

The National Action Plan on Gender Equality presented



UNFPA Photo: Mr. Amandurdy Arabov, Director of the National Institute of Democracy and Human Rights, presents his opening statement.

Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, 10 April 2015 – “Achieving the goals and objectives of the National Action Plan will bring positive changes in women’s rights and, in many respects will assist the Government of Turkmenistan in meeting its international obligations to ensure the equal rights of men and women,” said Mr. Amandurdy Arabov, Director of the National Institute of Democracy and Human Rights under the President of Turkmenistan, as this week the Government presented the new National Action Plan (NAP) on Gender Equality in Turkmenistan for the period 2015-2020.

The National Institute of Democracy and Human Rights presented the Action Plan in Ashgabat, together with the Inter-ministerial Commission on Treaty Bodies of Turkmenistan and UNFPA, United Nations Population Fund.

The National Action Plan was approved in the beginning of this year by the Government of Turkmenistan. The Plan, developed with support of UNFPA, will serve as an instrument for advancement of gender equality and gender mainstreaming in all spheres of life.

“Gender equality is a human right and a precondition for sustainable development, and we’re pleased that Turkmenistan gives such importance to this issue,” said Ms. Jacinta Barrins, UN Resident Coordinator and UNFPA Representative in Turkmenistan, in her opening speech.

Ms. Barrins congratulated the Government on the development and approval of the National Action Plan and noted the importance for all involved sides to come together to support the mechanisms of going forward in implementing the Action Plan, including establishing deliverables, indicators and timeline. Ms. Jacinta Barrins assured the Government of Turkmenistan that all UN agencies will stand ready to support the implementation of different aspects of the plan.

Following Ms. Barrins’ opening statement, Ms. Shemshat Atajanova, Head of the Unit of the National Institute of Democracy and Human Rights, presented the key actions outlined in the National Action Plan. Ms. Atajanova gave an outline of the national and international legislative framework to address and guide the gender equality policy in the country. She noted that Turkmenistan has been signatory to seven international treaties, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which was ratified in 1996, along with its Optional Protocol later in 2009.



UNFPA Photo: Presentation of the National Action Plan on Gender Equality.

In her presentation, Ms. Atajanova said that Turkmenistan has submitted four periodic reports to the CEDAW Committee and one of the concluding observations was the creation of a national instrument and mechanism to implement a successful gender equality policy.

The National Action Plan was developed by the Working group of the Inter-ministerial Commission on Treaty Bodies of Turkmenistan under the leadership role of the National Institute of Democracy and Human Rights and with support of the UNFPA international consultants. The plan will address issues such as further engendering the legislation of Turkmenistan, the elimination of discrimination against women, promotion of equal opportunities for women, equal access to quality education, health care and the labor market, as well as the fulfillment of international treaty obligations.

It's noteworthy that the plan also outlines the actions for elimination of violence against women, which for the first time will help address the issue of domestic violence in Turkmenistan. In light of this, the National Institute of Democracy and Human Rights with UNFPA technical support will conduct a sample survey on domestic violence. The results of the survey will be analyzed and provide evidence-based data to identify the next steps forward.

Members of the Inter-ministerial Commission on Treaty Bodies of Turkmenistan followed the presentation of Ms. Atajanova and provided more details on the way forward in different areas of the National Action Plan.

Ms. Bahar Agayeva, Head of the Medical Statistics Department of the Ministry of Health and Medical Industry of Turkmenistan, gave a detailed overview of the actions that have already been taken and will be implemented, within the framework of the NAP, to respond to the concluding observations in the area of ensuring access of women and girls to healthcare services, including reproductive health.

Representative of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection Ms. Selvi Sysoeva presented the areas related to women in labour market. She highlighted the key actions that the Government continues to undertake in response to CEDAW and other Conventions in the area of labour, including the review of the legislation, creation of new job opportunities for women, provision of professional development and creation of favorable conditions for creation of small businesses for women, with special focus on rural and vulnerable women.



UNFPA Photo: Presentation of different aspects of the National Action Plan on Gender Equality.

Ms. Hallygul Tuvakova, representative of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, spoke about the aspects of the CEDAW concluding observations and the National Action Plan that address women in detention. Key areas of actions include cooperation with international partners to provide technical and advisory assistance in the development of guidelines on the procedures of custody of prisoners, as well as improvement of the system of filing and administration of complaints.

Ms. Bahar Serdarova, representative of the Women's Union of Turkmenistan briefed on the activities and plans in the area of raising awareness of population at large on the issues of gender equality through information campaigns, establishment of hotlines, as well as close partnership with mass media.

UNFPA Assistant Representative Ms. Bayramgul Garabayeva concluded the series of presentations by giving an overview of the role of UNFPA in development of the National Action Plan on Gender Equality. Ms. Garabayeva started her presentation by quoting UNFPA Executive

Director Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin, “When women and adolescent girls have equal rights and opportunities, their families, communities and nations prosper.”

Ms. Garabayeva said that for more than 30 years UNFPA globally has advocated for women and girls, promoting legal and policy reforms and gender-sensitive data collection, and supporting initiatives that improve women's health and expand their choices in life.

She noted that UNFPA has worked with the Government of Turkmenistan on advancing the gender equality, and most recently has supported in the development of NAP through extensive advocacy efforts and technical assistance. Ms. Garabayeva assured the Government of Turkmenistan that UNFPA is ready to support in implementation of the aspects of the National Action Plan that are within the UN agency's expertise, including the areas of engendering the legislation, gender-based violence, targeting the stereotypes, gender mainstreaming of the education, reproductive health and rights, gender-sensitive data collection and analysis, and creation of the monitoring and evaluation mechanism for the Action Plan.

In conclusion, Mr. Amandurdy Arabov, Director of the National Institute of Democracy and Human Rights under the President of Turkmenistan, thanked all the participants for active involvement in development and implementation of the National Action Plan.

Ms. Jacinta Barrins once again congratulated the Government of Turkmenistan and invited the national partners, UN agencies and development partners to support the Government in successful realization of the Action Plan.

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