INDEPENDENT INSTITUTE FOR MONITORING
OF THE FORMATION OF CIVIL SOCIETY

DEVELOPMENT OF CIVIL SOCIETY
IN UZBEKISTAN

REPORT

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Independent Institute for Monitoring of the Formation of Civil Society (IIMFCS) is a non-governmental organization that carries out systematic monitoring the formation of the processes related to formation of civil society in Uzbekistan, assists in strengthening the role of civil society institutions in democratic renewal and modernization of the country, increasing the political culture, legal awareness, social and political activity of citizens.

The report on «Development of Civil Society in Uzbekistan», is based on the compilation and analysis of statistical data and results of monitoring studies conducted by the IIMFCS, and represents the first experience of such publications. The Institute plans to publish such reports on an annual basis.

The report is intended to be used in the work of ministries, agencies, research centers, think tanks, NGOs and other interested institutions specializing in the research activities and the drafting of proposals in the area of civil society development and its institutions.

The Team of Authors from the IIMFCS will be grateful for all the comments and recommendations on the content of the paper forwarded to the following: 100027, Tashkent city, Bunyodkor sq, 1a, e-mail: irs@nimfogo.uz


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Establishing a democratic state based on the rule of law with steadily growing economy and open civil society is the goal that Uzbekistan set for itself since the independence was acquired.

Since then Uzbekistan has been implementing a number of organizational and legal measures aimed at the creation of conditions favourable for the formation of civil society, its development and the enhancement of its institutions. The progress of Uzbekistan in building civil society institutions can be divided into the following several stages distinguished in essence, significance and content:

**The first stage**: from 1991 to 2000 – the stage of priority reforms, transformations during the transition period and the formation of legal framework for the creation and functioning of the various institutions of civil society.

Firstly, the Constitution of Uzbekistan (the Supreme Law), adopted in 1992, declared that a human, their life, freedoms, dignity and other inalienable rights are the highest values.

The Constitution enshrines the right of citizens to form trade unions, political parties and other public associations, and to participate in mass movements. Article 58 of the Constitution specifies that «The state shall safeguard the rights and lawful interests of public associations and provide them with equal legal possibilities for participating in public life». The Constitution also underpins freedom of media and prohibition of censorship.

Also, during that stage a number of laws governing the establishment and operation of non-goverment, non-probij organization (NNO), citizens’ self-governing bodies, (CSB), political parties and mass media were adopted.


Adoption of the Law «On citizens self-governing bodies» in 1993 and its further amendments played an important role in strengthening and developing the existing natural and traditional self-governing institute in Uzbekistan, called «Mahalla». In other words, the *mahalla* as an effective self-governing body, enjoying the full support of people and capable of solving their vital and urgent problems, was supported by a law enacted for that very purpose.

The adoption of these documents gave a powerful impetus to the development of civil society institutions.

**The second stage**, from 2000 to 2010, is characterized by the processes of active democratic renewals and country modernization aimed to ensure the independent functioning of civil society institutions.

The main objective of that phase of the reform was to ensure consistent and gradual transition from a strong state, the need for which was reasonably necessary during the period of transition and statehood establishment, to a strong civil society.
In particular, during that stage a number of legal acts were adopted and community-based initiatives aimed at further development of civil society institutions, providing assurances regarding their activities, consolidating their efforts and resources to address issues of social importance, were implemented.

Thus, the adoption of Law in 2004 «On financing of political parties» was essential to the revitalization of political parties in order to strengthen their institutional capacity and financial situation. According to the law, the national system of funding of statutory activities of political parties through existing internal sources and public funds was established.

The adoption in 2007 of the Constitutional Law «On strengthening of the role of political parties in renewal and further democratization of state governance and country’s modernization» also gave significant impetus to the development of the multi-party system in Uzbekistan.

During this period the following laws aimed at the strengthening of the role and importance of civil society institutions in addressing urgent social and economic problems of Uzbekistan citizens were adopted: «On principles and guarantees of freedom of information» (2002), «On public foundations» (2003), «On guarantees of the activities of NGOs» (2007), Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan «On measures to assist the development of civil society in Uzbekistan» (2005).

The next step in supporting the institutions of civil society was the adoption in 2008 of the Joint Resolution of the Legislative Chamber and the Senate of the Oliy Majlis (Parliament) of the Republic of Uzbekistan «On measures to strengthen support of NGOs and other civil society institutions».

In accordance with the aforesaid Resolution the Public Fund for Support of NGOs and Other Civil Society Institutions under the Oliy Majlis, as well as the Parliamentary Commission for Administration of the Fund were established. Parliamentary Commission is formed from the deputies of the Legislative Chamber of the Senate of the Oliy Majlis, representatives of leading and reputable NGOs, other civil society institutions, as well as the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Finance.

During 2008–2013, in line with the decisions of the Parliamentary Commission over 28.9 billion Uzbek Soums (Uzbekistan Currency) were allocated to the country’s civil society organizations and have been utilized to support initiatives of civil society institutions through grant competitions, allocation of subsidies and signing public contracts.

The third stage, covering the period from 2011 onwards, is characterized by the development of civil society institutions in the wake of the implementation of comprehensive measures within the framework of the Concept of the Further Deepening of Democratic Reforms and the Formation of Civil Society in the Country¹, launched by the President of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov in November 2010, and aimed at the most important priorities of the country’s development.

This Concept initiated new reforms in all spheres of society’s life, with a clear task to develop and adopt new legal and regulatory framework that would provide for greater participation of civil society institutions in state and public development.

It should be underlined that the development of the above mentioned legal and regulatory framework is carried out by a special commission consisting of experts from relevant ministries and agencies, MPs, experts, research centers, think tanks, as well as representatives of civil society institutions.

At the same time, it should be also noted that the development and implementation of proposals on further development of civil society, strengthening the role and importance of its institutions in protecting public interests, human rights and freedoms require systematic monitoring and analysis of the processes taking place in civil society.

¹ Report of President Islam Karimov of Uzbekistan at the Joint Session of Legislative Chamber and Senate of Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan on 12 November 2010
In this regard, the IIMFCS together with its regional department carry out monitoring of the socio-political situation in the regions, media activities, NGOs, political parties, and self-governing bodies. This paper intends to assess different aspects of civil society and relevant institutions’ development in Uzbekistan based on the analysis of the monitoring studies.

As of today, expert community has not widely accepted the definition of the term “civil society”, nor there is common understanding of its essence, characteristics and functions. In addition, it can be seen that researchers employ different approaches to the issues of relations between civil society and state. While some researchers highlight confrontation aspect, others put forward partnership and cooperation factors emphasizing complimentary and mutually reinforcing traits.

This paper adopts the following understanding of the term “civil society”:

**Civil society is a social space where the rule of law is respected and maintained; rights, freedom and legitimate interests of people are protected; favourable conditions for personal development and self-fulfillment are created; and where there are functioning independent and stable institutions supported by people.**

From this definition, it follows that the formation of civil society depends not only on institutional factors (government policy regarding civil society institutions, qualitative indicators of their activities, the availability of organizations with relevant infrastructure, etc.) but also on personal factors and social practices (level of legal awareness, people’s political and legal culture, readiness of citizens to defend their rights, their social inclusion, involvement in community work).

In this paper the following entities are considered as institutes of civil society: non-governmental and non-profit organizations (NGOs), political parties, public movements, trade unions, public funds, self-government bodies (mahalla), independent mass media (media).

Given the above, an analysis of the following main factors (indicators) regarding the development of civil society in Uzbekistan, has been undertaken:

1. **Legal framework** that creates necessary conditions for the development of civil society institutions.

2. **Quantitative and qualitative composition** and organizational capacity of civil society institutions.

3. **Financial sustainability** of civil society institutions, mechanisms and modalities for their financial support.

4. **Infrastructure** and activities of various organizations, providing support to civil society institutions on a regular basis.

5. **Protection of the public interests**: participation of civil society institutions in public administration matters, their impact on state authorities, defending the rights and freedoms of citizens.

6. **Public recognition**: attitude of citizens and state towards the institutions of civil society, their public image, and status.

One of the important factors in the formation of civil society is a high level of civic awareness, political culture, and legal culture. To achieve this objective it is vital to implement the following measures: enable people’s respect to human rights and freedoms, law-abiding behaviour; form a sense of belonging to the on-going developments in their homeland and the world; secure the awareness of citizens of their constitutional rights and freedoms.

In this regard, the following indicators were analysed to study the level of people’s legal awareness and legal culture:

1. **Legal framework** to improve the legal culture of the population.

2. **Legal education within the education system**.

3. **System of training and advanced training of legal personnel**.
4. Activities of government bodies in the improvement of the people’s legal culture.

5. Role of civil society in shaping the people’s legal culture.


7. People’s civic engagement seen in their participation in socio-political, socio-economic and cultural life of the country.

8. Ability of citizens to defend their rights, including through referral to public and non-state organizations to protect their rights.

This report is prepared on the base of the 2013 year results, and consists of following chapters:

1. Strengthening the role and place of NGOs in civil society institutions system.

2. Role of independent media in the public control system.

3. Political parties role in democratization of government bodies and governance.


5. High legal culture is the base of a democratic society.

The team of authors hopes that the publication of this paper will be a significant contribution to the formation of the foundation of scientific and practical knowledge about civil society in Uzbekistan.

The Institute plans to continue publication of annual reports on the development of civil society in Uzbekistan based on the analysis and monitoring of the relevant surveys.
CHAPTER 1

STRENGTHENING THE ROLE AND PLACE OF NGOs IN CIVIL SOCIETY INSTITUTIONS SYSTEM

1.1. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Legal framework regulating the establishment and operation of public associations, protection of their rights and legitimate interests is enshrined in the Article 13 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan.


In particular, the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan «On guarantees of the activities of non-government non-profit organizations» prohibited obstruction of or interference in the activities of NGOs. The law also guarantees the right of NGOs to access information; they have the right to appeal to the state authorities and officials with a request to obtain the information necessary to exercise their statutory activities. A separate article of the Law gives the right to NGOs to protect themselves from unlawful decisions of the state bodies, actions (failures to act) of the officials. A special chapter covers the aspects of state support to NGO activities. In particular, that chapter specifies such forms of state support as subsidies, grants and public contracts, the procedures and conditions of their release.

Entering into force of the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan «On ecological control» was also an
important event of 2013 and the development of the Law was contributed by the Ecological Movement of Uzbekistan, which also initiated and facilitated public discussions on its’ draft.

In line with this law, NGOs and citizens’ self-governing bodies are empowered to implement public ecological control and participate in the preparation and decision-making on the issues related to environmental protection. NGOs also have the right to make proposals to appropriate state bodies on taking measures on identified facts of violations of the legislation in the field of environmental protection and rational use of natural resources.

Adoption of the Decree of the President of Uzbekistan «On additional measures to assist the development of civil society in Uzbekistan» No PR-285 dated 12 December 2013 became another milestone event of 2013.

This Decree provides for the implementation of measures to simplify the procedures of registration of NGOs and their reporting, and to improve institutional interaction between government agencies and NGOs. In particular, starting from 1 January 2014 the amount of NGO registration fee is reduced 5 times, and the amount of fee charged for the state registration of NGOs symbols is also reduced 2.5 times. The period of handling applications for state registration of NGOs is also reduced two times, from two months to one month. In addition, the Ministry of Justice is instructed to take measures on ensuring effective control over the observance of the rights and interests of NGOs enshrined in the laws and international treaties of the Republic of Uzbekistan, by public authorities.

To facilitate further development of NGOs as well as to strengthen their role in ensuring the effectiveness of the implemented reforms in the country it is necessary to ensure adoption of the laws «On social partnership» and «On public control in the Republic of Uzbekistan». It is also important to accelerate the introduction of amendments to the Administrative Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan to bolster accountability of public officials for the violation of the NGO rights to carry out public control.

1.2. QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE COMPOSITION

The stable growth in the number of registered NGOs could be seen during 2013. Thus, on January 1, 2014 the number of registered NGOs exceeded 7800.

The analysis shows that in 2013, growth in the number of NGOs was primarily due to the registration of newly formed Water Users Associations in the country provinces, as well as registration of branch offices of national civil
society institutions (Farmers Council, Youth Movement «Kamolot», political parties, etc.).

At the same time, an analysis of the statutory objectives and activities of the country NGOs shows that the majority of NGOs works in the following areas: supporting entrepreneurship and farming (17.9%), sports (13%) and youth organizations (8.3%), regional branches of political parties (10.7%), an organization protecting the rights and interests of persons with disabilities (7.3%).

The results of the survey carried out among 120 representatives of officially registered NGOs, showed that about 60% of NGOs involve volunteers (from 2 to 5 on average), mostly students, to help with implementation of the grant projects.

At the same time, the results of monitoring studies show that NGOs face institutional problems such as weak material and technical supply. Only 16% of the interviewed NGO representatives reported that their organizations have own premises, 40% rent space on a for-fee basis. 46% of the interviewed indicated that their NGOs have all necessary office equipment, computers, faxes, printers, as well as international telephone access and Internet. Only 10% of the interviewed NGOs have their own web page on the Internet.

1.3. FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

The funds of the Public Foundation for Support of NGOs and other civil society institutions un-
Under the country’s Parliament remain to be an important source of financial support for national NGOs implementing socially important projects.

As the study shows, the number of NGOs involved in grant competitions held by the Public Foundation is increasing as: 564 NGO participated in the competition with 760 projects in 2012, while in 2013 already 639 NGOs submitted to the Parliamentary Commission 780 project proposals. Accordingly, the number of NGOs, which won the grant competitions also increased by 13%: from 163 NGOs in 2012 to 193 in 2013.

At the same time, the amount of funds allocated annually by the Public Foundation for support of social projects of NGOs is also increasing gradually. Thus, the Public Foundation allocated for these purposes UZS 444.6 mln in 2009, while in 2013 the amount already reached UZS 2.7 billion. On average, the funds allocated for one project are around UZS 14-15 mln.

The analysis of surveys conducted among civil society activists, shows that NGOs in the regions of Uzbekistan are also funded by international and foreign organizations. Thus, out of 147 respondents 21% noted that the implementation of grant projects were funded repeatedly by international organizations such as the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women, USAID, OSCE, ADB, World Bank, the EU Commission and others.

In accordance with the Tax Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan, nonprofit organizations do not pay the following taxes:
- Corporate Income tax (Article 126);
- Value added tax (Article 197);
- Use of water resources tax (Article 257);
- Property levy of legal entities (Article 265);
- Land tax (Article 279);
- Tax on the development of social infrastructure (Article 295).

