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DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA
ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE

PC.DEL/13/18
12 January 2018

ENGLISH only

Statement

**In Response to the Address of H.E. Angelino Alfano,
OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Italy**

**as delivered by Ambassador Kirakossian, Permanent Representative of Armenia
at the 1171st Special Meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council
January 11, 2018**

Mr. Chairperson,

We warmly welcome H.E. Angelino Alfano, Chairman-in-Office and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Italy to the Permanent Council and thank him for the comprehensive and coherent address.

Mr. Minister,

At the outset, we would like to thank Italy for its strong commitment to multilateralism and resolve to lead our Organization in open, transparent and inclusive manner.

We are pleased to note that in seeking “Dialogue, Ownership and Responsibility” the Italian Chairmanship will be guided by forward looking approach taking up not grievances but inspiration from the past.

Difficult security issues have always been high on and even dominated the OSCE agenda and this is true today as never before. However, conflict perceptions cannot be point of departure for multilateral cooperation. The OSCE participating states should not impede but assist each other in implementing their joint commitments by strengthening, and not weakening OSCE presence as it happened in the case of the closure of the OSCE Yerevan Office.

Despite this serious setback, Armenia looks forward to renewed cooperation with the OSCE Chairmanship, participating states and executive structures. We hope that “Armenia cooperation program” will become instrumental this year and we count on support of the Chairmanship in this regard.

Mr. Minister,

We took a positive note of the intention of the incoming Chairmanship to put protracted conflict high on its agenda.

We strongly maintain that protracted conflicts are not identical and cannot be approached by identical set of principles of settlement while they are addressed in

different agreed formats. In this regard, we appreciate the approach of the Chairmanship to address protracted conflicts through supporting agreed formats.

Armenia strongly supports the efforts of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs aimed at resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict based on three principles of non-use of force or threat of the use of force, equal rights and self-determination of peoples and territorial integrity, and the statements delivered on behalf of the Presidents of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairing countries.

Armenia welcomes the intention of the incoming Chairmanship to support the efforts of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs. Armenia will support concerted efforts to strengthen the OSCE presence on the ground in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict area aimed at reducing tensions along the Line of Contact.

The necessity of such measures has been agreed at Geneva Summit last year while the measures themselves had already been identified in the statements made at the Vienna and St. Petersburg Summits and they include creation of an OSCE investigative mechanism and PRCiO expansion.

We would like to recall that OSCE Chairmanships along with OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs proposed very essential confidence and security building measures such as withdrawal of snipers. Given the nature of last ceasefire violations and claimed casualties on the Line of Contact which occurred already this year, this proposal continues to remain very pertinent.

Armenia values the support of the Chairmanship to its Personal Representative whose Office remains critical in implementing already existing and envisaged confidence and security measures in the NK conflict area.

The impartiality and neutrality is the key of successful performance of any conflict related mandate and in this regard, we would highly appreciate efforts of the Italian Chairmanship to ensure balanced work and composition of the HLPG.

Mr. Minister,

We took note of the strong emphasis that the Italian Chairmanship puts on Structured Dialogue. The dialogue on Arms Control regime along with military transparency and predictability is at the heart of the OSCE, and we will continue to be an active part of the process in line with the tasking of the Hamburg Ministerial Council.

We share importance that the Italian Chairmanship attaches to the Human Dimension. We firmly believe that Human Dimension in its entirety remains an important platform for inclusive dialogue and any attempt to undermine the inclusive nature of this dialogue will not be supported by my delegation. The voice of people residing in the conflict areas should be heard.

OSCE is well positioned to prevent grave and massive human rights violations, particularly those, which are criminalized under universal international instruments. This year, the international community will mark the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of

the Crime of Genocide. In our view, OSCE as a regional organization should be a part of this important commemoration and we stand ready to contribute towards that end.

As far as Mediterranean dimension is concerned, we stand ready to bring our own perspective, which is shaped also by experience of the Armenian communities throughout the Mediterranean and Middle East region in future deliberations organized by the Italian Chairmanship in this regard.

In conclusion, we would like to thank the outgoing Austrian Chairmanship and to wish all success to you, Mr. Minister, to the Chairman of the Permanent Council Ambassador Azzoni and to the Italian able and competent team.

Thank you.