



NEWSLETTER

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OSCE Gender Issues Advisor Applauds Azerbaijan's Domestic Violence Prevention Law

Organization for Security and Co-operation (OSCE) in Europe Senior Advisor on Gender Issues Jamila Seftaoui highlighted the importance of the adoption of the law on prevention of domestic violence in Azerbaijan. The OSCE supported the drafting and the adoption of the law, which Seftaoui described as a significant step for Azerbaijan towards implementing its gender equality commitments. "A comprehensive approach to combating violence against women and an effective implementation of this law are essential to ensuring fundamental rights and security for women," said Seftaoui. In discussions with Azerbaijani senior officials from the Ministry of Interior, the State Committee on Family, Women and Children Affairs, and the Ministry of Economic Development, as well as with representatives of the international organizations and civil societies, Seftaoui debated ways to advance women's rights and promote women's economic empowerment, as well as their protection from discrimination and all forms of violence in order to achieve gender equality in Azerbaijan. "Gender equality is a fundamental human right and an essential element of the OSCE's comprehensive security mandate," Seftaoui said. "Viable mechanisms that help protect victims and prosecute aggressors are crucial parts of comprehensive frameworks to promote gender equality. Seftaoui emphasized that a family's privacy, culture, tradition or education level could never be a justification to tolerate or ignore violence against women.

World Bank Group Launches New Partnership Strategy With Azerbaijan

The World Bank Group Board of Directors discussed a new Country Partnership Strategy (CPS) with Azerbaijan, which provides the framework guiding the World Bank Group's assistance to Azerbaijan for 2011-2014. "While Azerbaijan weathered the recent global economic crisis relatively well, the crisis has underlined the need for a diversified economy, market-based policies, and strengthened social services and support," said Asad Alam, World Bank Regional Director for the South Caucasus. "As the Government prepares to meet these emerging needs and challenges, this World Bank/International Finance Corporation strategy seeks to

support the country in this endeavor." In recent years, Azerbaijan's GDP has risen sharply and poverty has fallen dramatically, led by increasing oil and gas revenues. Its remarkable success in reducing poverty from 49 percent in 2001 to 16 percent in 2008 was largely driven by very high growth rates which averaged more than 20 percent for the period. This was complemented by a strong rise in wages and transfers, and a well-targeted social benefits system. "This Strategy, with its greater emphasis on analytical services, knowledge transfer and institutional capacity building is our effort to respond to this shift in the client needs. We will also be focusing on our large undisbursed portfolio and be giving a priority to accelerating project implementation," said Joseph Owen, World Bank Country Manager for Azerbaijan. For the full Strategy period of four years the Government has requested a total investment of about US\$ 1 billion. In the first two years, lending is anticipated to be around US\$ 380 million. With Azerbaijan's per capita income of US\$ 4,820 (Atlas method, 2009), which is now placing the country in the group of the middle income countries, 2011 will be the last year when the country will receive concessional financing from the World Bank. International Finance Corporation (IFC), the World Bank Group's private sector lending arm, will increase its investment program to about US\$ 200 million during this period.

International Jazz Festival opened in Baku

The opening ceremony of the International Jazz Festival took place in Baku. The Festival is organized by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Azerbaijan, Azerbaijan Culture Foundation and Sweet Production. Addressing the ceremony, Abulfaz Garayev, Minister of Culture and Tourism of Azerbaijan emphasized that much progress has been achieved in Azerbaijan to popularize and promote jazz. Azerbaijani jazz is a combination of Azerbaijani mugham (national music of Azerbaijan) and traditional American jazz. The style reached a peak of its fame in the 1950s and 1960s under the influence of composer Rafiq Babayev and his Gaya quartet and renowned Azerbaijani jazz pianist and composer Vagif Mustafazadeh. These sounds gave Azerbaijani music its identity within the jazz genre. The Baku International Jazz Festival will bring together jazz musicians from Azerbaijan and a wide range of foreign countries. The festival will last until October 30.