

Intersessional workshop within IOM's International Dialogue on Migration

“Strengthening international cooperation on and governance of migration towards the adoption of a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration in 2018” to be held in 18–19 April 2017, in New York

Statement by the Chief of State Migration Service, Mr. Firudin Nabiye

Panel discussion on:
“Building from the ground up: promoting a whole-of-society approach to good migration governance”

19 April 2017

Mr. Chairman!

Dear participants!

Regulation of migration processes in the modern world is one of the most pressing problems. Regulation of migration processes in accordance with international norms and protection of the rights of migrants are priority directions of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

It should be regretfully noted that, due to the conflicts, wars, natural disasters the scope of the migration processes are expanding and as a result the number of people who are forced to leave their countries continues to increase. In this sense, we would like to express our deep concern related to increased Islamophobia trends and efforts to equalize Islam with violation and terrorism in the migrant receiving countries.

Yes, the political and economic crisis in the early 80s and 90s at the end of the last century has resulted in mass migration of citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan abroad. However, in recent years, ensurance of rapid socio-economic development in Azerbaijan, implementation of international projects in energy transportation fields, improvement of people's living conditions, at the same time geopolitical position of our country has resulted in the intensification of migration processes even more. As a result, citizens' tendency of returning back to their homeland and the influx of foreigners to Azerbaijan are increasing. And this in recent years has turned our country from a country of origin into a transit and

destination country. High-level tolerance in our country should be noted as a factor affecting migration processes with no less significance. Therefore it should be emphasized that no violation of the rights of migrants on the national, ethnic and religious ground has been recorded so far.

Consequently, Azerbaijan has become a venue for prestigious international events, as well as sports games. Undoubtedly, the organization of such events in our country, ranked among the list of safest countries, is an indicator of its growing prestige in the international arena.

Today, our country is experiencing a growth period in the tourism sector. Thus, facilitation of visa requirements for tourists arriving in the country and the application of electronic visas ease visa issuance, which has resulted in a significantly increased flow of foreign citizens from year to year. Intensified migration processes require implementation of effective measures for the management of these processes.

Over the past period, the measures taken on the regulation of migration processes on the basis of unified and flexible procedures, facilitation of documentation, ensurance of comfort for foreigners have been further expanded as a result of the works done in the field of migration.

Thus, application of the “one-stop-shop” principle in the management of migration processes has been launched since 2009 and competencies of the unified state authority on this principle were entrusted to the State Migration Service of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Other countries have quite large interest in the Migration Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan, which was adopted in 2013 with the aim of aligning migration legislation to the requirements of modern periods, as well as further facilitating procedures related to migration processes.

Unified Migration Information System (UMIS) was established in order to maintain record of foreigners and stateless persons in our country. Today, entrance date of foreigners to the country, their place of residence, place of work and exit date from the country are completely controlled via the System.

Expanding civic engagement in the Republic of Azerbaijan is one of the main directions of public administration development. Considering this, in 2015 Public Council has been established under the State Migration Service to ensure active participation of civil society organizations in migration management.

As the rest of the world, sustainable development of migration processes in Azerbaijan stimulated strengthening of international cooperation. Thus, our country deepens activities with the United Nations, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Organization for Migration, the European Union and other international organizations. As a results of the accomplished works so that protection of the rights of migrants in our country are highly appreciated by international organizations.

A high level of cooperation has been established in this area with a key partner of our country, the International Organization for Migration. As an indicator of this cooperation, Cooperation Agreement on implementation of Pilot Project on Assistance for Voluntary Return of Migrants from Azerbaijan was signed last year with the aim of establishing suitable conditions for voluntary return of migrants in illegal position in the Republic of Azerbaijan to their countries of origin.

A number of bilateral and multilateral agreements have been signed by the Republic of Azerbaijan in order to ensure protection rights of migrants, as well as Azerbaijani citizens living as migrants in other countries. In general, the Republic of Azerbaijan has been always open to bilateral and multilateral cooperation in all areas, including migration.

Rising international prestige of Azerbaijan has given added incentives to the Azerbaijanis living abroad and created new opportunities for Diaspora organizations to operate with more confidence. Thus, diaspora organizations in the countries where they operate, besides taking effective measures to ensure the integration of the Azerbaijanis to the local community, also actively participate in the public life of that country. At the same time, congresses regarding the above-mentioned issues and resolving other issues raised by the Diaspora organizations are held on a regular basis.

We believe that expanding international cooperation on migration, strengthening governance in this field and promoting a whole-of-society approach to good migration governance will contribute for achievement of the objectives more quickly and Azerbaijan is ready to share its experience in this area.

Thank you for Your attention!