

BULLETIN

HIGHLIGHT OF THE FOREIGN POLICY OF REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

Table of contents

- I. President Ilham Aliyev lays out Azerbaijan's vision for the regional postwar order
2
- II. Azerbaijan and the EU are working closely to increase gas supplies to Europe
7
- III. Baku hosts the first trilateral meeting of the foreign and transport ministers of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Türkiye
9
- IV. Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan step into a new era of bilateral relations
10
- V. Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, and Iran agree to double the volume of gas swap
12
- VI. President Ilham Aliyev attends the 6th Summit of the Caspian littoral states in Ashgabat
14
- VII. Azerbaijan and Pakistan continue to enhance bilateral cooperation
16
- VIII. Azerbaijan and Israel aim to boost cooperation in all spheres
17

I. President Ilham Aliyev lays out Azerbaijan's vision for the regional postwar order

On June 16, the 9th Global Baku Forum on "Threats to the Global Order" has kicked off under the auspices of President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and with the organization of the Nizami Ganjavi International Center. Current regional and global issues were discussed in an effort to come up with clear-cut and compelling solutions. Opening the forum, President Ilham Aliyev [emphasized](#) the benefits of the forum, noting that discussions and exchange of views will contribute to the study and the solution of most pressing issues. The Nizami Ganjavi International Centre has turned into an international platform that studies ways of resolving global problems and informs the world community about them, the president said, adding that Azerbaijan's victory in Karabakh opened up new opportunities for regional peace. Addressing the forum, President Ilham Aliyev laid out Azerbaijan's approach to the postwar situation in the region, adding that "last time when we met I broadly covered the issue related to occupation, devastation and humanitarian crisis which our people suffered for almost 30 years. I don't want to repeat that. It is known already, because there are so many visitors to the liberated territories-politicians, public figures, journalists, representatives of civil society and they see all with their own eyes what ruins were left after Armenian occupation." Speaking about the 44-day war that resulted in the liberation of Azerbaijan's occupied lands, President Ilham Aliyev noted that "Azerbaijan won the war. The war was just, the war was inevitable and it led to restoration of justice, international law, and national dignity of Azerbaijani people. Now we talk about peace. I think it's one of the

unique cases in the world that after such a long-lasting confrontation within a short period of time the country which restored justice and defeated aggressor offers peace if you look at the history of wars not in many cases one can see this picture. But why we select peace, because we want stable, sustainable development in the Southern Caucasus," adding that "it's a unique opportunity. Southern Caucasus was disintegrated throughout the years of independence of three countries of Southern Caucasus. For thirty years it was disintegrated because of Armenian occupation. So, now it's time to establish peace, establish cooperation. And Azerbaijan is working on that."

On the normalization of relations with Armenia, President Ilham Aliyev noted that the proposals initiated by Azerbaijan for the normalization of relations with Armenia also include the countries' mutual respect for each other's borders. "With respect to process of normalization of relations with Armenia, we suggested, it was our proposal to start working on peace agreement. Armenia did not respond. Then we made another step, we put forward five basic principles of international law, including mutual respect to and recognition of territorial integrity of both countries and mutual refrain from any territorial claims now and in the future, and other principles which make the bulk of our proposal," the president emphasized.

"We were glad to see that the Armenian government accepted these five principles. So this is positive dynamics but now we need to move to practical implementation," the president said. President Ilham Aliyev called for the implementation of what the parties had agreed upon to end enmity and turn a new page, but expressed doubts about capability of the Armenian leadership to keep their promises. "We know from the history of times

of occupation when we were negotiating that sometimes words even on high-level articulated by Armenian officials do not mean a lot. Because we need steps. Azerbaijan already on its side established Azerbaijani commission on peace agreement and we expect the same to be done by Armenia. As soon as it is done, or if it is done, then negotiations will start,” President Ilham Aliyev added.

On the border delimitation process, President Ilham Aliyev pointed out that Azerbaijan “put forward a proposal to start the process of delimitation of our border. Because biggest part of our border was also under occupation and never a delimitation took place. Therefore, this process also has started and the first joint meeting of the border commissions of Azerbaijan and Armenia took place last month on the border. That was also symbolic that both sides met on the border and that was also an important message that there will be progress. Of course, we understand that it’s a long way but it started.”

At the same time, President Ilham Aliyev called on Armenia to honor the trilateral Declaration signed on 10 November 2020 deal to restore regional communications. “We expect that Armenia will comply with the trilateral Declaration signed on 10 November 2020 with respect to the opening of communications for Azerbaijan to have connection with its Autonomous Republic of Nakhchivan. Unfortunately, it’s more than one and a half year since Armenia signed a capitulation act, but so far there is no access. And this is unacceptable. First, this is a violation by Armenia of the provisions of trilateral Declaration, and it also creates a kind of imbalance in the region, because based on the same declaration, Azerbaijan undertook obligation to provide unimpeded access from Armenia to Karabakh region of Azerbaijan

where Armenian population lives. So for one year and a half Armenians are using Lachin road to have this unimpeded connection, but Azerbaijanis cannot use the road through Armenia-Zangazur corridor to connect us with Nakhchivan.” President Ilham Aliyev emphatically pointed out that the current arrangement “is not fair and this is not just. We will never agree with that. Therefore, I think that the deliberate delays from Armenian side of giving us this access is counterproductive.”

President Ilham Aliyev pointed out that it is similar to the “the times of negotiations when Armenia was delaying and delaying and just winning time. What was the result of that? The result was total defeat on the battlefield and on political arena. The result was that Armenian ideological basis was totally dismantled. Almost 30 years of occupation did not make Armenian people happier. On the contrary they have been known by the world community as occupants and aggressors. Now, after the war ended everybody can see what ruins they left during the times of occupation. Therefore, the soonest resolution of the opening of Zangazur corridor is one of the fundamental elements of future peace in the region.”

President Ilham Aliyev warned that “if we are not given this access then it will be difficult to talk about peace and all efforts of Azerbaijan aimed at normal coexistence and normal neighborhood with Armenia will fail. This is an important issue again. Azerbaijan has a right to demand it. Armenian government signed a corresponding declaration. Second, Azerbaijan won the war as a country which suffered from occupation, and we have a moral right to demand it.”