NGOs are also exempt from the payment of mandatory contributions to the following funds:
- Pension Fund (Article 312);
- National Road Fund (Article 316);
- The Non-budgetary Foundation for Reconstruction, Refurbishment and Equipping of Schools, Professional Colleges and Academic Lyceums and Medical Institutions (Article 325').
Financial sustainability of NGOs is also secured by the legislation that exempts them from taxation and other mandatory payments.

At the same time, membership fees are the main financial source only for certain organizations, such as trade unions and territorial divisions of the Chamber of Commerce. Youth Movement «Kamolot» is one of the examples of the local NGOs whose budget is financed by small business enterprises, based on signed agreements on mutual support, in the amount of 8% from the charged amount of single tax payment.

1.4. INFRASTRUCTURE

One of the largest organizations providing information, logistical and material support to NGOs is the National Association of NGOs of Uzbekistan (NANNOUz), operating since 2005. Currently NANNOUz has 12 resource centers in the country regions. 450 NANNOUz members consolidate their efforts in the implementation of social projects and programs.

One of the achievements of this institution is an international conference organized and conducted in Tashkent in September 2013 entitled «The participation of NGOs in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals: experience of Uzbekistan».

Already traditional regional forums and the National NGO Forum held on the initiative of NANNOUz in November 2013 generated widespread interest.

To some extent, consolidation of core functions of NGO sin 2013 were also carried out by both the Women’s Committee of Uzbekistan and the Ecological Movement, one of the statutory objectives of which is to provide support to women’s and environmental NGOs respectively.

A survey among the leaders and activists of regional NGOs demonstrates the need for further improvement of infrastructure organizations in the country provinces. In this regard, first of all, National Association of NGOs of Uzbekistan is an urgent need to ensure full-fledged operation of its resource centers in the provinces.

1.5. PROTECTION OF THE PUBLIC INTERESTS

The results of the survey conducted by the Institute indicate that the role and importance of NGOs in the implementation of democratic reforms in the country, development and the implementation of major state programs for socio-economic development, have intensified over recent years.

In 2013, representatives of NGOs continued to take active part in the work of the commissions for the preparation of draft legal acts developed in the framework of the practical implementation of the President’s Concept (these commissions have been established in accordance with the Decrees of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan №№ P3557-3562 dated 14 January 2011).

Involvement of activists of NGOs in the development and discussion of proposals to improve legislation is in increase. Thus, in 2013 over two thousand representatives of local NGOs took part in public discussion and examination of draft laws «On ecological control», «On social partnership» and «On public control» (in 2012 the number of those who took part was 1,200). Offered proposals
NGO representatives are actively involved in the implementation of socially important projects, monitoring compliance with laws in the field of protection of human rights and freedoms, ensuring transparency of government activities via participation in the work of such committees as:

- National Interagency Commission against Human Trafficking;
- Republican Commission for Coordination of Activities against the Spread of HIV Infection;
- Interagency Council for Coordination of the Activities of Government Bodies in Legal Propaganda and Education;
- Public Council under the Ministry of Defense;
- Interagency Working Group to review current state of compliance with human rights and freedoms by law enforcement and other government bodies;
- Interagency expert group for monitoring of implementation of National Action Plan under CEDAW, etc.

and recommendations were submitted for analysis and synthesis to the relevant expert group drafting the bills.

During 2012–2013 NGO representatives, as a part of Government commission, actively participated in the development and implementation of government programs «Year of the Family» and «Year of the Welfare and Prosperity» (see orders of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan №P-3760 dated 13 December 2011 and №R-3940 of 13 December 2012).

If the number of NGO representatives directly involved into the implementation of the State program «Year of the Family» in 2012 at the national level was 23 (and over 320 at provincial level), in 2013 the number of republican NGOs involved into the implementation of the State program «Year of Wellbeing and Prosperity» increased to 31 (and more than 430 NGOs from country provinces); i.e., the level of involvement of civil society organizations in the implementation of government programs increased by 34%. Institutional mechanisms of interaction between public administration bodies and NGOs to address the issues of socio-economic development, protection of rights, freedoms and interests of the people are established and effectively functional. As of 1 January 2014, the leaders and activists of public organizations are the members of more than 40 permanent national

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**LAW OF THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN**

“ON GUARANTIES OF ACTIVITIES OF NON-GOVERNMENT NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS”

**Extract**

**Article 6. Guaranties of access to information**

The State ensures the right of the non-government non-profit organizations to search, obtain, research, disseminate, use and keep information in accordance with legislation.

... Governmental agencies and their officials are obliged to provide the non-government non-profit organizations with an opportunity of familiarization with legislative acts, documents, decisions and other materials, which affect their rights and legal interests.

**Article 10. Protection from unlawful decisions of the state bodies, acts (inaction) of their officials**

The non-government non-profit organizations shall have a right to appeal the unlawful decisions of the state bodies, acts (inaction) of their officials to a higher body in accordance with subordination or the court. The non-government non-profit organizations are exempt from paying the state fee for appealing against the unlawful decisions of the government bodies, actions (inaction) of their officials who violate their rights and legitimate interests.

The harm cause by the non-government non-profit organizations as a result of misconduct of government decisions, actions (inaction) of their officials shall be compensated on the basis of a court decision.
interagency committees (councils, working groups), established in accordance with the decisions of the country head and government.

Last year, such organizations as the Federation of Societies for the Protection of Consumer’ Rights, Ecological Movement of Uzbekistan, and Youth Movement «Kamolot» demonstrated the most effective use of their statutory authorities in implementing public control.

As the results of the survey show, as of today, over 40% of the country’s NGOs provide social services to the people, such as providing psychological and legal assistance for professional education, employment assistance, social rehabilitation, support for vulnerable groups, and others. The greatest number of such NGOs operate in Tashkent, Samarkand and Khorezm provinces.

At the same time, the monitoring analysis showed existing gaps in the work of local authorities with NGOs. Thus, only country-wide NGOs having branch offices are invited for the implementation of government programs in the provinces («Mahalla», «Nuroniy», «For Healthy Generation» Foundations, Youth Movement «Kamolot», Women’s Committee of Uzbekistan, trade unions, Society for Rehabilitation of the Disabled and others).

The monitoring also demonstrated low level of legal awareness and political culture among NGOs leaders and activists, poor knowledge of the legal opportunities for the implementation of public oversight, application to state authorities with a request for information, as well as appeals against wrongful acts of government officials and others.

In general, it should be noted that the activities of NGOs in the country regions largely focused on providing various social services to the people and to a lesser extent on the implementation of public control over the activities of state and government structures.

1.6. PUBLIC RECOGNITION

Social status of NGOs is increasing and the work of activists of civil society is publicly recognized. In particular, 159 NGO representatives were honored with state awards by the decision of the President of Uzbekistan during 2010–2013.

At the same time, NGO leaders and activists need to make greater use of modern methods of informing the public about carried out activities in order to gain credibility and trust among citizens, expanding the range of its supporters and partners. Thus, according to a survey conducted in the country regions, out of 308 respondents, only 54% indicated that they trust NGOs in one way or another, and use their services.
CHAPTER 2

ROLE OF INDEPENDENT MEDIA IN THE SYSTEM OF PUBLIC OVERSIGHT

2.1. LEGAL FRAMEWORK


Adoption in December 2011, a Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan «On Granting Additional Tax Benefits and Preferences for Further Development of Media» was another step in ensuring the independence of the media, increasing their role in the establishment of public control over the activities of state authorities.

