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SPECIAL EDITION ON

COP 29

BAKU, AZERBAIJAN



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FC ANNOUNCES RESILIENT GHANA PACKAGE (RGP) ACCOMPLISHMENTS AFTER ANNOUNCEMENT AT COP 28

Ghana, represented by the Forestry Commission (FC), has showcased a host of accomplishments it has made, a year after the Resilient Ghana Package was announced at the Twenty-Eighth Conference of the Parties (COP 28) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE) in 2023.

This was at the Twenty-Ninth Conference of the Parties (COP 29) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Baku, Azerbaijan, where the Chief Executive of the Forestry Commission, Mr John Allotey, chaired the Country Packages Meeting. It was attended by the Governments of the United Kingdom (UK), the United States of America (USA) and Singapore. Non-state actors, including the Country Package Seed Fund, the Nature Conservancy and the Forest & Climate Leaders' Partnership (FCLP) Secretariat, attended this meeting.

Progress Made So Far

In a presentation by the Director of the Climate Change Department, Ms Roselyn Fosuah Adjei, she mentioned that the Government of Canada had provided funding to the tune of CAD 2.5 million to support the Gender Responsive and Integrated Landscape Management Project (GRILMaP). According to her, this initiative is at its very embryonic stages of implementation. Its aim is to enhance gender-inclusive gover-

nance, promote climate-smart cocoa production and restore degraded forests in the Ashanti Region.

The Director of the Climate Change Department also mentioned that under the Interagency Climate Ambition Programme Support (ICAPS), The USA will provide funding of USD55,463. This will enable Ghana to develop its carbon market framework, address policy gaps and strengthen community benefits through results-based payments. Though the implementation will start in 2025, all high-level technical meetings and engagements have been completed.

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) in fulfilling its promise made at COP 28 in Dubai, has signed a Letter of Intent (LOI) with Ghana to provide USD 30 million for the Climate Resilience, Community Empowerment and Forest Landscape Restoration Program. Set to commence in 2025, the Program has a focus on reforestation, forest biodiversity conservation and empowering forest-dependent communities through sustainable livelihoods and eco-tourism in the six Hotspot Intervention Areas (HIAs) in the country.

Chief Executive's Opening Remarks

In his opening remarks, the Chief Executive expressed his sincere appreciation to the FCLP for arranging the meeting, despite the limited time frame. He also acknowledged the

outstanding leadership exhibited by the co-leads of FCLP, the USA and Singapore, for their relentless efforts before and after COP 28.

Mr. Allotey further informed the gathering that since the Resilient Ghana Package was announced, Ghana has not rested on its oars at implementing the Package. Ghana has conducted extensive engagements successfully with about 90 per cent of all the stakeholders. He was full of appreciation for the FCLP Secretariat which has provided support to make this possible. “The FCLP Secretariat has provided invaluable support, including procuring a dedicated Consultant who has been instrumental in ensuring continuous engagement and keeping the conversation running”, he said.

The Chief Executive further informed the audience that the objectives of the meeting were to give a refresher on the Ghana Country Package and its objectives, and to invite partners who are willing to invest in the Package to come on board and be part of Ghana’s forest and climate ambition. He encouraged all present to be participatory because the meeting has been structured in an unofficial style to enable free conversations and experience-sharing sessions. He called on existing partners to share their experiences and input, which can serve as valuable leverage to bring on board additional finance and support.

Other Major Achievements

Ms. Roselyn Fosuah Adjei furthered her presentation by highlighting other achievements the Forestry Commission has chalked since the Ghana Package was announced at COP 28. She informed the audience that SouthBridge Investments has almost completed the necessary legal requirements as part of the efforts at fulfilling its commitment to support the

Resilient Ghana Package. When completed, farmers will be able to access interest-free loans to support their activities, especially those interested in agroforestry and practitioners of climate-smart agriculture, silviculture or nature-based solutions.

The Director of the Climate Change Department also talked about an engagement with Seed Fund, which is in the advanced stages and near conclusion. Funds to be secured from this organisation will be used for strengthening institutional capacity, identifying and packaging catalytic nature-positive opportunities, piloting integrated biodiversity conservation in selected Hotspot Intervention Areas (HIAs) and develop advanced systems for planning, monitoring, reporting and verification.

After this detailed presentation on the achievements chalked after the announcement of the Resilient Ghana Package, there were questions, comments and clarity-seeking statements from the audience which were very well addressed by Ms. Adjei.



FORESTRY COMMISSION AND UNDP SPONSOR LOCAL COMMUNITIES REPRESENTATIVES TO COP 29

The Forestry Commission in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme has sponsored two representatives of local community groups to the 29th Conference of Parties (COP 29) of the United Nations Climate Conference in Baku, Azerbaijan.

