

Madame Chairperson, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have a distinct honour and pleasure to represent the Republic of Azerbaijan at this Second World Summit for Social Development convened by the United Nations and hosted in Doha by the State of Qatar. At the outset, I would like to express sincere appreciation to the State of Qatar for the warm welcome and gracious hospitality extended to our delegation in Doha and commend excellent organization of this Summit.

Three decades on from the First World Social Summit, where a cornerstone of the UN's social development agenda – the

Copenhagen Declaration was adopted, while recognizing the tangible progress achieved in poverty eradication, education, improvement of living and health standards on the globe, we have to admit substantial shortcomings and failures and assess them with the goal to align the agenda to keep up with the pace of global changes.

The Government of Azerbaijan deems it essential to reaffirm its enduring commitment to the Copenhagen Declaration and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We consider the SDGs as a comprehensive framework providing integrated approach in this regard. We fully support the Doha Political Declaration that was adopted today at the Summit to further the 2030 Agenda on Social Development.

Azerbaijan's national development agenda set out in the document "Azerbaijan 2030: National Priorities for Socio-Economic Development" is focused on converting economic growth into the well-being of its citizens thus exemplifying strong policy coherence with the SDGs. Guided by the "leave no one behind" principle of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Azerbaijan, under the leadership of His Excellency President Ilham Aliyev, has taken decisive steps to ensure that social progress keeps pace with economic growth. We are proud to be currently ranked second among developing countries on the Inclusive Development Index.

Over the past 5 years, we have recorded over 60% real term increase of average wages and pension, as well poverty threshold amount.

Addressing gender equality as a key national priority, we keep to narrow the wage gap and empower women across all sectors of public and economic life.

Having one of the youngest age distributions among European countries we view high-quality education and decent job opportunities for future generations as the most potent instrument to ensure full realization of their potential. In addition to national agenda, we contribute to the global efforts for empowerment of the youth. We launched

international education grant programme named after the national leader of Azerbaijan HE Heydar Aliyev for students from the member states of the Organization for Islamic Cooperation, Non-Aligned Movement, and small island developing countries and have already funded initial 500 grants.

We also assist developing countries in delivery of effective public and social services, sharing our success story of delivering such services through dedicated centers that operate as comprehensive, 90% digitized one-stop platforms and ensure exceptionally high citizen satisfaction rate. These centers (“ASAN” and “DOST”) have evolved to become internationally acclaimed national brands of Azerbaijan.

Excellencies

A year ago, at the Global Climate Conference in Baku (COP 29) in November 2024, we launched the Baku Initiative on Human Development for Climate Resilience and adopted the Baku Guiding Principles on Human Development. Next year, Azerbaijan will host *82nd session of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)*, that we view as another opportunity to build on the outcomes of the Doha Social Summit and to further operationalize the Baku Guiding Principles.

Another major international event that Azerbaijan will be hosting also next year is the *13th World Urban Forum*. Through this Forum Azerbaijan aims to promote well-planned and safe cities and communities that advance also the goals of the Baku Initiative and our shared vision of sustainable, climate resilient, human-centered development.

Excellencies

Addressing climate change has become an indispensable component of the social development agenda. With only five years remaining until 2030, we need to further strengthen international cooperation and partnerships to deliver on our

commitment to foster concrete, integrated and targeted policies and actions in line with the Doha Political Declaration and the Sevilla Commitment. In this regard, we believe it is important to reiterate Azerbaijan's commitment to continue contributing to the united efforts on ensuring implementation of the climate resilient social development agenda.

I thank you for your kind attention.