



REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN



THIRD VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEW

2021



REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

Third Voluntary National Review

The Third Voluntary National Review details the work carried out in the Republic of Azerbaijan with a view towards “sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic that promotes the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development: building an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development”.

FOREWORD

The importance of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is more important than ever at a time when all humanity is coping with the coronavirus pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic has created new challenges and realities for the implementation of development priorities in the Republic of Azerbaijan. The natural fulfillment of the quarantine regime (particularly the mandatory lockdowns) to prevent the spread of the virus had a serious impact on economic growth, welfare, health care, education, tourism and the entire implementation of the 2030 Agenda on the SDGs.

The Government of Azerbaijan applied new strategies and programmes on how to mitigate the consequences of the pandemic, ensuring economic stability, macroeconomic and financial sustainability and keeping the unemployment rate at the minimum level based on the principle of “Leaving No One Behind”. As a result of these efforts it is anticipated that 2021-2022 will be a recovery period for Azerbaijan.

The Government of Azerbaijan acknowledges that humanity can only achieve the desirable result of mitigating the consequences of the pandemic through solidarity and the joint efforts of partnership. As such, Azerbaijan took an active part in the fight against COVID-19 and supported more than 30 countries with humanitarian, technical and financial aid.

Fulfilling the commitments made by Azerbaijan on the SDGs is an integral part of the state policy. Within this framework, the Government of Azerbaijan set up the National Coordination Council on Sustainable Development and established bilateral and multilateral corporation with local and international organizations respectively. In addition, state programmes, strategies, action plans covering social, economic and environmental spheres have been adjusted to meet the goals and objectives of the 2030 Agenda, while sector strategic plans were also developed within medium-term expenditure, which will be a significant roadmap for SDG financing.

As a result of the actions taken, Azerbaijan was ranked 54th among 166 countries in the UN Sustainable Development Report for 2020, achieving 72.6 points out of 100 for the “Sustainable Development Goals Index”. (For comparison it should be mentioned that the mean value for this Index in Eastern Europe and Central Asia is 70.9 points.) According to the Index, Azerbaijan has made progress on the SDGs for health care, well-being, poverty, nutrition, clean water and energy, sustainable cities and communities. At the same time Azerbaijan was acknowledged as one of the most reformist countries in the “Doing Business 2020” report published by the World

Bank and Azerbaijan's ranking rose to the 28th position among 191 countries in the global rating list.

Azerbaijan has prepared and approved a new development strategy for the post-pandemic and post-war period covering the period 2021-2030. In this framework, the Government of Azerbaijan has established five national priorities (a sustainable and growing competitive economy; a dynamic, inclusive and social justice-based society; competitive human capital and modern innovations; great return to the liberated areas; a clean environment and green growth) targeted at achieving the long-term evolution towards the social-economic and environmental development of the country for the next decade. It should also be highlighted that the National Priorities are important towards the fulfilment of commitments made in the "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development".

Furthermore, taking into consideration global climate change and the commitments ensuing from the Paris Agreement within the UN Framework Convention, the Government of Azerbaijan supports projects concerning promotion of transition to a circular economy, the use of clean technologies, the use of clean energy sources and the reprocessing and cleaning of polluted areas. In this regard, high-quality environment and green energy have been selected as national development priorities. Additionally, based on SDG11 targets, the Government took the decision to start the alignment of smart city and smart village standards in newly established cities and villages.

In particular, the cessation of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan in November 2020 will contribute to ensuring security, stability and well-being in the region. Moreover, mutually beneficial cooperation in the region as well as the development of economic and trade relations will provide a massive input into the development of Azerbaijan and the region as a whole.

Taking advantage of new international and regional transport and logistics corridors, and the reintegration of the now liberated territories into the national economy, will strengthen Azerbaijan's economic sovereignty by 2030 and transform it into a powerful state with a strong social welfare society based on modern living standards.

I am certain that the realization of the SDGs by 2030 will serve prosperity, peace and global partnership while contributing to addressing such global issues as the fight against hunger, poverty, inequality and climate change.

Ali Ahmadov



**Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Azerbaijan,
Chairman of National Coordination Council on Sustainable Development**



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ACRONYMS AND

ABAD	Support to Family Business
EU	European Union
SCFWCA	State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan
ANAS	Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences
ANAMA	Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action
CoE	Council of Europe
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
AIDA	Azerbaijan International Development Agency
UN	United Nations
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNDRR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
ILO	International Labour Organization
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
KOICA	Korea International Cooperation Agency
IMF	International Monetary Fund
BP	British Petroleum
CEPEJ	European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
NCCSD	National Coordination Council on Sustainable Development of the Republic of Azerbaijan
DOST	Agency for Sustainable and Operational Social Protection
SSC	State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan
MENR	Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Azerbaijan
VAT	Value Added Tax
MLSPP	Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population of the Republic of Azerbaijan
IDEA	"International Dialogue for Environmental Action" Public Union
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
ECO	Economic Cooperation Organization
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
ICT	Information (and/-) Communication Technologies
MoE	Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Azerbaijan

ABBREVIATIONS

ABAD	Support to Family Business
ODA	Official Development Assistance
MM	Mass Media
VNR	Voluntary National Review
SME	Small and Medium Entrepreneurship
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Azerbaijan
NGO	Non-governmental organization
GPI	Global Partnership Initiative
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
MoC	Ministry of Culture
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
LLC	Limited Liability Company
MoF	Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Azerbaijan
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
CoM	Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan
EDF	Entrepreneurship Development Fund of the Republic of Azerbaijan
RIA	Rapid Integrated Assessment
MoH	Ministry of Health of the Republic of Azerbaijan
TANAP	Trans-Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline
MTCHT	Ministry of Transport, Communications and High Technologies.
MoED	Ministry of Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
TSSA	Targeted State Social Assistance
STS	State Tax Service
UMIS	Unified Migration Information System
HLPF	High Level Political Forum
“2030 Agenda”	“Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”
NIP	National Information Portal
UMISSMS	Unified Migration Information System of the State Migration Service
ODS	Ozone-depleting substances

SUMMARY

The Third Voluntary National Review (VNR) presented by the Republic of Azerbaijan towards the implementation of the “Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” illustrates the framework with which the Government of Azerbaijan continues to fulfil its commitment to the 2030 Agenda on SDGs under the main principles of universality, integrated approach and “Leaving no one behind”. The VNR also reflects best practices, lessons learned, implementation tools, and actions taken to strengthen international partnerships, emerging challenges, the best practices used to address these challenges, and future steps in this regard.

At the same time, the review incorporates the goals of the thematic plan of the High-Level Political Forum to be organized by the UN Economic and Social Council in 2021 and the actions taken with respect to the implementation of the selected goals and the current circumstances.

This is the Third VNR submitted by the Government of Azerbaijan since its accession to the UN 2030 Agenda. The submission of this VNR demonstrates that the Government of Azerbaijan is committed to achieving the SDGs and is mobi-

lizing all its efforts to honour this commitment in a timely and suitably manner.

The National Coordination Council on Sustainable Development and the Ministry of Economy lead the VNR process, through consultation with various stakeholders including Parliament, line ministries, public institutions, NGOs, the private sector and academic institutions. During the reporting period, activities on prioritised 17 goals, 88 targets and 119 indicators have been successfully continued, and the alignment of state programmes, action plans, and strategic documents associated with the SDG goals and targets have been successfully implemented.

Furthermore, Azerbaijan is entering a strategic phase in this new post-pandemic and post-conflict era which spans from 2021 to 2030. Acknowledging global trends and challenges, the Government of Azerbaijan sets the country’s long-term development vector and pathways to socio-economic and environmental development through five corresponding national priorities (approved by Presidential decree) for the subsequent decade. These priorities are aligned with Azerbaijan’s commitments under the 2030 Agenda and are as follows:

- A steadily growing, competitive economy;
- Dynamic and inclusive society based on social justice;
- Competitive human capital and space for modern innovation;
- Great return to the liberated territories, including sustainable settlement and economic reintegration;
- A clean environment and green growth in the country.

In line with these priorities, a strategy and an action plan for 2021-2025 will be formulated and approved.

One of the major elements of the 2021 VNR is in regard to the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic and the challenges it caused. The COVID-19 pandemic created massive disruption in people's lives around the world and seriously affected the implementation of the SDGs in Azerbaijan in several areas - economic growth, employment, health care, education and tourism. Since the first quarter of 2020, the spread of COVID-19 in Azerbaijan and the subsequent obligatory lockdowns naturally had a negative impact on economic activity and led to a 4.3% decrease in GDP in 2020. To mitigate the impact of COVID-19, the Government of Azerbaijan approved support programmes to provide direct financial assistance (USD¹ 1.5 billion overall in 2020). As a result of this effective support, it is anticipated that 2021-2022 will be a recovery period for Azerbaijan. In parallel to national measures, the Government actively participated in fighting COVID-19 globally through bilateral and multilateral programmes providing

support to 33 countries in the form of humanitarian aid and financial assistance.

Moreover, numerous actions were taken to ensure the transition to efficient models of manufacturing and consumption. To this end, the volume of hazardous waste generated per capita has been maintained at a consistent level, the use of renewable energy generation capacity has been increased, urgent actions to combat climate change and its impact have been expanded, and the control of the reduction of the annual volume of total greenhouse gas emissions has been reinforced.

Thus, alongside the actions taken to address the COVID-19 pandemic situation, Azerbaijan continued to comply with the following requirements and recommendations in achieving the SDGs in the period under review:

- The active engagement of the private sector and government entities in the implementation of activities related to SDGs was promoted, with a specific focus on awareness-raising at all levels, regulating environmental issues, and expanding the access of private sector finance for SDGs;
- Special attention was attached to the implementation of literacy-raising activities at all levels, and dialogues with various segments of society at the national and regional levels were organized;
- Efforts to increase the development and diversification of the non-oil sector, strengthen innovation activity and export capacity, improve the efficiency of social

¹1USD = 1.7 AZN

SUMMARY

services and increase the green economy were reinforced;

- Mitigation measures were taken to address the socio-economic challenges posed by COVID-19 by building an effective institutional system and infrastructure, and ensuring close cooperation with the World Health Organization (WHO).

Moreover, the Government of Azerbaijan anticipates receiving the necessary support of international partners in the implementation of the planned activities, in the areas mentioned above, through direct financing mechanisms, the sharing of international experience,

building effective partnerships, overcoming existing difficulties, as well as the deployment of the Platform of National Importance to achieve the SDGs by 2030.

Additionally, the cessation of the 28-year conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan creates new economic opportunities not only for Azerbaijan also for the entire region. In this respect, the rehabilitation, reconstruction and reintegration of its liberated and conflict-affected areas will constitute the key dimension of the development strategy of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the coming years.

INTRODUCTION

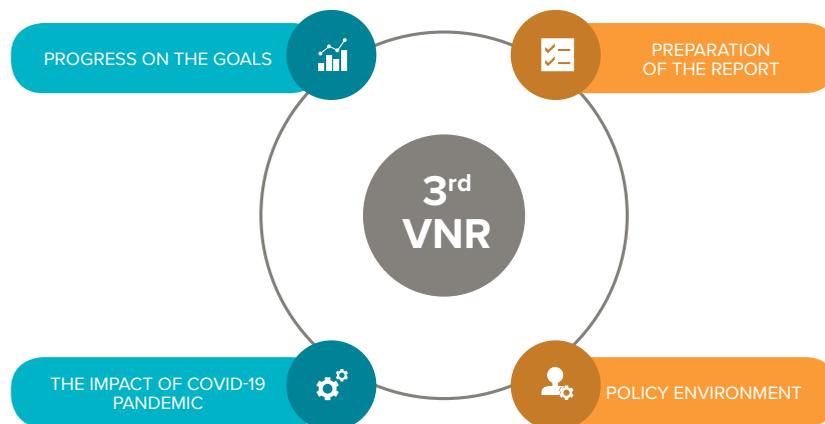


The third Voluntary National Review of the Republic of Azerbaijan is presented in the framework of the thematic plan of the 2021 HLPF, namely “Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic that promotes the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development: building an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development”. It details the status of the implementation process of Azerbaijan’s national commitment (particularly over the period 2019 to 2021), the significant action plans and their execution on the mitigation of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the

implementation of the 2030 Agenda on the SDGs, the ongoing involvement of stakeholders in the process under the principle of “leaving no one behind”, and encompasses strengthening partnerships for the SDGs.

The VNR is presented in five sections. The first covers the formulation of “The process and methodology for the preparation of the review”. This section describes the main methodology and associated process for preparing the third Voluntary National Review and the different features of the third VNR and those presented previously.

The second section describes the activities completed by the Government of Azerbaijan between 2019 and 2021



on the formulation of the “Policy and enabling environment by 2030”. In particular, this section reports on the public awareness of various segments of society, on integrating the SDGs into the national development agenda and on improvements to the statistical framework on the SDGs through the application of the principles of “ownership”, “participation” and “Leaving No One Behind”; this includes the engagement of stakeholders in the implementation process of the “2030 Development Agenda” in Azerbaijan.

The third section, namely “Strengthening partnerships to support the implementation of the SDGs” outlines the strengthening of cooperation with international organizations (relevant UN, UN agencies and other international organizations) to achieve the SDGs in Azerbaijan. This section also discusses the financial support provided to other countries and international organizations by Azerbaijan in its role as a donor country responding to the global fight to address the COVID-19 pandemic.

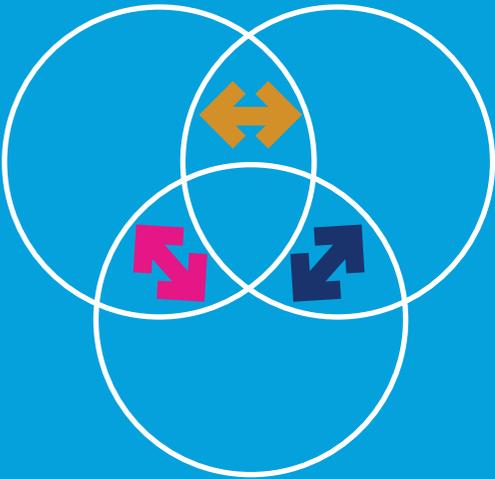
The section entitled “The impact of the

COVID-19 pandemic and crisis on implementing the 2030 Agenda” focuses on the comprehensive interventions put in place to not only meet the challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic for the implementation of the SDGs, but also to minimize the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the country’s economy and ensure the continuation of socio-economic development, diversification of the economy and increasing non-oil exports during the pandemic.

The final section “Progress in thematic goals and targets” presents a detailed report on the actions carried out towards achieving the SDGs, defined in accordance with the thematic plan of the HLPF on Sustainable Development of the UN Economic and Social Council. The VNR focuses on the thematic plan 2021 year on the following SDGs: Goal 1 (No Poverty), Goal 2 (Zero Hunger), Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-Being), Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), Goal 10 (Reduced Inequalities), Goal 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), Goal 13 (Climate Action), Goal 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions), and Goal 17 (Partnerships).

THE PROCESS AND METHODOLOGY FOR PREPARING THE REVIEW

1



1.1. Preparation process of the Third Voluntary National Review

The National Coordination Council on Sustainable Development and the Ministry of Economy lead the VNR process, through consultations with various stakeholders including the parliament, line ministries, public institutions, NGOs, the private sector and academic institutions. The preparation of the Third Voluntary National Review is based on the “Proposal for voluntary common reporting guidelines for voluntary national reviews at the high-level political forum” and other guiding documents. Accordingly, the general structure of the VNR and the content of the structural sections are as follows:

Foreword;

Summary;

Introduction;

The process and methodology for preparing the review;

Policy and enabling environment by 2030;

Strengthening partnerships to provide support in implementing the SDGs;

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda;

Progress in goals and targets;

Conclusions and next steps.

The initial stage of the process of formulating and writing the VNR began with the development of the plan and methodology for the Review. This was

Members of the National Coordination Council for Sustainable Development

Cabinet of Ministers;

Ministry of Economy;

Ministry of Foreign Affairs;

Ministry of Health;

Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population;

Ministry of Education;

Ministry of Justice;

Ministry of Agriculture;

Ministry of Youth and Sports;

Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources;

Ministry of Culture;

State Statistical Committee;

State Committee for Family, Women and Children’s Affairs;

State Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan for Affairs of Refugees and IDPs

based on the utilization of best practices as analysed by two international and local experts. The plan and methodology of the Review were developed in compliance with the thematic plan and requirements of the High-Level Political Forum.



As part of the Review formulation process, a written request was sent to stakeholders to provide information on the status of actions taken to achieve the SDGs. The Review was formulated according to the information and data received from line ministries and other government agencies, and the NCCSD Secretariat.

Ensuring the reliability of the data

The Review data was compiled with direct inputs from respective stakeholders (mainly from government agencies), from the National Information Portal (NIP) on SDGs, managed by the State Statistical Committee with the support of the UNDP, and also from the annual statistical report on SDGs provided by the State Statistical Committee.

The NIP is an interactive tool that collects aggregated information on the SDGs from designated government agencies, which is then accessible at the national and international levels. The tool thus allows everyone to track the progress being made towards the SDGs in the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The direct inclusion of stakeholders through the request for information on SDG status (including government organizations and other line agencies) and the official responses received, ensures the reliability of the data used in the Review.

Furthermore, other various verification methods were used to ensure the reliability of the administrative and statistical data collected in the preparation process of the Review.

Challenges in the preparation process of the Review

While improvements have certainly been made to the statistical framework used for the 2021 Review as compared to that used for the 2017 and 2019 Reviews, challenges remain in some areas of the statistical database. Thus, the available data has not been disaggregated by gender, age group, place of residence (rural/urban) and region/administrative district, which partially constrains the scope of analysis, assessment and findings.

1.2. Lessons learned and substantial alteration

The key distinguishing features of the Third Voluntary National Review of the Republic of Azerbaijan as compared to the VNRs submitted in 2017 and 2019 are: (i) the achievements resulting from the cessation of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, (ii) the overall alignment of the new phase of the UN partnership with Azerbaijan regarding the 2030 Agenda, (iii) improvements to the statistical framework to increase the monitoring of progress on the SDG indicators and (iv) COVID-19 pandemic challenges, mitigating the impact and driving the recovery process.

Post-conflict rehabilitation, reconstruction and reintegration activities

The VNRs, submitted in 2017 and 2019, explicitly reflected the social, humanitarian, economic and environmental constraints, encountered by the Republic of Azerbaijan due to the lack of peace in the region and occupation of its territories. The elaboration of the Third VNR coincided with the liberation of the territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the end of 2020, thus making it the key comparative characteristic of the subject review.

The Government of Azerbaijan continues to take confident and resolute steps to achieve peace, a decent life and the selected targets from the 2030 Agenda, notwithstanding the numerous problems and difficulties, such as

conflicts, poverty, environmental degradation and crime, that arise around the world and in the regions.

The military aggression of Armenia against Azerbaijan in the early 1990s caused the displacement of more than one million Azerbaijanis from their native lands. The war claimed the lives of 20,000 Azerbaijanis. Meantime, 50,000 Azerbaijanis became disabled. The scale of atrocities is evidenced, among others, by about 4000 citizens of Azerbaijan (including 71 children, 267 women and 326 elderly people) who went missing in connection with the conflict. Furthermore, the fate of more than 870 of above 2,000 Azerbaijanis who were taken captive or held hostage during military operations still remains unknown. The occupied settlements were entirely devastated, and the ecosystem severely damaged.

The consequences of the occupation of Azerbaijani territories by Armenia continue to be a serious problem in Azerbaijan, with the conflict causing a major humanitarian crisis, since the natural resources of the occupied territories were plundered by Armenia and could not therefore be used for the welfare of the Azerbaijani people.

The key milestone of 2020 was the liberation of Azerbaijani lands from occupation. This became achievable by a counterattack, which was launched on 27 September 2020 in response to the new act of aggression of the Armenian armed forces, and ended on 10 November, 2020 with signing of the tripartite statement by the leaders of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Rus-

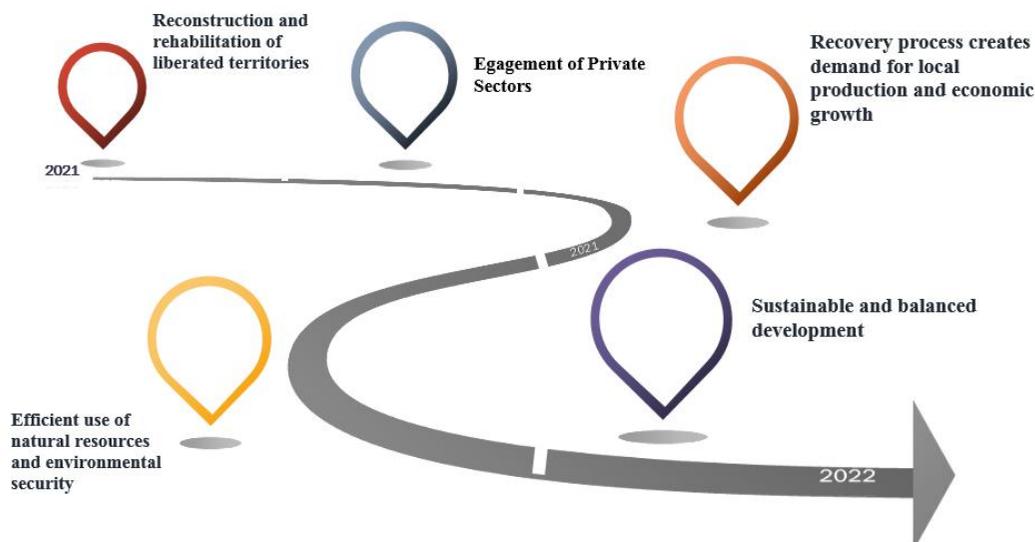
sia. This created conducive conditions for the voluntary, safe and dignified return of the IDPs to their homeland. In this regard, the Government of Azerbaijan ensured that the transport (road) infrastructure in the liberated territories was on a par with the rest of Azerbaijan to ensure the security of those returning to the liberated territories.

It should also be underlined that during the occupation, which lasted for about 30 years, the Armenian armed forces planted mines and other explosive devices in the territory of Azerbaijan. Armenia refuses to furnish Azerbaijan with information about the landmines, thus deliberately targeting human lives and attempting to impede the return of the internally displaced persons. Since the signing of tripartite statement, hundreds of Azerbaijani civilians were killed or seriously wounded as a result of mine explosions in the liberated territories. More than 100 Azerbaijani servicemen and civilians have been killed or injured by landmines in the area since the sign-

ing of the tripartite statement.

The unavailability of maps of the mined territories severely hinders post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction plans in the liberated territories of Azerbaijan, and the safe and dignified return of Azerbaijani IDPs to their permanent homes.

The main goal of the overall development strategy of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the coming years will be the rehabilitation, reconstruction and reintegration of conflict-affected areas and their integration into value chains. In line with the SDGs and the principles of the fourth industrial revolution, the territories will be developed taking into consideration local features, resources and perspectives, and post-conflict reconstruction will function as a driving factor of economic growth in Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan will continue to contribute to peace, security and cooperation in the region by constantly strengthening its economic, political and military superiority.



The restoration of the liberated territories in the coming years will include the implementation of measures aimed at restoration, reconstruction of economic and social infrastructure, development of the economy, support for business activities, provision of a decent living environment, and the repatriation and employment of the population in those territories.

In this regard, the State Programme on “Restoration and Sustainable Development of the Territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan Liberated from Occupation for 2021-2025” has been formulated. The Programme takes into account security issues, infrastructure and economic potential, return of the population, which is an important part of post-conflict rehabilitation with the creation of economically decent living conditions. It targets private sector investment including the extensive use of public-private partnerships, the process of land reclamation to create demand for local production and stimulate economic growth, the development of a competitive economy based on the principles of sustainable development, achieving high standards of social welfare, the efficient and environmentally sound use of natural resources thereby creating a favourable environment for the formation of an environmental security system based on the protection of the environment. Finally, the harmonious economic, social and environmental elements in the region can ensure the sustainable and balanced development of areas that will accelerate their development.

The Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan will continue to carry out restoration and reconstruction activities in the liberated territories with the full engagement of citizens, government agencies and the private sector. One of the main tasks is to attract international financial resources for sustainable development of these territories. In this respect, we believe that various stakeholders, including international donor organizations, will wish to contribute to the ongoing efforts to restore the conflict-affected areas and develop the potential of their populations.

UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for Azerbaijan (2021-2025)

One of the main distinctive features of the Third Voluntary National Review presented on behalf of the Government of Azerbaijan is that it coincides with the signing and implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for Azerbaijan (2021-2025) between the United Nations and the Government of Azerbaijan.

The framework guided by the principles of “Leaving No One Behind” and “Human Rights Based Approach”.

It should also be underlined that the Framework provides the foundation for deeper collaboration and the increased effectiveness of the United Nations specialized agencies, and focuses on meeting the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, protecting human rights, and leaving no one behind.

In the context of current challenges to development planning – including the emergence of COVID-19 as a major global threat and recovery needs in de-occupied territories, that the Republic of Azerbaijan plans to rehabilitate– the UNSDCF is deliberately forward-looking.

An extract from the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for Azerbaijan (UNSDCF) for the period 2021 to 2025.

Improving the statistical framework

Statistical systems today must produce accurate, up-to-date and comprehensive information for quick decision-making and the analysis of the implementation of those decisions. This applies not only to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, but also across the board in today’s challenging world. It is no coincidence that at the UN Summit on Sustainable Development Member States adopted a commitment to enhance statistical capacity in accordance with Targets 17.18 and 17.19 of Goal 17 (Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development).

As a result of the collaboration and partnership between the State Statistical Committee and the UNDP, the statistical database of the 2030 Agenda has

been nationalized and its scope further expanded. New methodologies, based on international and, importantly, best practices, make the 2021 VNR substantially different from previous Reviews.²

Furthermore, the “State Program on Improvement of Official Statistics in the Republic of Azerbaijan between 2018 and 2025” was fundamentally aligned with the relevant SDGs. Important measures such as obtaining statistical information on the labour force, poverty, the non-formally employed population, the employment of persons with disabilities, child labour, access to food by various population groups, the structure of agriculture (via census), development trends, transportation of goods and passengers by road, social welfare of mothers and children in the country context, use of time by different socio-demographic population groups, access and use of ICT by the population, as well as the integration of government databases into the SSC statistical database, monitoring the SDG achievement status, and creating a statistical database and Internet portal for public awareness, were all reflected in the State Program.

The State Program encompassed a total of 59 actions, including on the organization of observations and development of methodologies in the field of social, economic and multidisciplinary statistics (29), on metadata and classifications (6), on legal, administrative and information support of official statistical materials (7), on increasing user satisfaction (3), on international cooperation (7), and on strengthening material and

² First Voluntary National Review of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 2017: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/16005Azerbaijan.pdf>
Second Voluntary National Review of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 2019: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/23411AZERBAIJAN_VNR_Report.pdf

technical foundation and human resources capability (7).

In 2020, the State Statistical Committee responded to numerous inquiries from users requesting statistical information, including private entrepreneurs. In 2020, the work on SDG Indicator 17.18.1 (“Statistical capacity indicator for Sustainable Development Goal monitoring”) was financed with funds allocated from the state budget for the maintenance of the State Statistical Committee. During the VNR reporting period, through an initiative of the State Statistical Committee, the “Sustainable Development Goals: Statistical Review” was published, the data was mainstreamed in the National Information Portal on the SDGs, and the general public were given access to the database to obtain updated information on ongoing/completed activities related to the SDGs.

Certain activities were carried out with the aim of expanding the statistical database on the SDG indicators. In this connection, global methodologies on SDG indicators were studied and data

on six new indicators was developed in collaboration with relevant government agencies: “3.5.1 Coverage of treatment interventions (pharmacological, psychosocial and rehabilitation and aftercare services) for substance use disorders”, “11.6.1 Proportion of municipal solid waste collected and managed in controlled facilities out of total municipal solid waste generated by cities”, “13.2.2 Total greenhouse gas emissions per year”, “16.3.1 Proportion of victims of violence in the previous 12 months who reported their victimization to competent authorities or other officially recognized conflict resolution mechanisms”, “16.5.1 Proportion of persons who had at least one contact with a public official and who paid a bribe to a public official, or were asked for a bribe by those public officials, during the previous 12 months”, “17.3.2 Volume of remittances (in USD) as a proportion of total GDP”. Thus, metadata repository now contains information on 92 SDG Indicators (37.2% of the number of global indicators), and 70 national priority indicators (58.8 % of the number of national indicators).³

POLICY AND ENABLING ENVIRONMENT BY 2030

2



2.1. Integration of SDGs into the national development agenda

The alignment of the SDGs to national priorities in the Republic of Azerbaijan follows the key principles established within the framework of a collective approach to implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development:

- Universality;
- Leaving No One Behind;
- Commitment to human rights;
- Complexity and integrity.

Formulating a national development strategy that is in line with the 2030 Agenda helps to identify new opportunities for the country's key policy documents. By integrating the SDGs into the national development agenda the "2030 Agenda" can be amalgamated with national, regional and local plans, as well as relevant budget allocations.

As a first step to increasing the efficiency of activities in this respect, the Concept of Development "Azerbaijan 2020: Look into the future" and the "Strategic Road Maps for National Economy and Main Economic Sectors" began to identify where the national agenda was in compliance with the SDGs and related targets and where gaps existed.

The implementation of 17 goals, 88 targets and 119 indicators, approved at the meeting of the National Coordination Council for Sustainable Development on 7 February 2019, continued successfully in 2020.

The SDGs, selected on the basis of the "Leaving No One Behind" principle, will serve to improve the well-being of all citizens living in Azerbaijan by 2030, and specifically will target meeting the needs of the poorest people in the spirit of global solidarity. This initiative focuses on ensuring a prosperous and happy life for all people, as well as on achieving development that ensures economic, social and technical progress in harmony with nature.

To ensure the monitoring of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and to accelerate its implementation in the next decade, the National Coordination Council for Sustainable Development conducted two high level meetings with the heads of government agencies and conveyed comprehensive discussions in 2020. The process of aligning the national development agenda with the SDGs continued in 2020 with the following projects:

1. The State Programme on Socio-Economic Development of the Regions for the period from 2019 to 2023.

The main goal of the new state programme is to ensure the sustainable and balanced development of the regions. This includes the creation of a favourable environment and formation of an environmental safety system which will ensure a competitive economy based on the principles of the SDGs; ensuring that social welfare is maintained at a high standard, that natural resources are used efficiently and that the environment is fully protected.

Taking into account the implementation of a wide-range of infrastructure and investment projects in previous state programmes on regional development, the new state programme has identified the following issues as key priorities: to further accelerate the development of the non-oil sector, to support the progress of the real sector of the economy, as well as encourage entrepreneurship through new mechanisms, to increase the requisite knowledge and skills of business enterprises, and to provide consulting and other services. The new programme was aligned with SDG 4, SDG 5, SDG 6, SDG 9, SDG 10 and SDG 15. The successful implementation of the programme will contribute to achieving these goals and their associated targets.

2. Action Plan on reducing the negative impact of plastic packaging waste on the environment in the Republic of Azerbaijan for the period from 2019 to 2020.

The “Action Plan on reducing the negative impact of plastic packaging waste on the environment in the Republic of Azerbaijan for the period from 2019 to 2020” in line with the “Strategic Roadmap on the Production and Processing of Agricultural Products in the Republic of Azerbaijan” was developed to reduce pollution in this area based on an assessment of the negative impact of the mass use of plastic packaging products on plants, animals, land and water resources. The Action Plan aims to minimize this negative impact through its planned activities. In this regard, improvements on the regulatory

framework on improving and increasing the efficiency of plastic packaging waste management system are expected, together with the formulation of a market for additional raw materials, and the expanded use of alternative packaging. Furthermore, using international experience the activities will target the creation of a favourable environment for potential entrepreneurs and investors interested in the field of recycling, identify financing for a collection and processing system, as well as develop new business opportunities on the basis of modern technologies, strengthen the recycling market, and create new jobs. The activities will thus contribute to achieving SDG 11, SDG 12, SDG 13, SDG 14, and SDG 15.

3. Action Plan to ensuring the efficient use of water resources for the period from 2020 to 2022.

The Action Plan was developed to assess, protect and ensure the efficient use of water resources. Its goal is also to enhance the electronic water management, accounting and delivery information system, to improve the efficient use of water by the energy sector, to ensure the efficient and rational use of water for irrigation, finding of water resources, to upgrade the drinking water supply system, and to raise awareness on the overall issue of water resources. The Action Plan also aims to identify how best to effectively finance the water resource/supply infrastructure. The Action Plan has been aligned with SDG 6, SDG 9, SDG 12, SDG 13 and SDG 14 of the 2030 Agenda.

4. Draft National Water Strategy of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The National Water Strategy Project of Azerbaijan has been drafted and work is underway to develop an action plan for the Strategy based on the completion of specific milestones: short-term activity until 2025, medium-term activity until 2030 and long-term activity, in line with the SDGs.

The Strategy focuses on key challenges, such as improvements to legislation, institutional structure and capacity, and the development of cooperation on transboundary waters in accordance with the principles of integrated water resources management. The goal of the Strategy is to develop a system of water resources management, protection, water supply and wastewater management in Azerbaijan that adheres to international standards. The National Water Strategy is an important document for the implementation of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes and its Protocol on Water and Health. Equally, the Strategy will play a significant role in the successful implementation of water policy in Azerbaijan. The draft Strategy has been aligned with SDG 6, SDG 12, SDG 13, SDG 14 and SDG 17.

5. Draft Law on amendments to the Law “On Protection of the Environment” of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The draft law was adopted by Parliament on 20 November 2020 with the

purpose of directly supporting the implementation of the environmental objectives, targets and indicators of the 2030 Agenda. In this regard, it prohibits the import, manufacture, sale or provision to consumers, trade, catering and other service facilities of plastic polyethylene bags up to 15 microns thick, disposable plastic mixing rods, forks, spoons, knives, plates and cups. The law relates to SDG 6, SDG 12, SDG 13 and SDG 15.

