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**STATEMENT**

**by**

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**at the 16<sup>th</sup> Session of the Working Group on Universal Periodic Review  
of the United Nations Human Rights Council**

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**Distinguished Mr. Chairman,  
Distinguished members and observers of the Human Rights Council,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

In 2013 the international community celebrates **the 65th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 20th anniversary of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action on Human Rights**, which established basic democratic principles and requirements in the field of support, promotion and protection of human rights and freedoms and became a legal basis for formation of international human rights law. Over the past decades, these documents are not outdated, but continue to set urgent tasks for us.

Uzbekistan will consistently uphold principles of a rule of the international law and collective actions in international relations, including promotion and protection of human rights. We recognize that there is a need of joint search for solutions that would assure a democratic processes in internal and foreign affairs, as well as contribute to widespread compliance with the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Equal cooperation, willingness for mutual consideration of interests and search for compromise can be a real factor contributing toward the convergence of different countries, regional organizations, strengthening an environment of trust and mutual respect in issues of promotion and protection of human rights.

Tense conflicts in several parts of the world confirm the importance of a interdependence between all three pillars of the world order - sustainable development, peace and security and human rights. Today it is clear more than ever that without peace and development it is impossible to observe human rights.

**Mr. Chairman,**

I would like to inform that in December 2008 the consideration of the first National report of Uzbekistan under a new instrument of the UN Human Rights Council - the Universal Periodic Review took place.

After extensive consultations with both institutions of civil society and international partners in August 2009 the **National Plan of Action on implementation of recommendations of the UN Human Rights Council on the outcomes of the National Report of Uzbekistan within the Universal Periodic Review for 2009-2012** was approved, which contains 89 measures to implement the recommendations under UPR, deadlines and more than 60 responsible officials from the government, educational institutions, NGOs and media.

In June 2011, an international seminar was held with the participation of delegation from the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, which was devoted to the implementation of the National Plan of Action on implementation of UPR recommendations.

In order to prepare the Second National Report of the Republic of Uzbekistan under the Universal Periodic Review, an Interdepartmental Working Group was

established that developed a list of the most important issues to be covered in the report, and distributed it among more than 60 ministries, departments, agencies and non-governmental organizations.

While preparing current report two consultative meetings with representatives of ministries, agencies and civil society institutions were held. During these meetings different views had been expressed on a draft of the Second National Report and several comments and additions were introduced.

During preparation of a report the provisions of the resolutions and decisions of the UN Human Rights Council concerning the general guidelines for the preparation of information under the Universal Periodic Review were included.

On December 26, 2012 a meeting of the Interagency Working Group for the study of compliance of rights and freedoms by the law enforcement and other government agencies was held at the Ministry of Justice. The meeting reviewed and approved the draft of the second National Report of the Republic of Uzbekistan under the Universal Periodic Review.

On December 28, 2012 the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis of Uzbekistan (Parliament) discussed the Second National Report of the Republic of Uzbekistan under Universal Periodic Review of the UN Human Rights Council. Members of the Lower House of Parliament, representatives of government agencies, non-governmental organizations and media approved the second report of Uzbekistan under the UPR.

**Second National Report of Uzbekistan consists of 6 chapters** containing the information on measures taken to implement the recommendations of UPR upon consideration of the first report, on progress made in promotion and protection of human rights, as well as on existing problems and main priorities toward improving the situation on human rights in Uzbekistan.

I would like to emphasize that during the implementation of the HRC recommendations Uzbekistan paid special attention to the issues of further improvement of a national legislation and law-enforcement practices, as well as promotion and protection of rights of the most vulnerable groups, namely children, women, individuals with disabilities.

Additionally, among key priorities were also issues of deepening judicial reforms, provision of human rights during fair legal proceedings, combating crime, as well as issues of forming a human rights culture and development of civil society institutions.

Uzbekistan pays significant attention to systematic and consistent policy to ensure the gradual and full promotion of economic, social, environmental and cultural rights. The issues of further development of social sphere, steady increase of incomes and standards of living of the population remain in main focus of Government of Uzbekistan.

