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Human Dimension Implementation Meeting

Working Session 2, The International Covenants on Human Rights and their importance for the OSCE human dimension

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As delivered by

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Mr. Moderator,

I would like to thank our distinguished panelists for framing our discussions here.

The International Covenants on human rights: ICCPR and ICESCR have served as normative basis of the modern international system of human rights. OSCE commitments also identify the twin Covenants on human rights as core foundation of human dimension of security. 50 years anniversary is a good occasion to assess adherence to the international obligations emanating from the twin Covenants which unlike OSCE commitments have legally binding nature.

Article one in both Covenants is identical. It establishes and I quote “All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development”.

Furthermore the same article contains an obligation of its state parties of promoting the realization of the right of self-determination, and respecting that right, in conformity with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations.

Apparently, the International Covenants along with the UN Charter served as main points of reference in mainstreaming right of self-determination in the Helsinki Final Act as one of the important principle of this organization. 1989 Vienna document further builds on this principle and confirms that all peoples always have the right, in full freedom, to determine, when and as they wish, their internal and external political status, without external interference, and to pursue as they wish their political, economic, social and cultural development.

Unfortunately not all participating states have complied with both international obligations and OSCE commitments in respecting the right of self-determination. There have been cases of use of force against the realization of the right of self-determination of peoples which led to mass and grave human rights violations and eventually to violent and protracted conflicts and this has also been a case for Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Another form of violation of this collective human right is an attempt to deprive people of all means of existence including through impeding realization of their all human rights including right to life, economic and cultural rights, right to vote and so forth. This collective punishment is undertaken by consistent efforts of isolation of people from the international community including international organization promoting human rights.

Human rights of people residing in conflict areas should be upheld regardless of the status of their territory, something which is openly recognized in the other important human rights instrument such as Universal Declaration of Human rights.

We see important points of convergence between the relevant bodies and institutions of the UN and OSCE in engaging with the people residing in the conflict areas. Ensuring the access of international human rights machinery is essential and stems from the very nature of the UN which is eloquently communicated in its recent mottos: all human rights for all and no one left behind.

We hope that the OSCE with its conflict related mandates and filed missions can strongly cooperate with the UN in this regard.

In conclusion, we would like to submit a recommendation.

We recommend to all participating states who are state party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political rights to uphold their international obligation on promoting and respecting the right of self-determination.

Thank you