

A VITAL NATIONAL RESOURCE

- **a speech by Gordon Birrell, BP's Regional President for Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey, to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the CTTC training centre. 27 May, 2014**

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are here to mark a very auspicious occasion – the 10th anniversary of the opening of the world-class Caspian Technical Training Centre (CTTC).

Over the past decade the CTTC has become one of Azerbaijan's most impressive training facilities – and one of its least-known success stories.

This centre deserves to be far better known. More than 900 national technicians have been trained here since it opened in May, 2004. The great majority of them have gone on to work for BP-operated facilities in the Caspian region, both offshore and onshore.

But the CTTC has done more than this:

- It has ensured a consistent safety culture across all BP-led technical operations in the region.
- It has supported us in meeting our technician nationalization target
- It has accelerated high class learning through its concentration on skill-based training.
- It has created a large pool of skilled oil and gas sector technicians in Azerbaijan in a comparatively short period – all trained to international standards.
- And it has given us a platform from which to press the case for higher training standards across the entire regional energy sector.

I realize that these are big claims. But they are true. In this industry we highlight investments costing billions of dollars. We celebrate great infrastructure achievements such as the construction of Offshore platforms, Sangachal terminal and the BTC pipeline.

What we often overlook is that everything, in the end, comes down to people – and especially to the technicians who drill our wells, operate our plant, service our equipment.

Today is our chance to put that right. To say thank you. And to underline the importance of the training facilities at CTTC – the Drilling Control room facility, the Operations Training Plant and the Workshop facility to name just three.

The graduates from this centre really are the backbone of our business – the people who turn plans into reality. After their time at the CTTC they go out and spread the message – in particular, the crucial importance of higher standards to both safety and productivity.

We have a lot of organizations and people to thank for what has been achieved here. First, the Government of Azerbaijan which helped us to set up this centre and has been very supportive ever since. Second; our co-venturers in the ACG, Shah Deniz, BTC and SCP projects, including SOCAR, who have helped to fund the CTTC for a decade.

And third, TTE-Petrofac, which provides technical expertise to deliver the programme and supports the centre operations. They have done a splendid job which should be recognized. We could not have done this alone.

The CTTC is hugely cost-effective and has added enormous value to our business. We intend to continue to support it.

That said, this is an opportunity to emphasize our commitment to supporting other training initiatives in Azerbaijan and one in particular – SOCAR's Gobustan Regional Training Centre. We have committed to working with the Gobustan Training Centre by funding the vocational and technician training for 100 people living in settlements close to the Sangachal Terminal.

Both our efforts here at CTTC and this new agreement with SOCAR highlight something else – BP and its co-venturers long term commitment to advance our national workforce in Azerbaijan as quickly as possible.

Recently we committed to a new plan for the years 2014-18. This involves various initiatives and a new overall target – 90% professional staff nationalization by the end of 2018. Currently we employ 2,854 Azerbaijani nationals in BP in Azerbaijan of whom 85% are professionals. Many of them are in very senior roles.

We already have a number of senior level professionals working for us who have been trained in the CTTC. That is a measure of its huge impact and achievement in its ten-year life. I'm sure there will be many more successes in the years to come.

Thank you for your attention!