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Ilham Aliyev - Historical traditions of statehood in Azerbaijan and promotion of multiculturalism

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Abstract. The Republic of Azerbaijan has ancient traditions of statehood. Looking at these traditions, which have passed the test of history, it becomes clear that Azerbaijan has historically been a multinational state. In this sense, it is very important to pursue the policy of multiculturalism, characteristic of multinational states, in the right direction. The article tells about the policy of multiculturalism pursued by President Ilham Aliyev in the multinational Republic of Azerbaijan and its results.

Keywords. multiculturalism, traditions, statehood, policy, multinational state, human rights, promotion of multiculturalism

Introduction

The term "multiculturalism" and related concepts have been established as the most used words in the modern political lexicon. Therefore, it is necessary to clarify this term, as well as the broad socio-philosophical and ethno-cultural content behind it. "Multiculturalism" literally means many cultures. Translated from Latin, "multi" means "many". "Culture" originally meant cultivation of the land, building a settlement, a settled way of life, and in later periods, it referred to concepts such as upbringing, education, economic development, language, science, religion, art, behavior, etiquette, etc. It was first used in 160 BC ancient Roman politician and writer Marcus Porcius Cato in a treatise on agriculture. The term "multiculturalism" entered the literary lexicon of modernity after the Second World War. After India gained independence from Great Britain in 1947, the Indian constitution, adopted on January 26, 1950, represented the extreme multi-nationality of Indian society and ethno-political events that led to the split of the country between Hindus and Muslims on the eve of the principles of independence.

Since the late 1960s, the term has become the subject of political papers, scientific literature, and media in connection with the implementation of multiculturalism policies at the state level in Canada. In the republics that were part of the Soviet Union, including Azerbaijan, the term "multiculturalism" has become an element of the professional lexicon since the late 1990s. In the 60-70s of the 20th century, multiculturalism began to turn into a philosophical and political concept, going beyond the ordinary term as a requirement of ethno-political relations in Europe and North America. At the time under review, multiculturalism was not a

generally accepted term to describe the current state of the ethno-cultural, racial and religious diversity of a country taken in isolation. It has already manifested itself as a cultural revolution, designed for a secure future of society. Multiculturalism was first officially adopted in 1971 in Canada, a parliamentary monarchy, during the reign of French-born Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau in response to Quebec separatism, which demanded political independence from the country's government. Later, other Western countries began to apply this successful policy model. Nowadays, most Western countries oppose the policy of multiculturalism and emphasize its failure. Multiculturalism in European countries refers to the diversity created as a result of the migration process. Therefore, many countries report that later cultures change or destroy the main local culture. In this sense, an alternative policy of multiculturalism in Western countries was required.

For this, the concept of common European values and culture was thrown into the middle and this concept began to be seriously supported. It became necessary to move from collective processes to individual processes and integration policies. Now, individually, human rights come first, and all cultural concepts come later. Of course, even in states that declare multiculturalism a state policy, human rights are considered the highest value, and, without a doubt, the right to protect one's cultural identity is considered to be an integral part of human rights. However, cultural crises and conflicts began to arise in a number of Western countries that had difficulties in preventing the migration process. In European states, historically composed of mono-ethnic societies, it was difficult to preserve the culture of an already established people. Racial discrimination was impossible because it is contrary to democratic European values. Therefore, there was no other way out than to say that the cultures of the nomadic peoples were against entrenched European values and democracy. This is, of course, a form of discrimination.

Unlike what is happening in European countries, today Azerbaijan presents its model of multiculturalism to the world. Azerbaijan's experience in this area has an ancient history and is quite rich. The works of our classics, oral folk literature, etc. reflect enough examples of the values of multiculturalism. The Catholic Church, the Orthodox Church, the Jewish synagogue, mosques operate freely, without restrictions, safely, in conditions of tolerance based on mutual respect in the territory of Azerbaijan. Of course, this environment was mainly created by the state policy and the transformation of the unique internal norms of the hostel of people into a way of life. The policy of multiculturalism means a democratic state policy aimed at the preservation, development and promotion of various cultures within the boundaries of the state. The question of whether a multicultural society can exist without a state policy of multiculturalism is the subject of long discussions.

