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**Statement by H.E. Mr. Yashar Aliyev  
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the United Nations  
at the plenary meeting of the United Nations General Assembly under agenda item 14  
“Culture of peace”**

*14 June 2023*

Mr. President,

At the outset, I would like to thank you for convening this plenary meeting and for your important opening remarks.

We are grateful to the delegation of Bangladesh for facilitating the negotiations on the annual resolution entitled “Follow-up to the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace”, which Azerbaijan has co-sponsored.

We also thank the Secretary-General for his report contained in the document A/77/614 on the promotion of a culture of peace, submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 76/68.

Azerbaijan attaches great importance to the promotion of a culture of peace, paying particular attention to encouraging intercultural and interreligious dialogue at the national and international levels and successfully implementing various initiatives to that end.

As the Secretary-General informed in his report, in Azerbaijan, UN-Women and the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, in partnership with the Government of Azerbaijan, put forward a plan for a series of intergenerational forums on women, peace and security to raise awareness about gender mainstreaming in post-conflict reconstruction, access to sustained and legal livelihoods, women’s participation in spheres of decision-making and advocacy for endorsement of the country’s national action plan on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). The report also mentioned the participation of women and youth civil society representatives from Azerbaijan in the UN-Women organized online consultations on the theme entitled “Looking beyond 2020: advancing Women, peace and security in eastern partnership countries”.

Mr. President,

As the Secretary-General highlighted in his report, a culture of peace is central to the founding mission of the United Nations.

Indeed, intercultural and interreligious dialogue remains one of the important avenues within the broader objectives of peacebuilding, sustaining peace and reconciliation and is essential for tackling the root causes of violence and conflict.

However, hate propaganda, disinformation and the policies aimed at sowing dissension on religious and racial grounds, building mono-ethnic societies and advocating the ideas of ethnic incompatibility, dehumanization and racial superiority, continue to fuel identity-based intolerance, destabilize societies and undermine peaceful coexistence.

Attempts to weaponize the past and promote fabricated historical narratives serve the same purpose, resulting in generations growing up with a deep sense of hatred and intolerance.

Impunity for serious violations of international law remains one of the major impediments to peace, justice and reconciliation in some parts of the world.

It is high time to translate the right words into real actions. As we speak here people are dying in conflicts or are being blown up by mines in peacetime, including in my country – Azerbaijan.

We concur with the Secretary-General that the work of the United Nations on a culture of peace can be seen as a natural support for the New Agenda for Peace and its role to promote peace and prevent conflict.

Mr. President,

The fundamentally flawed and false allegations made by the representative of Armenia earlier at this meeting reveal the extent to which hatred, intolerance and falsehood dominate in his country's discourse and the serious threat that it poses to regional peace, security and stability.

It is ironic to hear accusations of hatred and discrimination on ethnic grounds from Armenia, where the dehumanization and identity denial of Azerbaijanis is so prevalent that anti-Azerbaijani stereotypes are taught to Armenian children in school from an early age and have expanded into a widely accepted view that Azerbaijanis are ethnically incompatible with Armenians. At the heart of the real objectives and policies of Armenia is a long-standing racist ideology, which seeks to unify all Armenians within a single, mono-ethnic State.

This is exactly what Armenia tried to accomplish by expelling all more than 200,000 Azerbaijanis from their historical homeland in Armenia, further unleashing aggression against Azerbaijan and occupying and ethnically cleansing a large portion of my country's sovereign territory.

Over more than 30 years of conflict and occupation, Armenia subjected Azerbaijani cultural heritage in the formerly occupied territories to large-scale plunder, destruction and vandalism. The facts are really shocking and unprecedented. Suffice it to mention just a few. Thus, out of 67 mosques in the formerly occupied territories 64 were destroyed. The deliberate use of mosques as pens for pigs and cows during the occupation was a potent and symbolic action intended as a particular insult. Over 900 cemeteries in those territories were either destroyed or desecrated. They were targeted deliberately due to their family, historical, and cultural importance to our people.

Moreover, despite the end of the war in the fall of 2020, in blatant disregard for the binding measure indicated by the International Court of Justice on 7 December 2021, ordering Armenia to “take all necessary measures to prevent the incitement and promotion of racial hatred, including by organizations and private persons in its territory, targeted at persons of Azerbaijani national or ethnic origin”, various organizations operating in Armenia continue to incite anti-Azerbaijani hatred in total impunity.

Mr. President,

Despite the devastating consequences of the aggression unleashed against my country and unspeakable atrocities and sufferings that our people have endured, it was Azerbaijan that, following the end of the war, genuinely proposed to Armenia normalizing inter-State relations. This initiative has been widely supported by the international community.

Azerbaijan remains fully committed to the objectives of a peaceful, secure, stable and prosperous region and will continue its efforts towards advancing post-conflict peacebuilding, reintegration and development in the region. We are keen to further contributing to the culture of peace, strengthening the legal order, advancing the prevention agenda, ensuring accountability and enhancing dialogue and global solidarity.

Thank you.