



**THE PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF
AZERBAIJAN TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

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Statement

by H.E. Mr. Elmar Mammadyarov

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Republic of Azerbaijan**

**at the General Debate of the Sixty-Eighth
Session of the United Nations General
Assembly**

New York, 28 September 2013

Mr. President,
Excellences, ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate Mr. John Ashe on his election the President of the sixty-eighth session of the United Nations General Assembly and wish him every success in fulfilling this highly responsible duty. We are also grateful to Mr. Vuk Jeremic for his able Presidency of the sixty-seventh session.

This year's General Debate is taking place in a period of serious threats and challenges to peace, security and sustainable development. Environmental, economic and social indicators demonstrate that the models for progress and development need to be modified and adapted. The theme of the current General Debate, entitled "The post-2015 development agenda: setting the stage", is timely and topical in providing an opportunity for evaluating progress achieved so far and identifying new ways of overcoming existing obstacles.

The Millennium Development Goals, which were adopted for addressing extreme poverty and multiple deprivations and for defining future development priorities, are of key importance in making future positive differences in the world.

Azerbaijan has recently become a donor country and contributed to sustainable development efforts of countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. This is a brand new chapter in history of my country and its activities on the international arena. A national entity, the Azerbaijan International Development Agency – AIDA – which has been established for these purposes, has already carried out various assistance programs in more than 20 countries. The Heydar Aliyev Foundation has provided various humanitarian and social programs in its turn.

Recently, the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization commended achievements of Azerbaijan in combating hunger and recognized that the country has accomplished the first goal of MDGs, namely, undernourishment. Moreover, gender equality, empowerment of women and fighting with HIV/AIDS have also been identified as progress areas.

One of the key elements that Azerbaijan is considering within the post-2015 agenda is information and communication technologies, which is a driving force of development and progress. To achieve the objective of ensuring improved access to ICTs, there is a need for intensified efforts towards enhancing regional synergies for promoting investment in ICT capacity building, refocusing tools and contents for addressing particular needs of the population, and thus better deploying ICTs in the service of sustainable development. In this connection, Azerbaijan has put forward a proposal to establish the Eurasian Connectivity Alliance – a regional platform in support of improved connectivity and greater cooperation in the field of ICTs. We are encouraged by Member States' support to that initiative through the adoption of resolution 67/298 this September and look forward to further cooperation with interested Governments and other stakeholders.

Mr. President,

The world is still facing violations of fundamental norms and principles of international law. Hundreds of thousands of people throughout the world continue to suffer from aggressions, military occupations, ethnic cleansing and prevailing culture of impunity for the most serious crimes of concern to the international community.

Twenty years ago, in 1993, the United Nations Security Council adopted four resolutions – 822, 853, 874 and 884 – condemning the use of force against Azerbaijan and the occupation of its territories. In those resolutions the Council reaffirmed respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, reconfirmed that the Nagorno-Karabakh region is an integral part of Azerbaijan and demanded the immediate, full and unconditional withdrawal of the occupying forces from all the occupied territories.

The resolutions also made specific reference to violations of international humanitarian law, including the violent displacement of a large number of civilians in Azerbaijan, attacks on civilians and bombardments of its territory.

A series of Security Council presidential statements adopted between 1992 and 1995 are phrased along the same lines. All in all, the above-mentioned resolutions, which are clearly the most authoritative and binding rulings on the problem, acknowledge that acts of military force were committed against Azerbaijan, and that such acts constituted a serious violation of international law.

To our deepest regret, principled Security Council demands, including in the first place the withdrawal of the occupying forces from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, have still not been implemented, and the mediation efforts conducted for more than 20 years within the framework of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) have yet to yield results.

Against that background, with a view to deflecting the attention of the international community from the urgent need to address the main problems caused by its continuing aggression against Azerbaijan, Armenia undertakes efforts to distort the actual situation, to downplay the relevance of the Security Council resolutions and to misinterpret their provisions.

Moreover, Armenia's continued annexationist claims and consistent measures it undertakes in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan with a view to further consolidating the current status quo of the occupation and preventing the return of hundreds of thousands internally displaced persons to their homelands represent an open challenge to the conflict resolution process and pose a serious threat to international and regional peace and security.