The existence of a multicultural society, formed as a result of historical development, and the political will of the state to maintain it actually justify the existence of multiculturalism. However, in order to maintain this policy, it is necessary to improve the legal framework and form the legislative framework for the multiculturalism policy. Former President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Heydar Aliyev was the founder of political multiculturalism in our country, historically a place where various ethnic and cultural groups and religious confessions live together. Having come to power, Heydar Aliyev not only saved Azerbaijan from civil war, but also united all the national minorities of our country around the single ideology of Azerbaijanism. As a result of the successful policy pursued during the reign of Heydar Aliyev, a number of normative legal acts were adopted regarding national minorities and religious groups seeking to protect their cultural diversity. It was thanks to his efforts that the foundations of democratic, legal state building were laid in Azerbaijan, and the tolerant foundations of

ethno-cultural and religious diversity that historically existed in the country were strengthened by the reforms carried out. In his speech at the session of the UN General Assembly on September 29, 1994, Heydar Aliyev said: "There is already a multi-party system in our republic, the principles of political pluralism, personality, freedom of speech, press, conscience, protection of human rights and the rule of law are firmly established. Regardless of skin color, religion and language, all citizens of multinational Azerbaijan enjoy equal rights. The most important task before us is to deeply assimilate the basic principles of the constitution, apply them to the life of the republic, and implement the guarantees provided for by it".

The Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan, adopted in 1995, clearly outlines the principles of tolerance that underlie the policy of multiculturalism. Also in the Constitutional Act on State Independence, the Republic of Azerbaijan declared that it recognizes the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Azerbaijan has joined all the acts adopted by the UN, as well as the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Decree of Heydar Aliyev of February 22, 1998 "On measures to ensure the rights and freedom of citizen" and of June 18, 1998 "On the approval of the State program for the protection of human rights", as well as multiculturalism, are one of the most important documents in this area, and it is assessed by experts as a strategic document in this area. The former president, who attached great importance to state-religious relations, which are the backbone of multiculturalism, said: "The Republic of Azerbaijan is a multinational state. In addition to Muslims, citizens belonging to other religions also live in Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan, as an independent democratic state, provides the opportunity for freedom and freedom to all peoples and nationalities living on its territory, regardless of their religion, race and political affiliation. Azerbaijan, continuing its development in this strategic direction, has formed a multicultural value system and a model that can be an example for the whole world.

Nowadays, the development of multiculturalism in Azerbaijan is associated with the name of the President Ilham Aliyev. Under the leadership of the President Ilham Aliyev, the Republic of Azerbaijan has become one of the exemplary states in the field of proper regulation of national and ethnic diversity in society and has achieved a number of successful accomplishments in this area.

These accomplishments are clearly expressed both in the domestic and foreign policy of the country. In the conditions of modern globalization, it is impossible to find a country in which there is no ethnic, racial, religious or cultural diversity. In every country in the world one or more of the mentioned varieties, or even all of them, is found. One of the important manifestations of multiculturalism, which is an integral part of the domestic policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan, is the high level of state-religious relations here. In the Republic of Azerbaijan, which is a democratic, legal and secular state, religion is separated from the state. All-round support from the state is expected in ensuring religious freedom in Azerbaijan, equality of all religions and spiritual sects before the law, the activities of religious communities, and the establishment of interreligious relations based on mutual respect and cooperation. Each of these aspects of state-religious relations in Azerbaijan is a great achievement.

Despite the fact that 96 percent of the population of the Republic of Azerbaijan professes Islam, the state not only does not distinguish between religions, but also provides the necessary support, including financial support, to religious institutions. According to official data, about 250 mosques have been built or repaired in Azerbaijan since 2003. These mosques include the Bibiheybat, Tsapir, Ajdarbey, Heydar mosques, the Imamzadeh Religious-Historical and Cultural Center and others. At the same time, the state provides the necessary assistance in the construction and repair of Russian Orthodox, Catholic, Albanian churches and

synagogues. In recent years, after a major overhaul and restoration, Russian Orthodox, Georgian Orthodox, Albanian-Udi, German Lutheran churches and temples, Jewish synagogues in Baku and various regions of the country have been presented to believers. In 2008, a Roman Catholic church was built in Baku. New synagogues were built for European Jews in 2003 and for Mountain Jews in 2011 with government funding.

