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Uzbekistan,***

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Introduction

1. Uzbekistan, in connection with the constitutional reform undertaken and the adoption of a new version of the Constitution following the referendum of 30 April 2023, is submitting this common core document forming part of its human rights reports. This document conveys the gist and content of the reforms under way to improve the mechanism for ensuring human rights, including those of women, young people, children and persons with disabilities.
2. On 28 January 2022, the New Uzbekistan Development Strategy for 2022–2026 was approved. This strategy, whose basic principle is to uphold the honour and dignity of the person, seeks to enhance the people's well-being, transform the economy, accelerate enterprise development, ensure human rights and interests and build a vigorous civil society.
3. The main areas of the Strategy cover 100 national goals and targets, which are aimed at Uzbekistan achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Uzbekistan has developed national indicators for implementation of the Goals in accordance with the United Nations principle leave no one behind.
4. The period 2017–2022 saw the adoption of more than 350 laws and 4,400 regulations, aimed at fundamentally reforming all areas of the life of the State and society and strengthening human rights safeguards and legal protection mechanisms. Uzbekistan has ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and six conventions of the International Labour Organization (ILO).
5. The country has carried out administrative reform and fundamentally overhauled the system of State authorities. It has identified ways of increasing their effectiveness, introducing modern mechanisms for State regulation, reducing the State's role in the regulation of socioeconomic processes and making extensive use of digital technologies in their work.
6. The National Human Rights Strategy of Uzbekistan, the first in the country's history, was adopted by a presidential decree on 20 June 2020. The road map for the implementation of this strategy provides for 78 measures to ensure the protection of human rights and legitimate interests, including the drafting of 33 laws and 12 codes covering all aspects of human rights in the country. As part of the strategy, the mechanism for fulfilling international human rights obligations has been improved, international human rights standards are being introduced into legislation and the work of State authorities, and measures are being taken to raise the population's legal culture in the area of human rights.
7. Uzbekistan fully implements its obligations under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It presented its first voluntary national review in 2020 and second in 2023 at the high-level political forum on sustainable development.
8. Special attention was paid to poverty eradication and social protection. In 2022, Uzbekistan adopted the Social Protection Strategy, which defines priority areas and comprehensive measures for the development of the social protection system up to 2030.
9. On the initiative of Uzbekistan, the General Assembly adopted a resolution entitled "Enlightenment and religious tolerance" at its seventy-second session, the main purpose of which is to ensure universal access to education, eliminate illiteracy and ignorance, promote tolerance and mutual respect, ensure religious freedom, protect the rights of believers and prevent discrimination against them.
10. Uzbekistan put forward a number of important international, regional and national initiatives at the seventy-fifth and seventy-sixth sessions of the General Assembly during and the high-level segment of the Human Rights Council at its forty-sixth session and identified major human rights priorities that practically cover all mechanisms for the protection of human rights and freedoms, current issues and ways to address them.
11. In order to implement the General Assembly resolution of 18 June 2018, entitled "Strengthening regional and international cooperation to ensure peace, stability and sustainable development in the Central Asian region", Uzbekistan held a number of international forums aimed at combating terrorist activities in the region, drug trafficking and organized crime.

12. Uzbekistan was elected, for the first time in its history, to the Human Rights Council for the period 2021–2023, with a representative of Uzbekistan serving as Vice-Chair of the Council in 2022.

13. Considerable progress has been made towards gender equality. Two laws, 6 presidential decrees and decisions, and 16 government decisions have been adopted to ensure gender equality, support women and increase their role in the governance of the State and society. A national commission on enhancing the role of women in society, gender equality and family affairs has been set up.

14. Over the past five years, the main economic reforms have involved ensuring macroeconomic stability, lowering inflation, reducing and simplifying the tax burden, diversifying economic sectors, creating a favourable business climate, improving infrastructure and promoting agricultural development, economic integration and the digital economy.

15. The reforms have created an environment of free and fair competition for all to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 10 (Reduce inequality within and among countries). The tax burden on business enterprises was lightened owing to the abolition of excessive levies and the standardization of tax rates. Moreover, property, income and social security taxes were halved.

16. The General Assembly unanimously adopted at its seventy-seventh session another draft resolution initiated by Uzbekistan, entitled “Enhancing the role of parliaments in accelerating the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals”.

17. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein, visited Uzbekistan in May 2017 to familiarize himself with the measures taken in the country to ensure human rights. In March 2023, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk, visited the country.

18. The visits of the special procedure mandate holders of the Human Rights Council to the country are primary evidence of increased cooperation with the United Nations, including the following:

- Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, Ahmed Shaheed, in October 2017
- Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers, Diego García-Sayán, in September 2019
- Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights while countering terrorism, Fionnuala Ní Aoláin, in November and December 2021

19. In 2022, a visit to Uzbekistan was undertaken by the High Commissioner on National Minorities of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Kairat Abdrakhmanov.

20. In April 2023, a visit to the country was undertaken by the European Union Special Representative for Human Rights, Eamon Gilmore.

21. The Global Forum on Human Rights Education was held in Samarkand on 5 and 6 December 2022 to discuss the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training and review the interim results of the implementation of the World Programme for Human Rights Education, and to share best practices and innovative approaches in this area. The outcome document of the Global Forum was issued as an official document for the seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly.

22. In the period 2017–2022, Uzbekistan implemented reforms to eliminate child and forced labour and statelessness and facilitate the repatriation of women and children from camps in the Middle East. Comprehensive work is under way to eradicate torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, to ensure gender equality and protect women’s rights, including protection against harassment and violence, to ensure freedom of the press and to pave the way for an inclusive society.

23. This revised core document was prepared on the basis of the guidelines for the introduction to reports of States parties under the core international human rights treaties and

the compilation of guidelines on the form and content of reports to be submitted by States parties to the international human rights treaties. The report contains new information to supplement the previous document submitted in 2017. It is structured according to the requirements set out in the guidelines. The document presents Uzbekistan in all its cultural, historical, political and legal diversity, including information on the land and the people, the general political structure and the protection of human rights.

I. General information

A. Demographic, economic, social and cultural characteristics of the State

Geopolitical characteristics

24. Uzbekistan is situated in Central Asia between the region's two biggest rivers, the Amu Darya and the Syr Darya. It borders Kazakhstan to the north and north-east, Turkmenistan to the south-west, Afghanistan to the south, Tajikistan to the south-east and Kyrgyzstan to the north-east. Approximately four fifths of Uzbekistan are made up of desert plains. The eastern and south-eastern regions include the Tien Shan and its foothills and the Gissar range. Within the Turan Plate lie the Ustyurt Plateau, the Amu Darya Delta on the southern shore of the Aral Sea and the enormous Kyzylkum Desert.

25. Uzbekistan has an extreme continental climate. Summers are long, hot and dry, while winters are rather cold, but short, with little snow. The average air temperature in July varies across the country, from 26°C in the north to 30°C in the south, with maximum temperatures reaching 47–49°C. The average temperature in January drops to -8°C in the north and to 0°C in the south, with the minimum temperature reaching -38°C.

26. Uzbekistan has an area of 448,924 km² and a population 36,024,946 as of 1 January 2023. According to United Nations criteria, it the world's fifty-sixth largest country by area and forty-first by population.

27. Uzbekistan is a unitary State. The administrative-territorial division of Uzbekistan has three levels: the first level comprises the Republic of Karakalpakstan, 12 provinces and the city of Tashkent; the second level, districts and cities administered directly by the provincial authorities; and the third level, cities under district administration, urban communities and villages, *auls* and mahallas.

28. Uzbekistan is a sovereign, democratic, social and secular State governed by the rule of law with a republican form of government. The parliament is composed of two chambers, namely the Legislative Chamber and the Senate. The Head of State is the President, the capital is Tashkent, and the currency is the sum.

Historical background

29. The first historical information about the settlement of Central Asia, including Uzbekistan, dates to the middle of the first millennium BCE. In the sixth century BCE, Central Asia was under the rule of the Persian dynasty of the Achaemenids. In the fourth century BCE, the Achaemenid dynasty was conquered by Alexander the Great. The territory of Uzbekistan, in its entirety or in part, was subsequently ruled by the great States of antiquity: the successors of Alexander the Great, the Seleucids (fourth and third centuries BCE), the Greco-Bactrian Kingdom (third to second centuries BCE) and the powerful central Indian State of Kushan (late first century BCE to fourth century CE).

30. Various cultures and civilizations helped shape the Uzbek ethnic group, a people with Turkic roots who gave their name to the nation. The historical development of the Uzbeks took place in conditions of close contact and intermingling with Iranian peoples and culture.

31. In the eighth century, Central Asia, including the land that is now Uzbekistan, was conquered by Arabs and was added to the possessions of the Arab Caliphate. Islam was introduced in the wake of this conquest. The new religion spread quickly among the people, although they continued to observe aspects of Zoroastrianism and other religions (Buddhism,

Manichaeism and Nestorianism). The spread of Islam brought the region into the realm of Islamic civilization.

32. Local dynasties replaced Arab rulers at the end of the ninth century. The territory of Uzbekistan was ruled by the Samanid, Karakhan and Seljuk dynasties from the ninth to the twelfth centuries.

33. The first Eastern Renaissance spanning the ninth to twelfth centuries saw the emergence of great scholars, holders of encyclopaedic knowledge and prominent thinkers in the territory of Uzbekistan. Among those who made a huge and invaluable contribution to the exact sciences are Muhammad al-Khwarizmi, Abu Ali ibn Sina, Abu Bakr Razi, Abu Rayhan al-Beruni, Ahmad al-Farghani. The great works of Imam al-Bukhari, Al-Hakim al-Tirmidhi, Burhan al-Din al-Marghinani, Abu Mansur al-Maturidi, Abu Bakr al-Shoshi, Mahmud ibn Umar al-Zamakhshari and other internationally recognized scholars have increased the wealth of human knowledge and raised Islamic law to a qualitatively higher level.

34. In the early thirteenth century, Central Asia (along with Azerbaijan and Iran) was briefly part of the State of the shahs of Khwarazm (Khwarazmshahs), which ceased to exist after the attack of the hordes of Genghis Khan. Power was soon taken over by the Timurid dynasty. This was the era of the greatest economic development and a thriving culture (second half of the fourteenth to the fifteenth century). Samarkand became the capital of the State of Tamerlane (Amir Timur). In the Middle Ages the Timurid State extended over a vast territory combining 27 modern states and created a common legal and economic area. This period, and the absolute monarchy that emerged at the time, may be regarded as the foundation for the nationhood of Uzbekistan.

35. During the second Eastern Renaissance, in the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries, the capital of the Empire created by Tamerlane brought together scholars, writers, architects and artisans from various parts of the world. His grandson Ulugh Beg, an outstanding mathematician, astronomer, educator, poet and polymath, founded one of the most important observatories of the time, built a rich library and created the Samarkand School of Scientists. His well-known life's work, the *Zij*, or star catalogue, became a work for all of humanity.

36. At the turn of the sixteenth century the Timurid State was replaced the Shibanid State, which ruled until the sixteenth century. For nearly four centuries, from the sixteenth century to the conquest of Central Asia by Russia in the second half of the nineteenth century, there were three Uzbek khanates in what is now Uzbekistan: the Bukhara (an emirate as from the mid-eighteenth century), the Khiva and the Kokand khanates.

37. In the second half of the nineteenth century, most of Central Asia, including the territory of present-day Uzbekistan, was conquered by the Russian Empire. The Governorate General of Turkistan was established.

38. The Turkistan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic was established in 1918 in the wake of the revolution in Russia and the Bukharan People's Soviet Republic and Khorezm People's Soviet Republic in 1920.

39. In 1924, Central Asia was divided up into ethnic States. The Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic was established on 27 October 1924. Under this ethnic division, the territories populated chiefly by Uzbeks became part of the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic. The Republic had 82 per cent of all Uzbeks living in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR); they accounted for 76 per cent of the total population of the newly formed republic. Uzbekistan was part of the USSR for nearly 70 years, and its demographic, social and economic development was influenced by processes characteristic of the Soviet Union.

40. The country reached a turning point in its history on 1 September 1991 when it declared itself an independent State. On 31 August 1991, the Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Uzbekistan adopted a decision proclaiming the independent statehood of the Republic of Uzbekistan and a constitutional act on the legal foundations of the independent statehood of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

41. More than 180 States of the world have officially recognized Uzbekistan as an independent State. As of January 2023, Uzbekistan has established and maintains diplomatic

relations with 141 States Members of the United Nations. Uzbekistan has 44 embassies, 1 consulate general, 8 honorary consuls, 17 offices of international organizations, 13 offices of international intergovernmental and governmental organizations of foreign States and 1 trade mission with diplomatic status. Uzbekistan has 55 diplomatic and consular missions in foreign countries and with international organizations. Uzbekistan is a member of more than 100 international organizations and is enhancing its cooperation with various multilateral organizations.

Population

42. Uzbekistan is home to more than 130 ethnic groups and peoples. The largest ethnic groups are Uzbeks, Tajiks, Kazakhs, Karakalpaks and Russians. About 80 per cent of the population of Uzbekistan is Uzbek.

