

**Statement of Amb. Valeri Chechelashvili
Secretary General of Organization
for Democracy and Economic Development – GUAM
at the 17th Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council
(1 December 2009)**

At the outset, I would like to express sincere gratitude to the OSCE for the invitation to attend participate in the 17th Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council. This is unique opportunity to share experience and exchange views on different matters of international and regional cooperation, as OSCE represents the only all-European regional platform.

It goes without saying that this forum is of particular interest and significance, as only here one can hear all views, sometimes conflicting and even confronting, on the assessment of level and intensity of political and economic developments and future of all-European security and cooperation.

Under the Georgian Chairmanship GUAM further enhanced its organizational structure, developed synergy of actions and upgraded level of political dialog. GUAM member states have very close, if not coinciding set of foreign policy priorities and consider GUAM as format, reinforcing position of individual member state in the network of international relations. It worth mentioning, that the one of our member states' top foreign policy priority is approximation to the European Union. We are under the same policy instrument of European Union — Eastern Partnership.

The last couple of years have been very busy and eventful with what we wanted to achieve – to transform GUAM from a strategic alliance of the countries with common interests, problems and threat perceptions into a result- and project-oriented regional organization with a distinct regional identity devoted to democracy and economic development. We take pride that today GUAM is a full-pledged regional organization with well-institutionalized structure, high degree of political interaction, which has successfully passed through various tests and proved its strong viability and practical relevance.

The main goal of GUAM is to establish space of stability and integration in the Black sea – Caspian Sea region; space of partnership, based on the European standards, criterias and practice. While implementing this main goal, we are using two main avenues of cooperation: 1) elaboration, signature and implementation of GUAM format multilateral legal instruments, and 2) generation, elaboration and implementation of GUAM projects and programs.

GUAM has its advantages. In this part of Europe it is one of few, international full-fledged organizations of regional cooperation with well-institutionalized format of interaction. Particular and undisputable advantage of GUAM is the fact, that member-states share common values in addition to foreign policy priorities, as it was stated above. As a result, decision-making process is dynamic and efficient. This is exactly why our Organization had tackled problems and implemented projects, impossible for other neighboring initiatives even to pick up. Namely – GUAM Free Trade Zone and Virtual Law Enforcement Centre were established.

GUAM internal trade, less than 2 billion USD in the year of 2006 (GUAM Free Trade Zone was established on GUAM Kyiv Summit of 23 May 2006), hit the ceiling of 4 billion USD in 2008, despite world financial crisis and Russian aggression to Georgia in last August, which particularly undermined international trade and transport, as central highway and railway were blocked, number of critical bridges destroyed. In this year, due to the consequences of world global crisis, we are expecting 25%-30% trade decline. Nevertheless, in the longer perspective, trade relations will intensify and trade turnover will reach double digit billion USD level in 4-5 years.

While talking about security we first have in mind protracted conflicts in GUAM region (the Transnistrian region of Moldova, the Abkhaz and Tskhinvali regions of Georgia and the conflict in and around the Nagorno-Kharabakh region of Azerbaijan). GUAM Member states have always been consistent in drawing the attention of the OSCE community to the need for speedy solution of these Conflicts on the basis of norms and principles of the international law, including those pertaining to the sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of international borders, relevant UN Security Council resolutions and the OSCE decisions. Common position of GUAM is based on the Joint Declaration of the Heads of state on conflict settlement, adopted at the GUAM Kiev Summit on 23 May 2006, which stress that -quote - “the territory of the state may not be a subject of acquisition or military occupation, resulting from the threat or use of force in breach of the relevant norms of international law. No territorial acquisitions and the resulting self-declared entities may be recognized as legal under any circumstances whatsoever” – end of quote. Unfortunately these threats became real after August 2008 Russian-Georgian war that seriously damaged European security architecture.

In this regard we regret that GUAM organization, which has always been determined towards cooperation with the OSCE, and aimed at contributing to the comprehensive OSCE efforts towards international security in all its three dimensions was not invited to Corfu forum.

One more important aspect of security where GUAM is taking active efforts is fighting against terrorism, illicit drug proliferation, illegal migration and trafficking in human beings, as well as other dangerous types of trans-border crime. GUAM

continues to enhance its cooperation and capabilities in these areas. Especially, it refers to the activities of GUAM Virtual Law-Enforcement Centre (VLEC).

The aim of this cooperation is to make GUAM Transport Corridor more secure, safe and attractive, to enhance conditions for sustainable development, to contribute to regional and international security and stability.

In addition to a number of bilateral operations between the appropriate GUAM Member States, two joint law-enforcement operations “Narcostop-2009” on combating drug trafficking and “Perekhvat (Interception)-2009” on combating trade in persons were carried out in June and November this year. The intergovernmental Protocol on protection of information within the channels of the GUAM Interstate Information Management System (ISIMS) signed last December in the margins of the 16th OSCE Ministerial meeting in Helsinki was ratified/confirmed by the GUAM Member States and is expected to enter into force after already chosen relevant technical means will be installed in four GUAM VLEC National Information Analytical Centers (NIACs). Besides, the first phase of the modernization of the NIACs was completed last July and the second phase is being implemented now.