In his speech, President Ilham Aliyev also touched upon the issue of Armenians living in Azerbaijan. “I think that the declaration which

was announced by President of the European Council Mr. Charles Michel as a result of a trilateral meeting in Brussels between President Michel, myself and Prime Minister Pashinyan clearly says that rights and security of Armenian population in Karabakh also will be taken into account. We fully support it. Rights of security of all people of Azerbaijan are provided by our Constitution. Azerbaijan is a multiethnic country and the Armenian population is not the biggest ethnic minority in Azerbaijan. Therefore, our Constitution provides equal rights for representatives of all ethnicities, including Armenians who live in Azerbaijan for many years. Therefore-rights and security-we will, of course, take care of that,” the president noted.

At the same time, President Ilham Aliyev underscored that Azerbaijan does not intend to grant its Karabakh region any special status that is different from other regions of the country, but it will ensure the provision of rights and guarantee the security of its inhabitants as is provided throughout the rest of the Republic of Azerbaijan, adding that “unfortunately, we start to hear from Armenian government words about status of the so-called “Nagorno-Karabakh” which is absolutely counterproductive and dangerous for Armenia itself, because Nagorno-Karabakh does not exist. The Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous District was abolished in the end of 1991 by the decision of Azerbaijani Parliament. We don’t have this administrative structure on our territory. Therefore, any kind of reference to the so-called “status” will lead only to a new confrontation. Armenian government should understand it and should refrain from attempts to re-write history.”

President Ilham Aliyev warned that “it was kind of a verbal agreement that no one will talk about the status. Unfortunately, it happens and it can lead to very serious consequences,

because if Armenia continues to put under question Azerbaijan’s territorial integrity then Azerbaijan will have no other choice but also put under question Armenian territorial integrity. And from historical point of view, we have much more rights to do it. Because the history of the last century clearly shows that in 1920 in November six months after sovietization of Azerbaijan, the Soviet government took historical part of Azerbaijan Zangazur and adjusted it to Armenia. Therefore, if Armenia will demand status for Armenians in Karabakh, why shouldn’t Azerbaijanis demand status for Azerbaijanis in Western Zangazur? Because it was fully inhabited by Azerbaijanis. So, this way will lead to a deadlock and I think Armenian government should not forget the lessons of the second Karabakh war and learn that lesson well and refrain from any kind of territorial claims to Azerbaijan.”

President Ilham Aliyev also touched upon the issue of the Minsk Group. “Minsk Group was created in 1992. The mandate was to help to resolve the conflict, but de-facto activity led to zero result. Can you imagine? For 28 years a group which has a mandate from OSCE didn’t produce any result and therefore, after Azerbaijan resolved the Karabakh conflict, the need for Minsk Group activity is no longer here. And we think that everybody understands it. Especially, after Russian-Ukrainian war, it is clear that three co-chairs of the Minsk Group cannot get together and we already received these messages that the Minsk Group will not, I mean the co-chair institute of this group will not function. In other words, Minsk Group is dysfunctional. Therefore, the attempts of revival are also counter-productive. I think the best way is to say goodbye to Minsk Group, not thank you and goodbye, but only goodbye, because 30 years is enough. It is time for retirement,” the

president said. President Ilham Aliyev noted that “any kind of speculations in Armenia or in any other country about Minsk Group lead only to irritation in Azerbaijan. We resolved the conflict. The so-called Madrid principles, which were elaborated by the Minsk Group, have been resolved and now we need to think about how to normalize relations with Armenia and sign a peace agreement. I think we can, if both sides work in good faith, sign this peace agreement within one year.”

President Ilham Aliyev also laid out his vision for the integrated Caucasus, noting that “our vision for Caucasus is integration. Cooperation and integration. And Azerbaijan already made on several occasions proposals to start, to make a first step. We consulted this issue with our Georgian colleagues and Georgian government is also supportive to this idea to organize a trilateral meeting on the level of foreign ministers of Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia in Georgia and to start this dialogue. Unfortunately, Armenia refuses. I don’t know what is the reason for that. I cannot find any explanation, any reasonable explanation. The same attempts were made, as far as I know, by some European institutions. Again, there was a refusal.”

“If they want another war, it will be a catastrophe for them and they clearly understand it and I think that the government and the revanchist forces in Armenia clearly understand that will be the end of their statehood. Therefore, I think we need to get a clear answer from Armenia. How do they see the Southern Caucasus? Our position is clear. The position of Georgian government is clear. We want to start this dialogue, start this interaction and, of course, without Armenia it will not be possible,” President Ilham Aliyev wondered.

On June 27, President Ilham Aliyev opened a new commando military base in the liberated Kalbajar district. “Six months ago, on 24 December, the first commando military base was commissioned in the liberated Hadrut. Today we are opening another one of the newly-established commando forces in Kalbajar. This shows that the process of army building after the Second Karabakh War is in full swing and the commando forces, along with all other armed forces, have all the capabilities to fulfill the tasks facing the country and protect our territorial integrity and our borders,” the president [pointed out](#), adding that “the Azerbaijani Army is even stronger now, both in terms of supplies and combat capability after the war. Therefore, we will continue taking serious steps to develop our Army. New contracts have been signed for the purchase of the most modern weaponry. These contracts are already being implemented, and new weapons and the most modern equipment are being imported into Azerbaijan. Our positions on the border with Armenia will be further strengthened.”

President Ilham Aliyev warned that “if Armenia still clings to its old tactics in the process of demarcation and tries to prolong it, it will regret it. We are closely watching the actions of revanchist forces in Armenia. Let them know that too. My words are written at the top of that mountain: “The Iron Fist is in place; let no one forget about that,” adding that “our defeat of Armenia in the war should be a lesson for them. They believed that their army was invincible and spread various rumors about it. We have shown that they cannot stand up to the Azerbaijani Army. They stated that Azerbaijan could never take its lands by force because the fortifications they had built, the 30 years of engineering work, and the geography of this region were very favorable for them. We have blown this myth to

smithereens and showed that no one could stand in front of us where there is a strong will, a unity of the people and the government, and patriotism of the military. If revanchist forces emerge in Armenia again, they should know what awaits them.”

At the same time, President Ilham Aliyev emphasized that Azerbaijan does not want a war and it never did, stressing, however, that “we want our interests to be secured. We want the realities of war to be accepted by all. I can say that the world's leading powers have already accepted the post-war realities and are building their activities based on these realities. Armenia must also accept this reality. Only a year and a half have passed since the war. Let them not forget this war – neither themselves nor their next generations. Let them know that Azerbaijan is a strong state. Azerbaijan has a strong army. Azerbaijani soldiers and officers are ready to sacrifice their lives to protect our state, as they sacrificed their lives in the second Karabakh war.”

