**Dear Ladies and Gentlemen, good morning.**

It is my pleasure to greet you all on behalf of the ACD with Prosecutor General of Azerbaijan. I’d like to express my gratitude for the opportunity to attend the **First General Assembly Meeting of the State Parties to the ECO Regional Center for Cooperation of Anti-Corruption Agencies and Ombudsmen.**

With your permission, I would gladly bring to your kind notice some updates about the activities undertaken by Prosecutor’s Office of the Republic of Azerbaijan in recent years.

After gaining independence, one of the primary duties of the Azerbaijani state was to establish independent government administrations and adequately fight against corruption. First steps were taken, such as establishing a new independent court system, reforming prosecution service, etc. After 2004 the process of bringing the anti-corruption system in line with international standards was accelerated. In this regard Anti-Corruption Directorate with the Prosecutor General (ACD) and Commission on Combating Corruption was formed; they were equipped with a wide range of competencies to prevent and fight against corruption.

Established in 2004, the Commission on Combating Corruption is the coordinative body promoting anti-corruption policy and deterring corruption.

The Anti-Corruption Directorate with the Prosecutor General of the Republic of Azerbaijan (ACD) was established by the Decree of the President in 2004, following requirements of Article 36 of the United Nations Convention against Corruption and the strong commitment of the country to combating corruption. The Directorate is a specialized prosecutorial body targeting the detection, criminal investigation and prevention of corruption. The head of the ACD is the Deputy Prosecutor General. ACD makes annual reports on its activities through Prosecutor General to the President and Commission on Combating Corruption.

For the adaptation of the prosecutorial bodies to the new challenges facing the criminal justice system following the Order of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Mr.Ilham Aliyev, dated June 10, 2020, significant structural transformations were carried out in the PGO. In accordance with this regulation the normative-legal base, which determines the activities of the prosecutor's office was revised, and the number of departments was increased.

Under “European Neighbourhood Policy” Plan, the European Union, since 1 February 2022, has funded Twinning Project “Support to the Reform of the Criminal Asset Recovery and Management System in Azerbaijan”, which aims to facilitate learning the best practices of respective bodies of European countries. The project covers developing a legislative and institutional framework, turning the newly established Department for Coordination of Special Confiscation Issues of the Prosecutor General’s Office of the Republic of Azerbaijan into a fully operational and national asset recovery office and improving its structure and activities, internal and external relations, as well as developing professional skills of the members of the Department. To achieve these goals, benchmarking visits to the Republic of Lithuania, the Republic of Italy and other foreign countries were organized to study closely the experiences of the competent state institutions in the detection, investigation, tracking, recovery and management of assets. To further speed up the asset recovery process and achieve effective results, intensive work is being conducted in the areas of the introduction of effective mechanisms for asset management, extended and civil confiscation, the concept of parallel financial investigation and other issues relating to national legislation by studying the progressive practices and legislation of some foreign countries.

Moreover, I’d be very keen to inform you about new and more pragmatic approaches developed in Prosecutor’s Office towards its activities. It is worth to note that Electronic Prosecution Information System (EPIS) has been recently programmed to simplify interagency and internal correspondence within Prosecutor’s Office. This System eases all internal file sharing, including all information regarding specific criminal cases, and creates a platform for videoconferencing.

**Dear colleagues,**

As you can all agree that corruption is a phenomena that should be fought against by all members of the international community for the sake of accountability, transparency and sustainable development in the whole world.

Hopefully, this Regional Center will serve as a medium for effective international cooperation in tackling corruption as well as for awareness raising programs so that all member States and respective law-enforcement agencies will benefit from profoundly.

**Thank you for your attention.**