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Culture of peace

Sustainable development

**Eradication of poverty and other development issues:
implementation of the Third United Nations Decade for the
Eradication of Poverty (2018–2027)**

**Protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their implications
for international peace, security and development**

The situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan

**Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli
Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian
People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories**

**Elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia
and related intolerance**

**Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial
functioning of the United Nations**

Security Council Seventy-fourth year

Letter dated 11 November 2019 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a statement of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev (see annex), delivered at the opening ceremony of the eighteenth Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement, convened on 25 and 26 October 2019 in Baku, Azerbaijan, on the theme “Upholding the Bandung Principles to ensure concerted and adequate response to the challenges of the contemporary world”.

The Summit gathered together more than 2,000 participants from around the world. In the framework of the Summit, useful discussions were held at the level of Heads of State and Government, foreign ministers and other high-ranking officials. The Summit concluded its work by adopting the following documents: the final document, the Baku Declaration, the Political Declaration of the Ministerial Committee on Palestine, the Special Declaration on Presidential Elections in Bolivia



and the Motion of Thanks to and Solidarity with the People and Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The adopted documents testify once again that the Non-Aligned Movement retains its high relevance and importance, especially when it comes to resolution of global problems and response to current challenges. The Movement acknowledged that, among other issues, preserving and strengthening the values of multilateralism and international cooperation, which underpin the Charter of the United Nations and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, are fundamental to promoting and supporting the three pillars of the United Nations – peace and security, development and human rights.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 15, 19, 22 (a), 32, 37, 51, 68 and 133, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Yashar **Aliyev**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex to the letter dated 11 November 2019 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

**Statement of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan,
Ilham Aliyev**

Eighteenth Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement, opening ceremony

**Baku, Azerbaijan
25 October 2019**

Dear Heads of State and Government,

Dear guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I cordially salute all the participants of the 18th Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement – welcome! I express my gratitude to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela for the chairmanship in the Non-Aligned Movement from 2016 to 2019.

The Non-Aligned Movement serves the cause of promoting universal values and demonstrates the commitment to the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of all countries. Having united 120 countries the Non-Aligned Movement is the second largest political institution to the United Nations General Assembly, where nations of the world are represented.

Azerbaijan became a member of the Non-Aligned Movement in 2011. Within a short period of time as a member of the Non-Aligned Movement, our country has gained a great reputation in resolutely defending the norms and principles of international law. At the XVII Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement in 2016, a unanimous decision was made to hold the next summit in Baku and entrust the chairmanship of the Movement to Azerbaijan for the years 2019–2022. It is a manifestation of respect, trust, and confidence shown to our country. I consider this as a support of the Non-Aligned Movement that unites in its ranks most states of the world to our policy and once again express my gratitude to you for this decision.

During its chairmanship in the Movement, Azerbaijan will build its priorities and activities based on historic Bandung Principles. The Bandung Principles that embody respect to sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries, non-interference into internal affairs, upholding of mutual interests and promotion of cooperation concur with the core principles of Azerbaijan's foreign policy.

We must increase our efforts to ensure universal compliance with the norms and principles of international law. In this regard, there is a great need for reforms in the activities of the United Nations. Changing of borders by force, violation of territorial integrity of countries by use of force and interference into internal affairs is unacceptable.

Azerbaijan, during its chairmanship in the Non-Aligned Movement, will make efforts to establish and foster dialogue with other institutions and to expand the geography of cooperation. Since most of the NAM member states are developing countries, developing of economic cooperation within the Movement is of great significance. In this sense, Azerbaijan's accession to the Group of 77 last month will

further enhance our international efforts in the socio-economic area. It is very important to protect the interests of member states within the UN through joint efforts.

Special attention should be given to the challenges encountered by the least developed, landlocked and small island nations. Since 2005 Azerbaijan has rendered humanitarian and technical assistance to over 90 countries. The Agency for International Development of the Republic of Azerbaijan has implemented grant programs and projects in the spheres of poverty eradication, science, culture, healthcare, development of information technologies and efficient use of water resources and other areas in different countries around the world. Since 2018 Azerbaijan has offered full scholarship to the nationals of the NAM Member States in higher educational institutions of our country. Today 37 students from 31 Member States benefit from that program.

Youth policy in Azerbaijan has been identified as a priority. Azerbaijani youth are brought up in the spirit of national sentiment, traditional values, bond with homeland and patriotism. Thus, we have initiated the first-ever Youth Summit of NAM. In the run-up to our Summit today, young representatives from 40 countries participated in the Youth Summit.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Dear guests,

Azerbaijan's independence is only 28 years old. One week ago, on October 18, we have celebrated the anniversary of the restoration of our independence. For more than 25 years the historic land of Azerbaijan – the Nagorno-Karabakh and seven adjacent districts – roughly 20% of the country's internationally recognized territory has remained under Armenia's occupation. Armenia has conducted a policy of ethnic cleansing against Azerbaijanis and as a result over 1 million Azerbaijanis have become refugees or internally displaced persons. Back then Azerbaijan's population was 8 million and at the time our country topped the list of the countries with the highest number of refugees and internally displaced people per capita in the world. Armenia perpetrated the Khojaly genocide against Azerbaijanis. As a result of the Khojaly genocide 613 innocent people, including 106 women and 63 children were brutally murdered just because they were Azerbaijanis. Over 1000 people went missing. Khojaly genocide was recognized internationally by more than 10 countries.

In 1993 the UN Security Council adopted four resolutions that demanded complete and unconditional withdrawal of the Armenian forces from the Azerbaijani territory. Unfortunately, those resolutions were never implemented. Sometimes it is a matter of several days that the UN Security Council resolutions are implemented and then there are other instances such as with the conflict that Azerbaijan faces when such resolutions remain on paper for 26 years.

