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**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY KELIN,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
AT THE MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

19 January 2012

**Regarding a Nagorno-Karabakh settlement**

Mr. Chairperson,

As a representative of one of the Co-Chairing States of the OSCE Minsk Group, I should like to report briefly on a meeting hosted by the President of the Russian Federation and attended by the Presidents of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Armenia, which was held in Sochi on 23 January 2012. This was the tenth such trilateral summit. The progress of and prospects for a Nagorno-Karabakh settlement were discussed in detail.

A whole range of issues were considered on which agreement has not yet been reached in the draft Basic Principles for a Nagorno-Karabakh settlement. The presidents exchanged views on the most complex subjects and reached the general conclusion that the work should be continued.

There was a general understanding, expressed by the leaders of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Armenia and supported by President Dmitry Medvedev, that it was essential to move away from maximalist positions in order to achieve further progress, which was likely. The Joint Statement adopted at the meeting states that the Presidents of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Armenia, noting the importance of moving on to the drafting of a peace agreement, expressed their readiness to speed up efforts to reach agreement on the Basic Principles, taking into account the work accomplished thus far.

The second matter, which was discussed at some length in Sochi, was the implementation of the understanding reached just under a year ago, in March last year, when the presidents expressed interest in the creation of a mechanism for investigating incidents along the ceasefire line.

The Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group – the Russian Federation, France and the United States of America – and Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office were involved in one of the stages of the negotiations. In furtherance of the Sochi Joint Statement of 5 March 2011, they prepared a report on the mechanism they had developed for investigating incidents along the ceasefire line. This document was submitted to the presidents.

The presidents took note of this report. They noted the work done and instructed that it be continued, believing that specific procedures should be prescribed for taking particular action when incidents were investigated.

The third topic of the Sochi meeting was also reflected in the Joint Statement. This was the conviction of the Presidents of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Russia that direct humanitarian, cultural, educational and other contacts – people-to-people contacts – play a very significant part in restoring and strengthening confidence and in creating the most favourable atmosphere possible so that political decisions can also be made. In this connection, the Presidents of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Armenia expressed their readiness to facilitate the further development of dialogue between representatives of intellectual, scientific and civil society groups.

Baku and Yerevan requested Russia's assistance with the development of such contacts. Naturally, President Dmitry Medvedev agreed. We always support humanitarian contacts of this kind and shall act as a mediator in this area too.

The Presidents of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Armenia commended the mediation activities of the Russian Federation and the other countries co-chairing the OSCE Minsk Group, and expressed the hope that Russia, the USA and France would continue to play an active part in the settlement, right up to the achievement of lasting peace and stability in the region.

The Russian Federation, in its capacity as the mediating State and a member of the OSCE's Minsk Group troika with the Co-Chairs from France and the United States, will continue its efforts to bring the positions of parties closer together.

Thank you for your attention.