**Uzbekistan has achieved the implementation of the UN Millennium Development Goals with regard to the full access to universal education. According to the World Bank, literacy rate in the country is one of the highest in the world - 99.7%.**

Government adopted a special **Resolution "On additional measures to implement the UN Millennium Development Goals in Uzbekistan."** In order to implement the additional measures aimed at gradual increase of level and quality of life, Uzbekistan in line with the Millennium Development Goals has developed the comprehensive programme of action and holds the annual hearing of information by the Government members in the Legislative Chamber of Parliament.

**In terms of steady growing GDP Uzbekistan is among the fastest growing economies in the world.** A distinguishing feature of the state budget is its social orientation. In 2012, 59.2 % of overall Government spendings were directed to financing the social sphere and measures for social protection of the population, including more than 34 % to education and more than 14.5 % - to healthcare.

As a result maternal and infant mortality in the country fell more than three times, average life expectancy has increased by 7 years, reaching among men 73 years, and among women 75. **In the world ranking of 161 states compiled last year by the International Organization "Save the Children" Uzbekistan took 9th place among the states with the best healthcare of a younger generation.**

There is wide discussion among the international expert circles on the results of the "Uzbek model" of education and healthcare based upon the past Tashkent International Symposium **"The national model of maternity and childhood health protection in Uzbekistan: Healthy mother - healthy child"**, as well as the **International Conference "Fostering a well-educated and intellectually advanced generation – critical prerequisite for sustainable development and modernization of country."** It should be noted that these meetings were attended by the heads of UN agencies such as the WHO, UNICEF, UNESCO, well-known specialists, foreign experts and analysts in education and healthcare.

**Mr. Chairman,**

Let me inform you on the following significant steps in the field of human rights that has been taken in Uzbekistan upon submission of the Second National Report under the UPR.

**First.** Uzbekistan consistently and firmly fulfills its international obligations under the major international human rights treaties. Uzbekistan has submitted 32 national reports to United Nations treaty bodies. During the last year Uzbekistan submitted the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> periodic national reports on the implementation of **the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination**. In March 2013, the fourth periodic report on the implementation of the **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights** was submitted.

Public authorities in cooperation with the civil society institutions are executing 10 national action plans on implementation of recommendations of UN treaty bodies on the outcomes of country's national human rights reports.

**Second.** Uzbekistan is working closely with the special procedures of the **UN Human Rights Council and treaty bodies**. Since 2004, a delegation of Uzbekistan participates in annual meetings of the High-Level Segment of the HRC.

In 2012-2013 we submitted responds to requests of the Special Rapporteurs on the right to education, independence of judges and lawyers, torture, trafficking in persons, especially women and children, independent experts in the field of cultural rights, on violence against women, Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on implementation of the Resolution of the UN General Assembly № 65/206 "Moratorium on the death penalty", as well as the UN Committees on human rights, rights of a child, elimination of discrimination against women.

Uzbekistan was one of the first states to discuss the provisions of the UN Resolution on Human Rights on 16 June 2011 **“Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: Implementing the United Nations “Protect, Respect and Remedy” Framework”**. In this regard, an international conference on **"Business and human rights: the protection and social responsibility"** was organized with the participation of the OSCE ODIHR experts. Delegation of Uzbekistan took also part in the discussion of the draft of **the European Action Plan on Business and Human Rights** in September 2012 in Berlin.

**Third.** In order to implement **the Concept of further deepening of democratic reforms and establishing of civil society in the country**, the recommendations of international organizations, as well as in order to deepen democratic reforms<sup>7</sup> laws were adopted in 2012 in the legal sphere to ensure the rule of law, the secure protection of rights, freedoms and legitimate interests of individual, the liberalization of criminal law, criminal procedure and administrative law, the strengthening of judicial control on pretrial proceeding.

A democratic legal order of procedural coercion was legislatively established in the form of removing person from the post and placing person to a medical institution, excluding from the authority of courts the right to file a criminal case, the duty to announce indictment on the case in the court is entrusted exclusively to the prosecutor. Also, it was increased responsibility for crimes and offenses against morality, prevention of activities that promote a culture of violence, cruelty and pornography.

