.

52. Thirty-three women deputies were elected to the Legislative Chamber in the elections held in 2009 and 2010, or 22 per cent of the total (31 were elected from single-mandate districts, and 2 from the Ecological Movement). Women account for 15 per cent of Senators and 15 per cent of deputies in regional representative bodies. Approximately 22 per cent of civil servants are women.

C. Children’s rights (implementation of recommendations Nos. 16, 17, 21, 22, 26, 30 and 31)

53. Ensuring the well-being of children is an important national objective on whose realization the creation of a healthy, educated and competitive society depends. State policy for the protection of children is carried out in the framework of the goals set by the MDGs, international obligations relating to the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and strategic national programmes, including the national plan of action for the protection of children’s rights and interests.

54. A legislative framework has been created to ensure the effective protection of children’s rights. The Guarantees of Children’s Rights Act reflects the basic mechanism for the protection of children and establishes the rights and obligations of State bodies, public institutions and citizens with regard to safeguarding the inviolable rights of all children.

55. State institutions for the protection of children’s rights have been set up and are operating, including in the labour field:

(a) The Government has an office for the protection of the family, motherhood and childhood, headed by the Deputy Prime Minister, which coordinates the activities of State and administrative bodies for the realization of the rights of children guaranteed in the Constitution;

(b) A special commission on the affairs of juveniles has been created which is attached to the Cabinet of Ministers and is headed by the Procurator-General; it is competent for taking decisions on virtually all matters relating to the status of children in society, including monitoring the prevention of the worst forms of child labour;

(c) Pursuant to a presidential decision on measures to combat trafficking in persons more effectively, a national interdepartmental commission has been formed for combating trafficking in persons which is composed of heads of ministries and departments; similar commissions have been set up at regional and district level;

(d) Legal inspectorates and inspectorates for labour protection, attached to the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, are operating at district level to provide State oversight of the prevention of violations of the labour rights of young people;

(e) Public oversight of the prevention of the worst forms of child labour is the responsibility of Trade Union Federation Council of Uzbekistan, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and citizens’ self-governing bodies (makhallas).

56. The well-being of children is a major national concern, and the economic reforms under way, which ensure stable robust economic growth and an increasing level of

employment of the population and family income, are important prerequisites for reducing the scale of child labour in the country. The stable rate of economic growth in recent years has led to the creation of new highly skilled jobs for the adult population and has set the economic conditions for reducing the scale of unskilled labour and eliminating child labour.

57. The creation of the material conditions required for the overall physical and mental development and better education and occupational training of the younger generation is a crucial aspect of social policy. The national programme of action for the well-being of children (2007–2011) was a success. Initiatives in the framework of the programme focused on the protection of children from violence, trafficking and all forms of exploitation and forced labour as well as on their social protection.

58. The Prevention of Child Neglect and Juvenile Delinquency Act was adopted in 2010 in order to prevent child neglect and homelessness, juvenile delinquency and other antisocial acts, rehabilitate minors and families at risk and detect and suppress the recruitment of juveniles for the commission of offences or other antisocial acts.

59. The reform of the educational system, which envisages a 12-year education programme for all children, is a powerful mechanism for the prevention of child labour. In recent years, Uzbekistan has invested approximately 12 per cent of GDP in education annually. Today, Uzbekistan is one of the few countries worldwide with an average 12-year education programme. The age of completion of compulsory education exceeds 18 years.

60. The Ministry of Education monitors school attendance. Information on weekly attendance rates is sent from the urban and regional education departments. Once pupils are identified who have not attended school or who regularly miss classes, measures are taken to return them to school.

61. Special attention has been given to job placement for graduates of vocational colleges. The practice has been introduced of concluding contracts between vocational colleges and enterprises for the practical training of future graduates and their subsequent recruitment.

62. In accordance with a decision adopted by the Government, it is planned to allocate more than 277 billion sum to conduct a programme for the period 2011–2016 to modernize the infrastructure and equipment of higher education establishments and introduce important improvements in the training of specialists.

63. Non-governmental non-profit organizations and institutions of civil society make a significant contribution to the realization of the right of young people to education and development. For example, the Forum of Culture and Art of Uzbekistan Foundation is carrying out a programme for the elaboration and introduction of national models for continuous inclusive education. In the framework of the project, a national model for inclusive education is being produced for introduction in preschools and primary schools through the organization of mixed groups on the basis of pilot schools and kindergartens in the cities of Navoi, Termez, Karshi, Jizzax, Samarkand and Kokand.

64. Pursuant to a decision of 12 September 2008, a national plan of action was approved for giving effect to ILO Convention No. 182 which set deadlines for implementation. The plan of action, which was endorsed by leading international organizations, has 37 points and consists of urgent measures for eliminating and preventing the worst forms of child labour.

65. Government Decision No. 82 of 26 March 2012 approved a plan for additional measures for the implementation in 2012–2013 of the ILO Convention concerning Forced or Compulsory Labour (No. 29) and ILO Convention No. 182, which Uzbekistan has ratified. The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection is responsible for coordinating the activities of government and economic management bodies, local authorities and other

organizations working to ensure compliance with the obligations stemming from these conventions and from the plan of action.

