

MISSION OF AZERBAIJAN TO THE UNITED NATIONS



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**Statement by General-Lieutenant Mr. Asgar Alakbarov,
Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan
at the High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development**

New York, 15 September 2006

Madame President,
Distinguished delegates,

The Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan welcomes the convening of this High-level Dialogue, which will allow us to identify prospects of future international cooperation on migration for the years to come.

In Azerbaijan there are more than twenty enacted laws and by-laws aimed at regulating the migration processes, in particular Law on Migration and Law on Labor Migration.

Azerbaijan is a State Party to seven basic UN legal instruments on the rights of migrants, including the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its complementary Protocols on Migrant Smuggling and Trafficking in Persons.

The foregoing legal instruments have laid the foundation of the National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking and Law on the Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings adopted in 2004 and 2005 respectively. National measures to regulate migration are based on the State Concept on Migration Policy adopted in 2004 and the State Migration Programme. One of the steps on the implementation of this Programme was the establishment of the Migration Service within the Ministry of Internal Affairs in 2005.

Since the restoration of its national independence in 1991, Azerbaijan has come across with the substantial emigration which allows describing Azerbaijan primarily as a country of origin. This has been caused by hardships of the transitional period aggravated further by emergence of some one million of refugees and internally displaced persons as a result of the occupation of a part of Azerbaijan's territory by Armenia.

Besides, a significant number of our fellow-citizens are currently residing and actively working in many CIS countries. The influence of migrants on social and economic life of the country is undeniable. At the same time, apparently, there is a need to work out special tools encouraging the use of remittances for poverty reduction and sustainable development. In this connection, there is a need to simplifying procedure of remittance transfers. Solving the issue is conceivable through active interaction with financial and other relevant agencies of countries of origin.

Permit me to touch upon another urgent issue -- the provision of the rights of migrants. We cannot but are deeply concerned at recently increased facts of racism and xenophobia towards migrants. Existing stereotypes with respect to migrants create obstacles to their full-fledged integration into the society, which in its turn, brings about serious social problems. In this regard, I would like to appeal on the countries of destination to undertake necessary measures.

Trafficking in human beings is the most dangerous consequence of illegal migration, and therefore, combating this type of crime should become a priority. In this connection, within the Ministry of Internal Affairs there has been established the Department on Combating Human Trafficking and the hotline has been launched with the assistance of the OSCE and NGOs; and for the time being, a shelter for victims of human traffic is about to be completed.

Tackling negative aspects of migration processes, as well as benefiting from their positive potential necessitate an active and efficient partnership between the countries of origin and the countries of destination, as well as close cooperation between government agencies, private sector and civil society. Cooperation with relevant international organizations is equally important. In this context, the work of the Global Migration Group is crucial.

In conclusion, I would like to recognize efficient and consistent activities of the International Organization of Migration. I am confident that the IOM in close collaboration with the United Nations will profoundly contribute in addressing urgent issues under discussion in the course of this dialogue.

Thank you for your attention.