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The COP29 Presidency hosted a landmark event titled “Empowering Resilient and Sustainable Future: The Role of Human Development in Climate Action” at the Heydar Aliyev Center on 11 October 2024, within the framework of Pre-COP in Baku.

The event marked the announcement of the “Baku Initiative on Human Development for Climate Resilience” developed through inclusive consultations with global partners, including with the World Health Organization (WHO), UNESCO, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), UNICEF, the International Labor Organization (ILO) and Multilateral Development Banks, as well as with civil society and philanthropic organizations, and discussions were held along in this direction. The event was attended by representatives from governments, international organizations, and civil society, who gathered to share insights and perspectives on the integration of human development into climate resilience strategies.

Opening the event with introductory remarks, Yalchin Rafiev, Chief Negotiator of SOR29, emphasised that the aim of the initiative is to support human development through education, health, social protection, green jobs and skills with a continued focus on children and youth, thereby building resilience to the impacts of climate change.

The first panel, moderated by Vladanka Andreeva, UN Resident Coordinator in Azerbaijan, explored the nexus between climate change and human development. Speakers included Hasan Hasanli, Deputy Minister of Science and Education of Azerbaijan; Saja Farooq Abdullah, UNICEF Representative in Azerbaijan; Troy Dooley, Head of the representative office of the International Organisation for Migration in Azerbaijan; Nigar Arpadarai, COP29 High-Level Champion; Yashar Hamzayev, ILO National Coordinator for Azerbaijan; and Kamran Mashhadi, Officer in Charge at WHO Azerbaijan. Discussions underscored the critical role of education, green jobs, and health in shaping a climate-resilient society, as well as the importance of empowering children and youth.

The second panel, moderated by Sunniya Durrani-Jamal, Asian Development Bank Country Director in Azerbaijan, addressed scaling up financing for human development in climate action. Panelists included Azary Bayramov, Director of OIC Labor Centre; Alessandra Roccasalvo, UNDP Resident Representative in Azerbaijan; Ahmet Levent Yener, Practice Leader for Human Development in the South Caucasus, World Bank; John Fairhurst, Head of Private Sector, The Global Fund; Jan-Willem van de Ven, Head of International Policy & Engagement, EBRD; and Bert De Wel, Global Climate Policy Coordinator of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC). The speakers discussed innovative financing mechanisms and cross-sector partnerships to bolster investments in human development.