

I deliver this statement on behalf of Azerbaijan civil society which can't be here due to lack of financial support and security risks.

In recent years, governments have made efforts to contribute to implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. However, certain issues require deeper commitment and more decisive action.

Therefore, we raise the following question:

**What are the next steps in the 2030 Agenda implementation over the coming years, considering these civil society recommendations?**

Firstly, it is crucial to enable an environment where civil society organizations, initiatives, and their members can operate independently, overcoming existing barriers and improving their engagement. This involves removing restrictive laws and ensuring freedom of association and expression.

Secondly, reforms in the judiciary system are needed to align it with best practices, including transparency, accountability, and impartiality. A fair and just legal system is fundamental for protecting human rights and the rule of law.

Furthermore, improving country rankings in global indices such as press freedom, human rights, and happiness should be a priority. This requires a commitment to safeguarding freedoms and enhancing the well-being of citizens.

Fostering citizen participation in the decision-making process is essential. This requires ensuring transparency and inclusion, allowing citizens to have a voice in policies that affect their lives.

Strengthening the implementation of SDG 5 is vital. Azerbaijan Republic's Government should commit to joining the Istanbul Convention, addressing gender-based violence and discrimination. While there has been progress, gender inequality remains a significant issue.

Lastly, bolstering sustainable urban policy across the country is essential. Adopting and implementing a National Sustainable Urban Policy will promote sustainable development in urban areas, addressing environmental and social challenges.

Thank you.