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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA TO THE OSCE

**Statement
on the 2022 Programme Outline
as delivered by the Delegation of Armenia
at the 1312th Meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council**

6 May 2021

Madam Chair,

The Delegation of Armenia thanks the OSCE Secretary General for the presentation of the 2022 Programme Outline.

We will provide more detailed comments and suggestions on the 2022 Programme Outline during the upcoming discussions in the Preparatory Committee, but today I would like to make a few general remarks, which we consider important for an understanding of where we are and how to move forward.

For the second consecutive year, discussions on the Programme Outline will be taking place against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, overcoming which will still require a lot of time and effort. But even without this, the OSCE region still faces serious challenges in ensuring security and stability, democracy, respect for human rights, the rule of law, media freedom, civil liberties, etc. The situation in our own region was further exacerbated, when last year Azerbaijan, supported by Turkey and foreign terrorist fighters, unleashed a war of aggression against the Republic of Artsakh, which led to numerous casualties both among the military and civilian population, massive destruction, ethnic cleansing and humanitarian crisis. It also seriously undermined the decades-long efforts of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs, the only agreed negotiating format for a peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Madam Chair,

Armenia continues to support the efforts of the Minsk Group Co-Chairs aimed at a negotiated, political and comprehensive settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict on the basis of the well-known principles and elements. We believe that a negotiated and comprehensive settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict requires a solid format, and in this regard, we call on the OSCE and its participating States to provide adequate and necessary support for the activities of the Minsk Group Co-Chairs, as in the case of other conflict-related mandates.

Likewise, Armenia continues to support the mandate and activities of the PRCiO. We hope for the earliest possible resumption of the monitoring activities of the PRCiO Office, as well as expansion of its capacities on the ground, which in the current situation requires additional and more active efforts.

Armenia's consistent position on the High-Level Planning Group (HLPG) is well-known. Given Turkey's direct involvement in the war against Artsakh, including the recruitment and transfer of foreign terrorist fighters to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone, our position on the inadmissibility of the presence of a Turkish officer in the HLPG becomes even more justified and relevant. Turkey has clearly declared itself as a party to the conflict and, therefore, it cannot be involved in any activities related to mediation or resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, including in the HLPG.

Conflict prevention and resolution lies at the core of the OSCE mandate and activities. At the same time, in light of the challenges to security and stability that we are facing in the OSCE area, executive structures tasked with specific mandates in all three dimensions should conduct a thorough assessment of effectiveness of their activities and, where necessary, revisit their working methods.

In this context, we call on the CPC to keep track of the developments in our region and analyse them from an early warning and early action perspectives. By saying that, we expect that the CPC will make full use of the instruments and tools at its disposal to implement in a diligent manner its mandate thus making its work more effective and result oriented. We also reiterate that any activity undertaken by the CPC in the field of dialogue facilitation and mediation support must be implemented with full respect for the agreed mediation formats and case specific basic principles and elements.

Madam Chair,

In the economic and environmental dimension, we note the intention of the Office of the Co-ordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA) to strengthen economic and environmental co-operation for confidence-building and conflict prevention, and to develop and implement activities that contribute to stability, security, and co-operation. Armenia will continue supporting activities related to promoting good economic and environmental governance, preventing and combating corruption and money laundering, economic empowerment of women, youth inclusion and human capital development. At the same time, we reiterate that any activity in the economic and environmental dimension, including extra-budgetary projects implemented by the OCEEA, must be based on the principles of solidarity, transparency, equal and non-discriminatory partnership, mutual accountability, and full respect for the interests of all OSCE participating States. We reiterate our principled position that the OCEEA must refrain from, or cease altogether, any projects that do not comply with and run counter to these principles.

Armenia highly values the well-established communication channels and fruitful co-operation with the RFOM and the ODIHR. We support their priorities as presented in the 2022 Programme Outline and stand ready to continue constructive and effective co-operation with both institutions. The COVID-19 pandemic and the war of aggression unleashed by Azerbaijan against Artsakh have clearly demonstrated that challenges to democracy, human rights and media freedom can be further aggravated during such crises. In this context, we consider it necessary to mainstream in the agenda of the OSCE institutions also the human rights of people living in conflict areas.

We call on the ODIHR and the RFOM to refrain from engaging in questionable processes and initiatives, with false narratives and to look beyond pronounced purposes to avoid a situation when OSCE institutions might be abused for promoting policies contradicting the OSCE's standards and values. Hasty, ill-advised actions will undermine the credibility of these institutions and the confidence of participating States towards them. We also urge both institutions to closely monitor manifestations of hatred, cases of hate speech in public discourse of political leaders that lead to hate crimes.

I thank you.