43. In anthropological terms, the Uzbeks are a people of mixed descent, with both European and Asian traits. Anthropologists regard the Uzbeks as southern Europeans from the Central Asian valleys. The Uzbek population of the towns and ancient cultivated oases have relatively few Asian traits.

44. Uzbek is the official language of Uzbekistan. Standard Uzbek belongs to the Karluk group of the western branch of the Turkic languages. The Karakalpak language belongs to the Kipchak group of Turkic languages.

45. In terms of religious affiliation, believers among Uzbeks and Karakalpaks are Sunni Muslims (approximately 95 per cent in 2022). In Uzbekistan, and indeed throughout Central Asia, the orthodox form of Islam has typically merged with mystical elements such as Sufism and pre-Islamic beliefs.

46. Uzbekistan is a secular State. Uzbekistan has 2,318 religious organizations belonging to 16 different denominations, including the Orthodox, Catholic, Lutheran, Baptist, Full Gospel, Seventh Day Adventist and other Christian churches, and the religious communities of the Bukhara and European Jews, Baha'i, Hare Krishna and Buddhists.

Economy

47. As a result of the implementation of measures aimed at increasing economic activity in the country and the ongoing economic reforms, the gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate was 7.4 per cent in 2021 and 5.7 per cent in 2022. In 2022, GDP was \$80.4 billion. According to the World Bank's forecasts, Uzbekistan is identified as a leading country in the Europe and Central Asia region, where high economic growth of 5 per cent is expected in 2023–2024. The GDP growth rate in 2023 is projected to be 5.3 per cent. The growth will be achieved by increasing industrial production by 5.1–6.9 per cent, services by 6.7 per cent and agriculture by 3.5 per cent.

48. Fixed capital investment for 2022 increased by 0.9 per cent. A favourable price environment for export goods and remittance inflows helped reduce the current account deficit from \$4.8 billion in 2021 to \$511 million in 2022. The international reserves of Uzbekistan for 2022 increased by 1.8 per cent and amounted to \$35.8 billion. As of 1 October 2022, the balance of the country's public debt was \$26.2 billion. External public debt decreased by 1.7 per cent and amounted to \$23.2 billion.

49. The consumer price index will rise by 9.5 per cent in 2023 compared to 12 per cent in 2022. By 2025, the Uzbek regulatory authority inflation targeting goal of 5 per cent is expected to be achieved.

50. The real growth rate of total income of the population of Uzbekistan in 2022 amounted to 9.7 per cent. In nominal terms, total income grew by 22.3 per cent. In turn, total income per capita increased by 19.8 per cent in nominal terms and by 7.5 per cent in real terms.

51. Uzbekistan made use of \$11.1 billion in foreign investment in 2021. Investment in fixed assets amounted to \$9.8 billion, showing a growth rate of 110 per cent against 2020 figures. Uzbekistan plans to implement investment projects worth about \$52.15 billion in 2022–2024. In 2022, projects amounting to \$16.57 billion have been implemented, \$6 billion

of which is foreign direct investment. Uzbekistan plans to implement projects amounting to \$17.34 billion in 2023. The volume of foreign direct investment will amount to \$7.06 billion.

52. The industry of Uzbekistan is characterized by dynamic development: over 2017–2022, production growth was 134.2 per cent, which is higher than GDP growth (129.5 per cent). Between 2017 and 2022, industry's share of GDP increased from 21.1 per cent to 26.7 per cent. This was facilitated by the steady growth of industrial production, which amounted to 141.3 per cent for the period. The manufacturing sector developed at a faster pace, with growth of 147.4 per cent. In addition, the electricity, heat and gas supply sector developed at an accelerated rate of 139.2 per cent and the mining sector at 130.4 per cent. The industry of Uzbekistan is based on the manufacturing sector, which accounts for 83.2 per cent of industry.

53. Significant reforms in agriculture have been implemented, which have given a new impetus to the development of this area. They include the approval of the Strategy of Agricultural Development of Uzbekistan for 2020–2030, the introduction of a cluster system, trade liberalization and export promotion, opportunities for leasing (subleasing) agricultural land plots, the provision of subsidies for the introduction of water-saving technologies and others.

54. The opportunities created have had a positive impact on the development of the agricultural sector in the country. Thus, cotton yield increased from 23.8 centners per ha in 2017 to 34 centners per ha in 2022, and the share of irrigated areas where water-saving technologies were introduced increased from 1.7 per cent to 24 per cent. Some 465 agriculture clusters have been created.

55. Changes in legislation related to trade liberalization and export promotion allowed for a 1.7-fold increase in exports of horticultural products over 2017–2022, from \$652.3 million to \$1,134.3 million.

56. As a result of the reforms undertaken, Uzbekistan improved its ranking in the Global Food Security Index for 2019–2022, rising by 12 places, from eighty-fifth to seventy-third place.

57. The development of the service sector is essential for economic growth, employment (especially for young people) and improved living standards in Uzbekistan. At the end of 2022, the share of the service sector in GDP was 41.5 per cent, and the real growth of the sector increased by a factor of 1.9 during 2017–2022.

58. The e-government system was developed further and the total number of electronic public services reached 368 services, 242 of which are intended for employers. Business registration has been simplified and the number of small businesses has increased 2.2 times (from 128,000 in 2017 to 325,000 in 2022). Information and communications technology infrastructure has been improved sixfold (total fibre optic links increased from 20,300 km in 2017 to 118,000 km in 2022) and the logistics system by a factor of 1.2 (freight transport increased from 1,146.2 million tons in 2017 to 1,398.9 million tons in 2022).

59. As a result of providing incentives for private sector to be involved in the development of modern services, financial services increased by a factor of 5.1 and information and communication services of 2.8, and international data network capacity reached 1,800 Gbps in 2022 (from 64.2 Gbps in 2017); educational services increased by a factor of 2.5; the number of private preschool educational institutions reached 833 (from 250 in 2017), preschool institutions based on public-private partnership 1,313 (from 250 in 2018), family preschool educational institutions 20,676 (from 579 in 2018) and non-State general education institutions 194 (from 39 in 2017), and the number of higher education institutions in the country increased to 191, non-State higher education institutions to 55 (from 1 in 2018) and foreign higher education institutions to 31 (from 7 in 2017).

60. Young people's access to higher education has increased significantly. While in 2016 only just over 9 per cent of secondary education graduates pursued higher education, by 2023 this figure had increased by a factor of 3.5. As of the beginning of the 2022/23 academic year, the number of students enrolled in the 191 higher education institutions operating in Uzbekistan exceeded 1 million. The number of male students was 544,800 and female students 495,600.

61. Over the period 2017–2023, a huge amount of work has been done as part of efforts to reform the health-care system, more than 200 sector-specific laws and regulations have been adopted, including the policy framework for the development of the health-care system of Uzbekistan. The country is improving primary, emergency and specialized medical care. Significant results have been obtained in preventing maternal and child mortality, early detection of diseases, promoting healthy lifestyles in families, improving the medical culture of the population and extending life expectancy.

62. Health-care services have doubled, with 7,320 private health-care facilities now in operation (4,000 in 2017), 5,823 of which are outpatient and 1,497 inpatient facilities.

63. Uzbekistan is carrying out systematic work to reduce poverty through the implementation of its national model. The percentage of the country's population living below the international poverty line at \$3.20 per day decreased between 2019 and 2021, from 26.3 per cent to 25 per cent, and, at \$1.90 per day, from 5.9 per cent to 5.4 per cent.

64. The poverty rate in Uzbekistan at the end of 2022 decreased by almost 3 per cent compared to 2021 and amounted to 14 per cent. The average income per capita increased by 8.8 per cent.

B. Constitutional, political and legal structure of the State

65. The constitutional, political and legal system of the State is set out in the new version of the Constitution adopted on 1 May 2023 (the old version was adopted on 8 December 1992), following the referendum of 30 April 2023. The new version of the Constitution was amended with the addition of 27 new articles (bringing the total number to 155, from 128) and 159 new constitutional provisions (bringing the total to 434, from 275), thus changing 65 per cent of its content.

66. The Constitution is committed to the ideals of democracy and social justice, universal values and the universally recognized rules and principles of international law. It is free of any provision that would establish a monopoly of a single political ideology or set off any nation or people living in the territory of the State against another. It lays down the principles of the supremacy of the Constitution and the law, the separation of powers between the legislature, executive and judiciary and the accountability of State authorities and officials to society.

67. Uzbekistan is a democratic, social and secular State governed by the rule of law with a republican form of government. The new version of the Constitution significantly expands personal, political, social, economic, cultural and environmental human rights and freedoms. The provisions on human rights guarantees have been increased threefold. The rights and freedoms of citizens embodied in the Constitution and the law are immutable, and no one has the right to deny or restrict them without passing through a court of law. The protection of environmental rights is reflected in the Constitution for the first time. The Constitution emphasizes that ensuring human rights and freedoms is the supreme objective of the State, human rights and freedoms are directly applicable, human honour and dignity are inviolable, and nothing can justify their derogation. The legal mechanism for the protection of the rights and freedoms of citizens, including women, children, young people, persons with disabilities and other socially vulnerable groups, has been improved. The State's obligations to provide those most in need with housing, a minimum wage (determined with due regard to ensuring a decent living and guaranteed medical care, etc.) have been established.

Legislature

68. The highest representative body is the Oliy Majlis, which exercises legislative power. It consists of two chambers, the Legislative Chamber and the Senate. The term of office is five years.

69. The procedure governing the establishment and legal status of the Oliy Majlis is laid down in the Constitution (arts. 91–104), the Constitutional Act on the Senate of the Oliy Majlis, the Constitutional Act on the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis, the Electoral

Code and the Act on the Status of Deputies of the Legislative Chamber and Members of the Senate of the Oliy Majlis.

70. The Legislative Chamber consists of 150 deputies, elected in accordance with the law, and the Senate of 100 members (senators) representing regional constituencies.

71. Members of the Senate from the Republic of Karakalpakstan, the country's provinces and Tashkent are elected by secret ballot to fill four seats each from among the deputies at the respective joint sessions of the Jokargy Kenes (parliament) of the Republic of Karakalpakstan and the representative authorities of the provinces, districts and cities. Nine members of the Senate are appointed by the President from among the most highly regarded citizens having broad practical experience and special merit in the fields of science, the arts, literature, industry and other areas of the life of the State and society.

72. During its term of office, the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis elects deputies of the Chamber to serve on Committees to draft laws, consider and develop legislative proposals submitted to the Chamber and monitor the implementation of laws and decisions adopted by the Chamber.

73. During its term of office, the Senate of the Oliy Majlis elects members of the Senate to serve on committees for the preliminary consideration and preparation of matters brought before the Senate and for monitoring the implementation of the laws of Uzbekistan and decisions adopted by the Senate.

74. When necessary, the Legislative Chamber and the Senate establish commissions of deputies and senators to fulfil specific tasks.

75. Joint sessions of the Legislative Chamber and Senate are held during inaugurations of the President of Uzbekistan, presidential addresses on fundamental social, economic and domestic- or foreign-policy issues and appearances of foreign Heads of State.

76. The President of Uzbekistan, the parliament of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, the deputies of the Legislative Chamber and the Cabinet of Ministers have the right to initiate legislation. The Constitutional Court, the Supreme Court and the Procurator General also have the right to initiate legislation on matters within their competence. The right to initiate legislation is exercised by those so entitled by introducing bills to the Legislative Chamber. At least 100,000 citizens with the right to vote, the Senate, the Ombudsman and the Central Election Commission may submit legislative proposals to the Legislative Chamber by way of legislative initiative.

77. Councils of people's deputies (*kengash*) are representative government bodies in the provinces, districts and cities. Council of people's deputies are headed by a chair elected in accordance with the law from among the deputies.

President

78. The President is the Head of State and ensures the smooth functioning and cooperation of the branches of government. Any citizen of Uzbekistan who has reached the age of 35, is fluent in the official language and has permanently resided in Uzbekistan for at least 10 years immediately prior to the elections may stand for election to the post of President. The same person may not be President more than two terms in a row.

79. The President is elected by the citizens of Uzbekistan for a term of seven years on the basis of universal, equal and direct suffrage by secret ballot.

80. The President acts as the guarantor of observance of citizens' rights and freedoms, the Constitution and the laws of Uzbekistan. He or she takes the measures necessary for the protection of the sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of the country and for the implementation of decisions on national issues relating to the system of government and represents Uzbekistan at the national and international levels.

81. The President is vested with the power to address the Oliy Majlis on fundamental domestic and foreign policy issues, ensures cooperation between the Uzbek authorities at the highest level, establishes and dissolves ministries and other central government agencies by promulgating relevant decrees for subsequent approval by the Senate, puts forward

candidates for President of the Senate and appoints the Prime Minister and members of the Cabinet of Ministers, or removes them from office, with the approval of the Legislative Chamber.

Executive

82. Executive power is exercised by the Cabinet of Ministers. The Cabinet of Ministers is composed of the Prime Minister and his or her deputies and ministers. The Cabinet of Ministers includes ex officio the Head of the Government of the Republic of Karakalpakstan.

