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## **AZERBAIJAN ATTACHES GREAT IMPORTANCE TO CLOSE COOPERATION WITH MALAYSIA**

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Azerbaijan attaches great importance to close dialogue and cooperation with Malaysia in the spirit of friendship, mutual understanding and trust, said its ambassador to Malaysia Prof Dr Qaley Allahverdiyev. He said Azerbaijan and Malaysia have enormous potential for further enhancing bilateral cooperation and in this context, Allahverdiyev is confident that with joint efforts, both countries will be able to effectively exploit available opportunities for the prosperity of their peoples. The ambassador said the year 2018 marked the 25th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Republic of Azerbaijan, located in the South Caucasus region of Eurasia, and Malaysia. Over the past period, our friendly relations have been further strengthened, and our cooperation in various areas of mutual interest, including within the framework of international organisations, has grown tremendously, he said in his speech at the celebration of Azerbaijan's Republic Day and the 100th anniversary of the country's Diplomatic Service.

Deputy Primary Industries Minister Datuk Seri Shamsul Iskandar Mohd Akin represented the Malaysian government at the event, attended by some 500 people. Azerbaijan's Republic Day falls on May 28. Due to Ramadan, the embassy hosted the celebration on June 17 instead. After asserting its independence from Russia in 1918 and prior to its incorporation into the Soviet Union in 1920, Azerbaijan gained the distinction of being the first democratic state in the Muslim world. In October 1991, Azerbaijan declared its independence from the then Soviet Union. Baku and Kuala Lumpur established full diplomatic relations in April 1993. Allahverdiyev said that in 2014, a Joint Declaration on Friendly Relations and Partnership between Azerbaijan and Malaysia was signed, adding that the two countries enjoy close cooperation in the energy sector where Malaysian national oil company, Petroliaam Nasional Berhad (Petronas), has invested more than US\$4 billion in Azerbaijan's economy to date. I would also like to note the fruitful cooperation with Malaysia in launching Azerbaijan's first telecommunications satellite, Azerspace-1, into orbit in 2013, he further said. Azerbaijan, located at the crossroads of Eastern Europe and Western Asia and populated by 10 million people, is a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country, where 96 per cent of its citizens are Muslims.

Allahverdiyev said the Government of Azerbaijan highly appreciates the position of Malaysia regarding the resolution of the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict on the basis of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of the internationally-recognised borders of Azerbaijan, adding that Baku is also deeply satisfied with the current level of inter-parliamentary relations with Kuala Lumpur. He said the Government of Azerbaijan is very hopeful that all

member states, including Malaysia, will be represented at the highest possible level at the 18th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in Baku, in October 2019. Touching on the countrys foreign policy, he said the countrys foreign policy priorities also include the elimination of the consequences of the military aggression by Armenia and the restoration of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan within its internationally-recognised borders. Allahverdiyev said that the year 2019 marks a significant milestone in the history of Azerbaijan as the country is celebrating the 100th anniversary of Azerbaijans Diplomatic Service. On July 9, 1919, the Government of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (ADR) adopted a temporary instruction by the secretariat of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. On 24 August 2007, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan signed a decree establishing July 9 as the Day of Employees of Azerbaijans Diplomatic Service. Allahverdiyev said Azerbaijan has a rich history of diplomacy, which dates back to medieval times when the Azerbaijani states managed to establish broad diplomatic relations with European and Asian states. He said one of the most remarkable figures was Sarah Khatun, mother of ruler of the Aghgoyunlu dynasty Uzun Hasan, who has gone down in history as the first female diplomat in the Muslim world. He said a successful foreign policy was one of the key accomplishments of the ADR founded on May 28, 1918, and despite its short existence, the ADR managed to establish diplomatic relations with many countries, with diplomatic missions of 16 states operated in Azerbaijan. Since regaining its independence on October 18, 1991, Azerbaijan has been conducting independent, diversified, balanced and active foreign policy based on the national interests of the country and is committed to developing equitable and mutually beneficial relations with all international actors, including states and international organisations, he said. Allahverdiyev pointed out that Azerbaijan has made great strides in foreign policy and its role in the system of international relations is being consistently strengthened. Azerbaijan is the initiator and participant of large-scale projects promoting regional cooperation, such as the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline, the Southern Gas Corridor, as well as the East-West, North-South and South-West transport corridors. Azerbaijans election as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council for 2012-2013 with the support of 155 countries is a testimony to the high confidence placed in it by the international community, he explained.

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