

Statement by the Republic of Azerbaijan

Annual high-level panel discussion on human rights mainstreaming:

**“The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and human rights,
with an emphasis on the right to development”**

31st session of the Human Rights Council

29 February 2016, Geneva

Mr. President,

Distinguished Panelists,

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is of a key importance in promoting development worldwide. These goals are universal and apply to all countries. States have primary responsibility for the creation of conditions favourable to the realization of the right to development and for formulating appropriate national development policies aiming at constant improvement of the well-being of the entire population.

Over the past years, Azerbaijan has achieved impressive results on many MDG targets, especially on eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, ensuring universal secondary education and promoting gender equality. In recognition of Azerbaijan's outstanding commitment and determination towards the implementation of the MDGs, my country received the 2015 South-South Award. Currently Azerbaijan is developing its SDG-based national sustainable development strategy aimed at developing a more sustainable, inclusive and diversified economy. We would like

to reiterate that Azerbaijan is committed to sustainable development and international efforts undertaken towards that end.

Mr. President,

Regretfully, challenges to peace and security continue to remain serious impediments to development and cooperation across the world. The ongoing military occupation by neighbouring Armenia of 20% of the territories of Azerbaijan, in blatant violation of international law and the relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council, continues to represent a serious threat to international peace and security. By violating basic conventional human rights, Armenia carried out ethnic cleansing as early as at the end of 80-s against almost one million Azerbaijanis in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan and in Armenia itself. Implementation of the UN Security Council resolutions in particular, putting an end to the occupation of the territories of Azerbaijan and ensuring the return of the forcibly displaced people to their homes in security and dignity, is an essential precondition to the implementation of sustainable development agendas in the South Caucasus region.

In this regard, we are confident that Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will be an effective tool in global efforts towards attaining peace, prosperity and growth.

Thank you.

