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Crime prevention and criminal justice

Letter dated 2 August 2019 from the Permanent Representative of Uzbekistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to convey to you information on the measures taken by the Government of Uzbekistan to fight trafficking in persons (see annex).

I should appreciate it if you would circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 109.

(Signed) Bakhtiyor **Ibragimov**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative



Annex to the letter dated 2 August 2019 from the Permanent Representative of Uzbekistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Russian]

Measures taken by the Republic of Uzbekistan to further improve its system for combating trafficking in persons

Uzbekistan has taken systematic and extensive measures to protect the rights and legitimate interests of citizens and to reform its legal and judicial system. Comprehensive measures have been put in place for the early prevention of delinquency and to combat crime, including in priority areas such as countering trafficking in persons and eradicating the use of forced labour.

Effective measures are being taken to identify and protect victims of trafficking, to assist in their social reintegration and to provide them with medical, psychological and other assistance.

The use of child labour has been eradicated and unprecedented measures have been put in place to eliminate the use of forced labour of adults in agricultural work and in beautification and landscaping projects.

Efforts are being made to work closely in this field with civil society representatives and non-governmental organizations from abroad to protect the rights and legitimate interests of citizens.

Particular attention is paid to ensuring that comprehensive assistance is provided to the victims of trafficking in aid of their social reintegration. A state-of-the-art reintegration centre that provides assistance and protection to the victims of trafficking has been established in the capital city of Tashkent and staffed with expert professional staff: doctors, lawyers, psychologists and other experts specialized in assisting in the social reintegration of trafficking victims. A personality-based victim reintegration methodology has been developed. The centre has provided psychological, legal, social, medical and other assistance to over 3,000 victims of trafficking.

Furthermore, since 2013, Uzbekistan has used an approach developed by the International Labour Organization (ILO), with the direct involvement of its experts, to monitor the use of child labour and forced labour in agriculture. ILO and the World Bank have reported no cases of large-scale use of child labour or forced labour during the cotton harvest during the period from 2013 to 2018.

A helpline established by the State labour inspectorate attached to the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations and a live chat service on the Ministry's website have been in operation since September 2015.

In addition, a web site for the feedback mechanism has been established to raise awareness of the measures taken to uphold the labour rights and guarantees established by law, including those arising from ratified ILO conventions.

In recent years, law enforcement efforts in the area of early intervention and timely crime prevention have included measures aimed at the early prevention of crimes, including trafficking in persons. As a result of nationwide public awareness campaigns, including among young people, the incidence of trafficking-related crimes has been significantly reduced.

In October 2018, the Academy of the Office of the Procurator General established a centre to carry out a comprehensive analysis of, and research into, the

causes of these crimes; analyse the manifestations of the crimes in question; and develop strategies for countering them for the current period and beyond.

On 30 July 2019, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan signed a decree on additional measures to further improve the system for combating trafficking in persons and the use of forced labour. In a symbolic gesture, the document was adopted on the day that the General Assembly had designated as World Day against Trafficking in Persons at its sixty-eighth session.

The Decree focuses primarily on the establishment of an effective system for coordinating the efforts of government authorities in combating trafficking in persons and the use of forced labour; the promotion of a positive image of the country in the international arena; and the implementation of the strategy for action in five priority areas for the development of Uzbekistan for the period 2017–2021.

Pursuant to the Decree, the national inter-agency commission on combating trafficking in persons has been replaced by a national commission on combating trafficking in persons and the use of forced labour; its composition, to be headed by the Chair of the Senate, the upper house of the Oliy Majlis, the parliament of Uzbekistan, was confirmed in the Decree.

The main purpose of the commission is to coordinate the efforts of national and regional authorities, self-governing bodies and non-governmental and non-profit organizations in the area of combating trafficking in persons and the use of forced labour in order to ensure their effectiveness, synergy and coherence. Furthermore, the commission is responsible for organizing the development and implementation of State programmes to combat trafficking in persons and the use of forced labour with a view to improving national laws and law enforcement practices and to monitor their implementation.

In addition, the President of Uzbekistan has issued a decree establishing the office of the national rapporteur on trafficking in persons and forced labour, whose duties will be exercised by the Chair of the national commission. It is envisaged that the national rapporteur will submit to the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan an annual report on the current situation in the country and in the world in the area of combating trafficking in persons and the use of forced labour, the steps being taken to prosecute and punish the perpetrators of such crimes and the support being provided to victims of trafficking.

Regular briefings will also be provided to the media with the participation of the diplomatic missions of foreign States and the representative offices of international organizations accredited in the Republic of Uzbekistan, with a view to bringing to the general public and the international community reliable information on the measures being taken in the Republic in this regard.

The national rapporteur is responsible for ensuring effective cooperation and collaboration with the international community, organizations and human rights defenders specializing in combating the trafficking of persons and the use of forced labour. The national rapporteur also has the important task of defending the national interests of Uzbekistan on this subject in the international arena.