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**Statement
at the 552nd meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council
21 April 2005**

Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the GUUAM Group Member States – Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine – I too would like to join previous speakers in warmly welcoming the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, distinguished Dr. Mladen Ivanić, to this meeting of the Permanent Council, and to thank him both for his informative presentation and written report.

Mr. Chairman,

As it has already been mentioned here, later this year we will celebrate the 10th anniversary of signing the Dayton/Paris peace accord, which brought to an end the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, secured its territorial integrity and inviolability of borders.

The situation in this country devastated by war has significantly improved since that historic day. We welcome the dynamic and pro-active steps taken thus far by the international community with a view of restoring normal life conditions and building democratic state based on the OSCE norms and principles. We commend the increasing role of the Government institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina in this process, which we consider to be vital for maintaining security, stability and peace in the whole OSCE area and, first of all, in the Balkans.

We take a good note of the role, which the OSCE played and continues to play in this important process, mainly through its Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina. The assistance provided by our Organization was timely and efficient in reforming such vital elements of a state as legislation, judiciary, law-enforcement, public administration, human rights protection, primary and secondary education, customs, taxation and audit.

Our Group welcomes the recent key reforms in the defence and security sectors of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We believe that these steps and their sustainable development will provide a strong impetus to the integration of this country into European and Euro-Atlantic institutions, first of all, through joining the PfP Program.

Mr. Chairman,

The GUUAM Group commends the energetic efforts undertaken by the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina in cooperation with relevant international actors with a view of providing emergency humanitarian relief to hundreds of thousands of refugees and IDPs, and assisting their return to the homeland, which is a fundamental element of any successful peace-building effort.

The expulsion of population from their homeland, including brutal practice of ethnic cleansings, constitutes a major violation of human rights in the OSCE area in general. It impedes the development of states, fuels the process of illegal migration and serves as a fertile soil for trafficking in human beings and all other kinds of illegal activities. Eventually, it undermines regional stability and poses a serious threat to peace and security of the whole OSCE community.

That is why our countries welcome significant progress achieved in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the field of return of refugees and IDPs so far. We call upon all parties concerned to spare no effort to complete this process fully. This cannot be achieved without improving security situation and providing adequate funding in the first place. It is a duty of the whole international community, including the OSCE, to help those deprived one of their fundamental human rights, namely to live in his or her home.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, please allow me on behalf of the GUUAM Group to reiterate our constant firm support to the process of post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and sincerely wish distinguished Minister Ivanić and his country further successes.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.