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**UN Human Rights Council
Thirty-ninth Session**

**Clustered Interactive Dialogue with the Independent Expert on the human rights of
older persons and the Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking
water and sanitation**

**Statement
delivered by Aydan Muradova, Third Secretary of the Permanent Mission of the
Republic of Azerbaijan to the UN Office and other International Organizations in
Geneva**

September 10, 2018

Thank you, Mr. President,

Azerbaijan welcomes the Special Rapporteurs and thanks them for the comprehensive reports presented to this Council.

Mr. Heller, we commend the chosen focus area of your report. The simple fact that today we are speaking about the highest level of forcible displacement on record, once again demonstrates that the lack of the adequate timely response and reaction to the problems of people, doesn't lead to their self-elimination, instead results with their proliferation and aggravation.

Mr. Special Rapporteur,

There is a growing number of projects on sustainable clean drinking water supplies and renovation of sewerage networks in my country. This area also falls under the scope of the priorities pursued by development concept "Azerbaijan 2020: look into the future", involving many aspects of short- and mid-term policies aimed at promotion and protection of human rights.

The living conditions of the most vulnerable layers of the population, which are internally displaced persons and refugees, are never bypassed and are constantly under the due attention of the Government of my country.

As the result of the ethnic cleansing of Azerbaijanis carried out 30 years ago in Armenia and the Armenian occupation of the 20% of the internationally recognized territories of my country, more than a million Azerbaijanis have been forced to become refugees and internally displaced persons on their own land and my country has become one of the countries with the biggest number of refugees and IDPs per capita.

All requisite measures have been taken by the Government of Azerbaijan to ensure the social welfare and meet the needs of the IDPs and refugees, improve their housing conditions, enhance the social infrastructure, including the water and sewage facilities.

Provision of water supply system and sewerage facilities was one of the essential elements during the first phase of the restoration and construction work in the Jojug Marjanli village and some areas in Nakhchivan region of Azerbaijan, which have been liberated from the Armenian occupation in 2016 and 2018.

Mr. Special Rapporteur,

We believe that it is crucially important to underline that, while paying due attention to find and guarantee solution to the basic needs of refugees and IDPs we shouldn't distract ourselves from their fundamental human desire - which is safe and dignified return to their homelands and do our best and spare no efforts in order to materialize this desire.

Thank you.