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**Short Overview of the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan
“On Guarantees for Activities of Non-governmental Non-commercial Organizations”¹**

The recently adopted Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On Guarantees for Activities of Non-governmental Non-commercial Organizations”², (hereinafter “Law”) marks a significant development in government treatment of Uzbek NNOs despite its largely declarative nature. After the lack of trust displayed by government bodies towards NGOs over the past several years, such a declaration of guaranties for NNOs’ activities and a proclamation of the necessity of NNOs, may help to improve the attitude of local government officials towards NNOs, at a minimum. The Law will likely be treated by lower level officials as an “instruction from the top” to improve the legal regime for NNOs. Therefore, we are hopeful that the impact of the Law will be larger than might be suggested by the text alone.

The Law itself consists of eighteen articles, of which only five establish new legal regulations. The remaining articles (which encompass about 75% of the Law) are largely declarative, in that they merely duplicate existing norms from other laws. The Law proclaims guaranties and support by the Uzbek government towards NNOs but does not create any specific mechanisms by which such guaranties or support will be provided. For example, Articles 11-14 of the Law describe new forms of state support to NNOs. For the first time, the government tries to create a legislative basis for the provision of financial and material resources from the state budget to NNOs for the fulfillment of projects with public benefit. Unfortunately, it is presently impossible to implement these articles. In order to do so, the Cabinet of Ministers would need to adopt the rules and regulations for allocation of state subsidies, state grants, and for the state social order (government procurement) to NNOs.

The only article of the Law which has any immediate positive effect is Article 10. This Article provides a direct privilege to NNOs for the first time, exempting them from having to pay the state fee for filing a court case challenging illegal decisions of governmental bodies, or illegal acts (omission/negligence) of government officials, which violate the legal rights and interests of NNOs. Also for the first time, this Article speaks about the possibility of infliction of harm by government officials to NNOs, and the requirement that NNOs be compensated for such treatment.

¹ The Law was adopted by the Uzbek Parliament on October 11, 2006, approved by the Senate on December 1, 2006, and came into force on January 4, 2007, after official publication in the State Newspaper “Narodnoe slovo”.

² Hereinafter NNO stands for Non-governmental Non-commercial Organization.