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STATEMENT

**in response to Ambassador Tuula Yrjölä,
Director of the Conflict Prevention Centre
as delivered by Ms. Lilit Grigoryan, Deputy Head of Mission
at the 1425th meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council**

1 June 2023

The Delegation of Armenia took note of the annual report of the Director of the Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC), Ambassador Tuula Yrjölä. We have few comments on the report.

The report makes reference to a number of existing conflicts and crisis situations in the OSCE, wherein the CPC, through the involvement in different undertakings, continues its support to the agreed formats for negotiations such as Transdniestrian Settlement Process and Geneva International Discussions.

However, with regard to the current crisis situation and escalation of hostilities in the South Caucasus, we note that in the reporting period the CPC provided support exclusively to the CiO's trip to the South Caucasus. The report for some reason omits any single reference to the support that the CPC is tasked to provide in line with its mandate to the Personal Representative of the Chairperson in-Office on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. We would like to recall that the Personal Representative of the Chairperson in-Office on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict accompanied OSCE CiO, Minister Osmani during his visit to Yerevan.

Likewise, the report fails to make a reference to the Minsk Process and Minsk Group Co-Chairs which have been established by relevant CSCE/OSCE decisions and constitute an integral part of the OSCE's organizational structure. The failure to refer to these structures in the report clearly demonstrates the inability or unwillingness of the CPC to deliver on its mandate and act in an impartial and professional manner. We urge the CPC to refrain from appeasing the aggressor state by way of legitimizing the results of the massive use of force and war of aggression against Nagorno-Karabakh and its people.

As long as there are some participating States which find their raison d'être in this Organization in threatening OSCE structures to carry out their mandates and there is little political will to protect assets of the Organization, both security and cooperation, which are the motto of our Organization, will remain elusive.

Mr. Chairperson

The security situation in the South Caucasus is deteriorating. In times of security challenges it is of vital importance that the OSCE remains engaged in the prevention of

crisis situations. In this regard, the mandate of the CPC should be fully implemented. Moreover, its early warning and prevention toolkit should be actively used without any geo-political considerations. We have always appreciated the efforts of the CPC to act as the OSCE wide Early Warning Focal point. The Vilnius MC Decision 3/11 on the Elements of the conflict cycle provides an exhaustive framework for conflict and crisis prevention which should be at the core of the CPC's activities.

That being said, the deployment of the OSCE needs assessment mission to Armenia following Azerbaijan's aggression in September 2022 has given rise to certain hopes and expectations that the Organisation, despite many challenges and pressures, is keen to uphold its principles and deliver on its mandate. Alas, what we have witnessed afterwards was a deplorable backtracking from this principled stance. We once again call upon the OSCE Chairmanship and the OSCE Secretariat, in line with the Organisation's mandate and objectives, to take relevant steps to make the report of the OSCE needs assessment mission available to the OSCE participating States. The report is a source of objective information about the situation on the ground, which together with the recommendations, could be a basis for the OSCE's further engagement on the ground, and could be instrumental in preventing new aggressions, as well as play an important role in a process of establishing peace in the region.

According to your report, the CPC was not engaged in dispatching NAM to Armenia. If our reading of the report is not accurate, then I have a question. Why, in your report, is there no single reference to NAM? We understand that last year, the CPC was criticised by Azerbaijan because in that report, the CPC referred to its mandated work related to Minsk Group Co-Chairs and the Personal Representative of the Chairperson in-Office on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. This year, in your report, and obviously following Azerbaijani demand, you have removed any references to your mandated work. By doing so, it seems to us that, for whatever reason, the CPC is trying to appease Azerbaijan.

In closing, we urge the CPC to act strictly within its mandate and refrain from any actions that violate the letter and spirit of the OSCE decisions, particularly those adopted by the highest decision making body of our Organization.

Last but not least, we call upon the CPC in the future to refrain from any action and activities that might be perceived as another attempt of endorsing the results of the war of aggression. Any conflict-related OSCE project in our region can only be carried out after careful consultation and clearly expressed consent of all parties concerned.

I thank you.