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**Dear Mr. Moderator,
Dear members of Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights**

I would like to thank you for organizing such an important meeting, where the members of OSCE Member States, representatives civil society can discuss very important issues as well as can share their own experience on addressing the challenges

I represent the Azerbaijan Future Studies Society, which is a “think tank” involved within framework of the Millennium Project in the Future Studies and future research , the purpose of which is to systematically explore, create and test both possible and desirable future in order to improve decisions, for early warning and research of long-term global trends and strategies.

Our NGO was established in 2006 as an independent non-profit global participatory futures research think tank of futurists, scholars, business planners, and policy makers who work for international organisations, governments, corporations, NGOs, and universities.

We are a global foresight network of Nodes existing in the 56 countries .
A think tank on behalf of humanity, **not on behalf of a government**, or an issue, or an ideology, but on behalf of building a better future for all of us.

Over its 10-year history, the Azerbaijan Future Studies Society implemented both national and international projects, some of which were more or less related to the promotion of tolerance and non-discrimination in society, with the future view in this area among the young generation of citizens of Azerbaijan.

Here I would like to touch on our projects in the field of education, where a special place belongs to the National Essay Competition - “Face to face with the Future Generations”, which we have been carrying out since 2006 .

The Essay Competition is conducted on the basis of the 15 Global Challenges, which have been studied by Millennium Project in its annual report - “State of the Future”.

Among the global challenges, on the basis of which high school and university students write their essays, there are challenges that resonate with the theme of our today meeting **-Policies and Strategies for the Further Promotion of Tolerance and Non-Discrimination**,

Some of this topics includes the following issues:

How can shared values and new security strategies reduce ethnic conflicts, terrorism, and the use of weapons of mass destruction?

How can the changing status of women help improve the human condition?

How can ethical market economies be encouraged to help reduce the gap between rich and poor;

How can transnational organized crime networks be stopped from becoming more powerful and sophisticated global enterprises?

((Democratisation; Education; Peace and Conflict; the Status of Women; and Global Ethics.)))

Students give their assessment of events and processes that are happening in the world and in our country, and try to show the vision of the future for the above-listed challenges in our country and in the world. We're trying to enlighten the young generation of our country in the field of tolerance and non-discrimination, by giving them information on global challenges facing humanity. We also try to develop their vision for the future based on tolerance and non-discrimination.

Other educational project – online course on Future Metodology, where our students has been taught how to write scenarios on different challenges, particular peace scenarios – which is very fragile theme for us, and under the moderation of our international directors there are deliver and share their scenarios with Armenian youth.

We also conducted several projects for the refugee's children and for the women from the conflict zone, we worked jointly with UNICEF and UNFP

For example, summer camps for these children, IT and English courses

As well as we worked Mainly on reintegration women from conflict zone into public and social life, women empowerment and leadership

Attracting refugee women to entrepreneurship activity, project on women refugees and IDP health

Today, the European States being members of the OSCE have encountered to a crisis related to the flow of refugees and migrants from the Middle East.

In this regard, it should be noted that Azerbaijan has experience in solving social, legal and regulatory issues related to refugees, because in a result of the Nagorno-Karabakh (Garabagh) conflict, a million Azerbaijanis ended up either refugees or internally displaced persons.

The social adaptation of refugees ,internally displaced persons and their integration to the society have been conducted .

There is the State Committee for Refugees and IDPs in our country, headed by the Vice-Prime Minister of the Azerbaijani Government. Extensive work is conducted in order to address economic and social problems of people - victims of Armenian aggression.

Then I'd like to give information about situation with the national minorites

I want to note that this year (year of 2016) has been declared the Year of Multiculturalism in Azerbaijan

We have longterm experience of the peaceful coexistence of many nationalities and confessions in one territory, which we could share with our colleagues. Azerbaijan today can become an example of how people of different nations and religions live in peace and harmony in one country. The practice of Azerbaijani multiculturalism could be useful to the countries faced with the flow of refugees from the conflict zones.

In order to illustrate, I would like to provide some the statistical data.

In addition to Azerbaijanis, a number of such ethnic minorities and nationalities as

the Lezgins (178 thousand), the Russians (141.100), the Talishs (76.800), the Avars (50.900), the Tatars (30 thousand), the Ukrainians (29 thousand), the Tsakhurs (15.900), the Georgians (14.900), the Kurds (13.100), the Tats (10.900), the Jews (8.900), and the Udins (4.100) have lived in peace in Azerbaijan .

And in spite of the existed Nagorno-Karabakh (Garabagh) conflict with ARMENIA, 120 thousand Armenians live in the Nagorno-Karabakh (Garabagh) region in Azerbaijan, and 30 thousand of them live in other regions and cities of Azerbaijan that proves once again that the Nagorno-Karabakh (Garabagh) conflict is not an interethnic conflict, but rather a territorial and inter-state conflict. There is no Azerbaijanis live in Armenia, and today Armenia is a mono national state.

The Constitution of Azerbaijan guarantees equal rights and freedoms for citizens, regardless of their nationality, language, or religion, and proclaim equality of all citizens before the law regardless of their ethnic origin, religion, and language. The State Committee for Religious Affairs has registered 534 religious organisations in Azerbaijan.

In addition to traditional Islam, Christianity, and Judaism, the following religious communities are functioning in Azerbaijan:

- Praise Cathedral Church of God (Nehemiah)
- God's Vivifying Grace
- International Society for Krishna Consciousness
- New Apostolic Church (Baha'i)
- Evangelical Christian Community

In Azerbaijan, there are: 1 Catholic Church, 4 Georgian-orthodox churches, 7 synagogues, 11 churches, 5 Orthodox churches and 1803 mosques.

And Armenian church still remains in the very centre of the capital of Azerbaijan – Baku city

As member of the Council of Europe, the Republic of Azerbaijan ratified and fulfils the European Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

The national minorities benefit from all rights and opportunities given to them by laws of the country. In the areas densely populated by ethnic minorities, the training in the primary grades of secondary schools is delivered in the native languages of ethnic minorities. The curricula and textbooks, poetry and folklore collections and fiction books are printed, the magazines are published, and the national theatre and folklore groups are functioning in the native languages of the ethnic minorities.

Each minority and nationally has their own **National Cultural Centres**, such as the Slavic Cultural Centre, Azerbaijani-Israeli Society, the Russian Community, the Society of Ukrainians, the Ingiloian Community, the Centre of Kurdish culture named “Ronai”, the Lezgin National Centre named “Samur”, the Chechen Cultural Centre, the Cultural Centre of Tat people, the Tatar Society of Culture named “Turgant-tel”, the Tatar Cultural Centre named “Yashlyg”, the Society of the Crimean Tatars named ‘Crimea’, the Society of Georgians, the Humanitarian Society of Azerbaijani Georgians, the Talish Cultural Centre, the Society of Avars, the Community of Mountain Jews, the Community of European Jews (Ashkenazi), the Jewish Women's Humanitarian Association, the Society of German Culture named “Kapelhaus”, the Centre of Polish Culture named “The Polonia”, the International Talish Association named “Mada”, the Association of Talishians named “Avesta”, etc., all carry out their activities in Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan understands that national diversity is an achievement of our country and,

In October 2014 the new educational programs such as “ Introduction to multiculturalism” and “ Azerbaijani multiculturalism” had been prepared and in December 2014 it was already implemented in the education programme