

## **Unofficial Translation**

### **Decree <sup>1</sup>of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on confirmation of the state support conception for NGOs of the Republic of Azerbaijan**

**July 27, 2007**

Accelerated social economic development observed in Azerbaijan over the recent years makes modernization of relations model between the state and civil society institutions, development of democracy and advocacy of NGO activities engaged in protection of national interests a necessity.

In order to establish a stable and effective system of partnership relations between state bodies and NGOs, to engage NGOs in resolution of issues deemed significant for the development of state and society, and to accelerate development of civil society I decree:

1. The State Support Conception for NGOs of the Republic of Azerbaijan shall be approved (attached)
2. The Executive Apparatus of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan shall be tasked with the following:
  - 2.1. to prepare and submit recommendations to the President on the establishment of a state body on NGO issues and a Foundation for Assistance to NGOs within two months:
  - 2.2. to implement oversight over implementation of clauses of The State Support Conception for NGOs of the Republic of Azerbaijan and regularly inform the President regarding the matter:
  - 2.3. The Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan shall solve issues arisen from this Order.
  - 2.4. This Order comes into force from the day of signing.

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<sup>1</sup> The Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on confirmation of the state support conception for NGOs of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated July 27, 2007 was published at the official newspaper Azerbaijan on July 28, 2007 (#165).

## **State Support Conception for NGOs of the Republic of Azerbaijan**

One of the main directions of democratization of public life in the Republic of Azerbaijan is the development of civil society institutions. Accelerated economic and social development of our country expands state opportunities to assist civil society activities and stipulates improvement of the state policy to support NGOs.

The goals of the state support for NGOs is to develop a new model of relations in our society, to modernize civil society institutions, to enhance citizen initiatives, to promote NGO activities linked to protection of national interests, to attract NGOs to resolution of problems of social significance, as well as to finance programs and projects significant for the development of state and society.

### **I. Analysis of the NGO sector of the Republic of Azerbaijan**

The Azerbaijani NGO sector was formed at the expense of public associations, foundations and other NGOs specializing in different areas during the period of independence. The analysis of this processes indicates that the formation of the NGO sector in our country past through several stages. The initial stage is characterized with the absence of systematicness and sparseness observed in the establishment of NGOs. In addition, a process of common approach and determination of priorities is underway in the state attitude to the NGO sector.

Following the adoption of the constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan in 1995, NGOs increased in quantity, improved their quality of performance and differed from each other in their types of activities. Relevant legal framework was established in connection with civil society activities. In 2000, a new law on NGOs (public associations and foundations) was adopted. Collaboration with NGOs in a number of areas was underway and NGO Training and Resource Center was established in partnership with the UNDP.

In the contemporary time, NGOs become one of the main institutes in the process of civil society building and country democratization. At such times close collaboration of state bodies with the NGO sector based on the principles of partnership in equal rights is very significant for the development of civil society, spread of democracy, adjustment of the legislation to the international standards and protection of national interests.

The analysis of NGO activities shows that currently sufficiently stable groups of civil society institutions specializing in different directions have been formed. 73 organizations specializing in the settlement of refugee, IDP, physically disabled and veterans' problems, 121 focusing on legal aid, 191 youth and children organizations, and 79 specializing on gender issues, 68 dealing with healthcare issues, 77 engaged in environmental protection, 218 involved in economic sphere, 63 linked with entrepreneurship activities, 176 focusing on science, education and

technology, 43 specializing in protection of rights of journalists, 113 engaged in culture and art as well as others received their state registration.

## **II. Main Principles and forms of the state support to NGOs.**

Formation and implementation of the state support to NGOs is based on the following principles:

- lawfulness;
- partnership – joint participation of NGOs and state bodies in resolution of social problems and determination of social policy priorities;
- transparency - publicity in presentation of financial and other state support and access to information for interested NGOs;
- concordance – adoption of coordinated decisions in the achievement of set targets and in relation to methods of organization of general activity
- responsibility- strict compliance with approved contractual terms for programs and projects funded by the state.

