

Statement by the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan

Thursday, 13 September 2018 Working session 6
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Thank you Madam Moderator,

"Baku Process" is an initiative directed to promote intercultural dialogue. It was initiated by H.E. Mr. Ilham Aliyev, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the Conference of Ministers of Culture of Europe and its Neighboring Regions held in Baku on 2-3 December, 2008. The topic of the Conference was "Intercultural Dialogue as a basis for peace and sustainable development in Europe and its neighbouring regions". For the first time ministers of culture of 10 Islamic states were invited to participate at the Conference. The Conference adopted "*Baku Declaration on Promoting Intercultural Dialogue*" submitted by Azerbaijan. The next year on October 13-15 Azerbaijan hosted *the Sixth Conference of Ministers of Culture of Islamic countries*. Official delegation from more than 10 European states attended the Conference. The participants of the Conference adopted *Baku communiqué in the Ministerial roundtable on "Fostering Dialogue and Cultural Diversity - Baku Process: New Challenge for Dialogue between Civilizations"*.

In September 2010 H.E. Mr. Ilham Aliyev, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan in his speech delivered in the 65-th Session of UN General Assembly declared that Azerbaijan will host *World Intercultural Dialogue Forum*. It caused *the transformation of the Baku Process from regional initiative into global movement*. In accordance with this idea of the President Ilham Aliyev there were 3 World Forums on Intercultural Dialogue in 2011, in 2013, 2015, and in 2017 in Azerbaijan.

This year (2018) Azerbaijan will celebrate the 10-th anniversary of the Baku Process.

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres highly appreciated the role of the Baku process in the development of dialogue between cultures. The report "Promotion of a culture of peace and interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace" submitted by the Secretary-General to the UN General Assembly in October 2017 says "The World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue, organized by the Government of Azerbaijan in cooperation with UNESCO, the Alliance of Civilizations, UNWTO, the Council of Europe and the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, has established itself as a key global platform for promoting intercultural dialogue." "The fourth biennial Forum, on the theme "Advancing intercultural dialogue: new avenues for human security, peace and sustainable development", held in Baku early in May 2017, hosted more participants, events and sessions than any previous edition, while its high-level dimension was enhanced by a high-level meeting on countering violent extremism through girls' education and a ministerial meeting."

“During the two-day event, around 800 stakeholders from more than 120 countries discussed sharing resources, knowledge and experience, opening up new avenues for joint thinking and action towards the aspirations of the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures, Sustainable Development Goal 16 to promote peaceful and inclusive societies, and the Baku Process, which has been at the forefront of advocating for dialogue among cultures since 2008,” the UN Secretary-General said.

Other International events taken place within the framework of Baku Process:

- Summit of Religious Leaders- April, 2010,
- Baku International Humanitarian Forums – (2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2016); In October there will be the VII Baku International Humanitarian Forum in Baku,
- The 7th UNAOC Global Forum –April 2016.

The 1-st European Olympic games and the IV Islamic Solidarity games held in Azerbaijan respectively in June, 2015 and in May, 2017 can be considered as “Baku process” events, because one of the main goals of these sport events was the promotion of dialogue between different cultures.

The Baku Process is understood as a process that comprises an open and respectful exchange of views between individuals and groups with different ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds and heritage living in different continents, on the basis of mutual understanding and respect. Contribution of the Baku process to the path of human civilization is indispensable, given its role in consolidating cooperation, coexistence, peace, love, tolerance and cross-cultural bonds among peoples and nations.

Main actors- the Government of Azerbaijan, the Council of Europe, North-South Center of the Council of Europe, UNESCO, ISESCO, Alliance of Civilizations, World Tourism Organisation and HeydarAliyev Foundation.

The objectives of the Baku Process:

- to promote understanding, dialogue, tolerance among cultures to increase co-operation in particular, between Muslim and Western societies;
- to build respect and understanding among cultures and amplifying voices of moderation and reconciliation which help to calm cultural and religious tensions between nations and peoples;
- to define the opportunities of culture, cultural heritage, art in order to use its potential more effectively in the process of realizing intercultural dialogue and cooperation and to prepare real recommendations for practical actions;
- to support cultural and artistic activities and exchanges and recognizing the role of artists and creators-as vehicles for dialogue and mutual understanding, and introducing incentives to facilitate everyone's access to and participation in this activities;
- to develop intercultural dialogue through concerted actions between the competent international and regional organizations, with the active involvement of the member states concerned and civil society;
- to promote UNESCO convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions;

-to support and organize international events on the promotion of intercultural dialogue.