6. Joint Action Plan to Support Green Agriculture (2020-2023).

The Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Azerbaijan developed and approved the “Joint Action Plan to Support Green Agriculture (2020-2023)”. The Action Plan will contribute to the implementation of SDG 2, SDG 8, SDG 13 and SDG 15.

7. Alignment of draft sectoral strategic plans to be developed within Medium-term expenditures framework to SDGs.

7.1. Sector Strategic Plan on Agriculture.

The purpose of this draft Plan is to ensure food security through the efficient use of existing natural and economic resources in the Republic of Azerbaijan, to meet the requirements of the industrial sector for raw materials and food products through local production, to increase agricultural exports and to in-

crease employment in the regions. One of the key areas of the Strategic Plan is “Environmental protection, sustainable use of natural resources and climate change impact management on agriculture.” The following measures will be implemented:

- Create mechanisms to reduce the negative impact of climate change and other natural factors on agriculture;
- Improve mechanisms to reduce the negative impact of agriculture on the environment;
- Improve mechanisms for the sustainable use of agricultural lands and water resources;
- Develop environmentally clean agricultural production.

The draft plan also envisages the implementation of measures such as “Improving the system of human resources management and training” and “Improving the system of science, education and information and consulting services in agriculture” over the period 2021 to 2024.

Furthermore, the draft plan has identified specific goals for the medium term, through a strategic analysis and SWOT analysis of agriculture. In this respect, implementing agencies have been identified in line with the measures, as have the required financial resources for the current year and the forecast for the subsequent three years, and the strategic indicators for the sector. The project is associated with SDG 2, SDG 8 and SDG 15.

7.2. Strategic Plan on the Education Sector.

The main goal of the draft plan is to establish a knowledge-based economy, to create an education system that takes a leading position among the countries of the world in terms of quality results and coverage. Furthermore, the draft plan envisages the following actions to meet the requirements of the labour market and to ensure the development of national competitive human capital in the country:

- to ensure the acquisition of systematized knowledge, skills and practices and continuous professional development;
- to prepare students for social life and productive employment;
- to train modern-minded and competitive personnel.

The draft plan is aligned with SDG 4 and SDG 8.

7.3 Strategic Plan on the Environmental Sector.

The main goal of the draft plan is to ensure sustainable development through environmental protection and the efficient use of natural resources, protecting ecosystems, minimizing the harmful impact on the environment by applying low-emission technologies and innovative methods, and the restoration and protection of its original status.

The draft plan will create new opportunities for improving the environmental situation, protecting the environmental components, ensuring the right of the population to live in the natural environment and the efficient use of natural

resources by solving existing environmental problems in the country.

The draft plan relates to SDG 6, SDG 9, SDG 13, SDG 14 and SDG 15.

8. “National Action Plan on Gender Equality for the period from 2021 to 2025” project.

The project will implement the following activities:

- Improve legislation on gender equality and women’s rights;
- Raise awareness on gender equality and women’s rights among the population, strengthen measures to combat gender-based violence, and achieve gender equality in the economic sphere;
- Develop small business opportunities for women, and increase the competitiveness of women in the labour market;
- Prevent and combat gender stereotypes;
- Conduct research to study the basic needs of vulnerable and isolated groups of women and men, including rural women, the disabled, IDPs, refugees and the elderly;
- Enhance the participation of women and girls in peace processes, and eliminate truancy and early marriages;
- Enhance measures in the field of reproductive health and family planning among the population,

especially women and young families, and enhance the participation of women in political and public life, decision-making and governance;

- Increase employment opportunities for rural women, the disabled, IDP and refugee women (through vocational courses, small business development), and other measures.

The project will support the implementation of SDG 4, SDG 5, SDG 8 and SDG 10.

9. Draft “National Action Plan for the period from 2020 to 2023” on the implementation of “Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security” in the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Resolution 1325, the first of eight UN Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security, calls on Member States to collaborate on averting the effects of armed conflict on women and girls, protecting them from violence during armed conflicts, and preventing, settling and resolving conflicts and increasing the representation of women at the regional and international level. The draft plan will contribute to the implementation of SDG 5 and SDG 16.

10. General Collective Agreement between the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Trade Unions Confederation and the National Confederation of Entrepreneurs (Employers) Organization of Azerbaijan Republic for the period from 2020 to 2022.

The main purpose of the General Collective Agreement is to form a socially-oriented national economy, made possible by the successful reforms in Azerbaijan to maintain macroeconomic stability, to diversify the economy and to accelerate the development of the non-oil sectors and regions.

In addition, the Agreement will act as a driver in strengthening State support for entrepreneurship through socio-economic policy, in ensuring the creation of employment opportunities and the provision of new jobs, thereby increasing the income and improving the material well-being of citizens with the aim of reducing poverty and unemployment in the country. The Agreement is aligned with SDG 8, SDG 9 and SDG 10.

The action plans prepared for implementation of the “2030 Agenda” focus on national and regional governing organizations in terms of the importance of supporting the implementation of goals and targets at the central executive level and the significance of the role of regional and local governments in achieving the SDGs.

The importance of participation in the global action to achieve the SDGs was demonstrated by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the approval of the “National Priorities for Socio-Economic Development: Azerbaijan - 2030” (2 February 2021).

According to the Decree, the following five National Priorities for the socio-economic development of the country must be implemented in the next decade:

1. A steadily growing, competitive economy:
 - 1.1. stable and high economic growth;
 - 1.2. resistance to internal and external influences.
2. A dynamic, inclusive society based on social justice:
 - 2.1. benefits to every citizen from development;
 - 2.2. greater and fairer social security within an inclusive society;
 - 2.3. balanced development of both the capital and regions.
3. Competitive human capital and space of modern innovations:
 - 3.1. education in compliance with the requirements of the 21st century;
 - 3.2. creative and innovative society;
 - 3.3. healthy lifestyle of citizens.
4. Great return to the liberated territories:
 - 4.1. sustainable settlement;
 - 4.2. reintegration into economic activity.
5. Clean environment and “green growth” country:
 - 5.1. high quality environmental environment;
 - 5.2. green energy space.

The specified National Priorities are also important with regard to the implementation of the commitments arising from the United Nations “Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”.

In the framework on “National Priorities for Socio-Economic Development: Azerbaijan - 2030”, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Azerbaijan signed the Order to establish a Commission to formalise the “Strategy for Socio-Economic Development for the period from 2021 until 2025” and facilitate the organization and coordination process for planning and management.

In order to coordinate the activities of relevant government agencies in the development of the Strategy, a sub-working group was formulated for each of the following areas:

- Economic growth (National Priority 1.1 and 2.3)
- Macroeconomic stability (National Priority 1.2)
- Macro-fiscal framework ensuring public debt sustainability and fiscal stability (covers all priorities)
- Inclusive social development and social security (National Priority 2.1. and 2.2.)
- Education (National Priority 3.1.)
- Innovation (National Priority 3.2.)
- Healthy lifestyle (National Priority 3.3.)
- Sustainable settlement and economic reintegration (National Priority 4.1 and 4.2)
- Environmental matters (National Priority 5.1.)
- Green energy space (National Priority 5.2.)

A Secretariat was also established in the Ministry of Economy to coordinate activities on the development of the Strategy.

2.2. National ownership of SDGs

The policy of the State of Azerbaijan for the inclusion of the SDGs into the national development agenda for the period 2018 to 2021 has continued to be successfully implemented.

It should be underlined that the key driver of nationalisation, based on international experience, was to organise awareness-raising events to involve everyone in the process in accordance with the principle of “Leaving No One Behind”.

The main goal the 2030 Agenda is the expansion of global cooperation for sustainable development through multilateral partnerships, to mobilize and share knowledge, experience, technology and funding to achieve the SDGs in all countries, especially in the developing countries. In this regard, multiple awareness-raising activities were implemented from 2019 to 2020 to bring the SDGs in line with national priorities. The



Quality education and lifelong learning opportunities



Virtual event on “Equal quality education and life-long learning opportunities”

activities included the following:

A series of panel discussions on “Sustainable Youth Development” were organized in 2020 to enhance the role of youth in achieving the SDGs within the project “Sustainable Development Goals for Youth” implemented by the National Coordination Council for Sustainable Development. The event included discussions on “Equal quality education and lifelong learning opportunities”, and State support measures to improve access

to education for all young people and create equal opportunities for all in line with the principle of “Leaving No One Behind”. Active discussions were held among young people, Members of Parliament and representatives of the Ministry of Education, and rectors of universities.

Furthermore, a video conference on “The role of youth in the liberated territories” was organized by the National Coordination Council for Sustainable Development. The participants exchanged their views on the Azerbaijani youth who represent the country on various platforms, as well as the active engagement of Azerbaijani young people in the restoration of the liberated territories, and their contribution to the implementation of the SDGs.

The National Coordination Council for Sustainable Development organized a further video conference on “Sustainable and personal development of young people in the liberated terri-

Sustainable Development Goals for Youth

The role of youth in the liberated territories

15:00
25 DECEMBER

Zoom SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Participants listed in the infographic:
 - Firudin Gurbanov, Deputy Minister of Education
 - Farhad Hadjiyev, Deputy Minister of Youth and Sports
 - Ajnur Sofiyeva, Deputy Chairman of State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs
 - Nigar Arpadarai, Member of Parliament
 - Ramin Mammadov, Member of Parliament
 - Huseyn Huseynov, Secretary of National Coordination Council on Sustainable Development

Sustainable and personal development of young people in the liberated territories



Sustainable and individual development of young people in the liberated territories

tories” at the end of 2020. The event focused on our glorious victory of the brave Azerbaijani Army in the 44-day Patriotic War under the leadership of Victorious Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces Ilham Aliyev, and discussed the role of our young people in achieving the victory. Discussions were held on the challenges faced by today’s youth in ensuring their personal development, education, gender equality and family planning and on how these relate to the SDGs.

To raising awareness and promote the engagement of all in the SDG process the Ministry of Youth and Sports held an online international conference on “Sustainable Development and Youth: New Opportunities and Challenges”, dedicated to the “11 July - World Population Day”, with the goal of enhancing the role of youth in the implementation of the SDGs. Government officials, Parliamentarians, representatives of youth organizations and SDG Youth Ambassadors spoke at the conference and provided detailed information on the activities implemented to date. Young representatives from other countries also attended the conference to share their experiences in raising awareness among young people on the SDGs.

The State Committee for Family, Women and Children’s Affairs has held multiple events to promote SDG 5. Within this framework, the Child and Family Support Centres of Agdam, Goranboy, Hajigabul Saatli, Sabirabad, Zagatala and Goygol, Zardab towns distributed educational material on the topic “Con-

sequences of early marriage and truancy” to 730 people, through Facebook and e-mails.

Furthermore, a guidebook on SDG 5, namely “Practical recommendations for implementation of Gender Equality Policy in Municipalities” was published by the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs under the framework of mutual cooperation between the State Committee and the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ).

On the occasion of “10 December - Human Rights Day”, the Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsperson) of the Republic of Azerbaijan held an online conference on the topic “Human rights protection and advocacy in COVID-19 and wartime” to promote SDG 16.

The Ministry of Education also played an active role in the implementation of SDG 16 during the reporting period. Of the 169 targets set by the Ministry of Education in relation to the 17 SDG goals, 106 were taken into account within 176 standards and applied to the general education system. These standards covered the 3rd to 11th grades and were included in 10 subjects.

In November 2020, the Azerbaijan Trade Unions Confederation, in collaboration with the UN and ILO, held a webinar with social partners to discuss Target 2.2 of SDG 8. This was followed by a further webinar in December, organized in collaboration with ILO-ACTRAV-ATUC, on the UN SDG Framework and the preparation of the VNR. Representatives from the Chamber of

Accounts (Supreme Audit Institution) of the Republic of Azerbaijan attended various events and working group meetings, organized by the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI), on the role of higher audit institutions in achieving the SDG targets, bilateral and multilateral discussions, exchanged experiences with colleagues, and implemented control measures.

It should be noted that, in 2020, the Chamber of Accounts amended its mandate to incorporate the SDGs. Thus, in 2020, the Chamber conducted the first performance audit, namely the “State Financial Control Measure on Assessment of Forest Management Activities of the Forest Development Service under the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Azerbaijan” which is in accordance with the SDG 15 Indicators.

The Chamber acknowledges that forest management is of great social, public, economic, and cultural importance, and has global significance in the context of climate change. Therefore, to achieve SDG 15, in addition to assessing the effectiveness and efficiency of forest development funds, the lack of funding for forestry management should be also assessed and more attention paid to the socio-economic significance of forests and greenery rather than the economic.

Since 2018, the State Statistical Committee began publishing an annual statistical compendium entitled “Sustainable Development Goals: statistical

review”. This publication is available in Azerbaijani and English, and explains the nature of the global goals and targets set out in the “2030 Agenda”, highlighting the global challenges being faced, and providing an analysis of the sustainable development trends in the national context via statistical indicators, describing the various graphs and tables over the past decade (2010-2019). The National Information Portal (NIP) on SDGs, released online by the State Statistical Committee in 2019, plays an important role in raising awareness. The NIP also provides regular access to information on the global goals, targets and indicators, national priorities for the SDGs, applicable legal framework, implementation mechanisms, government programmes, strategies, reports and publications in the social, economic and environmental spheres, along with SDG data through text, graphics and tables. As in previous years, the State Oil Company of the Azerbaijan Republic (SOCAR) developed and published the “Sustainable Development Report” during the reporting period. The Report outlines the company’s economic, social and environmental outputs, and is published in Azerbaijani and English with both printed and digital (via its website) resources available to stakeholders. The company uses the Report to raise awareness on the SDGs among governmental organizations and non-governmental organizations, international organizations, partners, educational institutions (in particular the Baku Higher Oil School), staff and companies operating in the oil and gas industry.

National Innovation Contest (Ideas for Change)

In the context of globalization, the expansion and dissemination of innovation activities, and their application in the field of production, creates new challenges for countries. The competitiveness of the countries that promote high value-added industries at the global and regional levels has a very positive impact on the development of innovation.

In this regard, to encourage innovation, promote high value-added sectors, and support the implementation of the “Azerbaijan 2020: Look into the future” Concept of Development and “Strategic Road Maps for National Economy and Main Economic Sectors”, the Ministry of Economy and the UNDP Country Office organized three “National Innovation Contests” which had already become a tradition as a result of previous successful collaboration. This contest is the first national competition in Azerbaijan to promote the SDGs.

To ensure the sustainability of activities in the relevant fields, and to collect, evaluate and reward ideas and projects in the selected areas, the Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Transport, Communications and High Technologies and State Agency for Public Service and Social Innovations formalized their mutual cooperation through a Memorandum of Understanding in 2017.

In 2018 the Ernst & Young office in Baku together with the Ministry of Culture organised and promoted the National

Innovation Contests, which is a testament to the importance of innovation for the country.

Projects submitted to the National Innovation Contests

In this respect, the Ministry of Justice’s support to innovative projects, especially the “Electronic Power of Attorney for Vehicles” project, which won the First “National Innovation Contest”, will help improve the quality of social services provided to various groups, ensure innovation-based progress, encourage the operation of innovation subjects and increase efficiency.

More than 200 projects were included in the National Innovation Contests in 2019, of which 36% were related to social, 30% to the economy, and 34% to the environment.

The winning projects were:

1. **“Secret of Longevity” project:**
The project was concerned with promoting the green economy and environmentally friendly agricultural production in line with the relevant targets of SDG 3, SDG 8 and SDG 15.
2. **“Nanomembrane” project:**
The project envisages the application of an economically viable method of decontamination of various origins in the agrarian industry, and thus contributes to achieving the relevant targets of SDG 6, SDG 7, SDG 13 and SDG 14.

2.3. Support of NGOs and private sector in the implementation of the SDGs

Creating inclusive and sustainable economic growth opportunities for all and “Leaving No One Behind” is a priority for the Government of Azerbaijan. The Government also demonstrates a strong will to transition to sustainable development and align its national development strategy with the SDGs. Furthermore, the importance of involving stakeholders, especially non-governmental organizations and the private sector, in accelerating the implementation of the SDGs and at the same time increasing the efficiency of their implementation, is acknowledged. In this respect, government agencies which are members of the National Coordination Council for Sustainable Development, held regular meetings and discussions with NGOs and the private sector.

To enhance the role of NGOs in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, cooperation with several NGOs was initiated and activities implemented under the projects “Increasing the role of PWDs and other vulnerable social groups as entrepreneurs in ensuring sustainable economic development and provide a foundation for solving existing problems in this sphere in Azerbaijan in compliance with the principles of UN SDGs”, and “Organization of online workshops on the role of entrepreneurs in ensuring sustainable economic development in Azerbaijan”; both projects were developed by the Council on State Support to NGOs under the Auspices of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

In November 2019, an international conference on “SDGs and Business Environment” was organised by the Azerbaijan Entrepreneurs Confederation (AEC) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) and was attended by government officials, representatives of international organizations and various business enterprises. Discussions at the event covered such topics as the implementation of SDGs in Azerbaijan, the main obstacles and challenges in the business environment, as well as the creation of a favourable environment for sustainable enterprises in Azerbaijan.

At the same time, to enhance the role of the private sector in the implementation of the SDGs, the Entrepreneurship Development Fund developed a concept document which combines environmental protection, social policy and corporate governance (ESG) factors to contribute to implementing the 2030 Agenda. The specified factors will directly influence to the SDGs and, at the same time, contribute to increase the source of funding.

In support of the implementation of the SDGs, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population and the Association of Banks of Azerbaijan began a joint project entitled “Support to Self-Employment”. The goal of the project is to provide financial (bank) and other assistance to unemployed low-income people, including people with disabilities, martyrs’ families, IDPs, recipients of targeted state social assistance and other vulnerable groups, to enable them to start small businesses. To date 666 citizens have been provid-

Elements of ESG factors

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Climate change and carbon emissions;
Air and water pollution;
Biodiversity conservation;
Prevention of deforestation;
Use of alternative energy;
Waste management;
Solution to water scarcity (non-compliance of clean water resources with standard water requirements) and etc.

SOCIAL POLICY

Customer satisfaction;
Gender and diversity issues;
Ensuring employment;
Regulating community relations;
Protection of human rights;
Ensuring health and safety;
Employee standards;
Supporting vulnerable segments of population, etc.

GOVERNANCE

Board composition;
Fighting bribery and corruption;
High business reputation and maintaining it;
Political contribution (support);
Availability of documents in compliance with International Financial Reporting Standards, and etc.

ed with assistance under the project. The project activities are expected to contribute to achieving the main targets of SDG 1, SDG 8 and SDG 10.

During the reporting period, the Entrepreneurship Development Fund provided AZN 368,000 in soft loans to finance the investment projects of 23 IDP entrepreneurs through authorized credit institutions. Through these projects 27 new jobs were created and five Limited Liability Companies were launched by the Small and Medium Business Development Agency (SMBDA) in new settlements in the Fizuli region. 15 greenhouses with an area of 160 m² each were built and 150 bee families with 10 bee families were given to 15 families in Jojug Marjanli village of the Jabrayil region. These project activities will contribute to implementing SDG 1, SDG 8, SDG 10 and SDG 17.

Taking into account the complex nature of public-private partnership projects, the new model for Azerbaijan and the knowledge and skills required for their implementation, the SMBDA paid special attention to building the capacity and education of stakeholders. The Public-Entrepreneurship Partnership Development Centre of the SMBDA organized online workshops on public-private partnership (PPP) in cooperation with the Istanbul Public-Private Partnership Centre of Excellence and the Energy Regulatory Agency. The goal of the events, which included the participation of various government agencies and business representatives, is to raise awareness about the development of public-private partnership in

Azerbaijan and to expand the application of this model, as well as to study relevant overseas expertise. The staff of the Centre also participated in multiple training sessions organized by the PPP with the support of the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank and the European Union.

The Public-Entrepreneurial Partnership Development Centre and the Istanbul Public-Private Partnership Centre of Excellence signed a Memorandum of Understanding with regard to collaboration and the organization of events for PPP information and expertise exchange, training sessions and workshops, the how to attract foreign investment from Turkey through the PPP model, and the provision of support to design relevant projects, etc.

Measures are also being taken to use international support mechanisms to

develop the PPP environment. An official request was filed with the Asian Development Bank's Asia Pacific Project Preparation Facility (AP3F), and an agreement was reached regarding a technical assistance project on grant funding for the "Capacity Building Assistance: Support to the Azerbaijan Public-Private Partnership Development Centre and the Project Development Fund".

Through the Multilateral Platform for Sustainable Infrastructure (SIF) a preliminary agreement was reached to integrate the SIF SOURCE platform, which offers a unique mechanism and tools, into the PPP project development process and relevant IT resources in Azerbaijan. This agreement facilitates the effective planning of PPP projects managed by the Fund, coordination with relevant agencies, monitoring and supervision of the process and in particular attracts international investment.

**STRENGTHENING
PARTNERSHIPS
TO SUPPORT THE
IMPLEMENTATION
OF SDGS**

3





Signing ceremony of UN-Azerbaijan Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for the period 2021 to 2025.

Cooperation with international organizations (relevant UN agencies and other international organizations) to achieve the SDGs in Azerbaijan continued successfully in 2020. The documents signed with regard to cooperation with international partners also focus on sustainable development issues. In this respect, the United Nations-Azerbaijan Partnership Framework (UNAPF) for the period 2016 to 2020, is particularly relevant. The “Final Evaluation Report” and “Joint Action Plans for 2019-2020” were agreed and approved by the members of the Steering Committee in coordi-

nation with the Ministry of Economy in August 2020.

Furthermore, a decision was made to develop the “UN-Azerbaijan Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for the period 2021 to 2025”, which defines the subsequent areas of cooperation between the UN and Azerbaijan. In January 2020, a consultation workshop was held to draft the Framework, with the participation of relevant government agencies, civil society, private sector, youth organizations, and academic circles, at which priority areas of the document were defined.

The resulting Framework for cooperation is based on the principles of “Leaving No One Behind”, human rights, gender equality, sustainable development, sustainability and accountability, and is in compliance with the SDGs of the 2030 Agenda. The future outlook, arising from the general analysis process and the analysis of potential gaps in the country, has been specified and divided into four priority areas, which will be the focus of the UN development system during the period from 2021 to 2025.

Priority Area 1: Inclusive Growth that Reduces Vulnerability and Builds Resilience.

Priority Area 2: Stronger Institutions for Better Public and Social Services Delivery.

Priority Area 3: Protecting the Environment and Addressing Climate Change.

Priority Area 4: A Gender-Equitable Society that Empowers Women and Girls.

The Priority Areas relate to each SDG as follows:

- Priority Area 1 focuses on SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure). The Outcome affects poverty (SDG 1), quality education (SDG 4), reducing inequality (SDG 10), sustainable cities and communities (SDG 11) and promoting peaceful and inclusive societies (SDG 16).
- Priority Area 2 focuses on SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG 4 (Quality Educa-

tion), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions), and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). The Outcome affects industry, innovation and infrastructure (SDG 9), reducing inequality (SDG 10), and sustainable cities and communities (SDG 11).

- Priority Area 3 focuses on SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), SDG 13 (Climate Action), and SDG 15 (Life on Land). The Outcome affects quality education (SDG 4), reducing inequality (SDG 10), sustainable cities and communities (SDG 11), protecting life below water (SDG 14), and partnership for the Goals (SDG 17).
- Priority Area 4 focuses on SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), and SDG 5 (Gender Equality). The Outcome affects good health and well-being (SDG 3), quality education (SDG 4), reducing inequality (SDG 10), partnership for the Goals (SDG 17).

In the framework of sharing the best experience on the implementation of the SDGs, the Azerbaijan delegation attended several prestigious conferences and workshops, and delivered speeches on the difficulties and future challenges of achieving the SDGs (the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), July 2020 (held virtually); the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), March 2020;

the 7th Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), May 2020, (video conference); and the North and Central Asian Multi-Stakeholder Forum on Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals within the framework of UNESCAP from September 2020).

Furthermore, with the support of UN agencies, Azerbaijan delegations participated in various SDG-related international events in 2020, including the “SDG Moment” (18.09.2020), “Financing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond” (29.09. 2020), “Financing the implementation of SDGs” (28.05.2020), and VNR workshops for countries presenting at the HLPF in 2021. A decision was made at the level of the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan to submit the subsequent Voluntary National Review of Azerbaijan during the HLPF for Sustainable Development to be held under the auspices of ECOSOC in 2021. In this respect, a letter was sent to the President of ECOSOC in August 2020 on behalf of the Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Chairman of the National Coordination Council for Sustainable Development, and our country was added to the list of countries to submit a Voluntary National Review in 2021.

In accordance with the instruction of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan to support the access of 22,000 people to small business support under the self-employment programme, a

USD 100 million project was approved with World Bank support, entitled “Employment Support in Azerbaijan”. The project will contribute to SDG 8 and is expected to attract 2,000 people to self-employment small business opportunities during 2020 and reach a further 5,000 people each year between 2021-2025.

A related project, “Creating Inclusive and Decent Jobs for Socially Vulnerable Groups”, launched in December 2018 by the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population in collaboration with the UN Development Programme, strengthens the social protection of persons with disabilities, enhances the capacities of unemployed job-seekers among the less fortunate segments of society and introduces them to a wide array of opportunities in the formal labour market in accordance with the principle of “Leaving No One Behind”. The project covers the period 2019 to 2024, and it is expected to involve 500 people with disabilities in self-employment activities each year. Within the project, 693 disabled people have already participated in training sessions in 12 pilot districts (Absheron, Shamakhi, Goychay, Zagatala, Shamkir, Barda, Fizuli regions, Binagadi, Sabunchu districts of Baku and Ganja, Mingachevir and Sumgait cities).

During the reporting period, Azerbaijan provided humanitarian, financial and technical assistance to 33 countries, via the World Health Organization, ISESCO and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) provided

humanitarian, financial and other technical assistance. Support was also provided to help fight the COVID-19 pandemic on a bilateral and multilateral basis. Furthermore, at the beginning of 2020, Azerbaijan allocated USD 50,000 to help address the severe consequences of forest fires in Australia, and USD 20,000 to address the severe socio-economic difficulties caused by the Ebola epidemic in the Democratic Republic of Congo and in the region following a request by the African Union.

The Government of Azerbaijan has also made two voluntary financial contributions to the World Health Orga-

nization amounting to USD 10 million over the period under review. At the same time, the Government provided USD 5 million in humanitarian assistance to the Islamic Republic of Iran on a humanitarian basis to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

Azerbaijan currently ranks 54th among 166 countries, in the “Sustainable Development Goals Index” of the United Nations Sustainable Development Report 2020. According to a report by the World Economic Forum, Azerbaijan ranks the 3rd in the Inclusive Development Index among 74 developing countries.

**THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19
PANDEMIC AND THE CRISIS
ON THE IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE 2030 AGENDA**

4

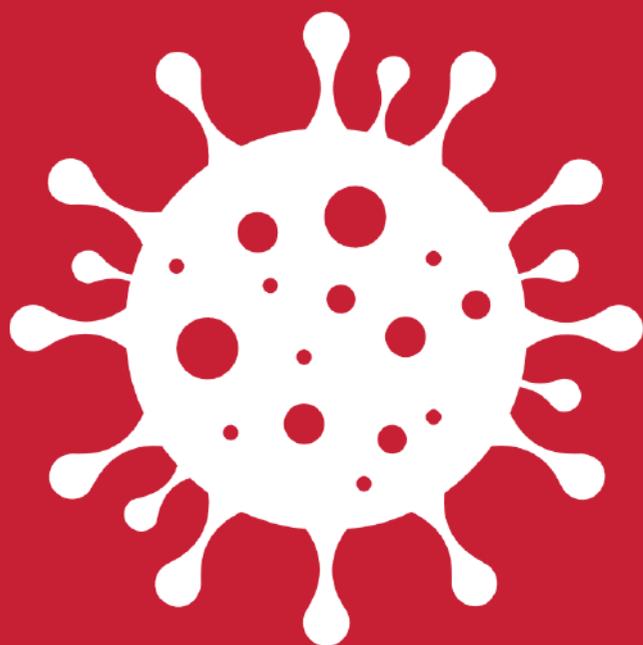
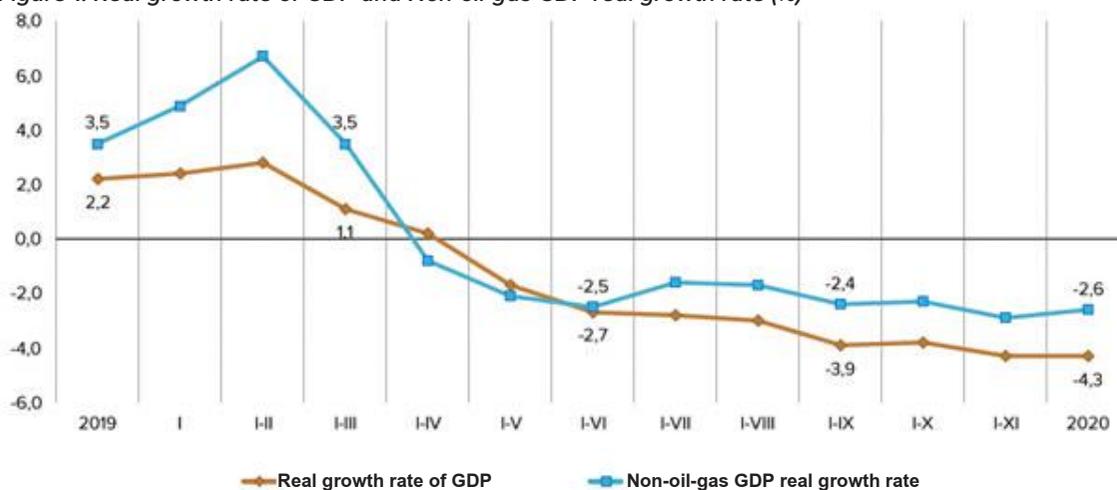


Figure 1. Real growth rate of GDP and Non-oil-gas GDP real growth rate (%)

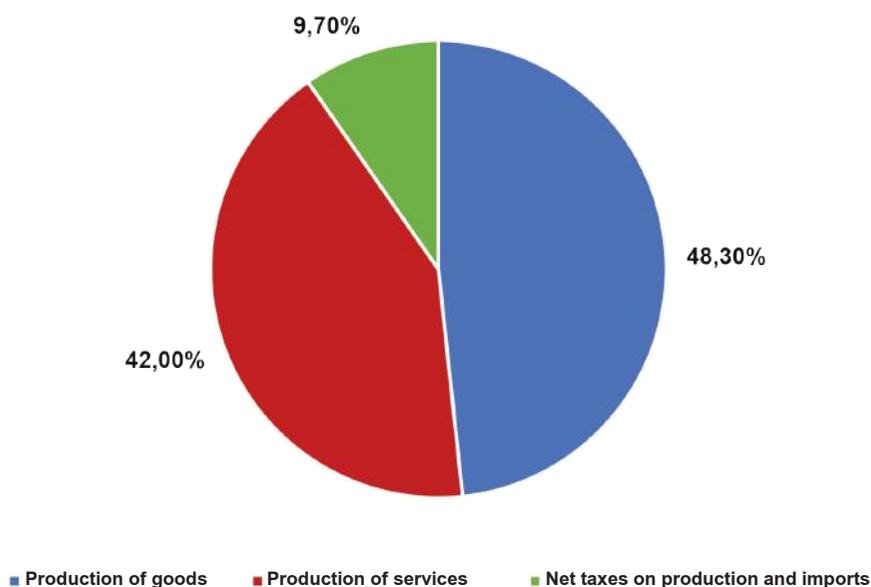


Source: SSC

The COVID-19 Coronavirus infection detected on 31 December 2019 was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization on 11 March 2020. The pandemic dealt a devastating blow to the global economic value chain, including the economies and health systems of countries. Due to the impact of the pandemic on Azerbaijan's economy, in 2020 GDP declined by 4.3% in real

terms and amounted to AZN 72.432 billion in current prices, and GDP per capita declined by 5.0% and amounted to AZN 7,262.8. During this period, value added production in the non-oil and gas sector declined by 2.6%, and in connection with the fulfilment of Azerbaijan's obligations under the "OPEC Plus" agreement it declined by 7.0% in the oil and gas sector.

Figure 2. Production structure of GDP (2020, %)



Source: SSC

In 2020, oil production was 34.6 million tons (7.8% decrease) and commercial gas production was 26.1 billion m³ (6.3% increase). The added value generated in 2020 was produced as follows: industry 33.7%; trade, repair of vehicles 11.5%; construction 7.7%; transport and warehousing 7.1%; agriculture, forestry and fishing 6.9%; information and communication 2.0%; tourist accommodation and catering 1.2%; and other spheres 20.2%. Net taxes on products and imports amounted to 9.7% of GDP.

The pandemic and derived sharp fluctuations in the global energy and stock markets, as well as obligatory lockdowns in the country to protect the health of the population, began affecting economic activity, including trade, tourism and construction, from the second quarter. In order to ensure sustainable development, as well as reduce the negative impact of the pandemic on the country's economy and employment, the Government adopted and immediately implemented an Action Plan of preventative and urgent actions. A secretariat of heads of relevant government agencies and institutions was established under the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan and necessary regulatory measures were taken accordingly. A support programme estimated at about USD 1.47 billion (3.1% of GDP) was drawn up, not only related to anti-crisis measures, but also as a programme of economic expansion, credit expansion and stimulation of aggregate demand. Since it seeks to preserve the social balance and economic development in the post-pandemic period, the wide-ranging support package adopted

by the Government also serves to ensure the continuation of activities under the SDGs. The support programme focuses on the following areas:

Protection of economic activity

- Direct financial support to 300,000 individual entrepreneurs in the affected sectors of the economy;
- Partial payment of salaries to 300,000 employees in the affected sectors of the economy;
- Temporary exemptions from taxes, insurance, and customs payments in the affected sectors of the economy;
- Provision of financial support to vital sections of the passenger transportation sector;
- Issuance of State guarantees and subsidised interest rates on bank loans to businesses operating in pandemic-affected areas;
- Subsidisation of part of the interest rate on existing bank loans without State guarantees.

