

Country Statement by the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan 79th Session of UNESCAP

16 May 2023

Madam Chair,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

More than ever before, ambitious and urgent global response is required now to address the confluence of multiple crises. We are confident that our session can make its due contribution to the consolidation of joint efforts, strengthening solidarity, cooperation, multilateralism and highlighting the central position of UN system in the Asia-Pacific Region.

As one of the most pressing elements of the recent global polycrisis, climate change poses serious threats for the future of life and necessitates prompt actions before the consequences are irreversible. We are confident that the concept of green growth is a crucial pathway for all countries to reduce emissions and reverse global warming.

The green transition is identified the as one of the five priority areas of development agenda of the Republic of Azerbaijan notwithstanding the fact that the traditional energy sector plays a vital role in our economy. The Republic of Azerbaijan contributes only 0.15% of the global greenhouse gas emissions, however we have set a target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 35% by 2030 and 40% by 2050 as a contribution to global climate change mitigation efforts. Meantime, we aim to increase the share of renewable energy sources in Azerbaijan's total installed electricity capacity from the current 17% to 30% by 2030. The updated NDC document envisaging the mentioned goals and some new ambitious targets is expected to be submitted to the Secretariat of UNFCCC before this year's COP28.

In this regard, we would also like to emphasize the raising need in strengthening international support, particularly in exchange of best practices, technology transfer, technical support, capacity building and awareness raising activities. The elaboration of the National Adaptation Plan

(NAP) of our government is underway. Furthermore, the establishment of the effective legal and institutional framework for the MRV (Measurement, Reporting, Verification) and ETF (Enhanced Transparency Framework) system is of utmost importance for our country.

Distinguished delegates,

Azerbaijan has seriously suffered from the devastating effects of the war unleashed against it by Armenia in the early 1990s. Over the period of almost three decades-long Armenian occupation, the natural resources of Azerbaijan have been deliberately destroyed, looted and vandalized. Apart from the barbarian exploitation of the natural resources, the Armenian occupation inflicted massive destruction and degradation of the environment. It has resulted in irrevocable damage to the unique ecosystems of not only Azerbaijan but the whole region and beyond. Ongoing massive pollution of our country's transboundary rivers by industrial wastewaters of Armenia hinders the efforts made by Azerbaijan for the sustainable management of water resources, which are decreasing every year due to climate change, and also poses a great threat to the ecosystem of the region as a whole.

The occupation was one of the major factors seriously impeding the full-fledged implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and targets in Azerbaijan, including the Nationally Determined Contributions within the Paris Agreement.

Following the end of the conflict in the fall of 2020, Azerbaijan has been undertaking large-scale post-conflict rehabilitation, reconstruction and reintegration of the liberated territories. These activities are based on the climate-friendly, environmentally clean technologies, "smart" and "green" approaches. We have also announced a new ambitious goal to transform the liberated territories of Azerbaijan into a "net zero zone" by 2050. The establishment of "Green Energy Zone" and implementation of other innovative initiatives in the liberated territories will altogether contribute to the overall mitigation and adaptation efforts both regionally and globally, and will transform these territories into one of the 'green' regions.

Madam Chair,

Located at the crossroads of Asia and Europe, Azerbaijan actively participates in major connectivity projects such as East-West and North-South transportation corridors, transforming itself into a transit and logistics hub of the region. This year, Azerbaijan runs chairmanship in the UN Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA), which is focused on enhancing digitalization and connectivity under the theme of “Transforming the SPECA region into a connectivity hub with global outreach”. Azerbaijan is planning to host the first ever SPECA Summit this year. With the strong overall support of the UNESCAP and UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), we are convinced that our chairmanship will be able to enhance cooperation and encourage result-oriented dialogue on advancing connectivity within SPECA.

Azerbaijan will also host the Clean Energy Centre of the Economic Cooperation Organization, which is a promising element of the Global Network of Regional Sustainable Energy Centres of UNIDO. We look forward to potential partnerships with regional and global organizations to support the activities of this Centre.

Strengthening international cooperation and multilateralism has also been high on the agenda of the Azerbaijani Chairmanship of the Non-Aligned Movement, which has been at the forefront of global efforts to mitigate the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As a reliable partner, Azerbaijan will continue its utmost efforts towards stronger cooperation within UNESCAP to accelerate the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals.

Thank you.