Mr. Sylvester Mensah, Chairman of the Sefwi-Wiawso Bibiani HIA, and Madam Nallice Adjei, Treasurer of the Juaboso-Bia HIA, represented their communities at the event.

Mr. Mensah mentioned that members of the HIA were so much enthused by the invitation and sponsorship to the two representatives to participate in the COP 29. He said that the HIA is involved in massive tree planting exercises and that in his view, is their small way of helping in the fight against climate change. He mentioned that the HIA has planted thousands of trees within seven years and they have acquired lands to plant more trees to help curb the negative effects of climate change.

He said that the COP 29 is a platform for learning from other countries which are putting measures in place to fight climate change. "I will share all the experiences I have gathered here with my fellow members of the HIA and this will spur us on to work harder and plant more trees. It will serve as a platform to encourage illegal operators to go through the legal means of working in the timber industry", he said.

For Madam Nallice Adjei, the invitation to attend the COP 29 was a very welcoming news and it was an avenue for members of the HIA to see that the fight against climate change comes with many benefits and learning avenues.

She mentioned that the Juaboso-Bia HIA has a huge tree population, as they embraced the Trees of Farms module, where farmers in the HIA were made to plant about 18 trees of mixed species on every acre of their farms. "This tree planting module has caught on well with farmers in the HIA because they have realised that the yield of our cocoa trees have increased significantly since we started that. And we will continue planting trees and discourage illegal mining in the area to save our environment"

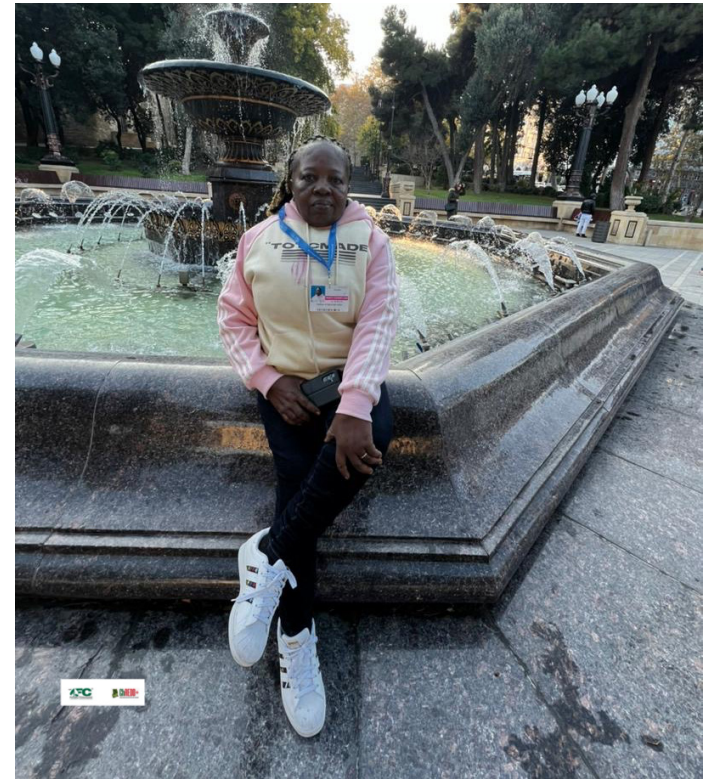
Madam Adjei mentioned that the COP 29 is a learning avenue where she hopes to learn from the experiences of other local communities and apply the ones applicable in her area.

Earlier on, the two representatives had participated in an event dubbed " **Call to Action on Securing Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities Forest Tenure**", where the Director of Climate Change of Forestry Commission, Ms. Roselyn Fosuah Adjei, appealed to the donor community for funds to document the lands of local communities.

The representatives also had a meeting with Ms. Carol Burga, Director, IPLC and Stakeholder Engagement of Emergent, on their work in their various communities. Ms. Carol was pleased to hear that most of the money these communities received were used for developmental projects which benefitted the entire communities.

She encouraged the two representatives to continue with their efforts at mitigating climate change through their awareness creation, sensitisation and tree planting efforts.





“SUPPORT LOCAL COMMUNITIES TO DOCUMENT THEIR LANDS” – ROSELYN FOSUAH ADJEI

The Director of the Climate Change Directorate of the Forestry Commission, Ms. Rosely Fosuah Adjei, has made a passionate appeal to the donor community to support local communities in documenting their lands.