66. On 25 March 2011, an interdepartmental working group was established to prepare and submit proposals for the implementation of the ILO conventions which Uzbekistan has ratified: the office for the prevention of labour violations by employers and employees. Bearing in mind the ILO tripartite principle, which is based on trilateral representation by Government, labour and management, the working group is made up of heads of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Trade Union Federation Council of Uzbekistan. Also represented are the heads of the Farmers' Association, the National Centre for Human Rights, the Ministries of Justice, Internal Affairs, Education, Higher and Secondary Specialized Education, Foreign Affairs and Health, the Women's Committee and the Kamolot youth movement. The working group's main objectives are:

- To prepare information for ILO on measures taken for the protection of the rights of working people as well as for children;
- To prevent child neglect and homelessness, violations and antisocial behaviour in the area of forced labour and to identify and eliminate their causes and conditions;
- To protect the rights and legitimate interests of persons under 18 years of age with regard to employment and occupational safety.

67. On 27 June 2012, the Farmers' Association, the Women's Committee and the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection adopted a joint decision on the introduction of on-site awareness-raising initiatives for farmers and the organization of travelling seminars for farming enterprises on ILO conventions and recommendations. In compliance with this decision, in August 2012 seminars on ILO conventions and recommendations were conducted at farming enterprises throughout the country.

68. The Trade Union Federation Council has elaborated a mechanism and set up working groups with a view to effectively monitoring compliance by enterprises, institutions, organizations and individuals with the prohibition of child labour, as well as with legislative norms and working conditions for juveniles and the requirements of ILO Convention No. 182.

69. According to an analysis of the public monitoring of compliance with the minimum age for employment and the prohibition of the worst forms of child labour pursuant to ILO Convention No. 138 and ILO Convention No. 182, the trade union working groups which inspected enterprises and organizations did not detect any cases of child labour in its worst forms.

70. On 24 August 2012, a meeting was held of the national ad hoc working group on awareness-raising activities around the country on the prohibition of the recruitment of children from general education schools to help with the cotton harvest, on the basis of which working groups were also set up and given mandates at local level.

71. A decision by the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection and the Ministry of Health, registered with the Ministry of Justice on 21 January 2010, approved regulations governing the prohibition of the use of child labour which are in line with the provisions of ILO Convention No. 182.

72. The inventory of jobs involving adverse working conditions for which the employment of persons under 18 years of age is prohibited has been reviewed and revised. It lists more than 2,000 jobs involving adverse working conditions for which child labour is prohibited.

73. Bearing in mind the provisions of ILO Convention No. 138 and ILO Convention No. 182, on 12 May 2009 maximum permissible norms for persons under 18 years of age for the lifting and moving of heavy loads were adopted and registered with the Ministry of Justice.

74. The organization of efforts aimed at preventing child labour and prohibiting and eliminating its worst forms is periodically discussed at meetings of the Commission on Juvenile Affairs attached to the Cabinet of Ministers.

75. A decision by the Cabinet of Ministers of 29 July 2009 on measures to develop and expand family businesses and cottage industries approved regulations for the creation of family businesses and cottage industries and established a procedure for the participation of juveniles in the activities of family businesses and cottage industries, account being taken of obligations under the Convention.

76. In accordance with the national plan of action for the implementation of ILO Convention No. 182, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection have set up a working group and approved a programme for on-site monitoring of the prohibition of the use of the forced labour of children recruited from general education schools to help with the cotton harvest. Monitoring is carried out by the Procurator-General, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, the Ministry of Education, the Centre for Secondary Specialized Vocational Training, the Trade Union Federation Council, the Kamolot movement, the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Karakalpakstan and local government authorities. Working groups have also been set up on the ground to monitor the prohibition of forced child labour.

77. On 2 May 2011, the Trade Union Federation Council, the Farmers' Association and the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection issued a joint statement on the prohibition of forced child labour in the agricultural sector.

78. A child labour hotline has been in operation in Uzbekistan since 2008 which children and their parents can call at any time if their rights have been violated in any way.

79. Anyone who forces children to work by any means, including through the threat of sanctions against children or their parents, is liable to prosecution in accordance with the law. With a view to establishing and stiffening penalties for farming enterprises and individuals which violate provisions governing the prohibition of child labour, on 21 December 2009 the Act on Additions to the Administrative Liability Code was adopted to strengthen legislation on the protection of the rights of juveniles, pursuant to which stiffer penalties have been introduced for officials who violate labour legislation or impose administrative forced labour on persons under the age of 18, and penalties have also been established for violations by other individuals of provisions governing the prohibition of child labour.

80. In August 2012, the Prime Minister issued an order prohibiting child labour during the cotton harvest. A Government directive published at the start of the 2012 cotton harvest on the prohibition of the recruitment of schoolchildren was distributed to all schools by the regional departments of the educational system; the Office of the Procurator-General is responsible for monitoring compliance. As a result of the order, not a single schoolchild was employed for the cotton harvest in 2012.

D. Juvenile justice (implementation of recommendation No. 19)

81. Children make up nearly half the population of Uzbekistan (40 per cent). Juveniles account for approximately 0.5 per cent of all persons sentenced to deprivation of liberty, a figure that is much lower than in other countries.

82. Targeted efforts are being made to prevent juvenile delinquency by:

- Strengthening oversight by the office of the procurator and the courts of the activities of the investigating authorities with a view to preventing unwarranted prosecution, detention and conviction of persons under the age of 18;
- Setting up a system of commissions on juvenile affairs which deal with children in difficulty; 246 such commissions, composed of more than 3,000 qualified specialists, are in operation around the country;
- Strengthening and improving the system of public institutions working to assist socially vulnerable categories of children; citizens' self-governing bodies play an important role in preventing juvenile delinquency;
- Stiffening judicial (administrative and criminal) penalties for parents and other persons who involve children in antisocial and criminal activities;
- Carrying out measures to identify, house and care for neglected children.

