

## **STATEMENT**

**by the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan at the United Nations High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges**

**as delivered by Mr. Seymur Mardaliyev, Counselor of the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the UN Office and other international organizations in Geneva**

**Geneva, 13 December 2017**

**Mr. High Commissioner,**

Migration and displacement remain high on the international agenda as one of the most urgent and complicated issues. As stated by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, "refugees, IDPs and migrants are not the problem; the problem lies in conflicts, persecution and hopeless poverty". Indeed, while the number of people fleeing their homes has reached the record figure, we see no solutions in sight for the too many unresolved conflicts that continue producing displacement and human sufferings.

It is only through international cooperation the challenges of displacement can be effectively managed. Azerbaijan strongly supports the 2016 New York Declaration and the subsequent developments for the establishment of the global compacts. We commend the UNHCR's leading role in the global compact process and do hope it will continue remaining active particularly when all of us are steadily approaching the crucial phase of this whole exercise. Azerbaijan stands ready to play active and constructive role in the adoption of the global compact in 2018.

**Mr. High Commissioner,**

While the plight of refugees makes the headlines, the international community appears to have forgotten about 41 millions of internally displaced persons made extremely vulnerable by conflicts and who still find themselves in protracted situations in different corners of the globe. Azerbaijan's sensitivities to IDP's cause are understandable. We host one of the largest internally displaced population per capita in the world as a result of the ongoing military aggression and occupation of the Azerbaijani lands by Armenia.

Azerbaijan fully supports all efforts to raise the visibility to the suffering of IDPs. The references to IDPs in the 2030 Agenda, the goal set by the Agenda for Humanity to reduce internal displacement by at least 50 per cent by 2030 as well as the New York Declaration which, notes the need for reflection on effective strategies to ensure adequate protection and assistance for IDPs and to prevent and reduce such displacement, certainly, are right steps, but clearly not sufficient. We do believe that global compacts process as well as the fact that 2018 will also mark the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement offer a favorable opportunity to demonstrate that IDPs, simply saying, did not leave behind.

The grave situation of IDPs requires renewed attention, rethinking of approaches to prevention, addressing the root causes as well as concerted action at all levels. While fully recognizing the primary responsibility of national authorities to protect and assist IDPs, nevertheless, we believe it is of vital importance that the global compact process addresses the issue of internal displacement and reflects our commitment to support this extremely vulnerable group of population in terms of addressing the root causes, ensuring the right of IDPs to return home in safety and dignity as well as the right to access to their properties.

Last but not the least. It is also crucial to pay careful attention to the attempts of some political leaders to misuse suffering migrants in their own malicious interests. For instance, policy pursued by Armenia aimed at resettling Syrian refugees of armenian origin on the occupied territories of Azerbaijan in a grave breach of IHL is a vivid example to these attempts. The ultimate purpose of the statements made by Armenian delegation in international foras is to try to secure funding for illegal resettlement of Armenian origin refugees from Syria in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan.

**Thank you.**