Unfortunately, despite repeated warnings from Baku, Armenia continues to engage in deliberate provocations against Azerbaijan. At a press conference on June 27, Armenian Prime Minister made a number of provocative statements that call into question Armenia’s intention to achieve a permanent peace in the region. Commenting on Pashinyan’s provocative statements, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan [pointed out](#) that “Azerbaijan has been a supporter and initiator of the normalization of relations between the two countries since the liberation of its territories, despite the aggressive policy of Armenia and the “destroy everything” approach used by Armenia for decades. It was the President of Azerbaijan who proposed to sign a peace agreement on the basis of strict adherence to the principles of international law at the post conflict stage. The Azerbaijani

side even presented to the other side the basic principles on which the agreement should be based. If Azerbaijan wanted a war, as Pashinyan claims, these steps would probably not be needed. If Azerbaijan wanted a war, it would not have made great efforts to rebuild and restore the territories destroyed by Armenia for 30 years.”

“The Azerbaijani side not only makes verbal statements on the delimitation of borders between the two countries, the opening of all communications in the region and the signing of a future peace agreement between the parties, but also implements own statements with its actions and concrete steps. For many years, it was the Azerbaijani side that has said that the establishment of normal relations in the region and the opening of all communications would be beneficial to Armenia. The fact that the Armenian side finally realized this and the Prime Minister’s statement that “the opening of communications is beneficial for Armenia” attracts attention as a new approach of Armenian leadership. It seems that it takes some time for Armenia to accept the truth. We hope that it will not take much time for Armenia to realize the effectiveness of the Zangazur corridor, which has already become a reality,” the statement from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan read, adding that “as for the trilateral statements, the obligations assumed by the parties with this document and their implementation is obvious. Armenia by grossly violating the requirements of the document sends sabotage groups to the territories of Azerbaijan, does not withdraw illegal armed groups from the territories of Azerbaijan, and delays the opening of communications for a long time, grossly violates the implementation of these statements. The Prime Minister of Armenia, without elaborating on the specific situation

he refers to, claims that "the Azerbaijani side boycotted the meeting at least once". If we start listing the meetings that have been proposed so far with the participation of international mediators in the post-conflict phase and were violated by Armenia under various pretexts, as well as postponed by provocations 1-2 hours before, then the list will be very long."

"If Armenia really wants peace, it must show its political will and take concrete steps towards peace, rather than spending time reviving a format whose efficiency has always been low and whose members now openly acknowledge its impossibility," the statement concluded.

II. Azerbaijan and the EU are working closely to increase gas supplies to Europe

Speaking at the official opening ceremony of the 27th International Caspian Oil and Gas Exhibition in Baku on June 1, President Ilham Aliyev [said](#) that Azerbaijan was in active negotiations to increase gas exports, which will make an important contribution to Europe's energy security. But President Ilham Aliyev also said that this could not be achieved quickly since the exploitation of new fields and expansion of the infrastructure requires a lot of financial resources. "Our potential consumers should also understand that it is impossible to extract large volumes of gas within one year. For that, we need contracts. We need to start and speed up negotiations. We need, of course, to work with our traditional partners, investors, and energy companies to increase production. And also we need to expand the existing facilities. We did not plan for that in the coming years because the Southern Gas Corridor is an integrated pipeline system consisting of three

pipelines. The last segment of it the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline's capacity is 10 billion cubic meters," the president underscored.

"The Southern Gas Corridor is a project which we can be proud of. At the same time, it allows us to increase production from the huge Shah Deniz gas condensate field, and it happens. It's only one year and five months since Azerbaijan has used this new modern infrastructure to transport its gas reserves. But already, the expansion of our presence on the European continent with our natural resources is needed for our partners and us. We managed to increase the production and our export," the president noted, adding that "last year Azerbaijan exported 22 billion cubic meters of natural gas, this year, the projection is 24, and the next year it will be even more. There can be different figures depending on the activity of production and the activation of other fields situated in the Azerbaijani sector of the Caspian Sea because our gas potential is not limited only to Shah Deniz. Other fields are also very promising. Some of them will start production next year. So that will be an important contribution to energy security, especially now, when the demand for Azerbaijani hydrocarbons is more than ever before. And we, as a responsible country, take that into account and try to support countries that face difficulties for different reasons."

President Ilham Aliyev noted that "now we think about the expansion because there is a demand for that. And that, of course, will take time, a lot of financial resources, and close coordination, cooperation and active dialogue with all countries involved. And we are ready for that. Minister of Energy of Azerbaijan and SOCAR already got all my instructions, and they are in the process of active negotiations," adding that "taking into account that there are now new challenges and new demands, of course, we are already in negotiations with

other potential consumers. But for that, of course, only our efforts will not be sufficient. There must be investments in infrastructure in Europe, building new interconnectors and, of course, agreeing on the terms because, as we all know, in the gas business, you first sell the gas, sign the contract and then start to invest and extract. But all I say is to give an outlook from our point of view. But, at the same time, we will do everything we can to speed up the process that has already started.”

President Ilham Aliyev also said that Azerbaijan was ready to borrow funds from leading financial institutions if there are projects of global importance, and the projects are important for Azerbaijan. “I would like to express also gratitude to the governments of the US and UK, our great supporters throughout our energy policy and performance. With their great support, we managed to achieve these results. I would like also to express gratitude to international financial institutions, World Bank, EBRD, Asian Development Bank, EIB, and Asian Infrastructure and Investment Bank. I hope all those banks that financed Southern Gas Corridor will also provide financial support to implement our new plans, particularly the expansion of TAP. We can also think about the expansion of TANAP because, as I said already, the demand for Azerbaijani gas is growing. The potential is here; political will is here. Therefore, we should not waste time. We should bring the capacity of our infrastructure to the potential level of transportation of natural gas,” the president added.

President Ilham Aliyev also highlighted the close partnership with the European Commission in ensuring energy security of Europe. “I would like to mention that fruitful cooperation between Azerbaijan and the European Commission also played a significant role in implementing the Southern Gas

Corridor project and will play an essential role in implementing our plans. We are in permanent contact with the European Commission on that. As a result of discussions that took place at the beginning of February this year in Baku between the Energy Commissioner of the EU and our Minister of Energy, we established energy dialogue between the EU and Azerbaijan. The agenda is comprehensive, of course, traditional issues like oil, gas, electricity, renewables, hydrogen, and energy efficiency. So, I think that this broad range of issues and their active cooperation on these issues will allow us to have more gas for export,” the president underscored.

