

NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION OF

AGENDA 21

The REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

(COUNTRY PROFILE)

Baky, 2002

INTRODUCTION

Situated at the crossroads of East and West –the South Caucasus region, the Republic of Azerbaijan regained its independence in 1991. As the other former socialist countries, Azerbaijan is facing a number of political, economic and related hardships of transformation.

The recently elaborated economic policy of Azerbaijan has put strong emphasis on liberalization, private sector development and transformation of the country's planned economy to a market-oriented system.

The economy of Azerbaijan is pretty diversified, including oil and gas production, oil-refining, engineering, metallurgy, chemical, petrochemical, light and food industries, construction materials, agriculture (cotton, tea, tobacco, silk worms, vine-growing, vegetables, fruits) and offers promising prospects for future investors.

The economic recovery is mostly attributable to strong investment activity in the oil and oil-related sectors and the Government's pursuit of a highly successful stabilization program with support from the IMF, the World Bank, and other international financial institutions.

Azerbaijan's sharp economic decline of the first half of the 1990s has reversed and the economy is now growing. The recovery has been uneven, and the burdens of a transition economy remain.

Ten years after the Rio Conference despite attained tangible results there is still a major gap in the implementation of Agenda 21 in Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan experienced firsthand horrible consequences of the terror campaign that was conducted during the period of escalation of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Covering its claims on the Azerbaijani territory with the slogan of the struggle of the Armenian population of the Nagorny-Karabakh region of the Republic of Azerbaijan for their self-determination, the Republic of Armenia has occupied the territory of this region, as well as of seven adjacent regions of Azerbaijan, and conducted ethnic cleansing on the occupied territory that resulted in expatriation of more than one million Azerbaijanis.

Given to this, the assistance to be granted by the international community as well as financial institutions on this critical stage is of paramount importance. It's widely recognized, that all of the above mentioned factors serve as impediments to the implementation of set priorities towards the establishment of political and economic stability in the country.

With the object to bridge the gap in the implementation of Agenda 21 and accordingly to promote sustainable development the Government of Azerbaijan has undertaken the step including inter alias:

COMBATING POVERTY (Agenda 21 –chapter 3)

Coordinating body on combating poverty in Azerbaijan is the Ministry of Economic Development. The transformation of economy from centrally-planned to the market-oriented system from the early years of its independence caused decrease of living standards as well as social inequality in Azerbaijan. The main reasons for that are:

- setback in production, consequently decrease of socio-economic indices;
- approximation of legislative base to the internationally adopted standards;
- increase of socio-economic differentiation of population.

All these processes set the combating poverty as an issue of core priority in the context of national social strategy. According to this strategy, formation of enabling environment for the improvement of living conditions of least protected groups of population becomes a target of strategic importance.

Since 1995, the observed sustainable growth of macroeconomic indices, upward trend in attraction of investments, carried out institutional adjustments compatible with the market-economy principles greatly contributed to the ensuring of socially related development. In 2002 average monthly wage as compared to the last years was increased to 20,2 percent. In 2000 the dynamic growth of GNP for the period of last 5 years reached its peak by running up to 11,4 percent.

Carried out structural adjustments in the field of economy have a positive resultant impact on distribution of labour resources and employment as a whole. Ratio of the officially registered unemployed to the economically active part of population was increased from 1 percent in 1996 to 1,3 percent in 1999. However due to the availability of unregistered unemployed this indicator is not quite objective one.

Referring to the UNDP's annual report (2001) on human development Azerbaijan in line of 174 countries was raised from the rank of 110 to the 79.

TENDENCIES AND PRIORITIES IN COMBATING POVERTY

One of the most pressing problems in Azerbaijan is availability of one million refugees and internally displaced persons (IDP). Just very this, urges the Government to elaborate and implement a policy designed to improve the lives of those who live in inadequate human settlements in line with the commitments on

urban renewal and development contained in the Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements and the Habitat Agenda.

The Government of Azerbaijan on initiative of the UNDP office in Baky launched elaboration of the "Sustainable Human Development" strategy. In line with the relevant decision of the Government the State Committee as well as Working Groups comprising of the representatives of all government and non-government structures has been established attached to the Ministry of Economic Development. Interim Strategy paper on poverty eradication has been drafted whereas the elaboration of the final paper being supported by the international financial structures (UNDP, the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank) is being carried on.

For elaboration the unified paper on poverty reduction in Azerbaijan compilation of comprehensive information on poverty level, its distribution and peculiarities is an overarching goal. However the research on surveillance of the housekeeping budget to be carried out by the State Statistical Committee for upgrading the existing situation would bring positive inputs. Consequently, through the application of new surveillance methodology on average income/expenses level per capita the Stated Committee succeeded in conducting regular statistics. However using of new information sources for the development of main statistical poverty-indices entails (gives rise) hardships on achieving the consensus particularly on issues related to indication of the poverty level as well as which estate (segment) of society has to be regarded as the poor.

