



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE
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Statement
by
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at
the General Debate of the 62nd Session
of the General Assembly
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Mr. President,

I would like to add my voice to the previous speakers in congratulating H.E. Dr. Srgjan Kerim on the occasion of his election to the noble post of the President of the United Nations General Assembly. I am confident that you will carry forward the able legacy left by your predecessor Madame Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa. Our warm tribute goes to the Secretary-General H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon as he strives to reinvigorate our Organization.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We all have great belief that in the XXI century the United Nations will be a more effective Organization. Continued relevance of this House to a large extent will depend on our ability to attune it to our concerns and make responsive to our needs.

The United Nations must continue to serve the interests of all its Members-States, regardless are they big or small. Our approach to the problems that transcend national boundaries should be based on a global consensus, while maintaining the United Nations key role in the cooperative management of these problems.

We need to advance further and harmonize diverging views on reforms of the Security Council. The Council should be transformed into a democratic and respectful organ, reflecting its universal character, corresponding to the present-day realities, and taking into consideration the need for balanced geographic representation in its membership.

The reforms package should strengthen the General Assembly as the policy-making organ of the United Nations. It is only through the reinforcement of the Assembly's role and mandate that we can successfully tackle some of the most pressing issues facing humanity, not least the process of globalization.

Mr. President,

Year 2007 marks the fifteenth anniversary of Azerbaijan's membership in the United Nations. I will use this apt occasion both for reflecting on our experience and for looking ahead.

Development of our region inextricably linked to the energy security issues. We in Azerbaijan are working for more than ten years on our energy security. When we started our energy projects, development of oil and gas fields, construction of pipelines we could not imagine that our energy

resources would be so needed to support the cause of free competition and free market. But it happened to be that we are just on time and ready to provide an important contribution to the global energy security.

Firm dedication to the policy of economic, political and social reforms allowed us to significantly improve our economic performance. We had last year GDP growth rate of 34% and this year more than 35%. The state budget in 4 years increased more than 4 times. We managed to significantly decrease unemployment and poverty. The 36.8 per cent increase of population income and savings in financial institutions are direct indicators of the livelihood improvement.

Investments continue to play a catalytic role in the overall development of the country. In 2007 level of investments from all financial sources has registered 10.6 per cent growth. The most important is, as against the previous years, currently the share of domestic investments accounts for significant increase (50.8 per cent) and large part of it goes to the non-oil sector. These are very important steps towards achieving a goal of diversified economy.

We believe sustainability of growth and development in Azerbaijan is not only ensued by the availability of natural resources, but it also shows the commitment and capacity of the Government to protect the rights of investors and to implement its commitments under various multi-billion contracts.

Transparency and efficiency in oil revenue management constitutes an important part in the Government's efforts to improve public service and accountability. Thus, it gives me great pleasure to inform that the State Oil Fund of Azerbaijan, which leads the implementation of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) in Azerbaijan, won the prestigious 2007 UN Public Service Award in the category of "*Improving transparency, accountability and responsiveness in the Public Service*".

We believe that this success shows the efficiency of the Initiative and invite the United Nations Member States to discuss the achievements made under the EITI and we plan to introduce a draft resolution on this subject during the current session.

Using our geographic location and unique transportation possibilities we are pioneering the projects on bridging Europe and Asia. Countries to the east of the Caspian Sea have expressed vivid interest to these projects and role of Azerbaijan in regional affairs has become more important and transformed into a stabilization factor.

Due to a political and historical background Azerbaijan became a home for various cultures and religions. Building on such a rich experience our country during its Chairmanship in the OIC Ministerial Council provided a substantial input to enhancing dialogue and broadening mutual understanding among nations, cultures and religions. We believe that spread of knowledge about Islam and its values, cultural dialogue between the civilizations will contribute to mutual understanding and trust. In this regard the frameworks of the Alliance of Civilization provide a good opportunity for joint actions and partnership.

Azerbaijan currently holds a rotating Chairmanship in GUAM. Our priority is to expose GUAM geopolitical and geo-economic advantages, utilize its role of a natural corridor bridging Europe and Asia, promoting development of civil societies and economic cooperation of GUAM Member States.

At the same time, GUAM serves as an effective instrument to increase awareness of international community about risks and challenges that its Member States have been facing. In this regard, I would like refer to the agenda item 16 of the current session related to the protracted conflicts on the territories of Azerbaijan, Georgia and Moldova. These conflicts have almost the same origin, similarly-developed scenario and dangerous outcomes. They all started from the manifestation of aggressive separatism, were accompanied by ethnic cleansing against civilians and resulted in violation of sovereignty and territorial integrity of these states.

GUAM firmly convinced that settlement of the protracted conflicts must be based on the territorial integrity within their internationally-recognized borders. Together with GUAM colleagues Azerbaijan will defend this fundamental principle of international law, initiate formal discussions in the General Assembly and mobilize support of the Member States of the United Nations.

Mr. President,

The Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorno-Karabakh conflict remains the most serious challenge to security of our region. As a result of the conflict, we are still facing the continued occupation by Armenia of a significant part (almost 20 %) of the internationally recognized territories of Azerbaijan. We are hosting around one million of refugees and internally displaced persons, who were ethnically cleansed and brutally expelled from their homes of origin in Armenia and in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan's position on the conflict settlement is fully based on the norms and principles of international law, four relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council, which provide for restoration of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and establishment of vast opportunities for the Azerbaijani and Armenian communities of the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan.

The negotiations on the conflict resolution carried out in the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group since 1992 have not yielded any results so far. And as the time passes the more difficult it is for us to observe from our side of the line of contact the attempts of the current Armenian leadership to consolidate the results of occupation of our territories, destroy everything associated with the Azerbaijani legacy in these territories and carry out illegal activities thereon. The United Nations shall not tolerate such action.

From this high podium I would like to address the Armenian nation to recognize that their policy of breaching peace and stability in the region has very dangerous, counterproductive and disastrous implications on the long-term perspectives of the development of Armenia. I am confident that Azerbaijan will restore its sovereignty and territorial integrity. This is only a question of time.

Finally on this issue, I would like to express our gratitude to the UN Member States for their unequivocal support extended last September to the General Assembly resolution A/RES/60/285 entitled "The situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan". Although, Armenia disassociated itself from this resolution after joining the consensus on it, we still believe that establishing proper conditions for the environmental operation may become a significant confidence-building measure.

Mr. President,

As a member of the Human Rights Council, Azerbaijan attaches great importance to efficient functioning of the Council. It is our common task and responsibility to ensure that this institution lives up to the expectations vested into it and becomes truly an objective, vigorous and credible universal human rights body. We are looking forward to finalizing the institution building of the Council so that it becomes fully operational and devotes attention to the issues directly within its mandate.

In the course of the last two years the United Nations has continued to represent a unique platform for the international standard-setting in the field of human rights by adopting two major documents – the International Convention on protection from enforced disappearances and the Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities.

Undoubtedly, adoption of these important instruments represents a significant step forward in a long historical process. Already a signatory to the first Convention, Azerbaijan is currently considering to sign the latter.

Thank you.