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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1163rd MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

9 November 2017

**In response to the statement by the Co-Chairmen of the
OSCE Minsk Group and the Personal Representative of the
OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on the Conflict Dealt with by the OSCE
Minsk Conference and the report by the Head of the
High-Level Planning Group**

Mr. Chairperson,

We thank the Co-Chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group Ambassadors Igor Valentinovich Popov, Stéphane Visconti and Andrew Schofer, the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Ambassador Andrzej Kasprzyk, and the Head of the High-Level Planning Group (HLPG) Colonel Hans Lampalzer for the detailed information about the progress in the negotiating process and their thoughts on the current situation in the region.

The meeting that took place after a long break in Geneva on 16 October 2017 between the Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan came about in large measure as a result of the mediation of the Co-Chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group through their active contacts in Baku, Yerevan and Nagorno-Karabakh. One important outcome of the summit was the agreement by the parties to step up the negotiating process. We are confident that this will help to further increase trust between the parties and hence the movement towards a compromise on essential aspects of the settlement. We hope that the constructive atmosphere as a result of the meeting of the Presidents in Geneva will be maintained. We are looking forward to the outcome of the meeting planned for the end of the year between the Co-Chairmen and the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Armenia and Azerbaijan.

The maintenance of peace and stability in the region is a necessary condition for the effectiveness of the mediating mission of the Co-Chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group. In that context, we highly appreciate the commitment by the parties to take additional measures to reduce tension at the line of contact. We would point out again that the practical implementation of the agreements reached at the meetings between the Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan in Vienna on 16 May and St. Petersburg on 20 June 2016 on reducing military risks and in particular increasing the number of OSCE observers in the conflict zone

would help to achieve this aim. We are counting on rapid agreement on an arrangement for enlarging the office of the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on the basis of a plan that would permit a qualitative improvement in the possibilities for monitoring the situation in the region. The final elaboration of a joint mechanism for investigating armed incidents in the conflict zone would also foster stability on the line of contact and the border of Armenia and Azerbaijan. The implementation of these agreements of principle would consolidate the positive atmosphere in the dialogue between the parties and also stimulate the negotiating process.

We appreciate the contribution of the HLPG to updating the peacekeeping plans in the region in the framework of the mandate agreed at the 1994 OSCE Summit in Budapest.

The Russian Federation, in co-ordination with the other members of the Troika of Co-Chair countries of the OSCE Minsk Group, approved by the United Nations Security Council as a joint mediator, is willing to continue to provide all necessary assistance to the parties in elaborating a mutually acceptable consensus basis for resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh problem. We trust that the forthcoming contacts by the Co-Chairmen will provide an additional stimulus to the peaceful resolution of this long-standing conflict.

Thank you for your attention.