83. In the event of a deadlock between the Prime Minister and the Legislative Chamber, on an official application to the President by at least one third of the deputies, a motion of no confidence in the Prime Minister may be brought before the Chamber for discussion. A vote of no confidence in the Prime Minister is considered to have been passed if at least two thirds of the total number of deputies of the Legislative Chamber vote in favour. In this case, the President decides to dismiss the Prime Minister from office. At the same time, the entire Cabinet of Ministers resigns along with the Prime Minister.

84. The executive in a province, district or city, respectively, is headed by the regional chief administrator (*hokim*). The regional chief administrator of a province or Tashkent is appointed and dismissed by the President of Uzbekistan in accordance with the law. The regional chief administrator of districts and cities is appointed and dismissed by the regional chief administrator of the province or Tashkent, subject to the approval of the corresponding council of people's deputies.

85. In recent years, Uzbekistan has undertaken major administrative reforms aimed at creating an effective system of governance, simplifying the processes of consideration of issues and decision-making, and focusing on efficiency, which is an important prerequisite for the country's further development. In particular, the structure of government agencies has been optimized by reducing tasks that do not fall within their remit and widely introducing digital technologies into their work.

86. In order to reduce bureaucratic barriers and improve the system of providing public services by introducing modern governance principles into the work of State authorities, about 30 types of licences and permits have been abolished, more than 70 State services have been simplified, and requests for more than 60 documents by State organizations have been cancelled.

87. The number of users of the e-government system, which provides access to more than 130 websites of State authorities, has exceeded 4 million. Almost 350 types of services are provided online on the central interactive State services portal.

Judiciary

88. The judiciary in Uzbekistan operates independently of the legislative and executive branches, political parties and voluntary associations. Judicial power is exercised by the Constitutional Court, the Supreme Court, the military courts, the Court of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, the provincial and Tashkent City courts, the Administrative Court of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, the administrative courts of the provinces and the city of Tashkent, the inter-district, district and city civil courts, the district and city criminal courts, and the inter-district, district and city economic courts. The establishment of extraordinary courts is prohibited.

89. Uzbek and foreign nationals and stateless persons are entitled to judicial protection against any unlawful acts or decisions of State or other agencies and officials and any offences against the person, honour and dignity, personal freedom, property and other rights and freedoms. Enterprises, institutions and organizations are also entitled to judicial protection.

90. Judges are independent and subject only to the law. Any interference in the work of judges in administering justice is inadmissible and punishable by law. Judges are appointed or elected under the established procedure for an initial term of 5 years, a subsequent 10-year term and a further indefinite term of office.

91. A system of online broadcasting of court proceedings has been introduced, which makes it possible to follow the progress of cases in the courts on the website of the Supreme Court. A system for recording court hearings in all courts by means of audio recording, on application of the parties to a case and with the consent of the presiding judge, has been introduced, and court transcripts are prepared using this system.

92. All persons must be provided with access to a lawyer in private from the moment of actual detention and before criminal proceedings against the person are brought. In addition, it is prohibited to summon and question close relatives of a detained suspect or accused person if there are no grounds for involving them as participants in the proceedings.

93. The programme for the digitalization of the work of the judiciary in 2020–2023 provides for the automatic assignment of cases to judges in courts of appeal and cassation, notification of all participants of the time and place of court hearings by sending SMS messages free of charge, and the submission of court decisions to the parties to a case online and, at their request, in paper form.

94. The Constitutional Court hears cases relating to the compliance of laws and regulations introduced by the legislature and executive with the Constitution. The Court determines whether laws, presidential decrees, decisions and orders, government decisions, decisions of local authorities, inter-State treaties and other obligations taken on by Uzbekistan are in conformity with the Constitution, and whether constitutional laws and laws on the ratification of international agreements entered into by Uzbekistan are consistent with the Constitution before they are signed into law by the President, and interprets the provisions of the Constitution and laws of Uzbekistan. The Court also considers complaints from private individuals and legal entities whose constitutional rights and freedoms, in their view, have been violated by a law applied in a particular case that does not comply with the Constitution.

95. The Supreme Court is the highest judicial authority in civil, criminal, economic and administrative proceedings. Supreme Court rulings are final and binding throughout Uzbekistan. The Supreme Court has the right to supervise the judicial activity of the lower courts. The President of the Supreme Court and his or her deputies are elected by the Senate of the Oliy Majlis for a five-year term of office.

96. The Supreme Judicial Council is an independent body of the judiciary, which is responsible for the development of the country's judiciary and observance of the constitutional principle of judicial independence. The President of the Supreme Judicial Council and his or her deputy are elected by the Senate of the Oliy Majlis for a five-year term of office.

Electoral system

97. The Electoral Code, adopted on 25 June 2019, implements both the universally recognized rules and principles of international law and the recommendations of international organizations (United Nations, OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights).

98. Citizens of Uzbekistan have the right to elect and be elected to the representative government bodies and to participate in referendums. Each voter has one vote. The law guarantees the right to vote, equality and the freedom to express one's will.

99. Elections are held on the basis of universal, equal and direct suffrage by secret ballot. Citizens of Uzbekistan who have reached the age of 18 are eligible to vote.

100. The procedure for including Uzbek citizens living abroad in the voter list, irrespective of their consular registration in diplomatic missions, and the legal grounds for voting in portable ballot boxes at the place of residence or work of voters abroad have been established by law.

101. The Electoral Code provides for a clear procedure for eligible voters to appeal against decisions taken at all stages of preparation and conduct of elections. The Code regulates the procedure for consideration by election commissions of appeals from private individuals and legal entities on issues related to the organization and conduct of elections and tallying the votes.

102. According to the Electoral Code, any citizen may report an error or inaccuracy in the voter lists to the precinct election commission. Within 24 hours, the precinct election commission is obliged to check the application and either correct the error or inaccuracy or provide a reasoned reply regarding the rejection of the application. In this case, the actions and decisions of the precinct election commission may be challenged in court. Decisions of election commissions may be challenged by political parties, political party candidates or their accredited agents, observers and voters in court.

103. All citizens, regardless of their social background, race, ethnic origin, gender, language, education, personal status, social position or property status, have the same voting rights. No citizen may serve as a deputy in more than two representative government bodies at the same time.

104. Citizens who have been deemed by the courts to lack legal capacity or who, by a sentence of a court, have been confined in places of detention do not have the right to be elected. Citizens who have been deemed by the courts to lack legal capacity or who, by a sentence of a court, have been held in places of detention for serious and especially serious crimes may be deprived of the right to participate in elections only in accordance with the law and on the basis of a court decision. In all other cases, direct or indirect restriction of electoral rights is prohibited.

105. The Central Election Commission, which is based on the principles of independence, legitimacy, collegiality, transparency and fairness, has been created for the organization and conduct of elections and referendums called by the Oliy Majlis. The Central Election Commission heads the system of election commissions, operates on a permanent basis and is guided by the Constitution and laws.

106. Under the Electoral Code, elections and referendums are organized and conducted by electoral commissions. The electoral commissions are responsible for the preparation and holding of elections, for upholding and protecting citizens' electoral rights and for monitoring compliance with those rights.

107. Five political parties are represented in the Legislative Chamber as a result of the elections held in 2019: the Movement of Entrepreneurs and Business Persons – Liberal Democratic Party of Uzbekistan, with 53 seats; the Milliy Tiklanish Democratic Party, with 36; the Adolat Social Democratic Party, with 24; the People's Democratic Party of Uzbekistan, with 22; and the Ecological Party, with 15.

108. There are 48 women and 102 men elected to the Legislative Chamber, with 6 per cent of the total number of deputies under 30 years of age, 65 per cent between 30 and 50 years of age and 29 per cent over 50 years of age. The youngest deputy to be elected is 26. The oldest deputy is 71. The average age of deputies is 46.

109. Ethnic Uzbeks account for 130 deputies, or 87 per cent of the total number of seats, and 20 deputies, or 13 per cent, are from other ethnic backgrounds. They include 5 Karakalpaks, 5 Russians, 3 Kazakhs, 3 Tajiks, 2 Koreans, 1 Turkmen and 1 Kyrgyz.

II. General framework for the protection and promotion of human rights

C. Acceptance of international human rights norms

Ratification of main international human rights instruments

110. Uzbekistan has acceded to the following core instruments of international human rights law.

<i>Treaty</i>	<i>Accession</i>	<i>Reservations and declarations</i>	<i>Derogations, restrictions or limitations</i>
International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966	31 August 1995	-	-
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966	31 August 1995	-	-
Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966	31 August 1995	-	-
Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty, 1989	10 December 2008	-	-
International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, 1965	31 August 1995	-	-
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979	6 May 1995	-	-
Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 1984	31 August 1995	-	-
Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989	9 December 1992	-	-
Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, 2000	12 December 2008	-	-
Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, 2000	11 December 2008	-	-
Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006	7 June 2021	Article 12	-

Ratification of other United Nations human rights treaties and related instruments

111. In addition to these 11 core international treaties, Uzbekistan has acceded to other United Nations human rights instruments.

<i>Treaty</i>	<i>Accession</i>	<i>Reservations and declarations</i>	<i>Derogations, restrictions or limitations</i>
Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948	30 September 1991	-	-
World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children, 1990	19 December 1994	-	-
Declaration on the Right of Peoples to Peace, 1984	30 August 1997	-	-
Declaration on the Right to Development, 1986	30 August 1997	-	-
Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief, 1981	30 August 1997	-	-
Declaration of the Principles of International Cultural Cooperation, 1966	30 August 1997	-	-

<i>Treaty</i>	<i>Accession</i>	<i>Reservations and declarations</i>	<i>Derogations, restrictions or limitations</i>
Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials, 1979	30 August 1997	-	-
Basic Principles on the Independence of the Judiciary, 1985	30 August 1997	-	-
Convention on the Political Rights of Women, 1952	28 December 1997	-	-
Convention against Discrimination in Education, 1960	8 March 1998	-	-
Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction, 1980	1 May 1998	-	-
International Convention against the Taking of Hostages, 1979	18 February 1998	-	-
Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, 1948	20 August 1999	-	-
Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 1997	20 August 1999	-	-
Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others, 1949	12 December 2003	-	-
United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, 2000	30 August 2003	-	-
United Nations Convention against Corruption, 2003	7 July 2008	-	-
Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, 2000	8 July 2008	-	-
World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control	24 April 2012	-	-
Paris Agreement, 2015	9 December 2018	-	-
Convention for the Protection of Producers of Phonograms Against Unauthorized Duplication of Their Phonograms, 1971	26 December 2108	-	-
World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) Performances and Phonograms Treaty, 1996	16 February 2019	-	-
WIPO Copyright Treaty (1996)	17 July 2019	-	-
Constitution of the International Organization for Migration, 1953	15 March 2019	-	-
Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, 2005	15 February 2020	-	-
Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired, or Otherwise Print Disabled, 2013	7 June 2022	-	-

Ratification of ILO conventions

112. Uzbekistan has acceded to the following 20 ILO conventions.

<i>Treaty</i>	<i>Accession</i>	<i>Reservations and declarations</i>	<i>Derogations, restrictions or limitations</i>
Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29)	30 August 1997	-	-
Forty-Hour Week Convention, 1935 (No. 47)	6 May 1995	-	-
Holidays with Pay Convention, 1936 (No. 52)	6 May 1995	-	-
Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87)	25 October 2016	-	-
Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98)	30 August 1997	-	-
Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100)	30 August 1997	-	-
Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102)	6 May 1995	-	-
Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105)	30 August 1997	-	-
Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111)	30 August 1997	-	-
Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122)	6 May 1995	-	-
Workers' Representatives Convention, 1971 (No. 135)	30 August 1997	-	-
Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138)	4 April 2008	-	-
Collective Bargaining Convention, 1981 (No. 154)	30 August 1997	-	-
Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182)	8 April 2008	-	-
Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144)	4 March 2019	-	-
Protocol to ILO Convention No. 29	25 June 2019	-	-
Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81)	27 August 2019	-	-
Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969 (No. 129)	27 August 2019	-	-
Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187)	4 June 2021	-	-
Safety and Health in Construction Convention, 1988 (No. 167)	7 February 2022	-	-
Working Environment (Air Pollution, Noise and Vibration) Convention, 1977 (No. 148)	8 May 2023	-	-

Ratification of the Geneva Conventions and other international humanitarian law treaties

113. Uzbekistan has acceded to the Geneva Conventions and other international humanitarian law treaties.

<i>Instrument</i>	<i>Accession</i>	<i>Reservations and declarations</i>	<i>Derogations, restrictions or limitations</i>
Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armed Forces in the Field, 1949	3 September 1993	-	-
Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of Wounded, Sick and Shipwrecked Members of Armed Forces at Sea, 1949	3 September 1993	-	-
Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, 1949	3 September 1993	-	-
Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, 1949	3 September 1993	-	-
Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I), 1977	3 September 1993	-	-
Protocol additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the protection of victims of non-international armed conflicts, (Protocol II), 1977	3 September 1993	-	-
Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, 1925	13 April 2021	-	-

