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Permanent Mission of the  
Republic of Azerbaijan  
to the United Nations

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**Statement by the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan on behalf of GUUAM  
at the informal thematic consultations of the General Assembly on  
Cluster III: Freedom to live in dignity**

New York, 20 April 2005

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the GUUAM Member States, namely Georgia, Ukraine and my own country, Azerbaijan. GUUAM commends the Secretary-General for the emphasis placed on rule of law, democracy and human rights as interconnected and mutually strengthening values reflected in the Charter of the United Nations, and reaffirms its strong commitment to these fundamental objectives.

Mr. Chairman,

GUUAM appreciates the role of the United Nations in promoting the democratic institutions and practices around the world and in supporting the emerging democracies with legal, technical and financial assistance and advice. We favor the initiatives aimed at strengthening the capacities and activities of the UN system towards this end, in particular the recommendation to establish a democracy fund at the United Nations which would provide assistance to countries in their democratization efforts.

With regards to **human rights**, GUUAM shares the importance of strengthening the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights. We welcome the proposal to provide the OHCHR with better support both politically and financially. We concur with the view expressed by the Secretary General in his report that the High Commissioner should play a more active role in the deliberations of the Security Council and proposed Peacebuilding Commission.

Mr. Chairman,

The UN human rights machinery is in need of reform. We must bridge the gap between expectations for credible UN action and the capacities of the existing system. We clearly need to increase our ability to deal with human rights challenges and to adequately respond to them, in particular in times of conflict and crises.

In this regard, GUUAM would like to thank the Secretary-General for his explanatory note on the Human Rights Council. It is not yet clear for us how the proposed scheme would ensure effective membership and functioning. In our view, all States should be involved in discussing universal human rights issues. Having said that and bearing in mind alternate approach reflected in the report of the High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, we believe that in our consultations there should be a room for all proposals made so far, including the one on universal membership for the existing Commission on Human Rights.

Mr. Chairman,

As for the **responsibility to protect**, GUUAM shares the view that situations where the national authorities are unwilling or unable to protect its population from genocide, ethnic cleansing or crimes against humanity may require effective action by the international community in accordance with international law, including enforcement measures in exceptional circumstances. We believe though that such measures could only be taken as the last resort and only under the explicit mandate of the Security Council.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, GUUAM would like to express its readiness to contribute in a constructive manner to the preparatory process for the High-Level Meeting in September and to engage fully in consultations with other Member States to identify common ground that would lead us to a successful outcome.

Thank you.