



**PERMANENT MISSION OF TURKMENISTAN TO THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE AT GENEVA**

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**OPENING STATEMENT  
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DEPUTY MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

Geneva, 22 April 2013



**Your Excellency, dear Mr. Chairman!**  
**Dear Members of the Human Rights Council!**  
**Ladies and Gentlemen!**

Let me express my gratitude for devoting much attention to economic, social and cultural development of Turkmenistan and to express confidence, that constructive dialogue with the delegation of our country will enhance further progress in promoting consecutive and full enjoyment by Turkmenistan nationals of human rights and freedoms declared in international conventions and treaties.

Here, I would like to elaborate on the basic directions of a policy of Turkmenistan aimed on fulfillment of the assumed obligations concerning human rights and to inform on the progressive changes which triggered a considerable progress in providing solutions to some issues of concern expressed during the dialogue which took place at the first cycle of the Universal Periodic Review of Turkmenistan held at the 1st session of the Working Group on the UPR on December 9, 2008.

Let me express my confidence, that meaningful dialogue with delegation of our country will facilitate further progress in addressing issues on consecutive and full enjoyment of human rights and freedoms.

**Dear colleagues!**

Recently a considerable progress has been reached in Turkmenistan in performance of the obligations assumed by our country within the framework of Recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review.

Considerable changes have been made concerning improvement of legislation in various sectors of public and social life and enormous work is done on bringing the national legislation in line with international standards.

The current period of development of the country is remarkable by big reforms in political, social and cultural life of Turkmen nationals. Nowadays in the country a big, multifaceted work is carried out on strengthening in Turkmen society of indigenous democratic traditions and protection of political, economic and social human rights.

The reforms conducted under guidance of the President of Turkmenistan Esteemed Gurbanguly Berdymuhamedov promote progressive reforming of entire social and political system and have gained authority in other countries. The basis of future comprehensive development of Turkmenistan is a determination of Turkmen nationals to go along the way of reforms and strong-willed aspiration of the government on supporting the chosen policy.

Strengthening of democratic principles and legal basis of society and the government, protection of political, economic, social and other human rights and freedoms of each individual is one of the main priorities of a public policy of the country. The national economy is fast developing; investments in science, education, public health services, culture and social infrastructure are increased. Government is committed to support private sector of economy, small and medium business in the country.

**Dear Members of the Human Rights Council!**

Turkmenistan is a Party to more than 120 international conventions and treaties including fundamental international and United Nations instruments on human rights, and undertaken commitments serve as a foundation for policy of Turkmenistan concerning human rights and freedoms and addressing social, economic and humanitarian issues.

Recognition of the international efforts of Turkmenistan in international development is its membership in a number of recognized international organizations. Turkmenistan is a member of UN Commission on Population Development Fund for 2012 - 2015, the UN Commission on Drugs for 2012 – 2015 and a permanent member of the Executive committee of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

On November 8, 2012, at the 67th session of the UN General Assembly Turkmenistan has been elected as a member of United Nations Economic and Social Council for 2013-2015. First of all, it is a big opportunity for our country for putting forward and implementing new initiatives and, at the same time, a big responsibility on working out and adoption of proposals within the framework of the ECOSOC.

This year on April 11 at the 65th session of United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Turkmenistan has been elected by acclamation as the one of the vice-chairs of the Commission.

Moreover, our country according to this status will perform function of the vice-chair of UNECE Executive committee for the next two years.

For further strengthening of human rights, Turkmenistan within the reporting period has joined a number of the international instruments, namely: Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the №182 Convention of ILO concerning the prohibition and immediate actions for the elimination of the worst forms of child labor, the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, the Convention of the United Nations on the Status of Stateless Persons, the Convention on Reduction of Statelessness, etc. Legal practice on introduction of the international conventions standards in national legislation is done upon pragmatic and comprehensive analysis. Thus, after performed analyses of interstate issues concerning citizenship the President of Turkmenistan in 2011 has signed the Decree granting citizenship to 3318 stateless individuals residing in Turkmenistan. World community has considered this fact as manifestation of humanism and justice. It is acknowledgement of aspiration of Turkmenistan on further protection of fundamental rights and freedoms of any individual including stateless people.