LEGAL PROVISION OF SOCIAL SECURITY

Pursuing to regulate the social protection of refugees and internally displaced persons has been adopted a reliable legislature consistent with the internationally accepted norms and guidelines:

- The State Programme on *Settlement Problems of Refuges and IDP* has been approved by the relevant decree of the President;
- The strategy *From Humanitarian Aid towards the Development* has been officially proclaimed during the international seminar held in May of 1999, in Baky;
- In compliance with the relevant Decree of the Head of State has been created the *Fund on IDP's Social Development* for undertaking measures oriented to support the least protected ones;

According to the laws on the: *Status of Refugees and IDP*, *Social Protection of IDP and No-Income Group* and other legislative acts the relevant fringe benefits have been granted to them:

For refugees

- 1.1. Settlers subjected to the second migration are monthly granted in the amount of \$5 per man just for partial covering of food expenses;
- 1.2. Habitats (529 families) of rural areas are provided with the white oil for a fall-winter seasons;
- 1.3. Preferential income taxation;
- 1.4. Preferential charges on health care;
- 1.5. Access to basic education free of charge in public sector through formal schooling and specialized technical schools;
- 1.6. Exemption from duties for the exchange and purchase of apartments;

For IDP

- 1.1. All IDP are monthly granted by the Government in the amount of \$5 per man just for partial covering of food expenses;
- 1.2. Habitats (92 000 families) of rural areas, tent camps, constructive houses are provided with the white oil for a fall-winter seasons;
- 1.3. Preferential income taxation;
- 1.4. Preferential charges on health care;
- 1.5. Preferential charges for rent and public utilities;
- 1.6. Access to free of charge basic education in public sector through formal schooling and specialized technical schools;
- 1.7. Exemption from duties for the exchange and purchase of apartments;
- 1.8. Temporary provision with lands for ensuring rural development;
- 1.9. Allotment of the rural-development oriented preferential credits;
- 2.0. Provision with the manuals free of charge during the general education schooling;
- 2.1. Indemnification of those who worked at the public account based organizations and entities before being evicted from homes in the result of occupation of the territory;

Annual expenses related to the social protection of IDP equals to \$212 765 957. Only \$ 42.553.191 of them is from public account, this constitutes 22 per cent of budget income. Rest \$53.191.489 is the means assigned by the international humanitarian organizations, and \$10.638.297 by the ministries and state concerns. One should particularly note that, the means assigned for social protection equaling to \$4.042.553 in 1993 has been increased tenfold.

HUMAN SETTLEMENTS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (HABITAT II)

In accordance with *UN Istanbul Conference's (Habitat II, 1996)* provisions devoted to *XXI century Agenda (Art.7) and Human Settlements Sustainable Development* has been worked up *State Program on Development of Azerbaijan regions*. Program covers investments, agriculture revival, food security, maintenance of mountain and trans-border regions.

HOUSING SECURITY PROGRAMMES

According to the Article 7 of Agenda 21, the Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements and the Habitat Agenda the State Programme on Development of Regions in Azerbaijan has been elaborated. The Programme envisages the attraction of investment inflows, urban areas rehabilitation, ensuring food security, promotion of sustainable development in trans-boundary and mountainous regions.

PROVISION the IDP's with the ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES

Despite the scarcity of financial resources all the IDP are monthly granted by the Government in the amount of \$5 per man just for partial covering of food expenses. These amount has been increased fiftyfold for past 8 years, twofold for the last 3 years.

It has to be underlined, that the international humanitarian organizations play a key role in the provision of IDPs with essential commodities and foodstuffs, generation of remunerative employment. In conformity with the relevant decree of the Head of State on *Food Provision of IDP's* \$ 192765 is assigned for ensuring the food provision of 57 000 IDP.

DEVELOPING ADEQUATE INFRASTRUCTURE

According to the relevant decrees of the Head of State on *Settlement of resettlement programmes related problems of the displaced populations which inhabited on the territory of the Republic of Armenia and been exposed to the eviction from own homes as a direct result of ethnic cleansing carried out by the Armenian aggressors* aimed to improve living conditions of IDPs through extension of new settlements and *Plan of Action on Resettlement of refugees and IDP originated from Agdam and Fizuli regions which had been occupied by the Armenian armed forces* the assignment of \$ 17.872.340 from the State Oil Fund has been envisaged to provide the implementation means of these commitments.

In 2000 and 2001 (9 month) at the expense of \$3/829.787 allotted from the public account 70 populated areas have been repaired, 96 water pumps and other facilities have been given to the refugees disposal.

Restoration of energy network in the *Turk Gizil Ay* tent camp (Agjabedi region) has been financed by the IDPs Social Development Fund.

Specific actions have been undertaken in the field of health protection with particular reference to children health. Moreover, adequately equipped the health facilities have been established, the health research have been conducted with further involvement of affected parts.

To ensure an access to basic education the construction of school in Saatli region, library-nursery in Sabirabad region have been supported by the international humanitarian organizations in 2001.

EMPLOYMENT RELATED PROBLEM

In conformity with the *State Programme on Settlement of IDPs and Refugees problems* 2100 ha in Gubadli, 1200 ha in Zangilan, 200 ha in Shusha, 11 thous ha to agrarian-farmers and for individuals use 50 thous ha of land site have been temporarily given to the disposal of IDPs on the territory of Azerbaijan. In 2000, the agricultural products produced on these territories come to \$74.255 and 500 persons were the job secured.

