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STATEMENT

by

**H.E. Dr. Akmal SAIDOV
Chairman of the National Human Rights Centre
of the Republic of Uzbekistan**

at the 16th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council

**Agenda item 6.
Adoption of Report of the Working Group
on the Universal Periodic Review of Uzbekistan**

**19 September 2013
Geneva**



**Dear Mr. President,
Dear Members of the Human Rights Council,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

As you know, the Second National report of Uzbekistan in the framework of the Universal Periodic Review was considered on 24 April 2013.

A representative delegation of Uzbekistan participated in the 16th session of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review of the Human Rights Council, consisting of the heads of the National Centre for Human Rights, Ministries of Justice, Labour and Social Protection, Internal Affairs and the Council of the Federation of Trade Unions.

Representatives from 83 states took part in discussion of Uzbekistan's Report, and it was noted that the Report reflects the significant progress in the area of democratic renewal and modernization of the country.

We take this opportunity to thank all the representatives of the states for their constructive approach and support.

We also thank the Troika members – Angola, Indonesia and Germany, as well as the Secretariat of the Human Rights Council for their assistance and support during the review.

During the discussion of the Report of Uzbekistan there were made 203 recommendations, therefrom:

- Uzbekistan accepted 101 recommendations,
- 30 recommendations have already been implemented or are being implemented,
- 14 recommendations that we were committed to respond before the 24th session of the HRC were also accepted,
- 58 recommendations were not accepted due to the fact that they either do not comply with the international obligations of Uzbekistan, or does not correspond to the reality.

Preliminary recommendations of the HRC resulted from the review of the Second National Report of Uzbekistan were discussed at the meeting of the Interdepartmental Working Group on Monitoring of the Observance by Law Enforcement and Other Government Agencies of the Rights and Freedoms under the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Legislative Chamber of Oliy Majlis (Parliament) of Uzbekistan has also discussed the information of the governmental delegation on the outcomes of consideration of the Second National Report of the Republic of Uzbekistan for the UPR. Members of the Lower House of Parliament, representatives of government agencies, non-governmental organizations and the media welcomed the outcome of the consideration of the Second Report of Uzbekistan at the 16th session of the HRC Working Group.

At present, after extensive consultations both with civil society institutions and international partners, a draft National Action Plan on implementation of the recommendations of the UN Human Rights Council after the second UPR is being prepared, which will include specific measures for implementing the recommendations under the UPR, timing and responsible officials from government agencies, educational institutions, NGOs and the media. In our opinion, the NAP will provide a platform for constructive cooperation

with both national and international partners in implementing the recommendations of the HRC.

While implementing the recommendations of the HRC Uzbekistan will pay close attention to the further development of national legislation and practice, as well as the promotion and protection of the rights of the most vulnerable groups, namely children, women, individuals with disabilities.

Dear Mr. President,

Let me inform you on the following significant steps taken in the field of human rights in Uzbekistan after the consideration of the Second National report for the UPR.

First. Uzbekistan is closely cooperating with the UN human rights agencies. In May 2013, a delegation led by Mr. Ivan Simonovic, Assistant of the UN Secretary-General for Human Rights, visited Uzbekistan. During the visit, meetings with the heads of the judiciary and law enforcement bodies, national human rights institutions, representatives of civil society were held/ On this occasion the issues of cooperation within the implementation of the UPR recommendations were also discussed.

Currently a preliminary agreement is reached with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on the conclusion of a Memorandum of Understanding between the National Human Rights Centre, OHCHR, UNDP, as well as on the implementation of a joint technical project for 2014-2017.

Second. Uzbekistan consistently and firmly fulfills its international obligations under major international human rights treaties. 32 national reports were submitted to the UN treaty committees. In June of this year Third and Fourth Periodic Reports of Uzbekistan on implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its two initial reports under the Optional Protocols to the Convention were considered. The Fourth Periodic report on the implementation of the UN Convention against Torture will be considered in October 2013.

Third. Uzbekistan consistently implements international standards of the ILO in the field of prevention and prohibition of child labor. Reliable mechanisms to protect children's rights at work were legally secured. The visit of the ILO Secretariat's experts took place and an international round table was organized, the Government adopted a special resolution on the implementation of the ILO conventions, a National Action Plan was approved.

A "round table" on "Prospects for technical cooperation for implementation of international commitments to Uzbekistan in the framework of the ILO" was held on 17-18 July 2013 in Tashkent. The event was initiated by the Secretariat of the ILO and its tripartite partners in Uzbekistan - Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, the Council of Federation of Trade Unions, the Chamber of Commerce, in accordance with the decision of the 102nd session of the International Labor Conference. The "round table" was attended by representatives of the Secretariat of the ILO, the International Organization of Employers, the International Trade Unions Confederation, the European Commission, as well as representative offices of the UN, UNICEF, EU, embassies of the U.S, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, the Russian Federation, China, India, Italy, Indonesia, Ukraine, Latvia, Malaysia in Uzbekistan.

