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**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF
AZERBAIJAN**

**Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting
Freedom of Movement and Human Contacts
April 25-26, 2013**

Mr. Moderator.

Freedom of movement is among basic commitments enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act and other relevant OSCE documents and discussions on this subject are of great importance nowadays.

The visa regime established in Azerbaijan is of a liberal character and mainly bases on the principle of reciprocity. Our country maintains bilateral agreements with about 45 countries on simplified procedure of visa issuance for holders of diplomatic and service passports and visa free regime with almost all CIS countries.

Nevertheless it should be mentioned that freedom of movement cannot be implemented against norms and principles of international law, such as respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity within internationally recognized borders.

Unfortunately some serious problems relating to implementation of freedom of movement still exist in some parts of the OSCE area. For instance, in our part of the world, around one million Azerbaijanis have been deprived of the right to live in their own homes and native lands and those people cannot visit their sacred places and cemeteries. Due to the ongoing conflict it was also not possible for foreign travelers wishing to visit Azerbaijan to go to the territories which are under the occupation now. Any visit to these territories without consent of the Republic of Azerbaijan is considered as a violation of sovereignty and territorial integrity in accordance with national and international law.

With regard to the statement distributed by the US Delegation referring to Azerbaijan we would like to note the following:

The information on case of Mr.Ali Karimli is politicized.

The provision on freedom of movement is enshrined and guaranteed by the law of the Republic of Azerbaijan, which also provides an opportunity for every person to go to court in case if he or she deems that his rights were violated. In some cases this legislation envisages certain possibility of limitation of freedom of movement.

Having said that we would like to reiterate our support to the relevant OSCE commitments on protection and promotion of fundamental rights and freedoms, including freedom of movement.

Thank you Mr. Moderator.