



# **Civil Society in Azerbaijan: National agenda for a change**

*1<sup>st</sup> Civil Society Forum presents the National Agenda comprising below mentioned suggestions for improving and enhancing civil society in Azerbaijan.*

*National Agenda constitutes of the following 4 parts:*

- 1. Registration of Non-governmental Organizations (NGO);*
- 2. Activities of NGOs;*
- 3. Economic activity and taxation;*
- 4. Inclusive policy decision making.*
- 5. Increasing donor and NGO transparency.*

## **1. In the field of the registratrion of NGOs:**

- 1.1 Simplification of state registration of NGOs and granting registration rights to courts-this change will enable NGO registration at local level;
- 1.2 Simplification of legal registration procedures of foreign NGOs and foundations, reserving the registration right at the Ministry of Justice and decreasing legal fees for establishment;
- 1.3 Simplification of legal procedures for registration of NGO Unions (coalitions, Alliances, Networks) via the necessary changes to the relevant legislation;

- 1.4 Online submission of changes about registration information and grant contracts, creation of online state registration service and application of online services for making technical changes to database.

## **2. In Activities of NGOs:**

- 2.1 Classification of NGOs on the base of annual financial turnover while submitting financial reports, exempting NGOs from submitting annual financial reports which have annual turnover till 12,000 AZN(According to the calculations average annual turnover of registered NGOs was 11,636 AZN last year) and establishment online service for submitting financial reports for NGOs having annual turnover more that 12,000 AZN.
- 2.2 Establishment of conference and local resource centers for development of activities of NGOs in the regions;
- 2.3 Removing illegal control and authority of intervention of local and central state bodies to activities of NGOs ;
- 2.4 Establishment of “NGO Houses” in regional centers and Baku for solving office problems of NGOs.

## **3. In economic activities and taxation policy:**

- 3.1 Prioritizing annual corporate social responsibility programs by NGO Support State Council and stimulation of annual social business development according to predefined directions;
- 3.2 Granting tax exemption in the form of freeing NGOs from simplified taxes as revenues from commercial activities are reinvested to NGOs and decreasing social deduction (22%) for employees employed under grant activities.
- 3.3 Application of stimulatory tax mechanisms to donation activities of business organizations and their associations and application stimulatory tax mechanisms for non economic activities such as grant, donation, supports to state and public union organizations;
- 3.4 Increasing and improving direct state financial support mechanisms to NGOs, realization of social services funded through state orders by selected NGOs in the result of competitions and adoption of law on “Social Orders”;
- 3.5 Creation and stimulation activities of national donor institutions and endowment funds.

## **4. In the field of inclusive public decision making:**

- 5.1 Organization of debates for the bill on “Public participation” and adoption the law;
- 5.2 Preparing and implementation of state programs and national strategies with the participation of public unions;
- 5.3 Representation of civil society in the management of public resources;
- 5.4 Participation of civil society in the budget discussion and law making process;
- 5.5 Organization of public hearings at the parliament with the participation of civil society members;

**6. Increasing donor and NGO transparency:**

- 6.1 Determination rights of access to national donor grant announcements, grant competition rules and publication of grant results and right of appealing
- 6.2 Preparation and adoption of transparency charter for donors and NGOs and policies for ethics and conflict of interest.
- 6.3 Organizing individual and/or group conferences for submitting annual reports for national donors and NGOs for transparency in their activities.