Currently, measures to further develop bilateral cooperation on the issues of child labour monitoring methodology of the ILO programme IPEC are being taken.

Fourth. Uzbekistan continues to cooperate in the field of the human dimension and human rights with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the European Union and the Venice Commission, including within the framework of the European Union' project on promoting judicial reforms in Uzbekistan.

Fifth. The country has carried out systematic and consistent measures to further reforming the judicial system. The issues of human rights in a fair trial, in the fight against crime are also key priorities, as well as to building a culture of human rights and the development of civil society.

Rules were introduced in the criminal procedure and penal laws, according to which the prison authorities must provide detainees and people in custody all the necessary conditions for unimpeded and confidential meetings and discussions with the Ombudsman. Besides the correspondence sent to the Ombudsman is not subject to censorship. Thus, in Uzbekistan the basic elements of the national preventive mechanism for the prevention of torture were established in accordance with the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture.

Sixth. A large-scale work is been carried out in Uzbekistan aimed at establishing a legal framework necessary for the effective organization of the prevention of trafficking in persons, including women and children.

Seventh. In order to strengthen the independence of the judiciary and improving the system of selection of judges a number of acts of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan were adopted, which are aimed at providing further enhance to the role and place of the judiciary in governance, strengthening the legal and social guarantees for an independent judiciary and the protection of the social status of the judiciary officers. These regulations implementing the generally recognized principles and norms of international human rights law, of course, can strengthen judicial control in conducting inquiry and preliminary investigation, expanding the scope of the institution of "Habeas Corpus" in the criminal process, ensure compliance with the basic functions of the court for equitable conduct of the trial, the independence, objectivity and impartiality of the court, strengthening the principle of adversarial criminal proceedings.

Eighth. Uzbekistan pays serious attention to its systematic and consistent policy of gradual and full safeguarding of economic, social, environmental and cultural rights. Further development of the social sphere, steady improvement in income and living standards of the population are in the focus of the Government of Uzbekistan.

Uzbekistan achieved the UN Millennium Development Goal for full access to universal education. According to the World Bank literacy rate in the country is one of the highest in the world - 99.7%.

A key direction of the State programme "Year of well-being and prosperity" is to ensure the steady growth of wealth and real income, employment, further development of small business and private entrepreneurship, farming, improvement of the public targeted social protection and social assistance to the population, especially the socially vulnerable and low-income families. About 60 percent of all expenditures of the state budget will be directed to the further development of the social sphere and the effectiveness of social support of the population.

The law "On combating the spread of the disease caused by the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV-infection)" was adopted, the main goal of which is to further improve the legal provisions aimed at improving the efficiency and quality of implemented measures for combating the spread of the disease caused by the Human Immunodeficiency Virus, necessary prevention and reliable protection against HIV-infection.

Ninth. In Uzbekistan measures are taken to accelerate the formation of the "electronic government". A single portal for online government services on the Internet was created. In 2013, adoption of the draft law "On the complaints of individuals and entities" is planned, which focuses on the regulation of appeals of legal entities to public authorities and institutions, as well as further improvement of the appeal procedure of citizens to public authorities and institutions, including in the form of electronic applications in the framework of establishing the system of "electronic government".

Currently, upon the decision of the Lower House of Parliament a new method of national legal practice was introduced - conducting a legal experiment. During 2013 in two regions of the country the legal experiment on testing of the developed draft law "On the openness of government and management" is being implemented.

Tenth. Uzbekistan attaches great importance to further improving the institutional, material and technical conditions for the free and active participation of citizens and civil society in addressing the major problems of socio-economic development and social construction. Between 2008 and 2013 more than 1000 NGOs and other institutions of civil society received financial support from the state budget in the amount of 30 billion soums in the form of government subsidies, social contracts and grants.

The utmost attention is given to encouraging the participation of civil society in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. In Tashkent on 5-6 September 2013 an international conference was held entitled "The participation of non-governmental organizations in the implementation of tasks to achieve the Millennium Development Goals : the experience of Uzbekistan".

In order to improve the organizational framework of the activities of the citizens' self-governing bodies 2 laws in new edition were adopted: "On the bodies of self-government" and "On the Election of the chairman (aksakal) of citizens meetings and his advisers."

Mr. Chairman,

Uzbekistan will continuously implement all international commitments and will further support all initiatives of the United Nations concerning the observance and protection of human rights and freedoms.

Uzbekistan will continue to improve institutional arrangements for the implementation of the personal, political, economic, social and cultural rights. Uzbekistan is dedicated to further implementation of international human rights standards in legislation and practice in line with the recommendations of the HRC.

We are open to further cooperation and collaboration with international organizations on human rights issues.

Thank you for your attention.