

Address by

Mr. Mahmud Mammad-Guliyev

Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs

Republic of Azerbaijan

at the

66th session of the UNECE

Geneva,

14 April 2015

Please check against delivery

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Along with celebrating the 70th anniversary of the United Nations this year, the global community works towards finalizing sustainable development goals, as well as, agreeing on a new climate agreement. Together, we move to the next level of development and the aim is to make it more sustainable and predictable.

From our view the **post-2015 development agenda** should go beyond setting up new goals. It is important to set up measurable targets in order to achieve concrete results. These targets being global in nature and universally applicable should take into account different levels of development and national capacities and respect national priorities. Comprehensive methodologies have to be applied in order to measure development more accurately and reflect complex individual realities of developing countries.

Together with the range of available funding options for sustainable development, a strong framework for monitoring and review of implementation, as well as improved statistical systems and measures, will be required.

Also, facilitation of technology transfer from developed to developing countries, encouraging R&D, introducing wider use of renewable sources of energy, sharing good practices, partnerships with the private sector and establishing legal bases for cooperation are among actions to be undertaken in order to obtain inclusive and sustainable development. In this regard, Azerbaijan stands ready to further contribute to the ongoing debate on the post-2015 development agenda.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In 2012 The Government adopted a national development strategy entitled **“Azerbaijan 2020: vision for the future”** that perfectly fits in global efforts on adoption and implementation of the post-2015 global development agenda. The strategy builds on the country’s latest socio-economic achievements and provides a framework for its transition from a traditional to a knowledge-based, competitive and diversified economy.

We are firm in our intention to **diversify our economy** in order to sustain current positive economic growth. First successful results are already witnessed.

Mr. Chairman,

Azerbaijan is entering one of the most exciting periods of its history, setting on a development path that will further make it **a leading player in the region**. In this context, among major events of the last two years is the launch of the Southern Gas Corridor, through which Azerbaijan will increase its contribution to the European energy security.

As an **emerging donor** we continue to provide technical and humanitarian assistance in the fight against global threats. For example, we made a one million US dollars pledge for the UN Global Fund to fight Ebola, to alleviate the consequences of the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, assist internally displaced persons in Serbia– to name a few.

At the same, time, Azerbaijan steps up the **South-South Triangular Cooperation**, and the United Nations, specifically UNDP, is partnering with Azerbaijan in sharing its knowledge and expertise with the developing nations.

Taking into account the significant role of **Transport** in the achievement of sustainable economic development, our major goal is to build a properly integrated and technically compatible infrastructure that will be able to serve all modes of transport.

Today, we not only participate in regional and international transport projects. As a matter of fact, we initiate the projects of trans-regional significance. The construction of Baku – Tbilisi – Kars railway that was included into the UNECE Trans-European Railway (TER) master plan as an important regional project connecting two continents and the new Baku International Sea Trade Port that will create an intersection of rail, road and sea routes passing through the territory of Azerbaijan could be the best example.

Abovementioned is a clear sign of our support to the efforts undertaken by the UNECE to develop Euro-Asian transport links.

The effective realization of large infrastructure projects as well as general socio-economic development can not be imagined without the participation of **information communication technologies (ICT)**.

In this regard, the Trans Eurasian Information Superhighway Project (**TASIM**) that is another signature project of Azerbaijan will help build broadband connectivity,

promote development of ICT infrastructure and e-commerce throughout Eurasia and support the realization of targets such as e-government, e-health and e-education and etc. TASIM could be an excellent example of public-private partnership (PPP) projects that will make its positive input in post-2015 Development Agenda.

In addition, cooperation between international organizations and financial institutions is the type of partnership that can play a crucial role in achieving sustainable development goals. Using this opportunity we would like to suggest considering the development of links between major projects, programs and initiatives, in the region that are aimed at harnessing cross-sectoral synergies, such as the proposal to link the UNSPECA, TASIM and Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC).

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Environmental protection is an indispensable part of the global development agenda. This is also true and crucial for Azerbaijan, the country that has long history of industrial oil production. In this regard we welcome the opening up of the multilateral environmental agreements under UNECE to global accession. However, we remain confident that obtaining meaningful results in the region primarily rests on participation of all members of the region.

Azerbaijan is a downstream country in terms of **freshwater reserves**. Large amount of Azerbaijan's freshwater reserves are formed in the neighboring countries and their intensive pollution, contamination with chemical, radioactive and other harmful substances on the territory of these countries causes problems in supplying drinking water to the population. Apart from that, the mass extermination of flora and fauna on the territories remaining occupied by the neighboring Armenia and large-scare arson fires on those territories have become yet another big ecological problems in the region.

Therefore, **we call on UNECE** to address the issue in a more proactive manner and encourage neighboring riparian countries to accede to the existing multilateral environmental agreements under the UNECE. Moreover, in the context of trans-boundary environmental impact assessment, **we urge UNECE** to ensure that the relevant conventions and the decisions taken within the framework of the convention such as the Espoo Convention already acceded to by the neighboring Armenia, are duly attended and fulfilled without further politicization.

Mr. Chairman,

Success of global cooperation rests on the strength of and the achievements in the region. **Conflicts** are the major impediment for regional cooperation and comprehensive development of individual member states. Respect for territorial integrity and internationally recognized borders of member states are detrimental preconditions for cooperation, integration and further development. Such conflicts exist in UNECE region, including the South Caucasus, and the urgent need for their immediate resolution is undeniable for the success of post-2015 development agenda. The occupation of the territories of Azerbaijan by Armenia has been continuing for more than 20 years. Numerous resolutions of the UN Security Council and General Assembly have been adopted calling for Armenian military forces to withdraw from the territories of Azerbaijan. However, the obligations remain unfulfilled and the conflict is unresolved. Existence of almost one million refugees and internally displaced persons as a result of this occupation puts an extra pressure on the Government and makes it difficult to address the challenges reflected in sustainable development goals.

Corruption and other organized crimes, as tax evasion and money laundering that unfortunately exist and grow in all parts of the world including the region of UNECE, cause another significant threat to the successful implementation of the post-2015 development agenda.

Concluding, I would like to say that Azerbaijan remains committed to finding solutions to issues of global concern and achieving sustainable development. New markets and new horizons are opening up, and, with the right policies, positive economic growth is likely to be sustained.

Thank you for your attention!