Employment, social welfare support and public health protection

- Provision of a lump-sum payment equalling the minimum subsistence rate to people who have lost their jobs, the non-formally employed and those from low-income families (600,000 people);
- Creation of 90,000 paid public jobs;
- Payment of tuition fees from the State budget for students from socially vulnerable families;
- Allocation of funds from the State



budget to protect the health of the population and to meet the needs of citizens for medical masks;

- Temporary increase of existing discount limits on electricity use, etc.

Other measures:

- Non-periodic calculation of rents on State property and the State Land Fund;
- Temporary exemptions from customs duties for relevant food and medical products necessary for the population;
- Continuation of State support measures and promotion of private investments in the areas identified as the main priorities of the State's economic policy in the medium-term, etc.

Actions taken on Fiscal Policy

In the framework of these measures, the provision of tax relief and tax holidays for entrepreneurs is considered a key priority. Two laws - "On Amendments to the Tax Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan" and "On Amendments to the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on Social Insurance" were entered into force to reduce the negative impact of the pandemic on the business environment in the short and medium term, as well as to support economic growth during the pandemic.

The period of tax relief and tax holidays provided for in the law "On Amendments to the Tax Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan" covers the period from 1 January 2020 to 1 January 2021.

1. All taxpayers engaged in the below-listed business activities, which are directly affected by the pandemic, are fully exempt from property and land taxes and from profit tax with respect to 75% of the profits (income):
 - Inland motorway (including taxi) passenger transportation (inter-urban and inter-regional; intra-urban and intra-district); hotels and other hotel-type accommodation facilities;
 - Travel agency and tourism operations;
 - Transportation and (or) delivery of goods on order, including meals, food and non-food items from sellers to buyers;
 - Catering;
 - Organization of exhibitions, stage, recreation and entertainment (game), cinema, theatre, museum and concert halls;
 - Sports and health-care facilities;
 - Preparatory (education) and professional development courses, child learning and development centres, children's clubs, and psychology centres.
2. Areas, in which the activities were fully or partially restricted as a result of the relevant executive authority given to protect the health and safety of the population in connection with the spread of the Coronavirus pandemic.
3. 50% simplified tax exemption for taxpayers engaged in public catering and passenger transportation are in addition to the above-mentioned property and land tax exemptions.
4. In addition to the above tax exemptions, the following relief is provided for the affected areas of economic activities described in (1) above:
 - 50% exemption (i.e. tax rate reduction from 14% to 7%) from withholding tax applied on rental fees paid to individuals leasing out immovable property, for those taxpayers engaged in above-listed activities affected by the pandemic;
 - Exemption from making and reporting current tax payments for one year, extension of the deadline of the tax payments for 2019 until 1 September 2020;
 - Extension of the deadline for payment of profit (income) and property taxes assessed for the prior year for those taxpayers not considered micro-entrepreneurs under the temporary tax regime until 1 September of the current year;
 - Deferment of assessment of interest on unpaid taxes, compulsory state social insurance and unemployment insurance fees from 1 April 2020 to 1 January 2021.
5. For micro-entrepreneurs:
 - 50% exemption on simplified tax;
 - Tax holiday awarded until 1 September 2020 for filing simplified tax returns and profit (income) tax returns, and property tax returns for the first and second quarters of 2020 and for paying the assessed tax to the budget.
6. The following tax relief was provided for all entrepreneurs:

- Deduction of expenditures from income, without any limitation, which are incurred by a taxpayer on necessary preventive measures, including disinfection, in order to prevent the epidemic and protect the life and health of the population;
- Exemption from VAT on imports of certain products (goods) necessary for the food and medical needs of the population.
- 15% in other areas - taking into account the differing regional interest rates);
- Calculation of mandatory State social insurance fees from 1 January 2021 to 1 January 2026 by the amount of minimum monthly salary activity (25% in construction and trade, 15% in other areas - taking into account the differing regional interest rates).

Actions taken on Social Insurance

In accordance with the law “On Amendments to the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on Social Insurance”, dated 8 May 2020 the following stipulations were put in place:

1. Within the framework of social reforms in the country, the amount of the minimum monthly salary was set at AZN 250 from 1 September, 2019. This significant change resulted in an increase in the amount of compulsory state social insurance fees, calculated from a percentage of the minimum monthly salary on income from non-employment activities. Therefore, the calculations on mandatory State social insurance fees for insured people receiving an income from activities not related to employment were provided for as follows:

- Calculation of mandatory State social insurance fee from 1 April 2020 to 1 January 2021, by the amount of the minimum monthly salary for entrepreneurial activity (25% in construction and trade,

2. Payments of State social insurance fees made with a fixed receipt to reduce the social insurance burden of taxpayers operating with a fixed receipt and badge, calculations of the social insurance fees made by taking into account the differing regional interest rates, and administration of compulsory state social insurance and procedures on social insurance payments simplified.

3. Mandatory State social insurance fee for each family member of individuals using agricultural lands owned by them, depending on the area of the land, calculated by the amount of the minimum monthly salary:

- Up to 5 hectares - 2%;
- From 5 to 10 hectares - 6%;
- More than 10 hectares - 10%.

Furthermore, the law provides for the payment of a compulsory State social insurance fee by landowners upon receipt of the “Receipt on payment of a fixed amount of simplified tax and compulsory state social insurance fee”.

4. For members of the Bar Association, independent auditors and indepen-

dent accountants the Law specifies the payment of mandatory State social insurance fees in the amount of 10% of their income after the deduction of expenses.

As a consequence of the above-mentioned provisions, the potential detrimental effects on the stability of the economy were prevented, economic development was sustained, the social protection of employees working in the areas of economic activity at risk of being negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic were reinforced, and the risk of job losses and low employment levels was minimized.

Actions taken on Education

Quick action was taken and measures put in place to ensure the continuation of education during the COVID-19 pandemic. With the suspension of the teaching and learning process in educational institutions, the Ministry of Education launched TV lessons on Azerbaijan State TV Channels for students at general education institutions. From March 2020 to April 2021, a total of 4,274 TV lessons covering general education subjects were broadcast, which benefited more than 1.6 million students across the country. It should be noted that the educational platform used in Azerbaijan during the pandemic was included in the list presented on the UNESCO website.

Furthermore, to minimize the impact of the pandemic on education, the tuition fees of approximately 21,000 students were paid off, in accordance with the

Decision of the Cabinet of Ministers “On payment of tuition fees for students belonging to socially vulnerable groups”, No. 138, dated 13 April 2020.

Actions taken on Social-Welfare

Pursuant to the Action Plan adopted by the Cabinet of Ministers to reduce the negative impact of the pandemic on businesses, a portion of the salaries of employees working in the areas affected by the pandemic were paid, and financial support was provided to individual and micro-entrepreneurs. By 1 January 2021, AZN 82.7 million had been transferred to the bank accounts of 107,303 taxpayers from the funds allocated under the financial support programme for individual (micro) entrepreneurs operating in the areas affected by the pandemic. In connection with the payment of a certain portion of the salaries of employees, AZN 206.5 million was transferred to the bank accounts of 25,088 taxpayers.

Furthermore, the employment and social welfare of 48% of the country’s population (4.8 million people) was protected by the implementation of 12 measures in 4 areas. During this period, the Centralized Electronic Information System of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population investigated the numerous terminations of employment contracts through the “Employment Contract Notification” subsystem, providing recommendations to employers, posting notifications in the subsystem and providing daily supervision.

In accordance with the Action Plan, relevant activities were carried out to prevent unjustified dismissals and layoffs of public sector employees and to ensure employees on leave retained their salaries. Thus salaries were protected for 9,164,000 jobs in the public sector and 7,302,000 jobs in the private sector.

As a result of targeted interventions, the number of labour contracts continued to grow, and the total number had increased by 31% (400,000 contracts) by 29 December 2020 compared to the beginning of 2018 (61% , approximately 301,000, private, the remainder public).

On the initiative of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 38,000 paid public jobs were created to ensure the active employment of those unemployed people with special needs for social protection and who found securing employment difficult, to support their entry into the labour market. Despite the quarantine imposed during the pandemic, the number of jobs created reached 90,000.

In order to strengthen the social protection of unemployed people, the lump-sum payment programme, in the amount of AZN 190 of the approved subsistence minimum in the country, was extended to cover 600,000 people, with payments fully secured in April-May 2020.

Payments were made in those cities where strict quarantine measure had been imposed and a total of AZN 450 million was spent to cover these expenditures.

In 2020, 12,000 unemployed and job-seekers benefitted from the self-employment programme, with 7,250 involved in agriculture, and 3,350 in services and production programmes.

Pursuant to the Decision of the Cabinet of Ministers, “On simplification of the procedure for providing targeted state social assistance to low-income families in the fight against the new strain of Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic” during the special quarantine period in the Republic of Azerbaijan, the targeted state social assistance expiring on 1 March 2020, for certain families, was extended to 1 July 2020.

According to the Order of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan “On extension of the period of disability of the persons with disabilities in the fight against the new strain of Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic”, dated 7 April 2020, the period of disability of those persons who’s disability period expired on 1 March 2020, including children under 18 years of age with disabilities, was extended until 1 July 2020 in territories under the special quarantine regime, and until 11 September 2020 in regions and cities under the hardened special quarantine regime.

Under the special quarantine regime, all citizens over the age of 65 at high risk of infection during the special quarantine regime were instructed to remain in their homes. In this regard, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population mobilized social workers, to provides these citizens with daily social services at home (household chores,



“New Clinic” hospital for treatment of coronavirus patients.

basic necessities, purchase of pharmaceuticals, payment of utilities, etc.). These social services were provided to 15,000 older and disabled people and those living alone, in Baku and other regions of the country.

A total of 100,000 families of older and disabled people, those living alone, other vulnerable groups, the bereaved, and large families or children with disabilities, were provided with food three times during the year with the support of social partners.

The interventions and social projects of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation, which are based on the principles of humanism and compassion and goodwill in caring for vulnerable populations groups became prominent and widespread during the pandemic. The Foundation’s Regional Development Public Union provided food assistance to citizens living alone and vulnerable

groups in all regions and cities of the country. The Union also provided food assistance to the families of 30,000 children with disabilities.

Actions taken on Health Issues

In addition to the challenges faced by the economy, social welfare and the environment, the COVID-19 pandemic put the health-care system under enormous pressure. Urgent measures were immediately put in place by the Government to address the new and mounting challenges being faced.

To minimize the impact of the pandemic on health, technical and material improvements were made in Coronavirus detection and laboratory numbers were increased: daily testing capacity of 4,050 in March increasing to 15,800 by January 2021.

Furthermore, health-care personnel from abroad arrived in Azerbaijan to provide assistance in overcoming the difficulties created by the COVID-19 pandemic. In March 2021, 115 overseas doctors were involved in the country's COVID-19 response.

A decision was taken by the Government to boost the salaries of health-care workers with special, 'time-limited' payments, in light of the extreme conditions caused by the COVID-19 infection in the public and private health-care facilities. In this regard, the following rules were specified in accordance with the Law on "Provision of time-limit supplements to the salaries of health workers involved in actions to fight against the new strain of Coronavirus (COVID-19) infection":

- Employees carrying out preventive medical measures – to receive an amount three-times that of the monthly (tariff) salary;
- Medical workers providing emergency medical services, as well as laboratory workers dealing with the inspection of biological material – to receive an amount four-times that of the monthly official salary;
- Employees providing in-patient medical services to patients - to receive an amount five-times that of the monthly (tariff) salary.

Moreover, 13 modular hospitals were built to address the challenges posed by the pandemic in the health sector. The main goal of these modular hospitals was to efficiently treat those people infected with the virus. By June 2020, five modular hospitals had been built in the regions - Shaki, Ismayilli, Gabala, Gobustan and Ganja, and eight in Baku, Sumgait and Absheron, with bed stock totalling 3,756 beds. The largest number of beds (1,729) were in the Modular Hospital of the Medical Centre of the Ministry of Emergency Situations.

In the post-pandemic period, Azerbaijan is entering a qualitatively new stage and a strategic period covering 2021 to 2030. The long-term vision for the national economy for 2020 and beyond is to strengthen the competitiveness of the Azerbaijani economy, which has entered a path of sustainable development, by creating more value through multilaterally-beneficial cooperation. The goal of finding sources of high economic growth through a new generation of structural and institutional reforms, of further strengthening the power of the State of Azerbaijan and of building a high welfare and inclusive society must be secured in the new strategic period; one characterized by actively utilising the latest technologies.

PROGRESS IN THEMATIC GOALS

5





GOAL 1

End poverty in all its forms everywhere.

This goal aims to eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, reduce at least by half the proportion of the population living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions, implement nationally appropriate social protection measures for all and achieve the the substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable by 2030.

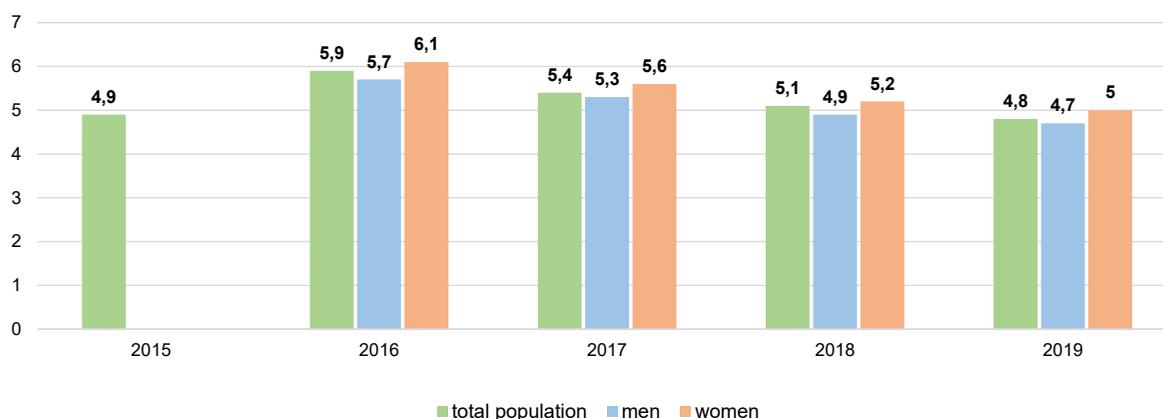
1.1. By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than USD 1.25 a day.

1.1.1. Proportion of population below the international poverty line, by sex, age, employment status and geographical location (urban/rural).

The 'international poverty line' is currently USD 1.90 a day. The proportion of the population living below the international poverty line in the Republic of Azerbaijan has been 0% since 2015.

1.2. By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions.

Figure 3. Proportion of population below the national poverty line, by sex, %



Source: SSC



In accordance with the Millennium Declaration, Azerbaijan has implemented comprehensive measures in the fight against poverty and has achieved significant results. Following the implementation of a number of State programmes, including the State programmes on poverty reduction and economic development, the poverty rate has been significantly reduced, the overall well-being of people has been improved, and the social protection of vulnerable population has been strengthened.

1.2.1. Proportion of population living below the national poverty line, by sex and age.

The proportion of the country's population living below the national poverty line decreased from 4.9% in 2015 to 4.8% in 2019 (4.7% for men, and 5% for women), with 4.5% in urban areas and 5.2% in rural areas. Overall, the decline

in the proportion of the population living below the national poverty line between 2010 and 2019 at the current pace is considered a positive trend.

1.3. Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable.

1.3.1. Proportion of population covered by social protection floors/systems, by sex, distinguishing children, unemployed persons, older persons, persons with disabilities, pregnant women, newborns, work-injury victims and the poor and the vulnerable.

The Targeted State Social Assistance (TSSA) programme has been applied in the country since 2006 as a passive social protection measure. As a social protection tool, the TSSA seeks to meet the minimum financial needs of

the poor and low-income segments of the population. This social programme plays a special role in improving the welfare of this group of families, and in solving their social and financial problems. The purpose of the TSSA is to provide financial assistance to low-income families in accordance with their income with a view to improving their social welfare. The amount of assistance is calculated as the difference between the average monthly income of the family and the sum of the needs criterion for each family member. The level of the needs criterion for 2020 was set at AZN 160, and the subsistence minimum in the country was set at AZN 190. In 2021, these figures were set at AZN 170 and AZN 196, respectively. Over the past period, the needs criterion and the subsistence minimum in the country have been steadily increased. Compared to 2006, the needs criterion in 2020 has increased by 5.3 times, and the subsistence minimum in the country has increased by 3.3 times.

In 2020, 76,827 families with 322,078 family members received TSSA. Thus,

the average monthly amount of TSA per family was AZN 240, and the average monthly amount per person was AZN 57.2. 53.3% (or 171,796 people) of family members receiving TSSA are women, 46.7% (or 150,282 people) are men, 54% (or 173,763 people) are children under 18 years of age.

A number of amendments were made to the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on Targeted State Social Assistance in 2020 with a view to facilitating the shift from unsustainable passive social security measures to sustainable active labour market measures by providing support to people from low-income families to create and develop their own businesses in line with their capacities or to increase their income through self-employment.

In 2020, the State Social Protection Fund paid social benefits to a total of 488,000 people or 5.1% of the population (398,000 people or 4.1% of the population received monthly benefits, while 90,000 people or 0.9% received a lump-sum allowance), and the presi-

Table 1: Disaggregation of recipients of social benefits in 2020

	Number	Proportion (%)
Number of recipients of social benefits	525,500	100
Number of recipients of disability pension	176,183	33.5
Number of children with disabilities under the age of 18 receiving disability pension	50,964	9.7
Number of recipients of old-age pension	96,996	18.5
Number of recipients of childbirth allowance	117,059	22.3
Number of recipients of funeral allowance	4,469	0.9

Source: Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population

dental benefits were paid to 276,000 people or 2.9% of the population. In total, 83,700 people were entitled, through an electronic system, to receive social benefits. 54.7% (or 214,400 people) of those receiving monthly social benefits were women, while 45.3% (or 177,400 people) were men. Social benefits are awarded to those who are not entitled to a retirement pension, and are intended to meet a minimum standard of living or to meet their specific needs in a certain area.

In accordance with the “Program of social protection and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities”, and with a view to improving the living conditions of citizens, 2,783 vulnerable people in 2019, and 4,943 vulnerable people in 2020 were provided with lump sum financial assistance.

In order to strengthen the social protection of the population, the amounts of social benefits assigned to many categories of the population have been significantly increased since 1 April 2019 by the decrees and orders of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, dated April 15, 2019. Specifically, the old-age pension was increased from AZN 73 to AZN 130; the disability pension from AZN 82 to AZN 150 for a level I disability, from AZN 61 to AZN 130 for a level II disability, and from AZN 52 to AZN 110 for a level III disability; and the disability pension for children under the age of 18 from AZN 82 to AZN 150. The allowance for the loss of the family head from AZN 68 to AZN 80; allowance for guardians (caretakers) of orphans and children deprived of

parental care from AZN 61 to AZN 100; allowance for children of active-duty military servicemen from AZN 68 to AZN 100; allowance for women with more than five children from AZN 33 to AZN 55 per child; childbirth allowance from AZN 109 to AZN 200; and funeral allowance from AZN 146 to AZN 300. In addition, the amounts of presidential benefits have been increased for some categories of people, and a number of new pensions have been established. With the aim of stimulating the adoption of children deprived of parental care, a new type of monthly social allowance (allowance for an adopted child, and allowance for an adopted child under 18 years of age with disabilities) was established by the relevant decrees of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated October 6, 2020. A monthly allowance of AZN 160 was determined for each adopted child aged 3 to 18 deprived of parental care, and AZN 480 per month for each adopted child with disabilities.

Unemployment benefit and unemployment insurance⁴

Calculations show that the number of unemployed people registered by the local offices of the State Employment Agency increased by 52,395 people (32,897 men, 19,498 women) between 2015 and 2019. The number of recipients of the unemployment insurance payment had decreased by 1,003 to 540 people by the end of 2019 (52.4% men and 47.6% women). By the beginning of 2020, of the 81,272 unemployed people registered by the local offices of the State Employment Agency, 62.3% were men and 37.7% were women.

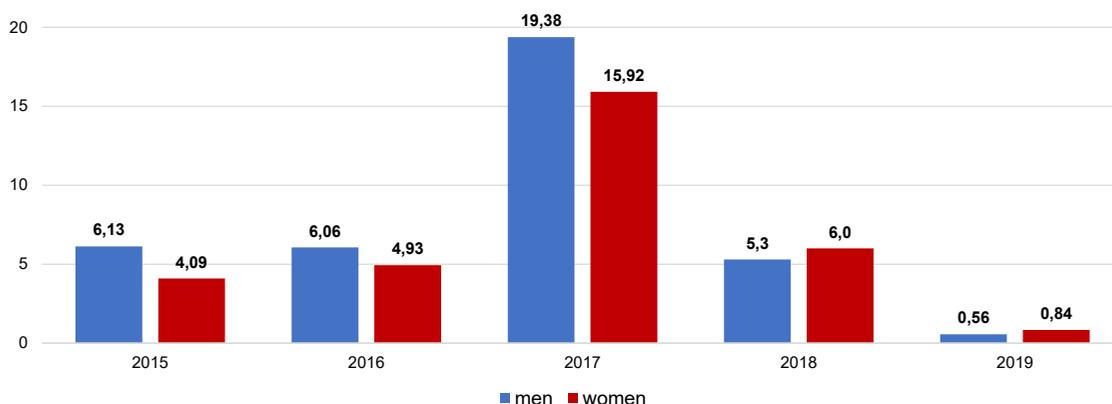
⁴ Unemployment benefit was provided in 2015-2017, and under the new legislation, unemployment insurance has been awarded since 2018.

Data for 2015-2017 reflects the number of people registered as unemployed by the offices of the State Employment Service.

Data for 2010-2017 reflects the number of recipients of unemployment benefit.

To calculate the proportion of the recipients of the unemployment insurance payment, the number of recipients is divided by the total number of the unemployed registered with the local offices of the State Employment Agency and multiplied by 100.

Figure 4. Proportion of unemployed receiving unemployment insurance payment, by sex, %



Source: SSC

When the number of recipients of the unemployment insurance payment are disaggregated by age, in 2019 only 7.8% (42 people) were aged 15-29 years old, while 92.2% (498 people) were aged 30 and above. When disaggregated by economic region, the highest proportion of recipients of the unemployment insurance payment in 2019 was found in Baku (1.25%).

1.4. By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance.

With the aim of supporting the initiative of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on sharing social responsibility, through the provision of support by national banks to facilitate the self-employment of the vulnerable population, the Ministry of Labour and Social Pro-

tection, the Central Bank of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Azerbaijan Banks Association signed a Memorandum of Understanding. Activities are now being implemented by 21 banks to promote self-employment.

In accordance with the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 330 of December 30, 2012 on the approval of the “Rules for the award of public contracts in the field of social services to municipalities, individuals and legal entities, including non-governmental organizations”, in 2019 224 social service projects were implemented by 73 non-governmental organizations, benefitting approximately 9,000 people. The services provided related to ensuring accessibility of social services for vulnerable children and families, providing equal opportunities for children with disabilities and ensuring their social and psychological rehabilitation and social inclusion. In 2020, 132 social service projects were implemented by 57 non-governmental organizations and 14,021 people benefited from the services provided.

Also, under the order of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan “On additional measures to improve the social and living conditions of persons with disabilities and martyrs’ families associated with the protection of the territorial integrity, independence and constitutional order of the Republic of Azerbaijan”, housing was provided for 934 martyrs’ families and persons with disabilities in 2019, and 1,571 (of which 68 were provided by a social partner) in 2020. Additionally, in accordance with the Cabinet of Ministers resolution regarding the provision of automobiles and motorized wheelchairs to persons with disabilities with the medical entitlement for a specific vehicle, 600 people were given cars in 2019 and 400 in 2020.

1.5 By 2030, build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters.

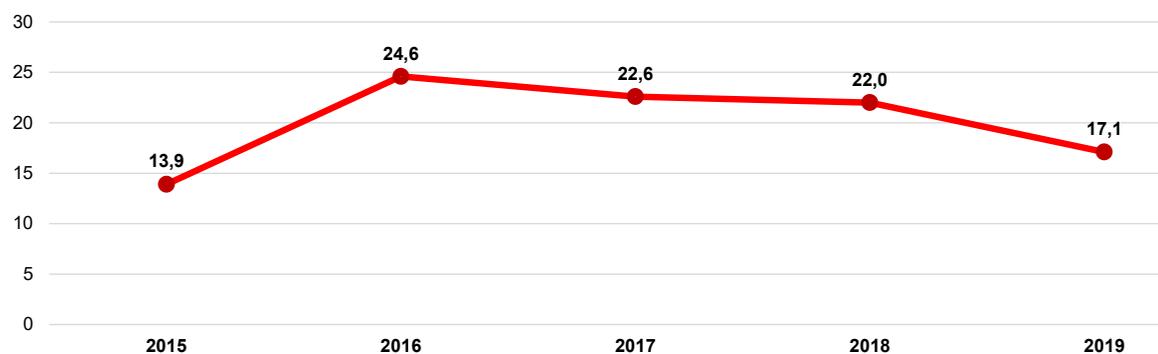
1.5.1 Number of deaths, missing persons and persons affected by disaster, per 100,000 people.

According to the administrative data of the Ministry of Emergency Situations, the number of deaths, missing persons and people directly affected by disasters, per 100,000 population, increased from 13.9 in 2015 to 24.6 in 2016, but decreased in subsequent years. In 2019, the number of deaths, missing persons and people directly affected by disasters, per 100,000 population, fell to its lowest level in four years.

1.5.3 Number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies.

The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction recommends the establishment of a coordination group to implement a National Strategy to systematize all data relating to the Sendai Framework Monitoring Platform. The relevant government agencies in Azerbaijan are currently setting up a National Strategy Coordination Group which will compile the necessary information for the national strategy.

Figure 5. The number of deaths, missing persons and people directly affected by disasters, per 100,000 population



Source: SSC

1.a. Ensure significant mobilization of resources from a variety of sources, including through enhanced development cooperation, in order to provide adequate and predictable means for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, to implement programmes and policies to end poverty in all its dimensions.

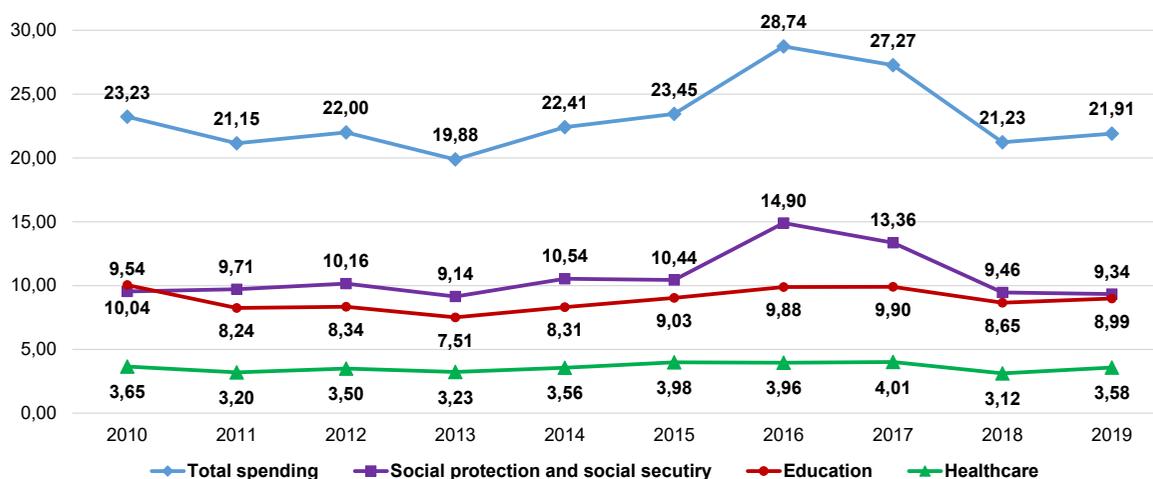
With a view to ensuring the social service system in Azerbaijan meets the requirements of the vulnerable population of the country to the maximum extent, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection drafted the 2021-2027 National Strategy for the Development of Social Services in the Republic of Azerbaijan. The Strategy defines the national policy for building a social service system through the implementation of activities such as improving the quality of social services available for vulnerable groups, strengthening human resources, improving the existing legal frame-

work, developing relevant standards and norms, strengthening the logistical capacity and expanding the network of social service institutions, and applying international experience and innovative technologies.

1.a.2. Proportion of total government spending on essential services (education, health and social protection).

Compared to 2015, the proportion of expenditures on essential services in total government spending decreased by 1.54% in 2019 to 21.91%. Nevertheless, the volume of essential services increased by 1.28 times in value terms during that period. Expenditures on education increased from AZE 1.6 billion to AZE 2.2 billion health care expenditures increased from AZN 708.2 million to AZN 873.6 million, and social protection and social security expenditures increased from AZN 1.85 billion to AZN 2.3 billion.

Figure 6. Proportion of total government spending on essential services, %



Source: SSC



Goal 2

End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.

The activities taken under SDG 2 aim to end hunger and ensure that everyone has access to safe and adequate food, and address important issues related to stunting in children under five years of age. To respond to this challenge the target is to double the incomes of small food producers, especially women, family farms and farmers, by providing equal access to land, other productive resources, relevant knowledge and financial services, through which to increase agricultural productivity and food prices in food markets. This can be achieved by providing timely access to information on food stocks in order to limit sharp fluctuations.

2.1. By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round.

With the aim of improving the financial situation of vulnerable people, families of martyrs and people with disabilities, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population (MLSP), in partnership with social partners, provided

100,000 families with food packages three times.

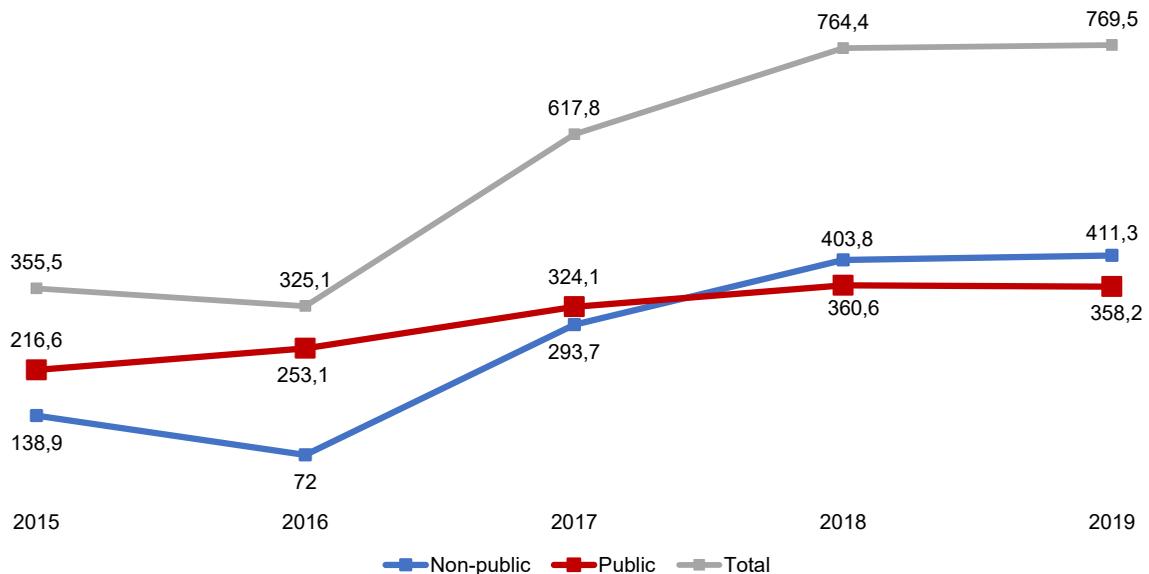
During the COVID-19 pandemic, the State Committee for Affairs of Refugees and IDPs (SCARI) provided food aid to low-income families with the support of local and international organizations. Under the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the SCARI and the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) in April 2020, packages of various food and medical products were distributed to IDPs settled in Baku, the elderly living alone aged above 65, and families of martyrs.

Moreover, the Council for State Support to Non-Governmental Organizations provided funding for several projects aimed at distributing social aid packages to low-income families to combat the effects of the pandemic.

Investment in agriculture and access to credit

Investment in the agricultural sector more than doubled during 2015-2019, including 65.4% from the public sector and about 3.0 times from non-public

Figure 7. Investment in agriculture, million AZN



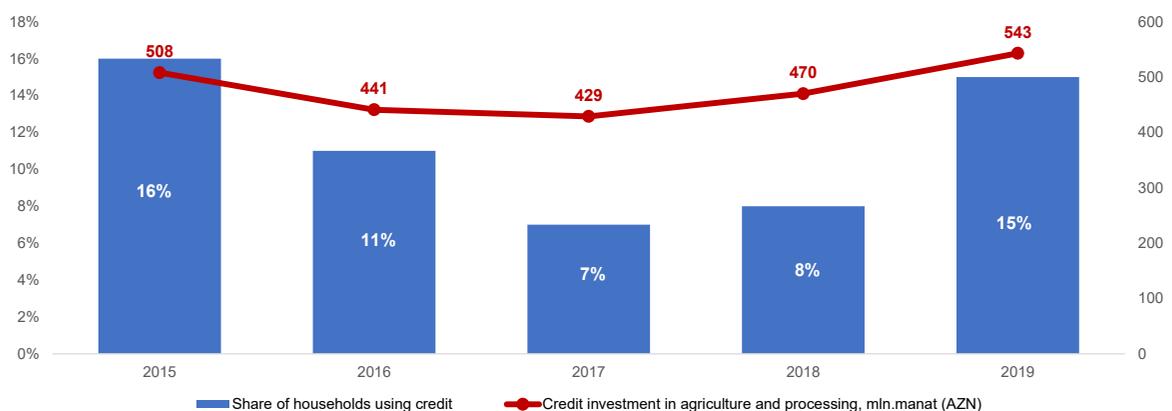
sources. A particularly positive point is that since 2018, the investment from non-public sources in the agricultural sector has surpassed that of the public sector.

