

**Statement by the Delegation of Georgia
At the OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
Opening Plenary Session
Warsaw, September 16, 2019**

Mr. Chairperson, distinguished Government and Civil Society representatives,

Let me start by thanking the Slovak OSCE Chairmanship, ODIHR and the host country – Poland for once again organizing the HDIM - the largest human rights event in Europe. A unique format of the HDIM enables us, the representatives of the Governments and the Civil Society, to discuss and review the state of human rights in our respective countries and the implementation of the shared human dimension commitments.

Upholding human rights is an absolute prerequisite for stability, security and prosperous development of our nations. While we recognize the progress achieved in many areas across the OSCE, we should reflect on worrying developments of the blatant violation of fundamental rights and freedoms that still prevails. In this context, the Georgian delegation will bring dire human rights situation in the Russian occupied Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions of Georgia to the attention of HDIM delegates in the course of the next two weeks.

As we speak, ethnic Georgians in these regions are subjected to discrimination based on their ethnicity. Violations of freedom of movement, right to education, right to health are a daily occurrence on the occupied territories of Georgia. All this, against the backdrop of hundreds of thousands of IDPs and refugees being expelled from the occupied regions as a result of several waves of ethnic cleansing and still unable to return to their homes in safety and dignity.

Mr. Chair,

Georgia is concerned over alarming humanitarian consequences stemming from Russia's aggression against Ukraine.

We welcome the exchange of detainees that took place earlier this month and hope that this exchange will be a first step in increased efforts to bring peace to Ukraine, where over 13 thousand people have been killed after the beginning of the aggression and many more have been injured and displaced.

We believe that since the OSCE's comprehensive and co-operative approach to security is based on the inherent dignity of all individuals and the protection and promotion of their human rights and freedoms, our Organization should enhance efforts aimed at duly addressing the violations of Helsinki principles and our shared commitments. The establishment of international security arrangements in the Russia occupied territories and unimpeded access of human rights monitoring mechanisms are urgently needed for the safety and security on the ground.

Distinguished delegates,

Ensuring respect for human rights is the unwavering will of all Georgian citizens and represents the constitutionally guaranteed principle binding all current and future governments in the fulfillment of the following duties:

Inviolability of human rights by the state;

Defense against human rights violations by others;

Creation of a system that will allow persons to realize their rights in practice; and

Adequately informing of the population on their human rights.

We fully acknowledge that this is a never-ending process and requires continuous effort. As in every society, we in Georgia have our own challenges. However, we are determined to overcome them by consistent and effective implementation of our international and national commitments.

We look forward to exchanging views with other participating States and Civil Society and are ready to share best practices across the OSCE.

Thank you Mr. Chairperson.