83. In addition to these measures, an outline plan is gradually taking shape to create a special system of justice for children. The outline plan, drawn up by Uzbek legal scholars and UNICEF specialists, calls for:

- The elaboration and adoption of a juvenile justice act;
- Amendments to the Criminal, Criminal Procedural, Criminal Sentence Administration and Family Codes as well as to the Administrative Liability Code to bring them into line with the juvenile justice act;
- Amendments to legislation on citizens' self-governing bodies and NGOs to strengthen their role in educating children and preventing juvenile delinquency;
- The adoption of an act on the office of the children's ombudsman, a body that coordinates and pools efforts to protect the rights of children, including in the area of justice;
- The training of social workers who deal with children's problems;
- The gradual formation of special juvenile courts: the creation of a pilot juvenile court in the city of Tashkent and in other areas, boards for juvenile affairs in regional courts etc;
- The comprehensive training of officials of the procurator's office, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Justice and local authorities in procedures and methods for dealing with juveniles;
- The extension of the system of judicial assistance for juveniles through the creation of organizations for their counselling;
- The setting up of rehabilitation centres that work on the basis of a programme of restorative justice.

84. A number of measures have been taken to introduce and develop the juvenile system which are envisaged in the national plan of action to implement the recommendations of the Human Rights Council following consideration of Uzbekistan's first country report under the universal periodic review (2009–2012).

85. The new Guarantees of Children's Rights Act, which establishes the right of children to personal inviolability and protection against violations of their honour and dignity, as well as unlawful arrest and detention, has made a major contribution to the development and advancement of juvenile justice. The Act strengthens guarantees for the right of children to protection against torture and other cruel, harsh or degrading treatment as well as their recruitment for criminal activities.

86. The Supreme Court of Uzbekistan has studied foreign experience with the functioning of juvenile courts and has prepared proposals for improving court practice. The research centre for the democratization and liberalization of judicial legislation and the independence of the court system, which reports to the Supreme Court, and the Centre for the Further Training of Legal Specialists regularly holds training courses for juvenile court judges and lawyers.

87. The Centre for the Further Training of Legal Specialists, which reports to the Ministry of Justice, holds seminars and round tables on a continuous basis on the protection of the rights of children, including through the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its two Optional Protocols, and on juvenile justice.

88. Advanced training courses offered by the Office of the Procurator-General also give special attention to training staff about juvenile justice.

E. The rights of persons with special needs (implementation of recommendation No. 13)

89. A new version of the Act on the Social Protection of Persons with Disabilities has been adopted in compliance with fundamental international instruments. With a view to creating accessible conditions for the integration of such persons in society, Uzbekistan has adopted and is carrying out a number of social programmes, including in conjunction with interested ministries, voluntary associations and local self-governing bodies, which call for awareness-raising initiatives, publications and appearances in the mass media of specialists and disabled persons themselves and the release of information documents and video materials.

90. In recent years, NGOs, for which the State has opened abundant possibilities, have played a significant role in the social protection of persons with disabilities. Measures have been taken to strengthen the role of non-governmental non-profit organizations active in this area. A consultative council of voluntary associations of persons with disabilities has been created within the national association of non-governmental non-profit organizations, whose main objective is to pool the efforts of NGOs active with disabled persons and of other interested organizations in order to advance the question of the ratification by the parliament of Uzbekistan of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In the context of the work of the consultative council, it is planned to elaborate a roadmap for moving ahead with the question of the ratification of the Convention, hold seminars and round tables on that instrument and examine the experience of other countries with ratification.

91. The Government has taken steps to optimize the diverse network of specialized educational establishments (schools and boarding schools) for children with special needs with a view to improving the effectiveness of initiatives undertaken to ensure social guarantees and create a proper environment for the education, upbringing and integration of children with developmental disabilities or in need of therapy and rehabilitation.

92. The Government has approved a programme of additional measures for 2011–2015 for further strengthening the social protection of single elderly persons, retirees and persons

with disabilities in order to enhance targeted social assistance and raise their standard of living and quality of life, improve the system for their social protection and strengthen the resource base of medical and social institutions.

F. Monitoring of detention conditions in places of detention (implementation of recommendations Nos. 11 and 12)

93. Definite progress has been made in reforming the prison system, bringing it into line with international standards and improving its transparency and monitoring by institutions of civil society. The Pretrial Detention during Criminal Proceedings Act, adopted on 29 September 2011, establishes strict regulations and conditions for the detention of persons suspected of a crime or remanded in custody.

94. The introduction in recent years of amendments to a number of legislative instruments has led to a decline in the country's prison population. This has made it possible to give priority attention to improving detention conditions, amenities and medical services for inmates and persons in custody and to enlist them in work of public utility.

95. In recent years, psychological counselling and education for inmates have been developed with a view to ensuring their resocialization, mastery of basic social functions and successful reintegration in society after release. Ongoing efforts to improve the spiritual and moral education of convicts focus on inculcating and developing a commitment to pursue a socially useful activity, obey the law and respect socially accepted rules of conduct.

96. Prison libraries have more than 22,000 works of religious literature, more than 10,000 legal publications, 96,000 works of fiction, 17,000 historical works and more than 35,000 works and publications on a variety of other subjects. The prison library system has more than 180,000 works of literature and periodicals. Every prison has several copies of compilations of international legal instruments, a suitable number of copies of the Koran and the Bible, legal, scientific and fictional literature, and manuals on the rights of inmates. Convicts and detainees have free access to these works. There are no restrictions whatsoever on the use of the library collection, including religious literature.

97. Prisons cooperate regularly with the traditional religions to ensure that inmates can practise their religion and exercise the right to freedom of religion and worship.

