



Statement by the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan
2017 Annual Security Review Conference

Special Meeting of the Structured Dialogue

Mr. Chairperson,

The Delegation of Azerbaijan joins previous speakers in thanking distinguished panelists for their valuable insights on the Structured Dialogue. We thank Ambassador Pohl for able leadership in steering the work of the Informal Working Group, which we find useful format for helping our common endeavor to prevent emergence of additional conflicts.

The Hamburg MC Declaration identifies that the Structured Dialogue should focus **on current and future challenges and risks** to security with a view **to fostering a greater understanding** on these issues that could serve as a **common basis for a way forward**.

We consider the three meetings of the Informal Working Group on **threat perceptions, military doctrines and force postures** as fruitful in terms of gearing open exchange of views among the participating States on current and future challenges to security.

Yet, as a result of discussions, it has been reconfirmed that the participating States differ in their understanding of challenges and consequently propose different or even divergent way forward. In other words, we are still far from fostering “a greater understanding” among ourselves.

Under current conditions of deep divergences among us, open dialogue itself could be an important confidence-building and stabilizing measure. It is within this understanding that we are of the view that IWG should continue its work towards raising awareness about the most serious challenges to security aiming at fostering understanding among the participating States. It is therefore important to continue discussions within the Structured Dialogue in a transparent and participatory manner ensuring ownership of all participating States, and without any pre-determined outcome.

Previous discussions within the Structured Dialogue clearly reveals that ongoing violations of the principles of the Helsinki Final Act remains to be the most serious challenge to rules-based European order. In view of overwhelming majority, the conflicts in the OSCE area, both protracted and active ones, emerged as a result of gross violations of these principles are the most serious threat to security.

It goes without saying that without resolution of conflicts through restoring sovereignty and territorial integrity of affected participating States, overall security in the OSCE area will remain fragile and precarious with unpredictable consequences. Until durable solutions are

found to the conflicts, divergences among the participating States along these dimensions will only deepen contributing to mistrust and lack of confidence. Consequently, OSCE-wide multilateral stability will be even more elusive. Therefore, we need to find solution to conflicts in OSCE area so that ground necessary for a successful dialogue is established.

No confidence-building or arms control measure can serve as a panacea, if it is not accompanied by tangible progress in finding sustainable solution to conflicts. It is undeniable that persistence of conflicts questions the very relevance and applicability of existing arms control and CSBMs. The measures, which to a large extent are designed for dispelling risks stemming from miscalculation or misperceptions in peace time, have been proven rather ineffective in face of reality of military aggression. Those measures that are applicable in peace time to mitigate risk of unintended escalation are simply unable to deal with intentional use of force against the territorial integrity of States.

It is within this understanding that we strongly believe that resolution of existing conflicts, as well as threats and challenges posed by lack of settlement should be kept high on the agenda of the Structured Dialogue. We encourage the Austrian OSCE Chairmanship and the German Chairmanship of the IWG to explore the ways of better integrating the issue of existing conflicts into the agenda of the Structured Dialogue, including through seeking contribution by existing negotiation formats.

In conclusion, we once again thank distinguished panelists for their useful insights and reiterate readiness of the Azerbaijani side to engage actively and constructively in further discussions of the Structured Dialogue.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.