While credit investment in agriculture and the manufacturing industry decreased significantly in 2016-2017

compared to 2015, in 2019 it increased by over 6.9%.

The proportion of farmers using credits also decreased significantly in 2016-2017, in line with the general trend in credit investment, and began to increase again in 2018.

Figure 8: Proportion of agricultural holdings availed of credit



Source:

1 Central Bank of the Republic of Azerbaijan: The credit investment in agriculture and manufacturing industry, 2019 statistical bulletin

2. Proportion of agricultural holdings availed of credit - Farm Data Monitoring System (FDMS) of the Ministry of Agriculture, 2015-2019



State support

The state support system is an accelerator for the development of agriculture. Therefore, in addition to the annual increase in the amount of state support for agriculture in Azerbaijan, special attention has been given to improving support mechanisms used. In this regard, the Government is focusing its programmes on farmers who are involved in ensuring the food security of the country, thereby ensuring an uninterrupted food supply for the population.

The Decree “On the establishment of a new subsidy mechanism in the agricultural sector” signed by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on June 27, 2019, establishes a new mechanism for support measures in the agricultural sector. These measures ensure accountability, transparency and the efficient use of budget funds in the sector, and simplify and digitize the application process. In this connection, farmers

have been receiving subsidies since January, 2020.

Under the new mechanism, product subsidies are grouped into three categories: cultivation, crop and seed subsidies. In the field of crop production, subsidies for fuel and motor oils, wheat and rice cultivation, together with subsidies for purchasing mineral fertilizers, biohumus and pesticides at a discounted price, have all been combined under the cultivation subsidy. As provided for in the Decree, the Agrarian Subsidy Council was established to bring the subsidy mechanism in line with the goals of agricultural development. The Council determines the regional specialization based on the base amount of AZN 200, the application of modern irrigation technology, the coefficients to be applied for subsidies to the crop production sector, and seed quotas, taking into account the promotion of high-yield and high value-added crops.

The established coefficients ensure that a certain amount of the farmers' expenses are covered by the State, while also stimulating the development of specific areas through the State subsidy mechanism. To promote the more efficient use of land resources, agricultural cooperatives receive cultivation subsidies to support their activities, with cooperatives responsible for land of more than 50 hectares receiving a 10% increase in subsidy. 25% percent of the cultivation subsidy is provided in cash, with the remainder used to purchase agricultural inputs.

In addition to cultivation subsidies, there are also product and seed subsidies in the crop production sector. The product subsidy is paid to farmers in addition to the cultivation subsidy for each kilogram of crop product provided to suppliers. Plant species and coefficients to which product subsidies are applied are determined by the Board. Product subsidies are currently provided for cotton, tobacco and sugar beet production. Seed subsidies are provided to seed farmers in accordance with the quotas set by the Council for the sale of certified (1st and 2nd replication) seeds and saplings.

In addition, in order to grant lump sum support to agricultural producers for repeated corn cultivation, subsidies were provided from the Ministry of Agriculture from the Reserve Fund envisaged in the 2020 state budget. The Council also determined that, in 2021, subsidies will be paid for soybeans, millet, sorghum, sunflower and potatoes, in addition to corn.

The following subsidies are provided for the livestock sector:

- Animal subsidies in the amount of AZN 100 for each healthy calf born through artificial insemination;
- Apiculture subsidies in the amount of AZN10 AZN per calendar year for each bee colony kept by farmers;
- Sericulture subsidies in the amount of AZN 5 for each kilogram of fresh silkworm cocoon (excluding spun and karapacha cocoons) provided to to the supplier.

From 2020, the provision of subsidies to farmers for crop and livestock production will be managed through the Electronic Agricultural Information System (EAIS), in accordance with the "Rules for subsidizing agricultural production" (Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan No. 759 dated June 27, 2019). In addition to the farmer registration subsystem, the EAIS is in the process of incorporating the subsystems for subsidy, supplier, veterinary monitoring, agrarian analytics, seed/sapling, phytosanitary control, agrarian equipment, laboratory, agrarian trade, agrarian credit, and agrarian insurance.

Direct Subsidies

In 2020, AZN 233 million in cultivation subsidies was allocated to farmers: AZN 29.5 million AZN for cotton production, AZN 1.2 million for tobacco and sugar beet production, and AZN 16 million for animal production (including AZN 8.8 million for artificial insemination, AZN 2.2 million for sericulture) and AZN 5 million for apiculture.

In order to grant lump sum support to agricultural producers for the seed supply for repeated corn cultivation, AZN 60 subsidy was provided to producers per hectare of repeated corn cultivation through AZN 2.2 million budget allocated to the Ministry of Agriculture from the Reserve Fund envisaged in the 2020 state budget.

The Agrarian Credit and Development Agency under the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Azerbaijan continued to fund the sale and leasing of soft loans, as well as for agricultural inputs, on preferential terms through authorized credit organizations.

Logistics

The Agrarian Credit and Development Agency funded the leasing and sale of 7,259 units of agricultural machinery in 2020 (compared to 4,117 units in 2019) on preferential terms: 39 grain harvesters, 1,102 tractors, and 6,118 other types of machinery.

Based on the 2,993 applications for support received, for the sale and leasing of agricultural machinery, technological equipment, and irrigation systems on preferential terms, credits amounting to AZN 37.3 million were issued and AZN 73.6 million was allocated through authorized credit organizations.

Breeding animals

In 2020, the Agrarian Credit and Development Agency received 423 applications for support and, accordingly, provided subsidies in the amount of AZN 16.8 million for the purchase of 8,758 (5,074 head of cattle, 3,684

head of small cattle) breeding animals to farmers and businesses. In 2019, AZN 9.9 million was allocated for the purchase of 4,523 heads of breeding animals, in the form of credits and discounts.

Agricultural credits

In 2020, the Agrarian Credit and Development Agency provided soft loans in the amount of AZN 47.6 million (AZN 13.2 million for medium and large agricultural loans, AZN 34.4 million for microcredits, and AZN 37.3 million for machinery and equipment loan). A total of 5,515 people (5,330 individuals and 185 legal entities) benefited from these loans. In 2019, a total of 1,730 people (1,606 individuals, 124 legal entities) received soft loans in the amount of AZN 53.4 million.

In addition, a number of measures have been taken to provide financial resources to farmers. Within the framework of the Agricultural Competitiveness Improvement Project, jointly implemented by the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the World Bank, in 2020, a total of 30 sub-borrowers were provided with agricultural loans on preferential terms in the amount of AZN 6.7 million and 392 new jobs were created. One of the innovative activities of the project regarding the creation of agribusiness value chains, continued in 2020 with the provision of grant funds in the amount of AZN 1.92 million (USD 1.13 million).

Other support measures - extension services

Given the importance of increasing the knowledge and skills of farmers

and producers working in the agricultural sector, 1,262 training sessions for 22,750 farmers were conducted in 2019. The Center for Agrarian Science and Innovation, Regional Agrarian Science and Innovation Centers, Azerbaijan State Agrarian University, Agrarian Services Agency and Agrarian Credit and Development Agency, coordinated the training, which involved 590 trainers from research institutes across Azerbaijan. In 2020, 207 training sessions on 66 topics were conducted in 60 districts of Azerbaijan; 155 trainers were involved and 1,547 farmers participated.

Training sessions were also conducted by the “Agrarian Supply and Procurement” Open Joint-Stock Company on the preparation, storage and packaging of products for export, for farmers producing pears, pomegranates, tomatoes and grapes in the Khachmaz, Kurdamir and Shamakhi regions of the country. Farmers were taught about the potential export markets for these products, the logistics channels to enable access to these markets, and the certificates for export and customs clearance.

2.5 By 2020, maintain the genetic diversity of seeds, cultivated plants and farmed and domesticated animals and their related wild species, including through soundly managed and diversified seed and plant banks at the national, regional and international levels, and promote access to and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, as internationally agreed.

The Ministry of Agriculture has prepared the “2021-2024 Sectoral Strategic Plan on the agricultural section of the state budget of the Republic of Azerbaijan.” The purpose of the Sectoral Strategic Plan is to ensure food security through the efficient use of existing natural economic resources in the country, to meet the needs of the industrial sector for raw materials and the needs of the population for food products through local production, and to achieve increased agricultural production and employment in the regions in order to increase the export of agricultural products. The Plan also addresses the “Environmental protection, sustainable use of natural resources and management of the impact of climate changes on agriculture” and aims to implement the following measures in this regard:

- Create mechanisms to mitigate the adverse impact of climate change and other natural phenomena on agriculture;
- Improve the mechanisms to mitigate the adverse impact of agriculture on the environment;
- Improve the mechanisms to ensure the sustainable use of agricultural lands and water resources;
- Develop environmentally sound agricultural production.

Together with these strategic activities, the Plan envisages the implementation of measures such as “Improving the system of human resource management and training” and “Improving the system of science, education and extension services in agriculture”.

2.a. Increase investment, including through enhanced international cooperation, in rural infrastructure, agricultural research and extension services, technology development and plant and livestock gene banks in order to enhance agricultural productive capacity in developing countries, in particular least developed countries.

In 2020, the Center for Agrarian Science and Innovation of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Azerbaijan began to apply innovative technologies, and modern breeding and biotechnological research methods in the field of crop production and livestock production, throughout its associated scientific institutions.

A smart garden system, providing automated subsoil irrigation and fertilization, has been installed in the innovative orchard on the 15-hectare territory of the Fruit and Tea Growing Research Institute of the Agrarian Science and Innovation Center. The system will save both water and fertilizer and will be more effective because it directly affects the root of the plant. Agro-technical maintenance is controlled remotely by telephone or computer. Furthermore, the subartesian well drilled as a water source will be powered by solar panels.

The AgroHackathon 2020 startup competition was held at the Vegetable Production Research Institute of the Agrarian Science and Innovation Center. More than 50 teams representing the country's leading universities applied for the competition, with 15 teams representing 11 different universities participating in

the final stage of the competition and the top three winning teams receiving valuable prizes.

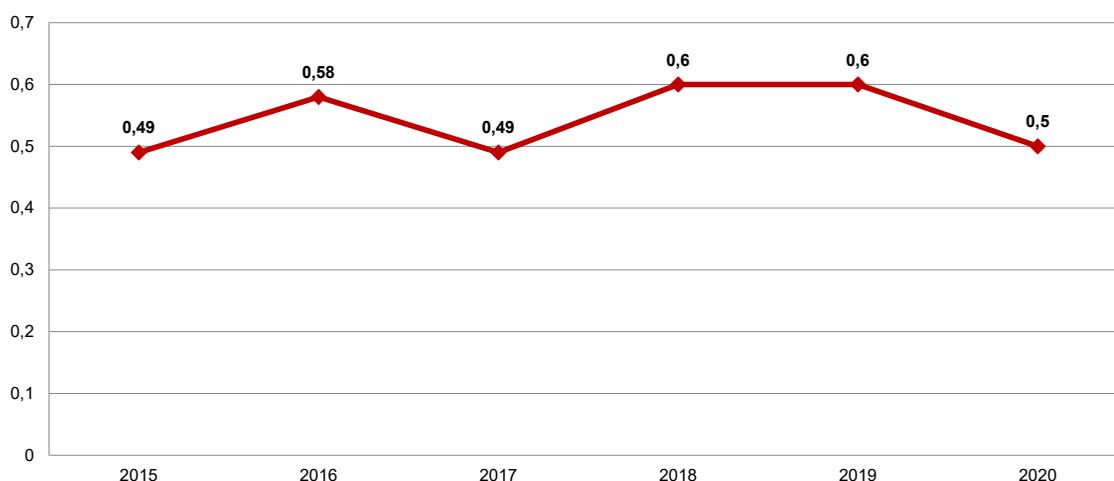
In 2020 certification was received by enterprises and seed farms included in the Agrarian Science and Innovation Centre for the following seed supplies: 43.8 tons of standard seed (wheat, barley, peas, lentils, rice, vegetables, melons and fodder crops); 191.29 tons of pre-basic seed (wheat, barley, cotton, peas, corn, rice, melons, potatoes and fodder crops); 2,413 tons of basic seed (wheat, barley, cotton, peas, corn, rice, potatoes, vegetables and fodder crops); 94,634 tons of R1 and R2 wheat and barley seed; 805.5 tons of corn seed; 40 tons of pea seed; 13,726 tons of potato seed; 206.41 tons of alfalfa seed; 12.01 tons of vegetable and melon seed; 190 tons of R1 and R2 fibrous cotton seed; 1,552,000 units of tea; and 513,741 fruit saplings.

2.a.1. The agriculture orientation index for government expenditures.

The index allocations to agriculture in the structure of state expenditures in 2019-2020 was less than 1 and varied between 0.49 and 0.60. This implies that the contribution of the agricultural sector to the economy is higher than the share of allocations made to agriculture in State expenditures.

The volume of value added in agriculture, forestry, fisheries and hunting increased from AZN 3.4 billion in 2015 to AZN 4.7 billion in 2019 and AZN 5 billion in 2020. In 2019, the value added created in agriculture, forestry, fisheries

Figure 9. Index of allocations to agriculture in the structure of state expenditures



Source: Ministry of Agriculture

and hunting increased by 7.3% compared to the preceding year. In 2020, although unfavourable climatic conditions led to a slowdown in growth, the total value added created in agriculture increased by 1.9% compared to 2019. Overall, the value added created in the agricultural sector increased by 19.2% in real terms during 2016-2020.

2.c. Adopt measures to ensure the proper functioning of food commodity markets and their derivatives and facilitate timely access to market information, including on food reserves, in order to help limit extreme food price volatility.

During 2020, the Agrariant Supply and Procurement OJSC organized fairs in Yasamal, Binagadi, Narimanov, Surakhani districts of Baku and Khirdalan city on the last day of every week on national holidays. The main purpose of the fairs was to prevent artificial price increases by intervening in the market, to facilitate the access of agricultural producers to

the market, and to provide the population with quality agricultural products at cheaper rates compared to market prices. Prices for some products were 20-30% lower than in other markets.

In 2015, within the framework of a project jointly implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) a price information portal for agricultural products was created, which was later improved by the Ministry to create an Agricultural Electronic Price Information Portal (www.aqarbazor.az). The Portal contains the following price information:

- Prices for the field sale, wholesale, retail sale and supply by processing enterprises of fruits, vegetables, potatoes and melons;
- Retail prices for livestock products (meat, milk, egg, honey);
- Prices for purchase by milk collection points;
- Sales and wholesale prices of meat in live weight;



- Sale prices for wool and hides by the population or slaughterhouses;
- Field sales of cereals during the crop season and wholesale prices after the crop season;
- Prices for procurement by supply enterprises of industrial plants and other crops used as industrial raw materials;
- Retail prices of agricultural inputs (fodder, fertilizer, breeding animals).

Prices for all types of crops are collected on a daily, weekly and monthly basis, depending on the product, taking into account low, medium and high levels.

Food security

Ensuring food security in the Republic of Azerbaijan is a key element of State policy. Activities in this area have thus been expanded and measures taken aimed at

providing the country's population with the required amount and quality of food on an uninterrupted basis.

Activities have been implemented in three areas with a view to ensuring food security:

1. To increase the level of self-sufficiency in food products, State support measures are being put in place to help entrepreneurs increase local production, such as subsidies, soft loans, tax and customs privileges, awareness raising, training, etc.
2. The Food Safety Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan is now responsible for controlling the minimum quality and safety of food products.
3. To ensure the availability of quality food products for all segments of the population, appropriate measures are being taken by

agencies responsible for implementing the State social policy. The “subsistence minimum”, based on the minimum consumer basket, is approved, and is also taken into account when determining pensions, allowances and social benefits. Moreover, the Ministry of Economy conducts monitoring activities to prevent monopolies, restriction of competition, distribution of markets, the application of agreed prices, which contributes to the increase of food prices in the consumer market, and takes measures in line with the anti-monopoly legislation against the manipulation of prices, price discrimination and dumping.

In addition, the resources of the State Grain Fund, established under the Ministry of Emergency Situations, are used to prevent shortages of flour and bakery products in the consumer market. To ensure the demand of the country’s population for grain and flour products can be met, two elevator facilities equipped with state-of-art devices and equipment, with a capacity of 100,000 tons and 60,000 tons were built and commissioned in the Sangachal settlement of Garadagh district and Ganja city, respectively. The construction of another elevator complex with a capacity of 100,000 tons in the Sangachal settlement is underway. With the commissioning of this complex, the total capacity of the elevator facilities will reach 260,000 tons.

With the aim of ensuring that state food wheat reserves are met, as determined

by the State Grain Fund, the beginning of the wheat harvest season in the country is announced in the local media every year, and all information is posted on the Ministry’s official website. The announcement provides the names, addresses and contact numbers of grain collection points covering all grain-growing regions of the country. If there is a shortfall in the supply of high quality local food wheat, the State food wheat reserves are made up through imports, in accordance with the legislation. Work is currently underway to import high quality wheat for storage in the Ministry’s Sangachal Grain Elevator.

In order to bring new technical regulations in line with international practices in the field of food safety, ten draft regulatory acts were developed by the Codex Alimentarius National Commission in coordination with relevant state bodies and are included in the State Register of Legal Acts of the Ministry of Justice. The regulatory acts will ensure a higher level of human health protection and the safety and minimum quality of food and feed products.

The inspections, monitoring, and investigations into poisoning incidents, certification, analysis of import-export operations and analysis of laboratory tests carried out in 2019 and 2020 revealed the key problems related to food safety, animal and plant health in the country. In response to the identified problems, nine risk profiles were developed for food safety, animal health and plant health, and scientific risk assessments carried out for each.

Land plots were selected for the construction of modern (stationary, modular and mobile) slaughterhouses in the regions and in Baku city, to promote the establishment of slaughterhouses in compliance with veterinary-sanitary and sanitary-hygienic requirements, together with the establishment of coordination mechanisms between the relevant central and local executive authorities. As part of the FAO Partnership and Liaison Office in Azerbaijan project, “Improve-

ment of national capacity to conduct disease surveillance including veterinary diagnostics”, in 2020 an international expert interviewed field veterinarians and farmers, and conducted serological monitoring of plague in animals in Bilasuvar, Jalilabad and Lerik districts. Based on the results, a draft document on the establishment of a plague-free zone has been prepared for the World Organization for Animal Health.

3



Goal 3

Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.

The goal is aimed at reducing the maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births, the neonatal mortality to at least as low as 12 per 1,000 live births, and the under-5 mortality to at least as low as 25 per 1,000 live births. It also aims to end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases and combating infections and non-communicable diseases. It further aims to prevent narcotic drug abuse and the harmful use of alcohol, halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road

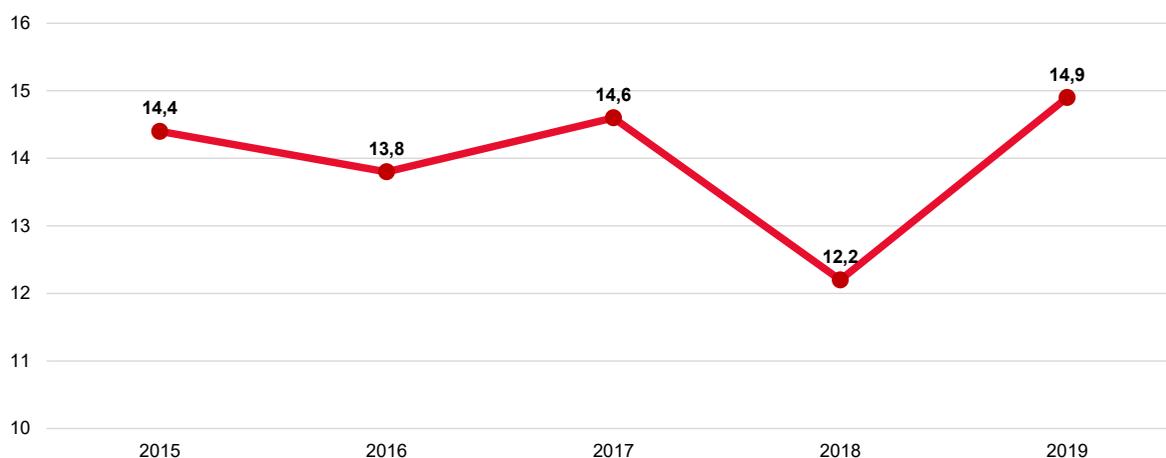
traffic accidents, and substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses resulting from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination.

3.1. By 2030, reduce the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births.

3.1.1 Maternal mortality ratio.

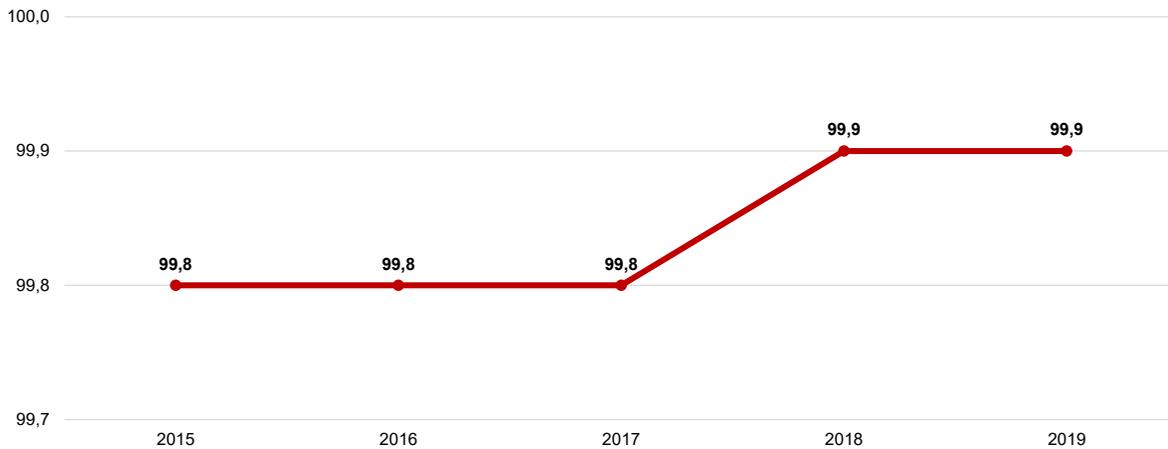
Although the maternal mortality ratio in Azerbaijan increased by 0.5 points between 2015 and 2019, stabilizing at 14.9, the overall number of mothers who

Figure 10. Maternal mortality ratio, per 100,000 live birth



Source: SSC

Figure 11. The share of births attended by skilled health personnel, %



Source: SSC

died during pregnancy, childbirth and postpartum period fell from 24 in 2015 to 21 in 2019. The number of maternal deaths in 2019, disaggregated by economic regions, was one in the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, eight in Baku, one in Absheron economic region, two in Ganja-Gazakh economic region, four in Lankaran economic region, one in Guba-Khachmaz economic region, and four in Aran economic region. No maternal deaths were reported in Sheki-Zagatala, Upper Karabakh, Kalbajar-Lachin, and Mountainous Shirvan economic regions. Compared to 2015, the maternal mortality ratio decreased from 23.5 to 15.2 in rural areas, and increased from 4.9 to 14.6 in urban areas in 2019. Overall, the maternal mortality rate was higher in rural areas than in urban areas. In 2019, the number of maternal deaths was 10 in urban areas and 11 in rural areas.

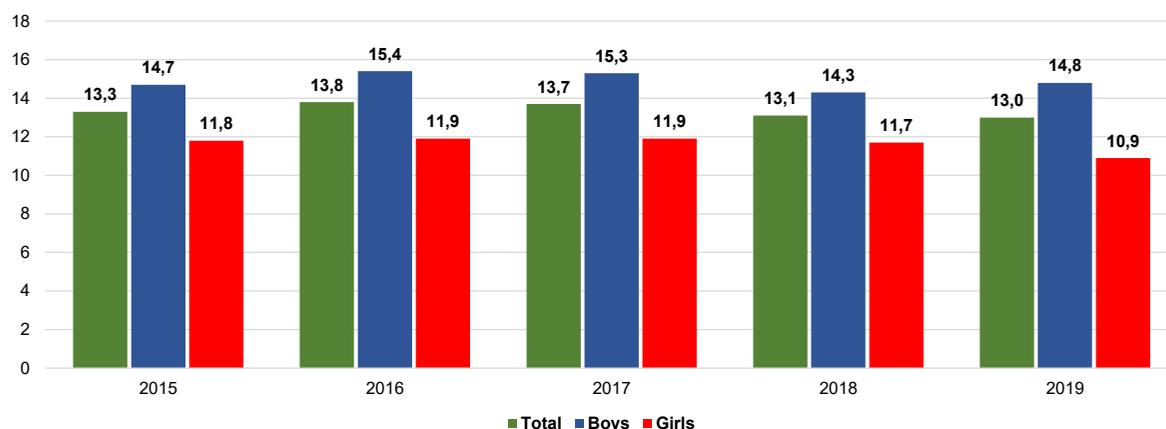
3.1.2 Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel.

Almost all births in Azerbaijan in recent

years are performed under medical supervision. Specifically, the share of births attended by skilled health personnel to undertake the necessary control, provision of services and counseling during pregnancy, as well as during childbirth and the postpartum period, independent delivery and care of newborns, increased from 99.8% in 2015 to 99.9% in 2019.

3.2. By 2030, end preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age, with all countries aiming to reduce neonatal mortality to at least as low as 12 per 1,000 live births and under-5 mortality to at least as low as 25 per 1,000 live births.

The Child and Family Support Centers in Aghdam, Shuvalan, Sabirabad, Ismayilli, Goygol, Hajigabul, Zardab and Saatli, which form part of the State Committee for Family, Women and Children's Affairs, conducted a series of activities in order to raise awareness on health and disease issues, in order to ensure the coverage of children in dispenser-

Under-5 mortality rate, per 1,000 live births, disaggregated by sex

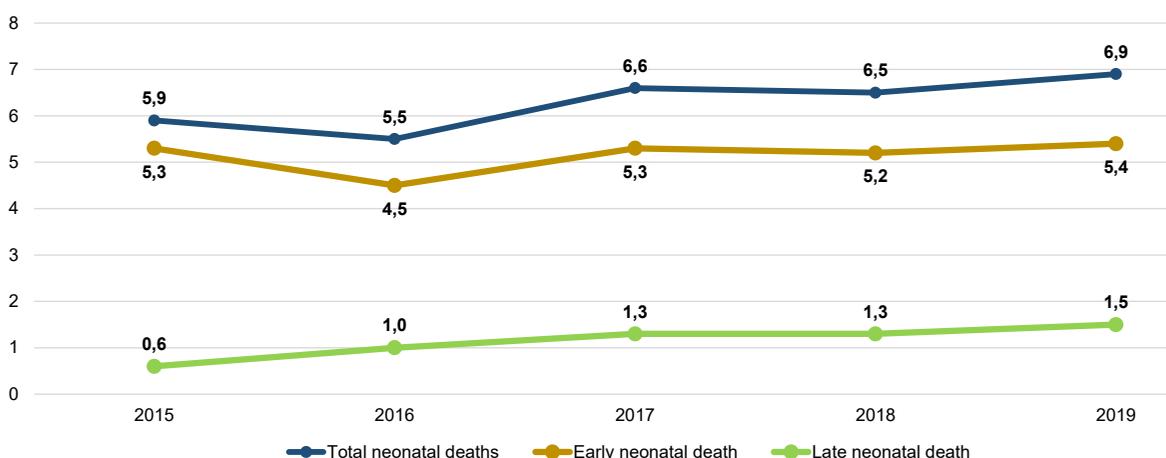
Source: SSC

ization (health screening) services. The activities, which involved a total of 457 people, included the distribution of 120 leaflets and the provision of education information (via WhatsApp) to 66 people.

3.2.1 Under-five mortality rate.

In the last five years, the under-five mortality rate has decreased, falling from 13.3 per 1,000 live births in 2015 to 13.0 in 2019. While the mortality rate increased slightly among boys (from 14.7 to 14.8 per 1,000 live births), it

showed a decrease among girls (from 11.8 to 10.9) in the same period. The total number of deaths of children under five increased by 10 in 2019 compared to 2018 to reach 1,835, (1,113 boys and 722 girls). Thus, the yearly number of deaths among children under five is 35.1% lower for girls than for boys. The number of deaths of children under five was 7.6 per 1,000 in rural areas and 18.7 per 1,000 in urban areas. The majority of children (84.9%) died before reaching their first birthday, while 15.1% died between the ages of one and five.

Neonatal mortality rate, per 1000 live births

Source: SSC



3.2.2 Neonatal mortality rate.

Although the neonatal mortality rate in Azerbaijan fluctuated between 2015 and 2019, the overall indicator increase was 1.0 points (between 2015-2019) to reach 6.9. Early neonatal mortality during the first seven days of life was higher than late neonatal mortality during the first 7-28 days of life. In the same period, the neonatal mortality rate for boys increased from 7.0 to 8.3, for girls from 4.6 to 5.2, and for all years the neonatal mortality rate for boys was higher than for girls.

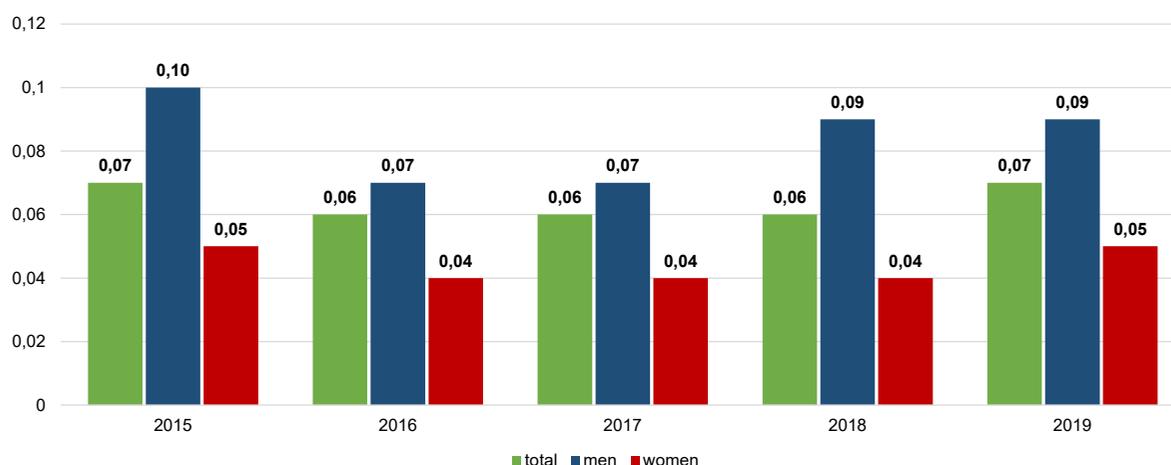
3.3 By 2030, end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases.

3.3.1 Number of new HIV infections per 1,000 uninfected population, by sex, age and key populations.

In 2019, 686 new HIV infections were registered (447 male and 239 female). Compared to 2015, the number of new HIV infections per 1,000 population fell during 2015-2018 to 0.06, but increased to 0.07 again in 2019. Although the number of new HIV infections per 1,000 population did not change in 2019 compared to 2015 for women, there was a slight decrease for men.

While there was no significant change in the overall number of new HIV infections per 1,000 population, there was still an increase in the absolute number of new HIV infections. By the end of 2019, the total number of people with HIV registered in the treatment and prevention facilities increased by 2,407 people compared to 2015 to reach 7,846 people. The number of registered people with AIDS increased by 695 to reach 2,377. Seven new HIV infections were

Figure 14. Number of new HIV infections per 1,000 uninfected population, by sex, age



Source: SSC

registered in the 0-14 age group, 176 in the 15-29 age group, 560 in the 15-49 age group, and 119 in the 50+ age group.

3.3.2 Tuberculosis incidence per 1,000 population.

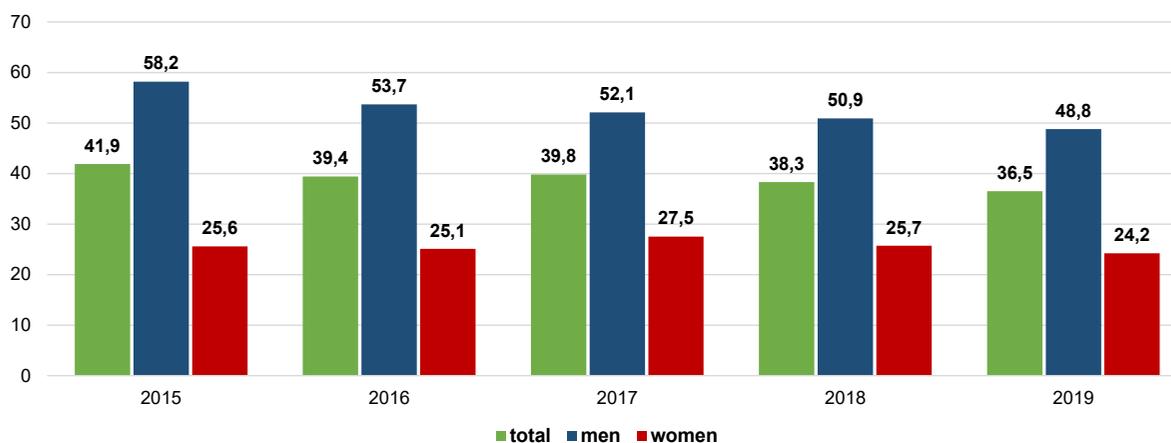
In 2015-2019, the incidence of tuberculosis per 1,000 population decreased by 5.4 points to 36.5. In 2019, the incidence of tuberculosis per 1,000 population was twice as high for men (48.8) than for women (24.2). Overall, the incidence of tuberculosis per 1,000

population decreased by 9.4 points for men and 1.4 points for women between 2015 and 2019.

