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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
First Session: Comprehensive approach to combating intolerance and discrimination
Tirana, May 21, 2013

Mr. Chairman,

First of all, we would like to express our gratitude to the Albanian authorities for hosting high-level conference on tolerance and non-discrimination and excellent arrangements made to that end.

Tolerance and non-discrimination has been always at the core of the OSCE human dimension. It is an issue which truly brought together participating states in their sincere efforts to combat manifestation of intolerance and discrimination.

The OSCE is an important player in the family of international organizations addressing the right to be non-discriminated. Throughout the OSCE commitments it occupies an important niche of addressing intolerance and discrimination related issues which have clear security implications.

In this regard, we would like to highlight the avenues where the OSCE plays a significant role and can further contribute.

Preventing identity based conflicts by addressing institutionalized discrimination is certainly an OSCE business which is pursued by the OSCE Institutions such as the High Commissioner for National Minorities. However, we see a need for more holistic approach in order to define the role of the OSCE in the prevention of mass atrocities such as crime against humanity and genocide.

Genocide is an ultimate crime of racism and discrimination and a regional security organization can closely cooperate with the United Nations and its relevant actors in preventing massive and grave violations that may lead to genocide.

It should be recalled here that the recent resolution on Genocide Prevention of UN Human Rights Council adopted on March 18, 2013 invites the regional organizations to cooperate closely with the UN in order to foster principles enshrined in the Convention of Punishment and Prevention of the Crime of Genocide as well as to exchange good practices among them.

The OSCE has already certain expertise in the issues related to the Genocide prevention such as education and remembrance and this expertise and commitments can be further strengthened particularly at the realm of reconciliation.

The persistent patterns of discrimination towards certain ethnicities, clear efforts of dehumanizing them, denying their freedom of movement purely on discriminatory ground are taking deep roots in some participating states. These violations can constitute early warning signs and should be clearly addressed through adopting new commitments.

Unfortunately, despite very strong commitments made by all participating states hate crimes still remain a significant issue and some of them justified and glorified at the highest political level have imposed serious security challenges in certain regions.

In conclusion, we would like to reiterate the genuine interest of Armenia to register strong progress in addressing tolerance and non-discrimination issues through inclusive cooperation with all participating states.

Thank you.