



General Assembly

Distr.: General
30 April 2010

Original: English

Human Rights Council

Fourteenth session

Agenda item 6

Universal periodic review

Information presented by the Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) of the Republic of Azerbaijan*

Note by the Secretariat

The Secretariat of the Human Rights Council hereby transmits the communication submitted by the Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) of the Republic of Azerbaijan,** reproduced below in accordance with rule 7(b) of the rules of procedures described in the annex to Council resolution 5/1, according to which participation of national human rights institutions is to be based on arrangements and practices agreed upon by the Commission on Human Rights, including resolution 2005/74 of 20 April 2005.

* National human rights institution with “A”-status accreditation from the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights.

** Reproduced in the annex as received, in the language of submission only.

Annex

23rd session of the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (ICC)

**Palais des Nations
Geneva, 23-25 March 2010**

Statement of the Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Mrs. Elmira Suleymanova

The activities of the Azerbaijani Ombudsman on the Universal Periodic Review

The Republic of Azerbaijan has taken several obligations on admittance to the UN Human Rights Council in 2006. One of these obligations is related to the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) mechanism.

Ombudsman institute of Azerbaijan was accredited as a National Human Rights Institute (NHRI) with “Status A” in 2006 by the International Coordination Committee (ICC) of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) at the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights among 10 influential European Ombudsman institutions. This status authorizes the Ombudsman institute to participate at preparation of the reports of the Government submitted to the Treaty bodies of the UN, as well as HRC, give references on these reports, prepare complimentary alternative reports and monitor international treaties of the government in human rights.

As it is known, the participation of the ombudsman institutions in UPR process was especially stressed at the 20th session of the ICC held in Geneva from April 15-18, 2008.

In order to ensure compiling of the governmental report on the UPR at high level, as well as to provide awareness of representatives of both state bodies and civil society.

In order to ensure preparation of the governmental report under the UPR at a high level, as well as to provide representatives of governmental bodies and civil society with substantial information about the UPR, the training-seminar was organized at the Ombudsman Office in the initiative of the Commissioner for Human Rights with participation of international experts (including experts of the UN Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights Mr. Ciaran O’Maolain and Mr. Vladlen Stefanov). The training was organized in order to introduce to the state and non-governmental bodies that could participate in preparation of the report under the UPR, functioning in human rights sphere that are involved into the implementation of National Action Plan on Human Rights in the Republic of Azerbaijan (NAP). The training-seminar was attended by representatives of the corresponding state bodies, international and non-governmental organizations.

In order to accelerate the process of preparation of the governmental report under the UPR, the staff members of the Ombudsman Office also took part in the work of the round table held in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with participation of the representatives state bodies and NGOs, as well as at the seminar organized by the UN Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights Azerbaijan Representative, gave comprehensive information about the work carried out by the Ombudsman in this regard, rules and main stages of preparation of report under the periodic review.

At the public hearings held in the regions for monitoring of the situation with implementation of the NAP, the Commissioner informed the participants about the mechanism of “Universal Periodic Review”.

In the initiative of the Commissioner the staff members of the Office were presented and took active part in the activity of the Working Group “On preparation and submission of the report of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the frames of the Universal Periodic Review of the UN Human Rights Council” established according to the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan from July 11, 2008.

According to the resolution of the UN Human Rights Council No. 5/1 dated June 18, 2007 relevant report was compiled on UPR mechanism and accordingly it was sent to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. Best practices in provision of human rights in recent years, as well as current shortcomings, difficulties were reflected in that report in accordance with relevant demands. Besides, a reference on the activity of the Ombudsman was submitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in connection with preparation of official report.

In the official report on UPR it was particularly mentioned that Ombudsman had also taken part in its preparation. It should be mentioned that eleven points of the document somehow deals with the activity of the Commissioner. The establishment of the Ombudsman Institute was welcomed; in general the activity of the Commissioner was highly appreciated in the Review on the Report of the Republic of Azerbaijan on UPR worked out by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. The Review enshrines proposals of Ombudsman on adhering to international documents, provision of gender equality, domestic violence, early marriages, combat against human trafficking, protection of the rights of inmates, refugees and IDPs and other strata of population, adoption of the National Action Plan (NAP) on Human Rights Protection, the activity of Ombudsman in its efficient implementation, public hearings and other issues.

The Azerbaijani Ombudsman also participated in the hearings of the state report of Azerbaijan on UPR in the session of the UN Human Rights Council held on February 2-13, 2009.

The report that was submitted to the Human Rights Council by Azerbaijan was considered successful; speakers highly appreciated the reforms carried out in human rights sphere in Azerbaijan and the role of preliminary measures taken jointly by the Ombudsman Office and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

More than 40 countries participating in sessions stated establishment and activity of Ombudsman Institute, as well as evaluation, appreciation of NAP as best practices.

UPR doesn't finish with one report it is continuing process. Taking into consideration this fact, on April 30, 2009 joint discussions were organized with the participation of state bodies, NGOs participated at preparation of the report in order to discuss the recommendation on the report, and to define the actions to be taken for investigation and elimination of the shortcomings indicated by the Commissioner for a short period.

The representative of the Azerbaijani Ombudsman attended the XI session of the UN Human Rights Council held in Geneva and sounded the commentaries and proposals of Ombudsman in relation to the recommendations given to Azerbaijan on UPR.

On October 2009, the actions taken for fulfillment of recommendations by the respective state bodies were discussed at the round table at Ombudsman Office.