

## **Conference**

### **Humanitarian Donor Evolution and Importance of Partnerships: Azerbaijan's story**

#### **Concept note**

#### **Background**

Since regaining its independence after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Azerbaijan has achieved impressive results in eradicating extreme poverty, unemployment, ensuring universal secondary education and primary health care, and promoting gender equality. Currently, Azerbaijan is adapting its national sustainable development strategy taking into account the Sustainable Development Goals targets aimed at developing a more sustainable, inclusive and diversified economy.

Within a relatively short timeframe, Azerbaijan has transformed itself from a transition economy into an upper middle-income country with a high human development index. This progress has made Azerbaijan an active and important international and regional player and an emerging humanitarian and development donor. Throughout the last 25 years, Azerbaijan has accumulated a wealth of experience, technical knowledge, expertise and best practices that can be shared with other countries. Azerbaijan actively cooperates with the UN institutions in exporting its knowledge and expertise to other countries within the framework of South-South Cooperation.

Today, as an emerging donor, Azerbaijan responds to humanitarian and socio-economic challenges faced by developing countries through the Azerbaijan International Development Agency (AIDA) and other channels. Established in 2011, AIDA has provided over 1,5 billion USD in humanitarian and overseas development assistance to more than 40 developing countries worldwide.

Although today Azerbaijan is widely regarded as emerging donor country, during the initial years following regaining independence, Azerbaijan itself was an aid recipient country. UN assistance was focused on addressing the immediate needs of refugees and IDPs affected by the conflict in and around the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan. During this time, the UN family provided food, health services, shelter and other non-food items to around one million Azerbaijani IDPs and refugees. The combined efforts of the national agencies, local authorities and international community were crucial in preventing the most dramatic consequences of large-scale displacement, such as mass starvation, epidemics and social unrest.

#### **Conference objectives**

- to demonstrate the evolution of the UN humanitarian policy in Azerbaijan as the country that successfully transformed from an aid recipient country into the emerging donor;
- to discuss the role and impact of emerging donors in the light of further developing cooperation with UN and establishing partnerships in global humanitarian and development actions.

## Organization

The event is co-hosted by OCHA and the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Partnerships with the Middle East and Central Asia and the Deputy Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan will co-chair the conference.

The event is scheduled for May 2019. It is going to be held in the Palais des Nations from 09:30 to 13:00 and will be followed by the launch of Azerbaijan's humanitarian aid publication. Cocktail and photo-exhibition illustrating the humanitarian activities in Azerbaijan will wrap up the entire event. Working language of the event is English.

## Format

Opening session: The conference will be opened by the Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Partnerships with the Middle East and Central Asia and the Deputy Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan.

Working sessions: two working session will follow the opening session. Working session 1 will discuss experiences and challenges in humanitarian aid delivery while collaborating with host governments. It will also highlight the evolution of the humanitarian policy and interventions by the UN and non-UN agencies as well as international NGOs since the beginning of the humanitarian operations in Azerbaijan in early 1990s. The session will include presentations from representatives of the Government of Azerbaijan, UNHCR, ICRC, research circles as well as UN member state that was actively engaged in rendering humanitarian aid to Azerbaijan.

Working session 2 will discuss the role of emerging donors in the context of the perspectives of further developing cooperation with UN and establishing partnerships in global humanitarian and development actions. This session will include presentations from the representatives of the UN agencies like OCHA and WHO, NGO networks as well as from the Azerbaijan International Development Agency and UN member states that benefited from the humanitarian and development assistance. Each session will be followed by Q/A sessions.

Working sessions will be followed by the launch of Azerbaijan's humanitarian aid publication. A short film will be screened illustrating the humanitarian activities in Azerbaijan and transformation of Azerbaijan from the aid recipient country into the emerging donor.

Closing session: Concluding remarks will be delivered by the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the UNOG in Geneva.

## Contacts

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