

*Siyasətdə və Dövlət Əhəmiyyətli Qərarların verilməsində
Qadın və Kişilərin Balanslaşdırılmış İştirakına Dair
Avropa Şurasının Nazirlər Kabinetinin Təvsiyələrinin
Rec 2003(3) Azərbaycan Respublikasında yerinə
yetirilməsinin monitorinqinin nəticələri haqqında*
HESABAT

REPORT

*on the monitoring of the implementation of (2003)3
Recommendations of the Committee of the Ministers
of the European Council on Balanced Participation of
Men and Women in the Process and Public Decision Making*

ОТЧЕТ

*о мониторинге выполнения в Азербайджанской
Республике Рекомендации 2003(3) Комитета
Министров Совета Европе о Сбалансированном
Участии Женщин и Мужчин в Процессе Принятия
Решений в Области Политики и Общественной Жизни*



Gender Bərabərliyi və Qadın Təşəbbüsləri İctimai Birliyi Avropa Şurası Nazirlər Komitəsinin üzv dövlətlər üçün nəzərdə tutulan 12 mart, 2003-cü ildə qəbul edilmiş *“Siyasətdə və Dövlət Əhəmiyyətli Qərarların Qəbul Edilməsində Qadın və Kişilərin Balanslaşdırılmış iştirakı”* Təvsiyə və İzahat Memorandumunun Azərbaycanda həyata keçirilməsinin monitorinqini aparmışdır. Bu monitorinqin nəticələri əsasında hazırkı hesabat təqdim edilir. Hesabat Gender Bərabərliyi və Qadın Təşəbbüsləri İctimai Birliyinin əməkdaşları Ülviyyə Məmmədova (layihənin direktoru), Nizami Heydərov (ekspert), Gülarə Əfəndiyeva (ekspert), Leyla Sayfutdinova (ekspert) və digərlərinin yaxından iştirakı nəticəsində hazırlanmışdır.

Monitorinq və hesabatın nəşri Açıq Açıq Cəmiyyət İnstitutu-Yardım Fondunun maliyyə dəstəyi ilə reallaşmışdır.

* * * * *

Public Union for Gender Equality and Women's Initiatives has realized monitoring of implementation of Recommendation Rec (2003) 3 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision making adopted on 12 March 2003 and explanatory memorandum in Azerbaijan. The results of this monitoring are presented in this Report. The report was prepared with close involvement of the colleagues of the Public Union for Gender Equality and Women's Initiatives – Ulviyya Mammadova (project director), Nizami Heydarov (expert), Gulara Afandiyeva (expert), Leyla Sayfutdinova (expert) and others.

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Общественное Объединение Гендерное Равенство и Женские Инициативы провело мониторинг выполнения в Азербайджане Рекомендации и меморандума разъяснений Комитета Министров Союза Европы предназначенных для государств-членов, принятых 12 марта 2003 года Rec 2003(3) о Сбалансированном Участии Женщин и Мужчин в Процессе Принятия Решений в Области Политики и Общественной Жизни. Данный отчет представлен согласно результатам этого мониторинга подготовленного с непосредственным участием коллег Общественного Объединения Гендерное Равенство и Женские Инициативы - Ульвия Мамедова (директор проекта), Низами Гейдаров (эксперт), Гюлара Ефендиева (эксперт), Лейла Сайфутдинова (эксперт) и другие.

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**Report on the monitoring of the implementation of
Recommendation Rec (2003) 3 of the Committee of Ministers of the
Council of Europe to Member States on balanced participation of
Women and Men in Political and Public Decision-making**

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Introduction

Gender equality is one of the main priorities of the development of democratic society and observance of human rights. The Republic of Azerbaijan recognizes the complete equality of men and women on legal level; however in practice both in Azerbaijan and in most countries of the world, there are differences in access to resources and power, as well as in the level of influence to social and political processes. In order to eliminate such negative happenings the international community has worked out a number of legal acts directed to increase the role of women in the society and to eliminate obstacles for their complete participation in public life. These documents include Convention on the Elimination of any form of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Beijing Convention, various regional and particularly European legal acts. One of the most important documents among these international acts is the 2003(3) Recommendations of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to the member countries on the balanced participation of men and women in the process of public and political decision making.

The recommendation passed by the Committee of the Ministers of the Council of Europe in March 2003 considers a number of measures directed to achieve a more balanced participation of men and women in the decision-making process (see details of these measures in section 1). Such measures include implementation of regular monitoring and control over the achievement of recommended indicators of gender balance in the field of decision making (points 42-48). The monitoring could be carried out either by government bodies or by various institutions of civil society. The present report represents the outcome of such a monitoring carried out by the Public Union of "Gender Equality and Women's Initiatives". The purpose of the monitoring and of the present report is the analysis of the activities carried out by the government in the field of balanced participation of men and women in public and political decision making, following its joining to the Recommendation as well as informing the public about the current condition of and achievements in this field.

The report consists of four sections. The first part briefly introduces characteristics of gender equality in Azerbaijan, as well as information about gender legislation accepted in the country and the present Recommendation. The second part includes quantitative analysis of the participation of men and women in bodies making decisions of political and public importance; on different levels of state authority, from municipalities to the Cabinet of Ministers and the Parliament. This section is based on publicly available information presented in print media and the Internet. The third section introduces the analysis of a small sociological research carried out by the specialists of the Public Union "Gender Equality and Women's Initiatives". The first part of this research consists of a sociological survey carried out in November 2008 by the trainers of the Union in three regions of the southern region of Azerbaijan: Neftchala, Kurdamir and Lankaran. The second part of the research includes the results of internet-survey by women-leaders in the field of political and civil society carried out in April and May of 2009. The fourth, and final section of the report, presents the main conclusions of the implemented monitoring and recommendations on the improvement of indicators for the balanced participation of men and women in the decision-making process.

CHAPTER ONE

Institutional and legal basis of gender equality in the Republic of Azerbaijan

1.1 Legislative regulation of gender relations

There is no specific government body in Azerbaijan to deal with gender equality problems. There is only one government committee on issues of women politics. This is the State Committee on the Problems of Women, Children and Family, established in 2006 on the basis of the State Committee on Women's Problems in force from 1998 to 2006. As the name indicates the women problems are viewed in the context of family, which affirms the traditional social division of labor again that the place of women is at home with her family. Such a situation can hardly be considered acceptable for a country that internationally recognizes the importance of gender politics.

The terms considering the equality of men and women in Azerbaijan are reflected in the Constitution of Azerbaijan Republic accepted in 1995 (article 25-1), as well as in other general legislative acts (Civil Code, Family Code, Labor Code, etc.). Besides these general legislative acts, there are also specific acts that regulate the position of men and women. The Decree on the "Measures to Improve the Role of Women" and the Decree on the "Establishment of Committee on Women's Problems" were issued on January 14, 1998; Decree No 289 on the "Implementation of Women's Politics" was issued on March 6, 2000 which is about integrating women's problems as special direction of state policy. The primary legislative act regulating the position of men and women in Azerbaijan is the Law on the Provision of Gender Equality accepted by the Parliament and approved by the President on October 10, 2006. Alongside these national documents, Azerbaijan has also joined and applied a number of international legislative acts directed at the establishment of gender equality. These acts include the Convention on the Elimination of Any Form of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on Political Rights of Women, a number of conventions by World Labor Organization (WLO) (NO 45 on "Inclusion of women labor into underground activities in all types of mines, No 100 on the "equal reward of men and women for work of equal value", No 103 on the "protection of maternity", No 111 on the "discrimination in the fields of labor and employment"), the European Social Charter, and others.

