



Statement by the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan 2016 Annual Security Review Conference

Working session I: Conflict situations in the OSCE area-security aspects

Mr. Moderator,

The Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan joins previous speakers in warmly welcoming distinguished keynote speakers and thanks them for their interesting presentations. Unresolved conflicts in the OSCE area are undoubtedly the major threat to peace, security and sustainable development. In this regard, we commend the efforts of the German OSCE Chairmanship to include this important topic into the agenda of this year's Annual Security Review Conference.

Threats posed by the conflicts, including the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict are of multi-dimensional character and evident in all three dimensions. Ongoing illegal military presence of the armed forces of Armenia in the occupied territories, illegal transfer and destabilizing accumulation of weapons and military equipment therein shakes the foundations of European Conventional Arms Control and CSBMs regimes. These territories are not under the control of any arms control regime and thus, represent itself as a grey zone undermining the indivisibility of zone of application of agreed CAC and CSBM regimes. Accumulation of armament and ammunition in these territories, as well as the risk of proliferation of hazardous nuclear materials pose a real threat to regional and international peace and security. In the meantime, illegal economic other activities in the occupied territories create conducive conditions for activities of trans-national terrorist organizations.

Disruption of communications and connections as a direct consequence of military occupation of territories is the serious obstacle for realization of region's untapped economic potential. This undermines prosperity and well-being of the countries and their populations. Due to occupation, Azerbaijan is not able to use vast economic potential of these territories. Similarly, full potential of the region for intra and trans-regional connectivity remain under-utilized.

The conflict's humanitarian consequences are equally harsh and necessitate urgent solutions. As a direct impact of massive displacement of people from their places of origin in the result of ethnic cleansing policy, close to one million refugees and IDPs continue to be deprived of their basic human rights and fundamental freedoms, most notably, right to home and property. Further continuation of this situation is intolerable in light of our shared OSCE commitments and international law.

It is within this context that, the Azerbaijani side firmly believes that the current status-quo established in the result of illegal use of force against sovereignty and territorial integrity of my country is both unacceptable and unsustainable. Reliance on fragile cease-fire is not a solution, rather it runs a serious risk of escalation of situation with unpredictable consequences. Earlier today we heard from one delegation, albeit in a distorted manner, that there are certain basics to be followed in the OSCE area. Clearly, non-use

or threat of force against sovereignty and territorial integrity is one of these basic rules. In this context, continuation of illegal use of force through maintaining illegal military presence in other's internationally recognized territories is by no means in line with the Helsinki Final Act and must be ceased immediately.

Azerbaijan as a victim of aggression is the most interested party in earliest solution to the conflict, which would allow to elimination of its consequences. Our participation in negotiation under the OSCE Minsk Group is a clear sign of the commitment to a peaceful solution of the conflict. At the same time, we are for an effective process, which should bring long-awaited solution easing the sufferings of millions of people affected by the conflict.

Azerbaijan is ready for result-oriented negotiations on the basis of principles, which have been so far elaborated and which are aimed at eliminating the impediments to political solution of the conflict on stage-by-stage basis. Our approach to the settlement of the conflict has been clearly articulated on numerous occasions. Yet, I would like to take this opportunity to outline the basic elements of our approach to peaceful settlement of the conflict.

The territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, like that of any other participating State, cannot and shall not be subject of negotiation or element of compromise. We have no territorial claim against any participating State, but demand what is rightfully belong to us under the UN Charter, Helsinki Final Act and relevant four resolutions of the United Nations Security Council. It is a matter of principle that no solution that is not in line with imperative norms and principles of international law can be just and sustainable. Therefore, *fait accompli* situation created in the result of violation of international norms and principles cannot serve as a basis for solution.

In the first place, the Armenian occupying forces must be withdrawn from the occupied Azerbaijani territories accompanied by restoration of railroad and transport lines and allowing the return of IDPs to their homes in safety and dignity. Once the negotiation table is cleared off the military factor, conducive objective conditions will emerge for the population of the Nagorno-Karabakh region, the two-Azerbaijani and Armenian communities, to discuss and decide their model of co-existence. The negotiations on definition of a final status of the Nagorno Karabakh region of the Republic of Azerbaijan, which will grant to both communities equal rights and opportunities for normal life must be preceded by elimination of impediments and consequences of the conflict.

These stages of resolution as outlined above can be elaborated in detail and implemented within the Minsk Group format and with the support of international community. Such support will include deployment of OSCE multinational peacekeeping contingent, which is centered on police and civil observation components and based on impartiality and objectivity. As a matter of fact, stage-by-stage solution of the conflict and these elements of OSCE peacekeeping were approved by the OSCE Budapest Summit Decision of 1994. This decision has tasked the Co-chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group to conduct speedy negotiations for the conclusion of a political agreement, the implementation of which will eliminate major consequences of the conflict and permit the convening of the Minsk Conference. In the meantime, the decision established the High-Level Planning Group of the OSCE and tasked it to elaborate the mandate of OSCE peacekeeping operation.

Latest high-level discussions held in Vienna on May 16 and in St.Petersberg on June 20 provided good opportunity for reinvigorating perspectives of peaceful resolution of the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict. We welcome the fact that discussions were held in a constructive atmosphere. For achieving peaceful settlement of the conflict, resumption of substantive negotiations without further delay is of urgent necessity. Progress in substantive negotiations on comprehensive settlement accompanied by implementation of confidence-building measures to strengthen the ceasefire can produce much-desired breakthrough in moving beyond the status-quo. Confidence-building measures must compliment the

political track on the settlement and should be considered in the context of elimination of the results of ongoing occupation of Azerbaijani territories by Armenia. Earliest withdrawal of Armenian occupying forces will significantly change dynamics in the region and pave the way for normalization of relations to the benefit of the people of the region. Any precondition put for resumption of substantive talks is a serious blow to peace process and undermines agreements reached in latest rounds of high-level discussions.

In light of above-mentioned, we call on all OSCE participating States, in particular the German Chairmanship and the members of the OSCE Minsk Group, to take all necessary measures at their disposal to persuade Armenia to engage in substantive effective negotiations on a comprehensive settlement of the conflict without further delay.

I thank you, Mr. Moderator.