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37th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council

High-Level Panel Discussion

**Seventieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
and twenty-fifth anniversary of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action**

Statement

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

28 February 2018

Mr. President,

Azerbaijan welcomes the initiative to organize such an important event and expresses its appreciation to the panelists for their valuable contributions.

70 years ago drafters from various political, cultural and religious backgrounds came together to work out a universal document which ought to have established a future world without war and atrocities proceeding from the understanding that all individuals have the right to live in peace and dignity. After experiencing two devastating world wars, the core intention behind elaborating such a document was a human desire to achieve peace, security and respect for human rights.

However, we have to admit that seventy years on, we are still a long way from achieving the goals laid down in the Declaration, with the ongoing wars, massacres of civilians, and millions of people suffering from gross violations of their basic rights.

This year marks the twenty fifth anniversary of the adoption by the World Conference on Human Rights of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action which was a bold step towards making protection of human rights a reality for all. One of the main achievements of the World Conference, among others, was the recommendation to the UN General Assembly to establish the position of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights with a view of strengthening global human rights machinery.

By coincidence, it was the same year that the UN Security Council adopted four resolutions on the occupation of Azerbaijani territories by Armenia which, inter alia, tasked the UN Secretariat, including the OHCHR to ensure effective remedy to the violated rights of one million Azerbaijani refugees and IDPs. Nevertheless, twenty five years have passed with no progress at all. Using this opportunity and in line with the statement made yesterday by the Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan, we urge the High Commissioner to take concrete steps for the restoration of the rights of Azerbaijani refugees and IDPs.

Mr. President,

The 70th anniversary of the Declaration is first and foremost an opportunity for all UN Member States to take a sober look at the world around us and to reflect on the challenges lying on the way of respecting human rights obligations today and tomorrow.

Thank you.