

**Speech by Gordon Birrell,
BP's Regional President for Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey
Nationalisation Protocol and Cooperation MOUs signing event
Fairmont Hotel, Baku, Azerbaijan
Thursday, 14 November, 2013**

**Mr Abdullayev, Mr Nabiyev, Esteemed Members of Parliament,
Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen**

I am pleased to welcome you all today at this BP and SOCAR-hosted event.

BP as operator of Azerbaijan's major oil and gas projects has always seen a role for itself to play in developing Azerbaijan's oil and gas specialised human resources to international standards.

Since early days of our presence in the Caspian region we have made it one of our priorities to train and develop nationals so that they are capable of competing with international experts and taking over senior roles from world-class BP experts.

To support the achievement of this goal, together with our partners and SOCAR in particular, we have to date designed and implemented a number of unique training and development programmes which Leyla will cover in detail in her speech today.

In addition, BP has continued to extensively use all existing tools to attract the best local talent both within Azerbaijan and outside. As a result since the beginning of 2013, we have recruited a record number of Azerbaijani nationals - more than 100 experienced hires, 100 technicians, 85 Challengers and 50 interns.

I am proud to say that today BP employs directly about 2,800 Azerbaijani nationals. In total, 84% of BP's permanent professionals in Azerbaijan are nationals and many of them are in very senior leadership positions.

But this is today. For the future we have even bigger plans. For the future we are setting a goal to further develop Azerbaijani nationals so that they are more extensively involved in our projects. This acquires a

greater importance now as we are preparing for implementation of new giant projects in Azerbaijan - Shah Deniz Stage 2 and expansion of SCP.

In particular, we have developed a nationalization plan for the years 2014 – 2018. It targets to reach 90% professional staff nationalization rate by the end of 2018. This envisages nationalizing the majority of professional roles that are currently occupied by the expatriate staff.

We have agreed this plan with SOCAR and I am pleased to say that today we signed a protocol with SOCAR in support of this plan.

In conclusion, I would like to highlight that BP remains committed to developing Azerbaijani nationals. The purpose of today's event in fact is to reaffirm our long term strategy and our commitment to enhancing nationalization of our staff and development of workforce involved in our operations in Azerbaijan.

Today's event is the outcome of many years of joint work with SOCAR and other relevant government agencies. As a result we have agreed the way forward that will allow us to combine our efforts aimed at developing Azerbaijan's national workforce. It is clearly in both the government's and BP and partners' interest that the large majority of the workforce involved in our projects and operations be Azerbaijani nationals.

I would like to thank SOCAR and the State Migration Service, specifically Mr Abdullayev and Mr Nabiyev for their support in agreeing and finalising the documents that we signed today.

I am confident that these documents will bring us a step closer to realisation of our shared vision about development of Azerbaijan's world-class human potential.

Thank you for your attention!