**Answers of the State Migration Service to the Questionnaire in relation with the report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants for the 77th session of the UN General Assembly on the impact of climate change and the protection of human rights of migrants**

According to Article 1 of the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan “On Status of Refugees and IDPs (internally displaced persons)” dated May 21, 1999 persons moved to another place being obliged to leave permanent place of residence on the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan as a result of military aggression, natural and technogenic disaster are considered IDP (internally displaced person).

According to Item 1.1 of the “State Migration Management Concept of the Republic of Azerbaijan” approved with the Decision of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated July 13, 2004 persons obliged to leave the place of residence as a result of the change of the level of the Caspian Sea, landslide, flood and other natural disasters, as well as salinization of the land because of the lack of resources and equipment to carry out melioration measures are considered **ecological migrants**.

State Migration Service of the Republic of Azerbaijan has received no application from migrants subject to displacement because of the climate change.

Currently, no noticeable flow of migrants has been observed in Azerbaijan due to climate change. However, the effect of global warming has not gone unnoticed in Azerbaijan recently. Azerbaijan is highly vulnerable to climate change given its coastal Caspian Sea location and scarce freshwater resources. Around 43% of its territory is affected by land erosion, and 20% by salinization.

Taking all this into account and based on the proposals of the region countries, Migration and the Environment (including climate change) has been included in the draft roadmap of the Regional Training Center on Migration (RTCM) in the Republic of Azerbaijan. The RTCM main stakeholders are expected refer to the main policies and tools for mainstreaming the environment such as the IOM Institutional Strategy on Migration, Environment and Climate Change 2021–2030.

Protecting the Environment and Addressing Climate Change was also adopted as one of the priority areas during the preparation of the draft Progress Plan for UN Network on Migration in the Republic of Azerbaijan. General focus of the project is fostering Regional Dialogue to assess and address Human Mobility driven from Environmental effects and Climate Change in Caspian, Caucasus and Central Asia and Adaptation scenarios.

**Information submitted by the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the questionnaire prepared by the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants**

The physical and geographical characteristics of Azerbaijan make it a highly sensitive country to the adverse effects of climate change. Extreme weather events, such as flooding, drought, heat stress are expected to increase in frequency.

The most vulnerable sectors are agriculture, human health, water resources, forestry and tourism.

One of the major environmental issues is the increase in temperature; according to the Asian Disaster Reduction Center, over the last century, the air temperature increased on average by around 0.5°C. The temperature in the country is expected to continue to rise and precipitation to increase. In 2015, the Fourth National Communication to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) forecasted a cumulative temperature increase over the period from 2021 to 2050 of 1.50 to 1.60°C, and precipitation is forecast by the PRECIS model to increase by 10 to 20 percent by 2050 compared to the 1961 to 1990 baseline level. These changes are worrying especially because they intensify the possibility of extreme weather events, for example, a temperature rise may correspond to unusual snowmelt in mountainous areas and showery rains that may result in heavy floods. Azerbaijan experiences frequent flooding, though estimates of the extent of this flooding vary. Flooding typically occurs in late spring and early summer in higher altitude areas of the country (above 1,500 m in altitude), whereas in lower areas, flooding may occur in spring or autumn.

**Water Scarcity problems**- in Azerbaijan about 70% of the country's surface water resources are heavily dependent on the external inflow of water from neighboring countries. The Kura and Araz rivers, are shared transboundary rivers that play a crucial role in the irrigation of the farming lands of Azerbaijan and the water supply of its population. However, due to climate change and anthropogenic impacts, extreme water decreases are observed which leads to displacement of most vulnerable people using those resources.

Azerbaijan is located in the region of the southern Caucasus Mountains and borders the Caspian Sea to the east. The Caspian Sea is the world's largest water body (lake) that is enclosed. The most significant feature of the Caspian Sea is its constant level fluctuations: the sea level can present monthly oscillations at the rate of 30‒40 cm intervals (the highest rate of the sea level occurs from June to August, while the lowest rate appears from December to February). Sea-level fluctuation is due to both environmental and human-related factors, such as the balance of the regional waters, pollution and rising temperatures, construction of infrastructures, and gas and oil exploration. Caspian Sea oscillations affect mostly oil and gas industries, chemical industries, agriculture, and fisheries.

Azerbaijan has already set several policies to pursue low-carbon emission, climate-resilient development. Related environmental issues and problems are covered by adaptation and mitigation measures, including state programs and plans for supporting and protecting the people from adverse effects of global warming and climate change.

According to the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan *“On the Status of Refugees and internally displaced persons”, the term IDP refers to any person,* who has moved to another place being forced to leave his/her permanent residence within the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan in connection with military aggression, natural or manmade disaster.

For improving the well-being of the people living in the regions of the country The State Program on "Socio-Economic Development of Regions of the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2019-2023 years" was approved by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated January 29, 2019. The main objectives of the mentioned state program are to enhance ecological safety and responsible use of natural resources, sustainable and balanced development, as well as social welfare. The mentioned state program is intended to improve clean water supply, household wastewater management, hydrometeorological network, and agricultural water supply in the vulnerable regions of the country in terms of environmental safety. To be prepared for hazardous hydrometeorological events, a modern system of early warning was established in Shamakhı and Goy-Gol regions. In short term it is planned to increase the number of these systems.

The Water Commission was created by Decree of the President, on 15 April 2020. The Commission ensures the efficient use of water resources in the country by coordinating all water sector management activities. In addition, the Action Plan to Ensure Efficient Use of Water Resources for 2020-2022 was approved. The Action Plan focused on sustainable development and integrated water resources management to achieve social, economic, and environmental goals, implement related programs and projects, and promotе efficient water usage at all levels.

Moreover, one of the 5 priorities in the “National Priorities” document approved by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated February 2, 2021, was “Clean Environment” which aims to ensure the efficient use of natural resources and meet the demand of the population for quality water.

Azerbaijan ratified the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 1995. The establishment of State Commission on Climate Change followed on 30 April 1997 according to the relevant Presidential Decree. The new composition of the mentioned commission was approved by the order of the President dated on 11 March, 2020. Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Azerbaijan and Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources are the chairman of the State Commission on Climate Change.

Currently, the Government of Azerbaijan with support of the Green Climate Fund is developing the National Adaptation Plan to improve climate change adaptation actions in three priority sectors - water, agriculture and coastal areas. This will increase capacity on climate resilience and adaptation in those three sectors through the implementation of actions and activities that will reduce or eliminate barriers for an effective adaptation process at both the national and local levels.  It will also help people build climate-resilient livelihoods and help the country to achieve the targets outlined in the Paris Agreement and its Sustainable Development Goals.

Azerbaijan also joined global actions against the impacts of climate change and global warming. Thus, Azerbaijan submitted the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) ahead of the Conference of Parties (COP21) in Paris, to reduce the vulnerability of Azerbaijan towards climate change impacts and targeted to implement of relevant adaptation measures for decreasing or minimizing the losses that may occur at national, local and community levels per sector.