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**Opening remarks by Mr. Tofiq F. Musayev  
Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the United Nations**

**at an interactive dialogue on the 1982 Manila Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of  
International Disputes: The Role of International Tribunals in the Peaceful Settlement of  
International Disputes**

**UNHQ CR9, 23 February 2023**

At the outset, I would like to thank and commend the Permanent Mission of the Philippines for the initiative to hold this interactive dialogue. We are particularly encouraged that this initiative has been unanimously supported by 120 Members of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The Manila Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of International Disputes is a landmark document, initiated by the non-aligned countries, developed by the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization at its session, held in 1980 in Manila, and approved by consensus two years later, on 15 November 1982, at the 37<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations General Assembly.

The Manila Declaration was negotiated and adopted against the backdrop of divergences on a number of pressing issues on the international agenda and the intent of the non-aligned countries to seek clarification of existing legal obligations in that regard. Therefore, the consensus achieved as a result of negotiations acquired additional significance.

The Declaration builds upon the Charter of the United Nations and other global and regional instruments, reaffirms the fundamental principles of general international law, recalls the relevant obligations and provides for a comprehensive framework of peaceful settlement of international disputes, with emphasis on the role of the United Nations and its relevant organs, as well as of regional arrangements.

The Manila Declaration recognizes the role of the International Court of Justice in the peaceful settlement of international disputes and invites States to recognize the compulsory jurisdiction of the Court and include in treaties, whenever appropriate, clauses providing for the submission to the Court disputes which may arise from the interpretation or application of such treaties.

As my country, Azerbaijan, is a current Chair of the Non-Aligned Movement, I cannot but recall that, the importance of the Manila Declaration was stressed by the Heads of State and Government of the Movement at their 18<sup>th</sup> summit, held in October 2019 in Baku.

Before, during and after the summit, the Non-Aligned Movement has consistently reaffirmed and underscored its principled position concerning the peaceful settlement of disputes and, in that context, has emphasized and commended the role of the International Court of Justice. The Manila Declaration continues to be especially relevant today, given serious threats and challenges facing the world nowadays and also taking into account the prevention as one of the key concerns and priorities of the United Nations and the international community as a whole.

While navigating States as to the means of settling their disputes, the Declaration makes it abundantly clear that the recourse to any of such means does not take place in a legal vacuum, provided that no peace settlement can be reached which is inconsistent with international law, particularly where the fundamental principles of sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity are concerned.

The point to make in that regard is that international law requires not just the settlement of a dispute, but that such outcome be accompanied by a process that is consistent with particular norms, achieved peacefully and in accord with international peace and security, and justice.

To conclude, I would like to emphasize that compliance with international law in all circumstances is crucial to any progress in settling disputes, preventing and resolving conflicts, restoring and maintaining peace, building bonds of peaceful mutual benefit among nations, enhancing respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, protecting human security and promoting sustainable economic and social development.

The Manila Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of International Disputes remains an indispensable instrument contributing to the prevention of the danger of recourse to force, promotion the observance of the principle of peaceful settlement of disputes and a policy of cooperation and peace and the enhancement of the role of the United Nations to that effect.