In order to provide the effective implementation of the previously mentioned national and international legislative acts, Azerbaijan also has applied 5-year national action plans on issues related to women's politics. The first of such plans (National action plan on development of women of Azerbaijan Republic) was accepted by the State Committee on Women's Issues in 1999 and was considered for years 2000-2005. This plan, developed in accordance with the regulations of Convention on elimination of any kind of discrimination against women and Beijing Action Platform, considered various measures in gender politics on 12 strategic fields: economics, education, health, violence against women, women problems in armed conflicts, problems of women-refugees and IDPs, human rights, mass media, environment, problems of female teenagers, participation of women in decision making, and development of relations with international women's organizations. For the realization of the National Action Plan, an interdepartmental council was established that included representatives of ministries, agencies and NGOs dealing with the relevant issues on 12 strategic fields. During this period, the project of the Law on Gender Equality was developed, gender expertise of national legislation and gender segregation of statistical data were begun, and events attempting to increase the interest

of criminal-legal bodies toward the problem of violations against women, both in the family and on the level of international human trafficking, were held.¹

The next national action plan, to cover years 2007 through 2011, was accepted by State Committee on Problems of Family, Women and Children. This plan too takes its basis from the previously mentioned convention. However, the specifics of the second National Action Plan, in regards to the scope of activity of the new committee, primarily focus on the problems of family, particularly to the position of women in the family. In the field of gender, this Action Plan considers measures for the elimination of judicial and economic inequality of men and women, social protection of women, the struggle against violations to women, and gender education. At present, work on the execution of the mentioned National Action Plan is still ongoing.

1.2 Recommendation (2003)3 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to member-states on the balanced participation of men and women in the process of political and public decision making

Recommendation (2003)3 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to member-states on the balanced participation of men and women in the process of political and public decision making is among the regional international legislative acts on the achievement of gender equality that Azerbaijan has joined. As the name of the given act states it is of voluntary, rather than compulsory nature; however it could be used as a tool of state gender politics. The recommendation was accepted on March 12, 2003 within 831st meeting of the Speakers of the Ministries. The urgency of accepting this recommendation was related to the inconsistency between the formal gender equality and the actual unequal access of men and women to economic, social and cultural resources observed in most of the member countries of the Council of Europe. The Committee of the Ministers of the Council of Europe assumes that the most serious obstacle for achieving the real equality is the settled traditional ideas about the division of the social roles between the two genders. Such ideas are especially deeply rooted in the field of political and public decision making, which is traditionally considered a male field of activity. This is the reason why achieving the balanced participation of men and women in the process of political and public decision making is particularly important for achieving the real gender equality. Based on the belief that gender equality in general and balanced participation of men and women in decision making process in particular serve as inseparable parts of human rights, as a condition for the democratic development of the society, and a factor for improving the living quality, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe recommends the member countries undertake the achievement of such a balanced participation. The recommendation states 40% representation from each gender as the minimum threshold of the balanced participation of men and women in public and political decision making process.

The Recommendation presents a total of eight tasks, the fulfillment of which will contribute to more balanced participation of men and women in the process of decision making. These tasks include equal provision of civil and political rights, personal use of right to vote (banning the practice of family voting), stimulation of women to take an active part in public life, inclusion of amendments to legislation, aimed at balanced representation of women in the decision making process, a provision of control over the results of the implemented policy.

¹ United second and third periodical report submitted by the government of Azerbaijan Republic in relation to article 18 of the Convention on the elimination of any type of discrimination against women. (<http://www.gender-az.org/Files/N0527214.pdf>)

In the framework of the monitoring over implementation of the Recommendations, Azerbaijan participates in surveys on Gender-segregation statistics on participation of women and men in the process of decision making held by Leading Committee of the Council of Europe on equality between women and men.

CHAPTER TWO

Participation of men and women in decision making process

Point 44 of the Recommendation, which sets forth the rules for monitoring and control over its implementation, considers a number of indicators for the balanced representation of men and women in the field of decision making. These indicators include the ratio of men and women in legislative, executive and judicial bodies at the state and regional level, as well as in the local self-governance bodies (municipalities) and in political parties. In addition, the recommendation considers the participation of men and women in the sphere of entrepreneurship. Let's review the condition of each of these indicators existing in Azerbaijan.

I. Percentage ratio of men and women elected to the Parliament (supranational/national/federal/regional) and to the local self-governance bodies from each political party:

The parliament of Azerbaijan (Milli Majlis) being the main legislative body of the country is elected based on the majority vote every five years. The most recent Parliamentary elections were held in 2005 and the term of office of this convocation will last till 2010.

15 female-members and 110 male-members were elected to the parliament during the elections. However, Lala Shovkat Hajiyeva, one of the elected female MPs, rejected from the participation in the work of the Parliament due to the protest against the results of the elections. As the result, at present women represent only 14 of 125 members of the Parliament (11.2%).

The position of the chairman of the Parliament is occupied by a male. The position of the vice president in the acting parliament is occupied by a female.

There are 12 permanent committees acting in the Parliament: on issues related to Legal Politics and State Organization, Security and Defense, Economic Policy issues, Natural Resources, Power Engineering and Ecology, Agrarian Policy, Regional issues, Scientific and Educational issues, Cultural issues, Human Rights, and International and Interparliamentary Relations. The chairman of only one of these committees, that on human rights, is a woman (8.3%).

Regional Legislative Bodies

The Nakhchivan Republic is the only region in the Republic of Azerbaijan that has its own parliament with 45 members. There is only one woman in the Parliament of The Nakhchivan Republic (2%).

Local self-governance bodies (municipalities)

20,346 municipality members were elected during the municipality elections of December 17, 2004. Out of these 19,516 (95.9%) are males and 830 (4.1%) are females.² Municipality elections were held on October 6, 2006. 4,576 candidates took part in the elections, out of which 1,930 municipality members were elected. 65 (3.37%) of the reelected members were women³. Such a situation is related to the low level of participation of women in elections: thus, according to the outcomes of civil monitoring of municipality elections of 2004 76.2% males and 23.8% females participated⁴. The monitoring states that women have considerably less interest towards municipality elections than to the parliamentary elections and demonstrate very low activity during municipality elections⁵. “However, even if a woman is elected to a municipality, she cannot get to a leading position. This is especially true today, when it’s the municipalities that distribute and sell lands that women are simply banned to hold those positions”, confirms the deputy chairman of the parliamentary commission on local self-governance during 2000-2005.⁶

II. Percentage ratio of men and women elected from each political party to the parliament (supranational/national) compared to the percentage ratio of women-candidates and men-candidates, promoted from each political party (success coefficient);

Azerbaijan has a majority vote system of election, according to which members of the Parliament are elected according to single member constituency, rather than party lists. Parties can only promote the candidates on single member constituency, alongside with other participants of the election process. As applied to the gender distribution of MP slots it means that the membership in political parties has less influence on the election of women MPs than in the countries which have proportional or mixed election systems. Alongside with this, the party affiliation of MP candidates serve as the indicator of the role of women in the overall political process in Azerbaijan, whereas the election of woman members of different parties reflects their participation in the process of political decision making to a certain degree, both in the parties internally and in the legislative branch of the power in general.

