

PRESS COMMUNIQUÉ OF THE CO-CHAIRS OF GENEVA DISCUSSIONS

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The participants in the Geneva Discussions have just completed their sixth round.

All participants met in two parallel working groups to discuss security and stability in the region and humanitarian matters. The discussions again took place in a constructive spirit.

In Working Group I, participants discussed the joint incident prevention and response mechanisms agreed during the Geneva Discussions on 17 and 18 February 2009. These mechanisms remain the best way for all sides to respond swiftly to security incidents on the ground, and are an important practical step to help foster and maintain stability and security. In this context, the Co-Chairs welcomed the continued commitment of participants to the mechanisms. It was agreed that the first consultative meeting of the new mechanism would take place in Gali on 14 July 2009, a development which the Co-Chairs said demonstrated flexibility and good will. Participants agreed on the importance of resuming meetings of the existing mechanism as soon as possible.

Participants also focussed on the broader issue of security and stability, notably the non-use of force and international security arrangements. Participants agreed on the importance of the principle of the non-use of force, exchanged views on possible ways to formalise arrangements and exchanged written proposals between themselves. Humanitarian cases were also discussed.

Both these issues will be further discussed during the forthcoming session of the Geneva discussions.

Participants of Working Group II discussed substantive issues and agreed to move towards a comprehensive plan to address the multi-faceted displacement issues. These included adequate conditions conducive to returns, including security, confidence building and human rights; issues related to the socio-economic rehabilitation of infrastructure and the provision of public services, including gas and electricity, to returnees and the receiving communities; a structure for the registration of IDPs, refugees and other displaced persons, documentation, and property restitution to enable the safe, voluntary and dignified return of the concerned population. There was an agreement to start immediately a joint assessment of the rehabilitation needs of the water supply system, both for potable and for irrigation water.

The participants agreed to meet again on 17 September 2009.