

**STATEMENT OF AMBASSADOR F.ISMAYILOV, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN TO THE OSCE  
AT THE 13<sup>TH</sup> OSCE ECONOMIC FORUM IN PRAGUE  
MAY 23, 2005**

Mr. Chairman,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, I would also like to welcome the participants of the Forum and thank the Slovenian Chairmanship and the OSCE Secretariat for excellent Organization of this event. Special thanks go the Government of the Czech Republic for hosting this Meeting in the beautiful city of Prague.

Mr. Chairman,

Having fully endorsed ourselves with the statement of the GUAM group of countries, I would also like to touch upon a few points of importance to my Delegation in my national capacity.

Historically, Azerbaijan has been enjoying diverse multicultural, multi-ethnic and multi-religious understanding throughout its territory and can present a good example of coexistence of different national minorities living in peace and harmony as well as their full integration into social and economic life of our society. A comprehensive information as to the respective policies implemented in Azerbaijan has been presented to the office of the OSCE Coordinator in economic and environmental activities.

Dear colleagues,

As we can tell from the tight schedule of the Forum, the major topic of this event presents a challenging task of discussing issues that undoubtedly have a considerable impact on the very fabric of our societies. This is also challenging because of the importance of these issues for and their implications on the overall concept of security, something that that affects us all.

That comprehensive approach to security holds true both for the OSCE as an organization and us as Member States. Anniversaries of the signature of the Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of Paris we marked this year give us yet another opportunity to assess to what extent the OSCE has succeeded in achieving its fundamental goal - to promote security for its participating States. However, we could be hardly satisfied when it comes to practical realization of the OSCE's potential or its real effectiveness in coping with complex challenges encountering the European security already for many years.

As we all increasingly witness, unresolved conflicts in the OSCE area have a detrimental impact on human security and target negative shifts in the demographic situation in the first place.

Azerbaijan is amongst those countries that suffered directly from the consequences of armed conflicts. As a result of the military aggression and occupation of 20% of its territory by Armenia, 1 million of Azerbaijanis became refugees and internally displaced people.

We also faced another phenomenon: when trying to consolidate the results of its military aggression, Armenia has consequently launched a policy of transfer of settlers into the occupied Azerbaijani territories, which is a violation of the Geneva Convention of 1949.

Azerbaijan has repeatedly expressed its deep concern with these actions at all international levels. We were compelled to request the UN General Assembly to consider the situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. The fact-finding mission of the Minsk Group of the OSCE that visited the occupied territories, revealed the process of the transfer of population in these territories and confirmed Azerbaijan's concerns on this matter. In their recommendations which they made on the basis of the mission's conclusions, the Co-Chairs of the MG of the OSCE appeal that "any further settlement of the occupied territories should be discouraged" to "avoid changes in the demographic structure of the region".

In compliance with the international practice, Armenia bears full responsibility for all actions taking place in the occupied territories, including the transfer of Armenians into the territories where they never lived before. The Mission's report and Co-Chairs' recommendations lay a solid foundation for further review and resolution of this problem and we hope to see the support of the international community on this issue.

Mr. Chairman,  
Distinguished delegates,

The importance of the economic and environmental dimension (EED) of the OSCE can hardly be overestimated. And I believe that all my colleagues around the table share this understanding. This is also the focus of the OSCE Strategy Document in the EED that

sets the framework for policies and activities designed to improve economic performance and promote economic co-operation and integration within the OSCE area.

Therefore, we would like to welcome the review of commitments in the sphere of transport, trade and integration to be held during our tomorrow's session and express our hope that these discussions will not only generate sharing of figure-based information but will also try to address proposals as to the ways of fostering economic development in OSCE Participating States.

In conclusion, I would like to invite participants of the Forum to exercise an interactive exchange of their visions and ideas on the topics discussed and wish them successful deliberations.

Thank you.