

Human Dimension Implementation Meeting Opening Statement

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As delivered by

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Mr. 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 Serbian Chairmanship for setting a common agenda that should be thoroughly addressed throughout our deliberations.

My delegation particularly values the opportunity to address the issues related to tolerance and non-discrimination, freedom of religion and protection of religious groups, freedom of expression and protection of journalists, freedom of movement, combatting torture and other degrading treatment in the OSCE area. We are glad to note that some outcomes of our discussions will also be addressed in the framework of the Belgrade Ministerial Council.

In our view, these themes are intrinsic part of comprehensive security. In paying particular attention to these fundamental freedoms, we are sending a strong message of embedding the protection of human rights into the overall European security.

In this year of the 40th anniversary of the signing of the Helsinki Final Act, it is important to reaffirm our full adherence to its all principles but particularly respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and the equal rights and self-determination of peoples since these principles are embedded in the Human Dimension commitments.

While acknowledging the role of international and regional cooperation in promoting human rights, we should remember that this link is reflective. The emergence of a strong “human rights” culture will bring more cooperation in sustaining and achieving peace and reconciliation along dividing lines. Conflicts should not be used as an excuse for maintaining and even worsening poor record of human rights. Conflicts can and should be resolved on the basis of human rights. The existence of the independent civil society is essential in promoting peace and reconciliation as much as coercive measures aimed at silencing civil society deepens mistrust and gap between peoples.

2015 marks other important anniversaries. Armenia and Armenians all over the world have been commemorating the Centenary of the Armenian Genocide joined by world leaders, members of parliaments and people who identify themselves with humanity and civilization. Remembrance and education of genocide is an important OSCE human dimension commitment. We are pleased to note

that this year the United Nations, first at the level of the Human Rights Council and then General Assembly, adopted resolutions on genocide prevention and setting up an International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of Victims of the Crime of Genocide and Prevention of this Crime. These resolutions clearly establish that Remembrance is an important part of reconciliation and genocide prevention.

Unfortunately, in the OSCE neighboring areas nowadays Christians along with other religious groups face massive and grave human rights violations perpetrated by terrorists and foreign terrorist fighters. This threat is existential and it should be approached within efforts of genocide prevention. We appreciate the intention of the Serbian Chairmanship to introduce draft decision on protection of Christians in the OSCE and beyond and we are ready to actively contribute here.

In concluding let me refer to the modalities of our participation to the HDIM. Armenia is ready to engage in mutual monitoring with all OSCE participating states without exception as well as to enter into dialogue with representatives of independent civil society. What we are not ready is to entertain organizations which are created to occupy the place of the independent civil society.

With this in mind we welcome all participants of HDIM and look forward to the meaningful dialogue.

Thank you.