

**A D D R E S S**

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Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the  
Organization for Democracy and Economic Development –**

**GUAM**

**at the 15<sup>th</sup> meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council**

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Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to start my address at this high forum in the capacity of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Organization for Democracy and Economic Development – GUAM.

At the outset I would like to express on behalf of the GUAM Member States our sincere condolences to the Government and people of Turkey with regard to the yesterday's tragic airplane incident that took live of civilians.

Dear colleagues,

I sincerely join previous speakers in expressing our appreciation to H.E. Minister Miguel Ángel Moratinos for the activities carried out by the Spanish Chairmanship under his leadership during 2007. Today in Madrid we are also glad to welcome our distinguished colleague from Finland, H.E. Minister Ilkka Kanerva, as the incoming Chairman-in-Office. We wish the Finnish team every success in carrying out the responsibilities of the OSCE Chairmanship next year.

Ladies and gentlemen,

By a symbolic coincidence Azerbaijan is chairing GUAM in the year of its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Ten years ago our countries came together driven by the shared approaches to solving common problems and established GUAM as a voluntary association of like-minded states, whose efforts are first and foremost focused on creating favourable conditions for prosperity and sustainable development of our nations in all areas.

Prosperity and development are driven by economic progress. Our intensive economic cooperation has already resulted in creation of the GUAM Free Trade Zone and rapid increase of commercial turnover among the Member States. GUAM also plays an important role in energy security and diversification, which is not confined exclusively to production and export of mineral resources, and is related to research and development of alternative and renewable sources.

Territories of the GUAM countries constitute a natural transport corridor between Europe and Asia through the South Caucasus, the Caspian and the Black Sea area. We are working actively to develop this corridor into an efficient component of international transport system, with fewer barriers and more cost-savings for movement of passengers and shipping of cargo. This way GUAM provides an

important constructive contribution to regional development and globalization in parallel.

Prosperity and development are based on security, and the transport corridors can not function properly if they are efficient from an economic point of view only. With this in mind the GUAM Member States join their efforts and pool their resources in the common fight against terrorism, organized crime, illicit trafficking in drugs, weapons and human beings. Acting on the good basis of the GUAM agreements and fully exploiting capabilities of the GUAM working bodies our law enforcement agencies, custom and border services exchange operational information in real-time mode, conduct joint trainings and define other ways to improve efficiency. Consequently GUAM contributes actively to the expansion of the area of security and stability in Eurasia through elimination of risks and challenges. Development of European and Asian extensions of GUAM plays a major role in this process.

Mr. Chairman,

Regrettably, the process of development of the GUAM states in many ways is still jeopardized by the unresolved conflicts in the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan, Abkhazia and Tskhinvali/South Ossetia regions of Georgia, and the Transnistrian region of Moldova. Taken out of the control of legitimate central authorities, heavily militarized, occupied by foreign troops and separatist forces these regions serve as hotbeds for terrorism, organized crime and illegal economic activities.

The GUAM states are firmly convinced that such negative phenomena as armed separatism, extreme nationalism, occupation, ethnic cleansing and disintegration have no right to exist in modern world, including the OSCE area. In this connection we elaborated the joint GUAM position on the conflict settlement issue, which is based on respect for territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, Georgia and Moldova, return of the refugees and internally displaced population to their homes and granting the self-governance to the entire population of the conflict-affected territories. This joint position is based on the relevant norms and principles of international law, UN Security Council resolutions and OSCE decisions.

We believe that this position represents the best way to achieve the soonest peaceful resolution of the conflicts in question and has no viable alternatives. We call upon the OSCE community to support this position of GUAM and, by doing so, to contribute to restoration of gravely violated principles and values of the OSCE.

GUAM commends the contribution of the EU Border Assistance Mission in providing greater transparency, order and stability on the Moldovan-Ukrainian border. We welcome the recent Moldovan proposals in the sphere of social-economic rehabilitation, confidence and security building measures, in particular those related to gradual demilitarization and call on the Transnistrian authorities to engage in a constructive manner in this matter. It is important for all involved actors to engage actively in the discussions on the transformation of the current peacekeeping operation into a multinational civilian mission under the OSCE mandate.

Mr. Chairman,

GUAM is open for constructive cooperation with other states and international organizations that share principles and values of GUAM. Efficiently using the “GUAM +” format we have been successfully developing mutually beneficial partnership links with Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, United States and some other countries. We are grateful to our partners for their valuable contributions and assistance to various programmes and projects carried out in the GUAM framework. We welcome the initiative to establish a Group of Friends of GUAM in the European Union and look forward to starting the practical work in this regard.

I would like to reaffirm the support of the GUAM Member States to the bid of Kazakhstan to assume the OSCE Chairmanship. We are convinced that our Kazakhstani colleagues will be able to perform the responsibilities of the Chairmanship in a professional and fair manner, promoting the OSCE principles and values.

Mr. Chairman,

Now I will continue my statement in the national capacity.

Dear colleagues,

I would like to brief you about the current state of affairs regarding the conflict in and around the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan. With a deep regret and concern I have to state that after three years of intensive talks at the level of Presidents and Foreign Ministers we are facing attempt by Armenia to camouflage its aggression and mask occupation of territories of Azerbaijan and barbaric practice of ethnic cleansing

against Azerbaijani population with baseless declarations on self-determination and chauvinist claims of ethnic incompatibility.

More of that, the Armenian leadership starts using extremely dangerous attempts to address the issue through the religious Christian-Muslim aspect.

Behind this veil of deception, which is quite obvious despite the intent of its designers, Armenia tries to intensify illegal exploitation of the natural resources of Azerbaijan, transfer Armenian settlers to the occupied territories and accumulate large stockpiles of weapons and munitions there, which far exceed all possible quotas. This activity is not helpful to the negotiations. On the contrary, it pursues an evident goal of imposing on Azerbaijan a *fait accompli*-based solution.

This policy is inevitably doomed to failure since Azerbaijan will never ever accept a loss of a single inch of its territory. With this in mind Armenian side must renounce these hopeless attempts and instead to negotiate in good faith so we can achieve the soonest peaceful settlement of this conflict to the mutual benefit of our nations, which are destined to live side by side.

In our efforts towards durable peace we must use concept of peace and focus on establishing proper environment conditions in which the Armenian and Azerbaijani communities of the Nagorno-Karabakh region will be able to engage directly, equally and fully in the process of discussion of a relevant self-rule within the Republic of Azerbaijan. It is quite obvious that this process, based on the principles of the rule of law, democracy and human rights, cannot be launched while the Armenian occupying forces remain on the Azerbaijani soil and the expelled Azerbaijani population is not able to return to their homes in Nagorno-Karabakh and other occupied regions. My nation will spare no efforts to end the continued occupation by Armenia of the territories of Azerbaijan for the sake of prosperous and stable region of South Caucasus.

Thank you.