



EMBASSY OF GEORGIA TO THE REPUBLIC OF AUSTRIA
PERMANENT MISSION OF GEORGIA TO THE OSCE AND OTHER
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN VIENNA

S t a t e m e n t

On the 19th round of the Geneva discussions

As delivered by the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the OSCE,

Ambassador Paata Gaprindashvili

at the 908th session of the OSCE Permanent Council

Vienna, 19 April, 2012

Mr. Chairman,

The 19th round of the Geneva International Discussions was held on 29 March 2012. The principal goal of the first working group of the Geneva Discussions remains to reach an agreement on the Non-Use of Force (NUF) and the International Security Arrangements (ISA). Non-Use of Force commitment by Russia, reciprocating the unilateral pledge made by Tbilisi in November 2010, would alleviate the existing security concerns and constitute a significant step towards stability on the ground. The discussions held during the 19th round demonstrated that there is a potential of moving in right direction and the pledge on the non-use of force by Moscow could materialize in the foreseeable future.

It is a strong position of Georgia as well as the international community that we need to ensure the Russian Federation fully implements the August 12 cease-fire agreement and withdraws its troops to the places held before the outbreak of the hostilities. In that context the Georgian side once again offered a number of interim measures before the full implementation of the cease-fire agreement takes place and the full-fledged international security regime, consisting, inter alia, of the

international peacekeeping/police missions, is established in the occupied regions. The Co-Chairs of the Geneva Discussions, as well as the representatives of the U.S., also share the position that the best guarantee of the non-resumption of hostilities and security and stability on the ground is the establishment of the solid international security arrangements.

Participants also discussed the issues pertaining to the work of the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanisms, which are dealing with the whole spectrum of issues related to the security environment on the ground. However, full utilization of the potential of the IPRMs and the instruments available to the Mechanisms still remains the task to be achieved.

During the 19th round of the Geneva Discussion, as in previous rounds, no progress was registered at the second working group. Moscow and its proxy regimes still refuse to discuss the safe, dignified and voluntary return of the IDPs and refugees to the places of their original residence and fail to recognize the fundamental rights of IDPs and refugees.

Within the second working group, the Georgian side also raised the issue of protection of cultural heritage in the occupied regions of Georgia. During the information session, held on March 28th, the legal tools for the protection of cultural heritage were presented to the participants of the Geneva Discussions, leading to an interesting exchange of views on the subject. The Georgian side maintains that the best way to ensure the protection of the sites of cultural heritage is to proceed in a non-politicized humanitarian way, with the involvement of neutral international organizations in the oversight of these important monuments of historical importance.

We are very much looking forward to the next meeting of the Geneva talks which is scheduled for 7-8 June 2012.

Thank you.