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Promotion and protection of human rights

**Letter dated 7 March 2016 from the Permanent Representative of
Uzbekistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

I have the honour to convey to you information on declaring 2016 in the Republic of Uzbekistan as the Year of Healthy Mother and Child (see annex).

I would appreciate it if you could circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the seventieth session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 72.

(Signed) Muzaffar **Madrakhimov**



Annex to the letter dated 7 March 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Uzbekistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Russian]

2016 declared the Year of the Healthy Mother and Child in Uzbekistan

At the initiative of President Islam Karimov, 2016 was declared the Year of the Healthy Mother and Child in Uzbekistan.

“By raising a healthy generation, we lay the foundation for a great State and prosperous lives”. Those profound words, spoken by President Islam Karimov on 2 May 1994 at the ceremony to award the first State prize established by independent Uzbekistan, the “For a Healthy Generation” award, established the main focus areas for maternal and child health care, for promoting the health and the spiritual, moral and physical development of the younger generation, and for instilling feelings of patriotism and love for the homeland.

From the very first days of the country’s independence, maternal and child health care has been one of the strategic focuses of State social policy. Over the years, measures have been developed and implemented to create conditions conducive to the birth and upbringing of healthy generations, with the long-term aim of improving the nation’s gene pool, raising awareness of health in families, and improving the population’s longevity and quality of life. An important foundation for all these noble causes was the declaration, at the initiative of President Islam Karimov, of 1998 as the Year of the Family, of 2000 as the Year of the Healthy Generation, of 2001 as the Year of the Mother and Child, of 2008 as the Year of Youth, of 2012 as the Year of the Family and of 2014 as the Year of the Healthy Child in Uzbekistan, as well as the implementation of the State programmes adopted in that regard.

As a result, the “Healthy mother, healthy child” concept has gained universal recognition, including abroad. Following its consistent implementation over the past five years, decreases have been observed in the maternal mortality ratio (from 23.1 to 19 per 100,000 births), the under-five mortality rate (from 14.8 to 13.9) and the infant mortality rate (from 11 to 10.7). According to these figures, Uzbekistan has fully achieved the corresponding Millennium Development Goals.

In 2016, which has been declared the Year of the Healthy Mother and Child in Uzbekistan, this huge undertaking will be not only continued, but also significantly expanded.

On 9 February 2016, the “Year of the Healthy Mother and Child” State programme was adopted by President Islam Karimov. This programme sets out a series of measures for fostering in society a deeper understanding of and belief in the noble idea that a healthy mother and child form the basis of a happy family, and a happy family is the foundation for a prosperous nation. The measures are also aimed at improving the family, maternal and child welfare system; encouraging society to show special consideration and respect for mothers; raising a healthy and well-rounded generation; and enhancing cooperation among State authorities and civil society organizations in strengthening the institution of the family.

One of the main focuses of the “Year of the Healthy Mother and Child” State programme is on further improving the legislative and regulatory framework relating to family, maternal and child welfare; protecting women’s interests; highlighting women’s role in raising healthy children; and strengthening the institution of the family as the basis for a strong, stable and prosperous nation.

This year, the process of drafting a new version of the law of the Republic of Uzbekistan on the State youth policy will begin. The Criminal Code will be amended in order to further liberalize criminal legislation pertaining to women with children under the age of 3 (irrespective of whether they are on parental leave), by including them in the list of individuals to whom corrective labour shall not apply. The Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan intends to adopt a decision providing for the establishment of day-care centres (groups) for children with disabilities, Muruvvat residential care homes and other State and non-State educational institutions.

In 2016, the authorities will continue their ongoing efforts to establish the necessary social, domestic and medical conditions for people living in remote and hard-to-reach rural areas, especially women; to build modern housing developments and social infrastructure facilities in rural areas; to improve the provision of drinking water and natural gas to the rural population; and to improve the quality of facilities and services.

For example, the Cabinet of Ministers is expected to adopt a decision approving a programme to establish 194 standard consumer services facilities, which must include beauty salons, clothing and shoe shops and repair services for small electrical appliances, in remote settlements of Uzbekistan, and to allocate bank loans and provide land for that purpose. Electrical appliances will be provided free of charge to women living in low-income households in remote and hard-to-reach rural areas of Uzbekistan. Rural inhabitants belonging to socially vulnerable segments of the population will be given sets of clothes for adults and children.

Under the State programme, housing developments totalling 13,000 individual units will be built in rural settlements in all regions of Uzbekistan, and a 296.3-kilometre power supply network and a 307.5-kilometre gas supply network will be constructed. Measures will continue to be taken to supply populated areas with high-quality drinking water by establishing a water supply network of over 1,300 kilometres in rural areas, including a 300.5-kilometre water supply network serving residential housing developments.

In 2016, special attention will be given to further strengthening the physical and technical infrastructure and human capacity of medical institutions, in particular perinatal and screening centres; improving the effectiveness of family clinics and rural health-care centres; increasing the number of community nurses; and upgrading the skills of obstetrician-gynaecologists and paediatricians.

With the aim of improving the quality of primary health-care services in rural areas and rehabilitation facilities for children with disabilities by providing them with modern medical equipment, and reducing the childhood disability rate in Uzbekistan, three provincial multi-specialty children’s medical centres (in Samarkand, Gulistan and Urgench) and clinics at the Tashkent Paediatric Medical Institute will be modernized and will undergo major renovations and equipment upgrades. The modernization and equipment upgrades of the national specialized

clinical research paediatric centre; the modernization, major renovations and equipment upgrades of departments and maternity units at 38 district medical associations; and the major and minor renovations at 11 family clinics and 244 rural health-care centres will be completed. Furthermore, a referral unit will be built and equipped at the national rehabilitation centre for children with musculoskeletal diseases, and the tuberculosis sanatorium for children in the Province of Khorezm will be modernized and undergo major renovations.