The policy of double standards must stop. The Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Cooperation Council of Turkic-speaking States, the European Parliament, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, OSCE and other prominent organizations have adopted resolutions and decisions demanding the restoration of Azerbaijan's territorial integrity. Seizing this opportunity, I wish to thank the Member States for their support expressed in the documents adopted by the NAM to the resolution of the conflict in line with the UN Security Council resolutions and based on Azerbaijan's territorial integrity.

Armenia destroyed all our historical monuments, mosques and cemeteries across Azerbaijan's occupied territories and plundered all the museums and tangible cultural riches. Armenia attempts to erase Azerbaijan's traces in the occupied territories by deliberately replacing all the original toponyms with Armenian ones. In contravention

of the international humanitarian law, Armenia also has implemented a policy of illegal resettlement and conducts illicit economic activity in the occupied areas.

As a result of military provocation by Armenia in April 2016 six Azerbaijani civilians, including one child were killed, 26 more people were wounded. Hundreds of houses were destroyed. Karabakh is Azerbaijan's ancestral land and conflict must be resolved solely based on the principle of Azerbaijan's sovereignty and its territorial integrity.

Azerbaijan is conducting an independent foreign policy. This policy stems from national interests and justice and has helped us gain many friends. A vivid example of that was Azerbaijan's election as the UN Security Council non-permanent member with the support of 155 nations in 2011. During our membership in the Security Council, Azerbaijan made great contributions to the strengthening of international peace and security and upholding justice and became an active player in the international political processes.

Azerbaijan is also contributing to international peacekeeping operations under the UN Security Council mandate. Our country regularly hosts Russia-NATO and Russia-U.S. meetings held between top-level military officials. There are nearly 200 countries around the world. Azerbaijan's selection, out of so many countries, as a venue for such meetings is a sign of respect to an independent foreign policy that we conduct.

Dear guests,

Early years of Azerbaijan's independence were extremely tumultuous. During the years of the rule of traitorous, cowardly and incompetent Azerbaijani Popular Front our country went through great disasters and misery. The civil war was unleashed in Azerbaijan. It was only in 1993, with the return of President Heydar Aliyev to power, upon the demands of the people, that Azerbaijan was saved from more calamities. Azerbaijan entered the path of democratic and sustainable development, peace and stability came to our land.

Azerbaijan is committed to such values as democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms. Historically, they are deeply engrained here. We are proud that over a century ago in the East, in the Muslim world, the first-ever democratic republic was established in Azerbaijan and women were granted the right to vote – something we had done ahead of most Western nations. Democratic development in Azerbaijan is our conscious choice. All the fundamental human rights and freedoms, the rule of law and freedom of the press are ensured in Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan's economy has been growing at a fast pace and the GDP has more than tripled in the past 15 years. More than \$270 billion were invested in Azerbaijan half of them being foreign investments. Azerbaijan's foreign debt accounts for 17% of our GDP and based on that indicator we are ranking 9th in the world. Poverty in Azerbaijan stands at 5%. This year alone we have doubled the minimum wage and social benefits and minimum pensions were increased by 70%. Our program of targeted social assistance covers 68,000 families or 280,000 people which means that every such family receives a monthly social allowance of an equivalent of US\$140. In the last 15 years, we have either build or completely renovated over 3200 schools and 640 hospitals. The literacy rate in Azerbaijan is nearly 100%. Over 300,000 internally displaced persons were provided with free houses and apartments. The internally displaced families receive a monthly allowance of an equivalent of \$180.

Azerbaijan's accomplishments are recognized worldwide. According to the World Bank's Doing Business Report for 2020 Azerbaijan is among the top 20 reformer countries, while also ranking 25th in terms of the business environment. According to the Davos World Economic Forum report, Azerbaijan ranks number 10

for the government's long-term strategy and 5th in terms of leadership's inclination towards reforms in the world.

Azerbaijan is a space nation. Today we have three satellites – two telecommunication ones and third an Earth observation satellite. 80% of our population are Internet users.

Azerbaijan ensures its own energy security. Once again, I would refer you to the Davos World Economic Forum report, where in terms of access to electricity index Azerbaijan ranks second in the world. Azerbaijan is also a supplier of energy to several other countries. Being a landlocked country, Azerbaijan serves as a bridge between Asian and European continents and as such has initiated and participated in several regional transportation projects. Azerbaijan is an active participant of East-West and North-South transportation corridors and is currently working on other key projects such as South-West and North-West. Thus, as a reliable transit country, Azerbaijan makes a valuable contribution to multilateral international cooperation.

Climate change is a global threat. Azerbaijan supports international efforts to tackle the consequences of climate change. Azerbaijan has ratified the Paris Agreement and identified a 35% reduction of greenhouse emissions as a target for 2030, with 1990 being the base year. Only environmentally safe natural gas and hydropower plants are used for electricity generation in Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan enjoys the rich traditions of tolerance and multiculturalism. Multiculturalism is a way of life for Azerbaijani people. The Baku Process that we started 11 years ago with the participation of the countries – members to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Council of Europe is also supported by the UN. The UN Secretary-General Mr. Antonio Guterres underlined that the Baku Process “has been at the forefront of advocating for dialogue among cultures since 2008”. Conceived as a logical continuation of the Baku Process the World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue, held biennially in our country, is recognized in the UN General Assembly resolutions as a “key global platform for promoting intercultural dialogue”.

Dear guests,

I am confident that discussions to be held within the Summit will contribute to the implementation of goals on the Non-Aligned Movement's agenda. During our chairmanship, Azerbaijan will put forth consistent efforts to realize its priorities jointly with member states. I wish success to the work of the Summit and once again welcome every one of you.

Thank you for your attention.