2004 (90.03%) male and 223 (9.97%) female Parliamentary candidates submitted documents for registration to the Central Election Commission during the recent election campaign.⁷ The total number of officially balloting male candidates was 1372 and female candidates 167 (10.85%) by November 6, 2005, i.e. the election day, according to the CEC information. According to E.

² Data provided by the Information Center of the Central Election Commission of the Azerbaijan Republic <http://www.cec.gov.az/en/3municipal2004/report/cins.htm>

³ <http://www.infocenter.gov.az/v3/statistika/en.xls>

⁴ www.gender-az.org/politics.report/stamp/

⁵ Alternative report. Monitoring on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of any kind of discrimination against women in Azerbaijan. Handwriting, page 12

⁶ Interview with S. Huseynzade, deputy chairman of the parliamentary commission on local self-governance in 2000-2005. Citing on alternative report. Monitoring on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of any kind of discrimination against women in Azerbaijan. Handwriting.

⁷ E. Gasimova. Gender picture of parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan, Baku. 2005, p.4

Gasimova, a famous gender expert in Azerbaijan, such a low political activeness results both from the existing stereotype that the traditional society is not ready to accept women as statesman and objective reality of the political life; the election campaign requires considerable financial resources that women do not possess⁸.

Out of 166 women participating in elections as MP candidates, 68 were members of political parties. At the same time, only 15 women from 47 parties participating in elections put forth their candidacy:

Table 1. MP candidates by parties

<i>Party name</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
Democratic Party of Azerbaijan	29	1
Popular Front Party of Azerbaijan	47	3
Democratic Reforms Party of Azerbaijan	12	1
Communist Party of Azerbaijan	14	2
Liberal Party of Azerbaijan	50	6
National Independence Party of Azerbaijan	49	2
Social Welfare Party of Azerbaijan	15	1
Hope Party of Azerbaijan	24	3
National Congress Party	4	1
“Modern Musavat” Party	14	2
“Musavat” Party	43	2
“Vahdat” Party	13	2
Civil Unity Party	2	1
Civil Solidarity Party	18	2
“Yeni Azerbaijan” Party	388	39
Total		

Source: No 28 Gender picture of parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan⁹.

As seen from the above table, the number of women, even in those parties that have put forward women-candidates, is extremely low. “Yeni Azerbaijan” Party promoted the greatest number of women, however even in its case the share of women made up 9% of the total number of candidates from this party. Percentage-wise the biggest share of women among candidates belongs to Civil Unity party where one of the two candidates is a woman. In average the share of women in the parties that have put forward both male and female candidates is 8.6% (68 out of 790).

The elected women-MPs represent the members of only two parties: “Yeni Azerbaijan” (5 candidates) and “Musavat” (1 candidate). One more woman candidate of Liberal Party was elected, however she later rejected from MP mandate. The remaining 8 women-MPs are independent.

⁸ E. Gasimova. Gender picture of parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan, Baku. 2005, p.4

⁹ http://www.gender-az.org/index.shtml?id_doc=658

Table 2. Gender and party affiliation of the elected MPs

<i>Party affiliation</i>	<i>males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>total</i>	<i>males %</i>	<i>females %</i>
Yeni Azerbaijan	56	5	61	91,8	8,2
Musavat	4	1	5	80	20
Popular Front Party	1	0	1	100	
Ana Vetən Party	2	0	2	100	
Civil Solidarity Party	3	0	3	100	
Hope Party	1	0	1	100	
Social Welfare Party	1	0	1	100	
Democratic reforms Party	1	0	1	100	
United party of popular front	1	0	1	100	
Boyuk Gurulush	1	0	1	100	
Civil Unity Party	1	0	1	100	
Party of Justice	1	0	1	100	
Independent	38	8	46	82,6	17,4
Total	111	14	125	88,8	11,2

The election of women as independent MPs is a lot lower than as party candidates: 8 out of 99 (8%) and 7 out of 68 (10.2%) accordingly.

Below are the success coefficients of women and men from two parties having elected MPs of both genders¹⁰:

Table 3. Success coefficient of men and women:

<i>Party</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>
New Azerbaijan Party	101	89
Musavat Party	84	455

¹⁰ Coefficient calculated according to the following formula:

$$\text{Success coefficient of women} = \frac{\text{Percentage of elected women}}{\text{Percentage of women-candidates}} * 100$$

$$\text{Success coefficient of men} = \frac{\text{Percentage of elected men}}{\text{Percentage of men-candidates}} * 100$$

See point 137 of the Attachment to the Recommendation

III. Percentage ratio of men and women in the composition of national delegations at appointed assemblies (for instance, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the Congress of local and regional authorities of Europe), as well as at international organizations and forums;

Azerbaijani parliamentarians participate in a couple of supranational legislative bodies: Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), NATO Parliamentary Assembly, Parliamentary Assembly of CIS member-states. The best situation in regards to the gender balance is found in the Azerbaijani delegation in PACE. This delegation consists of 12 people, out of which 3 (25%) are women. Azerbaijani delegation in NATO Parliamentary Assembly consists of 5 people with only one woman (20%). Delegation to the PA of CIS member-states consists of 18 people with 2 women only (11%).

IV. Percentage ratio of men and women in the composition of national, federal and regional governments
and

V. The number of men and women ministers/state secretaries in various fields of activity (ministry portfolios/ministry) of national, federal and regional governments of CIS member-states;

The most supreme executive body in Azerbaijan is the Cabinet of Ministers which includes the Prime Minister, his/her four deputies, ministers, chairmen of state committees and agencies. The total number of people in the Cabinet of Ministers is 39. Chairman of the State Committee on the Problems of Women, Children and Family is the only female member of the Cabinet of Ministers (2.5%).