For financing rural development of the population working at those sites the ad hoc base State Commission has been established. In 2001, assigned from the public account \$212765 has been distributed among the 400 IDPs.

MULTILATERAL ASSISTANCE

Fro the last years, international organizations, countries and those in a position to do so enhance their efforts to provide refugees and IDP with increased technical assistance for the solving social related problems, improvement of infrastructure, regeneration of employment and etc.

In 2001, the World Bank allotted a credit just for these specific purposes in the amount of \$10 mln. In conformity with the relevant presidential decree, for securing effective management of financial resources the *Refugees and IDP Social Fund* has been established.

Particular attention had been given to the provision food security for refugees and IDP's. The *World Food Programme, ICRC, ADRA* and other international organizations operating in Azerbaijan have been directly involved in food distribution and provision. More than 15 thous tons of food have been distributed among the refugees by these structures.

In the framework of *Food Aid-1995 programme* the Government of Italy implemented a programme supplemented by food aid in the amount of \$1,5 mln.

Assistance provided by the international humanitarian organizations to refugees and IDP include: providing shelter, support by facilitating their access to low-cost

buildings, upgrading informal settlements, sanitation and provision of water supply, sewerage system

AGIP, the Italian oil company allotted \$2,2 mln to the UNHCR for financing the construction of low-cost buildings populated areas for 200 families in Beylagan and Khanlar districts and sewerage system in Taxta Korpu district of Agjabedi. At present, in Beylagan 120 houses and 87 in Khanlar have been constructed by the US “International Relief” humanitarian organization and put into operation. Norwegian Refugee Council has financed the upgrading of 7 informal settlements on the territory and suburbs of Baky as an expedient measure and pragmatic solution to the shelter deficit of the displaced populations.

The UK “Oxfam” and the US “International Rescue Committee” have elaborated and implemented the project on water supply and irrigation system in Agjabedi and Beylagan districts.

ICRC concertedly with *Exxon Oil Company* supported the provision of 3750 refugees and IDP’s families with roofing. Aimed to settle social related problems a number programmes with particular focus on the regeneration remunerative employment and promotion of microcredit financial institutions have been implemented by the international humanitarian organizations.

Supported by the ICRC 7 tent camps (1770 families) have been provided with the programmes on promotion of market-gardening.

The project designed to improve and maintain infrastructure services and regenerate employment in the south region tent camps which has been financed by the *Exxon Oil Company* and implemented by the US “**Kear International**” maintained 21 557 IDP (5 247 families).

Financed by the UNHCR the project on promotion small and medium sized entrepreneurship in Agjabedi, Agdam, Beylagan, Tartar districts has been implemented by the US “International Rescue Committee”. The projects budget is \$99.5 thous.

Concurrently a numerous projects on regeneration remunerative employment and increasing job opportunities have been implemented with support of the “International Relief” company (US), Denmark Refugee Council, “International development Agency” (US). The UK “Direct Aid Fund for Children” have carried out a programme on promotion micro-credit system in Agdam and Tartar districts (for 500 IDP).

ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

Designed to reinforce the role of women in decision-making the Government established the State Committee for Women's issues. Azerbaijan joined the UN Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. In line with this Convention the National Programme for action has been adopted. The following state programmes have to be elaborated/adopted in compliance with the "Peking Platform for Action":

- Women and employment;
- Women and education;
- Women and health;
- Women and violence;
- Women and education;
- Refugees, and displaced women and children;
- Encouragement of entrepreneurship among women;
- Women and environment;
- Empowerment of women;
- Women and management.
- Actions on release women and children held hostage in result of war for implementation the relevant resolution of the UN Committee on the Status of Women.

HEALTH (Agenda 21 –chapter 6)

The health care sphere in Azerbaijan as well as other public services spheres, did not escape the general socio-economic crisis after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Funds allocated from the budget for medicine were cut to a fraction of their previous level. Immunization efforts practically came to a halt, there were a sharp increase in the activity of the remaining breeding grounds of infectious diseases, there were outbreaks of epidemics, and the system of universal and free medical care gradually collapsed. Guided with the chapter 6 of Agenda 21 and outcomes of the UN Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 1994) the health related reforms have been carried out with particular reference to:

- Reproductive health care;
- Family planning.