In 2019, the number of new tuberculosis cases was 3,613, (66.8% male, 33.2% female), with 27.8% of these cases registered in urban areas and 72.2% in rural areas. In 2019, 179 of new tuberculosis cases were found in children aged 0-14.

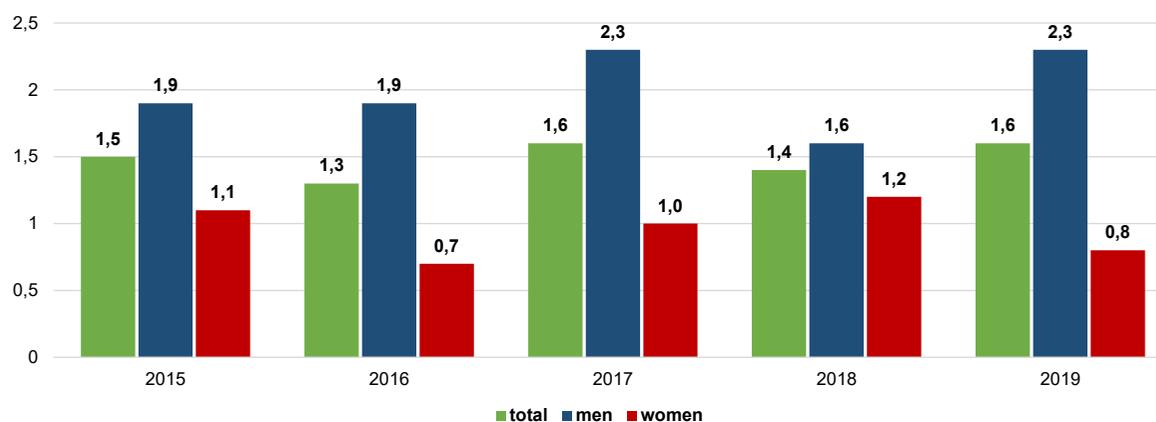
3.3.3 Malaria incidence per 1,000 population.

Figure 15. Tuberculosis incidence per 1,000 population, by sex



Source: SSC

Figure 16. Hepatitis B incidence per 100,000 population, by sex



Source: SSC

No cases of malaria have been registered in Azerbaijan since 2013. The last time a case was registered was 2012, when three people (two men and one woman) were found to be infected.

3.3.4 Hepatitis B incidence per 100,000 population.

In 2015-2019, the incidence of Hepatitis B per 100,000 population increased by 0.1 points to 1.6 (increasing by 0.4 points for men, but decreasing by 0.3 points for women); the 2019 figure in urban areas was 1.9 and in rural areas 1.2. Compared to the preceding year, in 2019, the number of new Hepatitis B infections in absolute terms increased by 49.4% for men (115 people) and decreased by 32.8% for women (41 people), with an overall increase of 13.0% (156 people).

3.4. By 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being.

In cooperation with public unions and charitable foundations operating at the international and local level in the provision of medical and social support to families of children with disabilities, the Child and Family Support Centers (under the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs) provided assistance to 15 people working in children's institutions; provided medical and social support for the families of eight children with disabilities; and referred six children with disabilities to the Medical Rehabilitation Center of Mardakan settlement, through the cooperation agreement with the Azerbaijan Service and Assessment Network (ASAN) and UNICEF.

In accordance with the Persons with Disabilities Social Protection and Rehabilitation Programme, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population provided financial assistance to 69 people in 2019 and 50 people in 2020 to cover treatment in Azerbaijan, and covered the travel expenses of 19 people in 2019

and 17 people in 2020, enabling them to receive treatment abroad.

In accordance with resolution No. 128 of the Cabinet of Ministers, dated August 12, 2002, 4,708 persons with disabilities in 2019 and 2,274 persons in 2020 were provided with sanatorium-resort vouchers.

Youth Houses, the social service institutions under the Ministry of Youth and Sports, regularly provide socio-psychological and rehabilitation services for children with disabilities and their parents. Training sessions were organised in 2019 (56 sessions), 2020 (34 sessions) and 2021 (11 sessions to date) for families of children with disabilities. In 2019, 524 children with disabilities benefitted from socio-psychological and legal services, 196 in 2020 and three, currently, in 2021. Furthermore, 25 children with disabilities were provided with rehabilitation services in 2019 and seven in 2020.

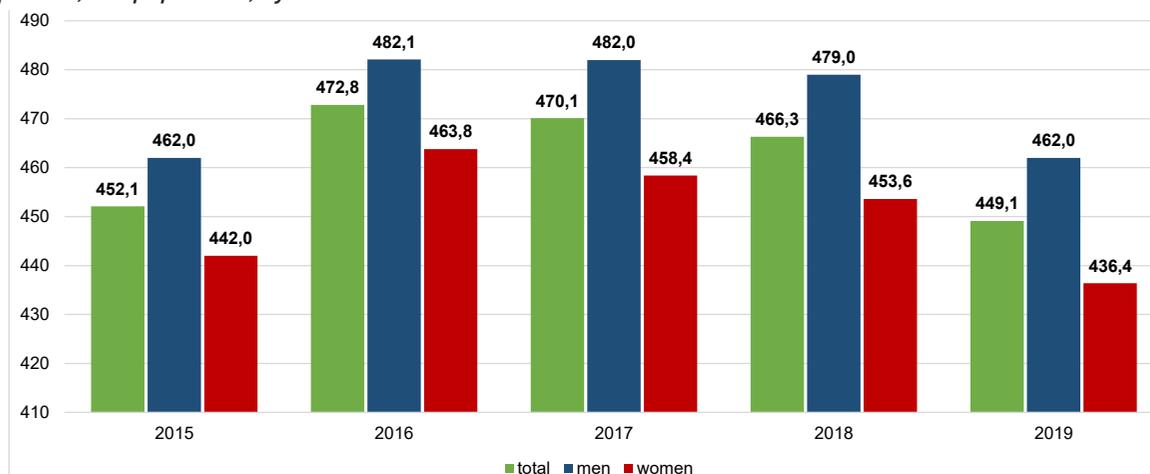
3.4.1 Mortality rate attributed to cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes or chronic respiratory disease.

Compared to 2015, the death rate from cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes and chronic respiratory disease decreased by 3.0 points, from 452.1 to 449.1 per 100,000 population in 2019. In the same period, this figure decreased by 5.6 points from 442.0 to 436.4 for women, but remained unchanged for men (462.0).

The highest number of deaths occurred in cardiovascular disease and the lowest in diabetes. When categorised by type of disease, in 2019 the number of deaths from cardiovascular disease per 100,000 population was 327.8, from cancer 89.0, from chronic respiratory disease 18.7, and from diabetes 13.6.

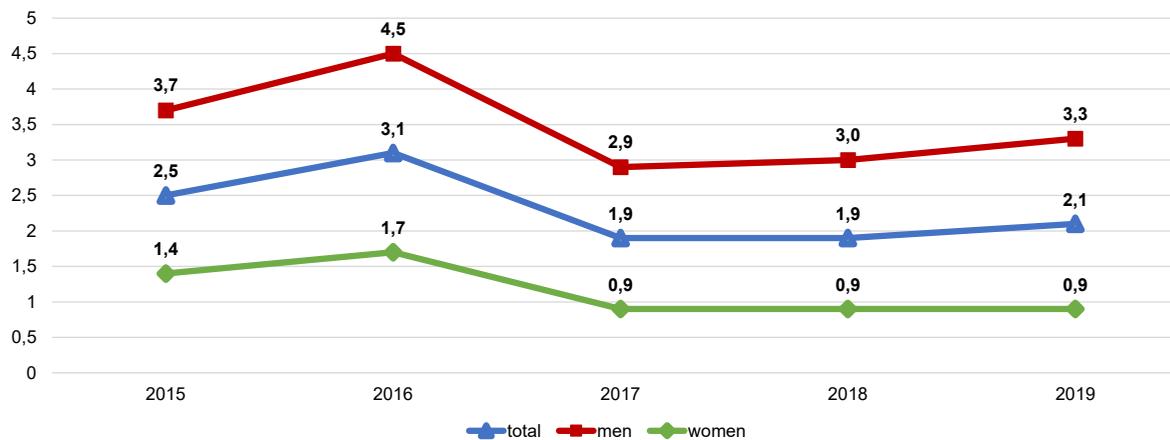
During the period under review, mortality rates decreased relatively for cardiovascular disease, and increased relatively for chronic respiratory disease, cancer, and diabetes.

Figure 17. Mortality from cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes and chronic respiratory disease, per 100,000 population, by sex



Source: SSC

Figure 18. Suicide mortality rate, per 100,000 population, by sex



Source: SSC

In 2019, 8,819 people died of cancer, 1,346 from diabetes, 32,471 from cardiovascular disease and 1,854 from chronic respiratory disease in the country.

3.4.2 Suicide mortality rate.

Although the number of suicides in the country increased in 2016 compared to 2015, in subsequent years this figure was lower than in 2016. Overall, in 2015-2019, the suicide mortality rate in the country decreased by 0.4 points, from 2.5 to 2.1 per 100,000 population. At every level of the dynamics, the suicide rate for boys was higher than for girls. During this period, the suicide mortality rate decreased by 0.4 points from 3.7 to 3.3 per 100,000 population, decreasing by 0.5 points for women from 1.4 to 0.9 per 100,000 population. In 2015-2019, the suicide mortality rate in urban and rural areas decreased by 0.4 and 0.5 points, respectively, and amounted to 2.1.

3.5. Strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, includ-

ing narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol.

In 2019-2020, the Internal Affairs agencies held more than 2,500 meetings, gatherings and conferences in specialized secondary and higher education institutions on the prevention of drug use among children and youth, the prevention of offenses and other harmful habits, legal awareness, and the promotion of healthy lifestyles. In total, 95 addiction care providers and 200 psychologists from health facilities were involved in the events, which were attended by about 90,000 students and their legal representatives. Articles and reports were published in various media outlets on “Illicit trafficking in drugs and psychotropic substances”, “Drug addiction as an important problem of humanity”, “Legal and socio-moral consequences of drug use”, “What do we know about drugs”, “Drugs destroy youth” and others topics; eight videos and four presentations were prepared and disseminated on the official websites of the Ministry and its subordinate

structures, and social networks. Workshops were held for 716 officers of the national police agencies on “The role of the state in the healthy upbringing of minors, youth, and implementation of anti-drug measures”, “New types of drugs and psychotropic substances, their transportation characteristics” and “Organization and conduct of preventive work among drug and substance abusers”.

In addition, Child and Family Support Centers in Goygol, Aghdam, Hajigabul, Goranboy, Saatli, Zardab, Zagatala and Shuvalan, part of the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs, held events, webinars and online meetings to discuss healthy lifestyles among youth, and the prevention of infectious and non-infectious diseases. The activities were organised to raise awareness among youth on the negative effects of drug addiction, tobacco, alcohol and other psychoactive substances, the importance of food nutrition, and to increase their knowledge and improve their behaviour, increase their level of physical activity, and educate them, together with their parents and teachers on the importance and benefits of adopting a health lifestyle. Overall, a total of 719 people participated in the collection of events.

As part of the implementation of the relevant activities of the “Azerbaijani Youth in 2017-2021 State Program” and the “State Program on Combating Illicit Trafficking in Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and their Precursors and Drug Addiction for 2019-2024”, the Ministry of Youth and Sports organized

a number of events. Overall, more than 1,000 youths participated in online workshops during the pandemic.

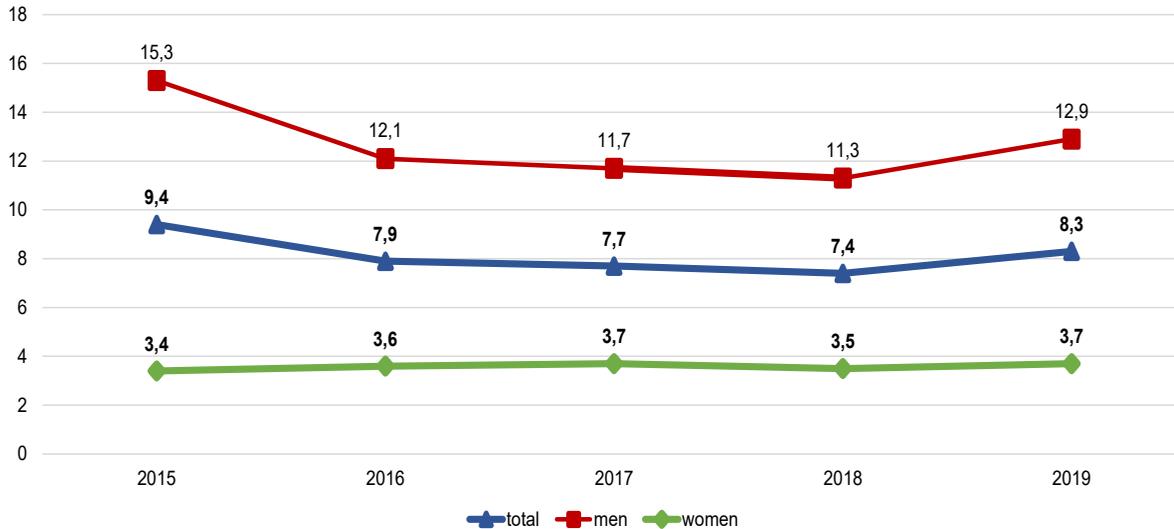
3.6. By 2020, halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs put a number of measures in place to promote road safety among adolescents and young people. As part of the safety weeks, organised to prevent vehicle-pedestrian collisions in Azerbaijan, events were held on educational topics such as “Learn, abide, teach and demand”; a “Traffic rules” textbook was distributed to minors, and many of these events were aired on TV stations, websites and social networks.

3.6.1 Death rate due to road traffic injuries.

Although the death rate due to road traffic accidents per 100,000 people has been decreasing each year since 2015, it showed an increase again in 2019. The overall death rate due to road traffic injuries between 2015-2019, decreased from 9.4 to 8.3 per 100,000 population. Despite the fact that the number of deaths due to road traffic accidents decreased for men and increased for women over these years, the mortality rate for men is much higher than for women. During 2015-2019, the indicator decreased by 2.4 points for men and increased by 0.3 points for women. Overall, the number of men killed in road traffic accidents in 2019 was 637, and the number of women was 184.

Figure 19. Death rate due to road traffic injuries, per 100,000 population, by sex



Source: SSC

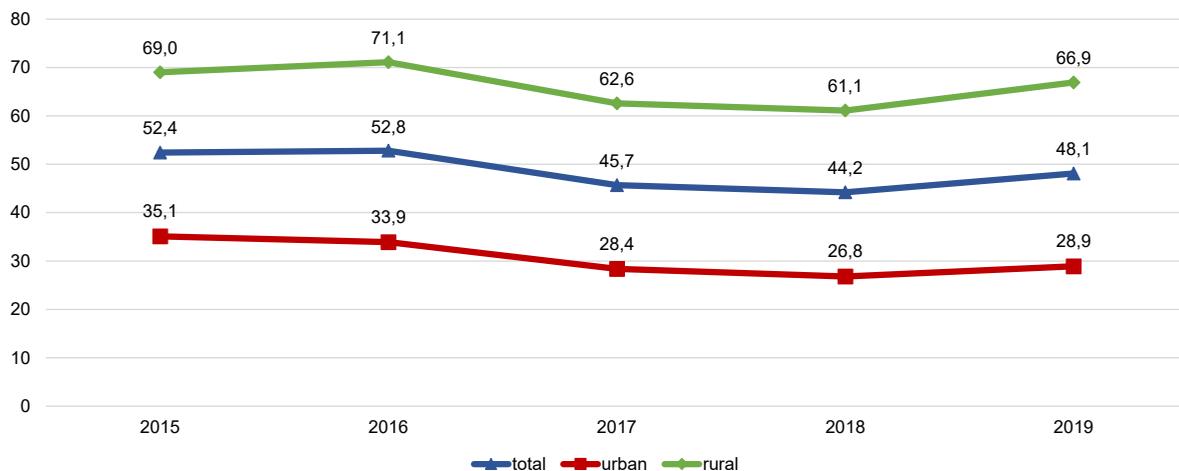
3.7. By 2030, ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes.

3.7.2 Adolescent birth rate (aged 10–14 years; aged 15–19 years) per 1,000 women in that age group.

The birth rate among women aged 15-19 has been in decline in recent years

and, while this figure showed an increase in 2019, when compared to the 2015 rate, the 2019 birth rate among women aged 15-19 had still decreased by 4.3 points, from 52.4 to 48.1 births per 1,000 women in that age group. The birth rate among women aged 15-19 continues to be significantly higher in rural areas than in urban areas, with 2019 rates indicating 66.9 births per 1,000 in rural areas and 28.9 in urban areas.

Figure 20. Adolescent birth rate (aged 15–19 years) per 1,000 women in that age group, by location



Source: SSC

3.8. Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all.

From January, 2020, the State Agency for Mandatory Health Insurance began introducing mandatory health insurance throughout the country. The health insurance currently covers 59 administrative-territorial units, and from April 2021, the mandatory health insurance coverage will be expanded to include the cities of Baku, Sumgayit, Khankendi, and the districts of Absheron, Gubadli, Zangilan and Shusha. In this regard, software and new registration systems are being installed in hospitals, and the supply of medicines and medical consumables is being digitized through the provision of computer equipment and internet access for hospitals and the development of a hospital information system. A register of medical services is also being compiled and hospital staff

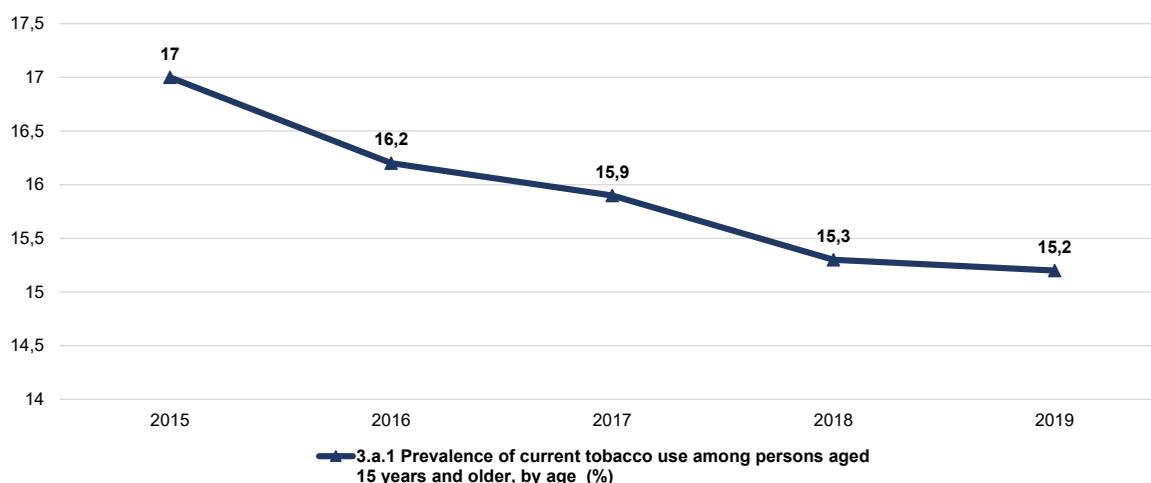
are being trained on the principles and rules of mandatory health insurance. The Agency also organizes regular educational training sessions on non-communicable diseases, maternal and child health, health management, etc.

3.a Strengthen the implementation of the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control in all countries, as appropriate.

3.a.1. Age-standardized prevalence of current tobacco use among persons aged 15 years and older.

In recent years, the prevalence of tobacco use in the country has decreased with the use among those aged 15 and above decreasing from 17.0% to 15.2% between 2015-2019. In 2019, the highest number of tobacco users was registered among people aged 45-64. The tobacco use rate among these individuals was 21.5%, while 0.2% of people aged 15-19, 13.6% of people aged 20-44 and 13.2% of people aged 65 and above used tobacco.

Figure 21. Prevalence of current tobacco use among persons aged 15 years and older, %



Source: SSC

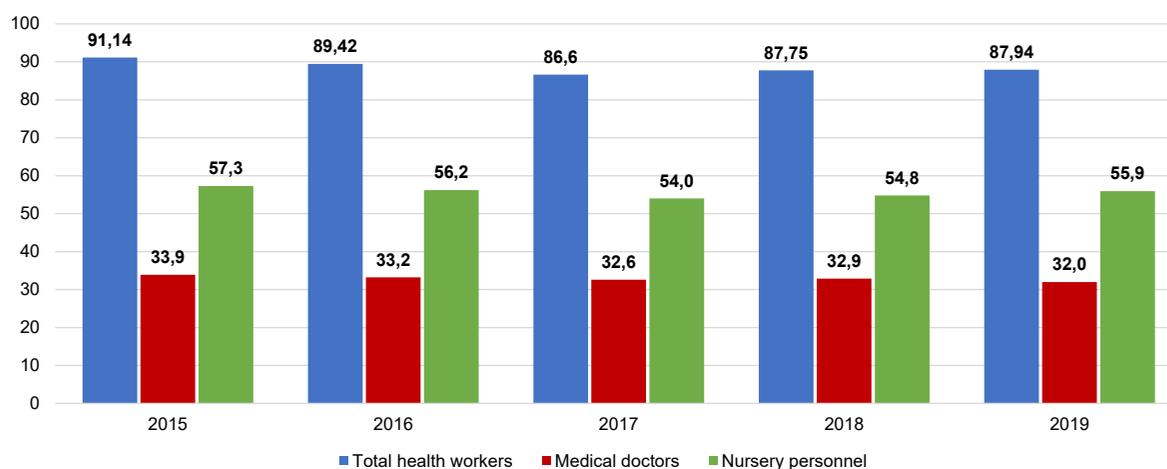
3.c. Substantially increase health financing and the recruitment, development, training and retention of the health workforce in developing countries, especially in least developed countries and small island developing States.

3.c.1 Health worker density and distribution (per 10,000 population).

Compared to 2015, the number of health workers in all categories per 10,000 population showed a decline in 2019, decreasing from 91.1 to 87.9. The number of medical doctors decreased from 33.9 to 32.0, and the number of nursing personnel from 57.3 to 55.9.

This shortage of health workers was more prevalent in the regions. The number of health workers increased from 874,000 in 2015 to 875,000 in 2019, while the number of medical doctors decreased from 325,000 to 318,000. The 2019 distribution of medical doctors by specialty indicated 7,801 physicians (24.5% of the total number of doctors) and only 71 addiction care providers (0.22% of the total number of doctors). The number of nursing personnel also decreased by 8,000 people compared to 2015 and amounted to 557,000 people by the end of 2019; the majority being (383,000 thousand) nurses.

Figure 22. Health worker density and distribution (per 10,000 population)



Source: SSC

8 DECENT WORK AND
ECONOMIC GROWTH

GOAL 8

Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

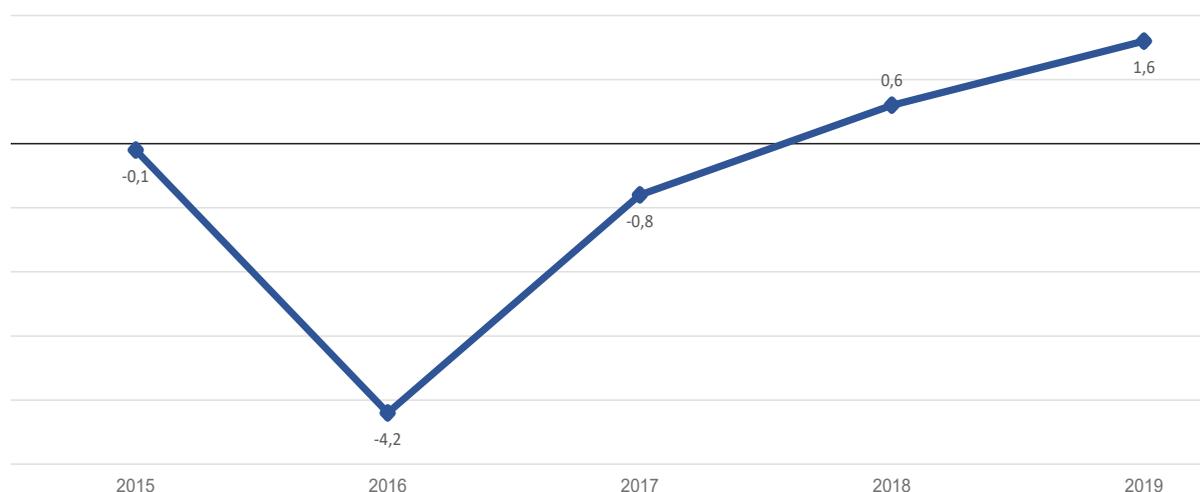
This Goal is aimed at sustaining per capita economic growth in accordance with national circumstances, achieving higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, ensuring full and productive employment and decent work for all, taking measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and end child labour in all its forms, and ensuring equal pay for work of equal value.

8.1. Sustain per capita economic growth in accordance with national circumstances and, in particular, at least 7% gross domestic product growth per annum in the least developed countries.

8.1.1 Annual growth rate of real GDP per capita.

Compared to 2015, real GDP per capita increased by 1.6% in 2019, amounting to AZN 81.9 billion, of which 61.8% was produced in the non-oil and gas sec-

Figure 23. Annual growth rate of real GDP per employed person.



Source: SSC



tors of the economy, and 38.2% in the oil and gas sector. Additionally, construction accounted for 7.4% of GDP, transport and storage for 5.9%, and other sectors for 16.3%, while net taxes on products and imports accounted for 9.0% of GDP.

8.2. Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including through a focus on high-value added and labour-intensive sectors.

With a view to developing innovative entrepreneurship and supporting start-up projects in Azerbaijan, an innovation centre is currently being built as part of an urban High Technology Park. During the reporting period, the Ministry of Transport, Communications and High Technologies (MTCHT) held a number of events to promote innovation in

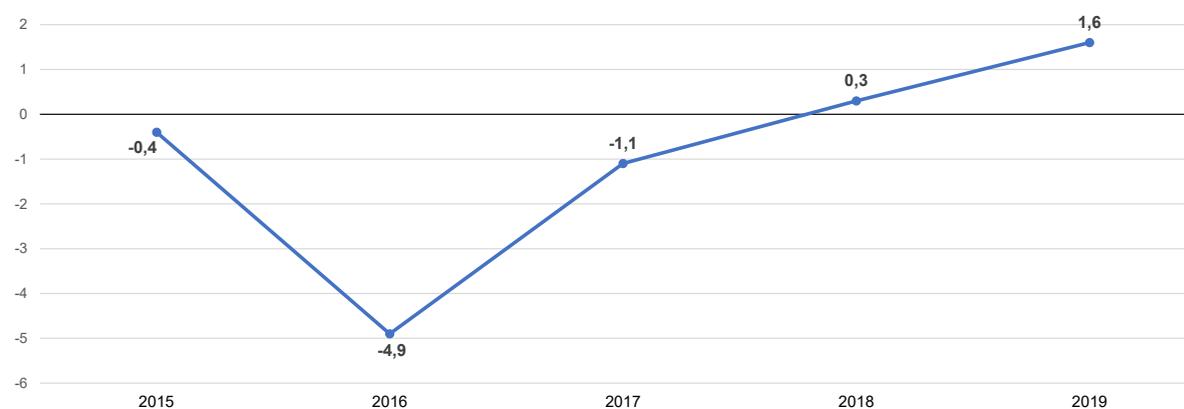
Azerbaijan, the involvement of young entrepreneurs in projects and to build relations with investors.

During 2019-2020, the Innovation Agency under the MTCHT provided AZN 34,000 in grants to individual winners of six grant competitions held in 2018 to fund innovative and applied scientific and technical projects in the field of ICT. Additionally, AZN 1.1 million was transferred to business entities as part of soft loans. The Innovation Agency has also continued to work on the general registration of startups in the country and there are currently about 250 startups in the database.

8.2.1 Annual growth rate of real GDP per employed person.

Compared to 2015, real GDP per employed person grew by 1.6% in 2019, and the number of employed people in

Figure 24. Annual growth rate of real GDP per employed person.



Source: SSC

the economy increased by 5.7%, reaching 4.9 million. Of the total employed population, 36% were engaged in agriculture, forestry and fishing, 14.4% in trade and vehicle repair, 7.8% in education, 7.4% in construction, 5.7% in public administration, defense and social security, 5.3% in the manufacturing industry, 4.2% in transport and storage, 3.9% in human health and social work, and 15.3% in other sectors of the economy. In 2019, 76.6% of the employed population were employed in the private sector and 23.4% in the public sector.

8.5 By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value.

Two strategies were developed to determine long-term public policy on employment, through institutional reforms aimed at ensuring productive employment on the basis of the existing demographic trends and development prospects and economic priorities of

the country: the “2020-2025 Action Plan on implementation of the Employment Strategy” and the “2020-2025 Action Plan on implementation of the Employment Strategy”. The main goals of the strategies are to use the labour resources, increase the employment rate, promote inclusive employment, support decent work, increase labour competitiveness and increase labour productivity.

Furthermore, according to the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated 5 September, 2018, a centralized electronic information system, consisting of 18 subsystems, and the “e-social” Internet portal were put into operation, and the “Employment” subsystem was created. The “Employment” subsystem registers the employed, unemployed and job-seekers, and ‘banks’ workplace vacancies throughout the country, as well as providing information on electronic employment services. The vacancy ‘bank’ in the “Employment” subsystem is integrated with the “Employment contract notices” subsystem and



referrals to vacancies are made electronically. During 2020, about 100,000 people received electronic referrals to jobs through the subsystem.

With a view to reducing the dependence of the working-age population on social assistance and benefits, in 2020 the State Employment Agency under the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection organised vocational training courses for 1,014 unemployed people to ensure the transition from passive social protection to active social protection.

With regard to labour market development, the self-employment programme is one of the most important active labour market measures aimed at promoting self-employment in the working-age population. In 2020, a total of 12,654 people applied to the self-employment programme (including 9,724

in agriculture and 2,930 in production and services), with 11,098 passing the assessment and being accepted into the programme. Of the 12,654 people applying for the programme, 3,171 were women, 1,704 were young people under the age of 29, 1,809 were people with disabilities, 1,461 were IDPs, 856 were members of martyrs' families, 120 were persons released from prisons, and 57 were recipients of targeted state social assistance.

In 2020, a total of 1,533 people were involved in the extraordinary self-employment programme, including 856 family members of martyrs, 418 people wounded in the war or their family members, 232 war participants or their family members. Moreover, 27 people whose houses were destroyed because of the attacks of the Armenian armed forces in Barda, Tartar regions and Gan-

ja city were involved in self-employment and assistance was provided for them to establish a family business.

Job fairs were also organized in 2020, in 16 cities and regions of the country with the participation of 522 enterprises, departments and organizations. Of the 4,761 vacancies offered at these job fairs, 1,045 unemployed people and job-seekers succeeded in finding a job; 392 were refugees, 18 were female IDPs, 304 were young people and 24 were people with disabilities.

Additionally, in order to encourage the participation of employers in the recruitment of employees, especially those with special needs for social protection and those who have difficulty finding employment, the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan “On Employment” was amended in 2020 to ease the conditions for the co-financing of their salaries through unemployment insurance.

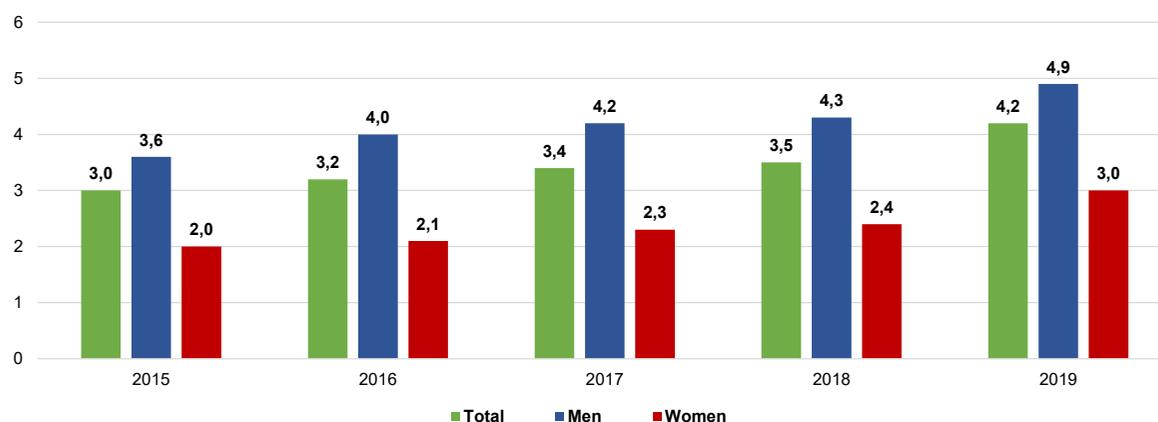
8.5.1 Average hourly earnings of female and male employees, by occupation, age and persons with disabilities.

During 2015-2019, the average hourly wage of employees increased by 1.4 times from AZN 3.0 to AZN 4.2. The average hourly wage of women also increased by 1.5 times, and the average hourly wage of men increased by 1.4 times. However, throughout the dynamics, the average hourly wage of men was higher than that of women, averaging 80%. In terms of distribution by economic region, Baku was highest (AZN 5.7) and Upper Karabakh was lowest (AZN 2.3).

In 2019, the average monthly nominal salary of men was AZN 764.8, and AZN 443.4 for women. The average monthly nominal wage was higher in the private sector than in the public sector. Specifically, women working in the public sector received an average monthly nominal salary of AZN 405.9, and AZN 549.6 in the private sector, while the average monthly nominal salary of men was AZN 673.1 and AZN 837.5, respectively.

