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**UN Human Rights Council  
Forty-third Session**

**Interactive Dialogue with the  
Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food**

**Statement**

**delivered by Amb. Vaqif Sadiqov, Permanent Representative of the Republic of  
Azerbaijan to the UN Office and other International Organizations in Geneva**

**March 3, 2020**

Mr. Chairman,

Ms. Hilal Elver,

In the past decade Azerbaijan has continued to further develop and enhance interaction with the UN Human Rights Council and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. During the past several years a number of the UN special procedures mandate holders made visits to Azerbaijan on the basis of a standing invitation issued by the Government of Azerbaijan to all of them.

UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food Ms. Hilal Elver visited Azerbaijan in October 2019. The visit of the Special Rapporteur was viewed as an important step which could contribute to further enhancement of constructive cooperation between Azerbaijan and the relevant UN mechanisms. All requested meetings with the authorities and other interlocutors were organized in due time. During numerous meetings with the authorities of Azerbaijan a lot of factual information, detailed explanations and written materials were provided to the Special Rapporteur.

I would like to extend our gratitude to the Special Rapporteur for her visit to Azerbaijan and thank Ms. Hilal Elver for her report and valuable recommendations. The Government of Azerbaijan attaches importance to the recommendations included in the report and will give them due consideration. Moreover, some of the recommendations are already at the

implementation stage, and my country remains ready to cooperate with the Special Rapporteur on the implementation of her recommendations in future.

Although speedy economic development of Azerbaijan in early years after regaining independence in 1991 has been made possible mostly due to increased oil production which has been a traditional part of economy of Azerbaijan since the first half of the XIXth century, today the Government is focusing its efforts on developing sustainable non-energy multisectoral economy. Together with infrastructural development, alternative energy projects, environmental protection, information technologies, and tourism, the agricultural sector is a major contributor to the non-energy economy with a high potential to stimulate economic growth, job creation and food security.

Development and support of small and medium-sized entrepreneurship and empowerment of women in the agricultural sector continues to be a priority for the Government, and a number of state-supported programmes and projects have been launched in recent years. As a result of these efforts, the number of women entrepreneurs has increased from 4% to 29%.

All projects aimed at ensuring sustainable economic development are implemented by the Government at times when for almost thirty years the economy of the country remains heavily burdened by the need to accommodate the needs of one million refugees and internally displaced persons arising from the ongoing armed conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan who were forcefully displaced from their homes in Armenia and Azerbaijan in the course of the occupation by neighboring Armenia of the south-western part of Azerbaijan which makes twenty percent of the territories of my country.

Yet my Government does not shy away from taking measures aimed at ensuring sustainable development of its people and contributing to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda including ensuring the right to food for its population. Azerbaijan has no difficulties regarding the availability of food and is mainly self-reliant in provision of food. Nonetheless, the Government is taking measures to achieve broader food security and food safety standards and accomplish new quality targets.

To allow the readers to have a full picture of a policy carried out by Azerbaijani authorities in the field of food security and related issues, we have submitted the Addendum to the

report of the SR reflecting in detail the views of the Government of Azerbaijan on this report, and we stand ready to provide additional information and clarifications.

Taking this opportunity, in general I would also like to bring the attention of the OHCHR to the following points concerning the methodology of preparing reports of SRs on their visits to UN Members States. In recent years this issue has been frankly discussed at a number of meetings organized by the OHCHR in Geneva. The main controversy in this filed lies in the question of a reflection in a report of a sound balance between official statistics and information provided by an official source of a visited country and information provided to a SR by sometimes dubious sources unidentified in a report. Notwithstanding the independence and professionalism of a mandate holder who is an author of a report, one has also to agree that an author of a report though being independent in his or her personal views nevertheless cannot overstep the position of the United Nations reflected in relevant UN documents which establish the framework of any process carried out within UN system and which has to guide an author of a report in his or her endeavors. The views of authorities have to be properly presented to the readers, which does not necessarily mean that an author of a report has to agree with them. However, a reader has the right to know all points of view and on this basis shape his or her own judgment on a situation in a particular field in a particular country. Consequently, the OHCHR has to make sure that in the course of a journey of a draft report through long corridors of Palais Wilson a draft does not become a subject of a hasty and controversial political editing aimed to satisfy this or that set of personal views of numerous individuals having direct personal interest in a report in question.

Finally, I would like to reiterate that Azerbaijan is ready to continue an enhanced dialogue and interaction with the UN human rights mechanisms on the basis of mutual respect and understanding, constructive dialogue, balanced and objective assessments, and expects these mechanisms to express the same attitude to the UN Member States free of double standards.

Thank you.