

PC.DEL/1548/15
13 November 2015

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1076th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

12 November 2015

In response to the report by the Co-Chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group

Mr. Chairperson,

We are pleased to welcome to this meeting of the Permanent Council the Co-Chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group, Ambassadors Pierre Andrieu, Igor Popov and James Warlick, and also the Personal Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office on the Conflict Dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference, Ambassador Andrzej Kasprzyk, and the Head of the High-Level Planning Group, Colonel Markus Widmer, and share the opinions stated by our colleagues on the situation in the region.

Settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict remains one of Russia's key foreign policy priorities. As one of the three Co-Chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group, recognized by the United Nations Security Council as a joint mediator, we shall continue, in close co-operation with the United States of America and France, to help the parties to achieve a mutually acceptable consensus-based framework for resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh problem without the use of force.

We remain of the opinion that the keys to settlement are to be found in Baku and Yerevan. It goes without saying that achievement of a peaceful settlement of the conflict demands patience from all parties involved and the willingness to engage in mutually respectful dialogue. Russia is willing to support the approach to resolving the problem established by the parties concerned.

We note the contribution by the Co-Chairmen of the Minsk Group to facilitating direct negotiations by the parties and to fostering confidence- and security-building measures in the region. We trust that the meeting of the Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan planned before the end of this year will be productive and stimulate peaceful dialogue.

Unfortunately, the resumption of talks is being made difficult by the exacerbation of the situation in the conflict region and the increase in the number of victims, including civilians. Information about the use of heavy weapons – mortars, artillery and rocket systems – is particularly worrying. This escalation is unacceptable in our opinion. We call on the

parties to refrain from using or threatening to use force and to demonstrate the political will needed to achieve a mutually acceptable settlement at the negotiating table.

A reduction in tension and the prevention of violations of the ceasefire regime would help to ensure practical realization of the agreements reached over the years by the Co-Chairmen on the joint investigation of incidents on the line of contact. It is also important in our opinion to implement already agreed confidence-building measures between the conflicting parties and to elaborate new ones.

We appreciate the work of the Personal Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office on the Nagorno-Karabakh settlement, Mr. Kasprzyk, and his team, in particular their monitoring of the ceasefire regime on the line of contact and the Armenia-Azerbaijan border. The distinguished ambassador has already held this position for 19 years and is effectively the guardian today of the institutional memory. We support the continuation of the useful work by the High-Level Planning Group in elaborating plans for the deployment of a peacekeeping operation in the future in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone.

In conclusion, I should like once again to state that negotiation is the only way to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh problem. We call on the parties to pursue constructive dialogue in the name of peace, stability and progress in the region.

We thank the distinguished ambassadors and Mr. Widmer for their great contribution to advancing the peaceful settlement of the conflict.

Thank you for your attention.