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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT

**on COVID-19 and its impact on the security situation in the OSCE region delivered
by the Delegation of Armenia at the 945th Plenary Meeting of the Forum for Security
Co-operation
May 6, 2020**

Mr. Chairman,

The Armenian delegation thanks the OSCE Secretary General Thomas Greminger for his thought-provoking address. We also express our appreciation to the Ukrainian FSC Chairmanship for commencing the Security Dialogues with the most challenging topic that is in the headlines of all news agencies in the world for the last several months.

The topic of today's Security Dialogue is not a usual one and we hope that it will not become as such, yet at this point in time it is extremely relevant taking into account the threat the COVID-19 poses to all aspects of our lives.

As we mentioned during the opening session, the COVID-19 pandemic, which does not recognize boundaries, borders, line of contacts, conflicts or crisis, have challenged the usual working methods of the OSCE respective mechanisms, with a potential of long term effects and security implications. This pandemic showed that we should build strong solidarity, and reach out to the people on the ground, especially in conflict affected areas, in a status-neutral manner, regardless of political or other circumstances.

The UN Secretary-General António Guterres's "Appeal for Global Ceasefire" in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic is quite noteworthy in this regard. Underlying the importance of putting armed conflicts on lockdown and focusing on the true fight of our lives, the UN Secretary-General calls to open precious window for diplomacy. In this context, it is important to make use of the OSCE existing platforms and the rich politico-military toolbox elaborated within the past thirty years. The existing confidence and security building measures have a potential to play a significant role in this regard, despite the fact that all on spot verification activities have been cancelled or postponed. We believe that the implementation of existing CSBMs in their letter and spirit will ensure the necessary degree of transparency and the extremely fragile trust among the participating States.

Armenia was among the first countries that supported the appeal for global ceasefire and as it was mentioned by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia in his letter addressed to the UN Secretary General: "Confidence building measures aimed at preventing, mitigating and managing disasters should be viewed as an opportunity in these challenging times for all people without exception, including parties to the conflict".

Nevertheless, it is with deep concern that we still witness the blatant violations of the established ceasefire resulting in casualties among civilians, including children. Though this happened in time when monitoring mechanisms cannot function properly, however it should not remain unnoticed and should be condemned in the strongest terms. In such cases, hesitation may have lamentable outcomes.

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to conclude, by reaffirming Armenia's strong support to global solidarity in face of the pandemic, noting that the Government of Armenia is committed to international cooperation to help defeat the pandemic and minimize its negative socio-economic, political, as well as security impacts.

Thank you.