These provisions implementing the universally recognized principles and norms of international human rights law undeniably enable to strengthen judicial control during the inquiry and prejudicial inquiry, expand the sphere of application of the “Habeas Corpus” in criminal procedure, ensure compliance with the basic functions of the court to conduct a fair trial, independence, fairness and impartiality of the court, enhance the competitive nature of the criminal procedure.

**Fourth.** In order to strengthen the independence of the judiciary and to improve the system of judges selection a number of acts of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan were approved, which are aimed at further enhancement of the role and place of the judiciary in governance, strengthening of legal and social guarantees for an independent proceedings and the protection of the social status of the judiciary.

It is appropriate to emphasize here that the adoption of these documents is also aimed at the implementation of the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the UN Basic Principles on the Independence of the Judiciary that were ratified by our country.

**Fifth.** Based upon the recommendations of HRC, on December 25, 2012 the Law "On operational investigation search activities" was adopted, which provides the establishment of legislative and legal basis for operational and investigation activities of law enforcement agencies, as well as real legal guarantees of the rule of law, the rights and freedoms of citizens in operational and investigation search activities.

**Sixth.** In order to fully implement the political rights of citizens and to strengthen civil control over the activities of the government bodies, the draft laws "On transparency of the state power and governance", "On the citizens' self-governance bodies", "On social partnership", "On the social control" and "On parliamentary control" and others are undergoing civil and international expert evaluation.

Currently, the Lower House of Parliament introduced a new approach in the national legal practice of conducting a legal experiment. During 2013 country's two regions will undergo the legal experiment of testing the draft of law "On transparency of the state power and governance."

**Seventh. The State program Year of well-being and prosperity** is approved in February 2013 that identifies as its priority tasks the further strengthening of stability and peace, security, civil and ethnic harmony in the country, protection of rights, freedoms and interests, consistent growth and prosperity of society. In order to implement it, concrete measures are defined to further improvement of the national legislation.

A key focus of the State program Year of Well-being and Prosperity is to ensure a continued growth of wealth and real incomes, employment, further development of small business and entrepreneurship, farming, improvement of the government targeted social protection and assistance to the population, especially to the socially vulnerable and low-income families. During 2013 the increase the wages of public-sector employees, pensions, allowances and scholarships on average not less than 23 percent is envisaged. It is planned to allocate about 60 percent of all expenditures of the state budget to further development of a social sphere and efficiency increase of social support of population. In order to implement measures under the State Program it is expected to spend a total of 6655 billion soums, which is equivalent to 919,2 million U.S. dollars.

**Eighth.** Uzbekistan takes measures to accelerate the formation of "electronic government" system. It is envisaged to create a unique portal of interactive government services in Internet which will operate in a "single window" mode significantly simplifying the interaction of participants of economic activity and the Government. In 2013, it is planned to adopt the draft law "On the appeals of individuals and legal entities," which focuses on regulation of relations in the sphere of legal persons' address to public authorities and institutions, as well as further improvement of the order for citizens' address to the public authorities and institutions, including a form of electronic applications under formation of the "electronic government."

**Ninth.** In order to improve the institutional framework of functioning of the citizens' self-governing bodies a new version of two laws was adopted: **"On the citizens' self-government bodies"** and **"On the election of the chairman (aksakal) of citizens' gathering and his advisers."** These laws provide an extension of functions of mahalla in the system of civil control over the activities of public authorities, implementation of programs to support the vulnerable populations, provision of financial assistance to young people, appointment and payment of social benefits, facilitation of youth employment. In addition, a further improvement of the election system to self-government institutions is planned which is aimed to ensure transparency and openness of elections of the chairman of citizens' meeting and his advisers.

**Tenth.** In 2012-2013 more than 10 new laws were adopted, and they are of particular importance for efficient solution of issues of further deepening of democratic market reforms and liberalization of the economy, to ensure its competitiveness. At the legislative level, a principle of the priority of the entrepreneurs in the relations of business entities with government, law enforcement and regulatory agencies was introduced, and all contradictions in the legislation should be interpreted in favor of entrepreneurs. An order was introduced on prohibition of planned tax audits of small businesses within three years from the date of registration and limiting subsequent conduct of tax audits for stable operating and fair taxpayers.