98. Convicts and detainees have access to the mass media. Prisons have radio broadcasts, wards have televisions, and housing areas have stands with periodicals. Convicts can sign out any national or international periodical (newspaper or journal).

99. Favourable conditions have been established to enable convicts to receive general basic and secondary education and vocational training, and special teaching approaches are used which take into account the intellectual development and educational level of the convicts. There are also educational and remedial programmes of work for various categories of inmates.

100. In 2001, Uzbekistan joined the WHO Health in Prisons Project. Since then, it has conducted work on developing medical services in the prison system in line with a basic conceptual focus on improvements to the health-care system and guaranteed medical assistance for persons held in places of deprivation of liberty. In the context of the project, measures have been taken to improve the resource base of medical units and medical facilities, in keeping with the conditions and requirements in the health-care sector, and to strengthen and develop hygienic and bacteriological laboratories in prisons.

101. Persons who have committed crimes and have been placed by the investigative bodies in a remand centre and then in other facilities of the prison system receive a complete medical examination; they are tested for HIV only if they so request.

102. With the participation of leading health-care organizations, modern preventive, diagnostic, therapeutic and rehabilitation techniques for the most common illnesses among prisoners have been introduced in the medical services of prisons in order to reduce morbidity, disability and mortality. The DOTS programme is being carried out, as a result of which the number of cases of tuberculosis cured in 2012 reached the 80 per cent mark, and recidivism declined to 5 per cent.

103. The activities of prison establishments are monitored by the Chambers of the Oliy Majlis, the parliamentary Ombudsman, the National Centre for Human Rights, non-governmental non-profit organizations, the interdepartmental working group to monitor the observance of human rights by law enforcement agencies, which reports to the Ministry of Justice, and the Procurator-General and his special procurators responsible for supervision of respect for the law in prisons.

104. Prisons have been visited by diplomatic representatives of the embassies of Germany, the United States, Jordan, Korea, China, Russia, Belarus, Azerbaijan and other countries and by groups of deputies to the European Parliament.

105. Over the past 12 years, the Central Penal Correction Department has been interacting effectively with the regional representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross. Groups of ICRC delegates have conducted more than 230 visits to penal correction colonies and remand centres in Uzbekistan since 2001.

106. Members of the media also visit prisons and record broadcasts for radio and television, and they publish material in the national press on work conducted in the prison system and measures being taken to ensure proper conditions for the detention of suspects, accused persons and convicts.

107. The penal correction system also conducts administrative monitoring of detention conditions and the treatment of detainees. Central Penal Correction Department staff carry out regular on-site inspections of departmental facilities. Prisons periodically undergo a complete inspection of their activities, following which specific inspections must be carried out to see whether deficiencies detected during the initial visit have been eliminated.

G. Capacity-building for law enforcement authorities and members of the judiciary in the area of human rights (implementation of recommendations Nos. 2 and 27)

108. On 23 July 2012, the Cabinet of Ministers adopted a decision on the approval of a procedure for the interdepartmental working group to monitor the observance of human rights and freedoms by law enforcement agencies and other government bodies with a view to effectively coordinating their activities in the area of human rights and freedoms and improving their interaction with institutions of civil society.

109. The interdepartmental working group is a board which examines and analyses questions relating to the protection of human rights and freedoms and is the coordinating body for the organization of interaction and the development of unified approaches for elaborating State policy in the area of human rights. The interdepartmental working group is made up of heads of judicial and law enforcement bodies, national human rights institutes and institutions of civil society and has been approved by the Government.

110. The main tasks of the interdepartmental working group are:

- Examining and analysing questions relating to the protection of human rights and freedoms, such as monitoring the consideration and settlement of complaints by citizens of violations of their rights and freedoms, including complaints of torture and other degrading treatment;
- Introducing proposals for measures to eliminate violations of legislation in the area of human rights and freedoms;
- Preparing proposals for improving legislation and ensuring that basic United Nations conventions in the area of human rights and freedoms are taken into account in national legislation and law enforcement practice;
- Examining the concluding observations and recommendations of the United Nations treaty bodies following consideration of Uzbekistan's periodic reports, and approving and monitoring national plans of action for giving effect to those conclusions and recommendations.

111. Uzbekistan devotes special attention to the training of judges, procurators and lawyers on questions relating to the treatment of persons remanded in custody. The Centre for the Further Training of Legal Specialists, which reports to the Ministry of Justice, and the advanced training courses of the Office of the Procurator-General have offered training classes and practical workshops on human rights at which questions concerning the prevention of torture and the treatment of detainees were discussed. In cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, a handbook has been published on international standards and national legislation relating to pretrial detention.

112. Retraining and further training courses are conducted at the Academy and educational institutions of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Special departments on the protection of human rights have been set up within the Ministry. With United Nations support, the OSCE is training Ministry personnel and prison staff on questions relating to international human rights standards.

113. In 2012, Uzbekistan successfully implemented the EU-funded project "Support for Criminal Judicial Reforms in Uzbekistan", in the framework of which fact-finding trips to European countries were organized for representatives of courts and law enforcement bodies in order to exchange practical experience on the activities of courts, law enforcement bodies and the prison service.

H. Human rights education (implementation of recommendations Nos. 5, 23, 24 and 28)

114. Improving knowledge of human rights law and the legal culture of citizens and promoting a culture of human rights constitute an essential component of all work on the formation of a State based on the rule of law and civil society. Uzbekistan participates actively in the campaign for a comprehensive educational programme in the area of human rights and the implementation of the provisions of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training. A permanent system of human rights education and awareness-raising has been set up, based on the Constitution, the Education Act and other legislative provisions.

