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DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA
ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE

ENGLISH only

Statement
in Response to the Presentation by the Secretary General of the Annual
Evaluation Report on the Implementation of the 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the
Promotion of Gender Equality
delivered by Ambassador Arman Kirakossian at the 1110th Meeting of the
OSCE Permanent Council
July 21, 2016

Mr. Chairman,

We would like to warmly welcome distinguished Secretary General, H.E. Lamberto Zannier and thank him for presenting the Annual Evaluation Report on the Implementation of the 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality.

The gender equality is a very comprehensive topic with many aspects and therefore we will use this opportunity to present some information on the policy and practice implemented at the national level in the field of gender equality, as well as touch upon most pressing issues, which shape reality on the ground.

Armenia prioritizes gender equality and participation of women in political, economic and social life and security sector through efficient cooperation with the UN, OSCE, Council of Europe and other international partners. The strategy documents in this sphere are the “Gender Policy Strategic Action Plan for the years of 2011-2015 ” and “Strategic Action Plan to Combat Gender based violence 2011-2014”

Political participation of women was among important topics within nationwide consultations on the new electoral code, which resulted in increasing the quota for women from 20 per cent to 25 per cent for 2017 and 30 per cent for the 2022 parliamentary elections.

The process of development of a network of women’s resource centres (WRCs) as grassroots organizations to promote women’s economic and political empowerment is underway. We would like to commend successful cooperation between the Government of Armenia and the OSCE Office in Yerevan in capacity building and sustainable operation of the centres.

Mainstreaming gender equality is an important element of the Security Sector Reform. Broader engagement of women is one of the objectives of the police reform

and development of police educational complex. Empowerment of women was streamlined within the policy of promoting human rights in armed forces.

Combating domestic and gender based violence and cooperation between law enforcement agencies and civil society in this field is another priority of the Armenian authorities. The OSCE Office in Yerevan has supported the Government of Armenia in organization of training courses on combating domestic violence through partnership between state and non-state stakeholders, raising public awareness, facilitating coordination of efforts of various state agencies.

OSCE with its comprehensive concept of security and institutional framework is well placed to promote human rights and fundamental freedoms of women throughout all stages of conflict cycle.

Since recent years we witness growing violence against women on certain cases amounting to atrocities in the context of protracted conflicts in the OSCE area. The Delegation of Armenia has regularly raised this issue in the context of intentional targeting of border settlements and civilians, including women. In September last year deliberate and indiscriminate shelling of civilian border settlements in north-east of Armenia resulted in death of three women, two of them elderly. They were killed in their own houses and farms, far from military positions.

This year's April escalation along the Line of Contact between Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan introduced new alarming trends of violence against women, the brutality of which was going beyond any elementary norms of civilized world, let alone the international humanitarian law. In the borderline village of Talish of Martakert region of Nagorno-Karabakh three elderly civilians, two of whom women, were brutally tortured, mutilated and killed by the members of Azerbaijani Armed Forces.

The women living in the conflict areas constitute a larger part of civilians and under the circumstances of intentional violation of humanitarian law they are particularly vulnerable. Thus there is a clear need for our Organization to undertake efforts to streamline the protection of the human rights of women, residing in conflict areas in its agenda through utilization of the relevant tools, including agreed formats and field operations.

OSCE is well placed also to engage and empower women in conflict cycle activities with focus on conflict prevention, confidence-building, people-to-people contacts post-conflict rehabilitation and reconciliation. Such efforts for being successful need to be inclusive and de-politicized.

Thank you.