The below table presents data on separate ministries:

Table 4. Gender distribution on ministries *

Name of the ministry	Minister		Deputy minister	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Ministry of Internal Affairs ¹¹	1	0	4	0
Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources ¹²	1	0	2	0
Ministry of Justice ¹³	1	0	3	0
Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Population	1	0	2	0
Ministry of emergency situations	1	0	5	0
Ministry of Youth and Sports ¹⁴	1	0	2	0

* The information acquired from the official internet pages of ministries (see references) and on the phone

¹¹ www.mia.gov.az

¹² www.eco.gov.az

¹³ www.justice.gov.az

¹⁴ www.mys.gov.az

Ministry of External Affairs ¹⁵	1	0	5	0
Ministry of Economic development ¹⁶	1	0	2	1
Agricultural Ministry	1	0	3	0
Ministry of Finance ¹⁷	1	0	2	0
Ministry of Culture and Tourism ¹⁸	1	0	2	1
Ministry of National Security ¹⁹	1	0	3	0
Ministry of Defense Industry ²⁰	1	0	2	0
Ministry of Defense	1	0	3	0
Ministry of Transportation ²¹	1	0	1	0
Ministry of Communication and Information Technologies ²²	1	0	2	0
Ministry of Health	1	0	2	1
Ministry of Industry and Power Engineering	1	0	1	0
Ministry of Education	1	0	2	1
Ministry of Taxes ²³	1	0	4	0
Total	20	0	52	4

Thus the dominance of males is clearly evident in the government of Azerbaijan Republic. There are no women on the level of ministries and even on the level of deputy ministers, the share of women makes up only 6%, which is more than 6 times below the level recommended by the Council of Europe.

There is only one woman in the composition of the government of Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic. She holds the position of vice-Prime minister.

¹⁵ mfa.gov.az

¹⁶ www.economy.gov.az

¹⁷ www.maliyye.gov.az/

¹⁸ www.mct.gov.az

¹⁹ www.mns.gov.az

²⁰ www.mdi.gov.az

²¹ www.mintrans.az

²² www.mincom.gov.az

²³ www.taxes.gov.az

VI. Percentage ratio of highly paid male and female officials and their distribution according to the fields of activities;

The most important body of the executive power in Azerbaijan is the Presidential Administration (President Apparatus). The Presidential Administration works out bills for submission to the Parliament, controls the implementation of laws and Presidential decrees, and ensures the interaction of the President with government bodies and public organizations. The general management of the administration is carried out by head of Administration. The Administration structure includes the following: four services (Service of the State Adviser on Economic Policy, Service of State Adviser on Minorities and Religious Structures, Service of Press Secretary and Service of Protocol), a Secretariat, Office for President's Work and thirteen departments. At present the heads of only two of these nineteen subdivisions are women – the Secretariat and Humanitarian Policy Department. Two subdivisions (Service of State Adviser on Minorities and Religious Structures and Office for Work) do not have heads. Thus the ratio of men and women holding leading positions in the Presidential Administration is 11.7%²⁴.

In addition, Azerbaijan has the position of the Authorized Person on Human Rights (Ombudsman). This position is held by a woman. There is the position of Ombudsman in Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic as well, which is also held by a woman.

VII. Percentage ratio of men and women judges in the Supreme Court;

The Supreme Court of the Azerbaijan Republic includes four collegiums: collegium on criminal issues, collegium on civil issues, collegium on economic disputes and collegium on military courts. Women are represented in two collegiums of the Supreme Court – the one on civil issues (3 out of 17, 17.6%) and the one on economic disputes (1 out of 4, 25%). Also the head of collegium on civil issues is a woman. The court management consists of four people and includes the chairman of the Supreme Court and chairmen of the first three collegiums. Thus the management of the Supreme Court includes only one woman – chairman of collegium on civil issues (25%)²⁵. However, in total the share of women in the composition of the Supreme Court is 12.5% (4 out of 32).

Another important juridical body in Azerbaijan is the Constitutional Court that manages the constitutional justice. The Constitutional Court consists of 9 courts. It has one woman in its composition who holds the position of deputy chairman (11%)²⁶.

VIII. Percentage ratio of men and women in the composition of bodies appointed by the government;

The important role of the executive power in the Republic of Azerbaijan belongs to the state committees. There are ten state committees in Azerbaijan:

State Committee on Religious Education
State Customs Committee

²⁴ www.prezident.az

²⁵ www.supremecourt.gov.az

²⁶ www.constcourt.gov.az

State Committee on City-building and Architecture
State Committee on Diaspora
State Statistics Committee
State Committee on Securities
State Committee on Standardization, Metrology and Patents
State Committee on Land and Cartography
State Committee on Problems Related to Family, Women and Children

There are two state funds in Azerbaijan – the Pension Fund and the Oil Fund, as well as the State Oil Company (SOCAR). Only one of these committees, the State Committee on Problems Related to Family, Women and Children, is headed by a woman (7.7%)²⁷.

A similar situation is found in large state companies. For instance, for the past ten years (following the conclusion of the oil contract) 75% of women were cut down from the average management level of the State Oil Company (SOCAR) and practically for 95% of the Caspian steam building.

IX. Percentage ratio of men and women in the composition of leading bodies of political parties at the national level;

47 political parties participated during the most recent parliamentary elections. Not all of these parties have the same weight in the society. On the other hand, information about the gender composition of the management is not available for all parties. Therefore with the present report we provide information related to only four political parties.

The Liberal Party is the only one in Azerbaijan headed by a woman. Unfortunately, information about the composition of the political council of the party was impossible to obtain.

“Yeni Azerbaijan” is the largest political party in Azerbaijan, having up to half a million members. The party management consists of a chairman, his two deputies and the Political Council. The posts of chairman and his deputies are held by males, however there are women in the composition of the Political Council – twelve out of ninety, which makes 13.3%.

“Musavat”, the oldest among the political parties, has a management consisting of a head, deputies and a divan with 23 members. The head and the deputies are males, whereas there are two women (9%) in the divan. There is speculation that a couple of years ago this party tried to introduce gender allocation into the process of formation of governing bodies²⁸. The quota for the participation of women is set at 20%, which is still only half of the 40% threshold proposed by the Recommendation. However, despite this measure, the real participation of women in the party management did not reach their own 20% standard.

Democratic Reforms party too has male chairman and deputy, however women are represented in the political council of the party – two out of eleven people (18%).

In general conclusion is that, even in the political parties of Azerbaijan one can observe low participation of women in decision making process. “Initiatives and programs directed to the enlargement of the participation of women in making important decisions are halted; awareness

²⁷ Based on the materials of the official portal www.azerbaijan.az

²⁸ Kasumova, E. Analysis of the Democratization process in Azerbaijan: a gender Perspective. Baku, 2007.

and advocacy on occupation of government posts by women are not sufficiently carried out. The number of women holding key management positions is not enough for providing serious political influence”²⁹.

X. Percentage ratio of men and women members in the unions of entrepreneurs, professional unions and syndicates, as well as the percentage ratio of men and women in the composition of the governing bodies at the national level

The participation of women in leading positions in the field of entrepreneurship too is very low. For instance, out of 3,500 members in the Confederation of the Organizations of Entrepreneurs in Azerbaijan, 90% are men³⁰. Such a situation is related to the general low activity of women in the business sphere. Thus, according to the information provided by the State Committee on Issues related to Family, Women and Children, only 3% out of 69% of business women have their own businesses³¹. Expert assessment shows that only about 7-8% of entrepreneurs in the country are women.³²

The Confederation of the Labor Unions of Azerbaijan, which includes 27 branch unions and has 1.2 million members, membership is 52% male and 48% female. However, the situation is different in the governing bodies and the number of women is considerably low: 72% male and 28% female. Nevertheless, it is worthwhile mentioning that in general, the situation in labor unions is much better than in other organizations in the country.