President Ilham Aliyev said that Azerbaijan was rapidly developing the production of renewable energy resources which would release additional volumes of gas for export. “We have had two groundbreaking ceremonies with leading energy companies, ACWA Power and Masdar, and now the construction of two - one wind and one solar - power plants with a total capacity of 470 megawatts is already underway. And next year, these two power plants will be commissioned. And this is only the beginning. Because we are already in an active phase of negotiations with many leading energy companies on renewables. We have massive potential in the Caspian Sea, which has already been evaluated. According to the information I was given, the capacity and potential of the Azerbaijani sector of the Caspian Sea are 150,000 megawatts. This is a considerable volume. At the same time, great potential is now in the territories that have been liberated due to the second Karabakh war, particularly in Kalbajar and Lachin and other areas. And we estimate this potential to be around 9,000 to 10,000 megawatts, only wind and sun. But if we add hydro, which also has great potential,

that can be another 1,000 megawatts or more. And all that now is seriously addressed by our government. And the more we have international investments in renewables, the more natural gas we will save for export. This is natural. So a combination of all these factors and, of course, including the energy efficiency and reduction of losses in our transportation system will add to the increase of gas exports from Azerbaijan. This is our target. I am sure we will achieve these goals because, so far, everything we planned, not only in the oil and gas business, everything our government planned and achieved with maximum efficiency,” President Ilham Aliyev noted.

President Ilham Aliyev also pointed out that Azerbaijan's transit potential had not been fully utilized, adding that the potential of Azerbaijan as an important transit country was underestimated by potential suppliers. “I think, now those who underestimated the potential of Azerbaijan as a reliable transit country, now will change their mind, and we see initial hints of that, and we are ready. We are ready to help everyone who needs help. We are ready because we have a political will. Our policy is always aimed at building bridges and strengthening cooperation. And we have the infrastructure. We have a brand-new seaport. We have railroads connecting us with all destinations, highways, and international airports. After we complete three international airports’ construction, one already has been completed, in the liberated territories will be nine, and a geographical location. So, Azerbaijan's transit potential should also be considered while planning our future plans concerning oil and gas cooperation,” President Ilham Aliyev added.

III. Baku hosts the first trilateral meeting of the foreign and transport ministers of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Türkiye

On June 27, Baku hosted a trilateral meeting of the foreign and transport ministers of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Turkey, where special attention was paid to the transport sector. The main objective of the first trilateral meeting was to improve the efficiency of the Middle Corridor. At the first meeting in such a format, representatives of the three states looked into the possibilities of more efficient use of the potential of the Trans-Caspian International Transport Corridor, labeled Middle Corridor, passing through the territories of Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan and Turkey, in light of the fact that the main logistic routes connecting Europe and Asia have changed due to the war in Ukraine, which makes the Middle Corridor ever more important. At the end of the first trilateral meeting, Foreign Ministers and Ministers in charge of Transportation of Azerbaijan, Türkiye, and Kazakhstan signed Baku Declaration.

Minister of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan Jeyhun Bayramov stated that the Azerbaijan-Türkiye-Kazakhstan trilateral format will play a major role in enhancing regional security, stability, and cooperation. Highlighting the importance of the first meeting of the foreign and transport ministers, Minister of Foreign Affairs Jeyhun Bayramov pointed out that the meeting opened up an opportunity to investigate the potential for developing cooperation in the fields of transportation and communications between the three states adding that construction work needed to be completed for the full operation of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway and stressing the importance to increase cargo transit through the Caspian Sea. “During the discussions, we

focused on the development of the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route (Middle Corridor) and the existing freight traffic in this direction. We paid special attention to the existing problems, the directions of expanding our transport and communication cooperation in this region in order to eliminate the narrow straits, on the other hand, very interesting new valuable ideas and proposals were voiced," the minister said. "In the context of the discussions, the potential expansion of the Baku-Tbilisi gas pipeline was also discussed. Various projects with the European Union, including the Trans-Caspian fiber-optic project, were put forward. Transport issues in Eastern Zangazur and Karabakh were also discussed. It is in this context that the full support to this project was given. The Baku Declaration signed today will make a great contribution to the development of serious cooperation," Minister of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan Jeyhun Bayramov noted.

Addressing the event, Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan Mukhtar Tleuberdi noted that the countries will seek to promote and facilitate transit traffic through the Trans-Caspian to increase the role of the Middle Corridor. He underscored the importance of the achievements in cooperation aimed at attracting additional volumes of cargo to the Middle Corridor, including the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars (BTK) railway. Speaking about the importance of developing relations between the three brotherly countries in the region, Foreign Minister of Türkiye Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu said that the trilateral meeting is crucial since it opens up new opportunities. "Relations between Azerbaijan and Türkiye are developing in all areas. We want to further expand opportunities in the energy sector with Azerbaijan," he emphasized.

IV. Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan step into a new era of bilateral relations

On June 21, President Ilham Aliyev arrived in Uzbekistan for a state visit. During the visit, nearly two dozen crucial documents were signed, especially in the fields of trade, transport, logistics, military, and military-technical cooperation. President Ilham Aliyev's visit to Uzbekistan is a testimony to Azerbaijan's emergence as a rising "middle power" in Eurasia. During the visit, Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan signed a declaration on deepening the strategic partnership between the two states virtually in all domains. Assessing the outcome of his visit as a "breakthrough" and describing it as "truly historic", President Ilham Aliyev said that it laid the foundation of the future development of relations between Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan. "I think this is a breakthrough visit because, in terms of the essence, form and content of the topics discussed, the decisions we have reached, this visit and the agreements signed will be the basis for the future development of our relations. Many documents were signed within the framework of the business forum yesterday. The total number of documents is close to 20 now," the president [said](#), adding that "this is essentially a roadmap for our activities in the future. It reflects foreign policy priorities, expresses mutual support for our states' territorial integrity, independence, and sovereignty, and defines specific tasks and goals in many areas of life."

