



**Statement by the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan
1118th Meeting of the Permanent Council,
10 November 2016**

*in response to Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan,
H.E. Adela Raz*

Mr. Chairperson,

The Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan warmly welcomes H.E. Adela Raz, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs for Economic Development of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to the Permanent Council and thanks her for comprehensive presentation.

Azerbaijan-Afghanistan relations are built upon shared history and cultural values and, serve to mutual benefit of both sides. Azerbaijan firmly supports Afghanistan's sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence. We attach utmost importance to security, stability and prosperity of Afghanistan and, remain committed to supporting the stabilization and development of friendly Afghanistan through bilateral efforts, as well as contribution within the relevant multilateral international and regional formats, including the 'Heart of Asia' Istanbul Process.

We are pleased to observe Afghanistan gradually coming out of nearly three decades of war and instability. Nevertheless, it is still critical to pay closer attention to security challenges facing the country to sustain the progress made thus far. Well-being and prosperity of Afghanistan, economic growth and regional cooperation are interlinked and dependent on the overall security environment in the region. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to demonstrate our resolve and strong will to continue jointly fighting regional threats and challenges, in particular those emanating from violent extremism, terrorism and separatism in all their forms and manifestations and enhancing regional cooperation to that end.

Azerbaijan is ready to continue sharing its experience with Afghanistan in building a modern, prosperous State and providing as needed training and assistance in the military, security, mine action, law-enforcement and good governance fields. We contribute to the post-ISAF "Resolute Support Mission" by providing troops, multimodal transit, training and financial assistance. Azerbaijan will continue contributing to the Trust Fund of Afghanistan National Army.

Support for Afghanistan's economic development in the Transformation Decade of 2015-2024 will be crucial for sustaining the positive results of stabilization efforts in the country. Azerbaijan has much to offer in supporting Afghanistan's efforts to integrate into the regional economy and revive trade with its neighbors and beyond through increased regional connectivity. We together with our international partners have achieved concrete results in developing trans-regional infrastructure with multi-modal capabilities along the East-West and North-South axes. These trans-regional projects will facilitate Afghanistan's linkage to the European markets and beyond by linking up the infrastructure across the Caspian Sea and providing connectivity in the region, capable of handling cargo and containers in a

much shorter, faster, efficient and cost-effective way. In this regard, we support the development of the Lapis-Lazuli project that envisages the creation of a transportation corridor from Afghanistan to Europe through Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey.

Development of information and communication technologies and broadband connectivity in and with Afghanistan is another important area where Azerbaijan has much to offer. Trans Eurasian Information Super Highway (TASIM) project, which we successfully implement, will help building broadband connectivity, promoting development of ICT infrastructure and e-commerce throughout the region and support the realization of targets such as e-government, e-health, e-education etc. Linking up Afghanistan to TASIM will be a significant boost to the international connectivity of Afghanistan.

In conclusion, we wish to thank once again Mme. Deputy Minister for her presence at the Council today and wish her and entire brotherly Afghan people every success in their efforts towards achieving a unified, peaceful and prosperous future for Afghanistan.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson