Country Statement by the delegation of Republic of Azerbaijan

Bangkok, 28 May 2019

Mr. Chair,

Madam Executive Secretary,

Dear delegates

At the outset allow me to express my sincere congratulations to you, on your election as a chairperson of 75th session of commission. I am confident that under your leadership this session will be crowned a great success. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the UNESCAP and the government and people of Thailand for the hospitality and excellent arrangement of this Commission. We believe that this mature organization has a good potential to respond to the emerging challenges in the region and to serve as a platform for exchange of the best practices as well as generating new ideas.

Mr. Chair

The resent report released by UNESCAP demonstrate that Asia-Pacific has emerged as the world’s fastest growing region over the past. On the other hand, dynamic development has been accompanied by rising inequality. Such trend has posed significant challenges to the international community in realizing SDG within set timeline.

During the last 15 years our economy grew more than three times. Infrastructure projects are very important for us and we used our financial resources to invest in creation of modern infrastructure.

We have built diversified railroad network connecting us with our neighbors. 15,000 km of roads and highways were built in Azerbaijan during the last 15 years. Talking about the transportation infrastructure, I want to add investments in the air transportation. Six international airports is our another contribution to modern transportation infrastructure.

We strongly believe that no nation can succeed alone without regional and international cooperation. In this regard regional projects will narrow inequalities within the countries and of course between the countries.

We in Azerbaijan attach great importance to promoting cooperation with countries of ESCAP region and look forward to deepening integration with our existing partners. The Government of Azerbaijan has initiated a number of big projects in the fields of energy, transport and information and communication.
technologies which are aimed at strengthening existing economic ties in our region.

Among those projects I can mention Baku-Tbilis-Jeyhan oil pipeline, Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum gas pipeline as well as a number of other infrastructure projects where Azerbaijan is active participant. I should underline that the above mentioned projects stand as symbols of genuine spirit of regional cooperation.

Located on strategic crossroads of East and West, Azerbaijan is open to potential new initiatives on expansion of inter-regional energy connectivity and bringing Central Asia closer to European energy architecture.

Policy of diversification of economy is one of the important elements for every country, especially rich with oil and gas. This policy successfully implemented in Azerbaijan. Development of non-oil sector is priority of the Government of Azerbaijan and transport, ICT, agriculture and tourism sectors play an essential role in achieving the relevant goals.

Being landlocked developing country, Azerbaijan nevertheless is advancing in building interconnectivity in the region. Our vision of interconnectivity played important role in shaping the patterns of regional transport networks. Azerbaijan is a crucial enabler and strong promoter of both North-South and East-West transport corridors. Development of these corridors covers connecting national railroad systems and creating relevant infrastructures.

Azerbaijan is a starting point of a strategic Baku-Tbilisi Kars railroad inaugurated in 2017. This project is not only a regional project connecting three countries, it is a project which connects continents.

Physical interconnection of railroad is not self-sufficient and in order to render it commercially viable we are currently working on tariffs unification.

Azerbaijan has a largest fleet of 260 ships in the Caspian Sea. There is also a shipyard in Azerbaijan built relatively recently capable of producing all types of vessels. Last year we inaugurated the new International Sea port of Baku capable to transport 15 million tons of cargos and 100000 containers. In the future the transportation capability of the port will grow up to 25 million tons of cargos, including 1 million containers. By creating modern transportation logistic infrastructure we not only transform our country into important transportation hub but also contributed to the cooperation with countries involved in East-West and North-South Corridors.

Development and growth in the modern age is directly associated with the application of ICT. Building ICT connectivity can bridge the digital divide and
provide new solutions to development challenges, access to information and knowledge as well as have immense impact on social progress.

We are also committed to meeting SDGs and in order to harmonize national development policies with 2030 Development Agenda, Coordination Council on Sustainable Development headed by Deputy Prime Minister was created in October 2016. Three Working Groups within the Council gather permanent basis to review progress made and to set new goals. As a result of work already done I can point out that voluntary national report on the implementation of these Goals by Azerbaijan was submitted to the UN on July 19 In 2017.

In conclusion we do believe that ESCAP will continue to play active role in promoting cooperation in the region to address existing challenges and coordinating joint efforts of its Member States for benefit of the region as a whole.

Thank you, Mr Chair