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Promotion and protection of human rights

Letter dated 22 April 2019 from the Permanent Representative of Uzbekistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to convey to you information on the measures taken by the Government of Uzbekistan to ensure the labour rights of citizens in accordance with national legislation and international labour standards (see annex).

I would appreciate it if you could circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 74.

(Signed) Bakhtiyor **Ibragimov**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative



Annex to the letter dated 22 April 2019 from the Permanent Representative of Uzbekistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Russian]

Information on the measures taken to protect guaranteed labour rights in accordance with national legislation and international labour standards

In the years since gaining its independence, Uzbekistan has established a solid legal foundation to protect in practice the universally recognized right of all persons to work, free choice of occupation and fair working conditions. Uzbekistan, as a member of the International Labour Organization (ILO), has ratified 15 ILO conventions, including ones aimed at combating child and forced labour, and has methodically put their provisions into effect in national legislation.

The measures taken have been successful. Specifically, child labour has been completely eradicated in Uzbekistan.

In order to boost the effectiveness of efforts aimed at combating the use of forced labour, particular attention is now being paid to ensuring that measures relating to labour relations are comprehensive and systematic and that effective use is made of the potential for social partnership between State bodies and public organizations.

At the initiative of President Mirziyoyev, the Government adopted a decree on 10 May 2018 on additional measures aimed at eradicating forced labour in Uzbekistan.

The decree calls on the Heads of State and economic administration agencies at all levels to combat all forms of recruitment of individuals and workers for forced labour and to take strict disciplinary measures against officials who have directly or indirectly allowed forced labour to occur.

With a view to further strengthening the capacity of labour authorities to ensure safe working conditions, protect individual labour rights, combat and completely eliminate forced labour and provide advisory and methodological assistance to workers and employers relating to labour relations, a presidential decree was issued on 20 August 2018 on measures to improve the structure of labour authorities and to strengthen the system for the protection of labour rights and occupational safety.

In particular, the decree approved a road map for promoting safe and secure labour that includes the drafting of Acts to ratify the ILO conventions.

On 4 March 2019, the President of Uzbekistan signed the Act on the ratification of the ILO Convention concerning Tripartite Consultations to Promote the Implementation of International Labour Standards (No. 144) (Geneva, 21 June 1976).

The draft law on the ratification of the ILO Protocol to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29) (Geneva, 11 June 2014) has been submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers. Discussions are underway to harmonize the draft law on the ratification of the ILO Convention concerning Labour Inspection in Industry and Commerce (No. 81) (Geneva, 11 July 1947) and the draft law on the ratification of ILO Convention concerning Labour Inspection in Agriculture (No. 129) (Geneva, 25 June 1969).

The draft law on amending and supplementing the Criminal Code and the Code of Administrative Liability of the Republic of Uzbekistan, which would increase penalties for labour law violations, including for the use of irregular employment

arrangements by employers, is under consideration by the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis.

Effective cooperation strategies have been introduced to protect guaranteed labour rights and to identify and eliminate all forms of forced labour in a timely manner. In particular, a public feedback mechanism has been established.

With a view to preventing the use of forced labour, addressing systemic errors in the work of State authorities in the field and completely eradicating the use of forced labour, the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations is using a specially established telephone hotline and the @mehnathuquq_bot Telegram channel to collect statistics on forced labour, including the number of reports and the number of resolved claims and complaints, disaggregated by city and region.

As at 1 February 2019, the hotline has received 2,145 reports from the public, of which 2,124 underwent an on-site review by State labour inspectors.

These reform efforts to eradicate forced labour undertaken at the national level by Uzbekistan have been commended by representatives of ILO, the United States of America Department of Labour, the international non-governmental organization Human Rights Watch and the States members of the European Union.

State inspectors have held events throughout the country to raise public awareness of labour rights. In that connection, around 3,000 different seminars, events and open houses have been held to promote the public's knowledge of the law, particularly among social workers, and managers of farms, organizations and enterprises. More than 30,000 members of the public and entrepreneurs from various sectors of the economy have attended the events.

More than 300 television and radio programmes had been broadcast on national and local television and radio channels, and articles were published in newspapers, magazines and on the Internet.

A parliamentary commission for the protection of guaranteed labour rights was established by a decision of the Senate of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan, dated 4 October 2017, to strengthen parliamentary and public monitoring of the implementation of national laws and international agreements that protect guaranteed labour rights, including preventing and combating situations that could entail child or forced labour in any form.

The parliamentary commission and the territorial commissions that it has established have carried out a number of activities in the past year. During the reporting period, a series of seminars were held in every province in the country to promote greater awareness of the ILO conventions and the purpose and the value of international labour standards. Managers and workers of more than 6,000 farms, organizations and enterprises have taken part in these events.

The parliamentary commission has studied the matter of implementing ILO conventions and recommendations, in particular Convention No. 187 and Recommendation No. 197.

Based on the commission's findings, a round table event was held on the topic of occupational safety at the national and international levels, and relevant recommendations were adopted.

The parliamentary commission, the science, education and health committee of the Senate and the labour and social issues committee of the Legislative Chamber reviewed the implementation of the Forced Labour Convention (No. 29) and the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention (No. 105).

To follow-up on their findings, the parliamentary commission and the aforementioned committees of the chambers of the Oliy Majlis held a joint meeting and adopted a decision on the subject.

Last year, 8,000 copies of 14 ILO conventions ratified by Uzbekistan were printed and distributed to all places of work for reference.
