

PRESS COMMUNIQUÉ OF THE CO-CHAIRS OF GENEVA DISCUSSIONS

16.12.2010

The participants of the Geneva International Discussions completed their fourteenth session and agreed to hold the next round on 4th March 2011.

In Working Group I, the participants started their discussions with a review of the security situation on the ground. They welcomed the full resumption of the Ergneti / Dvani Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism, as well as the regular and constructive work of the Gali / Zugdidi Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism. In this connection, the need for a prompt resolution of open cases of detained persons and for active work on missing persons was emphasized.

Concerns were raised with regard to recent developments on the ground, which undermine the efforts taken to build up trust and confidence. The co-Chairs underlined the importance of transparency and confidence-building measures, including fully functioning hotlines. The information session on various international experiences related to facilitation of crossings and freedom of movement proved to be useful.

The participants continued their discussions on the key issues of non-use of force and international security arrangements. All participants agreed that unilateral commitments to the non-use of force as a legal obligation under international law play an important role in advancing the process. The co-Chairs believe that today's discussions, in light of recent and relevant developments, contributed to work in this regard and can provide an impetus for further steps in the Geneva process. The co-Chairs called for constructive and serious engagement from all participants.

In Working Group II, the participants reviewed the humanitarian situation on the ground, focusing, in view of the forthcoming winter, on the living conditions of vulnerable populations, including the displaced persons. They welcomed the progress achieved on water and gas issues.

Concrete proposals related to returns to some areas of previous residence were reviewed. The co-Moderators welcomed the fact that return-related activities were discussed in a constructive spirit. They underlined the need for further consultations, in particular by the UNHCR, with the relevant participants in order to clarify parameters and modalities with a view to ensure that returns take place on a voluntary basis, in safety and dignity, and in accordance with international law and practice.