

**Statement of Mr. Sahil Babayev, Minister of Labour and Social
Protection of Population of the Republic of Azerbaijan**

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Your Excellency Mr. Chairman,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to thank Mr. Guy Ryder and all ILO staff for the submitted report. It reaffirms again the core mandate of the ILO in supporting sustainable development and promoting social justice worldwide.

We all acknowledge that any initiative arising from the concept of sustainable development involves setting and reaching more substantial goals in the context of social justice for each country as well as for the entire world community.

It's no coincidence that achieving gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls is high on the UN 2030 Agenda.

Despite considerable progress over the last decades, gender segmentation persists in all labour markets of the world. Women still face discrimination in employment, decision making and access to economic assets. They are forced to work in temporary jobs, enter in short-term or informal labour relations.

Therefore, the topic of today's discussion is an opportunity to approach the world of work from a broader context of promoting gender equality and to shape our attitude to possible changes.

Azerbaijan attaches great importance to gender equality and empowerment of women. As we celebrate the centenary of independence of Azerbaijan Democratic Republic these days, we respectfully honour the legacy of the

first secular republic in the Islamic world, including extending suffrage to women in 1918, 100 years ago.

The Government of Azerbaijan continues to promote gender equality in all spheres of life, by having ratified all the major international instruments applying to the protection of women's rights by putting in place strategies and state programs on protection of women rights, ensuring their equal representation at a decision-making and expanding their employment opportunities.

Macroeconomic stability and achievements in the economic sphere have enabled the Government to accomplish its political goals aimed at improving the social welfare of population.

Despite our accomplishments we are confronted with persistent challenge to fully ensure social rights of population. The occupation of 20 percent of Azerbaijan's territory by neighbouring Armenia, and over a million of refugees and internally displaced people in need of special care and social protection pose a threat not only to our country's social development but to the whole region.

Today in Azerbaijan, women constitute 50.1 percent of our population. Women's willingness to compete with men on an equal basis responding to the current challenges of the labour market, as well as their ability to assert themselves in new labour relations resulted in their greater representation in governance, business and power structures. For every 100 students in Azerbaijan there is an average of 47 women. 53.6 percent of all scientific workers are women. The First Vice President of the Republic of Azerbaijan is a woman. Women are adequately represented in electoral, management and judicial bodies.

Women's equality and empowerment is also integral to our national agenda on SDGs. The establishment of a National Coordination Council for Sustainable Development according to the relevant decree of the President of Azerbaijan, voluntary submission of initial national review on six SDGs, including the Goal 5, is a further proof of significance of the SDGs for our country.

Implementation of labour and employment policy under the ILO principle of tripartism, discussion and decision making in the Tripartite Committee on Social and Economic Issues set up based on gender parity are the preconditions for the success of this policy.

Joint activities with the ILO within the Second Decent Work Country Program, the election of Azerbaijan as a regular member of the ILO Governing Body is further testimony of the high regard of the international community.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Azerbaijan submitted its bid to host the World Expo 2025 in its capital Baku. The main focus of the proposal is the future of education, the future of health and the future of work – issues of global importance for every individual, every society and every country. I would like to take this opportunity and to invite you to support Baku's bid.

Thank you for your attention.