

Statement by the representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Director-General of the Directorate-General on Citizenship Affairs of the State Migration Service of the Republic of Azerbaijan Mr. Rza Talibov in seventieth session of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme

(Geneva, 8 October 2019)

Mr. Chairman!
Distinguished High Commissioner!
Ladies and gentlemen!

Since 1992 the Republic of Azerbaijan has acceded to a number of international documents on the reduction of statelessness, as well as numerous normative documents regulating relations regarding stateless persons have been adopted. Thus, in May 1996, the Republic of Azerbaijan acceded to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. Based on these Conventions, legislation of the Republic of Azerbaijan on citizenship envisages necessary legal guarantees aimed at prevention of statelessness.

It is well known that, as a result of the planned ethnic cleansing carried out by Armenia at the end of 1980's and the beginning 1990's, 250 thousand ethnic Azerbaijanis living in Armenia SSR, were forcibly expelled from their homes and took refuge in Azerbaijan. In accordance with the requirements of the legislation of the Republic of Azerbaijan on citizenship these persons were recognized as citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Moreover, a child born in the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan both parents of whom are stateless persons, as well as a child residing in the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan both parents of whom are unknown, is recognized as a citizen of the Republic of Azerbaijan. I think that these provisions should be considered as humane legal approach ensuring the right to acquire citizenship for every child born in the country.

Furthermore, relevant amendments have been made to the legislation of the Republic of Azerbaijan on citizenship for the purposes of facilitating naturalization of the stateless persons living in the territory of the country.

In order to strengthen cooperation for increasing awareness on the fight against statelessness and effective protection of the rights of these persons in April 2015 the State Migration Service joined the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' (UNHCR) campaign "To end statelessness within 10 years". Based on the 10th activity of the Global Action Plan adopted by UNHCR in the framework of this campaign, in order to identify stateless persons living in the regions and to raise awareness in this field, in 2016-2018 the State Migration Service jointly with the UNCHR Representation in Azerbaijan organized relevant events, as a result of which **389** persons were received and measures were taken for their legalization.

Azerbaijan is determined to continue relevant activities in this field, including through close cooperation with local authorities and the UNHCR Representation in Azerbaijan.

It should be noted that as a result of the measures taken towards naturalization of stateless persons, within a short period of time from 2008 till 2019 in total **1619** stateless persons were admitted to citizenship of the Republic of Azerbaijan and **51** persons restored citizenship of the Republic of Azerbaijan in accordance with relevant Orders of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan. However, there are currently **545** officially registered stateless persons in the territory of the country and naturalization of these persons will be ensured in the next **3 years**.

Thank you for your attention!