Another achievement characteristic of state-religious relations in our country is that interfaith relations within the country are based on mutual respect and cooperation. One of the important indicators of the multiculturalism policy pursued under the leadership of President Ilham Aliyev is the close cooperation of the religious communities operating in our country. They mutually help each other in the construction, restoration and repair of prayer houses. The Caucasus Muslim Board and the Baku and Azerbaijan diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church were directly involved in the construction of new synagogues for European and Mountain Jews. It should be noted that this is a progressive tradition left over from our historical past, when representatives of various religious communities provide financial and moral support for the construction and restoration of prayer houses of various religious confessions in Azerbaijan. For example, at the end of the 19th century, Muslims gave most of the collected donations for the construction of the Alexander Nevsky Church, known as the Golden Church in Baku. In modern times, the development of this progressive tradition is one of the most important goals of the policy of multiculturalism, implemented under the leadership of the President of the country Ilham Aliyev. In addition, representatives of religious communities operating in Azerbaijan participate in each other's events at a high level.

In Azerbaijan, interreligious relations established on the basis of mutual respect and cooperation prevent religious separatism and accelerate the processes of integration in society. Noting that interreligious relations in Azerbaijan are at a high level, President Ilham Aliyev said: "Representatives of all peoples, all confessions and religions live in Azerbaijan as one family and will do so. There have never been and never will be conflicts on religious grounds in our country. There shouldn't even be any misunderstandings. We go this way and show the world this way." The policy of multiculturalism pursued by President Ilham Aliyev not only raised state-religious relations in the country to a high level, but also ensured the protection of the ethno-cultural values of various peoples and ethnic groups living in the country and their integration into society.

The rights and freedoms of national minorities living in the Republic of Azerbaijan are protected by the Constitution of the country and other normative legal acts. In this sense, the Republic of Azerbaijan has joined many international conventions on the protection of ethnic national minorities. With a number of decrees signed by President Ilham Aliyev, social, economic, educational, cultural, medical, environmental, etc., a number of projects are being implemented at the fields. Currently, there are about 50 non-governmental organizations (NGOs), national cultural centers, public associations and societies in the country dealing with various issues of national minorities. These institutions have the opportunity to receive financial assistance by applying to the Council of State Support for Non-Governmental Organizations under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan with relevant grant projects. In addition, the media published in the languages of national minorities receive financial assistance through the State Support Fund for Mass Media under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Currently, more than 15 newspapers and magazines are published in the languages of national minorities living in Azerbaijan. Radio "Azerbaijan" regularly broadcasts in Kurdish, Lezgi, Talysh, Georgian, Russian and Armenian, financed from the state budget, and 5 local television and radio channels operate in areas inhabited by national minorities.

There are more than 300 general education schools with Russian as the language of instruction in the republic. Public and private universities have departments for teaching in Russian. In addition, there are 108 schools of grades I-IX in the Lezgi language and 225 schools of grades I-IV in the Talysh language. In order to further strengthen the multicultural environment in Azerbaijan, a number of important works have been carried out on behalf of President Ilham Aliyev. By the decree he signed on February 28, 2014, the State Consultative Service of the Republic of Azerbaijan on "Issues of Interethnic, Multicultural and Religious Relations" (currently called the "Issues of Interethnic, Multicultural and Religious Relations" of the Administration of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan) was established and the Baku International center of multiculturalism by decree of May 15, 2014. By the Decree of the President of January 11, 2016, 2016 was declared the "Year of Multiculturalism" in the Republic of Azerbaijan, and by the Decree of January 10, 2017, 2017 was declared the "Year of Islamic Solidarity".

By the Decree of the President dated March 11, 2016, the "Action Plan for declaring 2016 the Year of Multiculturalism" in the Republic of Azerbaijan was approved. By the order of the Head of the Administration of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated February 10, 2017, the "Action Plan for declaring 2017 the Year of Islamic Solidarity" in the Republic of Azerbaijan was approved. Each of these institutions and orders is aimed at the successful implementation of Azerbaijan's policy of multiculturalism. Thus, the high level of state-religious relations in Azerbaijan in recent times, the protection of the ethno-cultural values of various peoples and ethnic groups living in the country, and, as a result, their integration into society, indicate that multiculturalism is an integral part of the domestic policy of Azerbaijan. Republic and influences it. Multiculturalism, as part of the domestic policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan, regulates ethno-cultural diversity in society and leads to the deepening of integration processes. The deepening of integration processes, in turn, prevents conflicts that may arise on national and religious grounds. Multiculturalism, which is an integral part of Azerbaijan's domestic policy, influences its foreign policy. This is a kind of regularity.

