



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

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866 United Nations Plaza, Suite 560, New York, N.Y. 10017 Tel.: (212) 371-2559 Fax: (212) 371-2784

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**Statement  
by H.E. Mr. Elmar Mammadyarov  
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan**

**General Debates  
of the 64<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations General Assembly  
25 September 2009, New York**

Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to join the previous speakers and congratulate H.E. Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki of Libya on his election to the post of the President of the 64<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations General Assembly and wish him every success, and I thank his predecessor Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann for his work.

I also express my profound respect and appreciation to the Secretary-General of the United Nations H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon for his leadership in mobilizing the international community to make our world a better place to live.

Mr. President,

We all recognise that the security of every State in the world can be better promoted and ensured with a multilateral security system. This paradigm was a principal reason behind creation of the collective security system with the United Nations Organization at its core.

Yet, after more than 60 years since the United Nations was founded, the question still remains valid whether the contemporary international security architecture is effectively and timely addressing the multifaceted and interconnected challenges and threats confronting our today's world?

The global character of today's challenges and threats makes the geographic distance irrelevant in security policy formulation, since the threats as we know them today transcend the national frontiers and the whole continents. The indirect repercussions of the threats may be as much devastating and costly as the direct impact. The interconnected and intertwined nature of the threats requires reconsidering the very concept of security in broader terms that is not confined to the traditional military aspect of security, but comprises also political, economic, energy, cultural, information and other dimensions.

The security of each State, and more broadly, the international peace and security will depend on whether States follow the norms and principles of international law and use them as a guiding tool for shaping their foreign and security policies. Following common set of norms and rules on the international arena contributes to the transparency and predictability of State behaviour and hence consolidates international peace and security.

Unfortunately, unlawful use of force is still not removed from the context of international relations. Today civilian populations are still suffering in many places around the world due to the manifest failure of individual States to fulfil their most basic and compelling responsibilities. Armed conflicts, military aggression and foreign occupation involving the most serious international crimes are only a few vivid examples from our recent history of the bitter consequences of noncompliance by individual States with the norms and principles of international law. Governments failing to obey the rules of international conduct will inevitably infringe upon the individual liberties and freedoms at home, thus undermining the democratic development.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The most vivid example of misconduct of the norms and principles of international law is almost two decades long and still unresolved Armenian-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict which also stands out as a major threat to international and regional peace and security. As a result of the aggression conducted by Armenia almost one-fifth of the territory of Azerbaijan has been occupied, approximately 1 million ethnically cleansed Azerbaijani population has become internally displaced and refugees, thousands of Azerbaijani historical-cultural heritage devastated and looted.

The United Nations Security Council in its four resolutions on the conflict reaffirmed the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and the inadmissibility of the use of force for the acquisition of territory of the other state. It has also recognized Nagorno-Karabakh as a part of Azerbaijan and called for immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of the occupying forces from all occupied territories of Azerbaijan. The United Nations General Assembly in its resolution 62/243 of 14 March

2008, entitled "The situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan", expressed respect and support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan within its internationally recognized borders.

The approach of the United Nations Security Council and the General Assembly reflected in the above-mentioned resolutions is fully consistent with the position of Azerbaijan, which from the beginning advocated for a step-by-step approach to the conflict settlement as the only viable option. A number of important steps have to be taken, starting with the withdrawal of Armenian forces from all the occupied territories, rehabilitation of these territories and return of the internally displaced persons to their homes in and around the Nagorno-Karabakh region, opening of all communications for the mutual use. This will allow removing the consequences of the conflict and will pave the way for the establishment of durable peace and stability in the region conducive to the elaboration of the legal status of the Nagorno-Karabakh region within Azerbaijan with due account of the equally heard voices of the Azerbaijani and Armenian communities of the region.

The current settlement process gives some hopes for breaking the stalemate in the resolution of the conflict. The acceptance by Armenia of the step-by-step approach to the settlement of the conflict on the basis of the principles and norms of international law and the decisions and documents adopted in this framework as reflected in the Joint Declaration signed in Moscow in November 2008 by the Presidents of Azerbaijan, Armenia and the Russian Federation is a positive sign.

Azerbaijan is ready to continue talks with Armenia's leadership for the secure and stable South Caucasus region and beyond which will allow using the ample regional opportunities for the benefit of all.

Excellencies,

Against the background of the above-mentioned negative developments in the region let me briefly share positive economic performance of my country. Azerbaijan minimized the impact of the global economic downturn on its economy and managed to sustain the growth. In 2009 the national economy has retained its dynamism and as of today the GDP growth is recorded at almost 4 %. Since 2003 we have recorded the drop in the poverty rate to 13 percent from 44 percent. The Government of Azerbaijan has substantially improved trade and investment conditions in an effort to strengthen national competitiveness and spur private sector development, especially in the non-oil segment. Non-oil GDP grew at almost 16%, the highest rate in 5 years. In recognition of the results-oriented reforms and thought-through economic policy Azerbaijan are qualified by the World Bank as one of the world's top reformers.

Strategically located Azerbaijan with young, skilled population, ample resources and dynamic economy is inevitably taking a leading role in the region and increasingly becomes a pivotal player and credible actor beyond the region.

The successful implementation of the infrastructure projects such as Baku-Supsa, Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan export oil pipelines and Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum gas pipeline boosted not only our economy, but also contributed to the development of neighbouring States. The modern energy infrastructure coupled with the vast energy resources transformed Azerbaijan into an energy hub of international importance. Azerbaijan has proven itself as a reliable partner and indispensable, secure energy source for Europe and beyond.

Location of Azerbaijan at the crossroads of the East-West and North-South major transport corridors and rapidly developing national transportation infrastructure connected to the regional highway and railroad networks highlights the strategic importance of Azerbaijan. Completion of the construction of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railroad and commissioning of the brand new seaport Alat on the Azerbaijani coast of the Caspian Sea will increase the role of Azerbaijan as a communication hub linking Europe with Asia.

Azerbaijan also has put forward an initiative to establish a Trans-Eurasian Super Information Highway, which is expected to serve as a major element of the East-West transport corridor and facilitate the supply of 20 regional countries with internet, telecommunication systems, e-information resources and e-economies.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Today, we are living at a time of heightened religious and ethnic awareness, which in certain instances takes on exaggerated forms and sometimes is being maliciously exploited to fuel conflicts on ethnic, religious or cultural grounds. The broad recognition by the Member States of the United Nations of the role of the dialogue among civilizations, and specifically of inter-cultural and inter-religious harmony in maintaining international peace and security can only be praised.

We fully support the recommendations of the Secretary-General on the importance of increasing educational efforts to remove hate messages, distortions, prejudice, and negative bias from textbooks and other educational media, and ensuring the basic knowledge and understanding of the world's main cultures, civilizations and religions.

As a country where long-standing traditions of tolerance and peaceful coexistence of different religions and ethnic groups over centuries became an inseparable part of the culture, Azerbaijan has repeatedly demonstrated its determination to act as a natural bridge bringing together different continents, cultures and civilizations through

promotion of inter-religious and intercultural dialogue based on mutual respect and understanding among peoples of different cultures and religions.

Azerbaijan was among the first countries to join the Alliance of Civilizations initiative of Turkey and Spain. With a view to translating the recommendations contained in the "Alliance of Civilizations" report of the High-Level Group appointed by the U.N. Secretary-General into concrete actions, over the past years Azerbaijan hosted a number of important events. Most recently, we held Baku Forum on Expanding the Role of Women in Cross-cultural Dialogue, which we believe will raise the awareness of the role of women in intercultural dialogue. In December 2008 we hosted the Conference of Culture Ministers of the Council of Europe Member States. For the first time in the history of the Council of Europe the ministers of the Member States of ISESCO and ALECSO joined the event. The adopted Baku Declaration envisages *inter alia* intercultural dialogue between European and neighbouring States.

At the Fifth Islamic Conference of Culture Ministers the capital of Azerbaijan Baku was declared the Islamic Culture Capital for 2009. This autumn we will be hosting the Sixth Conference of Culture Ministers of the Organization of Islamic Conference, where we will continue discussions of our future actions in fostering dialogue among civilizations.

Mr. President,

The multilateral system with the United Nations at its heart undergoes serious changes that test its strength, viability and credibility. This requires more dedicated efforts aimed at strengthening the United Nations and promoting the effectiveness of the Organization through the implementation of its decisions and resolutions.

Azerbaijan believes that, as the only truly global organization, the United Nations has to be stronger and capable in engaging in a range of pressing global issues in every part of the world, as well as in addressing aspirations and concerns of each Member State. We continue supporting the reform of the Organization, so that it could be renewed, revitalized and more responsive.

Thank you!