List of measures have been undertaken in 2001:

- National Strategy on Reproductive Health has been worked up;
- Monitoring on identification of Family Planning and Reproductive Health (FP/RH) District Centers in 32 regions of the Republic;
- Educational Module on FP/RH for gynecologists in Azeri language;
- Seminar on reviewing and upgrading the existing orders as well as decrees in the field of FP/RH has been organized;
- Training on reproductive health for 264 obstetrician has been held;

INFANT RATE

Indicators	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Infant rate under year	22.7	24.0	26.0	24.4	22.2	19.7	18.3	15.0	15.7	12.8
NEONATAL RATE										
Premature born	42.7	50.8	43.3	68.9	51	52	46.1	52.4	49	48.9
Natimortality	11	10.1	9.2	9.5	9.3	9.3	9.4	9.8	9.0	8.9
Number of rate under (0-6 days)	4.9	4.3	5.2	5.5	5.6	4.9	4.7	4.9	4.8	4.5
Natimortality and number of rate under (0-6 days)	15.9	14.4	14.3	15.0	14.8	14.2	14.1	14.6	12.8	12.4
MATERNAL MORTALITY										
Indicators										
Number of persons	20.0	32.0	60.0	70.0	53.0	57.0	41.0	51.0	51.0	44.0
Rate of live-born on every 100000	10.5	17.6	34.4	43.8	37.0	44.1	31.0	41.1	43.4	37.6

Maternal mortality and infant rate still hold the upward trend. The dynamic of maternal mortality and infant rate is as follows:

Environmental Pollution related Disease

Granules (less than 10 mmk)- 100 microgram/m ³	Number of population and diseases
Untimely death	1450-3800
Respiratory related hospitalization	1900
Visits of first aid post	3700
Adults limited working days	600.000
Infants respiratory track related diseases	95.000
Symptoms of respiratory diseases	500.000
Chronic bronchitis	1900.000

Utilization of unsafe water represents threat for population health. Utilization of water incompatible with biological and sanitation standards gives rise to various infectious, gastrointestinal diseases. Impacts of unsafe water utilization on population health could be described as follows:

Types of infectious	1995	1998
Typhus	84.0	18
Bacterial Dysenteric	1173	533
Virus hepatitis	76887	4335
Ascariasis	40715	31641
Trikhosefalid	20568	14277
Enterebioz	40344	35095

IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL STRATEGY ON REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH FOR A PERIOD OF 2002-2004 THROUGH THE FOLLOWING STEPS:

- Family planning;
- Family safety;
- Infant health (care after newly born);
- Prophylactics and eradication of post-abortive complications;
- Prevention and prophylactics of AIDS/HIV, vaginal infectious;
- Adolescent's reproductive health;
- Participation of men;
- After fertile period diseases;
- Raising awareness on importance of sanitation;
- Health aspects in gender related issues.

In conformity with XXI century Agenda and Beijing Declaration (1995) with women's rights protection purpose has been formalized legislation base and established State Committee on Women's Problems.

EDUCATION

The structure of the education system set forth in existing *Education Law* of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

1. Pre-school education
2. General education
 - Primary school- (I-IV classes)
 - Elementary education - (V-IX classes)
 - Secondary education - (X-XI classes)
3. Professional education
 - Professional technical education
 - Secondary professional education
 - High school (Bachelor, Master)
 - Education after receiving a certificate (probation, ordinatura- two year period in which junior doctor specializes in particular field.
 - Preschool education
 - Independent education
 - Raising qualification and preparation of personnel (staff)

ORPHANS (Total more than 21.000)

1.	Places of education and inhabitants of orphans	Number
2.	Orphanage	681
3.	Special boarding schools	833
4.	Martyn's children	
5.	Children trusted by close relatives (grandfather, grandmother, uncle, aunt) and other peoples	17.000

CHILDREN WITH MENTAL AND PHYSICAL

DISABILITIES

1.	Deaf children	1069
2.	Weak hearing and acquired deafness	1547
3.	Blind children	423
4.	Weak sight children	9744
5.	Feeble-minded children	6614
6.	Children with defected speech	3687
7.	Polio and cerebral palsy	3723
8.	Curvature of the spine	1735

LIST OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Number of pre-schools	1973	1918	1879	1854	1814	1790	1790
Number of children	136.8	125.7	119.5	116.1	112.3	111	111
Number of secondary schools	4480	4474	4507	4536	4549	4548	4548
Number of pupils	1488	1526	1578	1611	1623	1654	1658
Professional schools and lyceums	160	119	118	118	108	110	109
Number of pupils	28	25	24	24	23	23	23
Secondary professional schools Including	89	90	77	77	77	71	69
State	78	77	73	73	73	68	66
Private	11	13	4	4	4	3	3
Number of students	33.5	34.9	34	36.7	39.8	42.6	42.2
Including							
State	30.5	31.4	32.6	35.7	38.8	41.2	47.7
Private	3.5	1.4	1	1	1.4	1.4	1.4
Total entrance to the secondary professional schools Including	9.7	10.5	9.5	12.4	14.3	14.8	17.4
State	8.9	9.5	8.8	12	14	14.3	16.9
Private	0.8	1	0.7	0.4	0.3	0.5	0.5
Total number of graduated institutions	7.3	9.2	8.6	10.3	10.1	11.3	11.4
State	6.2	8.2	8.3	9.8	9.9	10.8	10.9
Private	1.1	1	0.3	0.5	0.2	0.5	0.5
Number of high schools	40.3	46	41	42	42	43	40
Including							
State	23	23	25	25	25	25	25
Private	20	23	16	17	17	18	15
Number of students	98.8	102.7	100.2	106.5	116.1	119.7	123
Including							
State	86.3	82.4	79.8	82.3	88.5	91	98.9
Private	12.5	20.3	20.4	24.2	27.6	28.7	28.6
Total entrance to high-schools	19.3	22.1	23.5	26.8	24.6	26.4	32.4
Including							
State	15.4	16.9	18.9	18.8	19.9	20.5	26.5
Private	3.9	5.2	4.6	8	4.7	5.9	6.2
Number of post-graduated	17.4	19.4	24.3	21.1	20	24.4	24.8

