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STATEMENT
by the Republic of Moldova in response to the report
of the Head of the OSCE Mission in Moldova
Ambassador Michael Scanlan
(1071st Permanent Council, October 15, 2015)

Mr. Chairman,

We join the previous delegations in warmly welcoming Ambassador Michael Scanlan at the Permanent Council and thank him for the comprehensive report which provides a good opportunity to assess the current state of affairs in the Transnistrian conflict settlement process.

Let me start with a general remark and to note that the settlement process has been passing through different dynamics this year. As it was pointed in the report the situation on the ground continues to be influenced by both internal and external factors. Nevertheless, the Moldovan Government remains committed to pursue an active and constructive approach in order to address the most pressing issues on the agenda and to advance the resolution of the Transnistrian conflict. A particular emphasize has been set, lately, on strengthening internal consultations among the governmental institutions. In August this year the Inter-ministerial Commission on reintegration, under the leadership of the Prime-minister, has resumed its activity that aims to increase the coordination in promoting national policies on reintegration.

Mr. Chairman,

We share the main concerns expressed today with the lack of progress in resuming discussions in the 5+2 format that is suspended for than more than a year. Regretfully, the Transnistrian side continues to set artificial preconditions in order to re-launch official talks in the 5+2 format. The many sensitive issues on the agenda should not block the activity of the negotiation format that is specifically designed to address concerns of the sides and to search compromise solutions. The continuing impasse in the 5+2 talks is not conducive to the overall settlement of the Transnistrian conflict. In our view, international stakeholders can play a prominent role in facilitating the resumption of the official talks.

In this context, we are looking forward to the upcoming Bavaria conference on the confidence building measures which will take place at the end of October. For many years this conference has been serving as the valuable platform to address through an informal but structured and intense dialogue the relevant issues between Chisinau and Tiraspol in various fields such as economy, education, environment and others. Against the backdrop of

stagnation in the negotiation process, such venue like Bavaria conference is even more relevant and we are grateful to German colleagues and the OSCE Mission for preparing this important event.

As a more general direction, our efforts should aim at initiating talks on the comprehensive political resolution of the conflict that would set an appropriate environment for practical solutions in economic, social, security and legal areas. A viable solution can be achieved only by political means based on the respect of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova with the special status of the Transnistrian region within the reintegrated country.

While remaining concern with the state of affairs in the 5+2, we welcome the increased dynamic of the contacts on the level of the political representatives from Chisinau and Tiraspol. We are grateful to the OSCE Mission in Moldova and in particular to Ambassador Scanlan for facilitating the dialogue in the 1+1 format and between the working groups on confidence and security building measures. In the framework of CBMs, the OSCE Mission has provided valuable support in implementing different projects, including on eliminating pesticides and radioactive sources from the Transnistrian region.

The economic situation has become an important factor within the settlement process. Our task is clear – economy should not be dividing us. Economy is a great element of liaison between divided communities and we should build on this principle. Therefore, one of our priorities is to make sure that the changing regional economic realities and new trade regimes are serving as new opportunities and not as new challenges. There should be less politics and more pragmatism in the dialogue on economic issues. We are committed to finding a functional formula that would allow Transnistria to benefit from external trade preferences, while Tiraspol will have to respect international rules and requirements in this field.

On security issues, the situation remains calm but we need to continue monitoring the developments in the Security Zone. There is a clear understanding in Chisinau on the need to prevent any attempts aimed at destabilizing the situation on the ground. We hope that the ongoing discussions led by representatives of the OSCE Conflict Prevention Center will result in solutions that ensure unhindered access of the OSCE Mission in the Transnistrian region.

Since the last report in May this year, we have continued to witness military exercises carried out by the armed forces of the Russian Federation that are a matter of serious concern for my country. We continue to stress the need to finalize, without any preconditions, the withdrawal of the Russian military forces and remaining ammunitions stockpiles from Cobasna in accordance with the existing international commitments and the Moldovan Constitution. In the same vein, we believe that the current peacekeeping arrangement in the Transnistrian region has fulfilled its mandate and needs to be adjusted to the real needs on the ground. It is high time to initiate open and productive discussions, with all involved stakeholders, on the transformation of the existing peacekeeping operation into a multinational civilian mission under the relevant international mandate.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me turn briefly to the issue of Gagauzia. In particular, we would like to note the new positive dynamic in the dialogue between Chisinau and Comrat. The decision on launching the activity of the Working Group on interaction between the Parliament and the People's Assembly from Comrat is currently on the agenda of the Parliament and might be adopted during the fall session until the end of November. We are, also, thankful to the OSCE Mission in Moldova as well as the Office of HCNM for the assistance and support in developing the dialogue with the Gagauzian Autonomy.

The social integration of the national minorities remains one of the priorities of the Moldovan Government. We appreciate the valuable contribution of the HCNM in developing the Strategy on the Integration of the National Minorities. The process of the consultations on the draft Strategy with the responsible public institutions is close to be finalized. Equally, we need to continue working on reaching a sustainable solution for the normal functioning of the Latin script schools administered by the Moldovan authorities in the Transnistrian region.

The support and expertise provided by the OSCE Mission to Moldovan authorities in matters of human rights and law enforcement is highly appreciated. We appreciate the important contribution of the OSCE institutions towards improving the media regulatory framework as well as promoting diversity of opinions throughout the country. We also value the steadfast assistance of the OSCE Mission to Moldova on implementing policies on fighting trafficking in human beings.

Finally, let me thank once again Ambassador Scanlan for being with us today and sharing his ideas. We are looking forward to continuing our good cooperation and wish him and his able team in Chisinau every success in their endeavors.

Thank you.