In 2019 two social packages were introduced. The first, in March 2019, raised

Figure 25. Average hourly earnings of female and male employees, by sex, AZN



Source: SSC

the minimum wage by 40% to reach the subsistence minimum of AZN 180; funding for these expenditures was allocated from the State budget in the amount of over AZN 300 million. The package benefitted 600,000 people and led to an increase in the average monthly salary in the country. The second package, introduced in September 2019, increased the minimum wage to AZN 250, 38.9% more than the subsistence minimum. Overall, the two social packages benefitted a total of 4.2 million people.

8.5.2 Unemployment rate, by sex, age and persons with disabilities.

Between 2015 and 2019, the unemployment rate in Azerbaijan decreased from 5.0% to 4.8%, the unemployment rate among men from 4.1% to 4.0%, and among women from 5.9% to 5.7%. In 2019, the economically active population of the country amounted to 5,190.1 thousand people, of which 2.5 million people were unemployed.

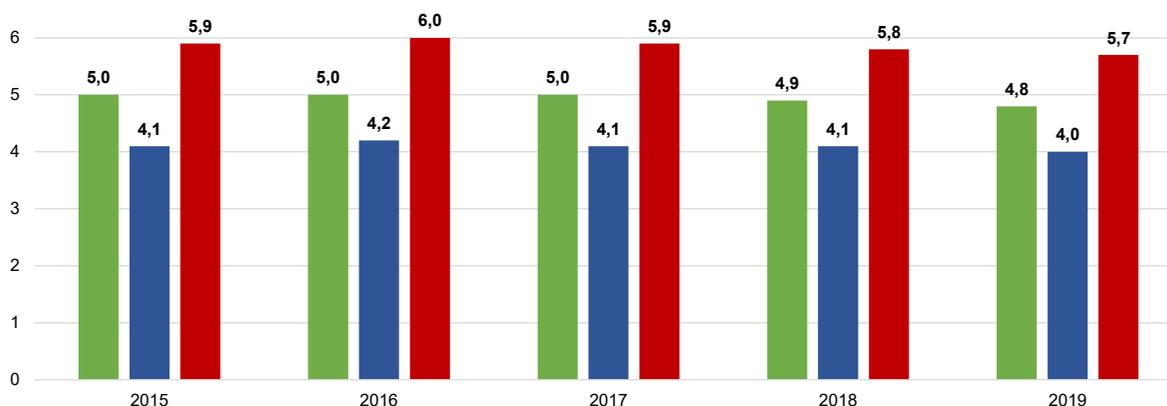
The 2019 unemployment rate was higher in urban areas than in rural areas, at



6.7% (urban) and 4.7% (rural) for women and 4.9% (urban) and 3.1% (rural) for men. The highest number of unemployed was registered in Baku. Unemployment among young people under 30 was higher than among people over 30: 15.8% for those aged 15-19, 12.2% for those aged 20-24, and 5.8% for those aged 25-29. The unemployment rate among the population aged 30 and above was below 4%.

As a result of measures taken during the pandemic to prevent unjustified dismissals and layoffs of employees in the private sector and to maintain the salaries of employees on leave, the jobs and wages of 794,000 employees (with employment contracts) were protected in the sector. Through the “Employment Contract Notification” subsystem of the Centralized Electronic Information Sys-

Figure 26. Unemployment rate, total and by sex, %



Source: SSC

tem of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population, employment contract terminations were investigated, necessary recommendations provided to employers, warning notices posted and daily monitoring undertaken. As a result of targeted measures, the growth rate in the number of employment contracts continued, and from the beginning of 2020 to January, 2021, the number of employment contract registration notices increased by about 150,000 units.

8.7. Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms.

In framework of the project “Lifting Legal Barriers to Women’s Employment in Azerbaijan”, implemented through the World Bank in 2020, two draft laws were drawn up. The first, “On amendments to the Labour Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan to reduce the number of jobs restricting women’s employment, on the basis of scientific approaches”, was followed by a further draft law, “On annulment of the Resolution No. 170 of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated October 20, 1999 on approval of the ‘List of industries, occupations (positions), workplaces, as well as underground jobs with harmful and severe working conditions, where the use of labour of pregnant women or women with a child under one year of age is prohibited’ and on the approval of the ‘List of

industries, occupations (positions), as well as underground jobs with harmful and severe working conditions and factors of production environment where the use of female labour is prohibited’ ”.

Furthermore, in accordance with paragraph 2.6 of the “Rules for submission of proposals on the conclusion or termination of international agreements of the Republic of Azerbaijan by the central executive authorities and state-owned enterprises”, the formulation of measures in line with the ratification by Azerbaijan of the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No. 155 on Occupational Safety and health (1981) are nearing completion.

8.8 Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment.

The State Migration Service has prepared a draft Migration Strategy to manage migration policies in accordance with the SDG targets. In accordance with the “Global Pact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration” and the “Global Compact on Refugees” and national priorities and interests regarding migration policy, the Strategy focuses on facilitating legal migration, preventing unregulated migration, protecting vulnerable groups, leveraging development prospects of migration, and organising awareness raising activities on institutional development and migration. The State Migration Service, together with civil society institutions, has put measures in place to ensure the rights

of migrants and help them adapt to local conditions. The Public Council under the State Migration Service, which brings together non-governmental organizations operating in the field of migration, regularly meets with migrants, arranging their reception, discussing their proposals and problems, and resolving complaints received in connection with the Service. The Public Council also supports the activities of the State Migration Service in educating foreigners about the existing legislation in the field of migration, their requirements, and changes in legislation.

From 24 March, 2020, when the first COVID-19 quarantine regime was announced in Azerbaijan, the following measures were taken to further simplify e-applications, minimize human contact and optimize the requirements for the submission of documentation to the State Migration Service by foreigners:

- The lifting of the need for foreigners currently in the country and unable to leave to have to apply for an extension of their temporary stay;
- The digitization of a number of services, including applications for the extension of the temporary stay of foreigners in the country, the issuance (extension) of residence and work permits, and citizenship issues (<https://eservice.migration.gov.az>);
- Applications for extensions of validity on passports or other border crossing documents for foreigners processed, even if the period

is shorter than that stipulated by legislation;

- People whose passports have expired may continue to legally reside in the country, and will therefore not be considered illegal migrants;
- No deportation of migrants, irrespective of their legal status, and no administrative procedures required to permit them to remain in the country;
- In light of quarantine restrictions, applications for refugee status were received electronically by the State Migration Service. This innovative approach was recognized as a best practice by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees;
- The Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and Telegram social network accounts of the State Migration Service actively used for awareness raising and communication with applicants.

In addition to the above measures, access to e-services was also made possible through the MigAz mobile application to help address citizen satisfaction. Particular attention was paid to ensuring the user-friendliness of e-services provided by the State Migration Service, as well as the timely and comprehensive provision of information to the public on relevant procedures related to the pandemic situation.

To further protect the rights and freedoms of migrants living in Azerbaijan and provide social support to vulnera-

ble groups of migrants, the State Migration Service expanded its interaction with non-governmental organizations and civil society institutions. In this regard, activities related to ongoing social assistance projects have been implemented with their close participation.

8.8.1 Frequency rates of fatal and non-fatal occupational injuries, by sex and migrant status.

The number of fatal and non-fatal occupational injuries per 100,000 workers increased from 11 to 18 cases between 2015 and 2019, with men becoming injured about 4 times higher than women. The number of fatal occupational injuries increased from 50 in 2015 to 63 in 2019, and the number of non-fatal injuries increased from 111 to 239.

When disaggregated by economic activity, the number of fatal and non-fatal occupational injuries in 2019 totalled 59 in the mining industry; 45 in the manu-

facturing industry; 18 in the production, distribution and supply of electricity, gas and steam; 3 in water supply, waste management and remediation; 53 in construction; 28 in transport and storage; 10 in information and communications; and 86 in other economic activities.

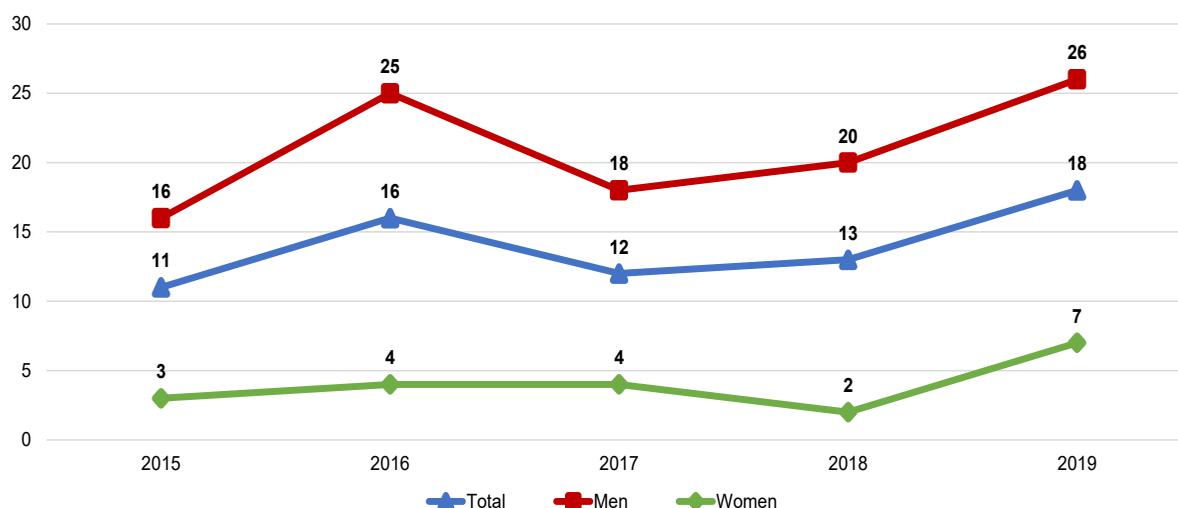
8.9. By 2030, devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products.

8.9.1 Tourism direct GDP as a proportion of total GDP and in growth rate.

During 2015-2019, the proportion of tourism in total GDP was 4.5%; falling to a low of 4.3% in 2018. In the same period, the average annual nominal growth of value added in tourism was 9.1%.

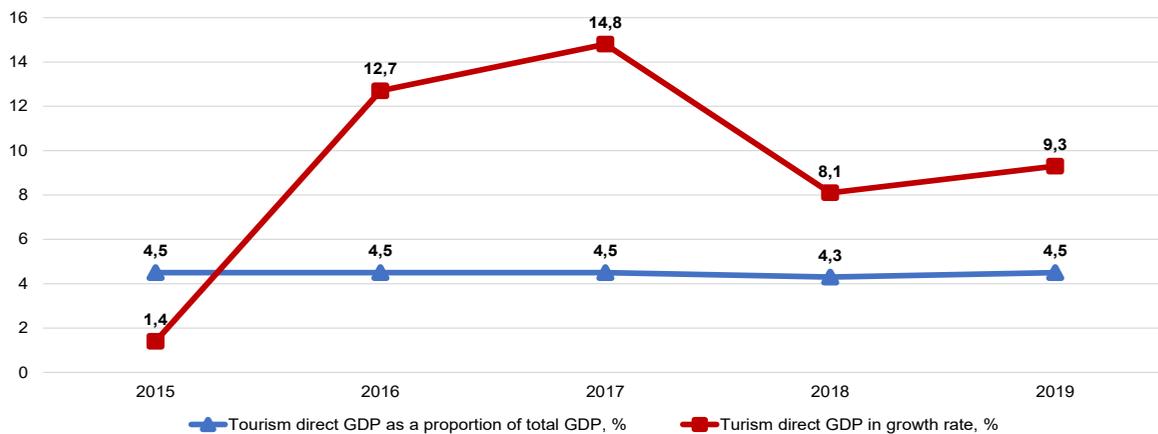
In 2019, the volume of value added in tourism increased from AZN 2.4 million to AZN 3.7 million, compared to 2014.

Figure 27. Fatal and non-fatal occupational injuries per 100,000 workers, by sex



Source: SSC

Figure 28. Tourism direct GDP as a proportion of total GDP and in growth rate



Source: SSC

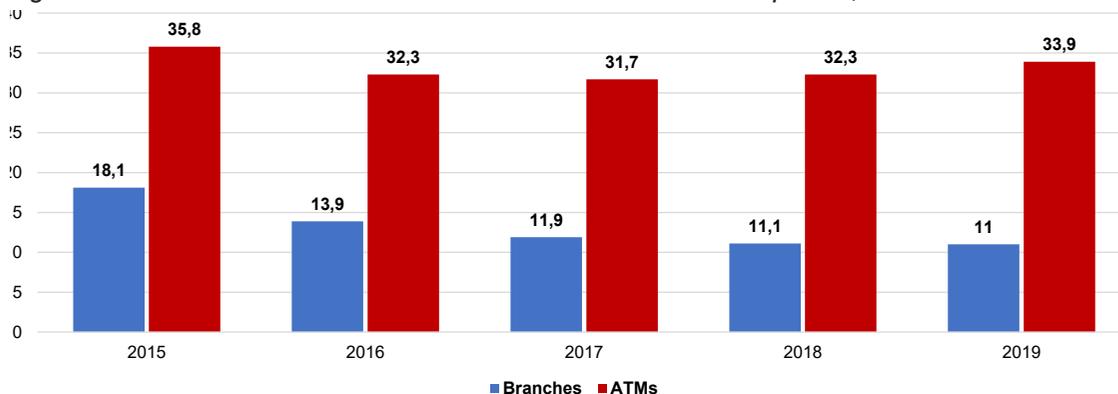
8.10. Strengthen the capacity of domestic financial institutions to encourage and expand access to banking, insurance and financial services for all.

8.10.1 (a) Number of commercial bank branches per 100,000 adults and (b) number of automated teller machines (ATMs) per 100,000 adults.

The number of commercial bank branches, per 100,000 population aged 15 and above, decreased from 18.1 in 2015 to 11.0 in 2019, and the number of ATMs from 35.8 to 33.9. The main

reason for the decline in this indicator was the closure of a number of banks in 2015-2019 due to financial difficulties. In absolute terms, the number of ATMs in the country in 2015 was 2,694 (1,502 in Baku and 1,192 in the regions); by the end of 2019, this figure had dropped to 2,647 (1,421 in Baku and 1,226 in the regions). In 2015, the number of people per ATM was 36,000 people, and in 2019 it was 38,000 people. In 2019, 509 bank branches, belonging to 30 banks, were operational in the country (two public and 28 private sector).

Figure 29. Number of commercial bank branches and number of ATMs per 100,000 adults



Source: SSC

8.b By 2020, develop and operationalize a global strategy for youth employment and implement the Global Jobs Pact of the International Labour Organization.

In 2020, the “2020-2025 Action Plan for the Implementation of the Employment Strategy” was approved by the Decree No. 1816 of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated 13 February, 2020. It comprises the following activities:

- expanding the network of vocational rehabilitation centres for people with disabilities in the regions to strengthen the social rehabilitation of people with disabilities, especially youth;
- supporting the establishment of career centres and career counseling services in higher, specialized secondary and vocational education institutions to organize the occupational orientation of young people;
- increasing the effectiveness of vocational training courses to attract people with special needs and difficulties in finding employment, especially young people, and people with disabilities, to the labour market;
- expanding the application of competence-oriented modular training using advanced educational methods in this field;
- taking measures to attract a segment of the inactive working-age population to the labour market, on the basis of statistical data regarding the number of this group (especially youth and women).

8.b.1 Total government spending in social protection and employment programmes as a proportion of the national budgets and GDP.

The efficient use of labour resources, expanding employment and entrepreneurship opportunities, supporting decent work, increasing the competitiveness of the workforce and increasing labour productivity, have all been identified as key goals for the strategic roadmaps for the development of the national economy and its key sectors. In this regard, a long-term state employment policy aimed at ensuring effective employment, the “2019-2030 Employment Strategy of the Republic of Azerbaijan”, was approved by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on 30 October, 2018.

The goal of the Strategy is to ensure the transition of the employment policy from an extensive to intensive phase, to increase employment, to ensure full employment, to support decent work and to increase labour productivity.

With a view to strengthening the integration of young people from vocational education into the labour market, improving career (vocational) counseling and planning services and ensuring a transition to the widespread use of digital technologies have been identified as priorities in the Strategy.



GOAL 10

Reduce inequality within and among countries.

The aim of this goal is to ensure equal opportunities for the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, religion or other status, reducing inequalities in income, improving the regulation and monitoring of global financial markets and institutions, and facilitating the orderly migration and safe mobility of people.

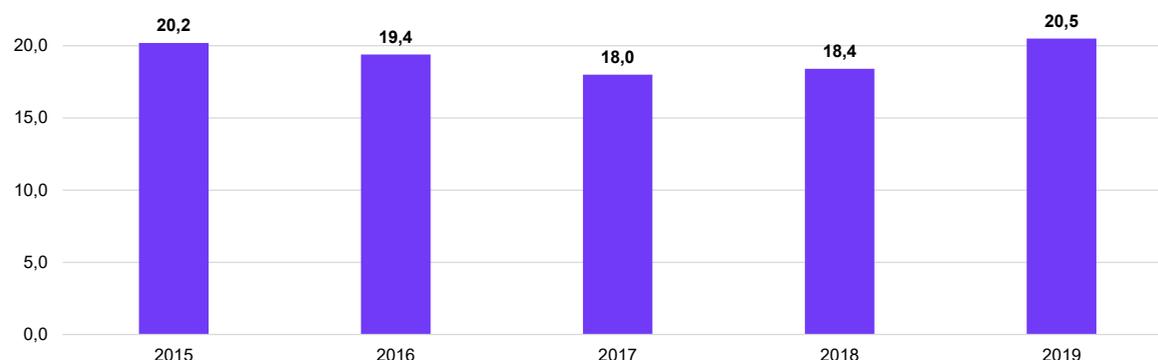
10.4. Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality.

10.4.1 Labour share of GDP, comprising wages and social protection transfers.

Compared to 2015, the labour share of GDP increased by 0.3 percentage points from 20.5 percent to 21.0 percent in 2019. Over the past 5 years, the nominal income of the population increased by 36%, from 41.7 billion AZN to 56.8 billion AZN.

10.7. Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.

Figure 30. Labour share of GDP, %



Source: SSC

10.7.2. Existence of migration policy to facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people.

In the past few years, significant improvements have been made in the regulation of migration in the Republic of Azerbaijan. The application of the “one-stop shop” principle for the management of migration processes, in accordance with the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated 4 March, 2009, was one of the important steps taken to develop the migration management system taking into account international best practices. It has resulted in more flexible, simplified and efficient migration management mechanisms, and has helped ensure responsiveness and transparency in this area. The State Migration Service issues permits and relevant identification documents to foreigners and stateless persons for temporary and permanent residence in the country, registers them on the basis of their place of residence, extends the period of temporary stay of foreigners and stateless persons, and issues work permits to enable these people to engage in paid employment in the country. Exit and return visas issued to foreigners have been abolished since the introduction of the “one-stop shop” principle. Currently, foreigners and stateless persons can exit or return to the country without obtaining a visa by presenting temporary and permanent residence permits and valid passports (or other border crossing documents) as many times as they wish.

Records of foreigners and stateless persons living, working and temporarily

staying in Azerbaijan are kept by the Unified Migration Information System of the State Migration Service (VMMS), created by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan (No. 276 dated 4 June, 2010). The VMMS also provides necessary information to government agencies involved in the management of migration processes, automating migration documentation, inspections, surveys and analysis. The VMMS is integrated with the “Entry-Exit and Registration” Interdepartmental Automated Data Search System and relevant systems of other government agencies. It is also integrated, where available, with the systems of hotels, sanatoriums, recreation facilities, boarding houses, campsites, tourist bases, hospitals and other such public places operating across the country.

Since September, 2011, a special e-service section has been hosted on the official website of the State Migration Service and currently provides 17 relevant e-services, thus making migration-related information more easily accessible for applicants. Information on the names of the services, accurate lists of documents required for the provision of these services and the electronic form of relevant documents (application, application form, letterhead, etc.), as well as the amount of State fees for permits, decisions and other documents are provided in the e-service section.

The State Migration Service considers the policy of ‘open information’ one of its priority areas. In this regard, particular attention is paid to providing information to foreigners, as well as to

Azerbaijani citizens, and on improving the main means of communication, in the field of public relations.

Regarding international cooperation in the field of migration, the Republic of Azerbaijan was accepted as a member of the Global Forum on Migration and Development Steering Group in light of the country's achievements in migration management at the national and regional levels.

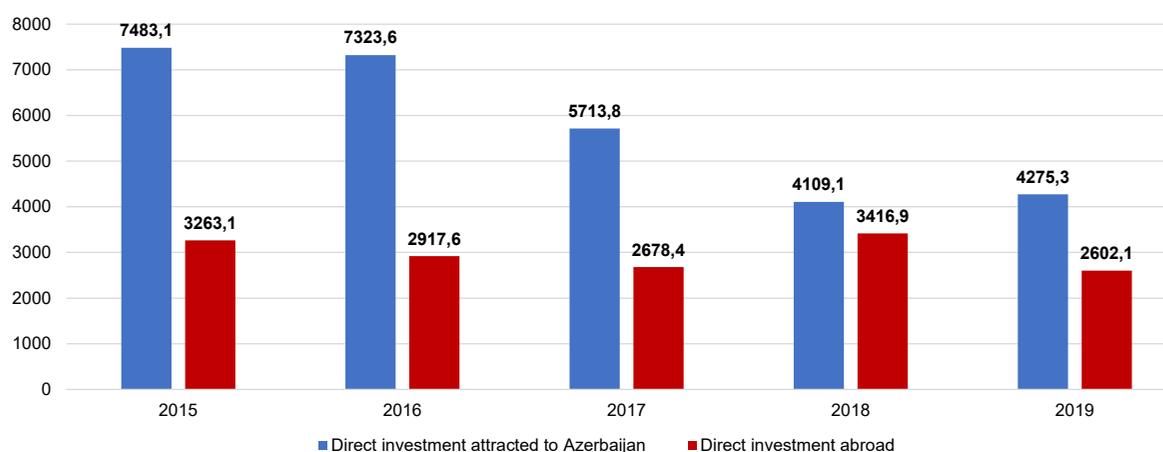
Today, the State Migration Service also provides services in the ASAN service centres. The ASAN agency was established to increase the transparency of government agency activities, to provide services to citizens in an improved and more comfortable format, using modern innovations and with the aim of ensuring citizen satisfaction. These services include issuance of residence permits, and work permits, registration, temporary stay extensions, handling citizenship enquiries, and the issuance of certificates from the Unified Migration Information System.

10.b Encourage official development assistance and financial flows, including foreign direct investment, to states where the need is greatest, in particular least developed countries, African countries, small island developing states and landlocked developing countries, in accordance with their national plans and programmes.

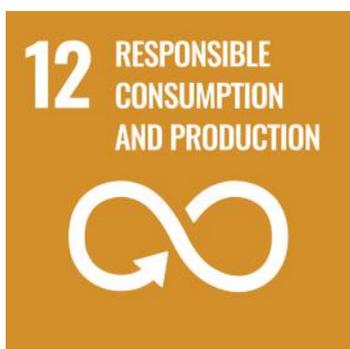
10.b.1 Total resource flows for development, by recipient and donor countries and type of flow (e.g. official development assistance, foreign direct investment and other flows).

In 2015-2019, direct investment attracted to the country decreased by 43% and amounted to 4,275.3 million USD, while direct investment abroad decreased by 20.3% and amounted to 2,602.1 million US dollars. Compared to 2018, in 2019 there was an increase of 166.2 million USD in direct investments attracted to the country, and a decrease of 814.8 million USD in direct investments abroad.

Figure 31. Direct investment attracted to Azerbaijan and direct investment abroad, million USD



Source: SSC



Goal 12

Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.

The aim of SDG 12 is to achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources by 2030, halving per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reducing food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses, significantly reducing the release of wastes to air, water and soil in order to minimize their adverse impact on human health and the environment. This, in turn, requires that companies, especially large and transnational companies, adopt sustainable management practices and integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle, that sustainable tourism is introduced, which promotes local culture and products, and that environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes is achieved.

12.4. By 2020, achieve the environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle, in accordance with agreed international frameworks, and significantly reduce their release to air, water and soil in order to minimize their adverse impacts on human health and the environment.

12.4.1 Number of parties to international multilateral environmental agreements on hazardous waste, and other chemicals that meet their commitments and obligations in transmitting information as required by each relevant agreement.

The Republic of Azerbaijan acceded to the UN Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes in 2001, and the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Azerbaijan has been designated as the competent authority under the Basel Convention. In order to fulfill obligations under the Convention, the “Passportization of Hazardous Waste” Rule and the “State Strategy for Hazardous Waste Management in the Republic of Azerbaijan” were approved.

The Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants was ratified by the Republic of Azerbaijan in 2003. The Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Azerbaijan has been designated as the competent authority under the Convention. The Ministry has collected extensive infor-



mation on the Convention, established a working group of experts from relevant organizations and prepared a plan of relevant proposals.

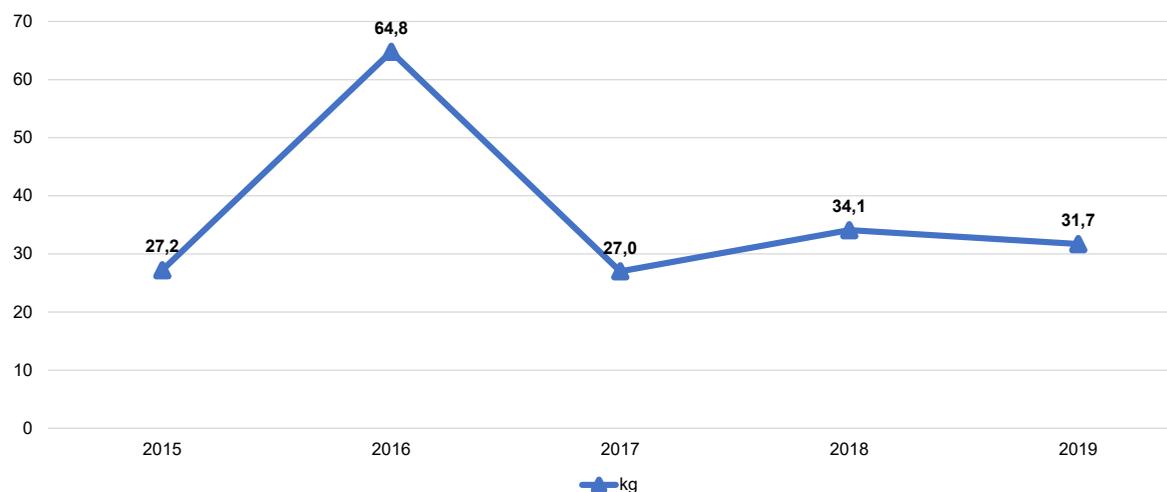
The Republic of Azerbaijan ratified the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer and the relevant amendments to the Protocol in 1996. The annual amount of ozone-depleting substances (ODS) used in the country has been determined and the Ozone Strategy of the Republic of Azerbaijan has been developed, envisaging the phased reduction of the use of these substances. In accordance with the strategy, a time schedule for the

phased reduction of the use of ODS in Azerbaijan was developed and submitted to the Secretariat of the Convention. According to the obligations under the protocol, the use of chlorofluorocarbon-containing ODS and their import should be stopped in the country.

12.4.2. Hazardous waste generated per capita and proportion of hazardous waste treated, by type of treatment.

During 2015-2019, the hazardous waste generated per capita increased by 16.5 percent from 27.2 kg to 31.7 kg. Specifically, compared to 2015 the amount of hazardous waste generated in 2019

Figure 32. Hazardous waste generated per capita, kg



Source: SSC

increased by 21% from 262.6 thousand tons to 317.4 thousand tons. The highest volume of hazardous waste per capita was 130.8 kg and 5.1 kg, respectively, in Baku city and Absheron economic region.

12.a Support developing countries to strengthen their scientific and technological capacity to move towards more sustainable patterns of consumption and production.

12.a.1 Installed renewable energy-generating capacity (in watts per capita)

The Ministry of Energy has taken important steps in recent years to significantly increase the share of renewable energy in energy supply; relevant laws and regulations have been adopted to improve the legislative and institutional framework for the development of renewable energy sources, and executive agreements have been signed. The draft Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan “On the use of renewable energy sources in the production of electricity”, which makes a special contribution to the development of renewable energy, was prepared and submitted to the government in coordination with state agencies.

In order to promote private investment in the development of this field, which requires high-tech equipment and special technical skills, in 2019 the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan signed an Order “On measures to implement pilot projects in the use of renewable energy sources.” Six regulatory documents on issues and mechanisms to be resolved within the legal aspects of the implementation of pilot

projects envisaged in the Order have been prepared.

In addition, a number of measures have been taken to assess the potential for the production of electricity from renewable energy sources and measures to be taken to use this potential. Eight areas were identified as having the renewable energy potential of total capacity approximately 1,000 MW. In addition, projects expanding the potential of solar and wind energy in the regions will also be developed in the coming years, using non-agricultural lands. In this regard, the Ministry has already identified the administrative territorial units and is exploring the designated uses of the lands and connectivity to the electricity network.

In 2020, “Azalternativenerji” LLC, a subsidiary of the State Agency for Renewable Energy Sources under the Ministry of Energy, generated 10.0 million kWh of electricity from renewable energy sources, of which 8.5 million kWh was transferred to the power grid. Overall, from 2015 to December, 2020, 2,883.3 million m³ of natural gas was not utilised in Azerbaijan and 5.1 million tons of CO₂ emissions were reduced as a result of renewable energy sources being used for electricity production.

The Ministry of Energy has set a target of a 30% increase by 2030 in the share of installed renewable energy capacity in the total energy balance of the country. To achieve this, a total of 1,500 MW of installed capacity will be created from renewable energy sources, includ-

ing 440 MW in 2020-2022, 460 MW in 2023-2025 and 600 MW in 2026-2030. On 9 January, 2020, the Ministry of Energy signed executive agreements with Saudi Arabia's ACWA Power and the UAE-based Masdar on the implementation of pilot projects on renewable energy. In accordance with these agreements, pilot projects will be implemented with ACWA Power for the construction of a 240 MW wind power plant and with Masdar for the construction of 230 MW solar power plants. On 29 December, 2020, the Ministry of Energy, Azerenergy OJSC and ACWA Power signed an Investment Agreement, a Power Purchase Agreement and a Transmission Network Connection Agreement on a project for the construction of a 240 MW wind power plant project.

Under the pilot project "Knowledge Exchange and Technical Assistance on the Development of Floating Solar Panel Systems" implemented with the support of the Asian Development Bank, the installation of a 100 KW photovoltaic system on Boyukshor Lake is planned. Business models promoting the participation of the private sector in solar installations will also be developed, and training will be given to strengthen national capacity. The project is expected to be completed by 2023.

The districts with high renewable energy potential in the territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan liberated from the occupation of the Republic of Armenia during the counter-offensive launched on September 27, 2020 in response to

the next act of aggression by Armenia, were treated separately. Precisely, a set of proposals have been put forward on activities related to installation of measuring observation stations to determine the exact potential for wind and solar energy and assessment of technical capabilities and economic efficiency; and 1 solar measuring observation station has already been installed in Zangilan district.

Eight areas with a total potential of more than 4,000 MW have been identified for the construction of solar power plants in six districts (Fuzuli, Jabrayil, Zangilan, Gubadli, Lachin and Kalbajar) in the liberated areas. In the mountainous part of Lachin and Kalbajar regions on the border with Armenia, there are large areas with an average annual wind speed of 7-8 m/s at an altitude of 100 meters. Taking into account the infrastructure, geographical relief and other factors of these areas, the initial wind energy potential is estimated at 600 MW.

In addition, from the first quarter of 2020, the State Housing Development Agency has begun cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Within the framework of this cooperation, in the Agency's next projects, it is planned to introduce new energy efficiency norms and standards and install energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies reducing the greenhouse effect, in 21 social buildings to be constructed in residential complexes, with funding from Global Environment Facility (GEF).



Goal 13

Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.



This goal is aimed at strengthening resilience to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries, eliminating the consequences of climate changes and mitigating the impacts thereof. This, in turn, requires strengthening of early warning measures, as well as promotion of enhanced education, effective planning and management capacity.

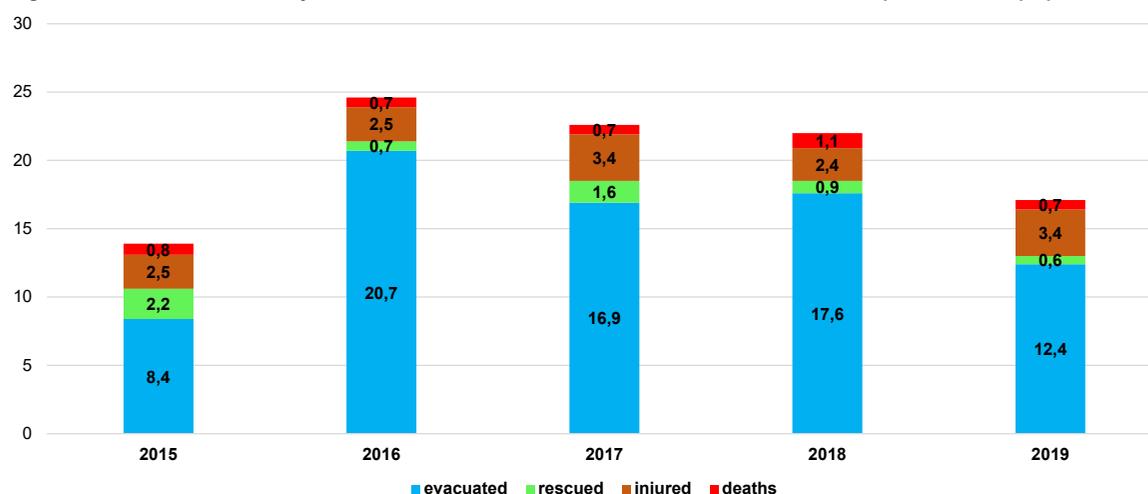
13.1. Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries.

