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**REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN  
HIS EXCELLENCY ILHAM ALIYEV**

**December 10, 2003**

**Distinguished Chairperson,**

**Dear Summit participants,**

**Ladies and gentlemen!**

During the last decade, Information and Communication Technologies have become an integral part of our daily life. It is difficult even to imagine today's world without the Internet, without e-mail, and many other features of the global cyberspace.

Today we are talking about new type of society - Information Society, new style of governance - e-Governance.

Decisions of this Summit to the large extent refer to young generation, since they are expected to create new realities of the information society. With this respect Summit documents will be of a great importance to Azerbaijan, with 70% of its population under age of 35. The young generation of Azerbaijan is actively involved in a number of ICT projects implemented jointly with the UNDP.

On behalf of the Government of Azerbaijan, I would like to stress that building the Information Society is fully in line with our principles and therefore we reconfirm our commitment to this idea. We are currently developing the State Programme "E-Azerbaijan", including a number of projects ranging from e-Governance to e-Economy.

Economic and political stability which exists in Azerbaijan for more than 10 years is one of the major reasons of rapid development. The policy of economic and political reforms, aimed at integration into international community resulted in rapid economic growth and further democratization of our society. Annual GDP growth is around 10% for the last 6 years. Private sector share in GDP is more than 70%. Azerbaijan for many years holds one of the leading places among former republics of the Soviet Union and countries of Central Europe in the amount of foreign investments per capita.

Today world's biggest energy projects are being implemented in Azerbaijan. During next three years almost 10 billion US dollars will be

invested in oil and gas development in Azerbaijani sector of the Caspian Sea and construction of oil and gas pipelines.

Good investment climate, full transparency and political stability in Azerbaijan are key factors of this investment boom.

Geopolitical situation of Azerbaijan makes our country a crossroad in regional transportation projects. Azerbaijan's role in East-West and North-South transport corridors is important. Transport and energy resources flows are always accompanied by information flows. Necessity of their processing and transformation into product are challenges we are facing in the field of information and communication technologies.

We believe that our country is capable to act as a system integrator in the regional ICT development, and ICT for Development in particular. This is a proposal we would like to make to all parties concerned.

Azerbaijan not only participates, but plays crucial role in all the regional projects. Azerbaijan's participation in the regional cooperation will continue.

Unfortunately, today there is one major factor which impedes full-scale regional cooperation.

This is continuing for more than 10 years Armenian occupation of 20 percent of the territories of Azerbaijan including Nagorno-Karabagh and 7 other regions of Azerbaijan. As a result of this occupation and aggression more than 1 million Azerbaijanis became refugees and IDPs. The fact of this occupation is reflected in 4 UN Resolutions, Statements of OSCE Minsk Group, official documents of the Council of Europe, other documents and is recognized by the international community.

International Community must use all its authority and urge Armenia to withdraw its troops from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Serious attention is paid in Azerbaijan to the creation and development of information and knowledge market, IT-infrastructure and IT-services. Scientific potential, technological achievements of Azerbaijan are sufficient for the creation of a knowledge-based society.

The State Oil Fund of Azerbaijan created to protect and properly manage oil revenues, help to diversify economy, accumulate assets for future generations is a completely transparent, internationally audited structure. This fund will help us to achieve our main objective – to transfer our black gold – oil resources into the human gold – a real welfare of every citizen of our country.

Thank you.