According to the law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on NGOs (public associations and foundations), the state can provide financial and other support to NGOs. State support to NGOs can be in the form of informational, consulting, methodic, logistical, financial and other support.

Information support to NGOs envisages enlightenment of activities of the NGO sector in the settlement of social problems in mass media, development of special rubrics, thematic radio and TV shows on the development of NGO sector in Azerbaijan.

Consulting support to NGOs is expressed by explaining legislative and other statutory acts, providing information on working methods and directions, opportunities to receive state support and etc.

Methodic support is implemented through preparation of methodic recommendations, materials, and information booklets as well as through other means.

Logistical support is implemented through joint organization of round tables, seminars, conferences, trainings and other activities aimed at resolution of socially significant problems.

Financial support to NGOs envisages competitive state funding of target programs, projects and activities aimed at resolution of significant problems for the state and society.

## **III Priority areas of the state support to NGOs**

The state in the first place will give preference to programs and projects covering the following areas:

- Advocacy of the just stance of Azerbaijan in foreign countries and international organizations in relation to Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict over Garabag;
- Defense of refugee and IDP rights in international organizations and courts;
- Settlement of problems of refugees, IDPs, physically disabled and veterans;
- Propaganda of the idea of national identity;
- Integration of Azerbaijan to the world community;
- Strengthening of cooperation with international organizations and NGOs operating in foreign countries;
- Development of political and legal and citizen culture;
- Development of citizens' legal knowledge
- Provision of human rights and liberties;
- Expansion of freedoms of speech, opinion and expression;
- Provision of social-economic development of regions;
- Development of education, science, technology, culture and art;
- Environmental preservation;
- Social, physical and moral development of children, women and youth;
- Protection of health of the population

#### **IV. Main tools of provision of the state support to NGOs**

##### **1. Improvement of legal framework:**

Improvement of statutory legal acts aimed at development of NGO activities and strengthening of relations between state bodies and NGOs by attracting civil society institutes.

##### **2. Improvement of collaboration mechanism of state bodies and civil society institutes:**

- Systematic organization of citizen forums for resolution of reciprocal activity problems between state and civil society;
- Establishment of the entity on NGO issues aimed at strengthening of democratization of the society as a form of cooperation between state and NGOs;
- Establishment of the Foundation for Assistance to NGOs which will provide funding for implementation of programs and projects of significance to the state and society;
- Development of a national information-analytical network in order to observe effectively civil society development processes and to implement the monitoring of cooperation programs;

- Creation of a database of civil society institutes and preparation of recommendations for state bodies on identification of forms and methods of synergy and formation of effective activity mechanisms.

**V. Terms of implementation of state financing of targeted programs, projects and activities deemed significant for the state and society:**

- Development of financing-contractual relations between state bodies and NGOs based on partnership;
- Assessment of results of programs and projects funded by the state;
- Learning and application of international experience on collaboration between state and NGOs upon preparation and implementation of national action programs in different areas

**Final clauses**

State Support Conception for NGOs of the Republic of Azerbaijan determines directions of the state policy related to NGOs, main principles and forms of the state support for NGOs.

This conception envisages creation of institutional mechanisms of the state support for NGOs, improvement of cooperation between state bodies and civil society institutes, participation of NGOs in the formation of political-legal and civil culture, as well as international cooperation directions of civil society institutes.

The following is determined as a priority in the conception: protection of national interests, respect to the constitution, laws and the state emblem, restoration of territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, active propaganda of Azerbaijan's stance regarding the Armenian-Azerbaijan conflict over Nagorno Garabagh, protection of refugee and IDP rights, active propaganda of NGO activities for advocacy of the idea of national identity, engagement of NGOs in the settlement of problems which are of significance for the development of state and society, as well as provision of informational, methodic, logistical and financial assistance to NGOs.

Thus, resolution of development problems of NGOs and improvement of the appropriate legal framework will serve for both the establishment of a stable and effective system of partnership relations between state bodies and NGOs and the development of civil society.

July 27, 2007