She furthered that in Ghana, there are two categories of farm lands, that is the on-reserve areas where the lands have been gazetted and are managed by the Government, and the off-reserve ungazetted areas, which belong to families or stools. But the challenges associated with land use are mainly found in the off-reserve areas with forest and farm lands. These lands have been passed on from generation to generation and there are no documents covering so it is difficult to know who the owners are. “These are lands that have been passed on through different generations, most of them do not have any paper work on them and so being able to secure them for particular people sometimes becomes a challenge”, she said. Ms. Adjei continued that the patriarchal system of inheritance in some local communities in Ghana also puts women at a disadvantage as it becomes difficult for them to own lands. But then every farmer or local community member has access to lands for farms but owning it is where the issue is. “We need to decipher these two things, ownership is one thing and access to use the land is another thing. However, owning that land means you need to get into documentation. So I think one of the big solutions we need is to support local communities to document their land rights because if we do not have

proper documentation, even in our ER programs, it becomes difficult to identify who to give what to. That is why in Ghana, we build our ER programs around who manages the land and not who owns the land, “she said.

She also mentioned that another challenge to land use in Ghana is the issue of “caretakers” of lands. These people are not farmers but they take care of the farms for their owners. So when they stay on the land for many years, some of them begin to get entitled to it or even encroach on forest areas so they can also have lands of their own.

She suggested that the only way that this issue could be addressed is through documentation as that will help to secure tenural rights for the off-reserve areas where lands have been passed on from generation to generation without any form of documentation.

The Director of the Climate Change Department reiterated that with the introduction of digitalisation, it will be easy to pick the GPS locations of the lands and plot them to start the processes of documenting the lands.

She made this appeal at an event dubbed “**Call to Action on Securing Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities Forest Tenure**”, organised by the Forest and Climate Leaders Partnership (FCLP) at the Twenty-Ninth Conference of the Parties

(COP 29) of the United Nations Climate Change Conference, held at Baku, Azerbaijan.

The event had two discussion panels; in the first one, panelists from various organisations in Brazil, Norway, United Kingdom, Germany, USA discussed “Advancing Financing for Forest Tenure for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities. The second panel had representatives from like-minded organisations in Peru, Columbia and Ghana, represented by Ms. Roselyn Fosuah Adjei, Director of the Climate Change Department.

In attendance at this meeting were two local communities representatives, Mr. Sylvester Mensah, Chairman of the Sefwi-Wiawso Bibiani HIA, and Madam Nallice Adjei, Treasurer of the Juaboso-Bia HIA. They were sponsored by Forestry Commission and UNDP to attend the COP 29.

The FCLP is a government-led partnership that works across a range of policy areas to identify how international collaboration can drive high-impact policy outcomes on a global scale. One of the policy areas is focused on supporting indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, led by Peru and Norway.





HIGHLIGHTS OF COP29

Global Leaders' Event

- At COP29, Ghana, in collaboration with the Forest & Climate Leaders' Partnership (FCLP), hosted a Global Leaders Event led by H.E. Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, President of the Republic of Ghana. The event was attended by Distinguished Leaders, including H.E. Razan Al Mubarak, UN Climate Change High-Level Champion, COP28 Presidency, UAE; H.E. Marina Silva, Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Brazil; H.E. Luis Gilberto Murillo, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Colombia; Dr. Hans Brattskar, Special Envoy for Climate and Forests, Norway; Rt Hon. Ed Miliband, Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, United Kingdom; John Podesta, Special Advisor for International Climate Policy, USA; Ravi Menon, Ambassador for Climate Action, Singapore; H.E. Laurent Tchagba, Minister of Water and Forests, Côte d'Ivoire; and Buba Balkisou, Vice National Coordinator of REPALÉAC, GATC;.
- The event, themed "Leaders Protecting Forests for Climate, Lives, and Livelihoods," provided an update on Ghana's progress with the FCLP over the past two years. This includes:
 1. Announcement of the programs Ghana has launched under the Country Packages Initiative.
 2. Transitioning of the FCLP Co-Chair role from Ghana and the USA to Guyana and the UK.

The Chief Executive of the Forestry Commission undertook the following:

1. Chaired the Country Packages Meeting, which was attended by the Governments of UK, USA, and Singapore, as well as non-state actors, including the Country Package Seed Fund and the Nature Conservancy, with the FCLP Secretariat. During the meeting, Ghana showcased the various programs we have launched through the Resilient Ghana Package.
2. Led a Bilateral discussion with South Korea for investment in the REDD+ credit with Article 6.2 purchases.
3. Led engagement with Mercuria (a global energy entity) on the purchase of REDD+ credits.



