

**S T A T E M E N T**  
**of Dr. Hijran Huseynova,**  
**Chairperson of the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs on**  
**“Consequences of Sexual Exploitation, Especially**  
**on Women and Children”**

*Vienna February 13*

**Ladies and gentlemen, dear participants.**

First of all, let me warmly welcome all the delegates and express my appreciation to the United Nations for initiative of organizing world wide Forum to fight human trafficking - dedicated to such an important issue.

Trafficking in human beings is a serious crime that governments, international organizations and devoted individuals try to address. Women and children remain the most sensitive group that can become victims of trafficking. Their trafficking for sexual exploitation is a high-profit, low-risk trade for those who organize it, but it is detrimental to the millions of women and children. Though people often associate it with certain regions, our globalizing world is too interdependent to be divided into isolated regions.

It is widely recognized that trafficking especially in women and children impoverish not only individuals, families, communities and governments, but also reduce the development of each nation. Apart from the human, social and economic costs of sexual exploitation, the spread of venereal diseases and HIV/AIDS, child prostitution deprives children of the opportunity to pursue education and to realize their full potential.

Azerbaijan has taken a number of both legislative and administrative measures to combat human trafficking. Taking into consideration the provisions of the UN Convention “on transnational organized crimes” and additional Protocol to it on Combating Trafficking there have been adopted “National Action Plan on Struggle against Human Trafficking” and Act on “Combat against human trafficking” and relevant amendments have been made to Criminal Code and other legislative acts. The Department on Struggle against Human Trafficking was also established. It is a special police institution fully charged of dealing with trafficking. Cabinet of Ministers approved the “Rules of establishment of special institutions for victims of human trafficking, their financing, as well as, supervision of their activities”. It envisages establishment of special shelters and a hotline for victims. All these measures give an opportunity to rescue the victims and to provide rehabilitative works.

Besides the legislative measures, we are taking various actions in this field. At the moment, two family and children support centers under the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs are functioning to combat human trafficking. We can understand the importance and

crucial need of such kind of centers and consolidate all our efforts to increase the number of such kind of institutions.

Azerbaijani Government is involved in many projects. One of them is the project titled “XXI century without violence against women”. It is being conducted by the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs, in cooperation with Heydar Aliyev Foundation and UNFPA. It is considered to carry out awareness raising campaigns and programs as well as on human trafficking and early marriages among others.

Distinguished guests,

It is a well known fact that often traffickers find safe heavens in the regions prone to wars and conflicts. Azerbaijan is the country which has suffered and still is suffering war and aggression. 20 percent of our lands are under occupation and as a result every one of 8 people in our country is either refugee or IDP. Over half of them are women and children that constitute the risk group for trafficking. Traffickers target these groups of people with social economic vulnerabilities for trafficking. As a result of huge reforms carried out by Azerbaijani Government, the refugee camps have been eliminated and the living conditions of refugees and IDPs have been ameliorated.

Although immediate measures have been taken, facts of human trafficking still occur. Statistics show that only during 10 months of 2007, 64 cases of human trafficking were registered by local authorities. This situation urges us to take more serious steps in this direction.

In light of the above stated, I think that following measures can be taken to prevent trafficking in human beings:

- Prevention of trafficking through the legal training of law enforcement officers;
- Rescue and rehabilitation for women and girl victims of trafficking;
- Foster awareness-raising among women and girls to prevent trafficking;
- Reduce conditions for trafficking through advocacy, particularly in relation to forced and early marriages;
- Target parents on promotion of long-term advantages of girls’ education;
- Enlighten schools and other institutes of higher education on trafficking in human beings.

It is recognized that in the modern world, no government can address the problem of human trafficking all by itself. Following international agreements, therefore we have to direct our efforts to harmonize our laws and law enforcement mechanisms, and to increase our collaboration, so that human traffickers are punished and victims are rescued. The task is hard to undertake but the stakes worth it.

**Thank you for your attention.**