

Canadian Delegation to the
Organization for Security & Cooperation
in Europe



Délégation du Canada auprès de
l'Organisation pour la sécurité et la coopération
en Europe

**DELEGATION OF CANADA TO THE OSCE
STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE FOREIGN MINISTER OF GEORGIA,
H.E. GELA BEZHUASHVILI
592ND MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL
FEBRUARY 9, 2006**

Canada joins other participating States in warmly welcoming the Foreign Minister of Georgia, H.E. Gela Bezhuashvili, on the occasion of his first visit to the Permanent Council. We appreciate the opportunity to hear directly from the Foreign Minister on the many developments and challenges facing Georgia.

Mr. Chairman, Canada is concerned that the security situation remains tenuous in both South Ossetia and Abkhazia. We recall that, as recently as October of last year, Georgian Prime Minister Zurab Noghaideli appeared here in the Permanent Council to present a plan to reach a settlement in the conflict in South Ossetia. We welcomed this initiative as Canada supports such constructive efforts at peaceful negotiation. We continue to believe that a political settlement that respects Georgia's territorial integrity is possible as long as all parties work together in a collaborative manner.

Canada is concerned that unilateral actions or statements may prove detrimental to the goal of reaching a lasting agreement. It is important that all sides refrain from any action or comment that may be considered provocative.

In the interest of regional stability and security, Canada stresses once again the importance of implementing existing demilitarisation agreements. We call upon all parties to make meaningful progress in this regard.

In this context, Canada would also like to recall the Ljubljana Ministerial Council Statement on Georgia where our Ministers supported an increased role for the OSCE in the conflict resolution process and stressed our firm commitment to support the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia.

Canada appreciates the good relationship the Georgian Government has with the OSCE and the extensive programming of our Organisation in Georgia. This continuing work is crucial for entrenching governance reforms that promote human rights and the rule of law, curb corruption, and build effective and democratic political and economic institutions.

Foreign Minister Bezhuashvili also touched on energy security in his address. Canada recognises this as an issue of growing importance that requires regional and international cooperation. We consider that the OSCE can also play a positive role in facilitating dialogue on this cross-dimensional issue.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.