

Human Dimension Implementation Meeting

WORKING SESSION 4

Ensuring equal enjoyment of rights and equal participation

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As delivered by

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I would like to thank all introducers for their thoughtful presentations and present our views on this first specifically selected topic that is under discussions in the HDIM.

Liberty, equality and brotherhood had been three main ideas of the Great French Revolution which largely laid foundations of the modern system of democracy and human rights. History showed that these three principles are effective together and absolutizing one at the expense of the other created restrictive systems some of which ended up in tyranny. Therefore it is important to assert that there is no freedom without equality and there is no equality without freedom and solidarity which is perhaps modern equivalent of brotherhood within and between societies can be ensured by joint application of these principles.

The equality is not merely an individual right but it is certainly a group or collective right. The collective equal rights are one of the important principles of the Helsinki Final Act wherein it appears in a comprehensive manner as equal rights and self-determination of peoples.

1989 Vienna document further builds on this principle and confirms that all peoples always have the right, in full freedom, to determine, when and as they wish, their internal and external political status, without external interference, and to pursue as they wish their political, economic, social and cultural development.

Unfortunately not all participating states have complied with both international obligations and OSCE commitments in respecting the equal rights and self-determination of peoples. There have been cases of use of force against the realization of this right which led to mass and grave human rights violations and eventually to violent and protracted conflicts and this has also been a case for Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Another form of violation of this collective human right is an attempt to deprive people living in conflict areas of all means of existence including through impeding realization of their human rights including right to life, economic and cultural rights, right to vote and so forth. This collective punishment is undertaken by consistent efforts of isolation of people from the international community including international organizations promoting human rights.

Human rights and fundamental freedoms of people residing in conflict areas should be equally upheld regardless of the status of their territory, something which is openly recognized in the other important human rights instrument such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

In conclusion, we would like to submit a recommendation.

We recommend to all participating states to uphold their international obligations and commitments on promoting and respecting the equal rights and self-determination of peoples.

Thank you.