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

Statement of the Delegation of Armenia
At the High level Conference on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination
Fifth Session: The role of human rights youth education in promoting mutual
understanding and respect for diversity in accordance with the existing OSCE
commitments
Tirana, May 22, 2013

Madam Moderator,

Human rights education and particularly youth education have been always considered as an important remedy to overcome the current challenges through changing perceptions and providing vision that can be shared by all. Along side with other international organizations the OSCE paid particular attention to the human rights education mainstreamed in the realm of tolerance and non-discrimination through commitments on the remembrance and education on crimes against humanity and genocide as it is stipulated in the Ljubljana MC decision 10/05.

We agree that education and remembrance of ultimate crimes of racism and discrimination are essential in safeguarding future generations from massive and grave human rights violation. We share our own duty of memory with national minorities of Armenia such as Jewish and Assyrian communities whose enormous losses and victims are commemorated through erecting remembrance monuments. Promoting mutual understanding and respect among youth is an important guarantee of non-recurrence of the tragic past. However, this process cannot be achieved alone by human rights education. This process requires more committed efforts of rapprochement and reconciliation.

We welcome the efforts to turn the OSCE into a platform of reconciliation which was manifested by the very successful event on reconciliation last year. In the Ministerial Declaration on the Sixty-Fifth Anniversary of the end of World War 2 adopted in Athens in 2009 we have already an important reference to reconciliation in the context of overcoming tragic legacies and promoting human rights.

It is true that unlike rapprochement of political leaders reconciliation of societies is a much longer journey and it requires sustained and systematic efforts. But it is also true that such efforts at the societal level can yield to results if there is a conducive political will. Unfortunately, we see that calls of reconciliation coming within society can be met by overt enmity of the political leadership. The ostracizing of the Azerbaijani eminent writer Akram Aylisli is a good case in point. His book Stone dreams which was designed as a call for reconciliation with the immediate neighbor has been labeled as an offence by the highest authorities of that country and the author was deprived of all his awards and pension.

Unfortunately, in some OSCE participating states laws of defamation of state and identity still hinder efforts of reconciliation since they curtail the right to know the truth. In conclusion, we would recommend mainstreaming the reconciliation issue into a possible draft decision on the tolerance and discrimination.

Thank you.