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**Statement by Mr. Tofiq Musayev
Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the United Nations
at the 58th plenary meeting of the seventy-seventh session of the United Nations General
Assembly on the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/77/1)**

6 February 2023

Mr. President,

Let me begin by conveying our deepest sympathies and heartfelt condolences to the peoples and the Governments of Türkiye and Syria in connection with the devastating earthquake that caused an extensive loss of human lives.

Mr. President,

We are grateful to the Secretary-General for submitting the report on the work of the Organization and sharing his priorities for 2023.

While the world is becoming more divided, uncompromising and intolerant, peoples throughout the planet continue to suffer from conflicts, forced displacements, terrorism, separatism, violent extremism, inequality, insecurity, poverty and climate change.

Policies based on ethno-nationalist ideologies and aimed at sowing dissension on religious and racial grounds, building mono-ethnic societies and advocating the ideas of ethnic incompatibility and supremacy fuel identity-based intolerance, destabilize societies and undermine peaceful coexistence.

The lack of accountability for serious violations of international law is also among the conditions conducive to the protraction, expansion or resurgence of conflicts.

Terrorism remains a potential and even immediate threat in many regions and countries. As the Secretary-General noted in his report, the global threat posed by terrorist organizations is compounded by growing concerns over terrorism grounded in racism and intolerance, or terrorist crimes targeting victims on the basis of religion or belief. Indeed, the threat from racially and ethnically motivated individuals and groups resorting to terrorist methods and means has increased and requires more focus and efforts to curb such activities and to prosecute and punish terrorist offenders.

Furthermore, acts of violence and terrorism against diplomatic and consular missions and representatives continue and their security and safety are being increasingly threatened and impaired. Unfortunately, in most instances, measures taken by receiving States to prevent such acts and ensure the protection, security and safety of diplomatic and consular missions and their staff are either insufficient or futile. In that regard, the increased attention and additional actions from the United Nations are needed to effectively guarantee the strict compliance by States with their respective obligations under international law.

Mr. President,

The purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations are universally binding and must be applied consistently, not selectively.

In order to build, keep and sustain peace, first and foremost, the obligations must be translated into real actions, consistent with international law and aimed at better addressing all forms and domains of threats, opposing and rejecting disinformation and confronting and overcoming old and new dividing lines.

The foundation-stone across all efforts is and must remain the State. Respect for its fundamental sovereignty and integrity is crucial to any progress in preventing 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.

It is critical that the United Nations continue mobilizing the world against racism and confronting hate speech, hatred of all kinds, disinformation and the incitement to fragmentation, violence and extremism.

Providing support to States affected by conflict and engaged in post-conflict peacebuilding, reconstruction, rehabilitation and reintegration is and must remain a critical commitment of the entire United Nations system.

We look forward to the New Agenda for Peace as an opportunity to address all forms and domains of threats, reflect on collective commitment to the Charter of the United Nations and multilateralism and enhance the UN prevention toolbox.

Mr. President,

Azerbaijan's experience of nearly thirty years of occupation of its sovereign territories by neighboring Armenia, in blatant violation of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the relevant Security Council resolutions, is an illustration and reminder of the need to do much more to prevent and resolve conflicts, ensure respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, confront hatred and build and sustain peace.

The consequences of the aggression against my country are shocking: tens of thousands of people were killed; more than 200,000 Azerbaijanis were expelled from their historical homeland in Armenia; all occupied territories were ethnically cleansed of more than 700,000 Azerbaijanis; hundreds of cities, towns and villages in my country were razed to the ground; and tremendous losses were inflicted on Azerbaijan's cultural and religious heritage and the environment. Furthermore, Azerbaijan is one of the countries in the world most contaminated with landmines and other explosive devices, as Armenia indiscriminately planted hundreds of thousands of such mines and devices in the formerly occupied territories of my country.

Following the end of the conflict in the fall of 2020, along with large-scale restoration and reconstruction works in the liberated territories to ensure the safe return of the displaced population and high standard of living, Azerbaijan instituted legal proceedings within the International Court of Justice and the European Court of Human Rights, as well as commenced an inter-State arbitration under the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats in connection with extensive destruction of its environment and biodiversity. Additionally, several individuals were prosecuted and punished for war crimes and terrorist and mercenary activities.

Mr. President,

We resolutely reject as false and misleading the statement by the representative of Armenia made earlier today at the informal meeting of the plenary. Hackneyed fabrications and deliberate deceptions are part of Armenia's long-standing policy of disinformation carried out against the background of its decades-long contempt for international law and human rights.

I have to recall that what the representative of Armenia erroneously called "Nagorno-Karabakh" is the internationally recognized sovereign territory of Azerbaijan, which was under Armenia's unlawful occupation for nearly 30 years. That was consistently reaffirmed in Security Council resolutions 822 (1993), 853 (1993), 874 (1993) and 884 (1993). The legal name of this area of Azerbaijan is now the Karabakh Economic Region or, in its shortened equivalent, the Karabakh region.

If Armenia genuinely cares about international law, it must be aware that only geographical names established by legitimate and competent national authorities in relation to their sovereign territory must be recognized and used in the Organization. The respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States is an absolute imperative.

Armenia's claims of a closure or blockade of the Lachin-Khankandi road are simply false. This road is situated entirely in Azerbaijan within its Lachin district. There is neither blockade nor impediment whatsoever or shortages of food and medicine. The regime for the movement of persons, vehicles and cargo along the road remains unchanged, with Azerbaijan guaranteeing the security, in accordance with the November 2020 Trilateral Statement. Residents, ambulances, humanitarian convoys and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) continue using the road without any restrictions. Thus, since 12 December 2022, about 1400

vehicles have passed safely through the road, most of them being large trucks carrying foodstuff, medicines and other supplies to Khankandi.

Moreover, the Government of Azerbaijan has declared its readiness to provide further humanitarian or any other assistance to the residents, if needed.

It is more important than ever for the international community to support bilateral and result-oriented talks between Armenia and Azerbaijan based on the agreed principles and commitments. The still remaining opportunity to turn the page of enmity and establish a sustainable and lasting peace must not be missed.

Azerbaijan will continue its consistent efforts towards strengthening security and stability, promoting accountability and advancing peacebuilding, reconciliation, reintegration, peaceful coexistence and development in our region and beyond.

Thank you.