115. In the framework of the International Year of Human Rights Learning and the anniversaries of international agreements in Uzbekistan, initiatives were carried out to disseminate universal ideals and values and the principles of respect for and protection of human rights. Important steps were taken to improve the methodology and approach of the educational process and involve various population groups, especially women, young people and children. Handbooks, compilations and anniversary publications of the

Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols were published in Uzbek, Russian and Karakalpak with the assistance of international organizations.

116. The basic documents of the United Nations, ILO and UNESCO on human rights questions and OSCE documents on the human dimension have been translated and published in large numbers. The curricula of educational establishments include a compulsory course on human rights.

117. Human rights learning takes place in the following forms:

(a) Teaching children in preschools and educational establishments through discussions, interactive games, lectures, contests, sports events and the like;

(b) With the help of an interactive approach, teaching specialists in various fields about human rights through lectures, seminars, training programmes and courses;

(c) Conducting awareness-raising campaigns in the media: regular television and radio broadcasts on human rights; publishing specialized newspapers, journals, books, manuals and brochures on the subject of human rights protection;

(d) Conducting awareness-raising campaigns on human rights in the street, at recreation centres and gatherings, in citizens' self-governing bodies and in voluntary associations;

(e) Holding meetings and discussions with national and international human rights experts to consider topical problems in the area of human rights protection;

(f) Holding competitions for the best book or article on human rights, and bestowing special awards on authors of research on human rights.

118. An international round table was held in Tashkent on 30 June 2011 on the topic "Building a culture of human rights – the most important task in protecting human rights and freedoms and the further development of civil society in the country", which was attended by representatives from the national human rights institutes of Latvia, Korea and Germany, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and government bodies and institutions of civil society in Uzbekistan.

119. The promotion of a human rights culture in society depends on the presence of a system for teaching human rights, educational programmes in the spirit of human rights, a clear and deliberate methodology and approach to such education, the creation of special institutes dealing with human rights education and the formation of a broad awareness-raising system which makes provision for the publication of international documents, manuals, research and textbooks on human rights questions. A draft outline plan on the promotion of a human rights culture is currently being elaborated.

120. The measures carried out to protect human rights and freedoms and the dissemination of questions of constitutional law and civic duty in Uzbekistan are major themes in national and regional periodicals. The National Centre for Human Rights together with the Creative Union of Artists and the Foundation for the Support and Development of the Independent Print Media and News Agencies of Uzbekistan have organized a competition for journalists on the topic "Human rights in the eyes of the journalist".

121. Between 2009 and 2012, the National Electronic Media Association of Uzbekistan conducted more than 80 initiatives and training seminars directed at raising people's awareness of their rights and obligations with regard to access to information and improving the qualifications of journalists in the electronic media.

122. A legislation database, publicly accessible since 2000 at the portal lex.uz, systematically adds recently adopted laws and regulations.

123. Pursuant to a Government decision, an interdepartmental council was established on cooperation between government bodies on raising awareness of the law and promoting legal education. The council serves as a board to coordinate the work of State bodies as well as voluntary associations, citizens' self-governing bodies and other institutions of civil society active in this area. Its main tasks include:

- Coordinating the work of State bodies and voluntary associations on raising awareness of the law and promoting legal education, which is directed at improving public knowledge of the law, fostering a legal culture and strengthening the rule of law;
- Elaborating and submitting proposals for improving the quality of training, retraining and further training of legal personnel, as well as raising the awareness of the law of schoolchildren and students;
- Taking a wide range of measures to make effective use of the mass media, including the print and electronic news media and modern information and communication technologies, for raising public awareness of the law and promoting legal education and to ensure a broad involvement of institutions of civil society in this work.

I. To improve living standards (implementation of recommendations Nos. 4 and 20)

124. Leading international financial institutions, including the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, have issued a very positive assessment of Uzbekistan's economic achievements in recent years. The assessment mission of the International Monetary Fund noted that Uzbekistan has achieved robust growth and has withstood the global financial crisis well. At 8.5 per cent on average over the last five years, Uzbekistan's growth is higher than the average growth in Central Asia. In terms of stable growth of GDP, Uzbekistan has one of the world's most dynamic economies.

125. In 2012, with a view to sharply cutting back State interference in the activities of enterprises, 80 approval procedures and 15 licences for business activities were abolished and the forms and frequency of submissions of financial records were reduced by one third. It was also decided to abolish, as of 1 January 2013, 65 types of statistical records and 6 types of tax records, and intervals between submissions were more than doubled.

126. In accordance with existing legislation, regulations were established pursuant to which the State is responsible for loss sustained by businesses as a result of unlawful decisions by government bodies, the acts or omissions of their officials or the adoption of unlawful administrative acts.

127. The Government continues to focus attention on the future development of the social sector and the steady growth of income and standard of living in the population. It is no secret that the standard of living depends above all on the income of the population. In the course of 2012, this indicator grew by 17.5 per cent, and the minimum wage by 26.5 per cent. In comparison to 2000, real per capita income grew 8.6-fold, pensions nearly 9-fold and wages 18-fold. Life expectancy rose by seven years. It is estimated that average wages are more than four times higher than the cost of living. In 2013, the objective is to raise salaries for the staff of budgetary organizations, pensions, benefits and grants by an average of at least 23 per cent, and to achieve real income growth for the population of at least 50 per cent between 2013 and 2015. Significantly, the income structure is also changing, with

a steady rise in the share of income from business activities, amounting to 51 per cent in the past year, i.e. more than half of all income is generated by enterprises and small private businesses.

128. In recent years, the housing stock nearly doubled; 98.5 per cent of families now have their own house or flat, and 97.5 per cent of rural families have a plot of land. This is a tangible result of targeted national programmes.

