

Human Dimension Implementation Meeting

WORKING SESSION 14 (specifically selected topic):

Economic, social and cultural rights as an answer to rising inequalities

As delivered by Mr. Davit Knyazyan, Head of the OSCE and Conventional Arms Control Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia

Mr. Moderator,

We appreciate that economic, social and cultural rights are among specifically selected topics of this year's meeting. Protection of these rights is one of key pillars for ensuring sustainable development. We believe that HDIM is a right platform to address challenges in this area from security perspective and thus contribute to the activities of other international organizations, first and foremost, the UN in reaching sustainable development goals.

Armenia attaches importance to protection of inalienable economic, social and cultural rights. We advocate international and regional cooperation in this regard, which could raise the level of understanding, confidence and trust between our societies. Armenia has overcome hardships of first years of independence and is now itself contributing to protection of economic and social rights. Armenia is participating in providing humanitarian assistance to Syria. We are hosting more than 20 thousand refugees from that country and Iraq and ensuring their economic and social rights is a priority for the Armenian authorities.

Regrettably, in the OSCE area some participating States continue to violate economic and social rights of people as a means to reach their political objectives. In this context we would like to recall that the OSCE participating States have committed to refrain from acts of political, economic and other coercion against other participating State in Helsinki Final Act.

Turkey is pursuing its policy of illegal land blockade of Armenia, which lasts for already a quarter of century. Such a policy is aimed at undermining the social and economic development of Armenia, isolating Armenia from international economic cooperation.

Mr. Moderator,

We would like to draw the attention of the audience to the need of ensuring social and economic rights of the people residing in conflict areas, which is of utmost relevance for our security Organization.

The realization of the individual and collective human rights and fundamental freedoms including economic and social rights must not be dependent on the status of the territory where peoples live, a concept which is well embedded in all international instruments including Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The international instruments such as the UN Covenant on Political and Civil Rights and the UN Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights empower people to pursue their

economic, social and cultural development by the virtue of the right to self-determination. The UN Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights by its Article 1.2 establishes that “All peoples may, for their own ends, freely dispose of their natural wealth and resources without prejudice to any obligations arising out of international economic co-operation, based upon the principle of mutual benefit, and international law. In no case may a people be deprived of its own means of subsistence”.

We are concerned about the attempts of Azerbaijan to criminalize all economic, social, cultural and humanitarian activities of the people of Artsakh. Such a policy aims at further violating individual and collective human rights of the people of Artsakh and thus should be unequivocally condemned

The OSCE and its institutions should be involved in addressing the violation of economic, social and cultural rights of people residing in conflict areas.

Thank You.