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Azerbaijan discloses fourth EITI report

Committee on Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) established by the Government of Azerbaijan to implement its obligations taken at the conference on EITI held in June 2003 in London, on 18th August, 2006, announced the release of the Government's fourth EITI report (Jan-Dec 2005 assertion) audited by Deloitte, the independent Aggregator.

The publication of Azerbaijan's fourth EITI report follows the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on November 24, 2004 between the Government of Azerbaijan, foreign and local extractive industry companies and a coalition of some 90 local Non-Governmental Organizations for Increasing Transparency in Extractive Industries to implement EITI in Azerbaijan.

The MOU set out a clear and independent process for the implementation of EITI in Azerbaijan and since its signing has served as the framework for implementation efforts by all parties.

According to the Deloitte "Assertion of the Committee on the EITI of the Republic of Azerbaijan, that the schedule of payments/allocations received during the year ended 31 December 2005, is prepared in accordance with the aforementioned requirements, is fairly stated in all material respects.

The release of the Government's fourth EITI report together with the Aggregator's opinion follows presentation of the documents to the MOU parties on 16th August 2006 and discussion on the outcomes of the reporting cycle.

UN High Commissioner for Refugees visited Azerbaijan

On August 16, 2006 the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) started a six-day visit to the southern Caucasus, an area that is host to over 1 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees.

High Commissioner Antonio Guterres met with the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Minister of Foreign Affairs Elmar Mammadyarov, the head of the State Committee on Refugees and IDPs of Azerbaijan Ali Hasanov, the Deputy Minister of Justice Togrul Musayev and other senior government officials.

On August 17 High Commissioner for Refugees Antonio Guterres visited Galagayin displaced-persons camp in Sabirabad region in Azerbaijan.

The High Commissioner together with UN High Commissioner European Bureau director Ms. Pirrco Courula and deputy Prime Minister & head of the State Commission for Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons Ali Hasanov got acquainted with the living conditions of the IDPs.

Mr. Guterres said Europeans lack information on problems of Azerbaijani IDPs as European media do not cover it much.

UNHCR spends \$9.4 million annually in the region of South Caucasus.

28 High School Students Left for USA

The 28 winners of the contest held in Azerbaijan within the framework of the Future Leaders Exchange program left for the USA. The students are from all over Azerbaijan.

FLEX is the program of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the U.S. Department of State and American Council for Collaboration in Education and Language Study. The program is designed for high school age students (ages 15-17) from Eurasia.

The winners will spend a year in the United States, living with a family and attending a U.S. high school.