One of components of advancing of our country along the way of national progress is its legal guarantee. Nowadays the reforming of national legislation system under guidance of the President of Turkmenistan is successfully implemented in our country.

The National Commission on improvement of legislation of Turkmenistan pays a special attention to monitoring of national mechanisms of implementation and preparation of recommendations on improvement and elaboration of new laws, regulations and national programs taking into account fundamental provisions of international conventions ratified by Turkmenistan.

The international initiative of Turkmenistan is determined by acceleration of cooperation and increase of level of constructive dialogue with international partners and organizations. Here again, implementation of international standards of human rights and the recommendations of UN bodies in the national legislation is considered as the most important cross point in joint progressive efforts of the parties concern.

Parliament of Turkmenistan during the elaboration and adoption of laws, first of all, considers its conformity to international law as a whole and to the international obligations in particular.

Process of updating of corresponding legislative base of Turkmenistan is successfully combined with reforming of legal system of the country, consecutive activity of the special commission on monitoring of national legislation improvement and implementation of international standards in the national legislation

Within the scope of implementing legal reform a number of legislative acts on protection of human rights have been adopted in Turkmenistan from 2008 to 2012.

As an example we can mention amendments introduced in Criminal-procedural code of Turkmenistan taking into account provisions of international treaties on human rights, in particular Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. Taking into consideration final recommendations of Committee Against Tortures, the Law of Turkmenistan «On amendments in Criminal code of Turkmenistan» dated August 4t, 2012 introduced Article 182<sup>1</sup> entitled "Torture" which specified torture and incrimination concerning it.

There are other examples: the Air Code of Turkmenistan is amended by provisions of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Family Code of Turkmenistan (10.01.2012) is amended by provisions considering Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. There is more such examples: we would like to mention Law of Turkmenistan on «International Treaties ratified by Turkmenistan» (22.05.2010), «On Court» (15.08.2009), «On Public Prosecutor's office of Turkmenistan», (15.08.2009), «On advocacy and lawyer activity in Turkmenistan» (14.05.2010), «On legal status of foreign citizens in Turkmenistan» (26.03.2011), «On political parties» (10.01.2012), «On copyright and related rights» (10.01.2012), «On refugees» (04.08.2012), «On migration» (31.03.2012), «On mass media» (22.12.2012), the Criminal Code of Turkmenistan (18.04.2009), the Labor code of Turkmenistan (18.04.2009), the Criminal code of Turkmenistan, New Edition (14.05.2010), the Criminal-executive Code of Turkmenistan (25.03.2011), the Code of Turkmenistan «On social protection» (19.10.2012), the Housing code (2013) and so on.

Practically each legal tool is studied by the lawmakers on its conformity to international law standards.

The important event in political efforts of Turkmenistan on improvement of legislative base is the new Criminal-executive code of Turkmenistan adopted on March 25, 2011 specifying legal relations in penitentiary system of Turkmenistan. The fundamental principles of the Criminal-executive legislation of Turkmenistan is legitimacy, supremacy of law, humanism, democracy, equality of prisoners before the law, the differentiation and an individualization of execution of punishment, any person sentenced to a term in penitentiary institution has the right to humane treatment free of any humiliation of human dignity.

The separate chapter is devoted to juvenile penitentiary system considering age, psycho-emotional state and other peculiarities and providing a possibility of expanding contact with the outside world, rehabilitation and re-integration of convicted minors.

From 2009 to April 2013 major repairs and modernization have been carried out in 16 correctional facilities of the country. In some of them the work has been completed and in others the works are still ongoing.

In the Criminal-executive code of Turkmenistan the special role is devoted to inspections of penitentiary institutions.

The government of Turkmenistan has a regular dialogue with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) on urgent issues of the humanitarian right.

The Government of Turkmenistan and Regional agency of the International Committee of the Red Cross in the Central Asia have a Plan of action within the framework of multilateral cooperation in penitentiary system that is updated annually. According to the Plan since 2011, regular humanitarian visits of ICRC representatives in penitentiary institutions have commenced

From 2011 to 2012 representatives of ICRC have visited 2 correctional facilities (an educational colony for convicted minors and the high security correctional facility), 1 medical-labor facility and a construction site of a new penal colony for women. Following the results of all visits the representatives of ICRC gave a positive assessment of conditions in which prisoners are serving their terms.

