



**Statement by the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan**  
**HDIM Working session 8**  
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**As delivered by Fidan Mahmudova**

The full and equal exercise by women of their human rights is essential to achieve a more peaceful, prosperous and democratic OSCE area. Only with equal rights, women can have more important roles in contributing to comprehensive security in all its three dimensions. Azerbaijan committed to eliminate all forms of gender-based discrimination and ensure gender equality in the political, economic, social and cultural spheres of life in accordance with the OSCE commitments and obligations under international instruments. Our country has a proud history in providing enabling environment for women to play an important role in the society. The first ever secular school for girls in the Muslim world was established in Baku in the beginning of the XX century. Azerbaijan was the first country in the Muslim world granting women the right to vote in 1918.

Ensuring gender equality is among the top priorities of State policy and guaranteed by the Constitution and relevant legislative acts of Azerbaijan. The State Committee on Family, Women and Children Affairs, as a main body responsible for implementation of state policy on this issue, carries out activities aimed at women's empowerment, as well as prevention of violence against them. Besides the Committee gender focal points are appointed in almost all Governmental structures and in executive institutions of all regions of Azerbaijan.

As a result of policies adopted by the Government, we have made great strides in achieving gender parity in State institutions. As an example, currently 52% of staff members of MFA are women. The representation of women in the National Assembly has increased from 11% in 2005 to 17% in 2015. The proportion of women appointed to key government positions has also significantly increased in recent years. My delegation here on HDIM is a good example of gender balance, more than half of the delegation are females.

Azerbaijan, with close to 300 thousands internally displaced and 156.000 refugee women, attaches particular importance to the protection of these vulnerable groups that have suffered the most as a result of armed conflict and occupation of our territories, and allocates adequate resources to meet the needs of these groups, particularly through providing income-generating measures and education opportunities for IDP women and their children.

As a recommendation, in light of existing OSCE commitments, we encourage ODIHR to pay close attention to IDP women and girls in its activities.