Organization in 2013 of law experiment in Bukhara and Samarkand provinces to test the norms of the draft law «On the openness of activities of the government bodies and governance» became a milestone event in ensuring freedom of expression and information. According to experts, the involvement of the media, NGOs and citizens in the experiment demonstrated the efficacy of a new method of using the potential of civil society. The draft law modified in the light of the outcomes of the law experiment was submitted to the Legislative Chamber of Parliament.

At the same time, soonest adoption of other draft laws being developed in the framework of the President’s Concept is required, in particular, the laws «On the economic foundations of the activity
of the mass media», and «On the guarantees of state support of the mass media».

2.2. QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE COMPOSITION

As of January 1, 2014, 1,372 media outlets were registered with the Uzbekistan Agency for Press and Information, including 1,016 press outlets (709 newspapers, 289 journals, 14 bulletins, 4 information agencies), 95 electronic media (63 TV channels, 32 radio channels), and 261 news websites.

62% of TV and radio broadcasting stations and websites are non-government media. Media outlets publish and broadcast in 11 languages of the ethnic groups living in Uzbekistan. In 198 newspapers (26.4% of all newspapers nationwide) chief editors are women.

It should be noted that the number of Internet resources registered as media outlets over the past five years increased by more than 2 times. Thus, as of January 1, 2014 the number of Internet media has reached 261, out of which 256 (98.1%) are private.
Internet media provide information in Uzbek, Russian, English, French, German and other languages. Apparently the increase of Internet resources specialized in news coverage in the .uz domain is directly linked to the increase in the number of Internet users. Thus, according to the State Committee for Communications, Information and Telecommunication Technologies of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the number of Internet users in the country increased from 1 million people in 2007 and reached 10.9 million people by the end of 2013.

According to the International Telecommunication Union, in 2013 Uzbekistan occupied 40th place in the number of Internet users (out of 212 countries)\(^1\). In turn, according to the rating of «Internet World Stats», the country takes 11th place (among 35 countries)\(^2\) in the same category in Asia and the first place in Central Asia.

### 2.3. FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Grant competitions annually organized for the media by the Public Foundation for Support of NGOs and other civil society institutions under the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan play an important role in

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DEGREE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN “ON GRANTING ADDITIONAL TAX BENEFITS AND PREFERENCES FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF MEDIA” № PR-1672 AS OF DATED 30 DECEMBER 2011

Extract

1. Effective from January 1, 2012 release for a period of five years from:

- income tax and the tax on improvement and development of social infrastructure the profit earned by media editorial boards and publishers from the sale of socio-political and children’s literature and literature for persons with disabilities (blind, deaf, and others);
- payment of mandatory contributions to the Republican Road Fund and Reconstruction, Refurbishment and Equipping of Educational and Medical Institutions under the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Uzbekistan from printing houses and publishing entities with respect to revenues from sales of media products, books and services for their replication;
- customs duties (except customs duties) paper, printing materials and media equipment imported by printing houses, publishers, broadcasters and organizations for production of media and books according to a list approved by the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

2. Effective from January 1, 2012, media and books delivery services are not subject to value added taxation.

3. Effective from January 1, 2012, to decrease single tax from 6 to 5 per cent for mass media offices, publishing houses, printing organizations, broadcasters relating to micro-firms and small enterprises;

increasing the efficiency of the independent media, the transparency and openness of the reforms.

The amount of grant funds allocated for the development and support of the media also increase every year. Thus, if the amount of allocated grants in 2012 was UZS 507.1 million, in 2013 this figure reached UZS 803.5 million.

Tax incentives and preferences applicable to the media in accordance with the Resolution of the President of Uzbekistan «On Granting Additional Tax Benefits and Preferences for Further Development of Media» dated 30 December 2011 contributed significantly to the strengthening the financial stability of the media.

2.4. INFRASTRUCTURE

One of the main factors for dynamic development of the media is an effective system of professional journalistic training.

Currently the national system of training and retraining of journalists includes Uzbek University of State World Languages, National University of Uzbekistan named after Mirzo Ulughbek and Karakalpakstan State University named after Berdak annually prepare 165 bachelors and 70 masters.

Social structures, regularly supporting media and journalists of the country, represented by the following four organizations:

1. The Creative Union of Journalists of Uzbekistan (2004), which is focused on increasing the role and status of journalists in society and providing support in the protection of their rights and interests. The most significant events of the Creative Union in 2013 were the Annual National Contest in Journalism «Oltin Kalam» (Golden Feather) and «Eng Ulug, Eng Aziz» (The Greatest, The Dearest) Competition.
2. International Centre for Training Journalist (1997) that in the year of 2013 mainly focused on organizing and conducting various seminars and trainings for journalists with the support of international and foreign partners.

3. National Association of Electronic Mass Media (2004) that currently brings together and supports more than 100 electronic media in the country. International media forum devoted to the development of youth projects in the electronic media, has become a significant event organized by the Association in 2013.

4. Public Foundation for Support and Development of Independent Print Media and News Agencies of Uzbekistan (2005), the goal of which is to support the development of independent media, strengthen their material and technical base and human resources. Among the most important activities undertaken by the Foundation in 2013, is a National Forum «Press Uzbekistan» and the Competition for Journalists «E’tiroy».

At the same time, strengthening the role of the media in ensuring freedom of expression and information and implementation of public oversight requires performance improvement of these NGOs via improving professional skills of journalists of provincial media in the first place.

2.5. PROTECTION OF THE PUBLIC INTERESTS

Analysis of the monitoring data indicates significantly increased role of media in identifying and highlighting topical issues at the local level and implementation of public control over the activities of state and government structures.

Carried out in 2013, a survey of the content of 393 newspapers (156 district, 87 city, 25 regional and 125 central) showed an increase in the number of analytical materials in the media containing objective criticism of the local authorities and raising pressing issues of socio-economic development in the provinces. Thus, in 2012 the number of the most significant critical and analytical materials in the domestic press was 659, while in 2013 this figure increased up to 2,159 articles, of which 1,256 are of critical content.

24.3% of the total number of critical articles are on the activities of public authorities and local governance. The articles cover such topics as neighborhood improvement, preparing for autumn-winter season, performance of post offices in the delivery of pensions and other social benefits. In the articles criticized the activity of utilities (22%), problems of traffic security (13%), country education system (10%), and healthcare (7%).

Data on Critical and Analytical Materials Published in Provincial Media in 2012–2013

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<td>535</td>
<td>629</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

II quarter 2013 | I quarter 2013 | III quarter 2013 | IV quarter 2013 |
The analysis shows the growing confidence of readers to the media as an effective means of expressing their opinion on various issues of social importance as an instrument of public control over the activities of state and government structures in addressing existing problems. In particular, out of 1,256 critical articles were published in national press during 2013, 261 (21%) of the materials prepared on the basis of citizens’ appeals to local newspapers.

It should be also noted that while in 2012 the representatives of the state bodies took measures to address the problems raised in publications in 45% of cases, in the first half of 2013 this indicator went up to 85%.