In total, during the year of 2009 GUAM has elaborated and presented within the Framework GUAM-USA Program seven technical assistance projects in areas of combating drug trafficking, trade in persons, money laundering, terrorism, as well as improvement of border control in accordance with international standards to secure the GUAM Transport Corridor.

In law-enforcement and border control areas, GUAM extends its interaction with other international organizations, e.g. having hosted in the GUAM Secretariat in Kyiv in July the first joint UNODC/GUAM Workshop on Nuclear Terrorism; the second such Workshop for Criminal Justice Officials on International Cooperation in Matters related to Combating Terrorism will be held in January 2010. GUAM presented its law enforcement capacity at the International Workshop for National Counter-Terrorism Focal Points “Better Linking National and Global Counter-Terrorism Efforts” that took place in Vienna International Centre on 12-13 October 2009.

In this regard, I would like to mention especially the prospects of GUAM cooperation with the OSCE. I can not but express our profound gratitude to the OSCE for providing to GUAM important platform for interaction. Within this international organization GUAM always takes opportunity of making joint statements on a widest range of matters.

The results of working consultations between the OSCE Secretary General, H.E. Mr. Marc Perrin de Brichambaut, and the GUAM Secretary General, as well as between the GUAM Secretariat and the OSCE CPC officials gives us a hope for

developing mutually useful, interplaying and, perhaps, interlocking forms of their cooperation. One of the priority areas of such cooperation could be cross-border checking and verification of travel and other documents – the area, in which the GUAM Member States are interested in and the OSCE has the experiences.

In broader terms, GUAM invites OSCE to capitalize on the complementary of priorities in border control cooperation; the United States and the EU, having shared objective to ensure safe, stable and secure character of internationally recognized borders in the region, are already playing important role in this area; through USA-GUAM interaction and in the framework of the Eastern Partnership “Integrated Border Management” Flagship Initiative this role may further enhance.

Law-enforcement cooperation could be another important area of the GUAM-OSCE cooperation, while it will be institutionalized. The GUAM Council of Ministers for Foreign Affairs had already instructed the GUAM Secretariat in this regard. We do hope that the OSCE will also support the CPC cooperation with GUAM.

GUAM is an Organization based on the developed network of mechanisms and instruments of interaction including GUAM Strategy for Sector Cooperation Development, serving as roadmap for Working Group activities. Secretariat, located in the very heart of Kyiv, Maidan Nezalejnosti – Independence Square, inaugurated on 26 February this year, according to GUAM statutory documents, provides to Member states technical and organizational support, based on new technological opportunities – interactive dialogue capacity and video conference system. A simple, understandable structure responding the interests of all Member States and based on the principles of equality is contributing as well to paving the way to full-fledged cooperation in the framework of GUAM.

8 Working Groups of GUAM (on Economy and Trade - Country-coordinator – Ukraine), on Transport (Country-coordinator – Azerbaijan), on Energy (Country-coordinator – Georgia), on Information Technologies (Country-coordinator – Azerbaijan), on Combating Terrorism, Organized Crime and Drug Trafficking (Country-coordinator – Georgia), on Civil Emergency Planning (Country-coordinator – Ukraine), on Culture, Science and Education (Country-coordinator – The Republic of Moldova), on Tourism (Country-coordinator – Azerbaijan) following guidelines of GUAM Strategy for Sector Cooperation Development and new cooperation capacity of Secretariat, are streamlining their activities with a view of GUAM projects and programs implementation. Country-Coordinators, having taken responsibility for the respective 2 WGs each, are actively involved in the process, drafting Roadmaps for cooperation, based on GUAM Heads of State Council Documents, to serve with their Agendas implementation process of GUAM goals and objectives.

We believe that this stage of our development is particularly important. After high level political interaction was ensured in Organization, we are advancing to the stage of generating and implementing of GUAM projects and Programs of cooperation, some of them being already in the pipeline (in addition to Free Trade Zone and Virtual Law Enforcement Centre, to name a few, following GUAM projects can be mentioned: “Concept of GUAM Transport Corridor”, “Common Tourist Product”, “GUAM Common Telecommunication Space” etc.). It implies further improvement of our culture of cooperation and quality of targets. Thanks to the contribution of the Member States we have upgraded our cooperative capacity. We express our thanks to all those who have contributed to this task, including our external partners – USA, Poland, Czech Republic and Japan. We are open for cooperation with any external partner – being it state, international organization or just legal person, provided this cooperation is based on the principles of international law and principles of GUAM Statutory Documents.

For those who are interested in GUAM to I invite to visit our web-site – www.guam-organization.org in order to find more information about our organization – both basic and operational.

To conclude with, I would like to reiterate my sincere gratitude to OSCE for the invitation to take part in the 17th Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council.