13.1.1 Number of deaths, injuries, rescued persons and evacuated persons attributed to disasters per 100,000 population.

The number of people killed, injured, rescued and evacuated as a result of disasters per 100,000 population increased from 13.9 to 24.6 in 2016, and in subsequent years decreased steadily to 17.1. In 2019, the number of people killed as a result of disasters per 100,000 population was 0.7, the number of injured was 3.4, the number of rescued was 0.6, and the number of evacuees was 12.4. Overall, 14,192 natural and man-made disasters (139 natural disasters, 14,053 man-made disasters) occurred in the country in 2019, which is 1,272 incidents or 8.2 percent less than in 2018. As a result of natural and man-made disasters, 70 people died, 338 were injured, 63 were rescued and 1,228 were evacuated.



Figure 33. Persons killed, injured, rescued and evacuated as a result of disasters, per 100,000 population



Source: SSC

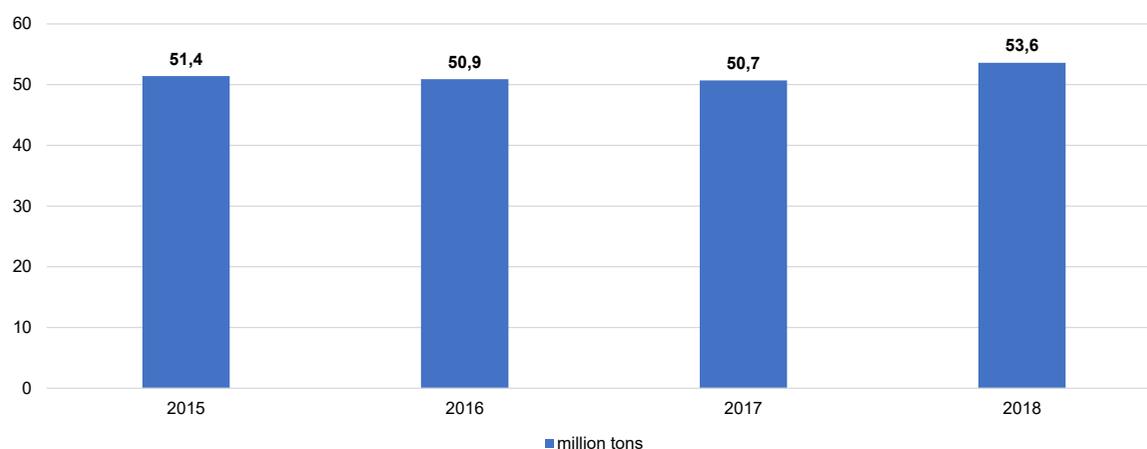
13.2. Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning.

A number of measures have been taken to study and apply international experience in the field of climate change in our country. Relevant coordination meetings were held on the implementation of international projects and programs in the field of climate change, as

well as online events, meetings, seminars, training courses, etc. were organized in frames of the projects.

In addition, the necessary domestic procedures for the technical assistance project document “Support to the planning and implementation of climate change adaptation activities in Azerbaijan” between the Government of the

Figure 34. Total greenhouse gas emissions per year, million tons (CO₂ equivalent)



Source: SSC

Republic of Azerbaijan and the United Nations Development Programme have been completed. The document was approved by the Order of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan No. 192s dated March 11, 2021.

With the support of the United Nations Development Programme, the preparation of the Fourth National Communication of Azerbaijan to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change has been completed. Within the framework of the EU4Climate regional project implemented by the United Nations Development Programme, priority sectors leading to significant carbon reductions have been selected; a preliminary action plan for the preparation of future Low Carbon Development Strategy has been drafted and the country is currently assessing the situation in sectors.

13.2.2 Total greenhouse gas emissions per year.

Total greenhouse gas emissions per year increased by 4.3 percent com-

pared to 2015 and reached to 53.6 million tons in 2018. In 2018, 61.0 percent or 32.7 million tons of greenhouse gases was carbon dioxide (CO₂), 6.5 percent or 3.5 million tons was nitrogen oxide (N₂O), 31.5 percent or 16,9 million tons was methane (CH₄) and 0.9 percent or 0.5 million tons of F-gases.

Overall, from 2015 to the end of 2020, 2,883.3 million m³ of natural gas was saved in the Republic of Azerbaijan and CO₂ emissions were reduced by 5.1 million tons thanks to electricity generated from renewable energy sources.

13.3. Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning.

With a view to mitigating the effects of climate change, the Presidential Decree No. 560 of 11 March 2020 determined the new composition of the State Commission on Climate Change and established a Working Group consisting of representatives of relevant organizations



under the coordination of the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources (MENR). The Working Group prepared an “Action Plan on issues to be addressed at the level of the State Commission.” The Action Plan includes activities to develop draft laws and regulatory documents in the field of energy efficiency and renewable energy sources, on expanding the use, promotion and application of renewable energy sources, on the introduction of measures to reduce carbon emissions, and also on climate change adaptation activities.

In addition, in order to combat climate change and its effects, the Republic of Azerbaijan submitted to the Secretariat of the Convention its nationally defined contributions under the Paris Agreement adopted at the 21st Conference of the Parties on 12 December 2015. As a contribution to global climate change mitigation initiatives, it has been set as a target to achieve a 35% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 compared to the baseline year (1990).

Measures have been taken to strengthen mitigation activities for dangerous

hydrometeorological events resulting from climate change, to improve the forecasting and early warning system, as well as to modernize the logistics base in order to improve monitoring and laboratory activities. Specifically, as part of the Strategic Road Maps and other state programme activities, 10 hydrometeorological stations will be adapted to become agrometeorological stations. Furthermore, another seven hydrological stations were refurbished and are now fully operational.

During this period, meteorological, hydrological, agrometeorological, actinometric, radar and oceanographic observations were carried out in accordance with the relevant instructions; hydrometeorological conditions were studied; short-term and long-term hydrometeorological forecasts, including issuance of warnings of expected dangerous hydrometeorological events were ensured; and hydrometeorological service was provided to state agencies, organizations and the population.

The Republic of Azerbaijan has joined the Bonn challenge to restore the forest

landscape in lands degraded by climate change and aims to restore 270,000 hectares of forest by 2030. During the period, reforestation measures covered 24.5 thousand hectares. Reforestation measures were carried out in 22,000 hectares through natural restoration, and in 2,500 hectares through planting, sowing and other methods.

Assessment of damage to environment and natural resources in the recently liberated areas of the Republic of Azerbaijan revealed that in the territories that had been under occupation of Armenia for 30 years, 260,311 hectares of forests and valuable tree species such as oak, beech, hornbeam, ash-tree, pine, maple, hazelnut, walnut and plane trees were cut down and used for various purposes. Mass deforestation in the occupied territories that lasted many years has led to desertification and soil erosion.

As a result of deliberate fires in the area, more than a hundred thousand hectares were destroyed by fire. As a result of regular fires, the fertile topsoil, along with grasses and shrubs, were destroyed, and the number of fauna and flora species declined sharply.

13.3.1 Extent to which (i) global citizenship education and (ii) education for sustainable development (including climate change education) are mainstreamed in (a) national education policies; (b) curricula; (c) teacher education; and (d) student assessment.

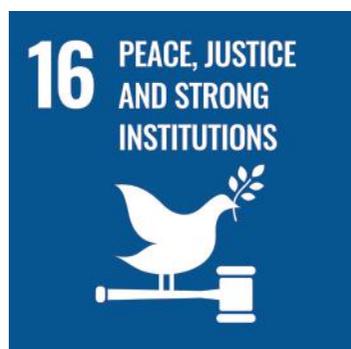
Relevant working groups have been instructed to include the issues related

to this indicator in standards, curricula and training programs.

13.b.1 Availability of nationally determined contributions, long-term strategies, national adaptation plans and strategies as reported in adaptation communications.

The Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources and the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Azerbaijan developed and approved a Joint Action Plan to Support Green Agriculture (2020 -2023) with a view to further strengthening the coordinated activities of the two government agencies in the field of agrobiodiversity, ecosystem protection and efficient use of natural resources and improve information exchange.

The Joint Action Plan to Support Green Agriculture incorporates measures for mitigation of and adaptation to the environmental impact of agricultural activities, efficient water and land use activities, protection, expansion and efficient use of forest resources, protection of biodiversity and ecosystems, aquaculture development, support to the development of organic (environmentally sound) agriculture and strengthening of institutional capacity. Within the framework of the Joint Action Plan, it is planned to establish a Working Group and implement measures on the sub-activities of the Action Plan in the coming years.



Goal 16

Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

This Goal is aimed at significantly reducing all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere, ending abuse, exploitation, trafficking and torture of children, providing legal identity for all, including birth registration, substantially reducing corruption and bribery in all their forms, significantly reducing illicit financial and arms flows, and promoting non-discriminatory laws and policies.

16.1. Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere.

Presidential Decree No. 2307 of November 27, 2020 approved the “2020-2023 National Action Plan to Combat Domestic Violence in the Republic of Azerbaijan”.

The main goal of the Plan is to bring domestic violence prevention measures in line with international standards, to provide families with timely and comprehensive assistance in order to strengthen them, and to implement and increase the effectiveness of measures stipulated in the regulations in the field of domestic violence prevention.

In addition to ensuring the continuity of activities related to incorporating international standards, the Plan also promotes education and awareness-raising, incorporates activities related to the detection and identification of victims of domestic violence, providing assistance to these victims in line with modern standards, and includes measures on the formulation of an effective protection system.

In accordance with the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on Social Services, a support center for victims of domestic violence (children) was established, which is based on the award of public orders in the field of social services to municipalities, individuals and legal entities, including non-governmental organizations; social, psychological, and legal support services were provided to 125 child victims of domestic violence in 12 districts and cities (Sheki, Zagatala, Gabala, Agsu, Ismayilli, Khizi, Shabran, Shamakhi, Guba, Gusar, Gobustan, Absheron) that are under the jurisdiction of the Sumgayit City Court of Appeal.

To prevent domestic violence, as well as early marriages, the Ministry of Internal Affairs pays special attention to the organization of explanatory and legal awareness events among the population, as well as students of general educational institutions; thus, it has organized awareness raising events at various educational institutions and children's and youth organizations on "Legal liability for and psychological aspects of early marriages", "Family values and legislation", "Family is under the special protection of the state" etc.

In 2020, the registry offices of the Ministry of Justice informed more than 60 young people of very early marriage age about the adverse effects of early marriage, as well as consanguine marriage on life and health, quality of life, emotional and psychological development, as well as held more than 50 awareness-raising events to prevent early marriage.

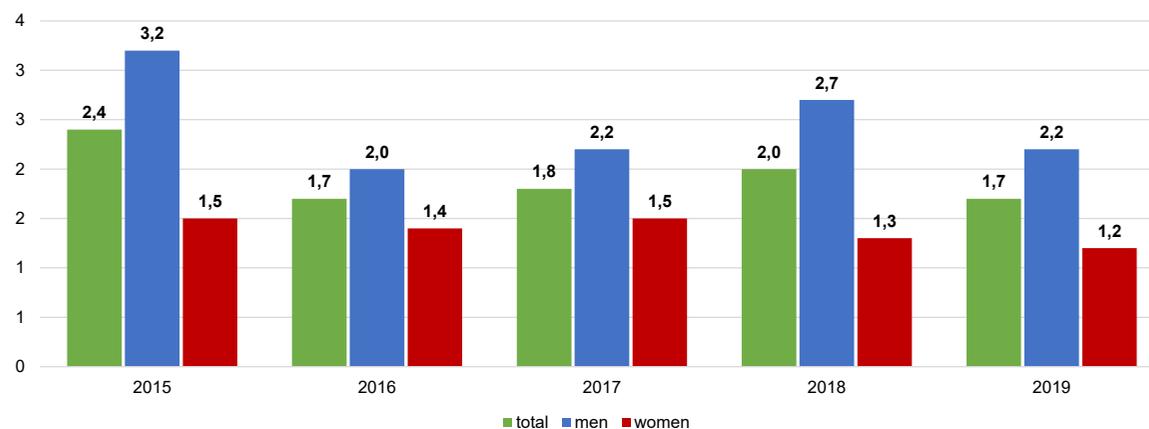
16.1.1 Number of victims of intentional homicide per 100,000 population, by sex and age.

The number of victims of international homicide decreased from 211 in 2015 to 168 in 2019. During the period under review, the share of homicides in the structure of crimes registered within the main types of crimes decreased from 0.8% to 0.6%. The number of intentional homicides per 100,000 population decreased from 2.4 in 2015 to 1.7 in 2019, including from 3.2 to 2.2 for men and from 1.5 to 1.2 for women.

16.2. End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children.

In 2019, Azerbaijan ratified the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children Against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse. Relevant draft laws have since been prepared by the Ministry of Justice and submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers for the implementation of the Convention. In 2020, the "2020-2030 Child Strategy of the Republic of Azer-

Figure 35. Number of victims of intentional homicide per 100,000 population, by sex



Source: SSC

baijan” was approved by the Presidential Decree. The main goal of the Strategy is to bring the child protection system into full compliance with the requirements of the Constitution and the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, to create equal opportunities for all children, to protect their best interests, to more effectively protect the rights of children in need of State care and to provide them with social support services in line with modern requirements.

The Strategy determines the priorities for improving the legal framework and institutional structure of child protection, ensuring the development of children in early childhood, strengthening the social protection of vulnerable children, ensuring the cultural and aesthetic education of children and their participation in cultural events, and improving the system of monitoring and evaluation of the status of implementation of children’s rights.

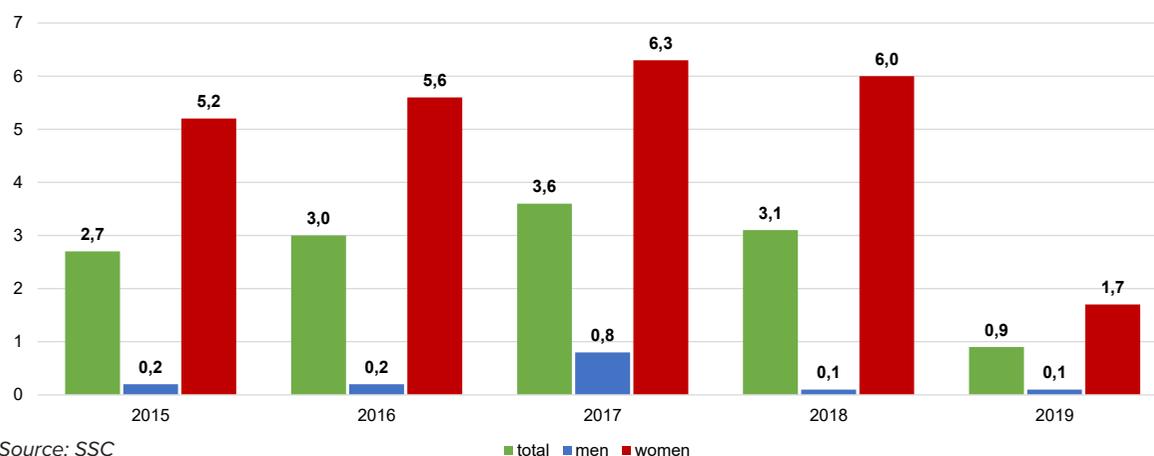
In addition, the “2020-2024 National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings in the Republic of Azerbaijan” includes activities that strengthen measures preventing child marriage, increase the accessibility of education for victims, likely victims or potential victims of human trafficking, and continue the monitoring of children’s absenteeism from education and child neglect. Activities also relate to the provision of individual preventive care, working with children avoiding education and those in conflict with the law, and awareness-raising among entrepreneurs and employers in order to prevent child labour abuse, etc.

16.2.2 Number of victims of human trafficking per 100,000 population, by sex, age and form of exploitation

The full purpose of the National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings is to ensure the continuity of activities that protect individuals and society from all forms of human trafficking, in particular to prevent the exploitation of women, children and other vulnerable groups, to identify and eliminate the causes of human trafficking, the conditions conducive to human trafficking, to reduce the risk of persons falling victim to human trafficking, to identify and ensure the social protection of groups vulnerable to human trafficking, to detect and prevent all forms of human trafficking, as well as eliminate its consequences, to ensure the protection of victims of trafficking, the restoration of their rights and social rehabilitation, to create the necessary conditions to improve the living standards of victims and potential victims of human trafficking, and to identify citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan who have been trafficked abroad.

While the number of victims of human trafficking per 100,000 population increased during 2015-2017, there has been a downward trend in the following years. That is, during 2015-2017, the number of victims of human trafficking per 100,000 population increased from 2.7 to 3.6, and in 2018 and 2019, it decreased to 3.1 and 0.9, respectively. Compared to 2015, this figure decreased from 5.2 to 1.7 for women and from 0.2 to 0.1 for men in 2019.

Figure 36. Number of victims of human trafficking per 100,000 population, by sex



Source: SSC

In accordance with the “Rules for the Social Rehabilitation of Victims of Human Trafficking” approved by the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Center for Assistance to Victims of Human Trafficking provided social, psychological and legal services to 85 victims of human trafficking in 2019 and 10 victims in 2020, as well as provided guidance for their treatment, employment, and acquisition of a certain profession.

In 2019, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection held interactive information sessions for students in a number of vocational schools and lyceums, on the types of human trafficking, on how people become victims of human trafficking, as well as on ways of combating human trafficking; relevant educational booklets and brochures were distributed at the events.

In addition, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of Education organized joint awareness-raising workshops in secondary, vocational and higher education institutions in 55 cities

and districts of the country on combating human trafficking and forced labor.

These events involved law enforcement officers, representatives of local executive authorities and juvenile commissions, health workers, entrepreneurs, representatives of transport, education, social protection, employment centers, civil society and the media; the over 10,000 booklets have been distributed.

Additionally, in 2019, events were held at the juvenile detention facility of the Penitentiary Service in order to raise awareness with juveniles on how to avoid becoming a victim of human trafficking.

With the cooperation and support of a special police agency, a public awareness campaign was held in Baku for the broader public. Educational videos and more than 100,000 awareness materials in Azerbaijani, English and Russian were distributed, and programmes dedicated to human trafficking were prepared and aired by various TV and radio stations and video portals.

16.3. Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all.

Within the framework of judicial and legal reforms carried out in the country within the past period, a number of important measures have been taken to promote the sustainable development of the justice and judicial system.

In connection with the implementation of the Presidential Decree “On deepening reforms in the judicial-legal system”, the operation of new regional commercial and administrative courts were organized, and the construction of new administrative buildings equipped with high technologies for several district courts was completed with a view to modernizing the judicial infrastructure.

In addition, work continued on the development of the “Electronic Court” information system. Under an agreement signed with the World Bank on 16 June 2020, necessary measures were taken to introduce “Electronic Court” and “Electronic enforcement” throughout the country, and the further modernization of the e-justice system, including “artificial intelligence”, “intellectual governance”, “predictive justice” and other innovations were put in place. Under the Presidential Decree dated 1 June 1, 2020, the “Regulations on the Electronic Court Information System” were also approved.

The information system is designed to effectively protect human and civil rights and freedoms, expanding access to justice, increasing the efficiency and transparency of justice, preventing procrastination and abuse of power,

ensuring transparency and efficiency, increasing the effectiveness of control over the enforcement of court decisions, and ensuring documentation is efficiently processed, both clerically and digitally.

The information system enables the digital preparation, submission and receipt of applications, complaints and other documents, the efficient registration and processing of documents, the generation of automated digitized spreadsheets regarding times and dates of court proceedings, digital delivery of information to persons participating in court proceedings (electronic cabinet, e-mail and SMS notification), and allowing participants to attend the court hearings remotely. In order to ensure public access to justice during the COVID-19 pandemic, court proceedings for civil and commercial cases were conducted via video conference.

Under the Law of 25 June, 2020, significant amendments were made to the Code of Criminal Procedure on conducting criminal proceedings electronically and conducting proceedings through the “Electronic Court” information system using video conferencing. The Ministry put in place the required measures for the application of a video conferencing system in criminal proceedings, and the system has been used in the courts since July 2020. Moreover, the accession of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the Second Additional Protocol to the European Convention on Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters, which provides for the application of videoconferencing in the interroga-

Table 2: Cases of violence, %

	2019
Proportion of violence victims	23.3
men	14.8
women	8.5
Physical violence	22.5
men	14.7
women	7.7
Sexual violence	0.8
men	0.1
women	0.8

Source: SSC

tion of persons in connection with the provision of mutual legal assistance, is currently under consideration.

Representatives of relevant government agencies have participated in numerous international trainings, workshops and other events that contribute to the capacity building of local staff and the study of international experience.

16.3.1 Proportion of victims of violence in the previous 12 months who reported their victimization to competent authorities or other officially recognized conflict resolution mechanisms.

In 2019, the proportion of victims of violence reporting their victimization amounted to 23.3%, of which 22.5% was related to physical violence and 0.9% to sexual violence. While most incidents were reported by men, most incidents of sexual violence were reported by women.

16.3.2 Unsentenced detainees as a proportion of overall prison population

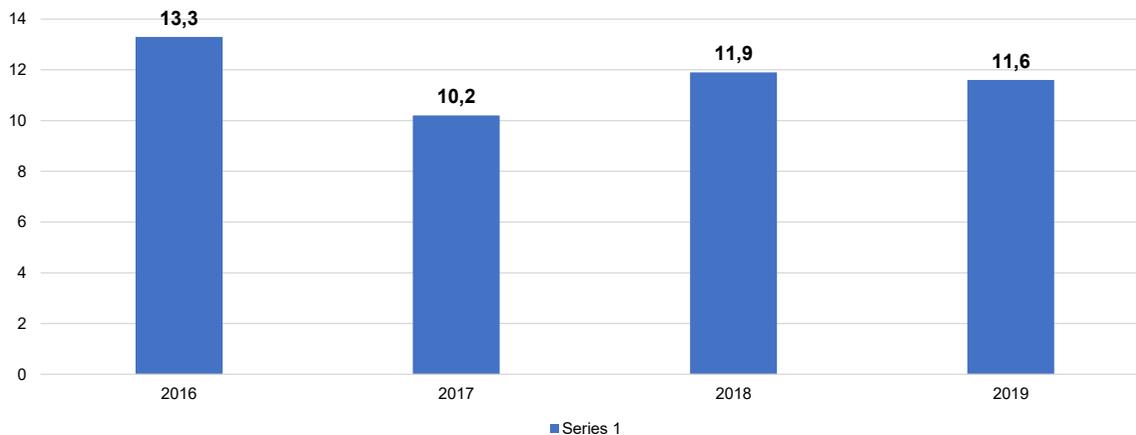
The proportion of unsentenced detainees in total number of prison population in 2019 decreased by 1.7 percentage points compared to 2016 and amounted to 11.6 percent.

16.5. Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms.

Presidential Decree No. 1859 of February 27, 2020 approved the “2020-2022 National Action Plan for Promotion of Open Government”. The main factors that necessitated the adoption of the National Action Plan were: further expansion of application of the principles of openness, transparency and accountability; increasing financial transparency; increasing the means for ensuring of access to information; support for civil society institutions and strengthening public control, sustainability of measures to promote open government is to provide.

The Plan includes measures to be taken to prevent corruption and strengthen transparency in the activities of state

Figure 37. Unsented detainees as a proportion of overall prison population, %



Source: SSC

agencies, ensure financial transparency, legalization of criminally obtained funds or other property and financing of terrorism, improve public services, expand the activities of civil society members, enhance public oversight and public participation, increase participation, ensure access to information, ensure accountability, transparency and public participation in local self-governance, increase transparency and accountability in the private sector, and increase transparency, accountability and customer satisfaction in public utilities.

At the meeting of the Anti-Corruption Commission of the Republic of Azerbaijan held on September 15, 2020, it was decided to develop a draft “National Action Plan for Strengthening the Fight against Corruption in 2021-2025”. Together with the Prosecutor General’s Office, a draft law has already been prepared and submitted to the Anti-Corruption Commission of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Furthermore, Azerbaijan continues to implement comprehensive and multi-

faceted activities to expand cooperation with international organizations on anti-corruption, in particular the Council of Europe Group of States against Corruption (GRECO), the Conference of States Parties to the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the International Anti-Corruption Academy (IACA), the OSCE and others.

The OECD Anti-Corruption Network (ACN) assessed the anti-corruption legislation of Azerbaijan and the level of implementation as satisfactory, and the activity of the “ASAN” service centres was described as commendable. During the reporting period, articles covering various aspects of the activities of the General Anti-Corruption Department were prepared and published on press outlets. In March 2021, the General Anti-Corruption Department published a guidance note on “Anti-corruption standards in the private sector” to support the development of the business environment in Azerbaijan.

During the reporting period, as part of the measures put in place to prevent corruption and strengthen transparency, draft amendments to a number of legislative acts related to the provision of financial information by officials were prepared and submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers. In addition, the Cabinet of Ministers issued a Resolution on 21 October, 2020, “On some measures to ensure the periodic risk assessment of the system of combating legalization of criminally obtained funds or other property and financing of terrorism (AML/CFT), arrange preparation for the assessment to be carried out in the relevant field, and establish a coordination mechanism with this purpose”. In line with this Resolution, a Coordination Council was established to ensure that national risk assessments are conducted periodically.

The General Anti-Corruption Department under the Prosecutor General of the Republic of Azerbaijan received 9,177 (8,447 in 2019) appeals from citizens in 2020, of which 4,516 (4,598 in 2019)

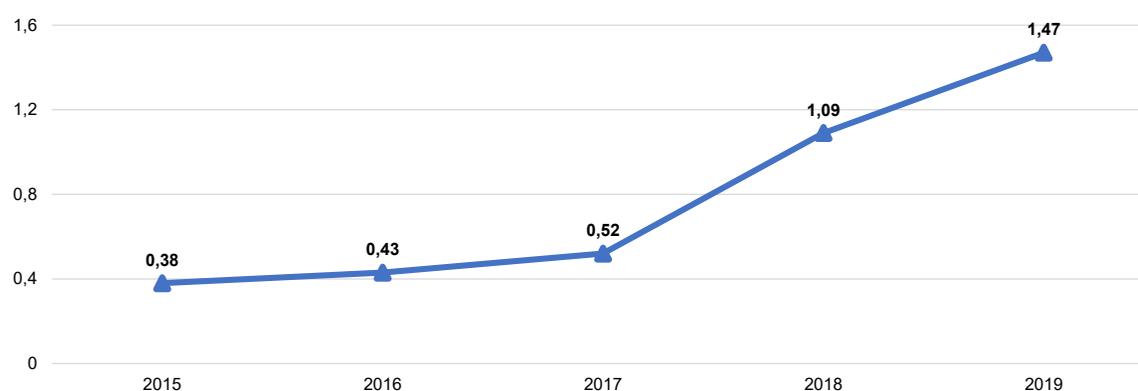
were applications/complaints, 4,661 (3,849 in 2019) were appeals received through the “161 Hotline” call center.

In 2019, the General Department considered 317 appeals and other reports as materials of criminal nature, and criminal proceedings were initiated on 231 materials (72.9%) under various articles of the Criminal Code, and a decision was made to refuse to initiate criminal proceedings on 86 (27.1%) materials, upon which other measures stipulated by the legislation were taken.

In 2020, the General Department considered 250 appeals and other reports as materials of criminal nature, and criminal proceedings were initiated on 205 materials (82%) under various articles of the Criminal Code, and a decision was made to refuse to initiate criminal proceedings on 43 (17.2%) materials, and 2 (0.8%) appeals were attached to criminal cases.

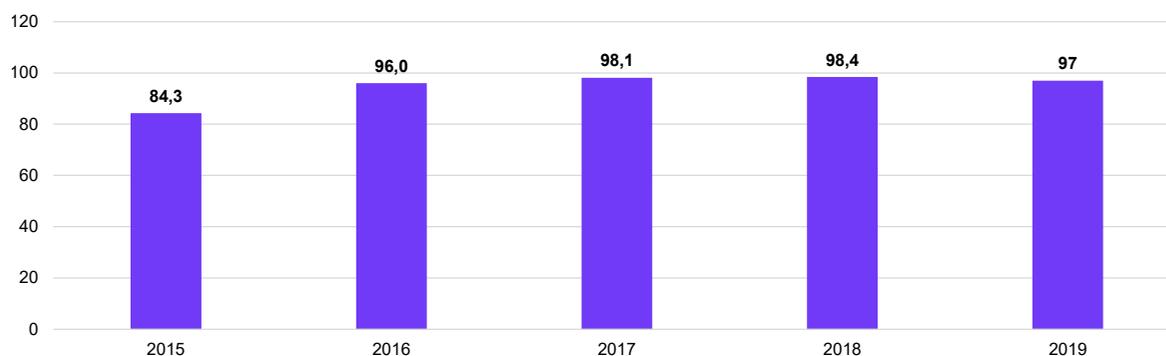
16.5.1 Proportion of businesses that had at least one contact with a public

Figure 38. Proportion of businesses that had at least one contact with a public official and that paid a bribe to a public official, or were asked for a bribe by those public officials during the previous 12 months, %



Source: SSC

Figure 39. Primary government expenditures as a proportion of original approved budget, by sector, %



Source: SSC

official and that paid a bribe to a public official, or were asked for a bribe by those public officials during the previous 12 months.

A 1.09% increase was recorded in this indicator in 2019 compared to 2015, with the proportion of reported cases reaching 1.47%, compared to 2015.

16.6. Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels.

16.6.1 Primary government expenditures as a proportion of original approved budget, by sector

The proportion of the primary government expenditures in the original approved budget expenditures increased by 12.7 percentage points, from 84.3 percent in 2015 to 97.0 percent in 2019. The volume of executed state budget expenditures in 2019 amounted to 24.4 billion AZN, which is 37.3 percent more than 17.8 billion AZN in 2015. Besides, the volume of approved state budget expenditures in 2019 (25.1 billion AZN) was 19.4 percent more than in 2015 (21.1 billion AZN).

16.9. By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration.

16.9.1 Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority, by age.

Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority amounted to 100 percent in 2015-2019.

16.10. Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements.

The operation, free of charge, of a unified online database of regulatory acts (www.e-qanun.az) and the State Register of Legal Acts (www.hüquqiaktlar.gov.az), which are open to the public and regularly updated by the Ministry of Justice, continued throughout the period under review.

To protect the property rights of citizens and increase access to information on related legal services, the Ministry of Justice put in place a number of dig-

ital services. Through these services, citizens can obtain real-time information on property alienation, inheritance, awards of power of attorney and other operations. Interactive consulting services, used to obtain information, provide prompt answers to citizens' questions.

These databases have been visited 2.25 million times. To further improve these resources, a database of legislation in line with modern requirements was launched in March 2021.

16.10.2 Existence of constitutional, statutory and/or policy guarantees that have been adopted and are implemented for public access to information.

Article 47 of the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan guarantees freedom of opinion and speech to everyone. In addition, according to Article 50 of the Constitution, everyone is free to legally seek, receive, impart, produce, and disseminate any information. That is, the legal grounds for ensuring the right to information, established by Article 50 of the Constitution, on the basis of the principles of an open society and a democratic state governed by the rule of law are enshrined in the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on Access to Information.

The general rules in seeking, accessing, preparing, submitting, producing and disseminating mass information, as well as the organizational, legal and economic grounds of the media, which ensure citizens' right to full, accurate and timely information, are regulated by

the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on Mass Media.

Moreover, the Office of the Ombudsman established a department to protect the right to information. The Office of the Ombudsman is responsible for ensuring the right to information, and considers and responds to appeals received in connection with the violation of the right to information; promotes and advocates for the right to information; conducts awareness-raising activities on the legal aspects of the right to information; conducts monitoring and analysis in this area; and implement activities in other areas related to the right to information.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the hotlines of the Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) of the Republic of Azerbaijan in one centre and using modern information technologies, a unified 916 Call Centre was established to ensure the effectiveness of the appeals of individuals. The Center received appeals on a 24/7 basis, recorded the conversations and entered them into an electronic database, which, unlike the previous period, allowed them to be promptly investigated by eliminating the requirement for a written application. Additionally, public awareness raising activities were carried out and a social video was prepared in this regard.

16.a. Strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels, in particular in developing countries, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime.

16.a.1 Existence of independent national human rights institutions in compliance with the Paris Principles

Following the adoption of the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the country rebuilt the system of institutional mechanisms for implementation of democratic, legal reforms and effective ensuring of human rights in this area.

Determining the ensuring of human rights in the Republic of Azerbaijan as a national task, the establishment of the institution of the Commissioner for Human Rights for the first time was envisaged in the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated February 22, 1998 on measures to ensure human and civil rights and freedoms. Also, the “State Program on Protection of Human Rights” approved by the Decree of the President of the

Republic of Azerbaijan dated June 18, 1998 envisaged the establishment of the institution of the Commissioner for Human Rights.

On December 28, 2001, the Milli Majlis (Parliament) of the Republic of Azerbaijan adopted the Constitutional Law “On the Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) of the Republic of Azerbaijan”, and on March 5, 2002, the President signed a Decree on the enforcement of this Law, thereby creating the legal basis for the establishment and operation of this institution.

The first Ombudsman of the Republic of Azerbaijan was elected by the Milli Majlis on July 2, 2002 by 111 votes (out of 112 votes) from among three candidates nominated by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan.