Ratification of regional human rights instruments

114. Uzbekistan is a signatory to regional human rights instruments.

<i>Instrument</i>	<i>Date and place of adoption</i>
Charter of Paris for a New Europe	21 November 1990, Paris; entry into force for Uzbekistan on 27 November 1993
Agreement on Cooperation in the Establishment of State Information Systems for New-Generation Passports and Visas and Their Further Development and Use in States Members of the Commonwealth of Independent States	14 November 2008, Chisinau
Agreement on Urgent Measures for the Protection of Victims of Armed Conflicts	24 September 1993, Moscow; entry into force for Uzbekistan on 21 November 1994; ratified by decision of the Supreme Soviet of Uzbekistan, No. 1013-XII of 29 December 1993
Agreement on Assistance to Refugees and Persons Subjected to Forced Resettlement	24 September 1993, Moscow; entry into force for Uzbekistan on 21 November 1994; ratified by decision of the Supreme Soviet, No. 1014-XII of 29 December 1993
Agreement on Joint Activities relating to International Humanitarian Assistance	22 January 1993, Minsk; entry into force for Uzbekistan on 19 December 1993
Agreement on Mutual Recognition of Visas of the States Members of the Commonwealth of Independent States	13 November 1992, Moscow; Uzbekistan announced its withdrawal from this agreement on 24 December 1999

<i>Instrument</i>	<i>Date and place of adoption</i>
Agreement between the States Members of the Commonwealth of Independent States on Social and Legal Guarantees for Military Personnel, Persons Discharged from Military Service and Members of Their Families	14 February 1992, Minsk; entry into force from the date of signature
Protocol to the Agreement	19 January 1992, Moscow; entry into force on the date of signature
Agreement on Guarantees of the Rights of Citizens of States Members of the Commonwealth of Independent States in the Field of Pension Provision	13 March 1992, Moscow; entry into force on the date of signature
Convention on Legal Assistance and Legal Relations in Civil, Family and Criminal Matters	22 January 1993, Minsk; entry into force for Uzbekistan on 19 May 1994
Agreement On Guarantees Of Citizens' Rights to Social Benefits, Allowances for Families With Children and Maintenance	9 September 1994, Moscow; entry into force for Uzbekistan on 12 April 1995
Agreement on Mutual Recognition of Rights to Compensation for Harm Caused to Employees by Occupational Injuries and Diseases or Other Work-Related Damage to Health	9 September 1994, Moscow; entry into force for Uzbekistan on 12 October 1995
Agreement on Cooperation in the Areas of Labour Migration and Social Protection for Migrant Workers	15 April 1994, Moscow; entry into force for Uzbekistan on 18 September 1995
Protocol amending the Agreement	Entry into force for Uzbekistan on 25 November 2005, Moscow
Agreement on Formation and Development of an Intellectual Property Market of States Members of the Commonwealth of Independent States	1 June 2018, Dushanbe; entry into force for Uzbekistan on 12 January 2019
Protocol to the Convention on Legal Assistance and Legal Relations in Civil, Family and Criminal Matters of 22 January 1993	28 March 1997, Moscow; entry into force for Uzbekistan on 29 February 2020
Convention on Legal Assistance and Legal Relations in Civil, Family and Criminal Matters	7 October 2002, Chisinau; entry into force for Uzbekistan on 12 July 2020
Charter of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization	7 June 2002, Saint Petersburg; entry into force for Uzbekistan on 19 September 2003
Shanghai Cooperation Organization Convention against Terrorism	16 June 2009, Ekaterinburg; entry into force for Uzbekistan on 14 January 2012
Convention of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization on Countering Extremism	9 June 2017, Astana; ratified by Act No. ZRU-469 of the Republic of Uzbekistan
Charter of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation	14 March 2008, Dakar; entry into force for Uzbekistan on 2 April 2017
Charter of Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	26 November 2015, Baku; ratified by Act No. ZRU-467 of the Republic of Uzbekistan of 3 April 2018

115. The provisions of international treaties may be cited in the courts and other State authorities within the national legal system. Under article 19 of the Constitution, human rights and freedoms are recognized and guaranteed in Uzbekistan in accordance with the generally recognized rules of international law and the Constitution.

116. Under article 15 of the Constitution, the international treaties to which Uzbekistan is a party, along with the universally recognized rules and principles of international law, form an integral part of the national legal system. If an international treaty to which Uzbekistan is a party establishes rules other than those provided for by national law, the rules of the international treaty take precedence.

D. General framework for the promotion of human rights at the national level

Legal framework for the protection of human rights

117. Human rights are legally established by the articles of the Constitution, constitutional laws, legal codes and an entire body of laws governing fundamental human rights and freedoms.

118. Chapter II (arts. 19–4) of the Constitution concerns fundamental human and citizens' rights and freedoms.

119. The Constitution establishes that human rights and freedoms belong to everyone from birth; human rights and freedoms are directly applicable; human rights and freedoms determine the essence and content of laws and the activities of State bodies, self-governing bodies and their officials; and all citizens have the same rights and freedoms and are equal before the law, irrespective of sex, race, ethnicity, language, religion, beliefs, social origin or social status.

120. The new version of the Constitution of 2023 expands on and clarifies personal and political rights and freedoms and State responsibility for and guarantees of these rights and freedoms have been substantially increased.

121. The Constitution guarantees the right to life and liberty, personal inviolability, the presumption of innocence, professional legal assistance, the inviolability of private life, the inviolability of the home, free movement within the country, the choice of place of stay and residence, freedom to travel outside the country, freedom of thought, speech and belief, freedom to seek, receive and disseminate any information, to profess any religion or none, access to the civil service, freedom of assembly, citizenship, participation in the administration of the State, freedom of association, freedom of expression and a number of other rights and freedoms.

122. Under article 28 of the Constitution, everyone charged with an offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial and established by a court judgment that has become enforceable. The accused person is afforded every opportunity for his or her defence. Any doubts as to the guilt of the suspect, accused, defendant or convicted person, if the possibilities to remove them have been exhausted, are resolved in favour of the suspect, accused, defendant or convicted person. A suspect, accused person or defendant does not have to prove his or her innocence and may exercise the right to remain silent at any time. No one is obliged to testify against himself or herself or his or her spouse or close relatives. Persons may not be convicted or punished if their confession of guilt is the only evidence against them. Persons deprived of their liberty are to be treated with humanity and with respect for the inherent honour and dignity of the human person. A person's criminal record and the legal consequences ensuing from such a record cannot be a basis for restricting the rights of his or her relatives.

123. Under article 29 of the Constitution, everyone is guaranteed the right to professional legal assistance. In the cases provided for by law, legal assistance is publicly funded. Every person has the right to be assisted by a lawyer of his or her choice at any stage of the proceedings and, where the person concerned is detained, from the moment the person's right to freedom of movement has actually been restricted. Suspects, accused persons or defendants have the right to be informed of the substance and grounds of the charges, to request the examination of the persons testifying against them or on their behalf, and to use the services of an interpreter. Evidence obtained in violation of the law is not admissible in the administration of justice. Everyone convicted of a crime has the right to have his or her sentence reviewed by a higher court in accordance with the procedure established by law and

the right to request a pardon or commutation of the sentence. The rights of victims of offences are protected by law. The State must provide victims with protection and access to justice, and create conditions for compensation for the harm inflicted on them.

124. Under article 32 of the Constitution, everyone lawfully present in the territory of Uzbekistan has the right to freedom of movement throughout the country and to choose his or her place of stay and residence, with the exception of restrictions established by law.

125. Under article 37 of the Constitution, Uzbek citizens have equal rights of access to civil service. Restrictions related to civil service careers are established by law.

126. Under article 55 of the Constitution, everyone has the right to defend his or her rights and freedoms by all means not prohibited by law. Everyone is guaranteed judicial protection of his or her rights and freedoms and the right to appeal in court against unlawful decisions, acts and omissions of State authorities and other organizations and their officials. Everyone is guaranteed the right to have his or her case heard by a competent, independent and impartial court within the time limits established by law in order to restore rights and freedoms that have been violated. Everyone has the right, in accordance with the law and international treaties to which Uzbekistan is a party, to appeal to international bodies for the protection of human rights and freedoms if all available domestic remedies have been exhausted. Everyone has the right to compensation from the State for harm caused by the unlawful decisions, acts or omissions of State authorities or officials.

127. Social, economic, cultural and environmental human and civil rights figure prominently in the Constitution. Under article 42 of the Constitution, everyone has the right to decent work, to free choice of profession and employment, to safe and healthy working conditions, to fair remuneration for work without discrimination of any kind and not lower than the established minimum wage, and to protection against unemployment in accordance with the procedure established by law. The minimum wage is set taking into account the need to ensure a decent standard of living. Women may not be refused employment, dismissed from work or have their wages reduced on the grounds of being pregnant or having children.

128. Under article 43 of the Constitution, the State must take measures to provide employment to citizens, protect them from unemployment and reduce poverty. The State organizes and encourages professional training and retraining of citizens.

129. Under article 46 of the Constitution, everyone has the right to social security in old age, in the event of disability, unemployment or loss of the breadwinner and in other cases provided for by law. The amounts of pensions, allowances and other types of social assistance established by law may not be lower than the officially established minimum consumer spending.

130. Article 47 of the Constitution provides that no one may be deprived of his or her home except by a court decision and in accordance with the law. In the cases and in the manner prescribed by law, the owner deprived of his or her home will be provided with prior and equivalent compensation for the value of the home and the losses incurred by him or her. The State encourages housing construction and sets in place the necessary conditions for the realization of the right to housing. The procedure for providing housing for socially vulnerable groups is determined by law.

131. Under article 48 of the Constitution, everyone has the right to health protection and skilled medical care. Citizens of Uzbekistan have the right to receive the guaranteed amount of publicly funded medical care in accordance with the procedure established by law. The State takes measures to develop the health-care system, both public and private, and various types of medical insurance, and to ensure public health and well-being.

132. Under article 49 of the Constitution, everyone has the right to a healthy environment and reliable information on the state of the environment. The State facilitates public oversight of urban planning activities in order to ensure citizens' environmental rights and minimize environmental hazards. The State, in accordance with the principle of sustainable development, implements measures to improve, restore and protect the environment and preserve the ecological balance. The State takes the necessary measures to protect and restore the ecosystem and ensure the sustainable social and economic development of the Aral Sea region.

133. Under article 50 of the Constitution, the State ensures the development of a continuous education system and its various types and forms and State and non-State educational establishments. The State facilitates the development of preschool education. The State guarantees free general secondary education and basic vocational training. General secondary education is compulsory. Early childhood education and general secondary education are under the supervision of the State. Inclusive education is provided in educational establishments for children with special educational needs.

134. The Constitution establishes a legal mechanism for the protection of the rights and interests of citizens, including women, children, young people, persons with disabilities and other socially vulnerable groups.

135. The work of national human rights institutions is guaranteed by the Constitution. Under article 56 of the Constitution, national human rights institutions complement the existing forms and means of protecting human rights and freedoms, contribute to the development of civil society and promote a culture of human rights. The State facilitates the work of the national human rights institutions.

136. Under article 57 of the Constitution, the rights of persons who are incapable of employment, older persons, older persons living alone, persons with disabilities and other socially vulnerable groups are protected by the State. The State is taking measures aimed at improving the quality of life of socially vulnerable groups, facilitating their full participation in social and public life and enhancing their ability to provide for the basic necessities of life independently. The State sets in place the necessary conditions for full access of persons with disabilities to social, economic and cultural facilities and services, supports their employment and education, and ensures that they can obtain the information they need without hindrance.

137. Women and men have equal rights in accordance with article 58 of the Constitution. The State ensures equal rights and opportunities for men and women in managing the affairs of society and the State and in other spheres of social and public life.

138. Under article 78 of the Constitution, children are equal before the law, regardless of their parents' origin and civil status. It is the duty of the State to ensure and protect the rights, freedoms and legitimate interests of children and to set in place the best possible conditions for their full physical, mental and cultural development. Motherhood, fatherhood and childhood are protected by the State.

139. Under article 79 of the Constitution, the State protects the personal, political, economic, social, cultural and environmental rights of young people and encourages their active participation in the life of society and the State. The State facilitates the intellectual, artistic, physical and moral development of young people and the realization of their rights to education, health care, housing, job placement, employment and recreation.

140. General guidance on ensuring and protecting citizens' rights and freedoms are also set out in the sector-specific legislation of Uzbekistan. The most important principles for safeguarding human rights and freedoms are embodied in the Family Code, the Labour Code, the Housing Code, the Criminal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure, the Administrative Liability Code and other laws.

141. In recent years, important laws have been adopted to create organizational and legal mechanisms for the realization of citizens' personal and political rights. These include the Act on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Act on the Protection of Women against Harassment and Violence, the Act on Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men, the Children's Rights Safeguards Act, the State Youth Policy Act, the Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations Act, the Act on the Legal Status of Foreign Nationals and Stateless Persons in the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Act on Transparency in the Work of State and Government Bodies, the Civil Service Act, the Social Partnership Act, the Environmental Monitoring Act, the Parliamentary Oversight Act, the Communications from Legal Entities and Individuals Act and others.

