

*Translated from Russian*

**Information submitted by the Government of Turkmenistan concerning General Assembly resolution 65/182 of December 2010 on follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing**

Far-reaching changes have taken place in the modern history of Turkmenistan under the leadership of President Gurbanguly Berdymukhammedov in order to further deepen and broaden democratic principles in Turkmen society and the Turkmen State, and to ensure a decent standard of living for its population, including older persons.

Turkmenistan pays special attention to the care of its elderly citizens. At the initiative of the President, systematic efforts are under way to improve the well-being and social conditions of the older generation. Accordingly, a number of laws and regulations have been adopted, including the Social Security Code of 17 March 2007. These provide a comprehensive set of measures to ensure social protection and support for pensioners, Great Patriotic War veterans, veterans of labour and persons with disabilities.

As elsewhere in the world, Turkmenistan celebrates the International Day of Older Persons. This day has been included in the national register of official holidays and fully reflects the public policy priorities adopted by President Berdymukhammedov, which are based on the Turkmen people's inherent values and the wisdom of their centuries-long traditions.

In observance of the International Day of Older Persons, gatherings, concerts and other festive events are held each year on 1 October at schools, universities and cultural centres in the nation's capital and in all *velayats* (regions). These events are attended by war and labour veterans and by senior community members.

One of the traditions laudably upheld in the new era of national rebirth is veneration and deeply-held respect for older persons, whose wealth of life and work experience is invaluable both for instilling patriotic and moral values in the younger generation and in implementing large-scale socio-economic transformations and reforms. The Turkmen people have a long-standing tradition of discussing all vital matters with their seniors. One example of this is the Council of Elders, a key democratic institution in Turkmen society which has earned a new place on the modern day map of Turkmenistan's national history.

The State guarantees the exercise of equal rights in political, social, economic, cultural and other fields to all citizens, including older persons. It does so through legislative, economic, organizational, social, informational and other measures laid down in the Constitution, the Social Security Code of 17 March 2007, other national laws and regulations, and the generally recognized principles and norms of international law.

Much attention is being paid to mobilizing resources in order to best meet the needs of the population. The State budget is socially oriented. Under the law on the State budget of Turkmenistan for 2011, adopted on 27 November 2010, 12.2 per cent of the total funds allocated for public and social services have been

earmarked for health services and 36.2 per cent for the State-run social security system. Significant resources will be spent to further increase pensions, allowances and stipends for all segments of the population.

Unswervingly meeting its international obligations and acknowledging the norms of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Turkmenistan has adhered to the main international human rights instruments. These include: the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Optional Protocol thereto; and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol thereto.

Article 19 of the Constitution of Turkmenistan dated 26 September 2008 guarantees equal human and civil rights and freedoms and equality before the law regardless of ethnicity, race, gender, origin, material or employment status, place of residence, language, attitude towards religion, political conviction and party affiliation or lack thereof.

Article 37 of the Constitution entitles citizens to social security payments in connection with old age, illness, disability, loss of the ability to work, loss of the breadwinner and unemployment.

Large families, children without parents, veterans and other persons who have suffered damage to their health while defending State or public interests are granted additional assistance and benefits from State and public funds.

Turkmenistan is a socially oriented State. Its domestic policies consist of ensuring a decent standard of living for the population, protecting the security, rights and freedoms of citizens, developing democratic processes and building the legal system. In a decision dated 25 October 2006, the People's Council of Turkmenistan extended free access to natural gas, electricity, drinking water and salt for all citizens until 2030. Symbolic charges have been set for utilities, telephone use and public transportation.

Implementation is currently under way of the President's national programme to upgrade social and living conditions in villages, towns, cities with *etrap* status (districts) and *etrap* centres for the period until 2020.

With a view to harmonizing the numerous national and State programmes being implemented around the country, the 2011-2030 national programme for the socio-economic development of Turkmenistan was adopted on 14 May 2010 by Presidential decree. One of the primary goals of the programme is a fundamental improvement in the living standards of the population. A socio-economic development programme until 2012 has also been adopted for the regions and the city of Ashkhabad, together with other social programmes.