129. From the first years of independent development, Uzbekistan has attached great importance to a further strengthening of principles of social equity and the prevention of pronounced income and standard-of-living disparities. Thanks to the above-average increase in wages, income, benefits and tax breaks for socially vulnerable groups, and bearing in mind that income has increased 8.1-fold in the past 10 years, the income gap between the lowest and highest population groups, i.e. the income inequality index, declined from 21.1 to 8.3. This index value is one of the lowest observed in the Commonwealth of Independent States and a number of economically developed countries.

130. The steady, gradual growth in purchasing power of wages and pensions in recent years is tangible proof of the increasing standard of living and improved quality of life of the population. Whereas in 1991 the minimum wage covered only 8 per cent of the cost of living (calculated strictly in accordance with ILO and WHO recommendations), in 2011 it amounted to 131 per cent of the cost of living, or a 15-fold increase, and the purchasing power of minimum pensions increased 9-fold.

131. One priority area in the system of social protection measures, which concerns virtually all segments of the population and has been broadly applied throughout the entire reform process, has been the regular increase in minimum and average wages in connection with the liberalization of prices and the growth of inflation. Another important area of social protection is the adoption of measures to protect the domestic consumer market and support a certain level of consumption of basic food products and consumer goods. Effective measures of social protection and support for the poor constitute a third key area of active social policy.

132. The strategy of increasing the well-being of the population continued until 2011 and was the basis for measures taken for the social protection of vulnerable population groups. Budgetary allocations for the development of the health-care system have increased from year to year.

133. In 2011, work continued on further reforming and developing the health-care system. Budgetary resources were allocated and favourable foreign loans and grants received amounting to nearly 137 billion sum (136 million dollars) to renovate medical facilities and supply them with modern laboratories and diagnostic and therapeutic equipment. In the past 10 years, budgetary resources and favourable loans and grants amounting to more than US\$ 750 million have been used for the development of the health-care system.

134. The considerable efforts made in this area over the past 10 years have led to a significant decline in overall morbidity in Uzbekistan. The number of persons with socially significant illnesses, such as congenital abnormalities, declined by 32.4 per cent, infectious diseases by 40 per cent and severe infections of the upper respiratory tract 4.2-fold. Diphtheria, paratyphoid, poliomyelitis, malaria and a number of other diseases have been eradicated.

135. In 2011, 5.9 million women received an annual check-up, and 150,000 pregnant women were given a screening test. More than 243,000 pregnant women in rural areas received free multivitamins. Virtually all children were vaccinated against infectious diseases.

136. Advances in public health care were given a positive assessment by WHO, UNICEF and other leading international organizations at the international symposium held in Tashkent in 2011 and entitled “The national model of maternal and childhood health protection in Uzbekistan: Healthy mother – healthy child”.

137. Uzbekistan has become one of the top 10 countries in Save the Children’s rating of States for their level of medical care for children. Together with the Ministry of Health, WHO is currently working to devise new methods for the early detection, prevention and elimination of infectious diseases. Uzbekistan is making great efforts to strengthen the legal framework for improving the health of mothers and children. A number of projects are under way, including in the following areas: protection of pregnant women, effective perinatal care, reanimation of newborns, breastfeeding, monitoring of children’s growth and development, and the introduction of strategies for an integral treatment of childhood illnesses.

J. Human rights in the ecological crisis zone (implementation of recommendation No. 14)

138. The Ecological Movement of Uzbekistan came into being as a response to the need to conserve the environment, improve the ecological situation and protect people’s health, which are problems of interest to all segments of the population, regardless of their political views. The Movement brings together people who support these ideas and wish to take an active part in the protection of the environment and the health of the population, because they believe that an ecological approach to public, political, economic and social reforms is the best path to sustainable development for Uzbekistan.

139. For the first time in international practice, a quota has been introduced on the basis of which 15 seats in the Legislative Chamber have been set aside for the Ecological Movement in order to help ensure a successful and effective implementation of its objectives, and bearing also in mind the very topical nature of environmental protection issues. This innovation has enabled the Ecological Movement to address such questions at parliamentary level and to provide parliamentary oversight of the implementation of legislation in this area.

140. Efforts to improve national legislation on environmental protection and public health are an important part of the work of the Ecological Movement. A bill on ecological oversight is currently being drafted.

141. Parliamentary hearings to increase the responsibility of local authorities and social structures for the strict implementation of legal provisions and State programmes in the area of the environment are an important aspect of compliance oversight.

142. In June 2009, a hotline of the Ecological Movement began operating to promote a sense of responsibility in society, make known views on how to address environmental problems and contribute to public environmental oversight. The organizers take into account the national and international experience of consultative services and “green” hotlines. Thanks to measures taken, 73 per cent of ecological problems have been resolved. On the basis of data from public oversight conducted by the hotlines, proposals were made to amend the Environment Act, the Act on the Conservation and Use of the Plant World, the Act on the Conservation and Use of the Animal World, the Natural Resources Act and other legislation, as well as a bill on ecological oversight.

143. The Ecological Movement of Uzbekistan has considerable experience in examining, analysing and elucidating environmental problems in the Aral Sea region. A number of population groups are involved in projects carried out by the Ecological Movement to

address environmental problems throughout the country. The Ecological Movement has brought together more than 220 NGOs active in the area of environmental conservation and public health in order to pool efforts and coordinate activities.