President Ilham Aliyev also noted that "the region of the Caspian Sea, Central Asia, and South Caucasus today is a region that needs peace and stability. The basis of this, of course, is the political resolve of the leaders, as well as economic prerequisites. I think that the agreements we have reached today on increasing trade, investment projects, transport and logistical areas, and the projects

related to the deepening of cooperation in agriculture will create excellent opportunities for increasing trade and even greater cooperation between our countries and peoples.” President Ilham Aliyev particularly stressed cooperation planned in the military and military-technical fields, saying that they were a priority for each country. “We are located in regions that require daily attention to issues of security and defense capabilities,” President Ilham Aliyev said, adding that the two countries would “that will mutually strengthen our security”. President Ilham Aliyev underscored that the Political Declaration signed between two countries takes Azerbaijan-Uzbekistan relations to a qualitatively new level.

President Ilham Aliyev also thanked Uzbekistan for its support for Azerbaijan in the 44-day war and President Shavkat Mirziyoyev for his decision to build a school in Fuzuli which was liberated in the war. “I want to note today the support the Uzbek people and the President of Uzbekistan had provided Azerbaijan when we were restoring our territorial integrity. Azerbaijanis know this very well, remember and highly appreciate your fraternal attitude. The words of the President of Uzbekistan, his congratulations on our Victory – naturally, all this is perceived in Azerbaijan as the words of a friend, the words of a brother. We do appreciate that. For our part, we are also next to Uzbekistan, next to the Uzbek people in all matters. Today's visit is another demonstration of this. Today, we are also talking about economic cooperation, contacts between business entities, and security and defense capabilities issues. Foreign policy initiatives, the deepening of cooperation within the framework of international organizations, issues related to the humanitarian sphere, and culture – so, in a broad sense, the foundation is being laid for

our future active interaction. I am sure that everything we have planned will be fulfilled,” the president noted.

Following the expanded meeting in Tashkent, a ceremony of signing Azerbaijan-Uzbekistan documents was held in the presence of President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev. President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev signed the “Declaration on the Deepening of Strategic Partnership and Expanding Comprehensive Cooperation between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Uzbekistan”. Minister of Labor and Social Protection of Population of the Republic of Azerbaijan Sahil Babayev, and Minister of Employment and Labor Relations of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Nozim Khusanov signed the “Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of Population of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Ministry of Employment and Labor Relations of the Republic of Uzbekistan”. Minister of Digital Development and Transport of the Republic of Azerbaijan Rashad Nabiyev, and Minister of Innovative Development of the Republic of Uzbekistan Ibrohim Abdurakhmonov signed the “Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Digital Development and Transport of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Ministry of Innovative Development of the Republic of Uzbekistan”.

Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of Azerbaijan Inam Karimov, and Head of Agency of Plant Protection and Quarantine of the Republic of Uzbekistan Ibrohim Ergashev signed the “Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Plant Quarantine and Protection between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of the

Republic of Uzbekistan”. Minister of Economy of the Republic of Azerbaijan Mikayil Jabbarov, and Minister of Justice of the Republic of Uzbekistan Ruslanbek Davletov signed the “Agreement on cooperation in the field of protection of industrial property between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan”. Minister of Digital Development and Transport of the Republic of Azerbaijan Rashad Nabiyeu, and Minister of Transport of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Ilkhom Makhkamov signed the “Agreement on International Road Transport between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan”.

Minister of Defense of the Republic of Azerbaijan Zakir Hasanov, and the Minister of Defense of the Republic of Uzbekistan Bakhodir Kurbanov signed the “Agreement on Military Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Agreement on Military-Technical Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan”. Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan Jeyhun Bayramov, and Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan Vladimir Norov signed the “Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Cooperation in Combating Illegal Migration and the Program of Cooperation between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2022-2024”. Minister of Economy of the Republic of Azerbaijan Mikayil Jabbarov, and Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Uzbekistan

Sardor Umurzakov signed the “Agreement on Industrial Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Agreement on Interregional Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan”.

Both countries established joint funds to finance the development projects which include machine building, textile, food, construction, wine-making, oil, gas petrochemicals and agro-based industries. Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan also signed a roadmap on cooperation in agricultural domain. The two countries are also planning to establish joint ventures that will promote their products to foreign markets. Chairperson of the Senate of the Supreme Majlis of Uzbekistan Tanzilya Narbayeva stated that the visit of President Ilham Aliyev to Uzbekistan opened a new phase in the development of relations between the two nations. "We consider the visit of the president of Azerbaijan to Uzbekistan a breakthrough and progressive. This visit opened a new phase in the development of strategic relations between our countries," she said. Narbayeva recalled that the documents were signed between the entrepreneurs of the two countries in excess of \$500 million as a result of the visit.

V. Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, and Iran agree to double the volume of gas swap

In early June, Iranian Minister of Petroleum Javad Owji [announced](#) that Iran, Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan reached a deal to double the volume of natural gas under the swap agreement signed in November 2021. The agreement envisaged deliveries of 1.5 to 2

billion cubic meters of gas each year, with Turkmenistan supplying gas to Iran and Iran delivering an equal volume of gas to Azerbaijan. “Fortunately, everything is ready to increase the volume in the gas swap agreement, and it will be doubled very soon,” Owji said during his visit to Baku, Azerbaijan, where he attended the Caspian Oil and Gas Exhibition and the Baku Energy Forum on June 1-3. Owji noted that Tehran, Ashgabat, and Baku had almost finalized the deal for doubling the volume of gas stated in the swap agreement. In January, Owji pointed out that Iran had the capacity and infrastructure required to increase the volume of gas swapped with Turkmenistan to 10-15 bcm per year.

On June 29, President Ilham Aliyev held a meeting with Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi on the sidelines of the 6th Caspian Summit in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan. Addressing the meeting, President Ilham Aliyev noted that after their previous meeting in Turkmenistan, relations between Azerbaijan and Iran received a fresh impetus and started to develop even faster. “There has been very good progress on a number of issues, especially in transport, energy, and other areas. Therefore, I am confident that after today's meeting, a further impetus will be given to the development of our relations and a common future of our fraternal peoples will be ensured,” President Ilham Aliyev noted.

