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Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY KELIN,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

16 February 2012

Mr. Chairperson,

We should like to make the following comments on the statement by the delegation of Georgia.

I should like to recall that the Russian military base is located in the Republic of South Ossetia in accordance with the bilateral agreement concluded between the Russian Federation and the newly independent Republic of South Ossetia in 2010 and ratified by the parties in 2011. The tasks of the base are strictly defensive, namely the protection of the security and the sovereignty of the Russian Federation and the Republic of South Ossetia.

As we have stated on several occasions, South Ossetia has all the necessary attributes of a State, including the division of executive, legislative and judicial authority. This also implies the possibility of protecting its territory, all the more so as it has been the object of aggression at least three times in recent years.

In this connection, I should like to refer to the statement by the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of South Ossetia indicating that the first company made up of citizens of South Ossetia will be formed by 1 April, after which it will set about military training. In total around 500 South Ossetian subjects will be performing military service. Moreover, the manning level of the new unit will be the same as that of the South Ossetian peacekeeping contingent until August 2008.

As for the incidents mentioned by the Georgian delegation that are alleged to have taken place, there exist corresponding Incident Prevention and Response Mechanisms (IPRMs) as set up in the Geneva Discussions to consider them. It remains to be said that these questions were not brought up by Georgia during the meetings of the two IPRMs that took place literally the other day.

Thank you for your attention.