On our initiative in the United Nations in 2005 and 2010, OSCE-led fact-finding and fact-assessment missions visited the occupied territories. Both missions documented the facts of illegal activities in those areas involving, inter alia, implanting settlers, extensive redrawing of boundaries, changing original geographic names, and discriminatory treatment regarding cultural property and sacred sites.

However, the missions' recommendations remained on paper. Moreover, the latest reports on the transfer of Syrian Armenians into the Nagorno-Karabakh region and other 7 adjacent occupied districts of Azerbaijan, along with other illegal activities, including efforts to operate flights into and out of those territories, provide yet more evidence of Armenia's deliberate policy of annexation of Azerbaijani lands.

In this regard, it is critical that the international community continue to insist on the need for an immediate and unconditional halt to all actions seriously obstructing the prospects for a negotiated settlement of the conflict.

Armenia's annexationist policy has absolutely no chance of success. The Nagorno-Karabakh region was, is and will be an inalienable part of Azerbaijan. The only way to achieve a durable and lasting solution and establish civilized relations between two neighbouring States is to de-occupy Azerbaijani territories, fully re-establish the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, and immediately provide for compliance with the inalienable right of refugees and internally displaced persons to return to their homes. That is what international law and the relevant Security Council resolutions require, and that is what that can in no way be introduced as a bargaining chip in the conflict-settlement process. Above all, Azerbaijan will never compromise its territorial integrity or the rights and freedoms of its citizens.

Without prejudice to its rights under the UN Charter, in particular those set forth in Article 51, Azerbaijan embarked on and remains committed to the conflict settlement process.

We have no doubt that Azerbaijani and Armenian communities of Nagorno-Karabakh will one day live side by side in peace and dignity in this region of Azerbaijan. It is therefore essential and vital to continue efforts for peace, accord and coexistence between the two communities of the Nagorno-Karabakh region. We consider these aspects as an important part of the entire reconciliation process, which should be given due attention.

Azerbaijan highly appreciates the principled stance of the States Members of the United Nations expressed in various formats on issues of vital importance for Azerbaijan and pertaining to its sovereignty and territorial integrity. We count on the continued resolve of the international community in defending the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and its strong solidarity with the just position of Azerbaijan.

Mr. President,

We note encouraging developments on the Middle East peace process, with the resumption of direct negotiations between Israel and Palestine. The current situation of insecurity in the whole region necessitates the progress in the peace process as never before. It is imperative that the parties demonstrate responsibility to sustain international efforts towards achieving the two-State solution and avoid actions that would risk undermining this objective.

The economic, financial and humanitarian situation in Palestine requires continued international attention and assistance, particularly in order to ensure humanitarian aid to the region. This June Azerbaijan hosted a Conference of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation on the establishment of an Islamic Financial Safety Net in Support of Palestine and the Donors Conference in Support of the City of Al-Quds. The States Members of OIC and international organizations attended the conferences pledged to contribute to improving Palestine's economy, healthcare and education and to the infrastructural projects.

We welcome the adoption yesterday of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) regarding the safeguarding and destruction of Syria's chemical weapons stockpiles. We hope that the unanimous and strong position demonstrated by the Council will contribute to finding a political solution to the conflict in Syria, putting an end to the suffering inflicted on the Syrian people and ensuring compliance by the parties concerned with their obligations and commitments under international law.

Azerbaijan strongly condemns the use of chemical weapons in Syria, particularly the killing of civilians that resulted from it. Resolution 2118 (2013) affirmed that the use of chemical weapons constitutes a serious violation of international law and also qualified such act as a threat to international peace and security.

By endorsing the Geneva Communiqué of 30 June 2012 and calling for convening of an international conference on Syria, the Security Council paved the way for achieving peaceful transition, stability and reconciliation. It is imperative that all parties cease armed violence, engage constructively in the political process and commit to the implementation of the Geneva Communiqué.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, I would like to express our hope that during the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly Member States will be able to take successful steps towards a stronger and more effective United Nations. We look forward to continued commitment and engagement of the UN system both in reinforcing the implementation of national development goals by individual countries and in ensuring the implementation of decisions and resolutions adopted by the organization.

Thank you.