Side Engagements on Nature and Climate Finance

Ghana participated in various significant events, including:

1. A World Bank Event to showcase support for the development of High-Integrity Carbon Markets.
2. A Ministerial Event on Forest Carbon Markets by the Forest & Climate Leaders' Partnership to explore strategies and partnerships for mobilizing and aligning finance to protect and sustainably manage forests for climate mitigation and sustainable development.
3. An Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLC) Event on Land Tenure Commitment to highlight the progress being made by the FCLP to Support Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities in Forest and Climate Action. We took two local community representatives to attend.
4. An event by Nature Conservancy on Leveraging Low-Carbon Economies Based on REDD+ Result where we shared our experience implementing REDD+ over the years.
5. A UNFCCC event on (Boosting Forests—Empowering Parties to Raise Climate Ambition with REDD+) where we explored innovative approaches to enhancing climate commitments through forest-based solutions.
6. Event by UN-REDD titled “Agriculture-forestry innovation and finance: scaling up ambition towards COP30 and beyond” where we explored how REDD+ efforts and results-based finance (RBF) can strengthen agriculture-forestry synergies.





COP 29 AND THE BAKU EXPERIENCE

Azerbaijan's capital city, Baku, hosted the Twenty-Ninth Conference of Parties (COP29) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change from November 11 to 22, 2024.

Over 50,000 participants from across the globe attended COP 29. Upon arrival at the Heyder Eliev Airport, Baku, COP 29 volunteers greet you with smiles and offer assistance with information regarding transport to participants' place of stay, money exchange, and SIM card purchases, among other things.

Baku - The City of Winds

Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan, is 28 meters below sea level. It is the lowest-lying city in the world and the largest in the Caspian Region and the Caucasus.

To say that Baku is called the City of Winds is an understatement; whistling winds, one can say. The fierce wind comes with whistling, and one wonders whether people are blowing whistles around. This, coupled with cold temperatures, makes Baku a unique place, especially when the wind welcomes you in the morning as soon as you step on the streets. Even when you are in the room, the wind announces its presence.

According to seaya.az, two main winds blow at Baku. One is the warmer Gilavar, which blows from the South, and the cooler Khazri, which blows from the North.

For the duration of the COP 29, temperatures ranged between 130 - 160 celcius. This meant that one would have to be prop-

erly attired to face the weather, especially for those who live in temperate regions in their various countries.

Free Transport

The COP 29 offered free transportation to all participants and this started right from the Airport. Buses were designated to convey participants from the Airport to the Baku Stadium, which was the venue for the Conference, the City Centre, hotels, residential apartments, among others. Trains were also made available to participants, pro bono. This made life in Baku very easy and safe for participants. Some participants enjoyed free transport right from doorsteps to the COP venue. Unless desired by a participant or when moving about after 10.00 pm, participants had access to free transport throughout the city of Baku.

The Conference Venue

The venue for the COP 29, the Baku Stadium, was well-designed, partitioned and branded for the event. One will never miss it, especially at night when the event name is boldly displayed on the Stadium's outer wall. There were delegations pavilions as well as that of organisations and institutions. These were well branded, with names boldly displayed on each stand, though the sizes differed. Every stand was ready to receive visitors with some, displaying souvenirs for picks by visitors. People who manned the stands gave information about their organisations and took details of all who visited them.

Meetings, negotiations, side events, bi-laterals, and informal discussions were held in the various meeting rooms by participants. The meeting and side event rooms had all the necessary gadgets to make meetings successful. Interpreters were available to ensure that language did not become a barrier at the Conference.

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Food Court and Restaurants

The COP 29 would not have been possible without a food court. There was a ‘Grab &Go’ section which sold finger foods and drinks as well as restaurants where participants could go and sit and eat. There was a wide variety of meals and these places were almost always filled with participants who wanted to satisfy their hunger or thirst.

Outside the COP 29 venue, there was food in abundance at restaurants and other eateries at all times; and the food is very good and nutritious.

Pomegranates abound in Baku and one has the choice of washing down meals with a glass (es) of freshly prepared purple-red natural pomegranate juice or other fruit juices.

Potable Water

One of the purposes of COP 29 would have been defeated if potable water was not provided sustainably. One could imagine the garbage that would have been generated from the use of plastic cups and bottles, by the sheer number of participants. It was, therefore, a good decision that each participant was given a water bottle to use to fetch water from dispensers which were placed at vantage points. Large refill bottles were also on standby for replacement whenever any of the dispensers ran out of water. This has been done at almost every COP and it is a sure way to save the environment from plastic pollution.

Heavy Security Presence at COP 29

There was high-security visibility at COP 29. Attention-standing policemen were visible at the Event Centre. Outside the Centre, the police were also seen standing at short intervals around the Centre. This created a sense of security for participants within and outside the Centre. In addition to this, there were other security personnel moving to and fro at the event grounds.

