

Thank you, Mr Chair.

I wish to make a statement on behalf of the three countries co-chairing the Minsk Group, the Russian Federation, United States and France.

The Minsk Group is the only mediation format that has been accepted by the sides and has the full confidence of all OSCE participating States. The Minsk Group Co-chairs contribute to stabilizing the security situation by keeping regular contacts with the sides and through close cooperation with the personal representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office who monitors on a daily basis the situation on the ground, - in the context of regular and often deadly ceasefire violations - along the line of contact as well as along the international border between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

According to its mandate, which is inter alia “to conduct negotiations with the Parties to obtain conclusion of an agreement on the cessation of the armed conflict”, the Minsk Group Co-chairs aim at promoting, through the Madrid principles, a balanced approach to the settlement of the conflict, based in particular on the conciliation of the principles of self-determination, territorial integrity and non-use of force. It is not the inefficiency of the mediation process conducted by the Co-chairs that is to blame for the serious lack of progress in the negotiations, but the lack of political will of the parties to reach a peaceful settlement.

The Co-chairs are also working on the endorsement by the parties of confidence building measures, such as the creation of a prevention and investigation mechanism of the ceasefire violations along the line of contact, and dialogue between the communities of Nagorno-Karabakh. Their action also focuses on the humanitarian measure of exchanging data on the missing persons from the conflict, agreed at the Paris summit of 27 October 2014 and implemented by the ICRC.

The Co-Chairs will continue to brief international and regional organizations interested in supporting the Minsk Group process. They will continue their engagement to work closely with the sides in order to reach a peaceful and sustainable settlement of the conflict.