

Statement

**of the Director of the Azerbaijan International Development Agency (AIDA)
Dr. Ashraf Shikhaliyev**

**at the Third International Conference on Financing for Development
16 July 2015, Addis Ababa**

Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour for me to participate at this important conference and to address this distinguished gathering. At the outset, I would like to express our sincere gratitude to the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia for the warm welcome and generous hospitality extended to us.

We gathered in this hall during these four days to jointly discuss the trends of global development, explore the opportunities and design comprehensive policies towards ensuring sustainable financing for development. Today's Conference is an important milestone, as we are approaching the United Nations Summit on post-2015 development agenda, when we would review the implementation of MDGs and adopt new goals that would guide global development in the following period.

Mr. President,

It is known that the primary responsibility for sustainable development of countries lies with national governments, as efficient mobilization of domestic resources and sound poverty reduction strategies are important prerequisites for any country's development. Along with these, effective involvement in regional cooperation and trade is necessary for ensuring sustainable growth of national economies.

Global development trends indicate that in the modern world the developing economies are growing at a faster pace than the economies of the developed countries. The volume of South-South cooperation is steadily increasing and it facilitates exchange of resources, technology and knowledge among the developing countries.

The interesting trend is that some of the developing countries are emerging as new donors. These countries have to be given careful attention in order to encourage their more active participation and contribution to the global development, particularly for the development of the least developed countries. Moreover they may become an important additional source of financing for development during the post 2015 period.

Mr. President!

The Republic of Azerbaijan presents an example of the country that has successively overcome the challenges it faced and has been able to make a substantial progress in its development. The ongoing aggression and occupation by the neighbouring Armenia of 20% of the territory of our country, has resulted in more than 1 million people becoming

refugees and IDPs in Azerbaijan. Needless to say how heavy burden this is for our economy.

However, despite the hardships of the continuing occupation, Azerbaijan has succeeded in rebuilding itself and became the leading economy in the region. The sound economic strategy, steady course on diversification of the economy, development of private sector and poverty reduction measures have brought the impressive results. Thus during the last decade the poverty level in Azerbaijan was reduced from 49% to below 5%. The country became an economic driver and an important investor in the region and beyond. Today Azerbaijan is an initiator and active participant of large infrastructure projects in the region. According to the global competitiveness index of the World Economic Forum the Republic of Azerbaijan advanced to the 38th place in the world.

Azerbaijan also emerges as a donor and joined the family of donor countries. Being a pure recipient of foreign aid in the past, today Azerbaijan itself provides assistance to developing countries. The country provides international aid through the Heydar Aliyev Foundation and the national donor institution - Azerbaijan International Development Agency (AIDA). The Republic of Azerbaijan has recently provided assistance to fight Ebola outbreak in the three African countries. More than 40 countries of Africa, Latin America and Asia received AIDA's humanitarian, financial and technical assistance. AIDA strengthens its global partnerships and contributes to the development of South-South cooperation.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, I would like to say that a well-defined national development strategy, supported by strong political leadership is a prerequisite for attracting required financing for development. Fostering intra-regional cooperation and trade can add up to sustainability of such efforts. Additional volumes of ODA need to be provided and prudently utilized. Creating favorable external support along with strong monitoring and accountability mechanisms over the provided aid is extremely important. Efficient use of financial and non-financial resources by recipient countries can reduce their aid-dependence. Today, some countries, formerly aid-beneficiaries, have become active members of the donor family and thus represent additional rich source of financing and experience for other developing countries.

In this regard, I like to assure you that the Republic of Azerbaijan stands ready to contribute to international development and to the implementation of the noble objectives of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action.

Thank you for attention.