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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 843<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Permanent Council  
December 9, 2010**

*In response to the report by the  
OSCE Special Representative and Coordinator for  
Combating Trafficking in Human Beings*

Mr. Chairman,

We join previous speakers in warmly welcoming Ms. Maria Grazia Giammarinaro, OSCE Special Representative and Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings to the Permanent Council meeting today and thank her for very informative, thought-provoking and well-structured report. The report covers not only concrete actions taken by the Office of the Special Representative, but also gives descriptions of different forms of trafficking in human beings (THB), underlines joint efforts together with other organizations in tackling phenomena of THB, as well as indicates future perspectives for fighting this type of transnational organized crime.

Being an integral part of modern globalized world, Azerbaijan, in particularly, with a view of its favourable geographic location, unfortunately, has not been left aside of human trafficking, which significantly diminishes human security. Investigations of relevant cases show that, Azerbaijan is mostly a country of origin in THB.

Fight against THB is one of the priority areas of the Government of Azerbaijan and considerable achievements have been made to this end. Policy on combating trafficking in human beings in Azerbaijan is based on such principles as non-discrimination against victims, safe and fair treatment of victims, effective prosecution of the related crimes, involvement of civil society and international cooperation.

The main instrument for the fight against trafficking against human beings in Azerbaijan is the National Action Plan (NAP). Currently, the second NAP, which covers the years of 2009-2013, is being implemented. Encompassing all the aspects of the fight against trafficking in human beings the NAP envisages promoting mutual cooperation among the relevant institutions, enshrines main

tasks and defines the roles of the respective agencies. In accordance with the NAP the following measures have been undertaken to effectively fight against the relevant crimes: a new institution of National Coordinator was set up, a Department for combating trafficking in human beings within the Ministry of Interior and a special police unit within the Department were established. To ensure the openness and transparency, a hotline and a website of the Department have been launched. Since 2006 Assistance Fund and Shelter for victims of trafficking have been operating, where victims receive free of charge medical, psychological, legal and other assistance. They also receive one-time compensation/payment.

In accordance with the NAP relevant legislative framework has further improved. The Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on combating trafficking in human beings was adopted in 2005. “The Rules for National Referral Mechanism on victims of human trafficking” and “The Rules for identification of victims of human trafficking” were approved by the Cabinet of Ministers in 2009. This year Azerbaijan joined the Council of Europe Convention on Action against trafficking in human beings and starting from the 1<sup>st</sup> October of 2010, the Convention entered into force in relation to Azerbaijan.

Let me also briefly touch upon the SerbAz case which was mentioned in the report of the distinguished Special Representative. As soon as the relevant official request from the OSCE Office in Baku was made to the Government of Azerbaijan, the Ministry of Internal Affairs launched an investigation. The results of the investigation process, which we have at present, indicate that human trafficking is not a case in this concrete situation. Comprehensive and detailed information on the investigation process and its results were submitted by Azerbaijani side to Ms. Giammarinaro.

It is our strong belief that not a single state or government can fight human trafficking on its own and only joint efforts may give tangible results in tackling this challenge. There is still need for sustainable and continuous measures to this end. In this regard, Azerbaijan pays particular attention to increasing bilateral and multilateral cooperation in this field. Our Government relies upon technical and consultative support of relevant international organizations, including OSCE in this field.

At the end, I would like once again to commend Ms. Giammarinaro and her able staff for the work undertaken and wish all the best in their future endeavours.

Thank you.