

Statement of Wanda Nowicka, Federation for Women and Family Planning¹, UPR report adoption – Azerbaijan, June 11, 2009

Mister President,

We would like to commend the government of Azerbaijan on making commitments to ensuring gender equality.

In line with recommendations in paragraphs 69 and 90, we would like to stress the importance of addressing sexual harassment as a serious issue affecting thousands of women in Azerbaijan. We call on the government of Azerbaijan to conduct research to assess the situation of sexual harassment in Azeri society and plan accordingly, conduct public awareness campaigns to address the issue of sexual harassment and the existing legal framework and implement the appropriate mechanisms for women to be able to report rape cases, including training and sensitivity among law-enforcement personnel, women police stations, strong measures against corruption.

In addition, we call on government of Azerbaijan to conduct nation-wide educational campaigns about gender roles and the value of women and girls, as a way to reduce sex-selective abortions and to protect women's rights to education, health and freedom of movement.

We would like to call on the government of Azerbaijan to consider recommendations 26 and 48 about providing law enforcement and judicial officials with specific education/sensitivity training towards the protection of children, women and persons of minority sexual orientation or gender identity. In regards to past police harassment of transgender people, we call on the government of Azerbaijan to conduct proper investigations on police blackmailing, harassment and violence against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, duly punishing those responsible and setting up administrative and legal frameworks to eradicate such practices.

Finally, we would like to request the government of Azerbaijan to ensure that NGOs, including those supporting vulnerable groups, are free to register and operate without state interference or fear of reprisals.

Thank you.

¹ Working with Anna Kirey (Labrys – Kyrgyzstan) and the Sexual Rights Initiative (a collaborative project of Action Canada for Population and Development (ACPD), Creating Resources for Empowerment in Action (CREA; India), FWFP (Poland), Mulabi – Espacio Latinoamericano de Sexualidades y Derechos, and others).