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Hügelgasse 2, A-1130, Wien | Tel.: + 43 (1) 403 13 22 | Fax: + 43 (1) 403 13 23 | E-mail: vienna@mission.mfa.gov.az

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

### ***Working session I: Early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management, conflict resolution and post-conflict rehabilitation: Lessons learned and the way ahead***

Mme. Moderator,

The Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan thanks distinguished keynote speakers for their valuable contributions.

In line with relevant OSCE decisions and documents, the Organization is a key instrument for conflict resolution, as well as early warning and early action, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation. Each of these elements are integral parts of OSCE concept of conflict cycle, each of them are of equal importance, and deserves equal attention in the context of efforts of bolstering OSCE's toolbox.

Promotion of certain directions in a selective manner, artificial prioritization of specific elements, as well as attempts to re-define role and place of the OSCE in the pan-European security architecture in accordance with exclusive interests of certain states or group of states may undermine OSCE's capacities and capabilities to act independently and effectively in all phases of conflict cycle. If not reversed, such a tendency might affect OSCE's relevance as the most-inclusive pan-European security arrangement based on unique concept of comprehensive security.

In this context, lack of or insufficient attention to such areas as conflict resolution, post-conflict rehabilitation, including protection of rights of displaced persons need to be swiftly addressed. Similarly, in face of consistent attacks by one participating State, the Organization should act in solidarity in maintaining and further strengthening its crisis management capabilities, in particular unique multinational peacekeeping tool, such as the High-Level Planning Group. The Helsinki Document of 1992 and the Budapest Summit of 1994, which confers to the Organization a role in conflict prevention and resolution, complemented, when necessary, by peacekeeping operations provide solid framework for further improving OSCE's capacities in these fields. We underline the necessity of practical steps aimed at improving OSCE's peacekeeping capacities in light of developments in this field, in particular in terms of civilian and police components.

Mediation as an important element of all phases of conflict cycle requires closer attention. As a regional arrangement under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, OSCE's activities in the field of mediation should be strictly in line with standards developed by the United Nations on effective mediation, in particular in relevant resolutions of the UN General Assembly. Accordingly, mediation activities should be exclusively conducted in line with the norms and principles of international law, the UN Charter and Helsinki Decalogue, the principles of neutrality,

impartiality, compliance with the agreed mandate, respect for sovereignty of states and in conformity with their obligations under international law.

Past experience of the OSCE reveals serious shortcomings in this regard. It is imperative for the OSCE to significantly improve its capacities to effectively oversee activities of respective mediation formats with a view to ensuring strict compliance with their mandates. In this context, we reiterate the urgency of restoration of OSCE's ownership over mediation activities, including through providing guidance for the mediation efforts.

As for other phases of conflict cycle is concerned, we are of firm view that the Vilnius MC Decision 3/11 should guide any initiative taken by the OSCE Secretariat, institutions or field missions in those areas that specifically identified in the Decision. We believe that substantive work and discussions on elements of this decision is still needed. As for the role of civil society across the conflict cycle, we share the view that civil society can indeed be helpful provided that its input is agreed by the participating States directly concerned, as stipulated in the Ministerial Council Decision 3/11.

It goes without saying that proper collection, collation and analysis of information is of vital importance in terms of early warning and early action. In this regard, the OSCE Secretariat and relevant institutions should pay utmost attention to credibility and reliability of any information they receive. The relevant actors involved in OSCE's early warning activities should exercise utmost care that their sources are of *bona fide* nature, as reflected in their mandate. Past experience demonstrates serious deficiencies in this direction.

Comprehensiveness of early warning process is of equal importance. Unfortunately, on many occasions, we observe tendency of not paying due attention to analyze a situation in a comprehensive manner. In many cases, the OSCE institutions tend to act before properly analyzing the underlying context.

As for early action, we would like to stress the central and primary role of respective decision taking bodies of the Organization, in particular the Permanent Council. The Secretariat, institutions and field missions while exercising their functions in terms of early warning should act in their advisory capacity supporting the decision making bodies in formulating any action.

In conclusion, we renew our gratitude to distinguished panelists for their valuable contributions and hope that the views outlined above will be duly integrated into the ongoing work of relevant OSCE structures.

I thank you, Mme. Moderator.