



**Statement by the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan  
1181<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the Permanent Council,  
12 April 2018**

*in response to Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia*

Mr. Chairperson,

The Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan warmly welcomes H.E. Mr. David Dondua, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia back to the Permanent Council and thanks him for his insightful presentation.

Azerbaijan and Georgia enjoy strategic partnership based on mutual interests and guided by shared objectives. This partnership has brought dynamic economic development and political stability to the South Caucasus region, and provided prosperity to our nations and beyond.

Azerbaijan-Georgia partnership is a major driving force for implementation of many landmark regional energy and transportation projects exposing the South Caucasus region for co-operation and integrating it into European and global markets. The Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railroad officially commissioned on October 30, 2017 is a practical result of joint efforts of involved countries to transform our region to a platform of cooperation free of dividing lines and conflicts. Such cooperation creates new realities for strengthening political independence of our countries and throughout past years has successfully proved its indispensable role for maintaining peace, stability and sustainable development in the South Caucasus.

Mr. Minister,

We are pleased to observe successful expansion of our relations to trilateral and multilateral formats. Our countries enjoy good cooperation within the GUAM format and continue to work on establishment of Free Trade Zone, development of Transport Corridor, furthering effective cooperation among law-enforcement bodies in combating trans-national threats, and implementation of joint projects in the fields of energy and tourism.

Azerbaijan-Georgia-Turkey trilateral format is the best example of regional cooperation aimed at developing trans-regional energy and transport infrastructure, as well as military-to-military cooperation. We are encouraged with outcomes of sixth trilateral meeting of Defense Ministers held in Turkey on April 2.

On March 15, 2018, Baku hosted the first-ever quadrilateral meeting of the foreign ministers of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iran and Turkey. The meeting, which resulted in adoption of Baku

Quadrilateral Declaration, reaffirmed the commitment of four countries to enhance solidarity and cooperation among their nations to strengthen peace, stability and prosperity in the region. As a practical outcome of the meeting, the four countries agreed to increase the transit potential along the “South-West” route and explore the ways to further deepen their cooperation in fields of energy, ICT, agriculture, tourism and environment.

Against this background, we regret that the unresolved conflicts in the region continue to undermine security and stability of the region, and impede full utilization of its potential for cooperation. In this context, we would like to reiterate our full support for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of internationally recognized borders of Georgia. Azerbaijan supports efforts to find sustainable political solution to the conflict in Georgia within the Geneva International Discussions format.

We continue to believe that the protracted conflicts should be under close focus of the OSCE. We call on the OSCE Chairmanship and participating States to support the efforts of the conflict affected countries in this regard.

In conclusion, we once again thank Mr. Deputy Minister for his presence at the Permanent Council and wish him and his able team in Vienna every success in their further endeavors.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.