142. Considerable attention is devoted to providing for more effective protection of personal rights and improving the work of the courts and law enforcement agencies under the Laws and Regulations Act, the Police Work Act, the Pretrial Detention during Criminal Proceedings Act, the Procurator's Office Act, the Internal Affairs Agencies Act, the Courts

Act, the Act on the Oliy Majlis Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman), the Act on the Presidential Commissioner for the Protection of the Rights and Legitimate Interests of Business Entities, the Constitutional Court Act, the Anti-Corruption Act, the Act on the Procedure for the Serving of Sentences of Administrative Detention, the Supreme Judicial Council Act and acts issued by the President aimed at strengthening the legal and social guarantees for court proceedings and the social status of judges.

143. Evidence of the continuing importance attached by the legislative authorities to the realization of citizens' economic, social and cultural rights can be found in the adoption of the Education Act, the Act on Private Property and Guarantees for the Rights of Property Owners, the Consumer Protection Act, the Family Business Act, the Competition Act, the Act on Private Banking and Financial Institutions and Guarantees for their Activities, the Act on Procedures Permitted in Business Activities, the Free Enterprise Act, the Act on Joint-Stock Companies and Protection of Shareholders' Rights, the Trade Secrets Act, the Occupational Safety Act, the Employment Act and the Act on Social Services for Older Persons, Persons with Disabilities and Other Vulnerable Groups.

144. The Act on Protection of Women against Harassment and Violence and the Act on Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men of 2 September 2019 strengthen the mechanism for protecting women's rights against all forms of harassment and violence in the home, at the workplace and in educational settings and for regulating social relations with regard to equal rights and opportunities for men and women in all spheres of society, including politics, the economy, law, ideology and culture, and education and science.

145. A national programme to increase women's participation in all spheres of economic, political and social life for the period 2022–2026 was approved by a presidential decree on 7 March 2022. In accordance with the recommendations of United Nations treaty bodies, this programme identifies measures aimed at ensuring the social, political and economic rights of women.

146. A central electronic database containing information on promising women working in State bodies and organizations and a reserve list of more than 25,000 women candidates for senior positions have been created. The National Commission on Enhancing the Role of Women in Society, Gender Equality and the Family approved a national plan of action and road map for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security for the period 2022–2025.

147. The Strategy for Achieving Gender Equality for the period until 2030 was approved by a decision of the Senate of the Oliy Majlis on 28 May 2021. This strategy provides for a set of measures to introduce the principle of equality between women and men in all spheres of life in society and the State. It promotes gender equality in economic, political and social life in order to pave the way for the realization of equal rights and opportunities for men and women and respect for fundamental human rights. The strategy includes issues such as ensuring equal and high-quality education for all, creating opportunities for rural girls to pursue higher education, achieving gender equality and preventing violence and trafficking in persons. In 2022, the share of women in managerial positions in Uzbekistan reached 27 per cent, in entrepreneurial positions 25 per cent, in political parties 44 per cent, and in higher education 46 per cent.

148. According to the Electoral Code, the number of women must be at least 30 per cent of the total number of candidates nominated by a political party. In the 2019 elections, women took 24.7 per cent of seats in the upper house of parliament, the Senate, increasing their representation by 7.7 per cent compared to the previous result. Women took 32 per cent of the seats in the Legislative Chamber in the 2019 elections, showing a twofold increase.

149. Pursuant to a presidential decree of 19 May 2021, 29 centres for the rehabilitation and adaptation of women victims of violence and the prevention of suicide have been established. The State has also set up a trust fund to support women. Additional measures have been introduced to provide social support to families, women and young people in need of financial assistance and support.

150. Beginning in the 2022/23 school year, annually:

- 1.8 trillion sum are allocated from the budget to banks to provide interest-free loans for seven years to cover the tuition fees of women studying in universities, colleges and technical schools or correspondence or night school.
- Tuition fees are reimbursed for all women enrolled in master's degree programmes in State universities.
- Additional grants are allocated to women to study in foreign universities.
- Tuition fees are paid for female students without parental care.
- At least 300 targeted quotas are allocated to women in State scientific institutions or university doctoral programmes.

151. The Act of 11 April 2023 amending a number of legislative acts of Uzbekistan in connection with the further improvement of the system for the reliable protection of the rights, freedoms and legitimate interests of women and children established administrative and criminal liability for domestic violence, i.e. violence committed against a spouse or former spouse, a persons living together in a single household or a person with a child in common. Humane acts in the form of release on parole or commutation of punishment may not be applied to perpetrators of sexual violence, including against minors. On the contrary, the penalties for such offences have been increased. Liability has been established for the commission of acts of a sexual nature against women and for harassment and failure by parents to fulfil their obligations to appoint a tutor or guardian for their minor children.

152. As of 2019, 531 Uzbek nationals, mostly women and children, have been returned home from armed conflicts in the Near East. This humanitarian operation was carried out in accordance with international human rights instruments and the principles of international humanitarian law.

153. Under the Act of 7 December 2021 amending a number of legislative acts of Uzbekistan in connection with the further improvement of the system for guaranteeing the rights of the child, the age of criminal responsibility was raised from 13 to 14 years. The measure aims to strengthen humanity towards minors. The time limits for the questioning of a minor victim or witness are also clearly defined, while criminal procedure legislation provides for the participation of a teacher and psychologist in the questioning of a minor victim, witness, suspect or accused person. Criminal penalties under article 128 (Sexual intercourse with a person under 16 years of age) of the Criminal Code have also been increased.

154. According to the amendment made to article 15 of the Family Code, in accordance with the recommendations of the United Nations treaty bodies, the minimum age for marriage for women has been raised from 17 to 18 years as of 1 September 2019.

155. By a presidential decision of 11 February 2019 on additional measures to strengthen the social protection of orphans and children left without parental care, the amount of the allowance paid to each child taken into foster care has been increased by a factor of 1.33, with subsequent increases not lower than the rate of inflation. Tutorship and guardianship agencies, Mekhribonlik children's homes, children's villages, homes for infants and toddlers and other care institutions for orphans and children left without parental care are exempt from paying State duties and fees when executing documents relating to the placement of orphans and children left without parental care.

156. The Act of 11 March 2020 amended the Family Code, the Children's Rights Safeguards Act and other legislative acts. The Act establishes that the authorities and officials responsible for taking decisions to address issues affecting the interests of children should give due consideration to the views of the children, irrespective of their age, and should take decisions on the basis of the best interests of the child. Minors have the right to submit applications on their rights, freedoms and legitimate interests to State authorities, organizations or officials, including in the event of non-fulfilment or improper fulfilment by the parents (or one of them) or persons acting in loco parentis of the child's maintenance, upbringing and education, or in the event of abuse of parental rights.

157. From the 2019/20 academic year, a procedure for allocating additional admission quotas of 1 per cent of the total number of university applicants admitted on the basis of State

grants for orphans leaving care homes and orphanages has been implemented. From the 2020/21 academic year, an additional quota of 4 per cent has been introduced for State grants for full-time undergraduate education for girls in need of social protection.

158. The State takes measures to prevent all forms of exploitation and violence against children, to identify and eliminate the causes and conditions contributing to their commission, and to provide the necessary educational, psychological, medical and legal assistance to children subjected to exploitation and violence.

159. The Administrative Liability Code has been amended to increase the penalties for violating the requirements on the use of child labour (art. 49¹) or for administratively forcing them to work (art. 51) in accordance with the recommendations of the Charter-based and treaty bodies of the United Nations. The Criminal Code has been amended with the addition of articles 148¹ and 148², which provide for criminal liability for violation of the requirements on either the use of child labour or compulsory child labour by administrative decision, committed after administrative penalties have been imposed for such acts.

160. Child and forced labour has been eliminated in the country. This has been recognized by the international community. On 10 March 2022, the Cotton Campaign, which brings together the world's leading companies producing and trading finished cotton products, recognized that forced and child labour has been completely eliminated in Uzbekistan and lifted the boycott on Uzbek cotton.

161. The Trafficking in Persons Act of 17 August 2020 improved the mechanisms for ensuring the rights of victims of human trafficking to medical, psychological, legal, social and other assistance. Special attention is given to allocating funds for the establishment of shelters for victims of trafficking in persons.

162. A Cabinet of Ministers decision of 18 January 2021 approved the outline for the development of State youth policy in Uzbekistan until 2025. The policy outline is based on the general principle of working with and for young people as set out in the United Nations Youth Strategy. The outline is aimed at improving the legal framework for the protection of the legitimate rights and interests of young people, setting in place the necessary conditions for quality education, decent work, entrepreneurship, culture, art and sport, supporting young people in need of social protection, improving the social protection of young people, increasing the social activity of young people, and supporting voluntary youth organizations and volunteer movements.

163. The Act of 15 October 2020 on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities establishes the rights of persons with disabilities to: privacy; a family and family environment; nationality and free movement; housing; accessibility of transport facilities and road infrastructure; accessibility of hospitality services; information accessibility; participation in cultural life, recreation and sports activities; and appeal (arts. 19–28). The Act also provides for the rights of persons with disabilities to: social protection, including rehabilitation and habilitation; prosthetic and orthopaedic devices and assistive technology; health care; social assistance and welfare services; education; and work (arts. 32–43).

164. In accordance with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the recommendations of the treaty bodies of the United Nations, the principle of respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities and their right to preserve their identity is established in the Constitution and national legislation.

165. In accordance with article 8 of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, children with disabilities are provided with the full enjoyment of all human rights and freedoms on an equal basis with other children. In all measures taken with regard to children with disabilities, the supremacy of their interests is a priority, with a view to the full and harmonious development of children with disabilities, the promotion of their social activity and their engagement in work and inclusion in education, science, technology, art and sport.

166. The Children's Rights Safeguards Act (arts. 24–29) establishes additional guarantees for children with disabilities regarding family environment, integration into society, housing, social assistance, medical and social care and education. The Act provides that educational, medical and cultural education institutions must be designed to provide free access for children with disabilities. Children with disabilities are entitled to medical and social

assistance, which includes preventive, therapeutic and diagnostic, rehabilitative, specialized, prosthetic and orthopaedic care, mobility aids on concessional terms and other types of support, and to free medical and social care in State health-care institutions and home care.

167. Social protection and medical and special educational support for children with disabilities are also provided for under the Education Act, Health Care Act, Special Social Services Act and others.

168. A presidential decree of 17 February 2022 established additional measures to support persons with disabilities and segments of the population in need of social protection. The minimum amounts of disability pensions, including disability pensions for part-time work, and disability allowances for persons who are unable to work have been increased. A monthly allowance has been introduced for the legal representative of children with disabilities who care for children in need of an attendant.

169. A Cabinet of Ministers decision of 29 April 2021 established the Government Interdepartmental Council for Persons with Disabilities.

170. By the Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of 2 June 2018, beginning in the 2018/19 academic year, an additional 2 percent quota for State grant-based admission to institutions of higher education (out of the total number of student admissions) has been allocated to persons with disabilities.

171. The National Programme to Promote the Employment of Persons with Disabilities was approved by a Cabinet of Ministers decision of 20 April 2022. Under the decision, employment assistance was provided to 12,146 persons with disabilities in 2022.

172. By a decree of the President of Uzbekistan of 21 December 2021, employers who hire persons with disabilities are granted a monthly subsidy of 1.5 times the base calculation unit for each employee for 6 months from the State Employment Promotion Fund.

173. The Labour Code of 28 October 2022 establishes the basis for: the legal regulation of labour relations in accordance with international human rights standards; the right of everyone to make use of his or her capacities for work, to exercise them in any form not prohibited by law and to freely choose the type of training, profession and specialty, place of work and working conditions; guaranteed protection of personal information about the facts, events and circumstances of the employee's life, and members of his or her family, provided to the employer in connection with the employment relationship; the minimum length of an employee's basic annual leave, set at 21 calendar days, in accordance with article 3 of the ILO Holidays with Pay Convention (Revised), 1970 (No. 132); and the establishment of additional employment guarantees for socially disadvantaged groups of the population.

174. The Employment Act of 20 October 2020 establishes the procedure for the allocation of subsidies, grants and loans to stimulate employment and entrepreneurship, the drawing up of annual State contracts for job placement and the types of services provided by local labour authorities to jobseekers and the unemployed.

175. Since 2017, the country has been carrying out systematic work to strengthen social protection and expand the coverage and types of social services provided to citizens by the State. Among other things, spending on financing social programmes has doubled in relation to gross domestic product (GDP), the coverage of low-income families receiving benefits has expanded fivefold, and new types of benefits for citizens engaged in caring for persons with disabilities and children with disabilities have been introduced.

176. A presidential decree of 25 July 2022 approving the social protection strategy sets out the areas of social protection, including the coverage of families and citizens in need of social assistance and those eligible for social benefits from social assistance programmes; improves access to the social safety net, including social protection, through the digitalization of the sector and the introduction of the principles of openness and transparency into this process; provides for a phased transition to a social model for defining disability and providing employment for persons with disabilities; and affords social protection by introducing the practice of providing social services to the population directly at the mahalla level.

177. The National Social Protection Agency in the Office of the President and its agencies at the level of the Republic of Karakalpak, the provinces and Tashkent city, and the Inson

social service centres in the districts and cities, were created pursuant to a presidential decree on a set of measures to provide quality social services and assistance to the population and establish a system for their effective monitoring. The Agency is an authorized State body for the development and implementation of an overall State policy on social protection and provision of social services. The Agency carries out its activities independently of other State bodies and organizations and their officials. The Agency has established the Social Inspectorate and its regional divisions, the Centre for Professional Development of Social Workers, the Institute for the Development of Social Protection and the Department for Disability Evaluation and its regional divisions.

178. The Government adopted decisions on measures to fulfil the national goals and targets in the area of the Sustainable Development Goals up to 2030 on 20 October 2018 and on additional measures to facilitate the implementation of the goals and targets in the area of the Sustainable Development Goals up to 2030 on 21 February 2022 to ensure that work on the 2030 Agenda is systematically organized and the Agenda consistently implemented. The Strategy of Action of Uzbekistan for 2017–2021 and the New Uzbekistan Development Strategy for 2022–2026 attest to the serious interest and commitment to adapting the Sustainable Development Goals to the needs of the country.

179. The priority objectives for increasing the effectiveness of the system for detecting and preventing the use of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment were set out under a presidential decision of 26 June 2021. Civil society groups have been established to identify and prevent cases of torture; the rights and obligations of persons deprived of liberty have been clearly defined; provision has been made for the introduction of a central electronic register of persons held in places of detention with restricted freedom of movement; and preparatory work is under way to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture. The decision provides for a number of measures to improve the national preventive mechanism, taking into account the recommendations of the Charter-based and treaty bodies of the United Nations.

180. The Act of 29 March 2022 amended the Civil Code in order to improve the procedure for compensating victims of torture. According to the amendments, harm caused to a citizen as a result of any use of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment is to be compensated by the State in full, regardless of whether it is the fault of the officials of the bodies conducting the pre-investigation check, preliminary inquiries or preliminary investigation, the procurator's office or the courts, in accordance with the procedure established by law. The court may decide to make the officials who caused the harm responsible for the compensation. Non-material damage caused to a citizen as a result of any use of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment is also compensated.

181. A social protection mechanism for migrant workers and members of their families was created by a presidential decree on 20 August 2019, which includes improvements in housing conditions, financial assistance and medical care. A presidential decree on 15 September 2020 established a new mechanism for the protection of migrant workers, provided them with legal and social assistance, facilitated the reintegration of those returning to the country and introduced financial assistance services in the form of subsidies and grants. A procedure for providing financial support and compensation for needy migrant families and family members with disabilities was established pursuant to a presidential decree on 1 March 2022.

182. The previous six years have seen fundamental changes with regard to the eradication of statelessness in Uzbekistan. In accordance with the call of Secretary-General António Guterres for decisive measures to reduce the number of stateless persons in Uzbekistan, the procedure for obtaining citizenship has been simplified and more than 76,000 stateless persons have been granted citizenship.

183. The Act on the Legal Status of Foreign Nationals and Stateless Persons in the Republic of Uzbekistan of 4 June 2021 establishes that foreign nationals and stateless persons in Uzbekistan are guaranteed rights and freedoms in accordance with the rules of international law. According to the Act, foreign nationals and stateless persons have the right to property, employment, social security, health care, education, marriage registration and other rights.

184. The Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations Act of 5 July 2021 strengthens guarantees of freedom of conscience, strengthens legal mechanisms for ensuring the right of everyone to profess any religion or none, improves the State's policy on religious affairs, and simplifies the procedure for registering religious organizations.

System of State authorities that take decisions on human rights matters

185. The bodies authorized to deal with human rights issues in Uzbekistan include: the President of Uzbekistan; the Legislative Chamber and Senate of the Oliy Majlis and the local representative authorities; the Cabinet of Ministers and the ministries, and departments and agencies of the executive branch; the local authorities; the judiciary; the Office of the Procurator General; the Ministry of Justice; and the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

186. Legislative power is exercised by the Oliy Majlis, the highest legislative body of Uzbekistan, providing a legal framework for the realization and protection of human rights. Under the Parliamentary Oversight Act, committees of both chambers of the Oliy Majlis conduct parliamentary procedural checks of compliance with international human rights treaties and existing legislation on human rights. The Oliy Majlis considers a report on the work of the Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) and annual information on compliance with the country's international human rights obligations.

187. Measures have been taken to strengthen institutional mechanisms for the protection of citizens' rights and freedoms. A joint decision of the chambers of the parliament of 25 September 2020 established a parliamentary commission on the observance of the international human rights obligations undertaken by Uzbekistan. This commission develops recommendations for improving human rights legislation, engages in critical examination of the status of implementation by State bodies and officials of the National Human Rights Strategy, systematically monitors the implementation of national plans of action in accordance with the recommendations of international and regional human rights bodies, and discusses draft periodic reports on the fulfilment of international human rights obligations.

188. The parliamentary commission to monitor the implementation of national goals and objectives in the area of sustainable development until 2030 was established by a joint resolution of the chambers of the parliament on 27 February 2020. This commission facilitates communication between citizens and State and economic authorities and other organizations of Uzbekistan, establishes practical interaction between the parliament, the Government and civil society institutions in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and organizes parliamentary and public hearings on this issue.

189. The Gender Equality Commission was established under the Senate of the Oliy Majlis in order to incorporate into domestic legislation international standards for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.

190. The National Anti-Corruption Council and Anti-Corruption Agency have been set up to ensure effective cooperation between State bodies, the media and civil society institutions in tackling corruption and to take measures to protect citizens' rights and legitimate interests.

191. A National Commission on Combating Trafficking in Persons and Forced Labour has been established, which is a collegial body that coordinates the activities of State and administrative authorities and other organizations in this area.

192. The President acts as the guarantor of citizens' rights and freedoms, the Constitution and the laws of Uzbekistan; conducts negotiations and signs treaties and agreements on behalf of Uzbekistan; ensures compliance with the treaties and agreements concluded by Uzbekistan and the fulfilment of the obligations assumed by it; and suspends or revokes any laws and regulations issued by the State authorities and the regional chief administrators that are at variance with the provisions of the law. Through public reception desks and the Internet, the President monitors the protection of citizens' rights, freedoms and interests on an ongoing basis.

193. Executive power is exercised by the Cabinet of Ministers, which is responsible for: pursuing effective economic, social, financial and monetary policy; implementing measures to protect citizens' economic, social and other rights and legitimate interests; and ensuring

that the laws of Uzbekistan and decrees, decisions and orders issued by the President are enforced.

194. The representative authorities in the provinces, districts and cities are the councils of people's deputies, headed by a Chair who is elected from among the deputies in accordance with the law. They decide on issues within their competence in the area of ensuring legality, law and order and the security of citizens, and the economic, social and cultural development of the regions, and consider reports from the executive authorities and law enforcement agencies on ensuring the rule of law and guarantees of reliable protection of citizens' rights and legitimate interests.

195. Regional chief administrators of a province, district or city serve as the head of the executive authorities in the respective administrative area. They exercise their powers in accordance with the principle of individual responsibility, i.e. they bear personal responsibility for the decisions and actions of authorities under their direction. The regional chief administrators submit reports to the appropriate councils of peoples' deputies on current issues of crucial importance for the social and economic development of a given province, district or city, which are used by the councils to make their decisions. The decisions that the administrators take, within the limits of the powers conferred upon them, are binding on all enterprises, institutions, organizations, associations, officials and citizens in the region concerned.

196. Judicial power is exercised by the courts. Under the Courts Act, the main missions of the courts are to protect citizens' rights and freedoms, the interests of the State and society, and the rights and legally protected interests of corporations and sole proprietors guaranteed by the Constitution and other laws, international treaties to which Uzbekistan is a party and international human rights instruments. Uzbek and foreign nationals and stateless persons are entitled to judicial protection against any unlawful acts or decisions of State or other agencies and officials and any offences against the person, honour and dignity, personal freedom, property and other rights and freedoms.

197. Throughout its work, the Constitutional Court is called upon to ensure the supremacy of the Constitution and the application of the constitutional principle of the primacy of human rights and freedoms and other provisions of the Constitution. The right to appeal to the Constitutional Court is also enjoyed by national human rights institutions such as the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Oliy Majlis, the Commissioner for Children's Rights (Children's Ombudsman), the National Centre for Human Rights and the Presidential Commissioner for the Protection of the Rights and Lawful Interests of Business Entities (Business Ombudsman). Citizens and legal entities have the right to appeal to the Constitutional Court for a review of the constitutionality of a law if they consider that the law breaches their constitutional rights and freedoms, is at variance with the Constitution or is being applied in a specific case whose consideration by the court has been completed, and if all other remedies have been exhausted.

198. The Ministry of Justice has significant powers to realize and protect human rights and freedoms. The Ministry makes proposals for the incorporation of international legal standards into legislation, draws up measures to promote citizens' legal literacy, cultivates a respectful attitude towards human rights and freedoms, ensures that communications from citizens regarding violations of their constitutional rights and freedoms are objectively and comprehensively investigated and takes measures to restore such rights and freedoms in accordance with the law.

199. The Human Rights Department of the Ministry of Justice conducts an ongoing analysis of human rights legislation and makes proposals for its improvement and monitors compliance by the State and local authorities and law enforcement agencies with the human rights and freedoms enshrined in the Constitution, national law and the international agreements to which Uzbekistan is a party.

200. In 2022, the Department and its regional offices and divisions received 85,285 communications from individuals and legal entities, 74,293 (87 per cent) of which were dealt with by the justice system. The consideration of these communications and the checks conducted led to restitution for the violation of the rights of more than 28,000 individuals and

legal entities. More than 11,000 submissions and more than 17,000 statements of claim have been made to address the violations that have been found.

201. In accordance with the Internal Affairs Agencies Act, the Ministry of Internal Affairs is the government body responsible for protecting public order and security and citizens' rights, freedoms and legitimate interests. It ensures that citizens face no obstacles in submitting communications, complaints and applications. The principal responsibilities of the Ministry of Internal Affairs are to eliminate threats to citizens' security, provide them with any necessary assistance, ensure strict observance of the rights and respect for the honour and dignity of inmates and persons held in custody, improve supervision of officers' performance of official duties and prevent corruption and abuse of authority.

202. The National Guard is tasked with protecting public order, including during mass events, ensuring the legal regime in states of emergency and preventing offences, including by identifying and eliminating their causes and contributing circumstances. One of the main functions of the National Guard is to protect the rights, freedoms and legally protected interests of individuals and legal entities.

203. In accordance with the Procurator's Office Act, the main functions of the procuratorial authorities are to uphold the rule of law, reinforce law and order, safeguard citizens' rights and freedoms, the legally protected interests of society and the State and the constitutional order and prevent violations of the law. Another area of work of the procuratorial authorities is to supervise the enforcement of laws aimed at safeguarding human and civil rights and freedoms. The Procurator General may submit proposals to the President for the suspension or cancellation of acts of State authorities and regional chief administrators if such acts significantly infringe citizens' constitutional rights and freedoms.

204. The judicial and non-judicial legal remedies against violations of protected rights are clearly defined in the law. They are set out in such legislative acts as the Civil Code, the Code of Civil Procedure, the Courts Act, the Procurator's Office Act, the Internal Affairs Agencies Act, the Communications from Legal Entities and Individuals Act, the Act on Appeals to the Courts against the Actions or Decisions in Violation of the Human Rights and Freedoms of Citizens, the Act on the Oliy Majlis Human Rights Commissioner (Ombudsman), the Act on the Presidential Commissioner for the Protection of the Rights and Lawful Interests of Business Entities, the Bar Act and the Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organizations Act.

205. The Communications from Legal Entities and Individuals Act of 2017 regulates in detail the non-judicial procedure for making complaints regarding human rights violations. Communications to State authorities may be submitted as applications, proposals and complaints in the State language and other languages. Under the Act, there may be no discrimination in the enjoyment of the right to submit such communications, and all individuals and legal entities are entitled to appeal to a higher authority or directly to the court against an unlawful refusal to accept or consider a communication. Communications may not be transferred without good reason to other State authorities for consideration or referred to the bodies or officials whose decisions and actions or omissions are being challenged.

National human rights institutions

206. In accordance with the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action on human rights and the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles), Uzbekistan has established the following national human rights institutions: the Oliy Majlis Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman), the Commissioner for the Rights of the Child, the Presidential Commissioner for the Protection of the Rights and Lawful Interests of Business Entities and the National Centre for Human Rights. Their activities are constantly being improved on the basis of international human rights standards and international best practices. National human rights institutions exercise their powers autonomously and independently of State bodies and their officials.

207. The Oliy Majlis Commissioner for Human Rights considers and investigates complaints of human rights violations, recommends measures to remedy errors by individual organizations and officials, and assists in the restoration of human rights. Regional representatives of the Ombudsman work in all regions of Uzbekistan. The Act on the Oliy

Majlis Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) defines the Commissioner's powers to organize and implement the national preventive mechanism. In particular, the Commissioner takes measures to prevent torture and other ill-treatment through regular visits to places of detention. A report on the activities of the Ombudsman is heard annually at sessions of the chambers of the Oliy Majlis.