At the same time, the survey on interaction between state bodies’ press-services and media conducted among 333 chief editors of regional newspapers, demonstrated still existing problematic factors and shortcomings impeding the development of regional media. In particular, 25% of the surveyed chief editors noted «unwillingness to spoil relations with the local authorities» as a reason preventing the publication of critical materials, while and 24% of the respondents highlighted the «self-censorship» matter. The improvement of professional training of journalists and staffing of provincial media with skilled journalists are the important tasks to be addressed in the development of media activities.

In addition, there is a need to strengthen cooperation in the country provinces between press services of government and business management bodies and the media and public. This implies the need to address the issue of staffing press services of public authorities with qualified personnel.

2.6. PUBLIC RECOGNITION

In the course of 2013, the Creative Union of Journalists continued to quarterly publish in central newspapers information about most actual and efficient materials which were published and broadcast by the regional mass media. Based on the results of this work, publications and TV programs of more than 100 journalists have got a public recognition.

An important role in public recognition of the journalists’ efforts is played by the annual contest «Oltin Kalam» conducted by the above Union where more than 400 journalists participated in 2013 with their works, and 20 became winners in various nominations.

Based on the results of other contest in journalism – «Eng Ulug, Eng Aziz» – where 321 journalist have participated, works of 26 authors were named as the best ones.

It should be also noted that in 2013 three representatives of the mass media were awarded a title of «Honored Journalist of Uzbekistan».
CHAPTER 3

POLITICAL PARTIES’ ROLE IN THE DEMOCRATIZATION OF THE GOVERNMENT BODIES AND GOVERNANCE

3.1. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Legal basis for parties’ function in gin Uzbekistan is formalized in appropriate articles of Constitution, in laws «On political parties» (1996), «On financing of political parties» (2004), Constitutional Law «On strengthening of the role of political parties in renewal and further democratization of state governance and country’s modernization» (2007) and other regulatory instruments.

Political Party is a unique form of association, one of the tasks of which is the expression of political will of citizens, i.e. a party is a collective platform for the people to exercise the basic human rights of association and freedom of expression.

Prohibition on interference in parties’ activity is strengthened by state legislation and precisely defined the authority of the registering body and sets the limits of this authority. A party has the right to obtain government fund for financing of its statutory activity that it has a required number of parliamentary seats based on the results of the elections to the Legislation Chamber of the Parliament.

LEGAL BASIS FOR PARTIES’ ACTIVITY:
- Law «On public associations in the Republic of Uzbekistan» (1991);
- Law «On political parties» (1996);
- Law «On the election to region, district, city Kengashs (Councils) of People’s Deputies of Uzbekistan» (1997);
- Law «On the election to Oliy Majlis of Uzbekistan» (2003);
- Law «On financing of political parties» (2004);
- Constitutional Law «On the strengthening of the role of political parties in renewal and further democratization of state governance and country’s modernization» (2007), etc.
Furthermore, law obliges the parties to provide a transparency of their financial operations by way of annual publishing of their financial reports in mass media.

Conditions for the development of multi-party system and political pluralism is also provided by legislation. Particularly, «parliamentary majority», «parliamentary opposition» terms are clearly defined. Party that gained the majority parliamentary seats in election to the Legislative chamber has the right to propose a candidate of a Prime Minister or initiate their dismissal. Besides, the law envisages that consultations should be conducted with party groups in regional Kengashs (Councils) of People’s Deputies during the approval of khokims of regions and the City of Tashkent.

The amendment of the Law «On political parties» in order to strengthen the authority of party groups in local Kengashs of People’s Deputies the parliament has initiated during 2013. Particularly, according to the new regulation, party groups have the right to propose chairmen, deputy chairmen candidates and members of committees or commissions of a respective representative body. Party groups also have the right to propose on hearings report of the head public body located in relevant territory at sessions of Jokargi Kenes of Karakalpakstan, Kengash of People’s Deputies.

### 3.2. QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE COMPOSITION

Over 2013, all four parties – Liberal-Democratic Party of Uzbekistan (LDPU), People’s Democratic Party of Uzbekistan (PDPU), Democratic Party «Milliy tiklanish» (DP «Milliy tiklanish») and Social-Democratic Party «Adolat» (SDP «Adolat») (in some extent), have expanded the number of their members.

During 2013, there were no changes in number of parties’ fractions and deputy group Ecological Movement of Uzbekistan in the Legislative Chamber. However, the last year elections of deputies to Jokargi Kenes of Karakalpakstan, regional and Tashkent Kengashs of People’s Deputies were conducted in 68 constituencies. Based on the results of elections held in 2013, distribution of parliamentary seats in
the territorial Kengashs of People’s Deputies as of 1 January 2014 are as follows: most seats belong to LDPU (42% of total number of deputies) and PDPU (31% of total number of deputies). Representatives of DP «Milliy tiklanish» and SDP «Adolat» have 17% and 10% parliamentary seats respectively.

All parties, at certain regularity (but at least once a week) publish and disseminate their newspapers. Whilst publications of the parties are still not an efficient advocacy mean for program tasks of the parties among wide population strata, they do not contribute to internal linkage between the leadership and grass roots of the party. Thus, despite the increase in the number of party members, circulation of all four parties publications by the end of 2013 had decreased practically as much as twice, that witnesses low demand for party newspapers among the electorate and the MPs of the parties.

| Jokargi Kenes of Karakalpakstan | Andijan regional KPD | 12 | 18 | 12 | 7 | 7 |
| Jokargi Kenes of Karakalpakstan | Bukhara regional KPD | 19 | 22 | 9 | 4 | 4 |
| Jokargi Kenes of Karakalpakstan | Djizzak regional KPD | 24 | 11 | 11 | 3 | 3 |
| Jokargi Kenes of Karakalpakstan | Kashkadarya regional KPD | 22 | 22 | 9 | 4 | 4 |
| Jokargi Kenes of Karakalpakstan | Navoi regional KPD | 24 | 22 | 9 | 4 | 4 |
| Jokargi Kenes of Karakalpakstan | Namangan regional KPD | 26 | 23 | 10 | 6 | 6 |
| Jokargi Kenes of Karakalpakstan | Samarkand regional KPD | 28 | 13 | 9 | 3 | 3 |
| Jokargi Kenes of Karakalpakstan | Surkhandarya regional KPD | 25 | 13 | 9 | 3 | 3 |
| Jokargi Kenes of Karakalpakstan | Syrdarya regional KPD | 19 | 28 | 9 | 3 | 3 |
| Jokargi Kenes of Karakalpakstan | Tashkent regional KPD | 23 | 24 | 6 | 5 | 5 |
| Jokargi Kenes of Karakalpakstan | Fergana regional KPD | 28 | 12 | 15 | 5 | 5 |
| Jokargi Kenes of Karakalpakstan | Khorezm regional KPD | 25 | 14 | 12 | 9 | 9 |
| Jokargi Kenes of Karakalpakstan | Tashkent city KPD | 23 | 17 | 10 | 10 | 10 |
3.3. FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Last year, most part of the parties’ budgets was formed by the State budget allocations. Share of above funds in LDPU’s budget was 87.6%, PDPU – 62.7%, DP «Milliy tiklanish» – 87.9%, SDP «Adolat» – 85.5%.