Turkmenistan is focusing on long-term socio-economic development in the following key areas:

Fundamentally improving the standard of living of the population, developing and enhancing consumer demand and the demographic structure, and raising these indicators to the level of developed countries;

Recognizing health care, education, science, culture, sports and tourism, among other areas, as essential for the development of social values and the achievement of high levels of productivity and creativity;

Developing health care, education, science, culture, sports, tourism and other priority areas, in recognition of their essential role in the development of social values and the achievement of high levels of productivity and creativity;

Improving housing conditions to meet international standards.

The number of persons eligible for pension benefits has increased since the adoption of the Social Security Code.

<i>Turkmenistan</i>	<i>2008</i>	<i>2009</i>	<i>2010</i>
Total number of pensioners	253 709	262 702	274 171
Average monthly pension (in Turkmenistan manats)	183 530	204 570	245 330

Article 29 of the Turkmenistan law on the protection of public health dated 25 October 2005 governs the right of citizens to public health information.

Citizens are entitled to receive reliable and timely public health information on a regular basis, including information about the health and epidemiological safety of their place of residence, the recommended nutritional standards, the quality of goods and services and the compliance of these with public health norms and standards.

Citizens are entitled to receive any available information concerning their health, including test results, identified illnesses and the diagnosis and prognosis, treatment methods and associated risks, treatment alternatives and the associated consequences, and the outcome of the treatment conducted.

Personal health information may not be provided to citizens against their will.

Citizens are entitled to review medical records pertaining to their own health, provided third party interests are not affected.

Under article 99 of the Social Security Code, the loss of the breadwinner entitles persons of retirement age to receive lifetime State allowances.

The State welfare allowance is a welfare payment made to persons of retirement age who have no other source of livelihood.

Men aged 62 years or older and women aged 57 years or older who do not qualify for a pension are entitled to receive a State welfare allowance.

Similarly, article 110 of the Code guarantees the payment of a State allowance and other payments for certain categories of recipients. One-time monetary awards are made to unemployed recipients of State allowances, as set out in acts of the President of Turkmenistan.

Unemployed recipients of State allowances aged 62 years or older receive a one-time monetary award equal to the State allowance on the day the request is made.

Persons permanently residing in residential communities for older persons and persons with disabilities, boarding schools, children's homes and other

establishments fully funded by the State receive 20 per cent of the designated State allowance but no less than 40 per cent of the base figure used to calculate allowances.

Article 111 of the Code guarantees the right to State support. The right to State support is granted to the poorest individuals not entitled to a pension or a State allowance whose average individual income, not including adopted or foster children, is below the minimum consumer budget. Special centres in the nation's capital and regions provide free medical care and social support to older persons and persons with disabilities.

War veterans are awarded orders, medals and valuable gifts by Presidential decree every year, in honour of the unparalleled heroism displayed by troops on the battlefields during the Great Patriotic War from 1941-1945 and the exemplary bravery of the women who toiled behind the frontlines; in recognition of their noble work to instil the exalted qualities of patriotism, heroism and bravery in young people and to strengthen national unity and cohesion; and for their contributions to the successful transformations being undertaken nationwide.

Similarly, war veterans, war widows and veterans who worked behind the frontlines receive monetary awards of 200 Turkmenistan manats, one free holiday at a national resort and a 20 per cent pension increase.

Under article 26 of the Constitution, citizens are entitled to freedom of opinion and expression, and the right to receive information.

The national law on the print and other mass media in Turkmenistan dated 10 January 1991 guarantees citizens the right to express their opinions and beliefs and to seek, select, receive and distribute information and ideas in any form, including print and other mass media.

Under article 126 of the Social Security Code, citizens are entitled to receive information about their rights and obligations with respect to social services and the terms governing their provision. Citizens are entitled to receive information about the kinds and forms of social services, terms of payment and other conditions governing the provision of such services. Citizens must first be acquainted with the terms and conditions of social service institutions and the kinds of services provided by them.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection was established by Presidential decree on 8 April 2011. The new Ministry was assigned such important tasks as implementing national policy with respect to employment, ensuring demographic security and providing social safety nets. The Ministry is also entrusted with monitoring the labour system, providing and assisting the public with employment opportunities, affording the public unemployment protection and offering relocation services related to employment at a new location.

Article 20 of the Constitution contains a provision recognizing equal civil rights for men and women. The violation of gender equality is punishable by law.

Turkmenistan condemns discrimination against women in all its forms, consistently and unswervingly pursues a policy of no tolerance for any gender-based distinction, exclusion or restriction and seeks to ensure that women recognize, enjoy and exercise fundamental human rights and freedoms in political, economic, social, cultural or any other fields on an equal footing with men.

Turkmenistan ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 1996.

On 14 December 2007, the Parliament of Turkmenistan adopted a law on State guarantees of women's equal rights. The law, which reflects the national traditions of the Turkmen people and universal human values, is designed to implement the main principles of Turkmenistan's human rights policy. It provides for the comprehensive development and advancement of women and provides State guarantees for the enjoyment by women of the human rights and freedoms in political, economic, social, cultural and other fields on an equal footing with men.

Under article 4 of the law, the State policy on women focuses on the following areas:

Legislative support for women's equality, the protection of women from discrimination and the reinstatement of women's rights where these have been violated as established by national law;

The development and implementation of targeted State programmes to ensure the equal rights of women;

Support and protection for motherhood and childhood;

Promotion of the harmonious development of women, including their physical, intellectual, spiritual, cultural and moral development;

The protection of society from information advocating gender-based discrimination, violence, cruelty, pornography and drug and alcohol abuse;

Support for and cooperation with public associations and other organizations, including international organizations, working for the advancement of women;

Compliance with the generally recognized principles and norms of international law, and with Turkmenistan's international obligations to protect the rights and freedoms of women and ensure gender equality.

The Constitution guarantees the right to health care for all citizens residing in Turkmenistan regardless of ethnicity, origin, property and official status, place of residence, language, attitude towards religion, political conviction or party affiliation.

Article 14 of the Turkmenistan law on the protection of public health reflects the legally protected right of the citizens of Turkmenistan to health care.

Under article 19 of that law, the right of citizens of retirement age to health care is ensured through the provision of medical care in State-run health care institutions.

Citizens of retirement age are entitled to conclude an agreement for voluntary State-run medical insurance.

Article 38 of the law regulates the provision of medical and social assistance. In the event of illness, an inability to work and in other cases, citizens receive medical and social assistance covering preventive care, diagnostics and treatment, rehabilitation, prosthetic-orthopaedic and other forms of care, as well as social measures providing care for the sick, those unable to work and persons with

disabilities, including the payment of benefits for temporary disability and incapacity for work.

Persons of retirement age who engage in physical activity and sports are entitled to free medical check-ups.

Great Patriotic War veterans and persons of equal status are granted medical and social benefits in accordance with national law.

Under article 29 of the Turkmenistan law on disaster management and emergency response, dated 15 September 1998, citizens are entitled to:

Receive information on the necessary security measures in the event of a threat or the occurrence of an emergency situation;

Protect their lives, health and personal property in the event of an emergency situation;

Participate in emergency prevention activities in accordance with established procedure;

Use means of collective and individual defence and other items designed to protect the public in the event of emergency situations;

Receive compensation for damage to health and property resulting from an emergency situation;

Receive State benefits, if unable to work as a result of an injury or illness sustained in the performance of duties to protect the population and territory from emergency situations, as set out in the regulations governing worker disability resulting from duty-related injury;

Receive State benefits in following the loss of a breadwinner who died of an injury or illness while fulfilling duties to protect the population and territory from emergency situations, as set out in the regulations governing Government benefits for families of citizens who have died fulfilling their civic duty to save lives, protect State or public property and maintain law and order.

Article 32 of the law guarantees compensation for damage to human health and property or in the event of death as a result of emergency situations, in accordance with the legislation of Turkmenistan.

The Government is currently implementing a joint project of the European Commission, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations Development Programme entitled "Strengthening the National Capacity of Turkmenistan to Promote and Protect Human Rights (2009-2012)".

As part of this project, on 2 May 2011, a human rights information centre was opened at the Turkmen National Institute for Democracy and Human Rights under the President of Turkmenistan. It aims to advance human rights in Turkmenistan by improving public access to information on international human rights standards and norms.

To that end, a library for visitors to the Centre has been created which includes publications of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, international conventions and treaties, national human rights legal instruments and

theoretical, methodological and reference documents. Visitors can also access Internet resources on human rights.

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