208. The Oliy Majlis Commissioner for Children's Rights (Children's Ombudsman) provides guarantees for the protection of children's rights, freedoms and legitimate interests, may participate in the courts for the protection of children's rights, visits places of detention and penal institutions and promotes the social adaptation of children with disabilities and also orphans. The Children's Ombudsman considers applications from individuals and legal entities, including children and their legal representatives, concerning violations of the rights and legitimate interests of the child. The Ombudsman is also responsible for educating children and their legal representatives about the rights, freedoms and legitimate interests of the child. The Ombudsman regularly informs the public about the status of observance and protection of children's rights, freedoms and legitimate interests. The Ombudsman monitors the incorporation of international standards on children's rights and freedoms into law and the observance of children's rights in the activities of State bodies and other organizations. The Ombudsman helps orphans and children without parental care who have left foster care institutions find decent housing. The Children's Ombudsman submits an annual report to the Oliy Majlis on the status of compliance with the legislation on the protection of the rights, freedoms and interests of the child by State bodies, including law enforcement agencies.

209. The Presidential Commissioner for the Protection of the Rights and Legitimate Interests of Business Entities performs the following functions: provides business entities with legal support during inspections of their activities; examines the implementation of rules and requirements of the law on guarantees of freedom of business activity; participates in the preparation of proposals to improve legislation and the work of the relevant officials; monitors the legality of inspections of the activities of business entities; and may issue written warnings to officials of State bodies and other organizations, file applications and lawsuits with the courts in the interests of business entities without paying State duty and participate in meetings of State bodies related to the consideration of issues related to the protection of the rights and legitimate interests of business entities. The Commissioner regularly submits information to the President on compliance with legislation on the protection of the rights and legitimate interests of business entities by State bodies.

210. The National Centre for Human Rights is the State body responsible for ensuring cooperation between State bodies and other organizations in fulfilling the international obligations assumed by Uzbekistan, preparing periodic reports on human rights and expanding cooperation with international organizations for the protection of human rights. The main functions of the Centre are to assist State bodies in fulfilling the country's international human rights obligations; monitoring the implementation of recommendations of international and regional human rights organizations; developing national plans of action to implement the recommendations of international and regional human rights organizations, preparing national reports and ensuring the implementation of international human rights treaties in national legislation and law enforcement practice; providing advice and practical assistance to State authorities, civil society institutions and other organizations concerned with the protection and exercise of human rights; and promoting legal awareness about human rights among the public. The Centre operates a human rights information and library centre, the Human Rights House. The Centre annually submits information to the President, the chambers of the Oliy Majlis and the Cabinet of Ministers on the state of compliance with the country's international human rights obligations.

Reporting process at the national level

211. The national reports on international human rights treaties to which Uzbekistan is a party are prepared by the National Centre for Human Rights. Since 1997, the Centre has prepared 42 national reports. State authorities responsible for compliance with international obligations in the field of human rights and freedoms participate in the preparation of reports, as do the non-governmental non-profit organizations (NGOs) and citizens' self-governing bodies concerned.

212. The following steps are taken by the National Centre for Human Rights for the preparation of periodic reports:

- Collecting information and data from State bodies and civil society institutions for the preparation of draft national reports
- Drafting core and national reports based on information provided by State bodies and civil society institutions
- Holding regular coordination meetings with State bodies and civil society institutions to discuss draft national reports
- Ensuring timely discussion of draft national reports in the chambers of the parliament with the participation of representatives of State bodies and civil society institutions
- Submitting national reports to international human rights bodies and submitting them to Charter and treaty bodies of the United Nations
- Translating into the State language and transmitting concluding observations and recommendations of Charter and treaty bodies to State bodies and civil society institutions in a timely manner
- Holding consultations on the development of national action plans with State bodies, civil society institutions, and international and foreign organizations
- Developing and submitting national action plans to the chambers of the parliament for approval
- Distributing the approved national action plans to the agencies responsible for their implementation.

213. The Legislative Chamber and the Senate of the Oliy Majlis hold discussions in their committees and commissions on draft periodic reports on the implementation of the country's international human rights obligations; consider, as appropriate, the outcome of the consideration of national reports by the Charter-based and treaty bodies of the United Nations; and approve national action plans for the implementation of recommendations of international and regional human rights organizations. The parliamentary commission on the observance of the international human rights obligations of Uzbekistan organizes discussions on the outcome of the consideration of national reports in the Charter bodies and committees of the United Nations and the status of implementation of the concluding observations and recommendations of those bodies.

214. The media provide coverage of the preparation of reports and their presentation by delegations to the treaty bodies of the United Nations.

Legal status and regulation of NGO activities

215. As a result of the measures taken, there has been an improvement in the legal and regulatory framework, which provides legal safeguards for NGOs and meets modern democratic requirements and international standards. As a result, some 20 laws, presidential enactments and government decisions have been adopted. The legislative framework to safeguard NGO activities has been improved, including the Constitution (chapter XIII), the Civil Code, the Voluntary Associations Act, the Non-Profit Non-Governmental Organizations Act, the Voluntary Foundations Act, the Citizens' Self-Governing Bodies Act, the Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organizations Safeguards Act, the Charity Act and the Social Partnership Act. Work is also under way to prepare and adopt the Code of Uzbekistan on NGOs.

216. The new version of the Constitution defines the concepts, basic guarantees and principles of NGO activity. The concept of "civil society institutions" has been introduced into the Constitution. Under article 69 of the Constitution, civil society institutions, including voluntary associations and other NGOs, citizens' self-governing bodies and the media, form the basis of civil society. The activities of civil society institutions are carried out in accordance with the law.

217. Article 71 of the Constitution prohibits the creation and operation of voluntary associations aimed at overturning the constitutional order by force, impairing the sovereignty, integrity and security of the Republic and the constitutional rights and freedoms of its citizens, fomenting war or social, religious, ethnic or racial enmity, or undermining the people's health and morality. It also prohibits the creation and operation of paramilitary groups on ethnic or religious lines. Secret societies and associations are prohibited.

218. Under article 72 of the Constitution, the State ensures respect for the rights and legitimate interests of NGOs and creates equal legal opportunities for them to participate in the life of society. Interference by State bodies and officials in the activities of NGOs and interference of NGOs in the activities of State bodies and officials is prohibited.

219. A court decision is required to disband, prohibit or restrict the activities of a voluntary association. An NGO may be closed down in accordance with a decision of its governing body or on the basis of a court decision. An NGO is to be closed down in accordance with the procedure provided for by law.

220. State registration of NGOs is carried out by the justice authorities of Uzbekistan. Under the Non-Profit Non-Governmental Organizations Act, the judicial body that receives an application for the official registration of an NGO must consider it and come to a decision within one month; within three days of that decision, it must issue to the founders a certificate of official registration or a document indicating the specific legislative provisions on which its rejection is based. NGOs whose applications for official registration have been rejected may reapply. The decision of the registering authority to reject an application for official registration may be challenged in a court of law. The rules governing the registration of NGOs are set out in the regulations on the procedure for the registration of non-profit non-governmental organizations, approved by decision of the Cabinet of Ministers on 10 March 2014.

221. As a result of the measures taken, the number of NGOs has increased by 20.7 per cent over the last four years. As of 1 January 2023, 8,933 NGOs were registered with the justice authorities.

222. The number of citizens' assemblies and self-governing bodies – mahallas – is about 10,000. Under the Citizens' Self-Governing Bodies Act, State bodies and their officials may not interfere in the activities of citizens' self-governing bodies. State bodies create the necessary conditions for the implementation of the activities of citizens' self-governing bodies and assist them in the exercise of the powers provided by law.

223. The State pursues a policy of social partnership with civil society institutions. The Oliy Majlis Public Fund for the Support of Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organizations and Other Civil Society Institutions is responsible for the open, targeted and democratic distribution of financial resources allocated from the State budget to support the activities of NGOs. In particular, over the past four years, a total of 117 billion sum have been allocated from the State budget to support more than 1,270 projects of NGOs and other civil society institutions.

224. A presidential decree of 4 March 2021 approved the policy framework for the development of civil society in the period 2021–2025. The priority areas of the framework are as follows: continuous improvement of the legal framework for the development of civil society; promoting civil society institutions and improving the mechanism for providing them with State support; creating the necessary conditions for the active participation of civil society institutions in State and public administration; and expanding the participation of civil society institutions in the implementation of State social projects. The framework sets targets for increasing the volume of State support to NGOs and other civil society institutions in the form of subsidies, grants and social service procurement by a factor of at least 1.8 in 2025. The number of NGOs participating in the implementation of the announced State programmes is expected to increase to 50 in 2025 (compared with 30 in 2021). A transparency index for NGO activities has been introduced and will be compiled at the end of each year based on the work carried out by NGOs, the level of social partnership, the effectiveness of subsidies, grants and social service procurement allocated and other indicators. In addition, the decree introduced the institution of a permanent representative of

NGOs who participates in meetings of the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis and its committees.

225. By a presidential decree of 3 March 2021, the total amount of money and property received in one calendar year by NGOs from foreign sources, with notification (for information purposes) of the registration authority has been increased fivefold; the period for the re-registration of NGOs and the State registration of their logos has been reduced from 1 month to 15 days; State duty is waived for the State registration (or re-registration) of logos of voluntary associations of persons with disabilities, veterans, older persons, women and children; and the procedure for the registration of the separate division of NGOs has been cancelled.

226. Various NGO activists are engaged in human rights work in Uzbekistan, and a system of public monitoring and oversight of the work of State authorities has been set up. They consist mainly of children's, women's and environmental NGOs, organizations of persons with disabilities and older persons and professional associations, foundations, associations, unions and interest groups.

227. The National Association of Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organizations of Uzbekistan brings together more than 1,300 NGOs and pools the organizational and intellectual resources of NGOs to fulfil the priority objectives of democratic reform to form a free and open civil society in the country. The Association promotes the development of constructive and mutually beneficial cooperation between NGOs and the authorities, citizens' assemblies and trade and voluntary organizations in the country, the enhancement of the role and place of NGOs in protecting human rights and freedoms, the development and monitoring of laws and regulations and State, sectoral and regional programmes of sociopolitical and socioeconomic development of the country and regions, and the exercise of public control over the activities of State authorities. The Association covers all spheres of society, working in various areas (social support, the law, women's affairs, youth, the environment, etc.). It regularly holds public hearings with representatives in the fields of health care, education, environmental protection, labour and social protection.

228. On 24 August 2022, a national forum on cooperation between State authorities and NGOs in ensuring human rights and interests was held in Tashkent. The forum discussed issues and developed recommendations for further improving mechanisms for cooperation between State and NGOs in the protection of human rights and for further expanding the practice of holding consultations between State authorities and civil society institutions.

Human rights education in educational establishments of various categories (schools, upper secondary schools, technical schools, colleges, universities)

229. All types and stages of education, curricula and programmes for the study of the Constitution have been revised and brought into line with the standards and provisions of the Constitution, as amended. Measures have been taken to create textbooks, teaching aids and special literature on the study of the new Constitution on the basis of modern methods for students, taking into account the specificities of their age. Measures have been taken to organize training in the gist and content of the new Constitution for State civil servants and members of the judiciary at all levels according to distinct schedules. Special attention is paid to unlocking the potential of the Constitution in the development of new mechanisms for the protection of human rights and freedoms.

230. In accordance with the Education Act and the National Programme for Human Rights Education approved by a presidential decision of 7 February 2023, a system of continuing human rights education has been established in Uzbekistan. This programme was developed with the provisions of the World Programme for Human Rights Education in mind.

231. Human rights subjects, themes and concepts have been introduced into curricula and programmes at all stages of education. Thus, in grades 1–4, based on the specificities of the students' age, such concepts as law, duty and obligation are studied. All these topics are included in civics courses from grades 1–11 in a way that allows younger students to learn without much effort how to behave in society, preserve nature and respect the environment, what qualities they should develop in themselves, and how to build relationships with their peers and show respect for their elders.

232. In grades 5–7 in general education schools, civics courses teach children the skills of self-improvement, analysing and evaluating what is happening in society, and critical thinking. The importance of being an active member of society is explained.

233. In grades 8–9 of general education schools, the main objective of civics as it pertains to the law is to impart knowledge about the socioeconomic, political, legal, scientific and cultural development of society to students and foster creative thinking and the ability to voice their own opinions on personal life issues. A total of 136 hours are devoted to the subject foundations of the State and law in grades 8–11 and 19 hours to civics in grades 8–11.

234. All students at vocational and higher education institutions are taught courses on basic law and the Constitution, which include information on human rights and human rights protection.