Remaining budget of the parties was formed by membership fees. There at, fees in PDPU made up amount comparable to the State’s financial backing (37.1%), i.e. of all four parties, PDPU is the most financially viable. Much less fees are in LDPU, DP «Milliy tiklanish» and SDP «Adolat».

3.4. INFRASTRUCTURE

One of the organizations consistently supporting parties is an Independent Institute for Monitoring of the Formation of Civil Society and its regional departments. In 2013, within the framework of the assistance to the further strengthening of multi-party system, the Institute has organized, separately with each party, a series of regional seminar-trainings on activity of grassroots of party organizations, as well as party groups in local Kengashs of People’s Deputies. In total, 228 national and regional conferences, round tables, seminars and trainings were held.
3.5. PROTECTION OF THE PUBLIC INTERESTS

Analysis of work of the party groups in the regional representative government bodies during 2012–2013 witnesses stirring up of their activity in social-economic issues, carrying out of the deputy control of activity of executive agencies, initiating verification of the law enforcement and other government decisions on the ground.

Deputies associations of the parties in the regional representative bodies have started to more actively apply a practice of hearing of reports of the officials on the status with resolution of the social-economic issues on the ground, implementation of the government programs.

In 2013, in comparison with previous year, the number of reports of the officials on topical questions of social-economic development on the ground that were heard at instigation of the members of party groups at sessions of Jokargi Kenes of Karakalpakstan, regional and Tashkent city Kengashs of People’s Deputies has practically tripled (in 2013 – 148, in 2012 – 50).

Over the past period, the deputies of each party widely exercised the right of deputy inquiry. Thus, if in 2012 978 inquiries of the deputies were submitted, in 2013 there were 1698 inquiries.

In 2013, a rise in the party groups’ pro-activeness on proposing the program tasks of the parties was recorded, as well as interests of their permanent constituency. Particularly, number of proposals of party groups to Kengashs sessions in 2013 in comparison with the previous year had increased by 25%: from 82 to 101. Whilst from 101 submitted proposals, respective Kengashs have taken relevant decisions on 73 (72%).

At the same time, analysis of monitoring results witnesses existing challenges and untapped reserves in the parties’ activity.

Organization of the parties’ work on detection and studying of the social-economic problems that worry the local population, development of the regional programs on addressing of economic and social problems on the ground, implementation of their program goals, require a systemic approach.
3.6. PUBLIC RECOGNITION

Studying of the public opinion and preferences of the citizens witnesses inadequate public awareness about targeted tasks of each party and their program divergences. In experts’ judgment, this is firstly caused by the lack of planned and systemic work of the parties on the clarification of their program goals and tasks, and a clearly formulated position on certain social issues, to the people and potential electorate.

In this regard, parties should improve their performance, and it is especially essential prior to the forthcoming elections to be held in December 2014 to the Parliament and local Kengashs of People’s Deputies.
4.1. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Legal framework that regulates the operation of citizens’ autonomous bodies is formalized in article 105 of Uzbekistan’s Constitution, and in laws «On citizens’ self-governing bodies» (CSB) and «On election of chairman (aksakal) of citizens’ gatherings and his/her advisers».

In 2013, the law regulating the activity of CSB was substantially amended. So, in April 2013, laws «On citizens’ self-governing bodies» and «On election of chairman (aksakal) of citizens’ gatherings and his/her advisers» came into force in a revised version, developed under practical implementation of the Concept. Particularly, new provisions were included in law «On citizens’ self-governing bodies» specifying a unified order of autonomous bodies’ recording, defining forms of public control, and a list of commissions being established in citizens meetings. Authorities of Kengash of citizens gatherings were expanded by a provision of additional functions to it.

New provisions were included in the Law «On election of chairman (aksakal) of citizens’ gatherings and his/her advisers» directed at the improvement of elections to citizens’ self-governing bodies, securing transparency in exercising citizens’ right to elect and be elected to citizens’ self-governing bodies. Particularly, Kengash of Senate of Oliy Majlis has the right to fix concrete dates of elections and the order of preparatory activities for elections. Regulation on the establishment of the Commission of Kengash of Senate for the
elections period on assistance in the organization and holding of elections of chairmen of citizens meeting and their advisers was introduced. A number of additional requirements to candidates for chair persons of citizens’ gatherings are set up, procedures were introduced according to which candidates in their speeches should declare the program of their future activity.

Over 2013, 16 by laws (on activity of citizens gatherings and commissions, kengashs on the coordination of CSB’s activity, etc.) had been also developed and approved for implementation of laws, and adopted in revised version.

Milestone event of 2013 was the adoption in October 2013 of the Decree of the President of Uzbekistan «On the organization of advanced training for employees of citizens’ gatherings bodies».

4.2. QUANTITATIVE-QUALITATIVE COMPOSITION

As of 1 January 2014, there were 9756 citizens’ gatherings in Uzbekistan. Keeping in mind the size of the population, on the average each citizens’ gatherings covers about 3 thousand people.

According to Constitution, the chairmen of citizens’ gatherings and their advisers are reelected every 2.5 years based on openness principles, selectivity and equal voting power. In November-December 2013, during the regular elections to citizens’ self-governing bodies 9756 chairmen (aksakals) of
Based on the results of elections, women were elected as chairmen of 1310 (13.4%) citizens’ gatherings in the republic, thereof, 754 (57.6%) of them were reelected. In some regions, the number of women elected as chairmen of citizens’ gatherings significantly exceeds their average percentage in the country. For instance, in Andijan region it was 22.7%, Namangan – 19.0%, Tashkent – 18.7%, Bukhara region – 16.4%.

For comparison: share of women elected as chairmen to citizens’ gatherings based on the results of 2008 elections was 11.5%, in 2011 – 12.7%.

At present, the chairmen of citizens’ gatherings, the consultant on religious education and spiritual-moral upbringing, the executive secretary and the head of public formation «Mahalla posboni» all have a full-time job in each citizens’ gathering – in total, around 40 thousand people. Additionally, the advisers elected from reputable and respected residents to citizens’ gatherings, who chair commissions on major activities, participate in work of citizens’ self-governing bodies on a voluntary basis. Their number amounts to about 100 thousand people.

4.3. FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Financial base for the activity of citizens’ self-governing bodies is formed with their own funds, local budget, charitable donations of entities and persons, as well as other funds as provided for by the law.

During 2013, «Mahalla» Fund has allocated around UZS 16 billion for material and technical basis of citizens’ autonomous bodies.

Last year, «Mahalla» Fund jointly with State Committee on Communication and ICT has continued their work on computerization of citizens’ gatherings. At large, to date around 84% of citizens’ gatherings in the republic are equipped with modern computers.
4.4. INFRASTRUCTURE

Leading social entity is «Mahalla» National Charitable Foundation that has been assisting in the strengthening of citizens’ self-governing bodies for a long time (1992).

The afore said Foundation has a status of a working body of the Republican council on the coordination of the activity of citizens’ self-governing bodies. Conversely, territorial branches of the «Mahalla» Foundation by status are the working bodies of the respective territorial councils on coordination of CSB’s activity.

At the same time, advanced training for employees of citizens’ self-governing bodies, arranged in 2013 in each region for assistance to citizens’ self-governing bodies in addressing of their tasks, should play a key role.

