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STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF BELGIUM AT THE 2011 ANNUAL SECURITY REVIEW CONFERENCE

Vienna, 1 July 2011

Working session III: Revitalizing, updating and modernizing conventional arms control and confidence- and security-building measures: challenges and opportunities

Mr. Chairperson,

Belgium attaches great importance to arms control and confidence-building measures. Through its contribution to improving transparency and predictability among OSCE participating States, the Vienna Document 1999 occupies a vital place in our security architecture.

The aim of the Vienna Document has lost nothing of its relevance, but its contents need to be adapted to the evolution of the armed forces and the security context. It is with this in mind that Belgium is co-sponsoring the proposal to reduce the thresholds for prior notification of certain military activities.

In the same vein, Belgium would like to co-sponsor a proposal on the prior notification of major military activities. This proposal will enable participating States that have no military activities above the thresholds for notification to participate in efforts to improve military transparency.

Belgium believes that confidence-building measures are an important instrument for preventing conflicts and that the OSCE should step up its efforts in this regard. The discussions during the Corfu Process, Astana Summit and V to V Dialogue have demonstrated the general will to work in this direction.

As Mr. Mikhail Ulyanov pointed out in his statement at the opening of this meeting, the improvement to Chapter III of the Vienna Document on risk reduction deserves our full attention.

Experience has shown that in crisis situations an increase in the international presence in the field can help to reduce and defuse tensions. A major obstacle to the inspections under the Vienna Document is the fact that the quotas have generally been exhausted by the time they are most needed.

Belgium would thus like to co-sponsor the proposal by the Netherlands to create an OSCE inspection mechanism that would be used as a last resort in the event of unusual military activities. We firmly believe that this proposal remedies an omission in the Vienna Document.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.