It is worth noting that the gas swap agreement was finalized at the sidelines of the 15th Summit Meeting of the Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO), hosted by Turkmenistan in Ashgabat in November 2021. President Ilham Aliyev met with Iranian President Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi at the sidelines of the 15th Summit Meeting of ECO and within the framework of the meeting between the Presidents of Azerbaijan and Iran, the

agreement “defining the terms of transit of natural gas through the territory of the Islamic Republic of Iran” was signed. Commenting on the gas agreement at the time, President Ilham Aliyev underscored that “[i]t is a historic document. It shows again how deep Iran-Azerbaijan relations are. Azerbaijan will receive Turkmenistan's gas via Iran. This is an excellent basis for trilateral cooperation and shows our intentions. The signed document is of great significance in terms of economy and energy security.” President Ilham Aliyev also noted that relations with Iran are of great importance for Azerbaijan. “Our peoples are brotherly peoples. We have lived together for centuries. Our relations are also quite broad. Our peoples share a common history and culture. This is excellent ground. We are writing the modern history of bilateral relations on this basis,” President Ilham Aliyev said. President Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi also noted that “[t]he gas agreement signed today between Azerbaijan, Iran and Turkmenistan will serve the development of relations between our countries, the relations between two and three countries. It is necessary to take serious and numerous steps in this area, and thanks to the two countries' will, the relations between us, including cooperation in the economic, trade, transit and cultural spheres, should aim to expand the ties between the two countries.”

Within the framework of Iranian Minister of Oil's visit to Azerbaijan in early June, Deputy Prime Minister of Azerbaijan Shahin Mustafayev also met with Javad Owji. During the meeting, the parties underscored successful cooperation between Azerbaijan and Iran in various fields, especially in economic, trade, investment, transport, transit, energy, industrial, agricultural and other domains. The two sides emphasized that the new realities in the region opened up

major opportunities for cooperation. They highlighted the significance of a Memorandum of Understanding signed between the two countries in March to create new communication links between the East Zangazur economic region of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic through the territory of Iran.

The memorandum was signed by Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Azerbaijan Shahin Mustafayev and Iran's Minister of Roads and Urban Development Rostam Gasemi on March 11. Similar to the Zangazur Corridor (approximately 43 km) proposed after the 44-Day War, the planned route via Iran (55 km) is also supposed to include both railway and highway links in addition to communication and electricity connections. The new communication network will serve as an important international corridor for transport and electricity. It will fundamentally transform the transport and communication landscape of the region and lays the ground of a new multipurpose corridor, which includes roads, railways, electricity lines and digital communications uniting Azerbaijan, Iran and Turkey in Eurasia. Commenting on the signing of this document between Azerbaijan and Iran at the time, Assistant to the President of Azerbaijan and Head of Foreign Policy Affairs Department of the Presidential Administration Hikmat Hajiyev [called](#) it a historic event, noting that President Ilham Aliyev keeps this important transport and communication project at the center of constant attention and that the relevant authorities are instructed over its implementation. As a result of the implementation of this project, the long-term policy of Armenia on the blockade of Nakhchivan will be put to an end. Between the two regions of Azerbaijan – Eastern Zangezur and Nakhchivan – through the Iranian territory will be created automobile, railway, electric

power lines. Highlighting that the realization of this project became possible due to the restoration of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan following the 44-day War and regaining of control over the Azerbaijani part of the Azerbaijan-Iran border, which President Ilham Aliyev dubbed “a border of friendship”, Hikmat Hajiyev noted that “signing the Memorandum of Understanding coincides with the 30th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between Azerbaijan and Iran.” “The relations of friendship, mutual trust and close neighborhood established between Azerbaijan and Iran over the past 30 years play an important role in the implementation of this project,” Hikmat Hajiyev noted, adding that “We are confident that the new corridor will open up favorable opportunities for regional cooperation, development and welfare of the peoples of the region and expansion of economic and commercial ties.”

VI. President Ilham Aliyev attends the 6th Summit of the Caspian littoral states in Ashgabat

On June 29, President Ilham Aliyev attended the 6th Summit of the Heads of State of the Caspian littoral states in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan. On the sidelines of the summit, President Ilham Aliyev also held several one-on-one meetings with counterparts from the Caspian littoral states. Addressing the meeting with Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, President Ilham Aliyev noted that after their previous meeting in Turkmenistan, relations between Azerbaijan and Iran received a fresh impetus and started to develop even faster. “There has been very good progress on a number of issues, especially in transport, energy, and other areas. Therefore, I am confident that after today's meeting, a further impetus will be given to the development of our relations and

a common future of our fraternal peoples will be ensured,” President Ilham Aliyev stated.

At the meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin, President Ilham Aliyev pointed out that “this meeting will also contribute to the development of friendly and good-neighborly relations between our countries,” noting the growth of trade between the two countries, as well as the broadening of industrial links, and cooperation in the transport and energy sectors. President Ilham Aliyev also stressed the significance of the visit of the Russian foreign minister to Azerbaijan in June in terms of developing ties and expressed confidence that bilateral relations would continue to develop for the benefit of the two countries and peoples.

In his remarks at the Summit, President Ilham Aliyev underscored that Azerbaijan attaches great importance to the interaction among the Caspian littoral states. “The Convention on the Legal Status of the Caspian Sea signed in Aktau in 2018 is of historic importance. The document crowned many years of work and determined the legal status of the Caspian Sea. Its early entry into force will create a solid legal basis for the adoption of even more effective measures aimed at further comprehensive interaction and cooperation between our states,” President Ilham Aliyev noted, adding that “the legal framework of cooperation among Caspian littoral states is being strengthened. Agreements have been signed and entered into force in the areas of security, hydrometeorology, transport, conservation and rational use of aquatic biological resources, prevention and elimination of emergency situations, as well as other areas of mutual interest.”

President Ilham Aliyev also highlighted the importance of the Caspian Sea as a crucial component of many international and regional

projects aimed at improving the well-being of the peoples of the region. The main objectives of littoral states are the desire to create favorable conditions for the development of mutually beneficial economic cooperation, improve the investment climate, create reliable and secure communications, and attract highly profitable and environmentally friendly technologies. A crucial area of cooperation, President Ilham Aliyev stressed, is the development of transport infrastructure, improvement of the quality of transport services, and multi-modal transportation. The bilateral and multilateral agreements reached between Caspian littoral states in the field of transport create a strong basis for turning the Caspian Sea region into a major international transport hub with developed infrastructure.

Azerbaijan is one of the significant transport and logistical centers of Eurasia now, President Ilham Aliyev said, adding that Azerbaijan “plays an important role in the development of East-West and North-South international transport corridors. We are making effort to effectively use the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route. This will make it possible to use the transport potential of the Caspian littoral states to the maximum extent and contribute to the implementation of new projects for the development of transport infrastructure.” President Ilham Aliyev also added that “we are observing an annual increase in cargo transportation through the territory of Azerbaijan along the East-West and North-South routes. The volumes of transit cargo going through the new international trade seaport of Alat are increasing. The construction and commissioning of this port has become another important contribution of Azerbaijan to the development of transport and logistical infrastructure in the Caspian Sea. This year Azerbaijan also plans to hold the 8th meeting of the Coordinating Council of the

North-South International Transport Corridor.”

