



*Check against delivery*

## **Statement by the Republic of Azerbaijan**

### **Clustered Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on truth, justice, reparation and guarantee of non-recurrence, and the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion**

**34th session of the Human Right Council  
07 March 2017, Geneva**

Mr. President,

Let me join all other speakers thanking both rapporteurs for the reports.

Mr. Shaheed, we congratulate you with your first report and wish you all the success in fulfillment of your mandate.

We appreciate that, along with presenting the activities carried out by the former special rapporteur, you have also eloquently articulated a comprehensive overview of your perspective and vision for the mandate in your report.

We commend your intention to work in harmony and synergy with the other UN mechanisms as the issues you are dealing with are very much linked with many other aspects of our life.

We also welcome your ideas about the critical importance of the knowledge-exchange activities for advancing regional, international and multi-stakeholder engagement to increase protection for the right to freedom of religion or belief.

It is in this context that, I wish to point out that with long-standing traditions of tolerance and non-discrimination, Azerbaijan attaches great importance to promoting intercultural and inter-religious dialogue worldwide and hosts number of international events bringing ministers, heads of various international organizations, senior policy makers, cultural professionals, experts, journalists, practitioners and prominent intellectuals together. The upcoming World Forum on Intercultural

Dialogue that we will host in Baku on 5-6 May of this year, will focus primarily on the topics such as the role of faith, religions, migration, human security, violent extremism and etc.

Azerbaijan with a predominantly Muslim population has always been committed to the principles of equality among all its citizens, upholding the principle of “unity in diversity”. For many centuries Muslims, Christians and Jews continue to live side by side in Azerbaijan in peace, tolerance and mutual respect, and they all take part in the political, socio-economic and cultural life of the country and make contributions to Azerbaijan`s development.

Ms. Asma Jahangir Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion having visited Azerbaijan, appreciated the atmosphere of indisputable tolerance which in turn is the inherent feature of the Azerbaijani population.

Since 2009, 567 Islamic, 12 Christian, 6 Jewish, 2 Bahais, 1 Krisnaite religious communities has been registered in Azerbaijan. Registration processes are carried out in an equal manner to all confessions. More than 1800 mosques, 5 Orthodox, 1 Catholic, 1 Lutheran, 2 Alban-Udi, 4 Georgian-Orthodox, 7 synagogues and other prayer houses function in the country freely and without any discrimination.

Today Azerbaijan carries out many activities serving a better understanding between people of different religions. In this regard, we can indicate establishment of Baku International Multiculturalism Center and the position of State Adviser on Inter-Ethnic Affairs, Multiculturalism, and Religion, both aimed to protect and promote multiculturalism, tolerance, as well as cultural, religious, linguistic diversity.

Furthermore, "Baku process" initiated by the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan in 2008 for the promotion of intercultural dialogue proved its consistency and permanence by a number of big events hosted by Azerbaijan.

In conclusion, Mr. Special Rapporteur, we would like to echo that Azerbaijan supports your mandate and stands ready to cooperate with you in promoting tolerance and benefits of multi-religious atmosphere in our societies.

Thank you.