

Remarks by Azerbaijan
16th session of the Human Rights Council
Geneva, 7 March 2011

Mr. President,

The Delegation of Azerbaijan welcomes Mr. Chaloka Beyani, the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons and thanks him for the introductory statement. We express our hope that the Special Rapporteur's activity in the given sphere will be as successful and productive as that of the previous mandate holder, Mr. Walter Kalin, the former Representative of the Secretary General on the human rights of internally displaced persons.

The annual report shows that the Representative in the course of last year has visited several countries from all regions. Obviously these visits contribute to the adoption of relevant policies and measures in favour of IDPs. We hope that these visits will be followed up by the new mandate holder given the magnitude and scope of the problems with IDPs all over the world today.

We would like to note with satisfaction that the Representative's dialogue and cooperation with relevant international humanitarian actors, including the United Nations and its agencies as well as regional organizations and other stakeholders. We agree that this process is positively affecting the exchange and advancement of the knowledge and good practices in relation to internal displacement which in its turn leads to the embarking on practical changes as a result of fruitful discussions amongst the pertinent humanitarian actors. We believe that such useful interaction will be continued and the active engagement of the Special Rapporteur within the broader humanitarian platform with a view of attracting attention to and mainstreaming the human rights of IDPs will enhance the existing close cooperation between this mandate and other interested stakeholders.

It is worthwhile noting that previous mandate holder's activity was not only limited to vulnerable segments displaced as a result of man-made disasters, but also covered other IDPs – victims of the new challenges. We are glad that addressing the human rights of internally displaced persons and communities affected by the climate change and natural disasters has been included in the priorities of the Special Rapporteur. We commend this inclusive approach.

Mr. President,

We thank Dr. Kalin for his follow-up visit to Azerbaijan in May 2010 and his efforts aimed at focusing the international community's attention to the dire internal displacement situation in Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan appreciates the constructive and productive consultations that the Representative held with the relevant authorities during this visit and his comprehensive follow-up report. Let us stress that we take very seriously the Representative's conclusions and recommendations.

The Government of Azerbaijan well understands its primary obligation in tackling the problems faced by IDPs stemming from the occupation of Azerbaijani territories and forced eviction of the local Azerbaijani population by the Republic of Armenia. The current rampant economic growth and economic achievements enabled Azerbaijan to advance livelihood opportunities of the internally displaced persons.

The efforts of the Government of Azerbaijan aimed at alleviating the sufferings of refugees and internally displaced persons were highly valued by the Representative in his report and I quote "the Government of Azerbaijan has made significant progress in improving many aspects of the lives of IDPs since his visit to the country in 2007."

Today the projects concerning the improving the accommodation facilities, employment opportunities and the promotion of self-reliance of refugees and internally displaced persons are being implemented to its fullest extent in our country. The Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan is redoubling its efforts to resolve the existing difficulties of refugees and IDPs through the increased cooperation both on bilateral and multilateral levels.

As a result of the implementation of the "State Program on improvement of living conditions and employment rehabilitation of refugees and internally displaced persons" and Supplements made to that State Program, the all tent camps were liquidated, living conditions of IDP families were improved, the poverty rate among internally displaced persons dropped to 23% from 74%. These measures clearly demonstrate the sustained and firm commitment of the Government aimed at easing the sufferings and anxieties of internally displaced persons and solving their problems and these efforts are underway. In February 2011, the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on additional measures for improvement of housing and living conditions of the internally displaced families was enacted. This document envisages improvement of housing and living condition of internally displaced persons, continuation of the large-scale activities conducted in the field of strengthening their social protection which is in line with the Representative's recommendations.

It should be noted that all measures on resettlement of IDPs to newly constructed settlements are carried out on the basis of thorough consultations with them and on their consent. Furthermore, the newly-built settlements for IDPs, the entrance and exit routes to these places are located substantially remote from the line of contact

between the armed forces of Armenia and Azerbaijan and do not pose any threat to the persons settled there.

Mr.President,

As highlighted in the report, the vast majority of IDPs have been displaced since the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict which ended with the 1994 ceasefire still in place until today.

However, the Government of Azerbaijan will continue its active and vigorous efforts to improve the living conditions of its citizens who as result of the aggression by Armenia have become IDPs in their own country. As highlighted in the report, the majority of IDPs is firmly disposed to return to their place of origin. In this regard, we commend Mr.Kalin`s call on the international community to intensify its efforts to achieve a peaceful solution to the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and to implement relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions demanding the withdrawal of all occupying forces.

In conclusion, Mr.President, let ~~us~~ reiterate the support of our Government to the activity of the Special Rapporteur and our readiness to closely cooperate with this important mandate in the future as well.

Thank you.