



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

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Statement

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

**at the General Debate of the Sixty-Ninth
Session of the United Nations General
Assembly**

New York, September 26, 2014

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Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate my good friend Mr. Sam Kutesa on his assumption of the Presidency of the sixty-ninth session of the United Nations General Assembly and wish him every success in fulfilling this highly responsible duty. We are also grateful to Mr. John Ashe for all his hard work in presiding over the sixty-eighth session.

Mr. President,

Azerbaijan reaffirms its commitment to the implementation of the global sustainable development agenda and reaching an agreement on the post-2015 Development Agenda.

My country's record in attaining the Millennium Development Goals is truly unique. Over the past ten years, the Gross Domestic Product of Azerbaijan has increased by 3.4 times. Now, the economy of Azerbaijan accounts for more than 80% of that of the South Caucasus. The unrivaled high rate of economic growth has been achieved thanks to prudent use of available resources and rapid transition to socially oriented market economy. The poverty rate was reduced from 49% in 2004 to 5.3% in 2014. Over the same period, the unemployment rate has been decreasing from 10.6% to 5%.

The Government has been implementing large-scale programs on improving good governance, strengthening rule of law, ensuring respect for human rights, providing facilitated access to public services, inclusive and equitable education, gender equality and empowering women, enabling access to affordable energy and protection of environment.

The rapid development at national level enabled Azerbaijan to embark on a new road of official development assistance in the status of an emerging donor. Over the past years, Azerbaijan has continued responding to humanitarian and socio-economic challenges faced by the developing countries through the Azerbaijan International Development Agency-AIDA and other channels.

The commitment to contribute to international development is widely shared across our public. The leading non-governmental organization in Azerbaijan, the Heydar Aliyev Foundation, has implemented numerous social, humanitarian and development projects in a number of countries.

Azerbaijan has established itself as a reliable supplier of energy in the global market. Just recently, the groundbreaking ceremony was held in Azerbaijan launching the Southern Gas Corridor. This \$50 billion-project, which envisages construction of pipeline systems such as TANAP and TAP, will enable Europe to get gas supplies from a completely new resource base in Azerbaijan.

The project on the Trans-Eurasian information super highway (TASIM), which was initiated by Azerbaijan, will provide the countries of the region with ICT services, facilitating access to the Internet, telecommunication systems and e-info resources for 20 countries throughout the region.

Acknowledging the value of transport as an important mechanism for sustainable development, Azerbaijan has successfully launched several regional infrastructure projects. The Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway is an important link connecting Europe and Asia.

Against the background of various threats and challenges facing the world nowadays, it is critical to persistently stress the importance of promoting key values of different cultures, enhancing better understanding among diverse communities and encouraging mutual respect. Located between the two great continents of Asia and Europe, Azerbaijan is a unique place where East and West meet, world's main religions peacefully coexist, values and traditions of different cultures complement harmonically each other. It is not a coincidence that in recent years Azerbaijan has hosted numerous international events aimed at promoting the dialogue among civilizations and enhancing understanding among different religions, faiths and cultures.

Mr. President,

Violence and fragility remain the largest obstacles to the development. The world community is still facing serious breaches of the fundamental norms and principles of international law. Peoples throughout the world continue to suffer from devastating wars, aggression, military occupation and ethnic cleansing.

For more than twenty years, Armenia has been using force against the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Azerbaijan. It has occupied around 20% of the territories of Azerbaijan and conducted ethnic cleansing against almost one million Azerbaijanis, as a result of which no single Azerbaijani is left in Armenia or in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. No single Azerbaijani historic and cultural monument escaped destruction in the occupied territories and in Armenia.

In 1993, the United Nations Security Council adopted four resolutions that reaffirm the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and the inadmissibility of the use of force for the acquisition of territory. The resolutions demand the immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of the Armenian occupying forces from all the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. Further, the United Nations General Assembly, Non-Aligned Movement, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and numerous other regional organizations adopted various decisions supporting the sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and demanded settlement of the conflict based on these principles.

Unfortunately, Armenia disregards all the aforementioned resolutions and the generally accepted norms and principles of international law, and continues military occupation of Azerbaijani lands.

Armenia regularly violates the ceasefire and deliberately attacks Azerbaijani civilians, which results in the killings and woundings of inhabitants residing near the front line. Just recently, several Azerbaijani civilians visiting the graveyards of their relatives in the occupied territories were taken hostage, tortured and some of them even killed by the security forces of Armenia.

It is therefore critical that the international community play a more proactive role in ending impunity for the crimes committed against the civilian population of Azerbaijan. Combating impunity is important to ensure sustainable peace and reconciliation.

Two days ago, the President of Armenia delivered a statement here at the General Debate trying to mislead the UN General Assembly by distorting the facts and the situation in the peace process, and misinterpreting the norms and principles of international law and the relevant documents adopted in this framework. The President of Armenia misuses the noble principle of self-determination to cover up his country's attempts to annex territories of the neighboring State, Azerbaijan, by use of force. The situation, which he tries to present as a self-determination of the Armenians living in Azerbaijan, has nothing in common with the principle of self-determination contained in the UN Charter and the Helsinki Final Act. In fact, the principle of self-determination requires the return of the displaced Azerbaijanis to the Nagorno-Karabakh region, where they will live together with the Armenian community in peace, dignity and prosperity within Azerbaijan. We believe in achieving this goal by political means.

Azerbaijan stands for a negotiated settlement of the conflict without prejudice to its rights under the Charter of the United Nations, in particular those set forth in the Article 51. The Government of Armenia must realize that the military occupation of a territory of another State does not represent a solution and its reliance on the status-quo is a grave miscalculation. Azerbaijan will never compromise its territorial integrity and the rights and freedoms of its citizens violated as a result of the aggression.

The unequivocal and consistent support by the international community for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Azerbaijan has been a crucial factor. It makes clear to Armenia that the current status-quo achieved as a result of aggression will never be accepted. I would like to thank the Member States for upholding the letter and spirit of the UN Charter by supporting the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. The international community does not and will not accept attempts to change the internationally recognized borders by use of force. The world should also not accept double standards, otherwise it can bring us back to the dark chapters of the last century. In this regard, the time is ripe to bring to justice those in Armenia who perpetuated acts of aggression against Azerbaijan and crimes against humanity, and impose sanctions on them.

Thank you.

