

## Statement of the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan

### Working session 3 25 September, 2012

#### **Humanitarian issues and other commitments, including:**

- *migrant workers, the integration of legal migrants;*
- *refugees and displaced persons;*
- *treatment of citizens of other participating states*

It is an internationally well-known fact that up to 20 percent of the territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan is still under occupation of another OSCE participating state, namely Armenia. As a result of the occupation and accompanying it ethnic cleansing almost 700000 ethnic Azerbaijanis became IDP's. Moreover, that time more than 200000 ethnic Azerbaijanis were forced out of their homes in Armenia. Thus today we rank the first in the world in the number of IDP's and refugees – every 9<sup>th</sup> person in Azerbaijan is either an IDP or a refugee.

Throughout all these years those innocent people had been residing in different parts of Azerbaijan, living in miserable conditions – in wagons, tent-camps, dormitories etc. They have been deprived of many of their rights – right to freely choose the place of residence, right to property, right to elect and be elected in local elections, right to visit graves of their relatives etc.

But Azerbaijani IDP's and refugees have not been deprived of the care of the Government of Azerbaijan. Starting from 90's of the last century the Government of Azerbaijan entitled them to many privileges and advantages. For many years they also received social allowances and food aid from the Government. With the Presidential decree of July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2004 the Government of Azerbaijan launched a special program aiming at bettering housing conditions of Azerbaijani IDP's and refugees. The program was also aiming at reducing unemployment among them. From 2001 to 2011 tens of tent-camps were replaced with modern settlements with newly built houses, schools, kinder-gardens, hospitals and with the entire infrastructure. Up to 25000 IDP and refugee families and more than 120000 individuals benefitted from the program. All in all up to 5 billion USD were allocated from the state budget for this purpose. The Government of Azerbaijan

remains committed to the policy of care for its refugees and IDP's and we have all the means and resources to do that.

I would like to stress that the Government of Azerbaijan has even prepared a special program of development of the occupied territories of Azerbaijan once the occupying Armenian forces are withdrawn from Azerbaijan's Nagorno Karabakh region and 7 other adjacent to it regions.

We wish all the refugees and IDP's to return to their homes soon.

Thank you!