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**STATEMENT
BY THE DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN**

**971th meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council
14 November 2013**

*in response to the co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group and personal representative of the
Chairperson-in-Office on the Conflict Dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference*

Mr. Chairperson,

I join the previous speakers in welcoming co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group and Ambassador Kasprzyk. Our Delegation took note of their respective statements and wishes to make the following observations.

We thank the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen and Ambassador Kasprzyk for their efforts to arrange a meeting between the Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan next week in Vienna. As election cycles are over in both countries, we hope that the meeting could register progress in the process of settlement of the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict that would allow moving beyond the unacceptable status quo established in the conflict zone.

Delegations around the table are well aware about the position of Azerbaijan, which is based on four resolutions of the United Nations Security Council, guiding principles of the Helsinki Final Act and relevant OSCE documents.

We have demonstrated a constructive approach and accepted in beginning of 2010 the Minsk Group co-chairs suggested “updated Madrid principles” as the basis for negotiation. Those principles were reflected in the joint statement of presidents of Minsk Group co-chairmen countries adopted at G8 summit in L’Aquila in July of 2009.

Azerbaijan remains committed to this approach and believes that potential for reaching peace is not exhausted. We believe that updated Madrid proposal reflects a

reasonable compromise based on the Helsinki Final Act principles. We reiterate that Azerbaijan is ready to endorse those six principles of updated Madrid to allow drafting of a comprehensive peace agreement.

We believe that we have spent enough time deliberating and interpreting basic principles. It is time to work on a draft of peace agreement. Such a comprehensive peace agreement will envisage implementation of practical measures, where every step will dictate the next one and will be based on certain timeframes and the preceding elements. It will include all reasonable CSBMs starting with the withdrawal of troops, ensuring interim status for Nagorno-Karabakh, providing security guarantees for the population accompanied by reopening of borders and communications and gradually bringing both communities closer to the common denominator when they will be able to discuss the final status of the region. These steps will allow accommodating concerns and interests of two sides and setting them in one consistent process monitored, assessed and guided on a regular basis by the international community.

We are convinced that in order to reach a breakthrough in the negotiations we need to get rid of the factor of presence of the Armenian military force in the zone of conflict. We firmly believe that demilitarization of the conflict zone will bring more room for engagement on all possible tracks, create more confidence between both parties as well as between the Armenian and Azerbaijani communities of the Nagorno-Karabakh region and decrease military rhetoric and tensions in the region.

In the meantime, we recognize the importance of observing the cease-fire regime that should minimize human losses. However, the OSCE community should not settle for only dealing with technical aspects of the cease-fire, which was actually intended in 1994 as a temporary mean to speedily proceed to an agreement on the conflict settlement.

As we reconfirm our commitment to the cease-fire regime, we reiterate that demilitarization of the zone of conflict would allow moving beyond the unacceptable status quo and opening up the region for building trust and confidence.

We expect the Armenian side and President Sarkisyan to seize the opportunity that will be available next week in Vienna in order to demonstrate a constructive approach and achieve a breakthrough in the negotiations.

Thank you.