

**Statement by the Delegation of Georgia at the  
2008 Annual Security Review Conference**  
Opening Session  
(Vienna, 1 July 2008)

Mr. Chairman,

- The major security concerns of my country are linked to the unresolved conflicts in Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia.
- It is already more than 15 years that we have been facing two dreadful territorial conflicts that place at permanent risk not only regional stability, but also raise serious concerns with respect to European security.
- Regrettably, the situation on the ground is continuously deteriorating, especially during the last months and especially in Abkhazia, Georgia, even though the state of affairs in the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia is too far from calmness as well.
- As we can see now, main reasons for that are outdated and inefficient formats of the peace process underway in the both regions of Georgia.
- As a matter of fact, the formats in question have failed to provide solid ground for the implementation of any goal inherent with conflict resolution. We guess it is quite obvious now for all, or almost all OSCE Participant States.
- Together with the whole international community, Georgia irrevocably lost confidence in the current negotiation and peacekeeping formats. Primarily, this happened due to the fact that “the main facilitator” of the peace process, along with its so-called “peacekeepers”, reveals itself to be a party to the conflict, and is pursuing goals quite different from the peaceful resolution of the conflicts.
- One of these very goals is apparently the annexation of the sovereign territories of Georgia, which is currently being implemented, under various pretexts, but quite overtly.
- We have to take into account a number of aggressive and provocative actions against my country, be it either unlawful deployment of additional military forces into the conflict regions or serious incidents of a military nature, moreover, acts of aggression, such as 6 August 2007 Tsitelubani missile attack, close to the conflict zone in the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia and 20 April 2008 incident with the Georgian UAV downed in Abkhazia, Georgia.

Mr. Chairman,

- The Georgian Delegation will have an opportunity to address the issues related to conflict resolution in more detail at the appropriate working sessions of this Conference. So, without jeopardising the timetable, allow me to briefly outline our vision on possible ways of addressing the current situation.

- First of all, we believe that the OSCE, as well as the United Nations and the European Union could further and significantly improve their role in the conflict resolution processes throughout the whole OSCE area.
- For Georgia, effective peacekeeping and negotiation formats supportive to the direct, result-oriented, systematic and structured dialogue between the sides in the conflict is the key for eventually breaking this vicious circle, which has existed for more than 15 years.
- Elaborating effective negotiation and peacekeeping formats, which would be consistent with the current situation and be conducive to the final resolution of the conflicts, is the primary issue where the OSCE, the UN and the EU and other international organisations can and should not only increase their role, but take well thought-out, comprehensive and decisive actions.
- We believe that enhancing the role of the EU in Abkhazia, Georgia, increased cooperation between the EU and the UN would clearly contribute to all aspects of the peace process there. Complementing activities of each other, these two major international actors have good potential for effectively contributing to the final and timely conflict resolution, *inter alia*, through involving the EU in restructured peacekeeping and negotiation formats.
- In Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia, it is the OSCE's role that should be reinforced. As you may be aware, we offered "2+2+2" format that envisages the grouping of Russia and Georgia, Provisional Administration and the *de facto* Tskhinvali regime, the OSCE and the EU. We see this format as a way to adequately respond to the existing reality and give a fresh impulse to the peaceful settlement process in the region.
- The failure to address the grave human consequences of the conflicts is one of the main shortcomings of the formats in place.
- It is necessary to drastically strengthen efforts aimed at facilitating safe and dignified return of all IDPs and refugees to their original places of residence, as indicated in a number of the UNSC resolutions and the UN GA resolution on status of IDPs and refugees from Abkhazia, Georgia.

Mr. Chairman,

- We take this opportunity to once again express our gratitude to the OSCE, and the Participating States involved, for carrying out of the OSCE-led Economic Rehabilitation Programme in the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia. We reiterate our commitment to further contribute to its successful implementation.
- At the same time, we stress the urgent necessity of increased efforts at this direction also with regard to Abkhazia, Georgia. In Georgia, we have a clear understanding of the need to efficiently address this issue; that is why in the peace proposals, which has been offered by the President of Georgia and endorsed by international community, contains important elements of economic rehabilitation, including establishment of a free economic zone in Abkhazia, Georgia.

- We cannot but mention the main source of instability in the conflict zones throughout the world – increased militarization and illegal inflow of weaponry and other military equipment. Quite often this malevolent practice of feeding into tensions is conducted by the third parties. For Georgia, this is also the case. Just recently, on March 6, the Russian Federation withdrew from a 1996 CIS decision imposing restrictions with regards to Abkhazia, Georgia – the document which primarily prohibits military assistance and weapons transfers – thus completely freeing the way to further military build-up of the separatist regime.
- Perhaps it is time for the OSCE to take serious efforts to counter this tendency. Georgia would actively engage in the discussions on this matter within the OSCE, or any other international organisation, or in the bilateral framework.
- As a first step towards the progress in this direction we consider reaching a common understanding among all the OSCE Participant States on the inadmissibility of providing military equipment, arms, ammunition or military training to the separatist regimes. Such an understanding could be formalised in an appropriate OSCE document, by which the States Parties would commit themselves against any kind of military contacts with separatist regimes in the conflict regions.

Mr. Chairman,

- The Georgian side considers the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe as a cornerstone of the European security architecture and is seriously concerned with the decision of the Russian Federation to suspend its participation in the Treaty. Like the vast majority of the CFE community, Georgia is greatly interested in timely entering into force of the Adapted CFE Treaty. Though, it is well known, that only full implementation of all Istanbul Commitments, including the closure of the Russian military base in Gudauta, is an indispensable precondition for the ratification of the adapted CFE Treaty.

Mr. Chairman,

- Let me join other colleagues to stand ready for fruitful cooperation with the OSCE and wish to Finnish Chairmanship every success in leading the organisation towards the Helsinki Ministerial Council Meeting.

Thank you.