The further development of meaningful dialogue of the Government of Turkmenistan and the International Committee of the Red Cross is promoted by close cooperation on training and increase of vocational training of the personnel of bodies of penitentiary system of Turkmenistan. In the beginning of 2013 between the Government of Turkmenistan and the International Committee of the Red Cross the activity Plan on distribution and implementation of the international humanitarian right (IHR) has been signed in which it is planned to implement more than 20 various events.

### **Dear colleagues!**

Long-term strategic objectives of development of our country are defined in the National program on social and economic development of Turkmenistan for 2011-2030, the Concepts of social and economic development of rural area and Ashgabat city for 2008-2012, the Program of the President of Turkmenistan on social and economic development of the country for 2012-2016, the National program of the President of Turkmenistan on transformation of social conditions of the population of villages, settlements, regional and sub-regional centers for the period till 2020. Realization of these programs has promoted appearance on economic map of the country hundreds of new large industrial, social and infrastructural facilities.

The main objective of the National program of the President of Turkmenistan on transformation of social conditions of the population of villages, settlements, regional and sub-regional centers for the period till 2020 is to provide to people living in rural area high quality social conditions and favorable work conditions as much as possible similar to urban standards. For example, for 2008-2012 for achievement of this purpose the state has already allocated 4,8 billion US dollars for performance of new large projects in a countryside. The program covers 15 sectors of social and engineering infrastructure. The construction of new towns is going on in the rural area at rapid space. In the result of rural development new comfortable apartment houses, schools and medical institutions equipped with the up-to-date equipment, palaces of culture, stadiums and other recreation facilities have appeared.

Health care and well-being of the people, protection of interests of each individual of the country is the focus center of a state policy of dynamic development of Turkmenistan.

Thanks to consecutive and successful reforming of system of public health system of Turkmenistan is getting in line with international standards, providing access to nationals to a wide spectrum of medical services and the guaranteed quality health services according to international standards.

In 2009-2012 one International centre for neck and head deceases treatment and 5 "Ene Mahri" Perinatal Centres have been constructed in regions of Turkmenistan.

The new buildings equipped with up-to-date equipment of Scientific and clinical centre of oncology, the International Eye center for treatment of eye illnesses and eye traumatology, Turkmen state medical University have been constructed.

Newly founded Center of infectious diseases has 6 units - the Central dermatovenereological hospital, the Tuberculosis clinical-and-prophylactic centre, the Clinical-and-prophylactic centre of infectious diseases, the Center of AIDS prevention and the Central laboratory and the Blood Center.

Within the framework of rural development program since 2008 to 2012 4 new regional hospitals, 3 of which in new regions were constructed or reconstructed and equipped by the modern equipment. 11

regional hospitals, 4 rural Health houses and Health centers were built anew and 44 rural Health Houses and Health centers were reconstructed. The recreational center for children for 500 places is opened in Geokdepe – regional center.

This year the new building of the Centre on Stomatology and factory on manufacture of infusion solutions will be completed.

The activity on monitoring of sanitary norms and prevention of spreading of disease, successful cooperation with the leading international organizations, including the United Nations and its agencies – the World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and others have allowed our country to be certified as a country free of such dangerous infectious diseases as a children's paralysis, dracunculosis and malaria.

In the focus of development of public health services of Turkmenistan as indicator of public health development and a society as a whole, is protection of motherhood and childhood. It is the most important priority of our country development. Recently, such National programs as «Safe motherhood», «Integrated system for children diseases», «Protection and support of breast-feeding» and others were implemented.

In April 2011 Turkmenistan ratified WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco control. In the scope of such control the President of Turkmenistan has signed the Decree and has approved the Plan of actions on control of tobacco smoking in Turkmenistan for 2012 - 2016 specifying actions related to smoking control and on education of people on dangers of smoking.

Health protection of people in Turkmenistan is a comprehensive system covering construction of up-to-date medical centers and sanatoriums, ecological monitoring, development of sports activity and sport facilities infrastructure and advocacy of healthy principles of life, spiritual and moral values for everyone.

