

**STATEMENT DELIVERED BY DR. PAULI JÄRVENPÄÄ, DIRECTOR  
GENERAL, THE HEAD OF THE DEFENCE POLICY DEPARTMENT OF THE  
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE OF FINLAND  
ON THE OPENING OF THE THIRD SESSION OF THE FORUM FOR  
SECURITY CO-OPERATION IN 2008**

**10 September 2008**

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure and honour for me to address you today as Finland assumes the Chairmanship of the Forum for Security Co-operation for the third session of 2008.

At the outset, I wish to congratulate Estonia on having conducted a very successful Chairmanship and look forward to our continued co-operation in the Troika. I also wish to express our gratitude to the outgoing Troika member, Spain, and welcome the incoming member, France.

The politico-military situation in the OSCE area has changed dramatically since the hostilities broke out in South Ossetia, Georgia, in August. As holder of the OSCE Chairmanship, Finland has done its utmost to defuse tensions, negotiate a ceasefire, and promote conflict settlement. After fighting escalated on 8 August, the Chairman-in-Office Foreign Minister Mr. Alexander Stubb travelled to Tbilisi and Moscow with the aim of negotiating an immediate ceasefire and paving the way for humanitarian action.

Here in Vienna, special Permanent Council meetings have been convened frequently to discuss the situation in Georgia and to brief the participating States about the activities of the OSCE Chairmanship.

On 19 August, after intense negotiations, the OSCE Permanent Council decided to increase the number of Military Monitoring Officers in Georgia by up to 100. It was decided that 20 additional officers would be deployed immediately to monitor the ceasefire. The Chairmanship is currently consulting on the modalities for the remaining 80 additional monitors and hopes to reach an agreement soon.

In its national capacity, Finland will participate actively in the monitoring operation. We are prepared to send up to ten Military Monitoring Officers, the first two of whom are already in the area.

The efforts of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office are now focused on how the OSCE — together with other international actors — can help to strengthen the ceasefire and launch international negotiations aimed at a peaceful settlement.

The crisis in Georgia is also a challenge for the arms control and confidence-building regimes upheld by the OSCE and the FSC. Our focus should now be firmly on how to ensure the effective implementation of these regimes in the new situation.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Our main priorities for the OSCE politico-military dimension have already been outlined in the programme of the Finnish OSCE Chairmanship of January 2008. I believe that they have lost none of their validity in the present security situation.

Finland will strive to deepen the Forum's security dialogue, the recent revitalization of which we welcome heartily. The FSC is uniquely placed to debate all European security issues: its mandate should be utilized to the full.

Finland seeks to intensify the implementation of existing politico-military agreements and calls on all participating States to fulfil their commitments at all times. The Vienna Document 1999, the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security, and the Documents on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and on Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition (SCA) remain the basic normative documents of our Forum.

We will work to intensify OSCE activities in the area of SALW and surplus ammunition. Co-ordination and co-operation between organizations is of crucial importance if we want to address the problem of illicit small arms effectively and improve human security.

Making headway on SALW issues at global level takes time, as was demonstrated by the recent Third Biennial Meeting of States (BMS) on the UN Programme of Action. The OSCE has been at the vanguard of the global fight against the scourge of small arms, and we should seek to maintain our position. We have invited representatives of relevant think-tanks to give their views on how the OSCE could bring added value. We hope this will facilitate discussions in the FSC aiming at a Ministerial tasking to continue the work related to SALW and SCA issues. In this context we might want to subject our SALW-related work to a comprehensive review.

Finland will also focus FSC attention on human rights in the armed forces. This cross-dimensional issue will be a theme of a joint FSC-PC meeting, scheduled for 29 October.

As Chair of the FSC we are also ready to pursue new proposals related to politico-military commitments, provided that these are widely supported by the participating States.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We have circulated an indicative schedule for meetings under our Chairmanship (FSC.INF/11/08 22 July). Our intention is to give the delegations and the Forum the opportunity to concentrate on preparations for the Helsinki Ministerial Meeting in November.

We also propose to continue the general practice of inviting our Partners for Co-operation to attend not only our plenary meetings but also the Working Groups, as observers.

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is the task of the Finnish Delegation to lead the preparations for the Helsinki Ministerial Council with the particular aim of preparing a significant FSC contribution. As Chair, Finland will act in a proactive and transparent manner, and engage in close interaction with all participating States. We count on your co-operation in our common endeavour. Our delegation in Vienna is looking forward to working with you closely.

Finally, I would like to remind everyone that in accordance with the Vienna Document, Finland will organize a visit to an airbase and military facility from 23 to 26 September 2008. So you will have a unique opportunity to visit Northern Finland before the Ministerial Council in Helsinki!

I thank you, Mr. Chairperson.