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**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR FRANCOIS ALABRUNE,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF FRANCE TO THE OSCE, ON
BEHALF OF THE THREE OSCE MINSK GROUP CO-CHAIR STATES,
AT THE MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

On behalf of the three OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair States, I should like to draw the Permanent Council's attention to the joint statement by Barack Obama, President of the United States, Vladimir Putin, President of the Russian Federation, and François Hollande, President of the French Republic on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict adopted at the G20 summit in Los Cabos.

“We, the Presidents of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair countries – France, the Russian Federation and the United States of America – are united in our resolute commitment to a peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The parties to the conflict should not further delay making the important decisions necessary to reach a lasting and peaceful settlement. We regret that the presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia did not take the decisive steps that our countries called for in the joint statement at Deauville on 26 May 2011. Nevertheless, the progress that has been achieved should provide the momentum to complete work on the framework for a comprehensive peace.

We call upon the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan to fulfil the commitment in their 23 January 2012 joint statement at Sochi to ‘accelerate’ reaching agreement on the Basic Principles for a Settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict. As evidence of their political will, they should refrain from maximalist positions in the negotiations, respect the 1994 ceasefire agreement and abstain from hostile rhetoric that increases tension. We urge the leaders to be guided by the principles of the Helsinki Final Act – particularly those relating to the non-use of force or the threat of force, territorial integrity, and equal rights and self-determination of peoples – and the elements of a settlement outlined in our countries’ statements at L’Aquila in 2009 and Muskoka in 2010.

Military force will not resolve the conflict and would only prolong the suffering and hardships endured by the peoples of the region for too long. Only a peaceful, negotiated settlement can allow the entire region to move beyond the status quo toward a secure and prosperous future.

Our countries will continue to work closely with the sides, and we call upon them to make full use of the assistance of the Minsk Group Co-Chairs as mediators. However, peace will depend ultimately upon the parties’ willingness to seek an agreement based on mutual understanding, rather than one-sided advantage, and a shared vision of the benefits that peace will bring to all their peoples and to future generations.”