In order to provide comprehensive health care to women to improve their quality of life and to expand medical services, a plan will be developed to establish a level-IV health-care centre for women in Tashkent that is equipped with the most advanced diagnostic and treatment equipment and in which a modern consultation clinic and surgery unit will be opened.

This year, improvements will be made to the physical and technical infrastructure of paediatric and obstetrical facilities, including the national perinatal centre, provincial perinatal centres and branches of the national specialized research medical centre for obstetrics and gynaecology, 13 provincial multi-specialty children's medical centres and city and district prevention and treatment institutions, including their departments of paediatrics and obstetrics. The activities of the national centre for social adaptation of children will continue to be expanded; in 2016-2018, an additional 11 regional branches of the centre will be opened and a social fund will be created to support the social adaptation of children with special needs.

Another priority is the State programme for the early detection of congenital and hereditary diseases, which provides for perinatal and neonatal screenings of pregnant women and newborns, mass early perinatal ultrasound screenings of pregnant women at the primary health-care level, and the equipment of 13 screening centres with a high-end digital multipurpose ultrasound system. All of this will help to prevent the birth of children with birth defects and hereditary diseases and to lower the child disability and child mortality rates.

The "Year of the Healthy Mother and Child" State programme increases the responsibility of health-care workers to conduct full premarital medical examinations of couples planning to marry, which will reduce potential cases of congenital and hereditary diseases. It also includes measures to provide clinics with modern diagnostic equipment, enhance the quality of the medical services they provide and raise awareness among the population of the importance of premarital medical examinations for ensuring the creation of strong families and the birth of healthy children. Measures will also be taken to raise awareness of health among the population and to strengthen work in the areas of sanitation and hygiene, health care and psychophysiological wellness for pregnant women, specialized care for young mothers and children, and ensuring the quality and nutritional value of their diet.

In order to further improve the common scientific and practical policy on healthy eating and nutritional science, in line with modern international standards, a national nutritional science research centre will be established as part of the Tashkent Medical Academy.

The important tasks of the "Year of the Healthy Mother and Child" State programme are to increase the popularity of physical activity and sports, to encourage young people, in particular girls in rural areas, to participate regularly in

sports, to build new sports facilities and strengthen the physical and technical infrastructure of existing ones, to provide them with modern sports equipment and gear, and to staff them with highly qualified coaches and trainers.

There are plans to build over 1,700 additional gymnasiums in general schools (including 217 to be built in 2016), to establish 225 modern and fully equipped sports schools for children and young people (including 15 in 2016), and to increase the number of swimming pools to 290, including 11 to be built this year.

Continued efforts will be made to promote the physical health and intellectual development of girls and to ensure that they receive the necessary education in lyceums and vocational training institutions, master the latest knowledge and professional skills, develop a strong identity and are able to think independently, as these are the main conditions for being able to live in dignity and create a healthy and strong family in the future.

In each institution, training courses will be organized on topics concerning labour law and entrepreneurial activities. Town- or district-wide business clubs based in individual institutions will be established with a view to teaching entrepreneurial skills to participants. In order to encourage more women to undertake entrepreneurial activities and set up family businesses, the “My business idea” and “Young entrepreneurs as the backbone of the nation” regional and national competitions will be held and loans will be provided to young families and female entrepreneurs, including graduates of vocational training institutions.

Under the “Year of the Healthy Mother and Child” State programme, objectives have been set in relation to the strengthening of the role of the education system in raising healthy children, the further development of the network of preschool educational institutions, the dramatic improvement in children’s preparedness for school through high-quality primary education and the widespread introduction of advanced teaching and information and communication technologies.

There are plans for 286 preschool institutions to undergo major renovations and equipment upgrades, as well as to construct playgrounds and improve conditions for the development of non-State preschool institutions. In 2016, 28 new general schools will be built, 234 will be modernized and 105 will undergo major renovations and be provided with new school furniture, computer labs and laboratory equipment. Over 1,600 schools will be equipped with computers, including interactive whiteboards.

Thirteen lyceums and 107 vocational training institutions will be modernized, undergo major renovations and be provided with the necessary operating and other equipment.

The State programme makes special provision for the job placement of graduates of vocational training institutions, primarily girls; the further expansion of loans at preferential rates to young people who are seeking to set up their own business; the granting of mortgages to young families to enable them to buy and build homes; and consumer loans for the purchase of durable goods.

Measures will be implemented to encourage the conclusion of four-party agreements on mandatory work placements among graduates of vocational training institutions in the 2015/16 school year, organizations and businesses, the administrations of educational institutions and the khokimiyats (local governing

bodies) of the relevant territories. Assistance in securing employment will be provided to graduates of vocational training institutions who have disabilities or come from low-income and large families.

The State programme also addresses the further strengthening of cooperation among the local authorities, citizen self-government bodies (known as mahallas) and women's and youth organizations in the implementation of the programme's measures, with the widespread involvement of members of the older generation, who enjoy respect and authority in society.

In total, 7 trillion 483.3 billion sum (the equivalent of 194 million dollars) will be allocated to implement the "Year of the Healthy Mother and Child" State programme. Undoubtedly, the continuation of ongoing work and new initiatives will significantly strengthen the effective system for mother and child welfare that has been established in Uzbekistan and will promote the well-rounded development of the younger generation.
