

**Country Statement by the delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan
80th session of the Commission
22 to 26 April 2024**

**Mr. Chair,
Dear delegates**

First of all, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your assumption as a chairperson of this session, I am confident that under your leadership this session will be able to complete its proceedings successfully. 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.

Dear delegates

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

Azerbaijan attaches great importance to promoting cooperation with countries of ESCAP region and looks 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.

Located on strategic crossroads of East and West, Azerbaijan is open to potential new initiatives for the expansion of inter-regional energy connectivity and bringing Central Asia closer to European energy architecture. I should underline that the energy projects like Baku-Tbilis-Jeyhan oil pipeline, the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum gas pipeline, and the Southern Gas Corridor stand as symbols of genuine spirit of regional cooperation.

The policy of diversification of the economy is one of the important elements for every country, especially rich in oil and gas.

Being a landlocked developing country, Azerbaijan with a developed transport and logistical infrastructure, participates actively in regional connectivity projects, such as East-West, North-South, and North-West transportation corridors, becoming one of Eurasia's main and reliable transportation and logistics hubs.

Azerbaijan takes necessary steps to leverage digital innovation for sustainable development in our region. Azerbaijan extends its digital strategy to a broader, regional level. A pivotal example of this regional approach is the 'Trans-Caspian Fiber-Optic Cable' project. The project has been launched to lay a backbone fiber-optic cable between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Central Asian Republics through the bottom of the Caspian Sea. In parallel, we decided to start with the provision of high-speed broadband connectivity infrastructure across Azerbaijan. We believe that the creation of an innovative ecosystem starts with the connectivity of every family. In order to achieve this goal, we launched

“Online Azerbaijan” project. With all the above-mentioned advancements in infrastructure development, we were able to initiate Smart Cities and Villages project. Our primary objectives are to create Smart Cities and Villages in the liberated territories of Azerbaijan’s, transform traditional cities into technologically advanced smart cities, and ensure their long-term sustainability.

At the same time, we understand the rapid development of information technologies and acceleration of the digitization process have resulted in an increase in cyber threats and cyber attacks at the global level. By the Order of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated August 28, 2023, “The Strategy of the Republic of Azerbaijan on information security and cybersecurity for 2023-2027” was approved. This Strategy outlines the country’s primary objectives, principles, directions, and priority tasks in the sphere of information security and cybersecurity.

Worth mentioning, according to the latest "Global Cyber Security Index" report of the International Telecommunication Union, Azerbaijan improved its position in comparison to previous ranking by 8 pillars from 48th to 40th position.

We are also committed to meeting SDGs and in order to harmonize national development policies with the 2030 Development Agenda, Coordination Council on Sustainable Development headed by Deputy Prime Minister was created and at the political forum of the UN Economic and Social Council held in July 2021, Azerbaijan presented the third Voluntary National Report, thus becoming the first country in the region to submit such a report for the third time.

Dear Delegates

Azerbaijan attaches great importance to issues of combating climate change and makes an effort to take collective action to reduce its negative consequences. The 2024 was declared "Green World Solidarity Year" in Azerbaijan. It is no coincidence that the 29th session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP29), one of the most prestigious international events in the world, this year will be held in Baku, Azerbaijan by a unanimous decision of all countries.

Distinguished Delegates

As we all know economic and social stability inside the country can be fully provided when you have more or less predictable situation beyond your borders. Therefore, our intention always was to initiate the projects and to participate in them, which will bring benefits to countries, to peoples, which will increase predictability, stability in the region and create equal opportunities for all the people to live in our region.

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

Thank you,