



## ***SPEECH OF AZERI PRESIDENT ILHAM ALIYEV***

Dear President of Romania Mr Beseku!

Dear ladies and gentlemen!

First, I express my gratitude to my Romanian friends for the excellent organization of the forum and sincere hospitality. I am very glad to be in Your lovely country once more. With President Besesku we discussed yesterday issues concerning regional cooperation and bilateral ties. This forum is very nice chance for evaluating the future wide-scale regional cooperation. The forum is called Black Sea Forum. But it is clear that the big-scale cooperation among us is possible in case of joint implementation of regional projects connecting Black and Caspian seas. This issue makes of bigger importance now in the background of new realities of our region and results of the big regional projects.

Azerbaijan attaches big importance to cooperation with its partners. We are implementing big energy and transport projects and these projects have already impact on regional development. Azerbaijan successfully performs its energy strategy. Already yesterday the pipeline connecting Caspian and Mediterranean seas started to operate and first Azerbaijani oil left Ceyhan port via ship. This is a unique infrastructure. For the first time worldwide Caspian and Mediterranean seas regions were connected by very strong infrastructure. Considering giant oil and gas resources of Azerbaijan this event will bring to successful development of our country and common benefit to our friends and partners.

Our country is actively working on its gas project and gas pipeline to transport Azeri gas to Black and Mediterranean seas regions will be commissioned by late this year. Today Caspian Sea is linked to Black Sea and Mediterranean Sea that is considered access to the world market via pipelines. This opens new possibilities. Azerbaijan becomes very reliable energy resources exporter for neighbor countries and we will strive to maximally take use of this and create better conditions in region. I am sure it will give its contribution to regional cooperation, security and peace.

Our country is located in junction of Europe and Asia and plays in certain time the role of natural bridge. But we should firmly cooperate with all region countries to strengthen this bridge. Importance of transport projects directed from Azerbaijan to Europe, as well from Central Asia via Azerbaijan is getting increased. Restoration of historical Silk Road, TRACECA program, Kars-Tbilisi-Baku railway line to connect Central Asia with Europe that we plan to build are not ideas or desires only. Vast majority of them have already successfully been completed. Billions of dollars of investments, strong political support of region countries, USA were required to implement these projects. Now Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline is already reality not desire. And it means we can successfully implement projects of universal importance and everyone, all our friends will take its use.

At preset economy of Azerbaijan develops very rapidly. GDP increased 26% in Azerbaijan last year, this figure was 39% during 4 months of current year and industry production increased 50%. Nearly 400,000 workstations were opened in Azerbaijan for last 2 years and half. Our people benefits all these positive processes and we can share these assets with our friends and partners.

At the same time, I am fully confident that long term economic development is possible only due to strong political institutions, democratic processes in country. Real democratic society cannot be built in poor country. As well it is impossible to have success only due to big energy resources, transport corridors, economic potential without strong public control, democratic institutions. Economic and political reforms are carried out in Azerbaijan in the same time and this proves its success.

Besides, there are dangers and risks for region. Of course, frozen conflicts within Azerbaijan, Georgia and Moldova are major dangers and obstacles for regional development. I think the sole way of settlement should be found for Abkhazia, Southern Ossetia, Dnestr and Nagorno-Karabakh conflicts. All these conflicts have the same reason, they started as a result of separatism. These conflicts have the same consequences. As a result of conflicts territorial integrity of Georgia, Moldova and Azerbaijan was violated. These conflicts must be solved in base of international law. Conflicts cannot be settled according to desire, idea, expectation or plan of anyone. There are international norms and Azerbaijan is quite loyal to settlement of conflicts in frame of these norms.

Territorial integrity of Azerbaijan has been recognized by all international community, UN. Our attitude demands to settle Nagorno-Karabakh conflict only and only in frame of territorial integrity of our country. For more than 10 years 20% of Azerbaijani territory - Nagorno-Karabakh and more 7 districts located away from its administrative frontiers are under occupation. A million of Azerbaijanis having become refugee and IDP suffer the conflict consequences. We are pleased that international community openly declares its opinion on the conflict settlement.

UN Security Council has 4 resolutions demanding unconditional withdrawal of Armenian troops from Azerbaijani territories. Early last year European Council adopted resolution on the conflict that openly declares one member state of European Council - Armenia has occupied territory of another member state - Azerbaijan and this caused big humanitarian disaster. We are satisfied from vision of other international organizations. Special declaration was

adopted in recently held GUAM summit on unsettled conflicts and we are delighted of cooperating with our friends in this issue.

There is self-determination principle as well. But people of Armenia has already determined itself within state of Armenia. We think realization of self-determination of Armenians within Azerbaijani territory is inaccessible. There are many Armenian communities in the world and it is difficult to imagine what would happen if they demand self-determination in every country they live. I state once again that we want to peacefully solve this conflict, our country is devoted to the peace process. But territorial integrity of Azerbaijan cannot be subject to discussion. If we achieve peaceful settlement of this conflict and other similar ones in the region, I am sure the region will be safer, integration processes will go rapider here and we will be able to implement wider international cooperation. Experience of Azerbaijan and our partners that we together implement transport and energy projects of worldwide importance shows that this is possible and this brings only peace, stability, certainty and security concerning the future. And the most important is that people take its benefit. People cannot live in state of 'neither war nor peace'. We cannot stand till the end of time existence of illegal bodies not recognized within territory of Europe. That is why international community should give very strict message, take very strong practical actions to help us in peacefully solving these conflicts. All these issues are connected.

We cannot make difference among regional political development, democratic changes, European integration, peace, security, energy security, transport corridor issues, have success in one of them and fail in another. We must deal with these issues in the same time and Azerbaijan is ready for this. I mention once again that we are much pleased of regional cooperation. Our country gives very important contribution to this regional cooperation and we take big use of this. I consider this forum is very nice chance to estimate the prospects, analyze the assets and define future cooperation directions.

Thank you so much.