K. Fighting HIV/AIDS (implementation of recommendation No. 18)

144. The presidential decision of 2008 on additional measures for a more effective prevention of the spread of the HIV infection in Uzbekistan was a major initiative for combating the spread of the illness. Its aim was to create a single organization to address the spread of the HIV infection, improve the effectiveness and quality of prevention and protection measures, strengthen the resource base of centres for combating AIDS and provide material incentives for staff working in the area.

145. The Act on the Prevention of Illnesses caused by the Human Immunodeficiency Virus is under review by a working group made up of parliamentary deputies and specialists from the Ministry of Health. A bill is under consideration in the relevant ministries and departments.

146. The offices of the procurator have examined law enforcement, investigative and judicial practice in the prevention of the spread of the HIV infection. An analysis of national legislation and international experience has pointed to the need to amend the Criminal Code to make it a crime to infect a person with HIV as a result of non-performance or improper performance of professional duties.

147. Specific provisions were introduced into criminal legislation which make it a crime to infect another person with HIV as a result of non-performance or improper performance of professional duties, the aim being to stiffen penalties for medical staff for improper performance of professional duties, to correct investigative and judicial practice regarding offences in this category so as to reflect adequately the heightened danger for the population and to make measures for combating the spread of the HIV infection more effective.

148. A national plan of action on the prevention of the spread of the HIV infection in Uzbekistan was conducted in the period 2009–2011.

149. In 2009, the national association of NGOs of Uzbekistan started a project, entitled “Civil society and the prevention of HIV/AIDS”, which is being carried out with financial support from the Central Asia AIDS Control Project and whose efforts are directed at the effective prevention of the HIV infection. In the framework of the project, the quality of NGO services provided for HIV/AIDS risk groups was assessed, and NGOs which assist risk groups received financial and technical support (allocation of small grants).

150. Modern technologies have been introduced to improve the quality of assistance for pregnant women at primary health-care facilities, and women receive a double screen test for HIV during pregnancy. At the current time, tests are only performed on pregnant women in risk groups.

151. In order to raise awareness of HIV-related issues, a number of information documents have been published, including “The HIV infection”, “Specialized assistance for HIV-associated illnesses” and “Prevention of the HIV infection in dentistry”. Lectures, talks, round tables and seminars are held to raise awareness and improve knowledge of the issues involved. A sociological study was conducted among 17,548 persons between 15 and 45 years of age to ascertain what they knew about how the HIV infection is transmitted and how to protect against it. According to the findings, 76.1 per cent of the participants in the study were familiar with the problems associated with HIV/AIDS.

L. Combat organized crime, terrorism and drug trafficking (implementation of recommendation No. 25)

152. In 2009–2011, Uzbekistan ratified the Shanghai Convention on Combating Terrorism (Ekaterinburg, 16 June 2009), the Agreement of the Eurasian Group on combating money laundering and financing of terrorism (Moscow, 16 June 2011), the Agreement between Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan on the creation of a Central Asian regional information coordination centre for combating illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and their precursors (Astana, 24 July 2006) and the Cooperation Agreement between the Member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization on combating the illegal sale of weapons, ammunition and explosive devices (Dushanbe, 28 August 2008).

153. Since the ratification of the United Nations Convention against Corruption, considerable importance has been attached to cooperation with the bodies of the United Nations and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Uzbekistan joined the Istanbul Anti-Corruption Action Plan of the OECD for the countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia and has already presented two reports on the plan. Work has begun on elaborating an anti-corruption bill. Steps have been taken to enlarge the role of judicial bodies in monitoring compliance with the law and to ensure that in their actions, State bodies and law enforcement authorities, including the office of the procurator, are guided by the principle of the rule of law.

154. On 25 December 2012, the Police Operations Act was adopted, which calls for the creation of a legislative and legal framework for the police operations of the law enforcement authorities as well as effective legal guarantees of respect for the rule of law and protection of civil rights and freedoms during police operations. The Act makes it possible to systematize existing legal norms set out in a number of legislative provisions governing police operations and improve the quality of inquiries and pretrial investigations and the effectiveness of measures for the prevention and timely suppression of offences, and it will contribute to a further democratization of the judicial system and a liberalization of the work of the law enforcement authorities. The Act also ensures that organized crime, terrorism and drug trafficking will be dealt with effectively and efficiently.

M. Promoting a vibrant civil society (implementation of recommendation No. 3)

155. In the course of reforms to improve the activities of NGOs, a number of measures will be taken to create the organizational, legal and material conditions for the formation of institutions of civil society. Laws have been adopted on citizens' self-governing bodies, non-governmental non-profit organizations, voluntary associations and foundations, and trade unions, as well as on guarantees and rights relating to these activities.

156. In accordance with a joint decision taken on 3 July 2008 by the Chambers of the Oliy Majlis on measures to strengthen support for NGOs and other institutions of civil society, new regulations were introduced on the financing of institutions of civil society through the creation of a public foundation for the support of NGOs and other institutions of civil society and of a parliamentary commission to manage the foundation's resources. The relevant legal document specifies that competence for the financing of NGOs is to be transferred from the executive to the legislative branch, thereby contributing to an equitable balance of regional and national interests – the Senate represents the interests of the regions and the Legislative Chamber represents national interests. This helps achieve a more targeted and equitable distribution of financial resources allocated from the State budget for supporting the "third sector".

157. For the period 2008–2012, the parliamentary commission for the management of the foundation’s resources, made up of members of the Senate, the Legislative Chamber, the Ministries of Justice and Finance and non-governmental bodies, allocated 22.5 billion sum in support for NGOs and other institutions of civil society.