In order to reduce significantly the interference of Government in activities of business entities, **80 types of licensing procedures and 15 types of licensed activities were canceled, frequency and types of financial reporting were reduced by 1,5 times.** In accordance with the adopted legislation the order was established that provides a state reimbursement for a business entity for losses caused by unlawful acts of public authorities, acts or omissions of the officials as well as approval of acts contrary to the law.

**Eleventh.** In the activities of the Parliament the priority is given to the issues of ensuring employment and growth of people's real incomes. To this end, Parliament annually reviews **the Program of job creation and providing employment** for each year.

Thus, in 2013 creation of 972.7 thousand new jobs is supposed through establishment of new large-scale industrial facilities, renovation and expansion of existing enterprises, further promotion of the development of small business, private and family business, the service sector, expansion of capabilities of work at home including cooperation with large enterprises. A significant part of home-based jobs will be organized in the regions, which are traditionally centers of national craftsmanship.

**Twelfth.** Cooperation of Uzbekistan with **OSCE and European Union** on human dimension and human rights protection is being continued. Each year delegation of the Republic of Uzbekistan participates in annual OSCE ODIHR Human Dimension Implementation Meetings. National Human Rights Center in cooperation with the ODIHR and OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan prepared



and published a book in Uzbek - **“OSCE Human Dimension Commitments. Volume I. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Thematic Compilation”**. In 2013, the OSCE delegations headed by the Secretary General and the Special Representative of EU for Central Asia visited Uzbekistan.

Since 2012, Uzbekistan has been successfully implementing the EU Project **“Support to Judicial Reforms in Uzbekistan”**, in which study tours to European countries for the exchange of practical experience in the courts, the police and prison services were organized for the representatives of national courts and law enforcement bodies.

**Thirteenth.** Uzbekistan is consistently fulfilling **international ILO standards** on prevention and elimination of child labor, and legally secured the reliable mechanisms for protecting children's rights in the area of labor in legislation. The visit of experts of the ILO Secretariat and an international workshop were organized, the Government adopted a special resolution on the implementation of the ILO conventions, and a plan of action is approved. During 2012 parliamentarians heard the report of the government delegation on participation to 101<sup>st</sup> session of the International Labour Conference and the implementation of the ILO Conventions. Measures have been taken to further develop the bilateral cooperation with the ILO structures.

**Fourteenth.** Uzbekistan has been actively involved in the campaign for the **World Programme for Human Rights Education, the implementation of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training.**

Currently, Uzbekistan implements comprehensive measures to prepare the **“National Programme for improving legal culture of the society”** in a new edition, which pays much attention to issues of further strengthening citizens' sense of respect to the law, capacity building of civil society institutions in the promotion of a culture of human rights. To improve the legal culture of the society it was organized **the Interagency Council on the coordination of government agencies on legal advocacy and education.**

We intend to take active part in the realization of campaign to celebrate the anniversaries in the field of human rights, namely:

- **65th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;**
- **20th Anniversary of the adoption of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Actions;**
- **20th anniversary of the adoption of the Paris Principles on National Human Rights Institutions.**

Currently, there is a preliminary agreement with the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on conclusion of a Memorandum on Understanding between NHRC and OHCHR.

**Mr. Chairman,**

Uzbekistan will consistently comply with international obligations and further on will support all initiatives of the United Nations regarding the observance and protection of human rights and freedoms.

Uzbekistan will continue to improve the institutional and legal mechanisms for implementation of personal, political, economic, social and cultural rights. Uzbekistan is determined to further implementation of international human rights standards in legislation and law-enforcement practices. We are open for further cooperation and collaboration with international organizations on human rights issues.

We support the UN efforts on promoting universal peace and stability based on the principles of respecting human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Lasting peace, sustainable development and prosperity are possible only if they are based on the respect of human rights, democracy and the rule of law.