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The Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan
31st session of the Human Rights Council
Interactive dialogue with SR on minority issues

15 March 2016

Mr. President,

The delegation of Azerbaijan welcomes the Special Rapporteur on minority issues and thanks her for the comprehensive report.

Madame Special Rapporteur,

Traditionally, Azerbaijan as a multiethnic and multi-confessional country plans and carries out its national policy in all fields with the consideration of traditional tolerance and harmonic coexistence of different national, ethnic, linguistic and religious groups. The equality of all citizens without any ethnic, national, religious or linguistic definition is guaranteed by the national legislation. Azerbaijan does not conduct any registration or documentation of any individual according to his/her nationality and no such norm was defined in legislation. Further, as a result of sustainable practical measures and state guarantee of non-discrimination provision stipulated in the Constitution, there have not been crimes in recent years related to national, racial hatred, humiliation of national dignity, as well as to the restriction of the rights of citizens on racial or national grounds and violation of principle of non-discrimination.

Madame Special Rapporteur,

Over many centuries persons belonging to national, ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities lived in Azerbaijan in peace and harmony, and this multicultural, multiethnic heritage has been preserved in Azerbaijan until today. Currently, in addition to Azerbaijanis, there are Armenians, Avars, Georgians, Jews, Kurds, Lezgins, Russians, Tatars, Tats, Tsakhurs, Turks, Udis, Ukrainians and other ethnic groups in Azerbaijan.

At present, Azerbaijan experiencing armed conflict with neighboring country, resulting in occupation of 20% territories of Azerbaijan and the presence of more than one million refugees and internally displaced persons belonging to different minorities along with Azerbaijanis (Kurds, Russians, Jews and others). Despite this fact, Azerbaijan continues to pursue a consistent policy towards protection of rights of all minorities.

Madame Special Rapporteur,

With a view of further contributing to the promotion of tolerance and intercultural dialogue, Azerbaijan together with Council of Europe initiated "Baku process" in 2008. In this regard, just a couple of days ago Azerbaijan hosted 4th Global Baku Forum and in next month we will host 7th Global Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations.

In conclusion, Madame Rapporteur, we would like to reiterate our commitment to further promotion and protection of rights of all minorities.

Thank you.