Including							
State	17.3	18.7	22.3	17.1	16.4	19.6	19.9
Private	0.1	0.7	2	4	3.6	4.8	4.9

*INVOLVEMENT OF MENTALLY AND PHYSICALLY DISABLED CHILDREN
TO EDUCATION (totally 4876)*

	Place of education	School	Number of pupils
1.	Special boarding schools	12	2327
2.	Evening school	2	132
3.	Special school for mentally and defected speech children	6	1067
4.	Home-school	2	734
5.	Special extended classes		509

Factors influencing on birth of children with mental and physical disabilities:

1. Environmental imbalance
2. Parents illness
3. Drug and alcohol abuse
4. Morally disabled families
5. Marriages with close relatives
6. Lack of funds
7. Moral and psychological conditions caused by conflict

CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF RESOURCES FOR DEVELOPMENT

National level

A relevant part of the provisions set forth in Agenda 21 concerns protection of the environment and the use of natural resources. Relevant organizational arrangements have been carried out at the national level in the fields of utilization of national resources and the environment protection in Azerbaijan, which include inter alia:

- For the first time among the Newly Independent States the World Bank pilot project on *Assessment of Environmental Impacts in Azerbaijan* has been carried out.
- The exploitation draft projects on the extraction of minerals and carbohydrate resources and related new construction, which adversely affected the environment, have been exploited since 1996.
- The *National Plan of Action on the Environment Protection* has been elaborated in 1998.
- Pursuing to ensure sustainable development and holistic management of natural resources and environment all appropriate arrangements have been undertaken. Among the most important achievements is the establishment of the *Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources* in May of 2001.

Legislation on Environmental Protection

For preservation the ecological balance and environmental protection the adoption of the legislation in conformity with the international standards is an overarching goal. Approximation of the adopted laws to the European standards and elaboration of the new ones meets is very important.

Guided with this, a number of laws have been recently adopted in the Republic of Azerbaijan:

- Environmental Protection;
- Ecosafety;
- Preserves and biological objects protection;
- Protection of atmosphere;
- Industrial and domestic effluents;
- Preservation of soil fecundity;
- Land Code;
- Water Code;
- Forest Code;
- Bowels of the earth;

- Fauna;
- Gas supply;
- Population radiation security;
- Fishing;
- The resolution on the protection of sturgeon.

The relevant decrees of the President on the enforcement of the adopted laws have been enacted and the responsibility of the executive bodies and execution mechanism has been determined.

According to the existing laws a number of normative acts, rules and statutes have been approved. In line with this the relevant work is being carried out.

Given to its rich natural resources as well as developed industrial sectors Azerbaijan has vast potential for attaining set objects. However, lack of proper attention to the settlement of environmentally related problems induced severe pollution of environment in Azerbaijan. At the present resolution of the following problems are of core urgency: freshwater deficiency in urban areas (cities), pollution of water basins as well as the Caspian Sea from industrial effluents and domestic waste, damages from sea-level rise, gas emission exceeding the threshold level in the urban areas, erosion and salinization of rural lands, street-sweeping on non-regular basis, effective control of their disposal and etc.

FRESHWATER RELATED PROBLEMS (Agenda 21 –chapter 18)

Azerbaijan is short of water-supply sources for meeting population drinking water and agricultural needs. Non-effective use of water resources generates (entail) water deficiency in several regions of Azerbaijan and particularly on the Apsheron peninsula. Additionally, lack of sewage system, accordingly loss of nearly 40-50 per cent of drinking water is direct result of non-applicability of out-dated water pipes.

Resolution of water related problems requests more holistic approaches. Recent year practices clearly demonstrated that on-home installation of water-use meters is an effective regulatory mechanism for the prevention non-efficient resources utilization patterns. However the promotion of this in Azerbaijan is being deferred.

Another pressing issue related to water is aggravated pollution of the two largest rivers: *Kura* and *Araks* by neighboring Georgia and Armenia as well as influx of non-purified domestic and industrial effluents from settlements and industrial entities. The water inflowed from the *Kura* into the Caspian Sea is only for industrial use.

Water-purification installations are not compatible with modern standards. Only 35 cities from 75 have water purification centers at disposal, which equipped only with the mechanical treatment system. The volume of domestic wastes per day equals to 1,2 mln cub/m., whereas only 50 per cent is being purified.

Influx of non-appropriately purified liquid wastes in the volume 250 mln cub/m per year into the water sources and Caspian Sea give rise to other environmentally related problems. The average of liquid wastes inflowing into the Caspian Sea contains 1,5-2,0 thous tons of oil products, 15-20 thous tons of related substances, 60-65 thous tons of sulphate, 250-300 thous tons of chloride, mere 15-20 tons of carboic acid and other contaminants.

