



**Statement by the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan
1114th Meeting of the Permanent Council,
04 October 2016**

*Illegal economic and other activities
in the occupied territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan*

Mr. Chairperson,

The Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan would like to express its ongoing concern over illegal economic and other activities by natural and legal persons of the OSCE participating States in the occupied territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan. As it was underlined at the PC Meeting on the 8th of September, it is necessary for the OSCE participating States concerned to take proper measures to reverse such activity in line with their international commitments, in particular those taken within the OSCE framework.

All OSCE participating States agreed in Bucharest in 2001 that illegal economic activities among others, undermine security in the OSCE area. Good corporate governance, promotion of accountability and transparency, respect for laws, rules and regulations lie at the core of OSCE *aquis* in economic sphere and thus, must be unreservedly honored by all OSCE participating States, regardless of whatsoever differences in their national legislation.

Illegal economic and other activities in the occupied territories also run contrary to the OSCE commitments related to human rights and humanitarian law. These activities infringe upon property rights of hundred thousands of Azerbaijani IDPs expelled from the occupied territories and serve to creation of further impediments for their return. Such a breach of fundamental rights and freedoms with respect to Azerbaijani population is in itself gross violation of our shared OSCE commitments.

It is equally notorious to misuse noble notion of humanitarian assistance to conceal the true essence of illegal activities. As reaffirmed in the guiding principles on humanitarian assistance contained the annex to resolution 46/182 on “Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations”, adopted by the General Assembly on 19 December 1991, humanitarian relief actions by States, international organizations and other entities and bodies should, by definition, be exclusively humanitarian in nature. They must be carried out in conformity with the principles of neutrality, impartiality and consent of the affected country, while fully respecting the sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity of States.

Azerbaijan has on numerous occasions presented countless facts proving that economic and other activity by third country nationals is misused by Armenia to generate financial and other means

to sustain its occupation of the Azerbaijani territories, including for promotion of illegal settlement of Armenians in those territories. These activities, directly or indirectly, are changing the demographic composition in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan by increasing the number of Armenians and preventing the return of expelled Azerbaijanis to their homes and properties. Such a policy can in no way be considered as humanitarian in nature and consistent with human rights standards.

The co-chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group as the result of their fact-finding and field assessment missions conducted in 2005 and 2010 respectively “urged the parties to avoid changes in the demographic structure of the region, which would make more difficult any future efforts to achieve a negotiated settlement”. The co-chairmen further urged “to avoid any activities in the territories [...] that would prejudice a final settlement or change the character of these areas”.

In this context, any illegal and other activity in the occupied territories is a serious blow against the efforts of international community to find a peaceful settlement to the conflict.

In light of the above-mentioned, we reiterate our call on the OSCE participating States concerned to take urgent and effective measures to prevent any activity of their natural and legal persons in the occupied Azerbaijani territories taking into account their relevant OSCE commitments. Based on the report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan entitled “Illegal economic and other activities in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan”, the Delegation of Azerbaijan expects bilateral consultations on the matter and constructive engagement of all countries concerned without further delay.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson