
High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. Building back better and advancing the SDGs

Statement of the Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Protection of Population of the Republic of Azerbaijan, **Mr. Anar Karimov**, 05 July 2022

TOPIC: *“Azerbaijan’s recovery efforts for a sustainable, resilient and inclusive recovery from pandemic and for achieving the 2030 Agenda, including aspects such as social protection measures and labour market programs.”*

Dear Secretary-General, ladies and gentlemen!

- ❖ I would like to take this opportunity to greet the participants of the High-Level Political Forum. I am honored to take part in this esteemed platform to share Azerbaijani experience on a sustainable and inclusive recovery from the pandemic and for achieving the 2030 Agenda.
- ❖ Azerbaijan is among 12 countries around the globe and is the 1st in our region that has submitted its 3rd Voluntary National Review Report on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The country has recently entered a strategic phase in this new post-pandemic and post-conflict era.
- ❖ During the pandemic Azerbaijani Government’s focused on the following social policies:
 - ensuring effective and timely delivery of social support measures,
 - enabling access to convenient and transparent social security services,
 - applying innovative and digital solutions in the provision of social services,
 - strengthening social protection for low-income families, and
 - contributing to the global partnership for sustainable development, particularly to the global efforts in the fight against the pandemic.
- ❖ **These policies proved to be effective, resilient and inclusive recovery measures and could be kindly recommended to the esteemed participants.**
- ❖ To mitigate the COVID impact, the Government has adopted 10 programs, estimated at 2.7 billion US dollars, which is more than 6% of the country’s GDP.
- ❖ These programs were directed to most vulnerable groups in the field of employment, SME, healthcare, so they served not only as anti-crisis measures, but also as sustainable development programs.

- ❖ The state has taken several international initiatives to mobilize global efforts against the pandemic. It has proposed a resolution to ensure equal and universal access to vaccines at the UN General Assembly and the Human Rights Council on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement that was adopted last year.
- ❖ This March, Azerbaijan together with Ecuador initiated the resolution on the equitable and universal access to the COVID-19 vaccines that was unanimously adopted by the Human Rights Council at its 50th session.
- ❖ Azerbaijan has provided humanitarian and financial assistance to more than 30 countries to fight the pandemic. It also made a voluntary financial contribution in amount of \$10 million to the World Health Organization. In addition, Azerbaijan has provided \$ 7.5 million in bilateral assistance to 34 countries through the Islamic Development Bank, and a total of 270,000 doses of vaccines to 5 countries.
- ❖ Aligned with Azerbaijan's commitments under the 2030 Agenda, I would like to introduce to you a number of modern innovative solutions of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection.
- ❖ Modern social services centers, called "DOST centers", were established to contribute to the population's well-being, to strengthen public attention to vulnerable groups by implementing innovative solutions, and to maximize citizens' satisfaction of social service delivery.
- ❖ The project currently provides 154 social services transparently and efficiently from a single platform with coverage of more than 2 mln. people (20% of population).
- ❖ Regarding SDGs promotion, DOST centers follow principles of universality, inclusivity, and accessibility in its operation. It supports gender equality in service delivery, implements various projects with focus on social protection and employment of women as well as promotes gender equality in its HR policy.
- ❖ Furthermore, to promote sustainable growth by ensuring the access to technologies and knowledge, as well as, to promote the rights of vulnerable groups, the Agency cooperates with local and international institutions.
- ❖ The quality of interconnected social services is also improved and modernized through a centralized electronic information system - a unified electronic social register.

- ❖ The new Labor and Employment electronic system was launched in May 2022 to address all labor and employment issues through a single operational platform. This innovative system provides full automation of employment services, new opportunities for regulating labor relations, preventing informal employment, developing the labor market and expanding employment opportunities. So soon there will be no need for paper labour contract, HR can do e-processing.
- ❖ Centralized Information System automates the collection and processing of information on labor, employment, social protection and social security. By now, 22 social services have been integrated into e-Government platform. For recent years, 55 mln. applications, 3 mln. persons obtained electronic documents with QR codes.
- ❖ Innovation of services has led to creation of Proactive Mechanism in delivery of social services that excludes in-person application and hard copy documentation. Currently, 110 out of 175 social services is offered electronically and 48 are offered proactively.
- ❖ This proactive mechanism prevents corruption cases and malpractice. This sustainable model of automatic identification and provision of social rights helps to reduce waste and risk, eliminates red tape cases, delays, and biased approach to applications.
- ❖ Aprx. 400 thousands persons have received their payments in proactive manner – no need for application by any beneficiary. Eligibility for specific social benefits is automatically identified by the electronic system. The collection of hard-copy information is not required. The service recipient is notified by automatically generated text message. Such recipient-centered approach promotes social security, solidarity, equality, and a better quality of life for the end-users by cooperation between respective government agencies that ensures secure and efficient data exchange.
- ❖ Over the last 6 years, Azerbaijan has demonstrated its firm commitment towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. Scoring 73.5 out of 100 points possible on the SDG achievement index, Azerbaijan ranks 50th out of 163 countries in the 2022 Sustainable Development Report with the best result in the South Caucasus region.
- ❖ The Azerbaijani territories liberated in 2020 from occupation will undergo a complex innovative transformation into “green energy zones” and will be re-established based on ‘smart cities’ and ‘smart villages’ concept.
- ❖ As the world has faced unprecedented challenges, it is of utmost importance for all of us to overcome them together, so no one is left behind!