Participants Accommodation

A lot of the COP 29 participants were housed at the Sea Breeze Resort. It is a beautiful and neat community from which one can see the wide expanse of the Caspian Sea, as the name suggests. Located at Nardaran, it is a unique resort and residential complex with different types of accommodation from townhouses, apartments, villas, cottages and hotels. It has all the facilities that make it a modern community; a supermarket, a pharmacy, a gym, swimming pools, state-of-the-art restaurants, a medical and anti-ageing centre, food delivery

facilities, a shopping mall and a pier for yachts and boats. At night, the well-illuminated community gives a sense of high security, where one can take walking strolls while enjoying the beautiful scenery while being mindful of the cold weather accompanied by strong winds. Golf carts are available to carry participants from one point to the other which makes movement easy. The serene atmosphere will make one want to stay there for good.

The Green Scenes of Baku

Driving through the city of Baku, one cannot miss the beautiful landscape of the place. Streets are adorned with trees, well-manicured lawns, beautiful flowers and ornamental plants. These are watered and given all the care they need. Water fountains at public parks where one could sit and relax after a hard day's work are a common sight in Baku. These public spaces have trees dotted all over with benches to sit on for relaxation. Some of the parks have statues of men who once led the country or played key roles in the development of the country.

Warm People

One can easily say that the people of Baku are generally warm and very welcoming. They smile at visitors as if they were orientated to do so. Some were intrigued by the "dark" colour of some of the participants and requested to take photos with them, especially "selfies", almost daily. One could see that some of the Azerbaijanis could not speak the English Language but they communicated through gestures, while some spoke the "broken English". But in all, they found any means to communicate for one to understand them.

Tourism

Azerbaijan with its capital City of Baku, could be a good destination for tourism. It has five UNESCO World Heritage Sites, namely the Walled City of Baku with the Shirvanshah Palace and Maiden Tower; Gobustan Rock Art Cultural Landscape; Sheki Historic Centre with the Khan's Palace; Cultural Landscape of Khinalug People and "Koc Yolu" Transhumance Route; and the Hyrcanian Forests.

In Baku, one can visit the Heydar Aliyev Cultural Centre; Highland Park, The Baku Eye, and Flame Towers, among others.