“After the Victory in the Patriotic War and the resolution of the conflict with Armenia, Azerbaijan began to carry out large-scale work on the reconstruction and restoration of Karabakh and Eastern Zangazur, including the development of international transport links,” President Ilham Aliyev noted, adding that “The Zangazur corridor is already becoming a reality.”

President Ilham Aliyev also expressed concern about the current state of the Caspian Sea environment. “Azerbaijan is interested in expanding cooperation to solve the environmental problems of the Caspian Sea. The successful interaction of Caspian littoral states continues within the framework of the commission for the conservation and rational use of the Caspian aquatic biological resources. The Sixth Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea is to be held in Baku at the end of this year,” President Ilham Aliyev stated, adding that “today, at a meeting in a limited format, my colleagues and I exchanged views on an issue that causes particular concern, namely, the Caspian Sea becoming shallower. We have been observing this for many years and, unfortunately, the dynamics of the process is alarming. Therefore, we have already exchanged views and our delegations will probably continue to work in this direction in terms of creating special expert groups in order to identify the causes of such an environmental disaster and determine measures to prevent further the Caspian Sea from becoming shallower.”

VII. Azerbaijan and Pakistan continue to enhance bilateral cooperation

On June 29, Defense Minister of Azerbaijan Colonel General Zakir Hasanov and Air Force Commander of Pakistan Marshal Zaheer Ahmad Babar Sidhu have exchange views on military, military-technical, and military-educational cooperation. At the meeting with the Pakistani delegation in Baku, Colonel General Zakir Hasanov underscored the traditionally friendly ties between the two countries and emphasized the developing relations between Baku and Islamabad and the strategic partnership between the two countries. For his part, the commander of the Pakistani Air Force stressed that the Azerbaijani-Pakistani ties have been greatly boosted and enhanced, and that there is an untapped potential for bilateral military cooperation. The parties discussed expanding Azerbaijan-Pakistan relations in the military, military-technical, and military-educational sectors. During the 44-day war with Armenia in 2020, Pakistan was among the first countries to voice its unwavering political support for Azerbaijan. Islamabad also supports Baku in the reconstruction of the liberated lands of Azerbaijan. In September 2021, special forces of Azerbaijan, Türkiye, and Pakistan held joint military drills in Baku for the first time, codenamed “Three Brothers – 2021”. According to the Ministry of Defense, the key objective of the joint drills was to boost “the interoperability of the Special Forces Units of friendly and partner countries during combat operations, prepare for operations in peacetime and wartime, exchange knowledge and experience”.

Compared to Pakistan – Turkey partnership that dates back to the early 1950s when the two countries came together in the Western-aligned Central Treaty Organization (CENTO), the history of Azerbaijan’s close relationship

with Pakistan started in 1990s, after Azerbaijan's restoration of independent statehood. Being one of the first countries recognizing Azerbaijan's independence from the Soviet Union, Pakistan categorically opposed Armenia's occupation of Karabakh and therefore rejected to establish diplomatic relations. Bilateral relations between Baku and Islamabad have been on a growing track since then. The progress has been recorded in most major spheres, but primarily, in the military-strategic cooperation. Having signed a defense agreement in September 2002, Azerbaijan and Pakistan agreed on the legal framework of the military cooperation that includes primarily joint military exercises and exchange of information.

The 2015 marked another milestone in the bilateral ties between the two countries when they signed a declaration on strategic partnership aimed at enhancing relations by deepening and expanding cooperation in the political, economic, defense and security spheres, as well as trade, energy, investment, tourism, transport, science and technology, environment, information, youth and sports. The two countries are committed, particularly, to bolstering economic relations which are often seen as falling short of its true potential. There are new projects and opportunities to increase mutual trade which was less than 15 million dollars in 2019. The opening of Azerbaijan's Trade House in Pakistan, establishment of working groups to explore investment opportunities, expanding the legal framework in the field of food security and trade, investing in the textile, pharmaceutical and energy sectors, as well as developing cooperation between small and medium-sized businesses are in the agenda of the Pakistan-Azerbaijan relations. In January 2021, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan

and the Republic of Turkey came together in a trilateral meeting in Islamabad. Organized for the first time in November 2017 in Baku, this format of the cooperation between the countries has been gaining momentum over the last years. Furthermore, the parliaments of Azerbaijan, Turkey and Pakistan signed the Baku Declaration on cooperation in July 2021. Baku is striving to develop relations with its two partners in almost all spheres including those related to the cooperation in technology, science, culture, economy and military.

In June, Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) launched direct flights from Islamabad to Baku. An official event was held at Islamabad International Airport on this occasion. The event was attended by Azerbaijani Ambassador to Pakistan Khazar Farhadov, CEO of Pakistan International Airlines Mohammad Amir Hayat, PIA officials, as well as the first passengers of the direct flight. "The launch of direct flights between Pakistan and Azerbaijan is an important event. It will strengthen tourism and people-to-people contacts," Pakistani Senate Chairman Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani said. The launch of direct flights between Azerbaijan and Pakistan is also expected to make a significant contribution to the intensification of mutual ties.

VIII. Azerbaijan and Israel aim to boost cooperation in all spheres

Minister of Digital Development and Transport of Azerbaijan Rashad Nabiyev made a working visit to Israel, during which an agreement was signed between the Electronic Security Service under the Ministry of Digital Development and Transport and the Israeli Institute of Technology (Technion) on the establishment of the Azerbaijan Cybersecurity Center. The center, to be created under the deal, will train

more than 1000 professional specialists over the next three years. Training under the program will be conducted in Baku by the teaching staff of Technion University. Education at the center will be held in English and will be available to Azerbaijani citizens over 18 years of age. In addition, graduates will be given certificates from Technion University. One of the major benefits of the Azerbaijan Cybersecurity Center is the training of local trainers along with cyber security specialists.