This pattern follows from the correlation of domestic and foreign policy. In this regard, domestic policy plays a decisive role in relation to foreign policy. Internal stability creates the basis for a state's foreign policy to be peaceful and in line with the principles of international law. On the contrary, the unstable and crisis situation in the country is one of the main reasons for the aggressive foreign policy of the state and its disregard for international legal norms. Based on the idea that domestic politics plays a decisive role in relation to foreign policy, one can understand the reasons for certain successes achieved in this area as a result of multiculturalism, which is an integral part of Azerbaijan's domestic policy, which has a positive impact on the country's foreign policy. If the policy of multiculturalism of the Republic of Azerbaijan within the country leads to the protection of ethnic, religious and cultural diversity in society and the values that form their basis, then this policy in interstate relations creates favorable conditions for the development of comprehensive relations between Azerbaijan and all countries, regardless of their ethnic, religious, racial and cultural identity. This, in turn, creates favorable conditions for the development of intercultural and inter-civilizational dialogue throughout the world. One of the main directions of the foreign policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan is the promotion of intercultural and inter-civilizational dialogue throughout the world. It should be noted that our country has achieved great success in this direction. One of such successes is the "Baku Process", which has recently entered the political lexicon. The Baku Process is an initiative to develop a dialogue between different cultures.

The Baku Process initiative was first put forward by President Ilham Aliyev at the conference of ministers of culture of Europe and neighboring regions on the topic "Intercultural dialogue - the basis of sustainable development and peace in Europe and neighboring regions", held in Baku on December 2-3, 2008. President Ilham Aliyev spoke about the history and significance of the Baku Process at the opening of the III World Forum for Intercultural Dialogue, held in May 2015 in Baku: "In 2008, on our initiative, the Baku Process was launched. It was our initiative to invite the ministers of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to the meeting of the European Council of Ministers of Culture. It was the first such case, because, Azerbaijan is one of the few countries that are members of both organizations. Later, in 2009, the ministers of culture of the Council of Europe were invited to a meeting of ministers of culture of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. These were our initiatives, and it has already received the name "Baku Process". Today, intercultural and inter-civilizational dialogue, issues related to multiculturalism are included in the "Baku process".

One of the main goals of the "Baku process" is the development of mutual understanding, dialogue and tolerance between cultures. The Baku Process, which originated as a regional initiative, in 2010 began to turn into a global movement. This qualitatively new stage in the development of the "Baku process" is also associated with the name of President Ilham Aliyev. Thus, in 2010, speaking at the 65th session of the UN General Assembly, President Ilham Aliyev announced that next year the World Forum for Intercultural Dialogue would be held in Baku: "Azerbaijan has always been a place of coexistence and tolerance between different religions, ethnic groups and philosophies. As an active member of the Group of Friends of the Union of Civilizations, Azerbaijan contributes to the development of interreligious and intercultural dialogue based on mutual respect and understanding. In the spring of this year, Azerbaijan organized the World Summit of Religious Leaders of 32 countries, and in April 2011, it came up with the initiative to hold the World Forum for Intercultural Dialogue."

After this speech, Mr. President signed the "Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the organization of the World Forum for Intercultural Dialogue in the Republic of Azerbaijan" on May 27, 2011. According to this resolution, starting from 2011, the World Forum for Intercultural Dialogue will be held every two years in the Republic of Azerbaijan. In addition to the 4 forums of the World Intercultural Dialogue, held in Baku from 2011 to the present, other important events organized within the framework of the "Baku Process" is the Summit of World Religious Leaders, held in our country on April 26-27, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013 International Humanitarian Forums held in 2014, 2016 and 2018, and the 7th UN Alliance of Civilizations Global Forum held April 25-27, 2016. The progressive world community highly appreciates the role of the "Baku process" in promoting intercultural and interreligious dialogue. For example, UN Secretary-General António Guterres, at the 72nd session of the UN General Assembly, held in September last year, praised the Baku Process as a preliminary initiative defending dialogue between cultures since 2008. As a natural result of the successfully pursued foreign policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the system of international relations in the modern era, as well as the increased influence of our country as a result of major projects implemented in the development of intercultural and inter-civilizational dialogue, on October 24, 2011, at the plenary session of the UN General Assembly, Azerbaijan became a member Security Council of this organization. With the support of 155 countries, Azerbaijan had the opportunity to represent the region of Eastern Europe in the UN Security Council in 2012-2013. According to the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, the election of our country to the UN Security Council with the support of 155 countries "clearly shows that the

absolute majority of the international community supports Azerbaijan, trusts Azerbaijan and expresses its position in such an important voting process." Thus, if the influence of multiculturalism on the domestic policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan is manifested in the protection of ethnic, racial, religious and cultural diversity in society and the ethno-cultural values that form their basis, then its influence on the foreign policy of our country is manifested in the development of comprehensive relations of our republic with all countries, regardless of their ethnicity.