Such a low participation of women in the management of entrepreneurial organizations and labor unions can be explained by the situation in the sphere of economic activity itself. “There are no single woman on the board of directors of the International Bank of Azerbaijan”, which is the largest in the country. The same situation can be found in the board of directors of Unibank and Azeri Leasing, the largest leasing companies. For the seven years of my employment with the credit-analytical department I witnessed only one case when the business plan of a woman was approved. Though the International Bank of Azerbaijan provides business credits with the minimum amount of USD 40,000, women usually do not possess such funds”³³.

The legislative base of business development in Azerbaijan, as well as that of woman entrepreneurship, allows women to become full members in the entrepreneurial sphere, though not providing any preferential terms for their activity. Despite the presence of objective

²⁹ Interview with Sevinj Huseynova, head of woman section of Musavat party, quote on “Alternative report. Monitoring on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all types of discrimination against women in Azerbaijan”. Handwriting

³⁰ Telephone interview with head of the Confederation of Organizations of Entrepreneurs in Azerbaijan, April 20, 2009.

³¹ Report of the State Committee on Women, Baku, 2005, p.5

³² “Women Entrepreneurs”. International Labour Organization. National Confederation of Entrepreneurs (Employers) Organization of Azerbaijan Republic. 2004. p.27

³³ Interview with K. Huseynova, head of credit-analytical department of the International Bank of Azerbaijan (IBA) Assessment BAS EBRD TAM/BAS. Development of Consulting Services for Azeri Business Women. 2006. Baku . p. 32

preconditions for the development of woman entrepreneurship in Azerbaijan, together with a nondiscriminating legislation, women still face problems when dealing with entrepreneurship.

There is also a huge difference between men and women in property ownership. According to the research carried out within the ILO project in Azerbaijan men are ahead of women in owning property by almost 90%³⁴. It's particularly true in the Central region, where the number of women who can pawn for getting loan is half that of men – this can be confirmed by 56% of women and 32.9% of men. The absence of property means fewer opportunities for obtaining loans. Certificates or deeds of purchase (land, house) are lacking for -33.9% women and 16.8% men³⁵. for a number of reasons, including the incorrect actions by the executive power.

CHAPTER THREE

Analysis of the outcomes of empirical sociological research

3.1 Outcomes of the sociological survey carried out within the monitoring in three southern regions of the Republic of Azerbaijan

A sociological survey was carried out in three southern regions of Azerbaijan, seeking to measure the perception of women, about the balanced participation of men and women in the process of political and public decision making. The survey was deliberately conducted in the villages to check how deeply the concepts about gender equality have penetrated into the understanding of people living outside the capital city. The purpose of the survey was to reveal the status of women, as the least represented part of the population in the process of decision making. Accordingly, the selection was carried out with a certain purpose using the “snowballs” and elemental methods. A total of 113 women aged from 18 to 70 participated in the survey.

Social-economic status of the selection

70% of the surveyed women are married, 25.5% are single, and only 3.5% come from incomplete families (those who is either divorced or husband died). As for education, 53% have graduated or completed some higher education, 45% have graduated or completed some secondary education (including technical), and 2% have completed only primary education. Most of the surveyed women work: 57.5% are public officials, 3% work for non-governmental organizations, and 31% are employed in the services field. Only 7% of the surveyed women do not work and are housewives.

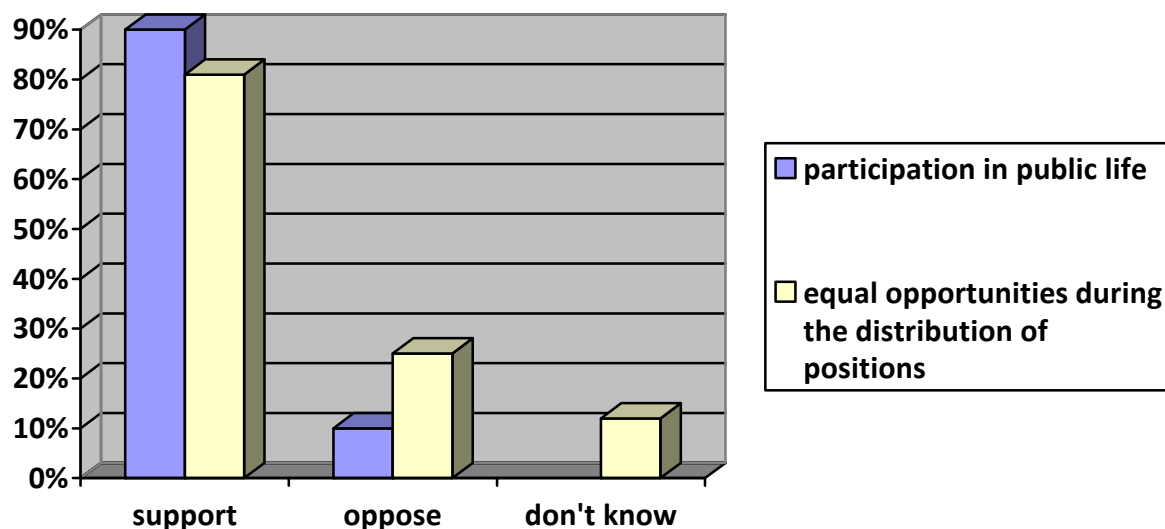
Analysis of the survey results

The questions of the sociological survey were primarily directed to reveal the attitude of women to the balanced participation in the process of decision making. 90% of the surveyed supported a

³⁴ Women Entrepreneurs. International Labour Organization. National Confederation of Entrepreneurs (Employers) Organization of Azerbaijan Republic. 2004. p.26

³⁵ Study of the outcomes and perspectives of future implementation of gender approach upon the execution of the agricultural program of the fund (project AZBA 42) and possibilities of interprogram interaction of OXFAM fund as a factor of elimination of gender discrimination in Azerbaijan

more active participation of women in public life, including business and politics. 62% of them recognized the importance of the balanced participation of men and women in governing bodies (13% were opposed and 25% had difficulty answering). 81% of the surveyed said they supported the idea that men and women should have equal opportunities to hold government positions (6% were opposed and 12% had difficulty answering).