158. Today more than 6,000 NGOs are operating in Uzbekistan, and their numbers are growing. The national association of NGOs of Uzbekistan, which has become a forum for feedback between State bodies and non-governmental non-profit organizations, uses various forms and mechanisms for the organizational, financial and material support of its members. More than 10,000 citizens’ self-governing bodies are making a major contribution on the ground at regional level to the profound democratic transformations taking place in the country. Another important institution, namely the mass media, is also growing rapidly. The number of mass media outlets in Uzbekistan exceeds 1,250, many of which are non-governmental. The Foundation for the Support and Development of the Independent Print Media and News Agencies of Uzbekistan and the National Electronic Media Association contribute to the democratization of the information sector.

159. The legal framework of the social partnership between the State and society is being improved in order to support institutions of civil society. A social partnership bill currently being elaborated provides for a clear delineation and improvement of the organizational and legal mechanisms for interaction between voluntary associations and government bodies in the implementation of programmes for socioeconomic development, the resolution of humanitarian problems and the protection of the rights, freedoms and interests of various social groups. A public oversight bill aims to create a system-wide effective legal mechanism for society and civil institutions for monitoring the implementation of legislative acts by State and administration authorities.

N. International cooperation in the field of human rights (implementation of recommendation No. 8)

160. Account being taken of national interests, an outline plan on the foreign policy of Uzbekistan, which was adopted at legislative level, establishes the fundamental principles and strategic priorities of the country’s foreign policy, objectives and tasks at international level and the mechanisms for advancing Uzbekistan’s medium- and long-term interests. It is designed to help consolidate Uzbekistan’s independence and sovereignty, strengthen its status and role as a full-fledged actor in international relations, ensure its entry into the group of developed democratic States, create a zone of security, stability and good neighbourly relations around the country and enhance its international image.

161. Uzbekistan conscientiously complies with its international legal obligations in the field of human rights and advocates a steady intensification of international cooperation in this area on the basis of mutual respect and a dialogue between equals. In line with international requirements, Uzbekistan has established a system for informing the international community about the situation in the field of human rights. It has submitted more than 30 reports to United Nations committees on the implementation of its obligations in the field of the protection of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, and it has adopted more than 10 national plans of action to implement the concluding observations and recommendations of United Nations committees following their consideration.

162. After the visit to Tashkent in July 2011 of Gianni Magazzeni, Chief of the Americas, Europe and Central Asia Branch of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, a memorandum of understanding was concluded between the Office and

Uzbekistan on the realization of a technical cooperation project in 2013 and 2014 on the primacy of the rule of law.

163. Every year, a delegation from Uzbekistan takes part in the discussions at the annual meeting of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the OSCE on the implementation of obligations in the field of the human dimension. Between 2009 and 2013, OSCE delegations headed by the Chairpersons-in-Office, the Secretary General, the High Commissioner for National Minorities and the Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights visited Uzbekistan.

164. Uzbekistan has been a member of the International Labour Organization since 1992, and cooperation with it is on the basis of interaction between the ILO and its social partners in Uzbekistan. To date, Uzbekistan has acceded to 13 ILO conventions. The actions of the Government in the area of decent work and in ensuring steady, balanced growth together with the creation of large numbers of jobs are fully in line with ILO strategy and principles.

165. Cooperation with UNICEF in 2011 and 2012 was based on the country programme action plan for the period 2010–2015 and workplans with major partners in 2011 and 2012. UNICEF has close contacts on questions concerning the implementation by Uzbekistan's government bodies of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and projects for monitoring children's rights.

V. Problems

166. Like many other countries during the global recession, Uzbekistan is experiencing a number of economic, social and political problems which have had an impact, in particular, on the most vulnerable social groups.

167. It is important to take into account the cumulative effect of domestic difficulties and outside dangers on the course and quality of the implementation of the provisions of international human rights agreements. Domestic difficulties are reflected in the transition to a democratic system of legislative, executive and judicial power. Overcoming these difficulties is also linked to the objectives of raising the level of legal culture, adapting mentalities to the requirements of a further development of civil society and promoting a better knowledge of the law and human rights culture on the part of the staff of government, judicial and law enforcement authorities.

168. The environmental situation in the Aral Sea region continues to be serious, and this has an impact on food security and access to drinking water.

169. Another problem is related to Uzbekistan's geopolitical location in Central Asia, a region that has had great difficulties in achieving stability and peace. Reference is made to the unstable situation in Afghanistan, where drug trafficking persists. The threat of international terrorism and religious extremism causes instability and diverts resources to combat those evils.

170. All in all, observance and protection of human rights and freedoms in Uzbekistan depend on further strengthening the organizational and legal mechanisms and procedures for their implementation in practice, pooling the efforts of government bodies and institutions of civil society in the field and raising public awareness of the law.

VI. Main national priorities for improving the human rights situation

171. Uzbekistan will consistently comply with all international obligations and support all United Nations initiatives on observing and protecting human rights and freedoms.

172. Uzbekistan will continue to improve the organizational and legal mechanisms for the enjoyment of personal, political, economic, social and cultural rights. It will continue to implement international human rights standards in domestic legislation and law enforcement practice.

173. Uzbekistan will take the necessary steps to improve parliamentary and public oversight and monitoring in the area of human rights. It will continue to develop an effective and permanent system of legal education and awareness-raising and a culture of human rights in society.

174. A draft national programme of action in the field of human rights is being elaborated with a view to analysing the situation of human rights in the country and defining priority areas for further improving the effectiveness of the activities of government bodies and institutions of civil society in safeguarding individual, political, social, economic and cultural rights, ensuring public oversight of compliance with the requirements of legislation in this regard and promoting a culture of human rights in society.

175. Uzbekistan is open to further cooperation and interaction with international organizations on human rights questions.