235. The main objectives of the National Human Rights Education Programme include:

- First, awareness-raising of human rights and freedoms among young people, including: the organization of Human Rights Week; the introduction of human rights teaching in the system of professional and higher education; the preparation of curricula, training and teaching aids on human rights, taking into account the areas of specialization; the organization of innovative summer schools, competitions for pupils and students in the field of education in human rights and freedoms, and sociological research
- Second, increase in the knowledge and skills of employees of State authorities in the field of human rights and gender equality, including: the organization of training courses on human rights and gender equality in the system of retraining and advanced training of managerial personnel; the organization of training courses on human rights and the fight against torture for law enforcement officers; the publication of compendiums of international human rights instruments to which Uzbekistan is a party in the State language; and the organization of regular advanced training in international human rights standards for the specialists of State authorities and organizations involved in the fulfilment of the country's international human rights obligations
- Third, improvements in the system of teacher training and support for scholarly research on human rights issues, including: the introduction of human rights training courses in the system of teacher training and retraining; the organization of the academic career path for law teachers and improvement of the master's degree in international human rights studies; the improvement of postgraduate education in human rights studies; the holding of competitions for applied, fundamental and innovative scholarly projects on topical human rights issues; improvement of the system of training and advanced training of specialists on topical human rights issues in bachelor's, master's and doctoral studies at foreign higher educational and research institutions
- Fourth, the increase in human rights awareness among the population in need of social protection, including: seminars and trainings on the rights of persons with disabilities; the introduction of training courses on women's and children's rights; and organization of training courses on migrants' rights for employees of State authorities and organizations
- Fifth, increased involvement of civil society institutions in human rights education, including: the organization of competitions for State grants and social support procurement in the area of human rights education; the organization of a series of seminars, training sessions and round tables on human rights education in cooperation with civil society institutions; the organization of training courses and a series of seminars on human rights for entrepreneurs and farmers; and the organization of training courses on human rights protection mechanisms in the trade union system
- Sixth, increased effectiveness of the system of human rights education and training using modern technologies, artistic works and the mass media, including: the creation of teaching aids and visual materials on the study of children's rights for teaching staff

of preschool educational establishments; the organization of a series of radio and television programmes and broadcasts on strengthening human rights education and training and the national human rights system; the production of social video and audio clips on human rights education; the organization of human rights training courses for news service staff and journalists; the establishment of an electronic human rights education platform

- Seventh, the development of international cooperation in the field of human rights education, including: with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, OSCE, the Council of Europe and other international organizations; the organization of international conferences in the field of human rights education and the development of international cooperation with higher educational and academic institutions abroad

236. In accordance with the National Programme for Human Rights Education, starting with the 2023/24 academic year, training and special courses on human rights, women's rights and the rights of the child have been introduced in vocational and higher education. Since June 2023, a national competition entitled "Education and Innovation in Human Rights and Freedoms" has been held annually. Training courses and seminars on the rights of persons with disabilities, women, children and migrants are being established in organizations whose activities are directly related to these groups of persons. Steps are being taken to prepare and publish a series of manuals and brochures on human rights and freedoms in Uzbekistan, human rights, children's rights, women's rights and the rights of persons with disabilities, and an electronic platform for human rights education will be launched.

237. Pursuant to a presidential decree of 12 May 2023, a programme of measures was approved for the broad celebration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, aimed at increasing citizens' knowledge of the principles and standards of the Declaration. The programme establishes that, from 1 to 10 December every year, 10 Days of Human Rights will be commemorated, the end of which coincides with Human Rights Day.

Raising awareness among civil servants and law enforcement officials

238. Uzbekistan has a network of educational institutions that conduct basic training and refresher courses for legal specialists and law enforcement officials. These institutions include the Tashkent State Law University, the Higher School of the Judiciary, the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the University of Public Security of Uzbekistan, the Academy of the State Security Service, the Centre for the Further Training of Legal Specialists, the Law Enforcement Academy, the Academy of Public Administration attached to the Office of the President, the University of World Economics and Diplomacy attached to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the law faculties of the National University of Uzbekistan and the Karakalpak, Samarkand, Termez, Bukhara, Namangan and Fergana State universities.

239. The Academy of Public Administration attached to the Office of the President offers a course on human rights. As part of the teaching of this course, field practice sessions are held at the National Center for Human Rights and the office of the Commissioner for Human Rights.

240. The system of human rights education and training is an integral part of the legal training of internal affairs officers. The Department of State and Legal Disciplines and Human Rights at the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs teaches subjects related to the general theory of human rights, children's rights, the elimination of discrimination against women, the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities, international agreements and conventions, international human rights mechanisms and recommendations in the area of human rights.

241. The Centre for the Further Training of Legal Specialists is a leading State educational institution in the field of training, retraining and advanced training of legal professionals. The Centre's curriculum includes topics on human rights mechanisms, gender equality, children's rights and the prevention of torture. The Center trained 303,329 attendees during 2017–2022,

including legal advisers, attorneys, justice officials, notaries and representatives of the Ombudsman.

242. The Law Enforcement Academy systematically carries out activities to raise awareness of human rights and to enhance the legal culture and professional skills of the staff of the procuratorial authorities. Starting in the 2021/22 academic year, the Academy has launched a master's programme in international human rights law, with an annual intake of 15–20 students.

243. The curriculum of the Academy of the State Security Service provides for the study of human rights as an independent academic discipline. The Academy has a Centre for the Law of Armed Conflict, which also offers classes on human rights. The subject is taught on an interdisciplinary basis and includes both general aspects of human rights and specific practical requirements for their observance, which should guide future members of the State Security Service in their law enforcement activities.

244. Tashkent State Law University has introduced a module on international human rights law for students specializing in international legal studies. In addition to this independent field of study, certain aspects of human rights are reflected in other fields of legal studies, such as the theory of the State and law, criminal law, administrative law, civil law and civil procedure.

245. At the University of World Economics and Diplomacy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, human rights diplomacy and international humanitarian law are studied at the undergraduate level as part of the course on human rights in the departments of international law and international relations, while international human rights law and national human rights institutions are studied at the master's degree level.

246. In addition to investigating officers and judges, the study of international human rights standards is included in the curricula of the military educational establishments of the Ministry of Defence. Since the 2005 academic year, optional classes have been organized and, since the 2006 academic year, the module on the principles of military law has included sections on humanitarian law and the law of armed conflict, where human rights issues are studied.

247. In the training and retraining of doctors in the Ministry of Health system, certain attention is paid to the study of human rights. The rights of specialists, medical examiners and persons undergoing examinations are set out in a course on forensic medicine taught on all medical school bachelor's programmes. There is also a course on the legal foundations of medicine. Attention is devoted to the rights and freedoms of individuals, including the rights to life, liberty and security of person, the right to protection from assault and the right not to be tortured or subjected to violence. Students are taught that medical or scientific experiments may not be carried out on a person without his or her consent. These issues are considered from both the perspective of patients and that of medical personnel.

248. The National Centre for Human Rights has set up courses for the training and further training of the staff of State authorities on human rights issues, and training courses are held for representatives of State bodies and civil society institutions to teach them the basics of drafting the country's periodic reports on human rights for the Charter-based and treaty bodies of the United Nations, preparing alternative reports and responding to requests from international and regional human rights bodies. The National Centre has set up an institute for postgraduate education and an academic council for the awarding of degrees in human rights (legal sciences and sociology), to train highly qualified research and teaching personnel in the field of human rights and to develop basic research in this area.

Promotion of human rights awareness through the mass media

249. Uzbekistan has more than 631 newspapers (311 State and 320 non-State), 678 magazines (323 State and 355 non-State), 746 Internet publications (105 State and 641 non-State), 6 news agencies, 84 television channels (34 State and 50 non-State) and 32 radio channels (3 State and 29 non-State).

250. As the number of global Internet users in Uzbekistan grows, so does the role of social media. The number of Internet users in Uzbekistan has reached 76.6 per cent, with Uzbeks

searching most often for information on Google, which accounts for 83.5 per cent of all searches, and Yandex taking second place, with 14.6 per cent.

251. Issues related to the protection of human rights, the legal and institutional mechanisms for ensuring them and various aspects of the role of civil society institutions in protecting human rights are covered extensively on a regular basis by independent television and radio stations and regional television and radio companies.

252. More than 30 legal journals and reviews with a focus on human rights are published in Uzbekistan, and a national database of Uzbek legislation has been set up (www.lex.uz).

III. Information on non-discrimination and equality

253. The principle of non-discrimination is one of the basic principles of Uzbek legislation on the protection of human rights. In accordance with article 19 of the Constitution, “all citizens have the same rights and freedoms and are equal before the law, without distinction as to sex, race, ethnicity, language, religion, beliefs, social origin or social status”.

254. The principle of equality between men and women is proclaimed in the Constitution. Under the Constitution, women and men have equal rights; the State ensures equal rights and opportunities for men and women in the management of the affairs society and the State and in other spheres of social and public life (art. 58).

255. The basic principles and rules concerning the creation of conditions for gender equality in all areas of political and public life are enshrined in the Act on State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men. Under article 6 of the Act, men and women are guaranteed equal participation in the management of public and State affairs and the electoral process and equal rights and opportunities in the area of health care, education, science, culture, labour and social protection, and in other areas of State and public life. The State undertakes temporary special measures for the implementation of gender policy in order to achieve de facto equality between women and men, increase their participation in all spheres of society and eliminate and prevent direct and indirect sexual discrimination.

256. Under article 7 of the Children’s Rights Safeguards Act, the State takes the necessary measures to ensure the protection of children against all forms of discrimination.

257. Discrimination on the basis of disability is prohibited under article 5 of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act. The Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability: “any separation, exclusion, alienation or restriction or preference of persons with disabilities, and refusal to create conditions for access to facilities and services for persons with disabilities, shall be prohibited. Special measures aimed at ensuring equality of opportunity for persons with disabilities and their inclusion in society and the State shall not be considered discriminatory against other citizens”.

258. One of the basic principles in the field of education in Uzbekistan is to ensure equal educational opportunities and non-discrimination in education. Under the Education Act of 7 August 2020, “everyone is guaranteed equal rights to education, without distinction as to sex, race, ethnicity, language, religion, social origin, beliefs or personal or social status” (art. 5).

259. The Labour Code (adopted on 28 October 2022) prohibits discrimination in employment and occupation on the basis of sex, age, race, ethnicity, language, social origin, property and official status, place of residence, attitude to religion, beliefs and membership of voluntary associations. Justified distinctions, exclusions and preferences, and restrictions on the rights of employees in the sphere of labour and occupation, due to the inherent requirements of a given type of work or special care for persons in need of increased social protection, including persons with disabilities, do not constitute discrimination (art. 4). This provision is reinforced by article 119 of the Labour Code, which prohibits unlawful refusal of employment that violates the prohibition of discrimination in employment and occupation.

260. In accordance with article 16 of the Communications from Legal Entities and Individuals Act (adopted on 11 September 2017), there may be no discrimination in exercise of the right to appeal on the basis of sex, race, ethnicity, language, religion, social origin,

beliefs, personal and social status of a natural person, and also of the forms of ownership, location (postal address), organizational and legal forms and other circumstances of legal entities.

261. Article 7 of the Pretrial Detention during Criminal Proceedings Act, article 5 of the Criminal Code, article 16 of the Code of Criminal Procedure and other Uzbek laws also provide for equality of rights and non-discrimination.

262. Article 4 of the State Language Act facilitates the study of the State language, respect for the languages of the nations and peoples living in the country and the development of those languages.

263. In accordance with article 20 of the Cultural Activities and Cultural Organizations Act (adopted on 20 January 2021) use of posters, emblems, banners and other items aimed at inflaming national, racial, ethnic or religious hatred, the propagation of cruelty and violence and discrimination against the rights of others is prohibited during cultural and mass events.

264. Article 16 of the Advertising Act (adopted on 7 June 2022) prohibits discrimination in advertising on grounds of sex, race, ethnicity, language, religion, social origin, beliefs, personal or social status, or other circumstances.

265. Under the legal system of Uzbekistan, there are administrative and criminal penalties for offences against equality of rights. Article 42 of the Administrative Liability Code establishes fines for the violation of citizens' right to a free choice of language of education and training, for the obstruction or restriction of the use of a language and for disregard for the State language or the languages of the various ethnic groups and peoples living in Uzbekistan.

266. The Criminal Code establishes criminal liability for violations of equality of rights (art. 141). Moreover, this constituent element of an offence is identified in chapter VII of the Criminal Code, which enumerates the types of offences against the constitutional rights and freedoms of citizens.

267. Article 156 of the Criminal Code establishes criminal liability for incitement to ethnic, racial or religious hatred, or deliberate acts that offend national honour or dignity and are committed for the purpose of inciting hatred, intolerance or discord with respect to any group on ethnic or racial grounds, and for the direct or indirect restriction of privileges, or the granting of direct or indirect privileges, on national, ethnic or racial grounds.

268. Article 153 of the Criminal Code establishes penalties for genocide, or the deliberate creation of conditions of life designed to bring about total or partial physical extermination, enforced birth control or the transfer of children from one group of people to another or the issuance of instructions to carry out such acts.

269. A committee on inter-ethnic relations and friendly ties with foreign countries has been established under the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. As the State authority responsible for inter-ethnic relations, the Committee is actively involved in working to ensure the continued implementation of State policy on inter-ethnic harmony and tolerance in society.

270. The 138 ethnic cultural centres and 34 societies for friendship with foreign countries play a leading role in preserving and comprehensively developing the history, culture, spiritual values, traditions and customs of all the ethnic groups, peoples and diasporas of Uzbekistan, harmonizing inter-ethnic relations and ensuring the sustainable development of society and the State. They make an important contribution to the mutual enrichment of cultures, the preservation of a peaceful and prosperous life, the development of friendly relations and cultural and spiritual ties with foreign countries, and the establishment of close and mutually beneficial relations with Uzbeks abroad through the extensive use of the mechanisms of "people's diplomacy".