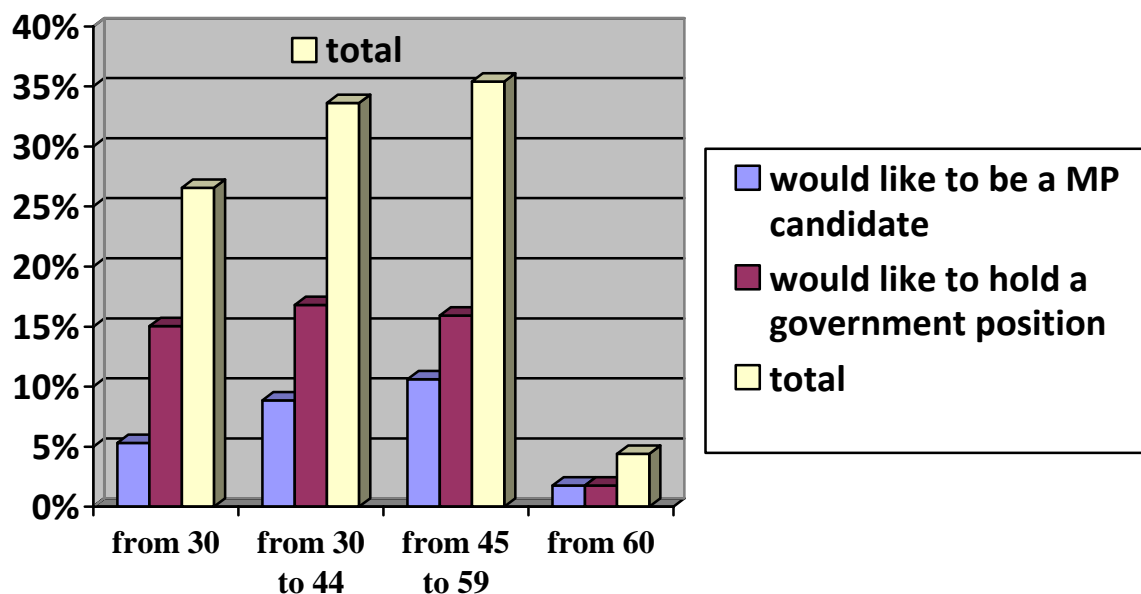
As a measure to enable a more balanced participation of men and women in the process of decision making, most of the surveyed supported the introduction of quotas (68%). In the second and third place stand the the opinions on enlightenment of women (61%) and the employees of legislative executive bodies (50%).

Thus, in total the majority of the surveyed women supported the need for a more active participation of women in the field of decision making. One would think this is a very positive outcome. However, despite the outcomes of the survey, the fact that the participation of women in the process of decision making is extremely low and not only on the level of central state power, but also on municipal level causes alarm. What is the reason of such a sharp discrepancy between opinion and the reality of the situation? The answer to this question becomes a bit more clear once we review the answers related to the direct, personal participation of the surveyed in the process of decision making. Thus, only 2.6% of the surveyed ever participated at elections as candidates (both parliamentary and municipality elections).

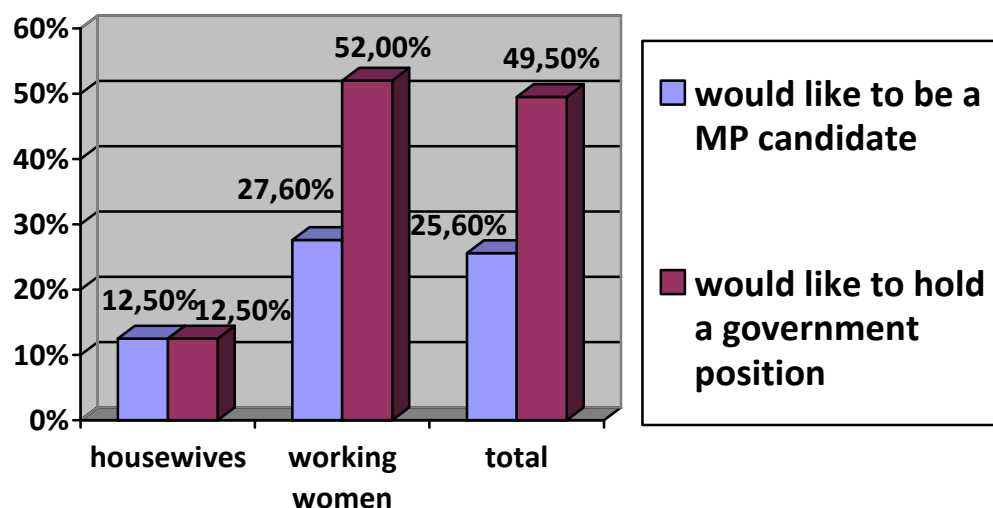
The question “Would you like to run as a candidate for MP?” was also answered negatively by most of the respondents: 73%. The views on holding government positions are much more positive: 49.5% would like to work in government bodies. However, even in this case there is not quite a majority of positive responses, as was the case with answers to most of the general questions.

The answers to questions about the reasons of willingness or unwillingness to be elected to or hold government positions are also interesting. Most of those who agreed to explain their reasons referred to the lack of education, skills and capabilities. Most women also noted the family responsibilities. Despite the fact that these questions are not sufficient from a statistical view point, they do provide some understanding about the real obstacles faced for involving women in political and state activity.

It's interesting that the willingness to be elected to the parliament or to hold a government position does not seem to have a direct correlation to age, as opinion changed very little for different age groups:



The differences related to social status are much more substantial. 27.6% of working women would like to run for a MP candidacy, whereas among the housewives the percentage is only 12.5%.



It is also interesting to note the difference in the number of women who would like to run as a candidate for MP and those who would like to hold government positions – the latter is almost twice as much as the former. 87% of those who would like to run for parliament would also like to hold a government position. Alongside that, 46% of those willing to work for government bodies would also like to run for the parliament. The outcomes of our survey are insufficient to explain this difference. However, it can be assumed that in the understanding of women there is a huge difference between the scope of work, authority, and potential return that come from these two types of activities. Besides that, it's clear that the understanding of “government

position” is greater than that of “MP” and includes not only high government positions, but also positions of low and average level, the access to which is more realistic for women.

Thus, there is a clear discrepancy observed in regards to the participation of women in public and political life. On one hand the surveyed said they supported a more active participation of women in the public and political spheres. On the other hand the great majority of the surveyed women are not involved in any public service, let alone political activity. This proves that the main obstacle in the participation of women in the decision making process does not come from stereotypes, but rather from the practical conditions that hinder full involvement into the political process. The outcomes of our research state that all these obstacles are primarily linked to the lack of knowledge and load of house work. Therefore, the measures for the involvement of women into political life should be directed to the solution of these two problems in the first place – providing women with education on one hand and releasing them from house work on the other.

3.2 Outcomes of an internet survey of female leaders

Besides the sociological survey in the regions of Azerbaijan, the specialists of the Union also carried out an internet survey of female leaders. Ten people took part in the survey: out of them five work in politics and the remaining five are leaders of civil society and experts on gender issues.

In total, all female leaders state that there is unequal participation of women in the process of decision making. However, the view points in regards to the reason of this inequality differ. There is an idea that the main reason for the unequal participation of women comes from the fact that the existing political system is not democratic. This is the opinion of female politicians belonging to the opposition parties. Latafat Malikova, deputy chairman of the Kurdamir division of “Musavat” party thinks that due to non-democratic elections, the government has the opportunity to appoint required people, both men and women, to the elected positions. Moreover, according to Malikova there is no discrimination directly against women: “90% of women do not want to hold governing positions themselves and men can skillfully take advantage of it”. It means that inequality does exist, but it does not come from discriminatory practices against women, but rather from general undemocratic situation in conjunction with the unwillingness of women to hold leading positions.

However, this point of view is exceptional. The majority of the women leaders think that discrimination and inequality do exist. As reasons for the existing inequality they also point to corruption and nepotism (A. Abdullayeva, head of National Committee of Helsinki Civil Assembly).