Goal 17

Revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

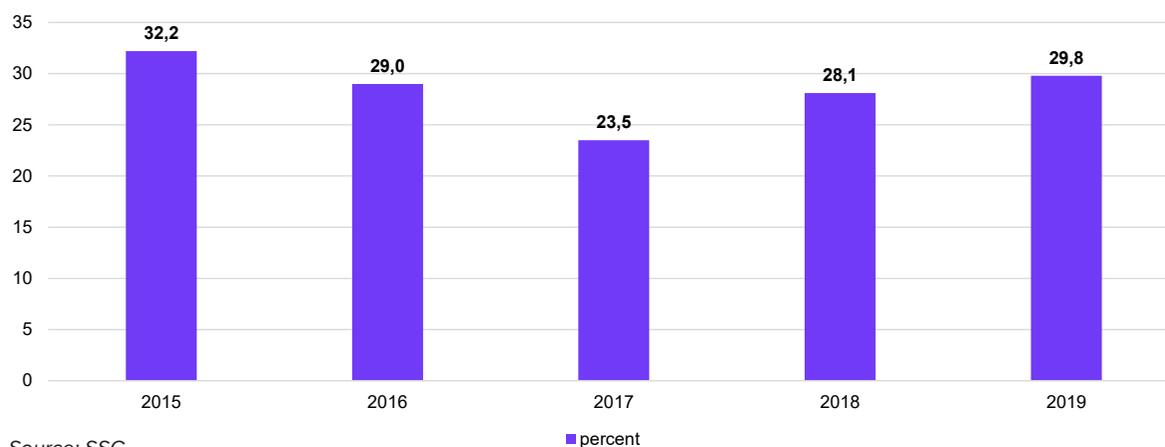
SDG 17 is aimed at enhancing macro-economic stability, assisting developing countries in attaining long-term debt sustainability, addressing the external debt of highly indebted poor countries, doubling the least developed countries' share of global exports, facilitating market access, developing the science, technology and innovation capacity, and increasing significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts for these countries.

17.1. Strengthen domestic resource mobilization, including through international support to developing countries, to improve domestic capacity for tax and other revenue collection.

17.1.1 Total government revenue as a proportion of GDP, by source.

The proportion of state budget revenues in GDP decreased from 32.2% in 2015 to 29.8% in 2019. Realized state budget revenues increased by 39.4% in 2019 compared to 2015 amounting to AZN 24.4 billion in 2019. 48.2% (AZN 11,755.0 million) of these revenues were tax revenues and 51.8% (AZN 12.6 billion) were other revenues.

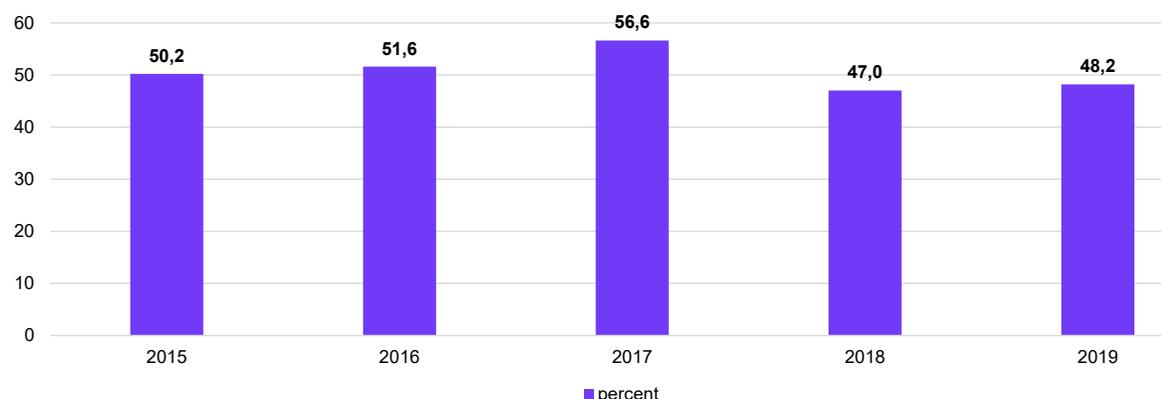
Figure 40. Total government revenue as a proportion of GDP, %



Source: SSC

■ percent

Figure 41. Proportion of domestic budget funded by domestic taxes, %



Source: SSC

17.1.2 Proportion of domestic budget funded by domestic taxes.

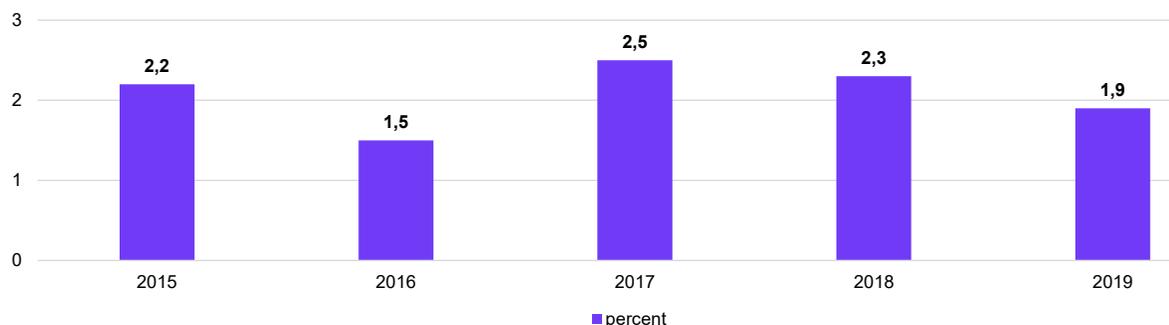
During 2015-2019, the proportion of taxes in state budget revenues decreased by 2% , from 50.2% to 48.2%. However, the volume of tax revenues of the state budget increased from AZN 8.8 billion in 2015 to AZN 11.8 billion in 2019. Last year, the volume of tax revenues of the state budget amounted to AZN 952.1 million (3.9%) for personal income tax, AZN 2,5 billion AZN (10.4%) for corporate income tax, AZN 50.0 million (0.2%) for land tax, AZN 212.6 million (0.9% for property tax, AZN 5.2 billion (21.2%)

for value added tax, AZN 854.7 million (3.5%) for excise tax, AZN 133.8 million (0.6%) for mining tax, AZN 1.3 billion (5.5%) for taxes related to foreign economic activity, AZN 358.6 million (1.5%) for simplified taxes, and AZN 118.9 million (0.5%) for road tax.

17.3 Mobilize additional financial resources for developing countries from multiple sources.

17.3.2 Volume of remittances (in United States dollars) as a proportion of total GDP.

Figure 42. Volume of remittances (in United States dollars) as a proportion of total GDP, %



Source: SSC

Compared to 2015, the volume of remittances as a proportion of total GDP decreased by 0.3 percentage points, from 2.2% to 1.9% in 2019 .

17.4. Assist developing countries in attaining long-term debt sustainability through coordinated policies aimed at fostering debt financing, debt relief and debt restructuring, as appropriate, and address the external debt of highly indebted poor countries to reduce debt distress.

17.4.1 Debt service as a proportion of exports of goods and services.

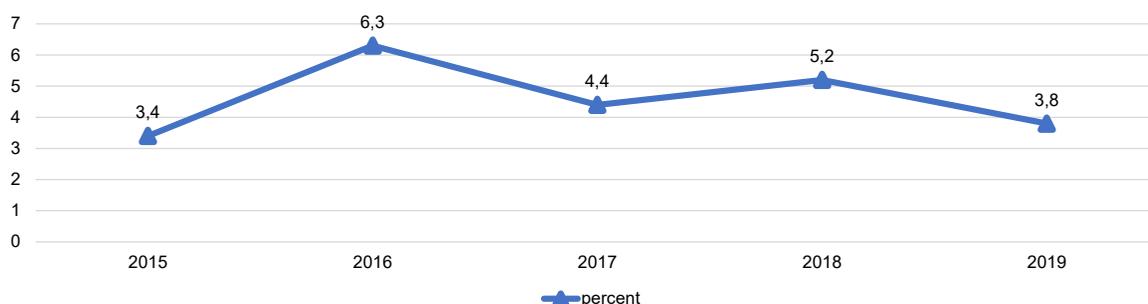
Compared to 2015, the debt service as a proportion of exports of goods and services increased by 0.4 percentage points, from 3.4% to 3.8% in 2019. Overall, this indicator showed a fluctuating trend in 2015-2019.

17.6. Enhance North-South, South-South and triangular regional and international cooperation on and access to science, technology and innovation and enhance knowledge-sharing on mutually agreed terms, including through improved coordination among existing mechanisms, in particular at the Unit-

ed Nations level, and through a global technology facilitation mechanism.

The Azerbaijan Digital Hub project is being implemented with a view to developing telecommunication infrastructure in Azerbaijan in line with world standards, eliminating dependence on the Internet from other countries, building a Digital Silk Way on the historic Silk Road between Europe and Asia, making the country a major Internet provider in the region, an Internet sharing hub and exporter of digital services. The project envisages the construction of fiber-optic cable lines along the bottom of the Caspian Sea on the routes Azerbaijan-Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan-Turkmenistan. For this purpose, agreements have been signed with the Republic of Turkmenistan and the Republic of Kazakhstan respectively. A groundbreaking ceremony was held in 2019 to begin construction of a 400-kilometre long fiber-optic communication line along the bottom of the Caspian Sea. The cable line for the Kazakhstan route will allow data transmission with a speed of at least 4-6 Tbit/s, and of 2-3 Tbit/s for the Turkmenistan route.

Figure 43. Debt service as a proportion of exports of goods and services, %



Source: SSC

Under the Hub project, and in accordance with the agreements signed between AzerTelecom and Azerbaijan Railways CJSC, durable main fiber-optic cable lines are currently being installed along the existing railway protection strip. The installation of these fiber-optic cable lines along the railways will strengthen the country's digital infrastructure, providing a new sustainable infrastructure across the country and durable broadband fiber-optic cable connections with neighbouring countries, including Russia, Georgia, Turkey and Iran (North-South, East-West); these infrastructures will intersect in Azerbaijan.

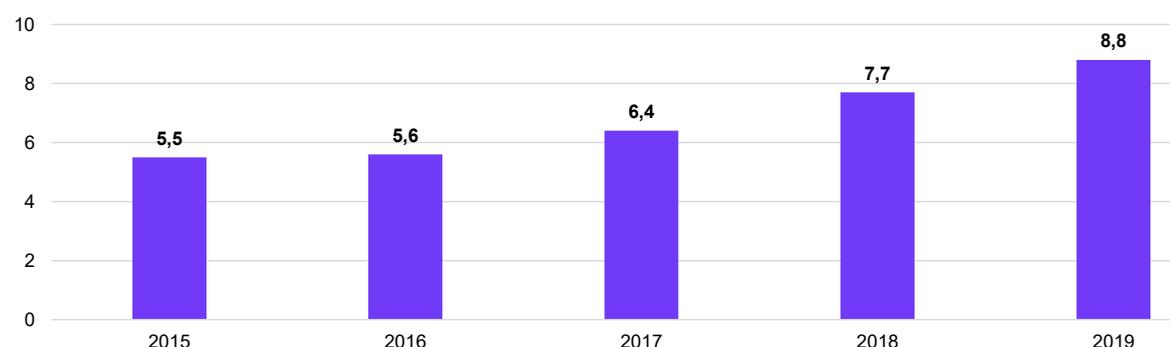
17.6.1 Fixed Internet broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants, by speed.

Compared to 2015, the number of fixed broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants increased by 3.3 percentage points to reach 8.8 percent in 2019. The dynamics shows an ongoing increase in the number of fixed broadband subscriptions in the country. Specifically, the number of fixed broadband subscriptions increased 16 times during 2010-2019 and amounted to 866,438 in 2019.

17.8. Fully operationalize the technology bank and science, technology and innovation capacity building mechanism for least developed countries by 2017 and enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology.

According to the Ministry of Transport, Communications and High Technologies (MTCHT), one of the main goals of the 2014-2020 National Strategy for the Development of Information Society in the Republic of Azerbaijan is to provide the population with secure and high quality access to communication services through the expansion of the country's communication and broadband service infrastructure and modernization thereof on the basis of new technologies. Furthermore, the following activities have been carried out in accordance with the 2016-2020 State Programme for the Implementation of the National Strategy for the Development of the Information Society and the Strategic Roadmap for the Development of Telecommunications and Information Technologies:

Figure 44. Fixed Internet broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants



Source: SSC

- With view to expanding the coverage of LTE, relevant draft regulations have been prepared to make the necessary amendments to existing legislation in order to form legal grounds for the regulation of a transparent and efficient national frequency distribution. In addition, with the purpose of achieving the goals set out in the Strategic Roadmap and to use frequency channels in accordance with international practice, proposals have been prepared and submitted for approval to the State Commission on Radio Frequencies regarding the transfer of TV broadcasting equipment operating on frequency channels intended for the application of LTE technology to low-frequency channels;
- The following plans related to the provision of high-speed Internet in the country by the regulatory body have been approved by the relevant orders of the MTCHT and sent to the relevant communications institutions for implementation: “2019-2020 Action Plan for the provision of broadband high-speed mobile telecommunications services in the territory of the country”, “Framework plan for the development of the telecommunications sector in Azerbaijan”, “The three-year transition plan covering the measures to be taken in frames of reforms in the field of telecommunications, the action plan on these measures and the establishment of an independent regulatory body for the implementation of regulatory functions in the telecommunications sector”;
- With the aim of introducing sectoral innovations, implementing projects, modernizing infrastructure and improving the quality of services and developing the regions in this regard, the Ministry has invested 124.7 million AZN in 2019-2020;
- As part of the continuing measures for development of broadband services and the expansion of the application geography thereof, the port capacity of the Internet network in Baku was increased by 151,685 numbers and the number of subscribers by 31,694 people by the end of 2019; and the Internet installation capacity in the regions rose to 555,316 units following an increase of 111,232 ports in 2020, while the number of subscribers rose to 444,539 following an increase of 66,880;
- Work has continued to provide uninterrupted and high-quality telecommunications services through the application of GPON (gigabit passive optical network) technology, which allows providing high-speed Internet to apartments in Baku;
- Besides GPON technology, the project implementation continued in order to provide modern telecommunications services through LTE technology, which provides wireless high-speed Internet service to citizens in the network of the capital; within this framework, 267 LTE eNB devices were installed in Baku and surrounding areas, technical capacity was built to provide communication services to 20,000 subscribers, and the number of subscribers reached 8,513;

- 23 modern EATs with a total capacity of 4,848 numbers were installed in the service area of the telecommunication junctions of Agdash, Aghdam, Aghstafa, Tovuz, Bilasuvar, Gazakh, Gusar, Shirvan, Khachmaz, Mingachevir, Siyazan, Saatli, Zardab, Gakh, Gabala, Shamakhi, Shamkir and Salyan regions;
- A project to build a DWDM/MPLS⁵ network on the regional telephone network is being implemented.

17.8.1 Proportion of individuals using the Internet.

Compared to 2015, the proportion of individuals using the Internet increased by 4.1 percentage points, from 77.0 percent to 81.1 percent in 2019. In 2019, the total number of population using the Internet was 8,112.8 thousand people, of which 52.2 percent were men, and 47.8 percent were women. The highest level of the indicator was registered in Baku (91.7%), and the lowest level in the Upper Karabakh economic region (74.8%). The indicator was 85.9 percent in urban areas and 74.6 percent in rural areas in 2019.

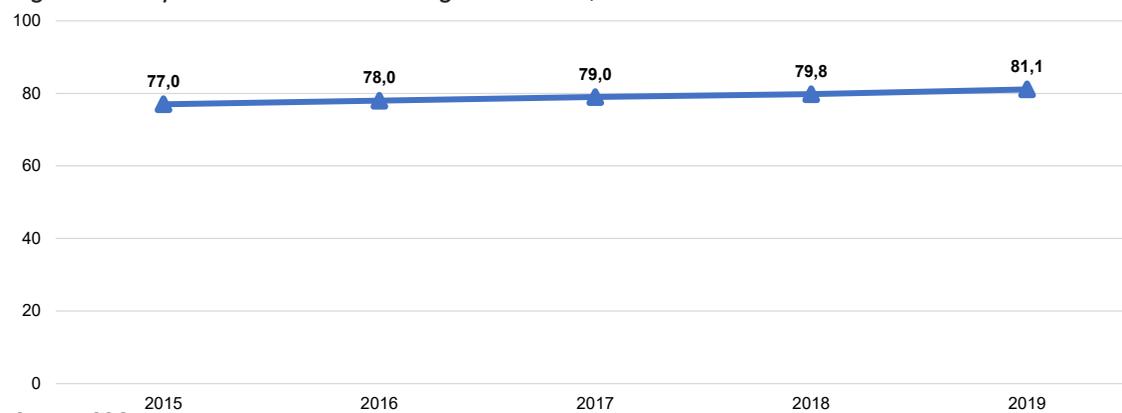
In 2019, 69.8 percent accessed the Internet in their houses (apartments), 2.7 percent in Internet clubs, 17.3 percent in workplaces, 7.1 percent in educational institutions, 0.6% in libraries, and 2.5 percent in other places. On average, the proportion of daily Internet users in the total number of Internet users is 82.0 percent.

Currently, 39.9 percent of Internet users are young people under the age of 24, 25.8 percent are aged between 25 to 35, and 34.2 percent are aged between 36 to 62. The proportion of users over the age of 64 is 0.1 percent.

17.9. Enhance international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity building in developing countries to support national plans to implement all the Sustainable Development Goals, including through North South, South-South and triangular cooperation.

17.9.1 Dollar value of financial and technical assistance (including through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation) committed to developing countries.

Figure 45. Proportion of individuals using the Internet, %



Source: SSC

⁵DWDM- Dense Wavelength Division Multiplexers;
MPLS- Multiprotocol Label Switching.

According to the Azerbaijan International Development Agency, the total amount of aid provided by the Republic of Azerbaijan in North-South (including Western countries), South-South and tri-lateral cooperation in dollars increased by 70.4 percent, from 3,410,747 USD to USD 5,813,408 in 2015-2019. Overall, the total amount of assistance provided by the Republic of Azerbaijan in the framework of trilateral cooperation in 2015-2019 amounted to 13.9 million USD.

Humanitarian aid

Assistance provided for humanitarian aid by the Republic of Azerbaijan in 2020 was mainly to support the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. During the period under review, humanitarian, financial and other technical assistance was provided to 33 countries on a bi-lateral and multilateral basis, with AIDA either directly involved or acting as a coordinator.

Additionally, an online workshop on combating the COVID-19 pandemic was jointly organized with the WHO, the Islamic World Educational, Scientific

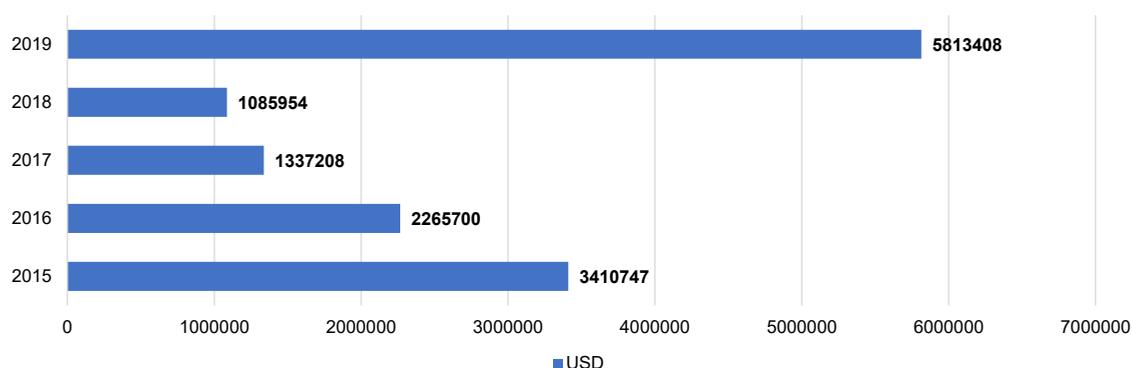
and Cultural Organization (ICESCO), the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), and the Islamic Development Bank, for doctors from Benin, Burkina Faso, Djibouti, Chad, Ivory Coast, Cameroon, the Comoros, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and Togo.

Assistance was also provided in support of the Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar, thereby strengthening Islamic solidarity, and humanitarian assistance was sent to Australia to help address the serious consequences of forest fires.

Provision of technical/financial assistance

Earlier this year, financial assistance was provided to Lebanon to deal with the aftermath of the strong explosion in Beirut; aids were provided to address the serious socioeconomic challenges posed by the Ebola epidemic in the Democratic Republic of Congo and in the region in response to the African Union's request; and our embassy in Mexico provided assistance for dealing

Figure 46. Dollar value of financial and technical assistance (including through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation) committed to developing countries



Source: SSC

with the consequences of the floods in the Mexican states of Chiapas and Tabasco, and to the poor groups in Bogota, Colombia. Azerbaijan has donated to the following organizations: United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); Aarhus Convention on Environmental Matters; Helsinki Convention for the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes; Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer; European Convention on Transboundary Environmental Impact Assessment; Anti-Corruption Network for Eastern Europe and Central Asia (for securing stable operation of the network); the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development; the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights; the Trust Fund for the Office of the President of the 75th Session of the UN General Assembly; the International Committee of the Red Cross; Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

In the area of Education

With regard to assistance for education, in December, 2017 and 10 January, 2018, scholarships were awarded to 40 students from the Member States of Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Non-Aligned Movement (Bangladesh, Djibouti, Chad, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Algeria, Palestine, Philippines, Indonesia, Jordan, Gambia, Ghana, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Central African Republic, Myanmar, Niger, Uzbekistan, Peru, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Somalia, Sudan, Suriname, Tajikistan, Thailand, Tanzania, Yemen, Zambia) to enable them to

study at higher education institutions in the Republic of Azerbaijan.

In 2020, online training was organized for diplomats from Benin, Burkina Faso, Djibouti, Cameroon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea and Madagascar as part of AIDA's ADA University Foreign Policy Programme.

17.11. Significantly increase the exports of developing countries, in particular with a view to doubling the least developed countries' share of global exports by 2020.

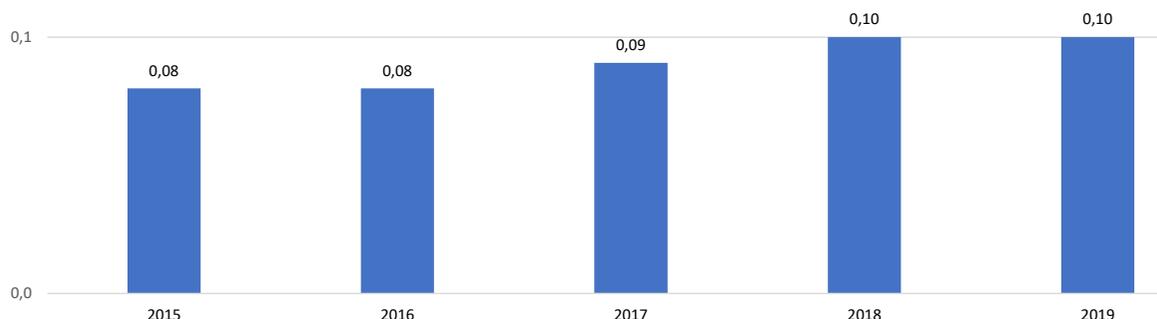
17.11.1 Azerbaijan's share of global exports.

Compared to 2015, the Azerbaijan's share of global exports in 2019 increased by 0.02 percentage points, from 0.08% to 0.10%.

In 2019, the volume of exports amounted to USD19.6 billion, which is USD146,134.6 thousand more than in 2018. In the commodity structure of exports, minerals accounted for 90.9%; crop products - 3.2%; base metals and articles thereof - 1.2%; precious stones and metals and articles thereof - 0.9%; plastic mass, caoutchouc, rubber and articles thereof - 0.9%, and other commodities 2.9%. 60.2% of the export volume went to Europe, 38.3% to Asia, 0.9% to the United States 0.4% to Africa, and 0.2% to Oceania.

17.18. By 2020, enhance capacity-building support to developing countries, including for least developed countries and small island developing States, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data

Figure 47. Azerbaijan's share of global exports, %



Source: SSC

disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts.

17.18.2 Availability of national statistical legislation complying with Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics.⁶

The national legislation on official statistics consists of the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan, other legislative acts of the Republic of Azerbaijan and international agreements to which the Republic of Azerbaijan is a party. The Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on Official Statistics (Law No. 789, dated 18 February 1994) reflects the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and regulates legal relations in the field of official statistics and defines the powers and functions of state statistical bodies.

17.18.3 Availability of a national statistical plan that is fully funded and under implementation.

The State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan, which implements state policy and regulations in the field of statistics and compiles offi-

cial statistical data on the social, economic, demographic and environmental situation in the country, organizes its activities in accordance with the Statistical Works Programme, approved by the Cabinet of Ministers. The activities are also coordinated with the methodological and work plans of data users, the quarterly work plans on economic analysis and the State Programme on the development of official statistics in the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The sixth State Program on the development of official statistics in the Republic of Azerbaijan in 2018-2025 was approved by Decree no. 3672 of 14 February 2018. The main goal of the State Program is to develop official statistics through the implementation of comprehensive measures to improve the statistical work in accordance with the ongoing socio-economic processes and modern challenges in the country and internationally. These measures include: organizing statistical observations and developing methodologies in social, economic and other areas, metadata and classifications; legal, administrative and information support

to generation of official statistical materials; increasing user satisfaction; international cooperation; strengthening material and technical base and personnel capacity.

17.19 By 2030, build on existing initiatives to develop measurements of progress on sustainable development that complement gross domestic product, and support statistical capacity-building in developing countries.

17.19.1 The value of all resources allotted for capacity building in the field of statistics in USD.

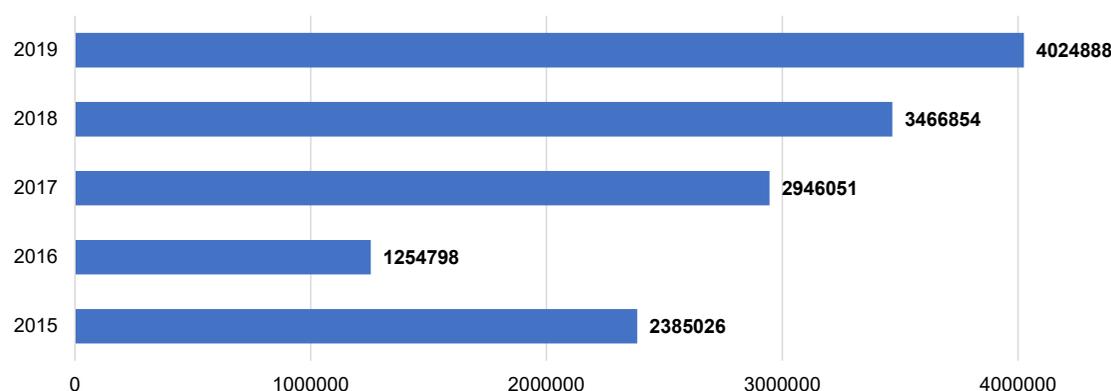
In 2019, 4 million USD was allocated for capacity building in the field of statistics, which is 68.8% more than in 2015. Overall, 14.1 million USD was allocated for capacity building in the field of statistics in 2015-2019.

17.19.2. Proportion of countries that (a) have conducted at least one population and housing census in the last 10 years; and (b) have achieved 100% birth registration and 80% death registration

The last population census in Azerbaijan was held in October 2019 in accordance with the 7 September 2016 Decree No. 1040 of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on “Conduct of a population census in the Republic of Azerbaijan in 2019”.

In accordance with the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan No. 517 of 16 December, 2016 “On the action plan for the preparation and conduct of the population census in the Republic of Azerbaijan in 2019”, and the “Calendar plan for the preparation and conduct of the population census in the Republic of Azerbaijan in 2019” approved by the Order of the State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan No.01/05s of 17 December, 2017, all the necessary measures were taken by the State Statistical Committee and other relevant government agencies in connection with the organizational work, preparation and publication of census materials, staffing, organization of public awareness work, technical support issues, devel-

Figure 48. The value of all resources allotted for capacity building in the field of statistics in USD



Source: SSC

oping the procedures for conducting the census and ensuring the receipt of documents.

Close cooperation was maintained with international organisations accredited in Azerbaijan, including UNFPA, UNICEF, UNDP, UNHCR, ILO and IOM, with regard to the development of methodological materials for the census and the organization of awareness campaigns. Census documentation and questionnaires were developed in accordance with the Conference of European Statisticians Recommendations for the 2020 Censuses of Population and Housing, the obligations under “Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, and the relevant decision of the 57th meeting of the Council of Heads of Statistical Services of the CIS member states, chaired by Azerbaijan on 31 May, 2017.

With regard to birth and death registration, the Decree “On expanding the use of electronic services in the field of civil registration by state” signed by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan

on 23 September, 2020, connects local executive authorities and consulates of the Republic of Azerbaijan located overseas to the State Registry of Population, and birth and death certificates are issued electronically.

Moreover, to increase the efficiency in determining the natural population growth, death registration is carried out automatically on the basis of information on deaths transmitted by health authorities to the information system of the Ministry of Justice, without waiting for a citizen’s request.

Since 2019, 100% of both births and deaths have been registered. The number of births in 2019 was 141,179, of which 68,665 (48.6%) were in urban areas and 72,514 (51.4%) in rural areas; 53.2% of the babies born were male (75,160) and 46.8% were female (66,029). The number of deaths was 55,916, of which 30,517 (54.6%) were in urban areas and 25,399 (45.4%) in rural areas; of these 53.5% were men (29,926) and 46.5% were women (25,990).

CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD

Conclusion

The Third Voluntary National Review of Azerbaijan underlines the importance of the country's obligations undertaken in connection with the SDGs and the timely and adequate implementation of these obligations in line with the principle of "leaving no one behind". Ensuring inclusive and sustainable economic growth, building a peaceful and inclusive society for all is one of the key priorities of the Government of Azerbaijan, and the country has manifestly demonstrated its commitment to a transition to sustainable development and the alignment of State programmes and strategies with the SDGs. Azerbaijan's continued commitment is substantiated by the February 2021 approval of the "Azerbaijan 2030: National Priorities for Socio-Economic Development".

As presented in the report, Azerbaijan has made efforts to comply with the following requirements and recommendations in achieving the SDGs:

- The active involvement of the private sector and public institutions in the

implementation of SDG-related activities was promoted. Particular attention was paid to raising awareness at all levels, regulating environmental issues, and enhancing private sector's access to funding for SDGs;

- Special attention was paid to the implementation of awareness-raising activities at all levels and the organization of dialogues with various layers of society (Parliament, civil society, academia and etc.) at the national and regional levels;
- Efforts to further accelerate the development and diversification of the non-oil sector, strengthen innovation activity and export capacity, increase the effectiveness of social services and the green economy were further strengthened during the reporting period;
- Responsive measures have been taken to address the socio-economic challenges posed by COVID-19 by building an effective institutional system and infrastructure, while also working closely with WHO;

For the next stage, Azerbaijan expresses its intent to further strengthen the results

achieved to date. In order to achieve SDGs by 2030, the Government of Azerbaijan also looks forward to the support of international partners in realization of planned activities in the above-mentioned areas through direct SDG financing mechanism, by sharing international best practices, building an effective partnership, overcoming existing challenges, as well as creating platforms of special importance for our country.

The end of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan creates new economic opportunities not only for Azerbaijan, but also for the region as a whole. In this respect, the rehabilitation, reconstruction and reintegration of its liberated and conflict-affected areas will constitute the key dimension of the development strategy of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the coming years. A draft Concept and State Program on the rehabilitation of our liberated territories has been prepared. The policy of rehabilitation of the liberated territories and ensuring of sustainable and balanced development of the regions in our country is envisaged in the following priority areas:

- reconstruction and re-integration of the territories;
- attraction of private investment;
- the demand for local production triggered by the rehabilitation process and economic growth;
- efficient use of natural resources and environmental safety;
- sustainable and balanced development.

Achievement of peace in the region will make a positive contribution to the implementation of the SDGs, especially SDG 16.

Way forward

Azerbaijan sees the implementation of the SDGs as an opportunity to ensure integration and development, and seeks to adapt policies, strategies and programs implemented at the national and regional levels to the SDGs. The key here is to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of policies and measures under implementation.

Preparation of the Strategic Document on the implementation of the SDGs. As a continuation of “Azerbaijan 2020: Outlook into future” Development Concept and with a view to ensuring implementation of the obligations arising from UN’s “Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, the “Azerbaijan 2030: National priorities for socio-economic development”, approved by the President of the country on February 2, 2021, is planned to be realized in five key directions: i) A steadily growing competitive economy; ii) a dynamic and inclusive society based on social justice; iii) competitive human capital and a space for modern innovations; iv) Great return to the liberated territories; v) clean environment and a country of ‘green growth’ It is planned to prepare and approve a detailed analysis document and action plan for 2021.

With a view to further improving the country's achievements in terms of the SDGs and increasing sustainability, the following activities are envisaged:

- **Driven by COVID-19 challenges**, strengthening health care system and enlarging the coverage of vaccination process. Meanwhile, recovering the economic activity by gradual elimination of mandatory lockdowns;
- **Accelerate economic diversification** and ensure dynamic development of the non-oil sector contributing to the implementation of SDG. This will be through clustering, the formation of a favorable business environment, development of a national innovation system, and the formation of a favorable institutional framework;
- **Develop competitive human capital** through expand the scope of active labor market programs, increasing investment in education and ensuring full accessibility to the compulsory health insurance system;
- **Strengthening the use of alternative energy sources and protecting biodiversity.** Ensure government agencies take measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in order to fulfill the obligations arising from the Paris Agreement on Climate Change;
- **Ensure sustainable development through the rehabilitation, reconstruction and reintegration of the liberated territories**, consideration of the SDGs and other international challenges, resources and perspectives;
- **Improve data collection and analysis** on sustainable development, including strengthening capacity for analysis and generating detailed disaggregated data on gender, ethnicity, age groups, habitats and regions/administrative districts;
- **Establish of SDG Financing Mechanism** with the engagement of private sectors and government institutions to achieve the selected targets of SDGs.

