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**Statement by the Delegation of Azerbaijan
at the 920th meeting of the Permanent Council**

ENGLISH only

Mr. Chairman,

According to mass media reports so-called “presidential elections” in the occupied Daghlygh Garabagh (Nagorno Karabakh) region of the Republic of Azerbaijan is planned to be held in July 19, 2012.

The Republic of Azerbaijan reiterates in this regard that the unrecognized separatist regime in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan represents nothing but an illegal structure established by the Republic of Armenia on the basis of ethnic cleansing of these territories from Azerbaijani population. The so-called “elections” are conducted in order to camouflage the annexation policy of Armenia and are aimed at consolidation of the results of the continued occupation of the internationally recognized territories of Azerbaijan.

Holding any kind of voting process in Daghlygh Garabagh is illegitimate since it is arranged in situation of use of force against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, under heavy presence of armed forces of the Republic of Armenia and in absence of expelled Azerbaijani population of the Daghlygh Garabagh region of Azerbaijan.

International community, including the Minsk Group Co-Chair countries on previous similar occasions didn’t recognize legitimacy of so called elections and reaffirmed the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan within its internationally recognized borders.

We call the OSCE participating States to condemn holding of so called “presidential elections” in the occupied Daghlygh Garabagh region of Azerbaijan and to persuade the Armenian side to withdraw its military troops from Daghlygh Garabagh and other adjacent occupied territories and create objective conditions for return of expelled Azerbaijani population to these territories.

We also request the OSCE participating States to undertake necessary measures to ensure that their citizens are not sent as observers for the so called elections.