However, more often the reason for discrimination is considered the existing stereotypes and patriarchal values, envy of men towards women, as well as women’s overload with housework and family duties, which prevent them from sparing time and strength for public and political activity.

In addition, there is an opinion that inequality is related to the lack of knowledge and education of women as well.

Measures directed to the change of existing stereotypes, as well as understanding of women themselves, were named as important measures for the elimination of discrimination against

women in the field of decision making. As noted by all the respondents, such a change is possible through enlightenment. Another measure considered effective by most of the surveyed is the assignment of quotas and the introduction of more committed state politics. Besides these two measures three of the respondents (M. Vazir, D. Naghiyeva and M. Omarova) also stated the need to lighten the burden of house and family work.

Besides the questions directed to discover the opinion of women-leaders about the existing situation on gender equality, we also asked a couple of questions about the personal experience of the respondents. It's interesting that most of the surveyed female leaders do not personally experience any gender discrimination and say they have friendly relations and enjoy equal rights with their male colleagues. This reply greatly contradicts the opinion of almost all respondents on the existence gender discrimination and inequality. It turns out that gender discrimination is not directed to all women but that there are some who can escape it. In other words, the existing discriminatory practices are directed towards women who do not possess sufficiently high level of education and knowledge. It is, therefore, the female professionals who have the same knowledge and education, as male peers, who experience the least impact of negative stereotyping.

Most of the female leaders also note that their families support their political and public activity. Only three of the surveyed women stated that they had to overcome the resistance of their families. If we compare this information with the outcomes of the survey carried out in the Southern region, where most of the women said their family duties do not allow them to deal with politics, we can conclude that family support is a main factor for achieving success in public and political activity. This factor is directly related to the existing stereotypes and traditional perception about the role of women in the society.

CHAPTER FOUR

Conclusions and recommendations

4.1 Conclusions

The most evident conclusion of the carried out monitoring is that at present the Republic of Azerbaijan is far away from the level of balanced participation of men and women in the field of decision making proposed by the Recommendation. None of the branches of power in Azerbaijan has the gender balance recommended by the Committee of the Ministers of the Council of Europe. Under current situation, the best figures are found in national delegations at selected assemblies and in judicial power – 25% at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and 25% at the management of the Supreme Court.

The most alarming scenario is that, as a rule the higher the level of power, the lower the participation of women in it. Women, though in very small numbers, can be found to hold positions as heads of departments in the Presidential Administration and as chairmen of state committees, MPs and members of parliamentary delegations. However, there are no female ministers, there is only one woman in the management of parliamentary commissions, and all parliamentary delegations are headed by men.

Another dangerous tendency is the distribution of labor between men and women inside the government bodies. For instance there are absolutely no women in the power structures within

the field of foreign policy and finance. “Female” spheres include the problems of women, human rights, humanitarian politics, culture, and civil legal procedures.

These dangerous tendencies are confirmed on the other hand with the wide-spread public notions and standards of behavior. As the conducted sociological research showed the public notion about formal gender equality, equal participation of men and women in public life and political process co-existed with traditional norms of life, where house and family remain the preferential female spheres. Such a duality in the thinking and behavior of people does not contribute to the achievement of real balanced participation of men and women both in the public life in general and in the process of political decision making, in particular.

Thus, it can be noted that despite the adoption of gender legislation and judicial security for the equality between men and women, achievement of real outcomes requires the application of more active and effective measures directed at changing things both on the level of state politics and that of civil society. The following section includes a number of recommendations.

4.2 Recommendations

- **Improvement of the economic condition of women**

The problems of balanced participation of men and women in the process of decision making cannot be solved in isolation; rather their relation to other problems of gender inequality should be taken into account as well. In particular, it's the economic inequality that has a substantial impact on the political status of women. Most of the surveyed women pointed to insufficient economic means, while explaining their unwillingness to run for Parliament. The issue is not only general economic condition, but also access to quite large financial resources necessary for a successful election campaign. Women, whose role in the business world is limited, often do not possess such opportunities. Therefore the improvement of the economic condition of women and elimination of inequality in economic life will have a positive impact on the participation of women in political process. In order to improve the economic condition of women, the latter should be provided with opportunities for professional education, the stimulated development of female entrepreneurship, and programs on microfinancing and bank loans.

- **Education**

Besides economics, it's necessary to pay attention to the education of women as well. Most of the women surveyed during our research stated that the lack of education is a major obstacle for the equal participation of women in public and political processes. Most of the women who have excelled in the professional and political spheres share this idea. Education is the most essential resource and a necessary condition for career development and especially for participation in the process of decision making. Therefore the government and society should take all possible measures for stimulating girls and women to get quality education. At this point, we should note not only the difference in the education of men and women, but also the difference in access to education and to the difference in the quality of education in Baku and the regions.

- **Establishment of a specialized state body on problems of gender equality**

Problems related to the provision of gender equality prove that the existing institutional mechanism is not sufficient. Serious shortcomings are found particularly in the field of balanced participation of men and women in decision making process, despite the adoption of

international obligations by Azerbaijan. Therefore we think it's worth establishing a specialized body to deal with the problems of gender equality in the society in general and on all levels of state power in particular. The establishment of such a body would allow for the implementation of a more coordinated and purposeful policy in this field and to execute the existing legislation more effectively for better monitoring and control. It should be mentioned that this government structure should focus directly at gender equality, rather than "women's" problems. There is already a state structure dealing with women's problems in Azerbaijan – the State Committee on Problems Related to Women, Children and Family. The meaning of this structure in Azerbaijan, with its complicated social-economic conditions and specific vulnerability of women and children, is hard to overestimate. However, as the name of the committee states its activity is directed mainly to family problems, rather than to the provision of equal participation of men and women in public life. The establishment of a specialized body on gender equality would serve for a more diversified illumination of gender problems.

- **Gender quota system**

Quota systems in general, and gender quota systems in particular, are quite a disputable measure. As a measure of positive discrimination it's not quite democratic: besides quota system can lead to the situation when the positions are not held by the most worthy possible candidates. However, in certain cases when quota system is used with the purpose of eliminating some specific inequality conditioned by many social-political factors, this measure can turn out to be quite effective. It is assumed that the implementation of quotas can be quite efficient in the condition existing in Azerbaijan. A quota system can serve to diminish the influence of social and cultural stereotypes that hinder the promotion of women to the leading positions. Besides that, a quota system will also serve as the confirmation of the government's determination to provide gender equality. Finally during the sociological survey, the majority of women mentioned this method as a means for the elimination of unequal participation of men and women in the political process; women leaders who have already achieved success in the political and public spheres also share this opinion. Such a unanimous positive perception about quotas supports the notion that within Azerbaijan, this measure can be quite effective.

- **Enlightenment**

Alongside the two measures directed to the solution of the above mentioned problems, the state bodies should also implement activities on the level of civil society. The survey carried out also pointed to the fact that women are not fully aware of their rights and opportunities. Increasing the awareness of women about their rights and opportunities should help them to take a more active part in public life. However, enlightenment should be carried out not only for women but also for men. It's necessary that both men and women understand the importance of equal participation of the representatives of both genders in the political and public life. From the long-term perspective enlightenment would help to spread positive gender ideas and lead to the gradual overcoming of the governing stereotypes in the society.

