



## **Statement by the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan**

### **1046<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Permanent Council**

**March 26, 2015**

*International Day for Elimination of Racial Discrimination*

Mr. Chairperson,

We join other delegations marking the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the adoption the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination. We consider this convention as the universal foundation for our efforts to prevent, combat and eradicate racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

The Republic of Azerbaijan attaches utmost importance to the full implementation of the Convention across the OSCE area and has made consistent efforts to promote the culture of mutual understanding and tolerance both within the country and beyond. As a result, today, Azerbaijan is one of many countries in the OSCE area, where people with different ethnic, religious, linguistic or other identities can live in harmony and mutual understanding.

Against this background, it of deep regret that up to one million of ethnic Azerbaijanis remain to be victim of ethnic cleansing policy inspired by an ideology based on ethnic incompatibility and discrimination. Approximately, 250 thousand Azerbaijanis had been expelled from the territory of Armenia and hundred thousands of ethnic Azerbaijanis had been forcefully dispelled from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. As a result, an ethnically based separatist entity is established in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. Regretfully, Armenia continues to deprive the expelled Azerbaijani population of their inalienable right to return to their homes in safety and dignity and carries out systematic policy aimed at changing the demographic, historical and cultural character of the occupied territories.

While marking the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the landmark Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination, we are of firm belief that the OSCE community cannot tolerate any manifestation of intolerance based on ethnic hatred and racial indiscrimination. In this regard, we reiterate our call on the Republic of Armenia to stop its policy of denying the basic human rights of the Azerbaijani refugees and internally displaced persons, withdraw its occupying forces from the internationally recognized territories of Azerbaijan, and thus, create necessary conditions for safe and dignified return of expelled Azerbaijanis to their homes. We also call on the OSCE participating States to persuade the Armenian side to do so.

Thank you, Mr.Chairperson.