It's worthy to note that the process of oil-fields discovery/exploitation and transportation of oil/gas resources is not safeguarded against any accidents, which in its turn enables inflows of thousand tons of oil into Sea. According with research assessment, mere 0,3 percent of oil extracted from the water area of Azerbaijan inflows into the Caspian Sea on obscured reasons. Cognizant of the leakage of 10 grams of oil contaminates 1 cum/m of water it is easy to indicate the level of pollution and the level of its man impact on the Caspian Sea.

Being a historically lasting process the rise and decrease of sea-level cause a economical, social and environmental related problems for the riparian states. The sea level increase has direct impact on coastline for the length of 825 km. Damage caused by the sea-level rise rates to \$ 12 million.

Proposals on water purification:

80 per cent of the country's population utilizes the water of the Kura river for drinking purposes without being properly purified. The main reason is that the territory of the country is not adequately equipped with sewage installations and purification facilities, moreover the most part of applied technologies are functionally depreciated.

There are 16 purification facilities (with the exception of Baky), from which 6 are mechanically and 10 are biologically based installations. Only 30 per cent of them are in operation status. Non-application of these facilities for a long period of time necessitates an overhaul repairs and rehabilitation.

Daily influx of sewages into the water basins comes to 1,3 mln. cubic/m of per day. Only 550-600 thous cub/m of these waters are being purified in compliance with normative guidelines. The overarching goal in this context is to ensure parallel investment for installation and rehabilitation of facilities meeting environmental quality criteria and standards.

WASTE-RELATED PROBLEMS (Agenda 21 –chapter 21)

Accumulation of domestic and industrial wastes for a long time without treatment is also conducive to the environmental degradation. Thus, accumulated tons of mercury substances on the territory of the Surface Active Material Plant are a challenge with disastrous environmental effects. Gradual leakage of this substance into the soil and concurrently its emission into the atmosphere is a major concern in protecting the human health.

The project on *Collecting and Disposal of Mercury Substances* co-financed by the World Bank is currently being elaborated. This project is designed to achieve complete settlement and eradication of these problems. Thus, for disposal of hazardous wastes 50-hectare (close to the Pirekeskul province) territory has been allotted for the target range construction.

Collection and disposal of industrial origin domestic wastes in the big human settlement areas as well as industrial centers are also the root cause for concern. Availability of numerous illegal target ranges nearby Baky, Gandja, Sumgayit have the long-range effects extending from environmental pollution to the sources of certain diseases.

However, the key to the solution of these problems has been found in a number of countries. Thus, to construct the waste treatment plants for burning effluents and ensure the energy supply of the adjacent settlements through the utilization of thermal energy generated in the process burning. It's well known, that the residuum of burned wastes after the making into compost could be used as a fertilizer for soil fecundity. Predicated on this practice, the construction of equally sound as beneficial plant is the matter of core urgency for Azerbaijan.

Addressing these and related issues requires major investment and up-to-date equipment. Pursuing to implement this cross-cutting goal Azerbaijan as a country in transition promotes setting afresh priorities oriented to application of relevant strategies in accordance with applicable internationally adopted principles and guidelines, development of co-operation with international financial institutions and reinforcing relations with the donor-countries, implementation of commitments stemming from the international legal instruments.

CLIMATE CHANGE

The Republic of Azerbaijan signed UN Framework Convention on the Climate Changes (UNFCCC) in 1992 and ratified it in 1995. In 2000, Azerbaijan signed and ratified the Kyoto protocol to the UNFCCC. For the implementation of commitments stemming from the Convention the State Commission on the Climate Changes has been established by the decree of the President in 1997.

Azerbaijan actively carries out a policy oriented to the preparation, implementation of the national and regional programs on reduction of the expected climate changes and raising awareness on this specific issue.

According to the provisions of the Convention, at the first stage the draft on “The first national report on climate change” in 1998-1999, subsequently the second stage have been implemented in 2000.

Within the first stage of the project the tendency of the current climate changes on the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan was observed and the prediction of the expected climate changes, *National Adaptation Plan on the Reduction of Possible Negative Impacts of Climate Changes*, *National Cadastre of the Greenhouse Gases causing Global Warming* and *National Plan of Action on the Reduction of Greenhouse Gas Emissions* have been worked up.

At the second stage of the project, the national technology related priorities for reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in the Republic of Azerbaijan have been determined and the potential as well as the current situation on the climate observance system have been assessed. At present, Azerbaijan together with the Eastern European and former Soviet Union Republics participates at the first stage of the regional project on the forming of national potential for improving inventory quality of greenhouse gas. The implementation term of the project is June 2002-June 2005. The following strategic priorities related to climate change have to be implemented at the national level:

- The creation of the database on statistics, evaluation, sources and concentrators of the gas emissions causing warming effect;
- For providing sustainable social-economic development to elaborate the relevant adaptations measures and evaluate dangerous impacts on climate, economy and ecosystems;
- To evaluate the impact of climate change on population health and elaborate the relevant adaptation measures;
- The encourage the transfer environmentally sound technologies to Azerbaijan for utilization of alternative sources of energy (sun, wind and biogases);
- To complete the gradual obviation of the use of ozone layer depleting substances;

PROTECTION OF THE ATMOSPHERE (Agenda 21 –chapter 9)

After the regaining its independence and transition to the market-oriented mechanism arose the problem related to the disruption of existed economic networks which in its turn affected the functioning of the most of industrial entities. Resultant impact is utilization by those entities of only 10-20 % of their productive capacity. The volume of the toxic substances emitted into atmosphere in comparison with 1990 has been significantly reduced.

