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Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. MAXIM BUYAKEVICH,
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1290th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL
VIA VIDEO TELECONFERENCE**

19 November 2020

**In response to the statements by
the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group,
the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office and
the Head of the High-Level Planning Group**

Mr. Chairperson,

We thank the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group – the distinguished Ambassadors Igor Popov, Stéphane Visconti and Andrew Schofer – and also the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, the distinguished Ambassador Andrzej Kasprzyk, and the Head of the High-Level Planning Group, Lieutenant Colonel Sulo Mustafaraj.

In view of the tragedy that has been unfolding in the South Caucasus since the end of September, the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair countries, namely Russia, France and the United States of America, supported by the rest of the international community, have taken active steps towards establishing a humanitarian truce in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone and inducing Azerbaijan and Armenia to resume negotiations on substantive aspects of the settlement process.

The trilateral statement adopted on 9 November by the President of Azerbaijan, the Prime Minister of Armenia and the President of Russia has made it possible to stop the bloodshed and stabilize the situation. Russia's efforts aimed at terminating the hot phase of the conflict were undertaken with due account taken of the earlier work performed over many years by the three co-mediators. After the agreement on a ceasefire in Nagorno-Karabakh was reached, we have continued our co-operation with our fellow OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair countries, notably at the highest level and at the level of foreign ministers. The United Nations Security Council has been informed in detail of the contents of the agreement. The text of the trilateral statement has been distributed at the OSCE.

As is known, Azerbaijan and Armenia, with a view to ensuring implementation of the agreed measures, have supported the decision to deploy a Russian peacekeeping contingent in Nagorno-Karabakh and along the Lachin corridor. That work is close to completion. The peacekeeping forces are going about their duties in a fully transparent manner. Thematic briefings are provided daily by the Russian Ministry of Defence.

These first ten days since the adoption of the trilateral statement have been encouraging. The “silence regime” is being observed. The process is under way for the return of displaced persons who had been forced to abandon their homes during the recent hostilities. Co-operation has been established with the parties on the transfer of the remains of those killed in action, the exchange of prisoners, clarifying the fate of missing persons and reinstating Azerbaijan’s control over the agreed districts. We sincerely hope that the statement agreed on by the Governments of Azerbaijan and Armenia will help to create the basis for normalization of their relations in the long term, and that it will make it possible to achieve a sustainable peace and strengthen stability in the South Caucasus and neighbouring regions.

We concur with the opinion that the most pressing issue now is to provide the people who have suffered as a result of the fighting with assistance in returning to a normal life in peace – especially in view of the approaching cold, wintry weather. It is these considerations that underlie the decision of the President of the Russian Federation to establish an inter-agency humanitarian response centre tasked with co-ordinating the multifaceted measures to help remedy the dire humanitarian situation in the region. The centre is open to co-operation with interested humanitarian actors.

We advocate an expanded international presence in Nagorno-Karabakh, specifically involving the deployment of field missions within the territory itself by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs; the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); and the United Nations Development Programme. We attach great importance to ensuring the necessary conditions for the International Committee of the Red Cross to be able to work effectively in the region. We are convinced that the team of the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, too, will play a role in tackling the acute humanitarian problems in the region.

In our view, joint action in this endeavour will help to create enabling conditions for the restoration of peace and harmony throughout the zone of what was recently a most bitter conflict.

Finally, we should like to reiterate that Russia is committed to continuing to provide – in a joint and co-ordinated manner with the two other OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair countries – all the necessary assistance to the parties with the development of a mutually acceptable basis for a definitive settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh problem. The trilateral statement of 9 November will help in drawing closer to that common goal.

Thank you for your attention.