

*Statement by Mr. Novruz Guliyev
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**Dear Chair,
Ministers and Heads of Delegations,**

First of all, let me express my deep appreciation to our host, the Government of France for excellent organization of the 21st session of the Conference of the Parties. I also wish to express our condolences and solidarity to the people and Government of France due to tragic events which took place in Paris last November.

Latest findings of experts alarm that climate change represents an urgent threat to humanity and urge to increase ambitions with more sensitive approaches towards climate change mitigation and adaptation in order to minimize potential threats. My country supports all efforts directed at smooth negotiation process with a view to reach a new universal agreement in Paris.

Azerbaijan, as a developing country is not included in Annex I group under the Convention and has not taken any quantitative obligations in accordance with Kyoto Protocol. However, the country succeeded to reduce GHGs emissions by more than 600 million tons since the Kyoto process started. This volume equals to the annual GHGs emission of developed European countries. This could be considered as our concrete contribution.

Azerbaijan is one of the few countries that was able to stop deforestation and achieved increase in reforestation. Over the past 15 years we increased the volume of reforestation activities by 2.5 times with annual expansion from 4700 ha to 10500 ha, tens millions of trees were planted. Namely due to active planting, we were able to increase the forest coverage of the country from 11.4% to 11.8%. It is important to note that all these mitigation activities were implemented by country's own resources.

We believe that our Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) presents an ambitious commitment. Despite being a developing country, Azerbaijan has chosen a low emission development path. To further contribute to global efforts to combat climate change, Azerbaijan targets the 35% reduction for 2030 in the level of greenhouse gas emissions compared to 1990/base year.

Nevertheless, the ongoing military occupation of one fifth of the territory of Azerbaijan, including its Nagorno-Karabakh region by Armenia and the existence of almost one million refugees and IDPs have created, inter alia, a serious environmental burden for my Government, threatens the post-2015 development agenda in the entire region and makes it difficult to address the challenges reflected in my country's sustainable development agenda, including commitments related to climate change reflected in our INDC.

Illegal occupation of our territories is also a serious threat to the unique ecosystem of ancient Karabakh region of Azerbaijan. Aforementioned illegal actions of Armenia have not only had serious negative impact on our capacity to address climate change challenges, including relevant mitigation and adaptation targets, but they are also in grave contradiction with the Convention, as well as global temperature targets and universal goals and measures against climate change that we are all discussing here today at COP 21.

In this line, I would like to recall that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change reaffirms that States have, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law, the sovereign right to exploit their own resources.

Therefore, along with the access to efficient international market-based mechanisms, the settlement of the conflict on the basis of well-known relevant UN Security Council resolutions and the fundamental norms and principles of international law namely, respect for territorial integrity and inviolability of the internationally recognized frontiers of states, is a crucial precondition to help Azerbaijan meet its respective commitments.

Dear participants,

We recognize the importance of post-2020 ambitions - a contribution to global climate change efforts in all long-term development programmes as prior topic focusing on low-emission strategies. It means production of thermal, solar and wind based energy in combination with hydroenergy will reach 25% share of total energy production by 2030. Taking into consideration the fact that we now became a producer but not an importer of solar panels, it sounds to me a very realistic goal.

Let me also draw your attention to the Declaration on Mountains prepared by the International Climbing and Mountaineering Federation (UIAA). Azerbaijan is an active member of this international organization and calls upon all parties, international organizations and NGOs to support this important initiative bearing in mind that mountain environment and livelihoods are one of the most vulnerable sites suffering from climate change.

Finally, I wish to stress that Azerbaijan stands with its developing country status and considers crucial to use this unique momentum to adopt the global agreement on climate change.

Again, let me sincerely thank the Government of France and UNFCCC Secretariat for organization of this crucial event with hope to come to long-awaited universal agreement.

I thank you for your attention.