AZERBAIJAN

CANDIDATE FOR THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL 2012/2013

Azerbaijan is a candidate for a non-permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council, allocated to the Group of Eastern European States, for the term 2012-2013. The elections will be held during the 66th session of the United Nations General Assembly in October 2011.

"Azerbaijan believes that the United Nations has to be stronger and capable in engaging in a range of global issues in every part of the world, as well as in addressing aspirations and concerns of each Member State."

Ilham Aliyev, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan

AZERBAIJAN AND THE UNITED NATIONS

Since joining to the United Nations on 2 March 1992, Azerbaijan has consistently demonstrated its strong commitment to the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, which are indispensable foundations of a more peaceful, prosperous and just world.

Azerbaijan has staunchly supported the United Nations, including, in particular, through active participation in the activities of its relevant bodies and agencies. Thus, Azerbaijan has served in the ECOSOC (2003-2005), Commission on Human Rights (2005-2006), Human Rights Council (2006-2009), UNESCO Executive Board (2005-2009), WHO Executive Board (2006-2009), IAEA Executive Board (2009-2011), UNICEF (1994-1997, 1998-2000), UNDP/UNFPA (2008-2010).

Azerbaijan is the main author of a series of resolutions adopted within the United Nations on the specific international humanitarian and human rights law issues. Amongst them are the biennial resolutions on missing persons (General Assembly and Human Rights Council) and on the release of women and children taken hostage, including subsequently imprisoned, in armed conflicts (Commission on the Status of Women), resolution on the protection of cultural rights and property in situations of armed conflict (Human Rights Council), as well as the resolutions on the situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan (General Assembly).

In line with its strong commitment to the promotion of gender equality and advancement of women and as a member of the Bureau of the Economic and Social Council, Azerbaijan has successfully facilitated the consultations and adoption without a vote at the ECOSOC's 2004 substantive session of the draft resolution entitled "Review of Economic and Social Council agreed conclusions 1997/2 on mainstreaming the gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system" (ECOSOC Resolution 2004/4). Azerbaijan was also one of the facilitators of the General Assembly resolution on the commemoration of the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/63/25).

Acknowledging the transparency as a crucial factor for insuring sustainable development, Azerbaijan has initiated a resolution on strengthening transparency in industries, unanimously adopted by the General Assembly (A/RES/62/274), which resulted in recognition of Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) as global transparency brand and standard.

General Assembly resolution on building connectivity through the Trans-Eurasian Information Super Highway (A/RES/64/186), initiated by Azerbaijan is expected to serve as a major element of the East-West transport corridors and to facilitate the supply of many counties of the region with internet, telecommunication systems, e-information recourses and e-economies.

Most recent initiative of Azerbaijan was the adoption of General Assembly resolution on the International Day of Nowruz (A/RES/64/253).

CONTRIBUTION TO INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY

As a country suffering from the scourge of war and situating in proximity to other conflicts affecting the regional countries, Azerbaijan is determined to establish lasting peace and stability in the region of South Caucasus and beyond on the basis of the generally accepted norms and principles of international law, the relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions as well as the appropriate documents and decisions adopted by other international organizations.

Azerbaijan is fully committed to and making sustained efforts for maintaining international peace, security and stability. The peacekeeping company in Azerbaijan's Armed Forces was formed in 1997 and transformed in 2001 into the battalion. Since 1999 Azerbaijan contributed sizable military personnel – with around 2000 peacekeepers – to the peacekeeping missions in Kosovo (KFOR), Afghanistan (ISAF), and Iraq.

Azerbaijani peacekeepers in Iraq

Azerbaijani peacekeepers in KFOR

Azerbaijani members of ISAF

Azerbaijan is a party to major international instruments on disarmament and non-proliferation, including Chemical Weapons Convention, Biological Weapons Convention, Non-Proliferation Treaty, Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty and Vienna Document – 1999, and fully complies with obligations arising from these documents.

Azerbaijan makes significant contribution to the counter-terrorism efforts of the international community and undertook a number of important practical measures to that end. It is a party to thirteen international counter-terrorism instruments. Furthermore, with the assistance of the United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (UNODC), Azerbaijan developed an Action Plan and adopted a package of legislative measures aimed at bringing its domestic law into compliance with the international instruments to which it is a party. Azerbaijan is committed to cooperating fully with the counter-terrorism subsidiary bodies of the Security Council and fulfilling its reporting obligations under the Council's relevant resolutions.

PROMOTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS

Azerbaijan regards the protection and promotion of human rights as an issue of priority for its internal and foreign policy agenda.

All human rights and fundamental freedoms set forth in the international documents are enshrined in the Constitution of Azerbaijan. Since regaining its independence in 1991, Azerbaijan became a party to all major universal and regional human rights treaties, including seven core United Nations instruments. Azerbaijan consistently fulfils its obligation to report both to the Human Rights Council within the Universal Periodic Review and to the relevant human rights treaty monitoring bodies. Moreover, Azerbaijan recognized the competence of all human rights treaty monitoring bodies to receive and consider communications from individuals or groups of individuals subject to its jurisdiction who claim to be victims of a violation of any of the rights set forth in the relevant human rights instruments.

The Government of Azerbaijan closely cooperates also with the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council and has extended invitations to various mandate holders to visit the country.

CONTRIBUTION TO INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

Azerbaijan has always been a place of coexistence and tolerance between different faiths, ethnic groups and philosophies. As a bridge between cultures and active member of the Group of Friends of the Alliance of Civilizations Azerbaijan feels responsible for the promotion of inter-religious and intercultural dialogue based on mutual respect and understanding.

Azerbaijan hosted lately a number of high-profile and action-oriented events. They include, among others, the international conference on the role of media in the development of tolerance and mutual understanding, a high-level conference in the framework of "Youth for Alliance of Civilizations" initiative, the international gathering on the role of women in cross-cultural dialogue, the Council of Europe Ministers of Culture conference on intercultural dialogue and the Conference of OIC Ministers of Culture. As a continuation of Baku Process of Cross-Cultural Dialogue initiated in 2008 during the CoE Ministers of Culture conference, Azerbaijan will host the World Intercultural Dialogue Forum in April 2011. In addition, Baku was chosen the capital of Islamic Culture for 2009.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND HUMANITARIAN AID

In 2009 and the first half of 2010 the national economy of Azerbaijan has retained its dynamism and as of today the GDP growth is recorded at almost 4 %. Since 2003 the poverty rate dropped from 44 percent to 13 percent. The Government of Azerbaijan has substantially developed trade and investment conditions in an effort to strengthen national competitiveness and spur private sector development, especially in the non-oil segment. Non-oil GDP grew at almost 16%, the highest rate in 5 years. In recognition of the results-oriented reforms, ambitious national development strategy and consistent economic policy, Azerbaijan has been recognized as one of the world's top reformers.

Azerbaijan is determined to contribute to the realization of the development goals and objectives agreed within the United Nations. It demonstrates full support and undertakes ceaseless efforts for eradication of poverty and promotion sustained economic growth, sustainable development and global prosperity for all, paying particular attention to addressing the special needs and vulnerabilities of the developing and least developed countries as well as those recovering from natural disasters. In the last 5 years Azerbaijan has provided extensive humanitarian assistance to and contributed to the implementation of national development policies and strategies in a number of countries from different regions.

NEW STRONG VOICE IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Year 2012 marks the 20th anniversary of Azerbaijan's membership to the United Nations, though it has never had an opportunity to be a member of the Security Council and has for the first time presented its candidature for a non-permanent seat in this UN organ.

Azerbaijan pursues a multidimensional and balanced foreign policy and proved itself to be a reliable partner, as well as a strong, stable, predictable and to a greater extent decisive country to cooperate with in the Caspian-Caucasus region.

Azerbaijan recognizes the central role of the United Nations in maintaining international peace and security, promoting sustainable development and advocating human rights and fundamental freedoms and believes that the multifaceted and interconnected challenges and threats confronting the today's world can be better addressed through a reformed and credible United Nations.

Azerbaijan acknowledges the vital importance of ensuring a greater transparency in the decision-making process, accountability in performance, shared responsibility and better involvement of non-member States in the work of the Security Council.

As a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, Azerbaijan will fully dedicate itself to contributing to the maintenance of international peace and security and to making the Security Council more representative, transparent and efficient organ so that it could address effectively the full range of challenges and threats confronting our world.