

As written

Address of Azerbaijan Women and Development Centre (AWDC)

Honourable Madame Chair!
Distinguished participants of the Forum!
Ladies and Gentlemen!

It's my great pleasure and honour to represent here my country and to introduce the achievements and obstacles of the implementation of the Cairo Plan of Action in Azerbaijan.

First of all I want to thank UNFPA and personally Ms. Nafis Sadik and all organizers of this very important conference that gives us a beautiful chance to appreciate the results of the implementation of Cairo Plan of Action all over the world and to identify: where are we, our successes and options, to learn the experience of different countries, regions and to choose the effective ways of the future development.

So, Azerbaijan is a New Independent Country from the former Soviet area with the population of 7,6 mln.

The situation of transition is severely aggravated here by over ten years of armenian aggression, so-called undeclared war with great damages: over 20 per cent of country territory is occupied, thousands from civil population were killed or captured as hostages, about million people had fled from annexed lands, being a heavy burden of the society.

A situation of cease-fire, neither war, nor peace is not the decision of the problem.

In my mind both countries need sustainable peace urgently in order to mobilize own natural and human resources for the sustainable development.

Meanwhile, a regime of cease-fire resulted in the stabilization of the political and economic situation in the country, in a tendency to reduce the poverty and unemployment.

The specificity of the current development processes in Azerbaijan is that NGOs are more and more involved into the development processes as the partners of the government, UN bodies and international NGOs. Azerbaijan Women and Development Centre, the first research centre in the country on gender and women issues, that is in consultative status with the UN ECOSOC, also the focal point of INSTRAW (UN Institute of Trainings

and Researches on Advancement of Women) is one of such kind of NGOs that is implementing the programs of UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNIFEM in urban and rural districts of the country.

These programs are based on the National Plans on women, youth, refugees, reproductive health and family planning issues, that were adopted during the last couple of years by the Government .

Census was provided with support of UNFPA and the results of analyses will help us in identification of the main concerns of the country sustainable development also the role and capacities of NGOs in their implementation.

Taking in account main topics that are discussed here I'll give you a short information on implementation of the RH and FP program.

This program is implemented from 1997 by UNFPA in collaboration with Ministry of Health and International NGO-Pathfinder International.

If before that, the main method of contraception practiced here was abortion, now the number of modern contraceptive users increased from 5-7 % up to 30-35% both in surveyed urban and rural districts.

But these are only for a few country urban and rural districts and only the first successful steps, that confirmed, yes, these issues and programs are applicable in Azerbaijan.

Now the doors are opened for expanding of combined efforts of medical and community based services.

But we face with the new tasks in order to promote and sustain achievements and efforts, to disseminate the RH and FP culture as far as to transfer them into habits, a demand of each couple as an element of their life and normal way of things.

To reach these goals we are planning to strengthen advocacy campaign in order to:

- improve the quality of RI-I services covering all generations, both women and men;
- broaden the access to all new methods of contraception for as much people as possible.

What we need now urgently is:

- dissemination of knowledge through IEC materials in native language
- training a lot of CBS providers in each country district
- networking the medical and community based services through UN bodies, Ministry of Health, local and international NGOs

-participation in distribution of modern contraceptives
-monitoring and evaluation of the progress based on unified indicators.

To realize these actions, to enable vulnerable people including thousands of refugees/IDPs, families of war victims, unemployed and other needy people to gain a control over their lives we need the mobilization of the internal and external resources for the population, we need the new investments.

In conclusion I want to share with you some of my visions: first of all discussing the Cairo Plan of Action is often limited by RH and FP issues. And really, the last ones are from the most significant.

But on the eve of the new millenium it is high time to reapprciate the values to make also the new accents on policies and strategies.

And then the abortions, maternal and infant mortality rates, different diseases including numerous diseases of reproductive tract, STDs and AIDS will be reduced sharply, and mainly excluded from the practice, it means elderly, disabled people, victims of war and disasters etc. will be included.

Today this is our hope and dream.

And I address the heads of the governments, religious committees, all UN bodies: help the NGOs transfer these dreams into reality.

Thank you for your attention.

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