

31 October 2007

ENGLISH only

Canadian Delegation to the
Organization for Security & Cooperation
in Europe



Délégation du Canada auprès de
l'Organisation pour la sécurité et la coopération
en Europe

**DELEGATION OF CANADA TO THE OSCE
STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE ADDRESS
BY THE PRIME MINISTER OF GEORGIA,
HIS EXCELLENCY ZURAB NOGHAIDELI,
684TH (SPECIAL) MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL
30 OCTOBER, 2007**

Canada joins others in warmly welcoming His Excellency, Prime Minister Noghaideli back to the Permanent Council today. We thank him for his address, and his perspective on developments in South Ossetia.

It is Canada's view that the OSCE is well placed to address challenges that affect the security and stability of Georgia.

We take the opportunity of the Prime Minister's appearance to underscore the conflict prevention and minority integration work being done in Samskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo-Kartli by the OSCE's High Commissioner for National Minorities, a programme that has received significant Canadian support.

We call on the Government of Georgia to redouble its efforts in facilitating government participation and societal integration of the minorities in these regions. This is one element in the continued reforms.

Our government followed the 6 August missile incident with great concern and commends the seriousness and restraint with which the Government of Georgia acted. We welcomed the discussion of that incident in the Forum for Security Cooperation earlier this month.

We further believe that, taking into account the work of other international organisations, the OSCE should expand its programming in Georgia to further assist Georgian aviation authorities in border programmes to ensure that incidents of this nature can be avoided in the future.

The OSCE has its regional presence, an active OSCE Mission in Georgia with a new Head of Mission, tasked with facilitating a modern solution to the conflict in South Ossetia. We would like to thank the Prime Minister for his update on the South Ossetian peace plan.

Canada supports all existing efforts to resolve this regional conflict and is pleased that negotiations in the Joint Control Commission format have recently restarted. We have taken careful note of the Prime Minister's comments and views on the current format.

In addition to regular negotiations, we are confident that establishing additional military monitors in South Ossetia would contribute significantly to building confidence and to conflict resolution in the region. We urge all participating states to show flexibility, so that we can get the monitors on the ground as quickly as possible.

Along with additional monitors, it is Canada's view that observers placed in key areas, such as Didi Gupta and at the Roki Tunnel, could further contribute to stability in the region.

We will conclude by highlighting a last point. The conflicts in Georgia can only be resolved through increased confidence-building measures and peaceful negotiations which respect the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Georgia.

We again thank the Prime Minister for returning to the Permanent Council, and wish he and his country all the best.