

12 September 2018

Human Dimension Implementation Meeting  
Opening Statement

September 10, 2018

As delivered by

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Mme Chairperson,

I would like to start by expressing my deep gratitude and appreciation to the hosts of the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, namely the Government of Poland and ODHIR. Furthermore, our thanks go to the Italian Chairmanship for convening this meeting under challenging circumstances.

Every year we get together in Warsaw to reaffirm the importance of our human dimension commitments by mutually monitoring each other, sharing good practices and getting feedback from civil society.

The 2018 has been an important year for Armenia. The Revolution of Love and Solidarity marks a critical juncture for promoting and protecting human rights in Armenia. The democratic movement evolved in the environment of respecting freedom of association, assembly and media and got accomplished by realization of the most important right: the right of people to take part and form the Government. A societal consensus on human rights, good governance and democracy is one of the most important outcomes and assets of the Armenian Revolution.

There was no any geopolitical context, as human rights do not exclusively belong to any single state, group of states or civilization. Human rights are universal and aspirations to enjoy them can have a universal appeal for all peoples. We hope that all participating states can agree with this assessment.

The OSCE commitments have always served as important reference points for all stakeholders in Armenia. We acknowledge the role of the OSCE institutions and particularly the OSCE Yerevan Office in building positive agenda around the implementation of the OSCE commitments. Despite the closure of the Office against the will of the hosting state, Armenia will continue exploring ways of cooperating with the Organization in other frameworks such as the Armenia Cooperation Programme.

Non-violence has been another important feature of the Armenian Revolution. It shows that crisis situations can be resolved based on non-use of force, peaceful dialogue and self-determination of people.

Armenia pursues these principles in the context of protracted conflicts as well. We regret that despite our strong efforts human rights and fundamental freedoms throughout the conflict cycle will not be thoroughly examined in a separate session due to the objection of a handful of OSCE participating states.

Having a separate session on human rights in a conflict environment would have allowed us to go into a substantial discussion on the human rights of members of all groups affected by conflict. It could have also prevented attempts of covering up a poor human rights record by referring to conflict-related issues under all agenda items, something that we were increasingly witnessing in recent years.

Last but not least, we took note with concern of continued attempts of some participating states to limit the space of civil society not only within their respective countries but in the HDIM as well. The space of civil society has already been limited by the existence of numerous GONGOs and the possibility of censorship. The participation of dissenting voices can severely undermine the relevance of this truly unique gathering.

Armenia looks forward to safeguarding the freedom to be heard in the HDIM in close cooperation with all interested participating states.

Thank you.