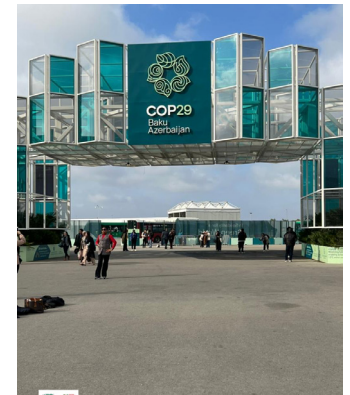
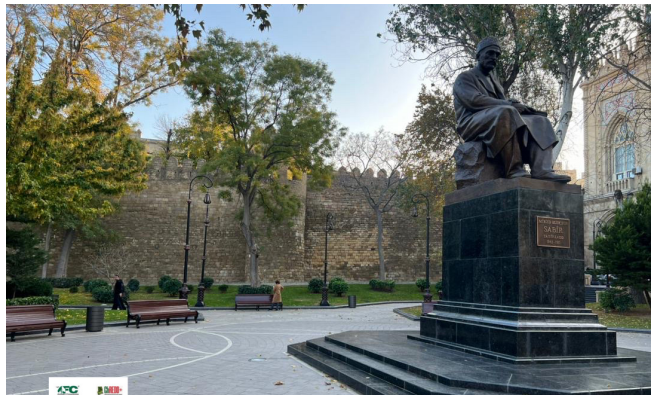
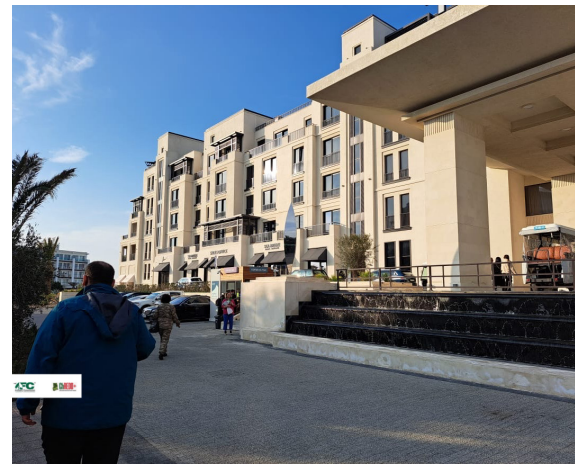
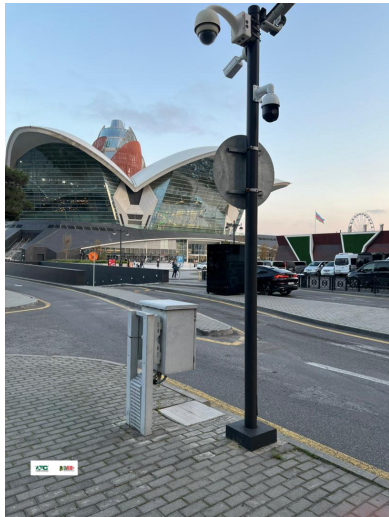
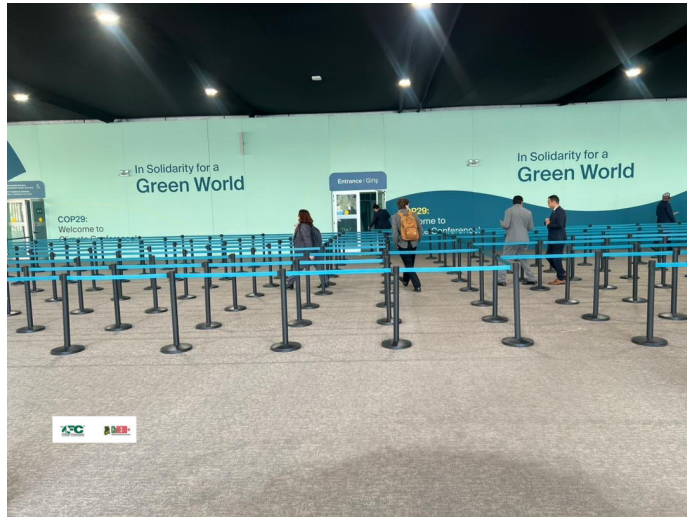
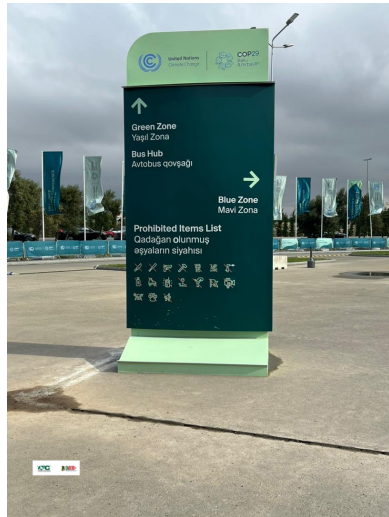
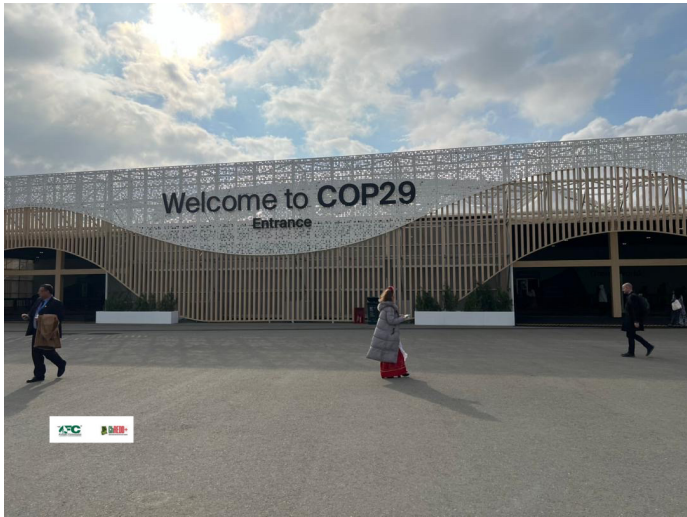
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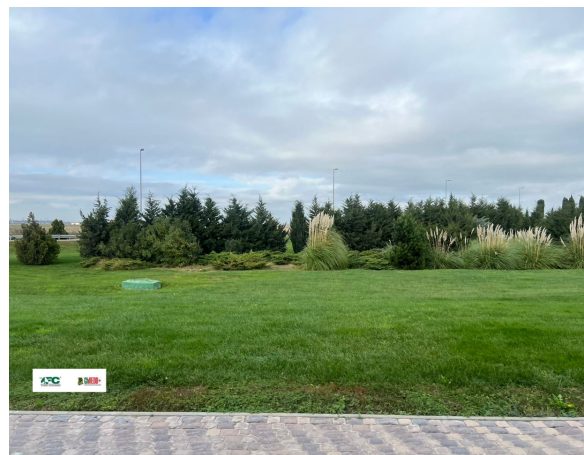
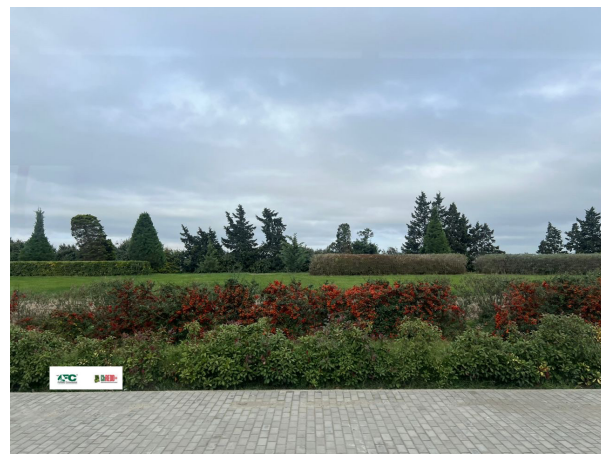
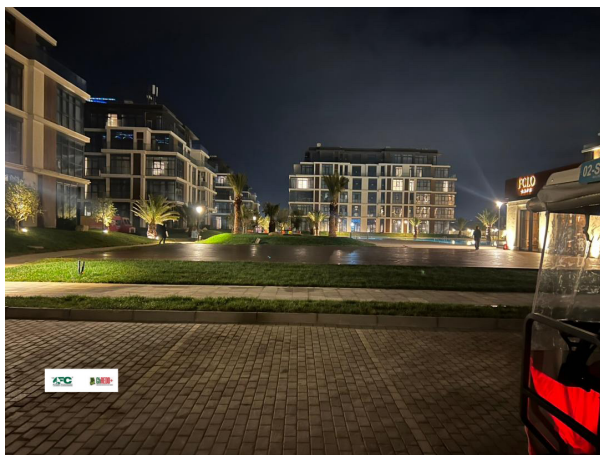
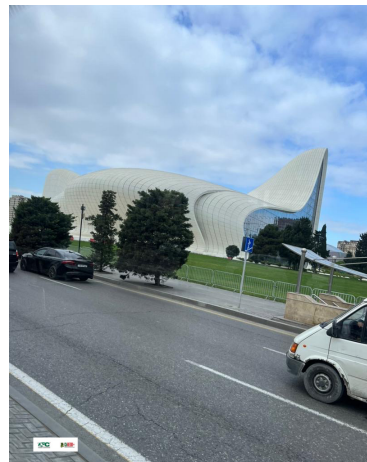
