Excellencies,

Distinguished colleagues,

It is an honor to address the Commission under Agenda item 4: Special Body on the Least Developed, Landlocked Developing and Small Island Developing States.

Countries in special situations in Asia and the Pacific face various challenges and constraints to the achievement of their development goals. These countries require both targeted programmes adapted to their specific needs, as well as relevant solutions within the context of the global and regional development issues affecting them.

Against this backdrop, frameworks adopted in support of the countries in special situations are important tools that provide much needed global context for cooperation and necessary direction to undertake specific actions. In this respect, landlocked developing countries continue to merit special attention, and we welcome the Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2024-2034.

Mobilization of resources from international and regional financial institutions, bilateral donors and multilateral mechanisms remains a priority area and it is critical that the international commitment to climate change produces tangible actions. The New Collective Quantified Goal on mobilizing at least $300 billion annually for developing countries adopted at COP29 in Baku last year is an essential enabler for sustainable development and achieving global climate goals.

Azerbaijan, which is a landlocked developing country, has attached great importance to the integration in global economy as an important policy choice to achieve sustainable and inclusive development and accelerate economic diversification.

Cooperation with ESCAP in this respect has translated into the establishment of the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA), which is supported by ESCAP and UNECE, respectively, and aims at facilitating economic cooperation in the region. Regional cooperation is crucial in order to develop adequate transit transport infrastructure networks and complete missing links connecting landlocked developing countries. SPECA is therefore an important cooperation platform connecting us with our Central Asian partners to work together towards our shared objectives.

Over the course of several years, we have pioneered important projects in ICT, transport and energy helping the entire region to achieve its development goals, considerably increasing connectivity and cross-border cooperation.

The Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway line which was officially opened in 2017, stretching approximately 850 kilometers, 500 of which run through the territory of Azerbaijan, represents the shortest route connecting Europe and Asia. An integral part of the Eurasian map today, it has not only contributed to the stability and security in the region, but also significantly enhanced its annual carrying capacity.

Furthermore, the Trans-Caspian International East-West Transport Corridor (The Middle Corridor), which has emerged as the fastest and most direct trade route from Asia to Europe, is witnessing a significant surge in container shipments, marking a transformative shift in global trade dynamics. Recent data reveals that container shipments along this crucial trade route have skyrocketed 14-fold in just the first seven months of 2024, highlighting the corridor's increasing significance and the immense economic potential it offers.

Digitalization is another important tool for making the transport route more efficient. In this regard, the SPECA Roadmap for Digitalization of

Multimodal Exchange of Data and Documents along the Trans-Caspian Transport Corridor provided a strong push for the process.

Regional energy security remains the cornerstone of our vision. Azerbaijan has demonstrated leadership in this regard by initiating a number of large-scale projects which have fostered social-economic progress of the larger region, establishing us as a reliable partner. Southern Gas Corridor, which represents a 3,500 km long integrated pipeline system, is the main artery for the energy security for many countries.

Finally, to encourage sustainable growth and diversify energy supply, Azerbaijan is determined to develop its renewable energy potential and accelerate energy transition in the coming years. Together with Georgia, Hungary and Romania, we are establishing a green energy corridor in the region through the Black Sea Submarine Cable Project. It will supply renewable energy generated in Azerbaijan to European markets via cable along the bottom of the Black Sea.

Thank you.