It should be noticed that the most of gas and dust collectors are useless. For resolving the above-mentioned problems it is necessary to carry out the following steps:

- to re-equip industries with gas-dust restricting facilities;
- to use in transport lead-free oil,
- to prohibit the use of out-dated transportation modes,
- to prevent air pollution through planting green.

LAND RESOURCES (Agenda 21 –chapter 10)

One of the main ecology problems is that agriculture use lands (4.1 mln. Ha.) became in arable. Thus, 1.3 mln. Ha of lands has been weekly, 1.15 mln.ha. medium and 1.14 highly exposed to soil erosion. Another great concern is salinization of more than 1.5 mln. ha of land.

At present, supported by the international financial organizations (World Bank, TESIS Program of the European Union) and foreign countries the new projects designed to clean oily polluted lands, provide with modern equipment is currently being carried out.

In conformity with environmental dimensions of sustainable development implementation of the following is necessary for rational use of land resources:

- to prepare national plan of action for increasing protection and fertility of land resources fit for agriculture;
- to carry out appropriate mechanism for elimination of erosion and cleaning saline lands,
- to continue re-cultivation works in oily polluted lands,
- inventory and rehabilitation of drainage-collector and irrigation system,
- fertilizing lands through draining of lake lets and marshes.

COMBATING DEFORESTATION (Agenda 21 –chapter 11)

There are a few woodlands on the territory of Azerbaijan. Only 11.5 % of the territory is covered by forest. The transition problems, interactive influence of refugees and IDP's on nature and forests led to decreasing a number and quality of forests. Taking into account the protection role of forests on water and land and their consequent impact on climate, the protection and rational utilization of this potential is extremely important. At the same time land and climate related conditions are essential for afforestation (laying a new strip for forest).

Afforestation is very important for providing the food and timber industries with raw materials and also in creation new job places.

One of the problems caused by transition period is a lack of energy. Scarcity of energy resources in rural areas also led to the reduction of forest lands.

It can be partially solved through forest rehabilitation and regeneration, afforestation as well as through the greening activities. To maintain existing forests the *National Forest Programme* has been elaborated and submitted to Milli Mejlis (Parliament).

Some of the specific steps to be undertaken include the following:

- carry out measures to prevent of felling forests and illegal lay for firewood;
- research the present condition of forests, inventory and elaborate a new projects on afforestation;
- develop and implement land-use plans for forest rehabilitation;
- introduce the policy on sound management of forest resources through utilization of renewable forest resources (fruits, medicaments and other greens);
- promote identification of recreate-base forest areas as a premise for the identification of re-creative potential for ecotourism
- draft the planning and extension of agriculturally significant forest-garden in line with a new planting methodology requirements;
- settle employment problems of inhabited forest areas and creation of job places not related to forestry;
- plant trees suitable for furniture factory and industry;
- carry out on regular base measures to protect forests from various diseases and pesticides.

Azerbaijan has ratified the UN Convention on Combating Deforestation in 1998. Scientific and institutional arrangements for the elaboration National Plan of Action on Combating Deforestation have been launched. In this framework particular focus would be given to the goal-setting and policy formulation in the context of sustainable land use and management of land resources.

The implementation of commitments emanating from this Convention is of core importance for Azerbaijan. Since, the climate change at globe scale has a direct impact on warming, forest poaching, land degradation, droughts as a result of scarce water springs causes the acceleration of deforestation.

Pursuant combating deforestation the following strategic measures at the national level should be undertaken:

- inventory deforested lands;

- speed up the process of elaboration and implementation of National Plan of Action;
- ensure the sustainable management of forest ecosystems and woodlands through developing feasibility studies and public awareness on this issue;
- assess negative interlinked impact between global environmental challenges and enhance the development of counter measure plan;
- ensure forest extension and afforestation.

FISH RESOURCES (Agenda 21 –chapter 17)

Azerbaijan Republic has a great potential for fishery development. It concerns as to exploitation and extension of natural sources of cost sort fish so to a new sphere of country economy – artificial fish-breeding (pisciculture) in the Caspian Sea. Azerbaijan is endowed with conducive environment and human resources for development this field. There is just need in conservation of the Caspian Sea and domestic water basins fish resources, their rehabilitation and regeneration of economically sound biodiversity. Primary challenge to be addressed is the conservation and regeneration of sturgeon species. The world wide sturgeon species mainly inhabit the Caspian Sea basin. In this regard, international cooperation is considered as an issue of paramount importance. After the joining CITES Convention in 1998 Azerbaijan formulated policy for the implementation commitments stemming form this instrument. Development of this cooperation at the new level will serve to protection of fish resources and improvement of fish ecosystems. For this purpose it is necessary to provide control over and increase the sturgeon-species breeding based on the principles of sustainable development:

- to evaluate sturgeon alike fish species in the Caspian Sea basin;
- to manage the fish resource breeding;
- to promote international cooperation in the field of breeding and exploitation of fish resources;
- to provide population food security through reproduction and breeding.

CONSERVATION OF BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

(Agenda 21 –chapter 15)

The Republic of Azerbaijan has joined to the Convention on Biological Diversity immediately after it had been adopted during the UN Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio-de-Janeiro in 1992. In line with this, the Government developed measures and arrangements to implement principles defined in the Convention.

Being a part of the strategy on “Protection of Pan-European Biological Landscape the Government have elaborated the special strategies, programmes and plans of action on specific clusters, notably on development of preserves, endangered species of flora and fauna, rehabilitation of wetlands, management of mountain ecosystems in Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan has ratified the UN Convention on Biological Diversity in 2000. In compliance with the relevant presidential decree the State Committee on Conservation of Genetic Biological Resources has been established in 2001. Supported by the GEF and UNDP the national report, strategy and plan of action has been developed and due to be adopted by the Government.

The process of accession of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the Council of Europe stipulated the environmental protection reinforcement as well as energized subsequent accession to the following international conventions:

Helsinki Convention on protection of trans-boundary watercourses, water basins and international lakes;

Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance;

Within Europe and the South Caucasian region Azerbaijan is a country with the most biologically diversified potential. There are a number of endemic plants and endangered species, which does not have any analogous world wide. According to the Red and Green Books hundreds of plants and species are endangered and referred to the specific conservation status. It is particularly important in this context to stress that conservation of biodiversity has to be reinforced at national and international levels.

Therefore, conservation of biodiversity and improvement of national inventory, regulation, management, control systems are one of the pressing environmental related issues:

- to invite countries to join the internationally legally binding instruments on conservation of biodiversity for promotion endorsed principles;
- to identify the value of biological diversity and its component part in the ecosystem provided and develop additional measures and arrangements for their protection;

- to update the Red and Green Books on country specific flora and fauna for carrying out surveys on the status of biodiversity
- to develop auspicious milieu in specially protected areas for conservation of plants and species referred to the different various preservation status;
- to ensure the protection of endangered plants and species gene pool and provide auspicious milieu for keeping them in specially protected areas, such as preserves, botanical gardens, zoos and etc;
- to collate and evaluate information on threats for biodiversity and identify endangered species to be affected at the very beginning of these threats;
- to create national parks on protection of biodiversity.

INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

Azerbaijan is actively involved into the cooperation related to the aspects of environmental protection. One of this aspects is the Caspian Environmental Programme (CEP).

Supported by the World Bank and other international financial institutions the Caspian Environmental Programme has been established with the consent of five riparian states (Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Russia and Turkmenistan) in 1995. The main mission of the CEP is the provide long-term environmental guideline and to secure sustainable development in this context. Since 1995 a number of projects have been carried out in the framework of the CEP.

Another ad hoc regional structure uniting Azerbaijan's state and non-governmental organizations structures for environmental protection is the Regional (South Caucasian countries-Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia) Environmental Center (REC)*.

It aimed to strengthen and broad intergovernmental as well as non-governmental co-operation in the context of tackling environment related problems and ensure sustainable development.

*Azerbaijan has a reservation to the Charter of the Regional Environmental Center for the Caucasus. Taking into account the impossibility of the regional co-operation in the South Caucasus until the settlement of the existing conflict between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Azerbaijan excludes the co-operation with the Republic of Armenia in activities held in the framework of the Regional Environmental Center for the Caucasus and participates in the Charter of the Environmental Center for the Caucasus proceeding from the provision mentioned above.

List of Conventions ratified in Azerbaijan:

- Convention on protection world cultural and natural heritage (06.12.1993);
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (10.01.1995);
- Montreal Protocol on Substances that deplete the Ozone Layer (31.05.1996) ;
- Helsinki Convention on transboundary watercourses and protection and use of international lakes (18.03.1992);
- Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as a waterfowl habitats (The Ramsar Convention) (18.07.2000);
- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (23.06.1998) ;
- Convention on Biodiversity (14.03.2000);
- European Convention on the conservation of European of wild life and natural habitats (28.10.1999);
- Convention on environmental impact assessment in a transboundary context (01.02.1999);
- Convention on access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to justice in environmental matters (Aarhus Convention) (09.11.1999);
- Basel Convention to the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes (16.02.2001);
- Convention on Combating Deforestation (24.04.1998);
- International Plant Protection Convention (14.03.2000)

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND NGOs

On initiative of NGOs operated in Azerbaijan the first international conference on *Sustainable Development of the Caspian Sea Littoral State* has been hold from May 31-June 4, in Baky. The meeting was organized with the support of Open Society Institution in the framework of the East-East programme.

The follow-up conference on *Problems Encountered on the way of Littoral States (Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Russia, Turkmenistan) towards Sustainable Development* has been hold with the support of National Academy of Sciences in 2001.

Conference served as a forum for discussion of social-economic, scientific and environment related issues as well as adoption of policy formulating recommendations.