Within the framework of the National programs it is planned to construct more than 200 sports schools for 75 thousand students, over 100 sport facilities and to update all available sports complexes. Moreover, a phased construction of sports boarding schools, football boarding schools, sports bases with modern equipment in all regions and Ashgabat city is planned.

Big attention in our country is paid to the information policy and a lot of activity is performed in the area of creation of information-telecommunication infrastructure system in the country and legal, organizational, financial and educational conditions for development of an information society are created. In Turkmenistan science and education system is completely equipped by computers and multimedia centers, at schools and higher educational institutions students study IT sciences. The public transport system is transferred to electronic tickets and information tabloids, in public health services electronic medical cards have been introduced. Electronic document turnover and «the electronic government» are introduced in public system.

Internet-services are accessible sources of the information for all citizens of our multinational country. The high and secondary educational institutions have access to services of a global Internet network. Public Internet café are opened in the capital and across Turkmenistan.

Successfully developing national economy enhances protection of economic, social and cultural rights of our nationals.

The economic growth of Turkmenistan which is on average 11 percent for the last five years, has led to steady increase in gross domestic product per capita, which figure is confirmed by the World Bank experts. Since 2007 GDP in Turkmenistan has increased approximately 3,5 times, and gross domestic product per capita on parity of purchasing capacity has increased 1,9 times. In 2012 GDP per capita in

Turkmenistan has exceeded the standard threshold for the country with average high level of income. Throughout last years the profound social orientation of budgetary expenses is observed - above 75 % of budgetary funds is allocated to financing of current and capital expenses of social branches.

In Turkmenistan from 15 to 26 December 2012 population and available housing census have been conducted. Preliminary results of population census show appreciable social, economic and demographic changes in the country. It is explained first of all by positive changes in living standards and improvement of housing conditions of the population. Birth rate of the population grows as well.

It is worth mentioning, that in the conditions of an economic crisis Turkmenistan is one of the first countries of the world that promptly commenced anti-recessionary activity. At that, we have not renounced any of assumed earlier social obligations. Moreover, the sizes of salaries of public workers, pensions and social welfares have increased approximately 30 %.

A system of social protection of the population taking into account the international practices is created in Turkmenistan and it reflects at the same time specificity of the country, its historical, demographic and social peculiarities.

Average expenses on payment of salaries, pensions, welfare payments and grants have increased by 10% each year. Granting of privileges to Turkmen nationals on low payment for habitation and utilities, transport and communication services, free use of electric power, natural gas, water, salt, and subsidized by the government fuel to private car owners - 120 liters of fuel for 1 car is provided free each month. Free provision of natural gas, water, food salt and electricity to population will continue till 2030.

Besides, in 2012 for stimulation of scientific and innovation activity, strengthening of scientific and pedagogical potential of the country additional payments for scientific degrees and ranks have been introduced and salaries for ranks of full members and member-correspondents of Academy of Sciences of Turkmenistan are established.

The basic priority in social security of citizens of Turkmenistan is implementation of rights of citizens to a provision of pensions upon retirement which is secured in Constitution of Turkmenistan and provision of state support to separate categories of citizens.

Clear evidence of it is acceptance of the Code of Turkmenistan on social protection of the population that was adopted on January 1, 2013. According to the Code social protection in Turkmenistan represents the public system of financial support and social service of invalid persons, persons with disabilities, families with children and other persons provided through pensions, welfare payments and social privileges.

Occupational pensions are awarded to people involved in heavy labor in hazardous environment. Since January 1, 2013 the new type of the welfare payment is awarded to the widow of the participant of the Great Patriotic War.

The legal tool for implementation of the Code of Turkmenistan "On social protection of population" is the Law Turkmenistan "On state pension insurance" adopted in April 2012. According to the law Since January 1, 2013 Turkmenistan has accepted the new modern system of the state provision of pensions – conditional accumulating pension system (CAPS) which will be monitored by the Pension fund of Turkmenistan created at the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the population of Turkmenistan.

The President of Turkmenistan provided annual increase of amounts of pensions and welfare payments. So, since January 1, 2013 the value of pensions has increased 15 % and welfare payments - 10 %.



The logical result of implemented large-scale major reforms and reorganization is steady growth of national economy.