4.5. PROTECTION OF PUBLIC INTERESTS

Targeted support to socially vulnerable population strata (payment of social allowances and material aid to poor families) in 2013 was one of the main activities of citizens’ self-governing bodies. So, in 2013, total social aid to citizens’ self-governing bodies equaled to UZS 1.131 billion that is slightly less than in 2012 – UZS 1.185 billion.

Analysis of monitoring results, study of opinion of employees of citizens’ self-governing bodies allows to note a number of positive moments in CSBs’ activity on the resolution of socially important tasks.

Improvement is observed in interaction between CSBs and the deputies of local KPDs in the resolution of issues faced by citizens assemblies (provision of employment to population, social support to poor families, and development of private and family business). Thus, during the interview, 466 (32%) employees of CSB out of 1471 respondents have pointed out at an availability of concrete results of cooperation with the deputy corps of local Kengashs (in 2012 only 52 (3.4%) employees of CSBs out of 1550 respondents have pointed out to the efficiency of such cooperation).

Practice of applying the authorities by the citizens’ autonomous bodies envisaged by the Law “On public control” is being gradually broadened. Particularly, during the field monitoring of 588 citizens’ gatherings in 142 districts/cities, more than a half of chairmen of citizens assemblies (55%) have noted that activities held in 2013 on hearings of reports of the executive agencies’ heads were in the format of earnest dialogue and discussions, and had a high practical value.

At the same time, monitoring results witness the existence of topical issues to be resolved, untapped reserves in assistance to CSBs in implementation of their tasks.

So, there are cases of formal approach to organization of commissions’ work established under CABs on major activities, as well as there vision commissions. In some cases, participation of representatives of the public bodies (tax and financial authorities) as prescribed by law in the work of appropriate commissions on assigning of allowances and material aid has a non-systemic, sporadic character.

In that context, there is a need in organization of systemic work on improvement of skills of CSBs’ employees, methodical assistance to their activity.

| Funds allocated to citizens’ self-governing bodies as social aid in 2011–2013 (UZS billion) |
|---|---|---|
| 1028 | 1185 | 1131 |
| 2011 | 2012 | 2013 |
4.6. PUBLIC RECOGNITION

Milestone event of the past year was adoption in July 2013 of Decree of the President of Uzbekistan «On awarding of employees of citizens’ self-governing bodies», according to which 60 activists of citizens’ gatherings were given various Government prizes. Totally, in 2010–2013, various government prizes were awarded to almost 150 employees of citizens’ self-governing bodies.
CHAPTER 5
HIGH LEGAL CULTURE IS THE BASE OF DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY

5.1. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Legal framework for rising of legal culture of population comprises Constitution of Uzbekistan, National Program on the rising of legal culture in society, National Program on the staff training, a number of laws and by laws.

National Program on the rising of legal culture in society defines that legal culture as an amalgamation of legal knowledge, legal view and practical activity is designed to ensure successful resolution of tasks faced by the society and government.

For the purpose by creation of an overall permanent system for formation of legal culture, main tasks for achievement of legal competence and high sense of justice are defined. These tasks assume the improvement of legal education; achievement of respect for law by the all public bodies, officials and citizens; enhancement of population’s legal competence; provision of social-legal activity of citizens.

BASIC LEGAL ACTS REGULATING ISSUES OF RAISING PEOPLE’S LEGAL CULTURE:
- Constitution of Uzbekistan (1992);
- National Program on the rising of legal culture in society (1997);
- National Program on the stuff training (1997);
Currently, in the country practical measures on the improvement of law where taken directed at raising a sense of justice, political and legal culture in society under the Concept on further deepening of democratic reforms and formation of civil society in the country which was adopted in 2010.

5.2. LEGAL UPBRINGING IN EDUCATION SYSTEM

A decisive role in the formation of legal culture belongs to legal education of the youth within the education system. According to the National Program on rising of the legal culture in society, «Human Rights» course was introduced in all schools starting from 1 September 1997. Training programs and methodic guide on legal education at the preschool facilities, secondary schools, academic lyceums, colleges and universities are elaborated.

Practical measures on learning the provisions of Uzbekistan’s Constitution at all levels of education system, upbringing of legal consciousness, thinking and culture of the youth, were undertaken under the Decree of the President of Uzbekistan «On the study of Uzbekistan’s Constitution» dated 4 January 2001. Particularly, requirements to the adequate training programs were developed, «Study of Uzbekistan’s Constitution» course was approved, textbooks and special literature for all stages education taking account of age peculiarities of students were published, and teachers on above courses were trained.

At present, at secondary schools, such courses as «Constitution’s ABC-Book», «Journey to the Constitution’s world», «Basics of the state and law» and others are being taught. Conversely, «Jurisprudence», «Constitution of Uzbekistan», «Personality and society» subjects are taught at the secondary special schools. At universities, legal culture of students is being improved by the introduction of subjects of general legal training and the knowledge of the Constitution, into the education system. Courses include the information on the human rights and liberties, means of their provision and protection.

5.3. ADVANCED TRAINING OF THE LEGAL STAFF

System of the advanced training of the legal staff comprises Tashkent State Law University, Academy of Ministry of Internal Affairs, law faculties of universities, specialized colleges, as well as Center on Advanced Training of Lawyers under Ministry of Justice, High Courses of General Procurator’s Office.

5.4. ACTIVITY OF PUBLIC BODIES IN RISING OF LEGAL CULTURE OF POPULATION

For efficient promotion of legal knowledge among the people in order to rise their legal consciousness, legal culture in society and consolidation of legality, special units are established in the structure of a number of the law enforcement and other public bodies. Particularly, Department on Legal Propaganda and Legal Education of the Ministry of Justice, Legal Propaganda Division of the General Prosecutor’s Office, Department of Human Rights Protection and Legal Security in the Ministry of Internal Affairs, etc.
These units are a driving force behind the promotion of legal culture with TV shows, radio speeches and printed media publications. They also organize seminars and round tables on the protection of citizens’ rights and liberties, crime prevention, as well as legal aspects of handling of citizens’ inquiries.

At the same time, Interagency Council on the Coordination of Public Bodies’ Work on Legal Propaganda and Education is established and functioning in the country.

Law-oriented newspapers (Inson va Qonun, Kuch Adolatda, Khuquq, etc.), published by the public bodies are also widespread in the country and regularly publish materials about the implementation of judicial-legal reforms, main provisions of applicable legal acts and draft laws, as well as educating articles directed at enhancement of sense of justice and legal culture of the population.

5.5. ROLE OF THE CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE PEOPLE’S LEGAL CULTURE FORMATION

Along with the education institutions, public and law enforcement bodies, key role in rising of legal culture of the people is played by civic institutions.

To date, there is a number of large public organizations with extensive network of their structural units in all regions of the country and working on rising legal culture of the targeted concrete population (youth, women, businessmen, employees of CABs, NGOs leaders and activists, etc.). First of all, these are such organizations like the Federation Council of Labor Unions, Federation of Societies on Protection of Consumers Rights, Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Youth Movement «Kamolot», Uzbekistan Women’s Committee, National Association of NGOs, Ecological Movement, etc.

Tasks on rising legal culture of the population, in some degree, are also fulfilled by the territorial units of four parties under the publicity events conducted by them among the various population strata.