Attachment 1. Questionnaire of the sociological survey carried out in the regions of Neftchala, Lankaran and Kurdamir of Azerbaijan

Survey on the monitoring of balanced participation of men and women in the process of public and political decision making

1. Age _____
2. Marital status : ☐Single ☐Married ☐Incomplete family
3. Social status:
☐Government officer ☐housewife ☐NGO employee ☐service field
4. Education:
☐Higher ☐Incomplete higher ☐Secondary ☐Incomplete secondary ☐Technical
☐Primary ☐No education
5. Would you like to get education?
☐Yes ☐No
6. How do you evaluate your participation in the resolving of family problems?
☐Decisive ☐Advisory ☐No participation
7. Are your opinions accounted for at your work place?
☐Yes ☐No
8. Do you participate at Parliamentary and municipality elections?
☐As a candidate ☐As a voter
9. Would you like to participate at elections as a candidate?
☐Yes ☐No

Please state the reason

10. Would you like to hold a government position?
☐Yes ☐No

Please state the reason

11. Do you determine the candidate you are going to vote for at home, with your family?
☐Yes ☐No

12. How are you addressed to by your family, at home, in the society?
☐Girl ☐Lady ☐Woman ☐As per profession

13. Are you satisfied with how women are treated in the society, at work and at home?
☐yes ☐no ☐don't know

Please state the reason

14. Do you think that the existing legislation can fully protect women's rights?

☐yes

☐No

Please state the reason

15. How do you think women should behave? (you can select several answers)

- ☐ Women should obey only what her husband says
- ☐ Her decisions should definitely be considered in the family
- ☐ The main function of the woman is dealing with her family and house work
- ☐ TWomen should take an active part not only in resolving family problems, but also those of the society as well
- ☐ Women should not take part in making serious decisions, unlike men
- ☐ The equal participation of women and men in making serious decisions is important
- ☐ Women have the same knowledge and skills as men
- ☐ Women can work only if allowed to do so by her family
- ☐ Women can work without the permission of her husband
- ☐ Other _____

Please justify your answers (state the reasons)

16. Is the protection of women's rights regulated by international legislation?

☐Yes

☐No

☐Don't know

If yes, please state the name of the relevant document you are aware of

17. Are there any events or seminars for stimulating the willingness of women to participate in political and state decisions held where you work or live by the government, NGOs or other bodies?

☐Yes

☐No

☐Don't know

If yes, please state the name of the events held

18. What do you think about women becoming active members of the society and entering the business world as well as various fields of political life?

☐Positive

☐Negative

Please justify your answers (state the reasons)

19. State the reasons why women cannot fully participate in making decisions of state and local importance (you can select several answers)

☐ Poverty

☐ Low level of knowledge and education

☐ Unequal distribution of power between men and women

☐ Stereotyping in regards to men and women in the society

☐ Other

20. Should the elected candidates (men and women) be provided with means to harmonize their family and work lives through adoption of corresponding legislative and administrative measures?

☐Yes

☐No

☐Don't know

21. Should administrative methods, including positive measures be used for the provision of balanced participation of men and women in political and government decision making?

☐Yes

☐No

☐Don't know

22. Is the balanced participation of men and women in legislative, executive and judicial powers important?

☐Yes

☐No

☐Don't know

23. Should equal opportunities be created both upon the distribution of decision making duties based on gender balance and upon the promotion of men and women?

☐Yes

☐No

☐Don't know

24. Is it necessary to provide a deeper participation of national and cultural minorities and especially women belonging to these minorities at all levels of decision making?

☐Yes

☐No

☐Don't know

25. Should seminars, trainings and lectures be organized for the full understanding of the balanced participation of men and women at all levels of decision making by people who hold high positions, by certain groups of the society, especially by politicians and social partners?

☐Yes

☐No

☐Don't know

26. Should social parties, public organizations, NGOs take into account the equal participation of men and women while forming their managing bodies that impact the decision making process?

☐Yes

☐No

☐Don't know

27. What do you think should be done for the balanced participation of men and women at all levels of decision making?

- ☐ Changes should be made to the legislation;
- ☐ Administrative-command method should be applied;
- ☐ Quotas for women should be appointed for all elective and appointing bodies;
- ☐ Propaganda should be carried out among women;
- ☐ Seminars and trainings should be carried out for the employees of all legislative and managing bodies.
- ☐ Other: _____

Please justify the answer you have selected

Place of the survey: _____ 2008

Survey carried out by:: _____

Attachment 2

Participants of expert internet survey

1. Arzu Abdullayeva, chairman of National Committee of Azerbaijan at Helsinki Civil Assembly
2. Leyla Aliyeva, political scientist
3. Mehriban Vazir, writer of political essays, head of NGO on “Center of Political Culture of Azerbaijani women”
4. Ruhangiz Huseynova, head of NGO “Women Solidarity”
5. Aynur Jamalgizi, MP, “Yeni Azerbaijan” party member
6. Ellada Mammadova, member of the Parliament (Majlis) of “Musavat” party
7. Latafat Malikova, deputy chairman of the Kurdamir branch of Musavat party
8. Malahat Murshudlu, chairman of Public Union of Independent Teachers
9. Dilshad Naghiyeva, deputy chief of Khatai branch of Musavat Party
10. Mominat Omarova, chairman of the Steering Committee of the Council of Europe on equality between men and women

Attachment 3. Questions for the expert internet survey

Experts:

1. How do you evaluate the employment of men and women in executive positions?
 - a. In agencies of local and central power
 - b. In the parliament
 - c. In political sphere (political parties, opposition)
 - d. In other public spheres (education, science, culture)
 - e. If there are differences existing between men and women in the above spheres, how can you explain it?
2. In which spheres do you think the participation of women is not sufficient?
3. What are the reasons why women are not sufficiently represented in the mentioned spheres?
4. Which measures, in your opinion, can help to solve the mentioned problems?
 - a. Government measures
 - b. Civil society measures

Women politicians (successful and unsuccessful) and female leaders of the civil society

1. Why did you decide to get involved in politics?
 - a. *For women-leaders of otherspheres*: why did you decide to be involved in this activity?
2. What kind of obstacles have you faced with your career?
 - a. Have you faced gender discrimination?
 - b. How do your male colleagues treat you?
 - c. Do the stereotypes about the role of women existing in the society hinder your work?
 - d. For non-elected women-candidates for MP: what do you think is the reason of your non-election? Does it relate to your being a woman? If yes, how would you explain it?
3. What does your husband (and family in general) think about your activity?
 - a. Do you feel support?
 - b. Have you ever had to overcome resistance from your family towards your work?

4. Is there equality existing between you and your male colleagues of the same level (involved in the same activity)?
 - a. If yes, where is it found?
5. How do you see your future career development? What are your future professional goals?
6. Are there any fields of activity (politics) that you would like to deal with, but cannot because you are a woman?
7. What do you think are the reasons of the insufficient participation of women in the decision making process? (on government and public level)
8. What do you think should be done for achieving a more balanced participation of men and women in the process of decision making?