

TRANSCRIPT

**U.S. Ambassador to Azerbaijan Richard Morningstar
TEDx Baki Opening Remarks
June 8, 2013**

Ambassador Morningstar: Hello, everybody. What an unbelievably fantastic crowd for this conference.

I was amazed, and I know my wife Faith who will be speaking in a few minutes was also amazed, to come in and to see so many young people here. I want to thank Idris Heydarli and Muski Alumnus Kanan Karimzade for your hard work in finding speakers and in organizing this conference. Also, thanks to the Baku Jazz Center for hosting the conference.

I also know that many of you in the audience are alumni of our exchange programs. I would be curious to see how many are actually here. Anybody who has studied as part of our alumni exchange programs, can you raise your hand? Quite a few. I hope that any of you who have not will do so in the future.

I think a conference like this is a fantastic idea and a way to share and exchange ideas, particularly among all of you young people. I hope conferences like this will encourage you and will reinforce your being independent thinkers and contributing to Azerbaijani society.

So I am not going to say any more right now, but I know that in a minute Faith will be introduced and will share with you some of the ideas that she thinks are very important. So I am going to walk off the stage because you do not need to hear any more from me. Let the program go on.

Thank you.

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