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UNCTAD

Second Ambassadors' Roundtable on Investing in the SDGs

**Statement
delivered by Ambassador Vaqif Sadiqov,
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the UN Office and other
International Organizations in Geneva**

November 11, 2019

Thank you, Madame Chairperson,

Creating favorable investment climate envisages investment-friendly laws and regulations, political and economic stability, functioning market and developed infrastructure as important aspects of attracting investments.

Azerbaijan with its 10 mln population, 99,8% literacy rate and 4,8 mln labor force has been listed by 2019 World Bank's "Doing Business" report in the top 10 most reforming countries in the world, and was named among the economies with the most notable improvement in performance compared to the indicators in 2017/18. The "Ease of Doing Business" rank for Azerbaijan has also improved, and my country is currently ranking 25 out of 190. Azerbaijan is ranking 58 in the Global Competitiveness Index 4.0 covering 141 economies, which is +11 rank improvement since 2018.

Strategic geographic location at the crossroads of Europe and Central Asia and the abundance of natural resources coupled with favorable investment and business climate ensured by the focused policy of the Government, has brought about \$250 billion investment to the Azerbaijani economy over the last 15 years, half of which attributed to foreign direct investments. Currently, the Azerbaijani Export and Investment Promotion Foundation is mainly in charge of assisting local companies' exports and supporting foreign investment process in Azerbaijan.

The Government is also taking large-scale measures to support small and medium-sized enterprises and to increase their participation in global value chains in the framework of the increased attention to diversification of economy, with a special focus on non-energy spheres. Digital economy, infrastructural projects, transportation, communication and space technologies, renewable energy, agriculture, environmental protection, tourism are the major areas of investments identified by the Government of Azerbaijan.

Special importance is attached by the Government of Azerbaijan to the implementation of Agenda 2030. The National SDGs Coordination Council headed by a Deputy Prime-Minister has already presented this year its 2nd Voluntary National Report at the High Level Political Forum in New York.

Azerbaijan contributes to regional development efforts through promoting connectivity. At present, Azerbaijan has transformed into an important international transportation hub with its 6 functioning international airports and the biggest air cargo terminal in the region, Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railroad linking European and Asian railroad networks in the framework of One Road, One Belt mega project, Baku International Sea Trade Port – the biggest in the Caspian Sea and linking container traffic from Europe, Central Asia, China, Iran and India, and the newest North-South railroad project linking North Europe and Russia with Iran, Persian Gulf, and India via Azerbaijan.

We believe that the World Investment Forum can be used to share information between private sector and Geneva-based diplomatic missions, where the private sector can provide information about global tendencies and interests in investments in certain SDG areas, while diplomats and government representatives can help identify and inform their capitals about such opportunities. UNCTAD can organize such inter-sessional meetings in Geneva for business representatives that visit Geneva to attend various events taking place in this city. This can be done together with other international organizations in Geneva, while the sessions can be dedicated to specific issues to allow more targeted approach.

Thank you.