This, in turn, creates fertile ground for the development of intercultural and inter-civilizational dialogue on a global scale. The policy of multiculturalism, successfully implemented in our country under the leadership of President Ilham Aliyev, has been facing serious problems since the early 2010s in a number of Western countries, where this policy first appeared. In his speech at the 47th Munich Security Conference on February 5, 2011, former British Prime Minister David Cameron expressed the common positions of these states as follows: "The doctrine of state multiculturalism hinders integration processes in society, supporting different cultures to live their own traditions. As a result, various communities, especially the Muslim community, reject liberal values in society and promote values that are contrary to the values of our democratic society. This creates conditions for the growth of religious extremism." The Republic of Azerbaijan offers an effective model of multiculturalism even among Western countries, where the policy of multiculturalism first appeared. The terms "Azerbaijani multiculturalism", "Azerbaijani model of multiculturalism" are widely used in the political lexicon. In modern times, a number of countries are studying the experience of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the field of multiculturalism. About the importance of this experience, President Ilham Aliyev says: "Our experience is being studied. I am sure that when applying the experience of Azerbaijan in other countries, inter-religious and inter-ethnic relations in these countries will be resolved on a healthy basis." This policy pursued by the great leader is successfully continued by President Ilham Aliyev. Azerbaijan's possession of the values of multiculturalism and its promotion are highly appreciated by leading international organizations and the world community. In today's tense international conditions, the creation of the International Center for Multiculturalism in Azerbaijan and its activities in the practical, scientific, propaganda and propaganda direction are of particular importance. At present, the experience of our country is the object of research, it is studied and taught in many countries. Every year, interest in cooperation in this direction is growing and ties are expanding.

The Azerbaijani people with their experience of coexistence and way of life proves that multiculturalism is alive and has a future. You just need to accept it, become its propagandist and popularizer. Attaching great importance to this, Mr. Ilham Aliyev said that Azerbaijan's experience in this area is highly appreciated by leading international organizations and the international community: "This proves that multiculturalism lives and has a future, only politicians, those who are able to influence the public, including media representatives, more should be held accountable. I believe that the role of the media in this matter should be more positive. Unfortunately, in many cases we see conflicts, refugee crises and related footage in the news. This approach only leads to isolation. We cannot allow this, because, as I said, we are connected and live on the same planet. As we have seen, the distance between Europe and the Middle East is not that great. In other words, distance doesn't stop people from going there to find shelter and save their families. Therefore, promoting these values by focusing on positive examples of multiculturalism will help us all, because, in the future, no country and nation will be able to live in isolation. We are connected to each other. The population of the vast majority of countries in the world is multi-ethnic and multi-confessional. We should be proud of this."

Erroneous ideas about the absence of a future for multiculturalism are heard from politicians in countries that talk about democracy, and materials in the media of these countries contain discrimination, religious and national intolerance, islamophobia, negative attitudes towards refugees, migrants, etc. incendiary ideas included. Such an approach only leads peoples and states to a state of isolation. At the same time, stability, coexistence and socio-economic development face great danger. We clearly see that these differences are fueled and exploited by the conflicts, wars and tensions that are taking place in the world today. There are many terrible things happening in the world. Nowadays in a big crisis are Middle East, Western Asia and Europe. Some countries are experiencing an economic, political, military and moral crisis. The leaders of these countries cannot adhere to the declared values.