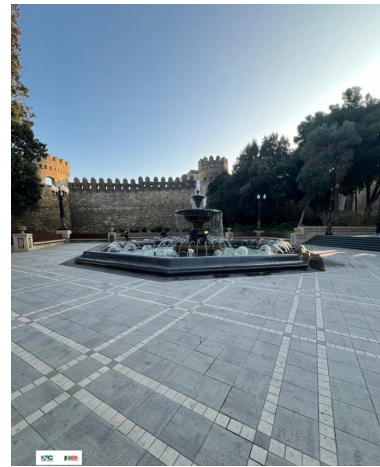
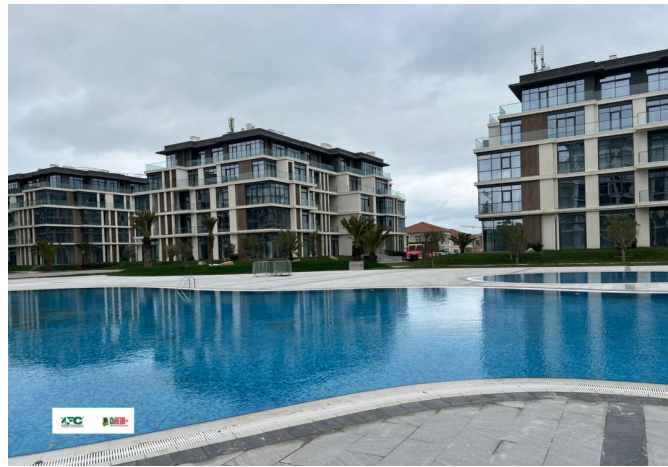
The Azerbaijan Manat (AZN) and Gapiks are the medium of exchange in Azerbaijan. It comes in 1, 5, 10, 20 and 100 denominations. One Hundred Gapiks make One Manat. One US Dollar is exchanged for One Manat, sixty Gapiks (AZN1.60). Foreign exchange bureaus and banks are a common sight in Baku and this makes it convenient for visitors to get the local currency for use during their stay in Baku.