**Dear Members of the Human Rights Council!**

On August 12, 2011 the Interdepartmental Commission on implementation of international obligations of Turkmenistan on human rights has been transformed by the Decree of the President of Turkmenistan into Interdepartmental Commission on implementation of the international obligations of Turkmenistan on human rights and international humanitarian law.

The activity on preparation and submission to treaty bodies of the United Nations of national reports on conventions on human rights has become more active. Recommendations of the international organizations are taken into consideration and process on implementation of standards of international law in national legislation is ongoing.

The important place in activity of the Interdepartmental Commission is devoted to conducting seminars, consultations and workshops with participation of international experts with objective of studying of the advanced international experience in area of protection of human rights and freedoms.

The Interdepartmental commission implements on a regular basis active dialogue with Regional Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNHCR and other agencies of the United Nations concerning preparation of national reports, implementation of recommendations of treaty bodies of the United Nations and carrying out of joint activity.

Turkmenistan participates in the international cooperation on protection of the rights and legitimate interests of the child, motherhood and childhood and provides implementation of the corresponding international obligations. Implementation in practice of the Convention on the rights of the child and other basic international instruments on protection of the rights and legitimate interests of children and youth is elaboration and adoption on May 27, 2011 by the Decree of the President of Turkmenistan the National program of Turkmenistan for 2011-2015 on early development and preparation of the child for school.

For improvement of forms and methods of protection of the rights of the child, the President of Turkmenistan adopted the Decree «On approval of the General Program of Turkmenistan on development of juvenile justice system» on June 1, 2012.

As a result of activity of the Interdepartmental Commission for the last period preparation and submission in the treaty bodies of the United Nations and Human Rights Council of national reports is performed on regular basis according to the schedule.

Strengthening of cooperation with the international organizations is the major direction of a policy implemented by the President of Turkmenistan.

At the present, the relations between the United Nations and Turkmenistan are built on principles of mutual benefit, considering of national interests and implementation of the international norms and the assumed obligations, which promote mutual cooperation and enrich them with new experience.

The joint project of the European commission, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the UNDP entitled «Strengthening of national capacity of Turkmenistan on implementation and protection of human rights», which was initiated by the Government of Turkmenistan for the purpose of the further strengthening of meaningful dialogue on protection of

human rights is being implemented together with the National Institute of Democracy and Human Rights under the President of Turkmenistan (2009 – July 2013).

Within the framework of this joint project an Information centre on human rights has been opened on May 2n, 2011 at the National Institute of Democracy and Human Rights under the President of Turkmenistan.

In 2012 the similar Centers have been opened at higher educational institutions in all regions of the country. The objective of these bodies is to increase the level of awareness of public employees, scientific workers, students, voluntary group activists and other interested parties in studying of world experience in human rights area.

Within the framework of the above-mantioned Project elaboration of the National Plan of Action on human rights is being carried out. Thus, the seminar for members of Working group of the Interdepartmental Commission of Turkmenistan on implementation of the international obligations on human rights and the international humanitarian law with participation of the international expert on human rights has been held on March 11-13, 2013 to discuss the project of National Plan of Action on human rights.

Since 2010 a new joint project - «Increase of legal capacity» within the framework of the technical assistance provided by the European Union to Turkmenistan is being implemented. The objective of the project is to provide assistance to the Government of Turkmenistan in interpretation and implementation of international law and preparation of national experts on human rights. The project is implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Justice of Turkmenistan and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan.

**Dear Mr. Chairman!**

All of this testifies to the fact that in our country a purposeful activity on implementation of fundamental principles of the international Conventions and bringing norms of the national legislation and protection of human rights in line with international standards is conducted. It is clear evidence that Turkmenistan in choosing way of social and economic reforms and democratic transformations focuses on implementation and protection of human rights.

**Dear colleagues!**

In the conclusion, I would like to underline, that Turkmenistan is steadily implementing the policy of adhering to noble objectives set by the President of Turkmenistan on further strengthening of independence, permanent neutrality, sociopolitical stability of Turkmenistan, national unity, protection of interests of our country, human rights and freedoms, social justice, well-being of the people, carrying out the further democratization of a society and mastering the best achievements of a world civilization, and people of Turkmenistan are actively involved in this process.

During our dialogue we will try to answer the questions of the Members of the Council, and we will provide additional information.

**Thank you for your attention!**