There is stability, development, prosperity and security in Azerbaijan. The values declared by Azerbaijan are obvious. National moral values, Azerbaijanism, national and religious tolerance, tolerance, socio-economic development and the state's reliance on its own political line are the main factors for sustainable development and success. As the head of state Ilham Aliyev stated, the traditions of multiculturalism and tolerance are the way of life of the Azerbaijani people, their moral value and the policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan. It is no coincidence that 2016 was declared the Year of Multiculturalism in our country. According to analysts, the policy of multiculturalism in Azerbaijan, in addition to being an example of national-confessional relations based on historical traditions, is primarily aimed at protecting and developing cultural diversity, the national cultural heritage of peoples, and their mutually beneficial integration. This exemplary civilization, based on the principles of traditional coexistence and mutual respect between different ethnic cultures, is a very successful mission and contribution of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the process of intercultural dialogue. Today, the Azerbaijani model of multiculturalism is widely and comprehensively promoted as an important and positive value aimed at deepening relations between the peoples of the world. The VII Global Forum of the UN Alliance of Civilizations under the motto "Coexistence in Inclusive Societies: Challenge and Goal" was held in the context of the global threat of terrorism, the aggravation of the migration crisis in Europe and the growth of intolerance in societies. Representatives of more than 140 countries of the world held broad discussions to come to a common opinion on solving complex problems, such as ethnic and religious conflicts in different regions of the world, and voiced proposals that would serve to develop a constructive dialogue.

The initiatives and recommendations voiced in the speeches made a great contribution to cooperation, strengthening relations, mutual understanding between cultures and civilizations. It should be noted that the Alliance of Civilizations creates trust and understanding in the world. His projects support young innovators, provide resources for journalists, and honor leaders who encourage dialogue. Let's also strengthen this precious Alliance as we face the challenges of our time, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said in a video message shown to the Forum participants: "Division and isolation are good for extremists. The bombs they throw are aimed at buildings. But what they really want to destroy is our mutual understanding. For this reason, I welcome the dedication of this Forum to the theme of "Coexistence in Inclusive Societies". It is also a key goal of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This diary is for all people, especially those who have been marginalized for a long time due to racism, discrimination, xenophobia and other forms of violence. The Alliance is helping to realize this global plan so that no one is left behind and everyone lives in dignity. I fully support this UN agency." This was stated by the UN Secretary General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, who expressed his unwavering support for the Baku Forum. This statement reaffirms the importance and necessity

of world leaders addressing the root causes of conflict and focusing on prevention. The Alliance serves as a delicate force mechanism designed to help build a safer world by preventing radicalization and polarization, encouraging greater intercultural understanding and participation in projects and programs aimed at achieving these goals. Stressing that Azerbaijan is a place where religions, cultures and civilizations have converged for centuries, Mr. Ilham Aliyev said that Azerbaijan is not only a geographical bridge between East and West, but also a cultural bridge: “For centuries, representatives of different religions and cultures lived peacefully and with dignity in Azerbaijan. Religious tolerance and multiculturalism have always existed here. Even when the word “multiculturalism” did not exist, these ideas have always lived on. As a result, today Azerbaijan is a multinational and multi-confessional country.

Conclusion

Representatives of all religions and nationalities live here in peace and tranquility. This is our greatest asset and we are proud of our history. We are proud of our historical monuments that reflect different cultures. One of the oldest mosques in the world was built in Shamakhi, the ancient city of Azerbaijan, in 743. In addition, one of the oldest churches - the church of the times of ancient Caucasian Albania - is located in Azerbaijan, not far from Shaki, another ancient city. Our government allocates funds for the construction and maintenance of mosques, Orthodox and Catholic churches, as well as synagogues. This is our policy and our way of life. Azerbaijan has preserved this wealth for centuries, despite the political and social situation in our country.” The day we overcome intolerance, discrimination, xenophobia and the fear of diversity, we will be able to succeed in this fight. The supporters of violence influence the younger generations with the utopias they create by distorting religious values and lead them to disaster. Instead, we must teach the new generations in the right way the true messages based on conviction, justice and equality. When we can do this as representatives of different religions, we will better understand that the world is a place where we can all live together. President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who paid sufficient attention to these ideas in his speech, said that we must continue to work together in this direction: “We must, stronger than ever, take responsibility for the Alliance of Civilizations, its principles and values. I believe that the agenda of humanity in the 21st century will not be doomed to an end determined by terrorist organizations. The Baku forum once again confirmed the need to develop cooperation and friendship between countries and peoples in order to ensure tolerance and mutual understanding. Dialogue and exchanges of views showed that the deepening of the system of multilateral relations will be important and important in order to take measures to respond to various challenges. This Forum has openly proclaimed its goals of peaceful, sustainable development.

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