Issues of the legal education, rising of legal culture, public awareness about important social and political events in the country and in the world are actively covered by the mass media. 5 specialized magazines and about 40 newspapers on human rights the measure published in several thousand circulations.

It should be also noted that rising public awareness about the law is one of the main tasks of consulting centers established by the citizens’ autonomous bodies.

On the whole, analysis of activity monitoring of civil society witnesses gradual strengthening of their role and place in rising sense of justice and legal culture of citizens.
5.6. CITIZENS’ LEGAL AWARENESS

Carrying out of opinion surveys on problems of the legal culture, public opinion on law, legal awareness of citizens are one of the main methods of detection of real picture of legal culture in the society and in the various population strata.

Last year, the Institute has carried out several opinion surveys on the identification of the level of justice sense and legal culture of the certain population strata – students of the education institutions, businessmen, and activists of the civil society.

Analysis of surveys’ results witnesses a rise in the political, legal culture and civic consciousness of the population, its social activity. Particularly, out of 816 examined representatives of youth, 95% have indicated that «law should be always observed», 87% respondents know their rights and obligations envisaged in the Constitution.

Furthermore, 85% of young people trust the fairness and restoration of their rights in case of their violation, 57% respondents stated that they address to the law enforcement bodies for protection of their rights and legal interests.

5.7. CITIZEN’S ADVOCACY

Results of monitoring, conducted by the Institute in the last years, witness rising advocacy of the citizens which is expressed in their participation in the political, social, economic and cultural life of the country.

Citizens actively use the power to elect and be elected to the representative government bodies. So, if at election to Legislative Chamber of Oliy Majlis in 2004, 12197159 citizens (85.1% of total number of constituency) participated in voting, then in 2009 at election to Lower House 15 108 000 citizens (87.8% of total constituency) have took part.

At election to provincial Kengashs of People’s Deputies held in 2012 in 60 constituencies, four parties have proposed 163 out of 240 possible candidates (67%). In 2013, during elections to 68 constituencies 233 out of 272 possible candidates (85%) were proposed. Whilst, turnout was on the average 79% in 2013 (in 2012, turnout was 76%).

Survey of population carried out by the Institute in 2013, has shown that 87% of citizens are interested in the political processes, including 53% respondents regularly follow political events, and 34% respondents are periodically interested in the political issues.

Furthermore, more than 80% respondents are intended to participate in the forthcoming election to representative government bodies at the end of 2014. As a basic motive of their participation in the forthcoming election, citizens note: possibility to make their contribution to democratization of the public administration; desire to support the party which they prefer; possibility to affect reforms in the country.

Citizens are highly interested in results of elections, confident in fairness of elections: thus, 62% respondents stated that they participate in election since they reckon that their vote is important.

Over the last few years, growth in the social-political activity of youth and women has been observed. Thus, number of parties’ members at the age under 30 increased from 295.2 thousand in 2011 to 339.2 thousand in 2013. As of 1 January 2014, an average of 40% of total number of parties’ members comprised persons at the age under 30.

Conversely, number of women–members of parties increased from 308.5 thousand in 2011 to 341.7 thousand people in 2013, i.e. currently women make up about 45% of total number of parties’ members.

It is noteworthy that number of business women has grown: if in 2011, 61.7 thousand women were involved in individual business, and then in 2013, number of women in individual business was 67.7 thousand.

Illustrative example of citizens’ advocacy is the nationwide khashars – historically common form of mutual help in Uzbekistan, being voluntary action
of citizens. Khoshars are carried out, as a rule, twice a year, on the eve of the national holidays – Navruz and Independence Day. Traditionally at khoshars the residents beautify and plant trees and shrubs in the streets, residential areas, help poor families, single, old and needy people.

5.8. CITIZENS’ SKILLS TO ASSERT THEIR RIGHTS

One of the indicators of high legal culture of the population is the awareness of citizens about existing legal mechanisms for protection of their rights, ability and readiness to assert them under the law.

Analysis of statistic data on citizens inquiries for guarantee and protection of their rights, character of citizens grievances and raised issues promotes detection of existing problems in society, shortages in the work of government and public organizations, as well as serves as a specific indicator of level of legal culture of citizens.

Accordingly, the Institute has studied statistics of citizens’ inquiries with the purpose of protection of their rights to the Commissioner for Human Rights of Oliy Majlis (Ombudsman), trade union and the regional societies on protection of consumers’ rights in 2013.

In 2013, Ombudsman received 11 733 inquiries from the citizens of which 7 712 claims and grievances – to the head office, and 979 inquiries – to its regional representatives.

Study of theme of inquiries received by the Ombudsman shows that it has not substantively changed. So, 4,230 inquiries were received on protection of the citizens rights, 2,343 inquiries were received on securing of the social-economic rights.

Practice of citizens’ inquiries to the labor unions for protection of their rights has emerged as well. In 2013, the trade union bodies had reviewed 3,539 written and 5,852 oral inquiries of the citizens. Responses were received for 3,478 (98.3%) written inquiries, where 2,695 were satisfied, clarifications were given to 744 inquiries.

Around 60% of all inquiries were related to the issues of labor relations, including 38.2% – application of the labor law, 10% – wrong acts of the employers, 9% – issues of recovery of wages and other similar payments.

«Hot lines» created in 14 territorial unions and 11 central trade councils enabled to more efficiently and quickly handle inquiries of the population. Number of inquiries over «hot lines» in 2013 was 1,994 (in 2012 – 1,475), legal aid and clarifications were provided to all inquiries.

At the same time, during 2013, regional societies on the protection of consumers’ rights received 8,457 inquiries of which 95.9% were found for the consumers; material and moral damage for ULS 2,208 million was compensated.
On the whole, analysis of inquiries proves an awareness of citizens about the existing legal mechanisms for protection of their rights, ability and readiness to assert them under the law that, conversely, is an indicator of relatively high level of legal culture of the population.

In the meantime, considering analysis of the monitoring results it is feasible under practical implementation of the Concept to speed up development and adoption of National Program on the rising of the legal culture in the society aimed at the cardinal improvement of legal education. Thereat, this program should foresee the practical measures on the strengthening of the interaction of the civil society institutes with public bodies in securing citizens’ rights, rising of their legal culture and social-political activity, improving efficiency and practical performance of their activities in this sphere.
CONCLUSION

Work on this paper has allowed to fully assess the state of civil society in Uzbekistan, revealing untapped reserves and designating tasks in strengthening of role and significance of civil society in the deepening of democratic reforms.

The results of monitoring carried out by the IIMFCS witness strengthening of the role of civil society institutes in the implementation of socially important tasks on the ground, in protection of the rights, liberties and legal interests of people. In particular, activity of the representatives of NGOs and mass media in development and discussion of the proposals on improvement of law was recorded. Quality changes in activity of the mass media are observed, their role in detection and coverage of urgent problems of the local population is increasing. Outcomes of surveys also reflect the social-economic activity and legal culture of citizens of the country.

This being stated, the authors can finish this report by a quotation from the President of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov’s speech: «It is arguable that we have achieved the main thing – reformation and democratization process of the country has attained an irrevocable and consistent character, people is changing, their political and civic engagement, their consciousness, interconnectedness to everything happening around them, and finally, their faith in the country’s future are growing».

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1 Report of the President of Uzbekistan I. Karimov at joint meeting of Legislative Chamber and Senate of Oliy Majlis on 12 November 2010.