“Today, together with Technion University, we have laid the foundation for cooperation in the field of cyber security, which is one of the most important areas for our country,” Rashad Nabiyev said. The minister added that students, who will study under the program, based on the methodology of the university, will be trained as competitive specialists in the labor market. “We are very pleased to cooperate with Technion University, one of the world’s leading educational institutions and knowledge centers, to bring international knowledge and experience in the field of cybersecurity to our country,” he said. In turn, Technion University President Professor Uri Sivan welcomed the cooperation and hoped it would broaden in the future. “The new center we have established is an important project to support the information security of Azerbaijan, and specialists to be trained there will contribute to the development of this area not only in Azerbaijan but also in the region,” Uri Sivan said. Minister Rashad Nabiyev also met with CEO of the Israel Innovation Authority Dror Bin. At the meeting, discussions were held in the areas of Government cloud, Electronic government, and the Israeli side shared its experience in this area.

At the meeting with Director of the Israel Space Agency Uri Oron, they discussed the broadcasting support provided to Israeli companies in Europe, the Middle East and

Africa region within the framework of cooperation with Azercosmos. The meeting discussed the prospects for cooperation with Israel’s space science industry and scientific research centers. Israeli agencies and companies were invited to participate in the International Astronautical Congress to be held in Baku in 2023.

During the visit, an agreement on air transport was also signed between the Ministry of Digital Development and Transport of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Ministry of Transport and Road Safety of Israel. This agreement is designed to facilitate mutual visits of citizens of Azerbaijan and Israel and will have a major impact on the development of tourism and cultural links between the two countries. Israeli Minister of Transport and Road Safety Merav Michaeli expressed satisfaction with the developing relationship between the two states and commended the deal on air transport. During the meeting, the parties exchanged views on transport cooperation between Israel and Azerbaijan.

At the same time, during the visit, a meeting was held with Minister of Tourism of Israel, co-chair of the Israeli-Azerbaijani Joint Intergovernmental Commission, Konstantin Yoel Razvozov. At the meeting, Minister Rashad Nabiyev noted that there are potential opportunities for cooperation in the field of tourism and highly appreciated the activities of the Azerbaijan Trade and Tourism Representative Office opened in Israel last year. Speaking about the large-scale projects in the fields of transport and logistics in the territories liberated from the Armenian occupation, the minister also touched upon the tourism opportunities of the Karabakh region. Konstantin Yoel Razvozov said that this year marks the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between

Israel and Azerbaijan. According to him, cooperation and strategic partnership with Azerbaijan have reached a new level over the past two years. Today, the areas of cooperation include such important areas as security, agriculture, energy, water supply, healthcare, as well as tourism. The Israeli Tourism Minister underscored the need for more active development of partnership in all domains.

According to Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of Israel Oded Forer, Azerbaijan and Israel already [launched](#) two task forces – one by the government of Azerbaijan and one from the Israeli government – in order to develop strategic plan to promote ties in the agricultural sector. “Israel has a lot of knowledge in aggrotech and making agriculture in arid and semi-arid regions. Azerbaijan wants to develop agriculture in many regions, to make advanced agriculture with a lot of technology. Together we can collaborate to help Azerbaijan build much stronger agriculture and of course, to deepen the ties between the two countries. We are already providing modern technologies to Azerbaijan. Israeli companies are active in Azerbaijan both in technology, agriculture. Some farmers here in Azerbaijan use Israeli technology. Of course, when we’re talking about building a strategic plan, it is about entering of more companies, of more knowledge, more technology into agriculture in Azerbaijan. At the agricultural exhibitions held at Baku EXPO Center everyone, including farmers saw what kind of technology there is now in agriculture. You can increase the crop that you can get from any acre of land. We can work on the same piece of land, but get more fruits and vegetables. Of course, if you have larger lands, you need to build it efficiently, you will have efficient and competitive agriculture in those areas. This will help

Azerbaijan to become an agricultural producer that can use agricultural products not only for itself, but export more,” the minister noted.

On the potential wheat exports from Azerbaijan to Israel, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of Israel Oded Forer pointed out that it will take a few years, since the first objective that Baku set is to produce enough wheat for domestic needs. “This is an important goal, given the fact that now everybody is concerned about food security for their own country. Azerbaijan is a large country and you have enough place to cultivate wheat that you need, of course, with the knowledge that we have about the kinds of wheat for the kinds of soil and how to grow more wheat. I am sure that you will be able to grow all the wheat that Azerbaijan needs and if you grow more, we will be happy to purchase from you. This is one of the things that we talked about. Israel purchases wheat from several countries and we want to diversify the imports. I have to say that agriculture is not only about wheat. You also grow many kinds of fruits and vegetables and we would like to deepen the trade between our countries. Israel has a lot of knowledge in aggrotech. It means that we make much more precise agriculture. We can use each and every acre of land and get more products from any piece of land that we are working on. This is food security. It is about knowing what to grow, where to grow and how to get the yield even in arid and semi-arid regions,” the minister underscored.

Oded Forer pointed out that Israel had many challenges to deal with over the years: from lack of water to the arid regions. “And we are a small state. That made us use technology to overcome the challenges that we had during the years. Now, of course, we did it with water and we know how to use water, how to manage water systems in Israel, water

recycling. Those issues are actually touching food security. You can't grow fruit without water, but you can grow fruit with the right use of water without wasting it. With that I think that we can help Azerbaijan to better use water, recycling water and to manage the water system. As I said, some Israeli companies are already active in Azerbaijan, but we need more companies to be more active and we need to set a strategic plan for five years for both countries," the minister stated.

Oded Forer pointed out that Israeli companies are active also in constructing a smart village in Karabakh. "I had a chance to visit Karabakh. This is actually remarkable to see what region is coming through. A year ago, there was nothing there, but now, after a year, the village is almost ready and this is inspiring for me, especially, when I see the use of Israeli technologies in agriculture in those territories. I think the future of that area, any area is about using high technologies in agriculture. With climate change and global warming, it will be very difficult to do agriculture without these

technologies. We need to start now to change the way that people do agriculture. There is a region where you can start from the very beginning and to build it right. There are challenges, but the opportunities are unlimited. There is an agreement signed with an Israeli company Mekorot, that has a lot of knowledge in irrigation, water systems. Actually, this company manages the whole water system in Israel. We know how to do it, how to help with that. I think there is a lot of potential. I think that not in long time we can build a good water system. This is the vision that the Azerbaijani government is promoting," the minister said, adding that Israel is inclined to share the knowledge that it has. "I am sure that by sharing that both countries can earn something. We will be a partner in agriculture in Azerbaijan and our companies can show the whole world how we can help our friends and I am sure that Azerbaijan will enjoy a new region that is becoming a blooming region," Oded Forer concluded.