



PRESS RELEASE
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Each year December 31 is marked as the Day of Solidarity and Unity by Azerbaijanis all over the world since Azerbaijan regained its independence in 1991. Founded by the national leader Heydar Aliyev, this holiday consolidates in itself Azerbaijani statehood, respect for national values, traditions and sense of belonging to the Motherland. The holiday has been warmly welcomed and celebrated by Azerbaijanis worldwide ever since.

By the initiative of Heydar Aliyev, on November 2001, First Assembly of the Azerbaijanis of the World was held in Baky. This event, which was followed by the establishment of the State Committee on Affairs with Azerbaijanis Living Abroad, has contributed to the strengthened national self-consciousness and brought the Azerbaijani communities throughout the world closer to each other and to their country.

In his recent address to the Azerbaijanis of the world on 29 December 2005, President Ilham Aliyev pointed out the progress achieved in the state policy in relation to Azerbaijanis living abroad and set out future priorities in this regard. These include protection of their rights enshrined in international instruments, strengthening their influence and establishment of organizations in their countries of residence, and higher assistance from state bodies.

President Ilham Aliyev emphasized the present period as crucial in the history of Azerbaijan. He pointed out the country's major achievements such as integration into the international community, highest rate of economic growth in 2005 as well as steps taken in the process of democratization and implementation of structural reforms. He mentioned future prospects and new opportunities that will be created after the completion of trans-regional mega projects - Baky-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline and Baky-Tbilisi-Arzurum gas pipeline.

“The rapidly growing potential of Azerbaijan will be a powerful aspect in the solution of all our challenges, including those related to the realization of tasks with regard to the Azerbaijanis of the world” the President said.

The President expressed his heartfelt congratulations to the people of Azerbaijan on this auspicious occasion.

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