



STATEMENT ON DEVELOPMENTS IN GEORGIA

As delivered by Ambassador Guttorm Vik
to the Permanent Council,
Vienna, April 17 2008

Thank you Mr. Chairman,

Let me first reiterate Norway's support for the leading role of the United Nations in Abkhazia, Georgia, in negotiations aimed at reaching a peaceful resolution to the conflict.

We welcome the new initiatives put forward by the Georgian President and encourage Georgia to engage in a meaningful dialogue with the Abkhaz *de facto* authorities, and call upon the latter to consider these initiatives seriously and in a positive spirit.

Norway will continue to support all efforts towards a peaceful settlement of the Abkhazian and South Ossetian conflicts, and calls on all parties to refrain from actions which could risk escalating the situation further.

Norway is concerned with the unilateral actions taken by the Russian Federation to establish legal links with the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Georgia's territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty must be respected. We urge the Russian Federation to reverse these measures.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.