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Hügelgasse 2, A-1130 Vienna Tel: +43 (1) 403 13 22 Fax: +43 (1) 403 13 23 E-mail: vienna@mission.mfa.gov.az

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**Statement at the 859<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Permanent Council  
April 14, 2011**

*Agenda item: Any other business  
“The World Forum on Intercultural dialogue”, April 7-8, 2011, Baku, Azerbaijan*

Mr. Chairman,

On April 7-8, 2011 Baku hosted the World Forum on Intercultural dialogue under the auspices of H.E. Ilham Aliyev, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The Forum was supported by UNESCO, Alliance of Civilizations, Council of Europe, the Center of North-South of the Council of Europe, and ISESCO.

The Forum was dedicated to intercultural dialogue and cultural diversity for the achievement of peace and development and its slogan was “To join common values, to be enriched with various cultures”.

Azerbaijan initiated holding the World Forum on Intercultural dialogue in 2010 based on the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations by the General Assembly of the United Nations (November 2001), the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, UNESCO (2005), Declaration on Cultural Diversity ISESCO (2004), Declaration and Plan of Action of the Third Summit of Heads of State and Governments of the Council of Europe (May 2005), the Council of Europe White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue (May 2008), the Baku Declaration for the Promotion of Intercultural Dialogue (December 2008) and the Global Agenda for Intercultural Dialogue.

The Forum brought together Ministers of Culture from 20 states, high representatives of international organizations, such as, Secretary General of ISESCO, Under Secretary General of UNESCO, Chairman of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, as well as mayors of the cities, politicians and about 500 prominent representatives of art, scientists and experts.

The sessions of the Forum were entitled: "Towards the world without borders", "More meaningful dialogue: Culture, Arts and Heritage", "The role of women in the intercultural dialogue".

The necessity of the dialogue among cultures was the major idea of the Forum. The Forum discussed such an important question as "What the world needs: clash of civilizations or dialogue and mutual understanding?".

At the closing ceremony of the World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue the Forum participants declared that Azerbaijan serves as an example for successful conducting of the intercultural and intercultural dialogue.

It is worth mentioning that, during the last years Baku has become a real space for a dialogue. A number of significant international events dedicated to this topic have been held in Baku. In 2010 Baku hosted the Summit of the World's Religious Leaders; in 2009 Baku was declared the capital of Islamic culture; in 2008 the Intercultural Forum on "Expanding the Role of Women in Cross-Cultural Dialogue" was held in Baku. In autumn of 2011 Baku will host the First International Humanitarian Forum. In 2018 Nakhchivan, another ancient city of Azerbaijan will be the capital of Islamic culture.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.