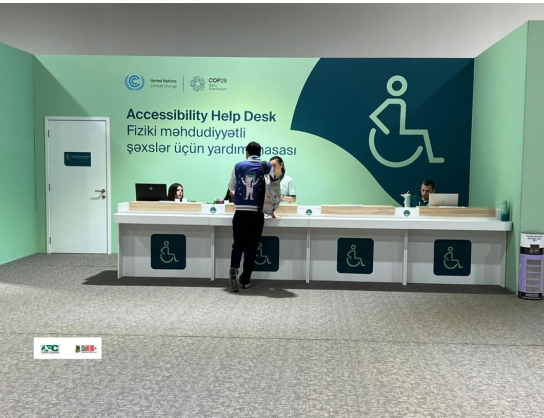
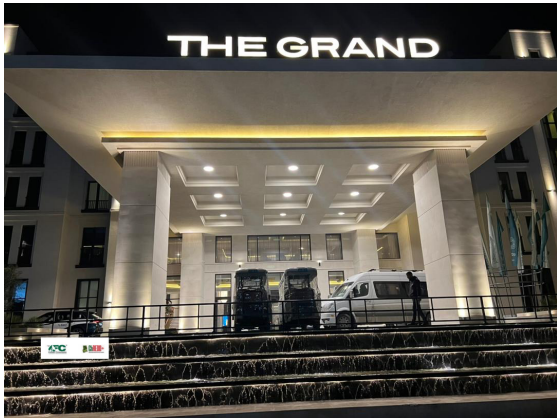
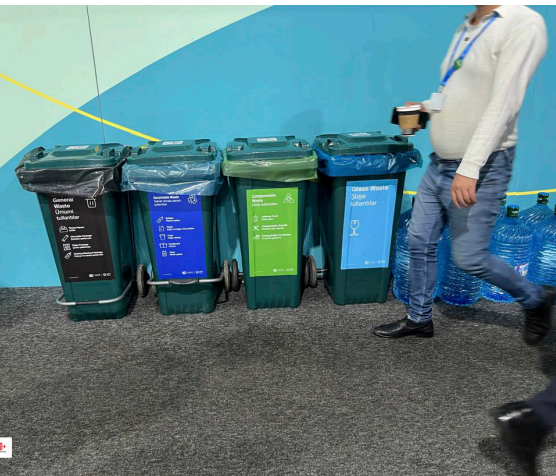
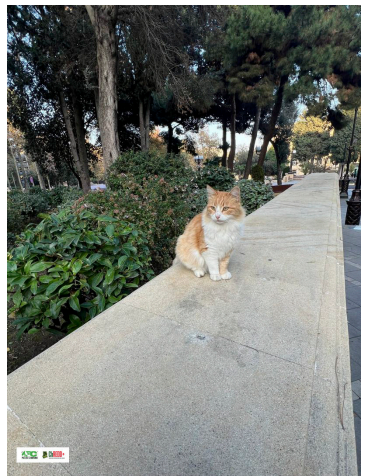
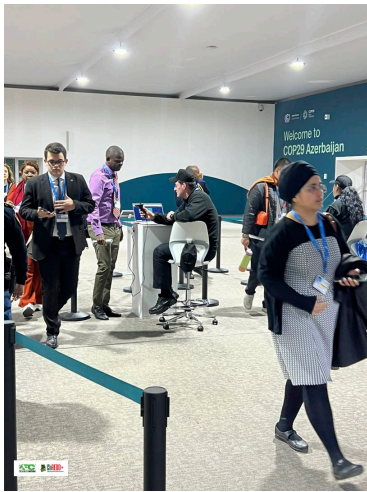
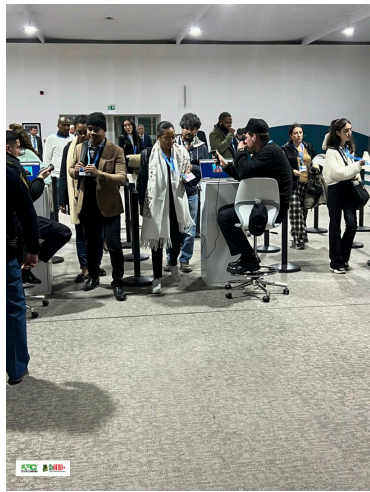
Shopping in Baku

The city of Baku has many shopping malls and shops where one can buy anything: food, clothing, shoes, cars, jewellery, cosmetics, and more. One is spoilt for choice when it comes to shopping. Azerbaijan and Baku branded souvenirs are also in abundance for visitors.

COP 29 was a wonderful experience, and it would be very enjoyable to take a trip to Azerbaijan just for holidays and relaxation; the venue is suitable, the atmosphere is right, and there are a lot of exciting places to visit. Think about it!!!!









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