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## STATEMENT

**In Response to the Address by the Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE, Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of Slovakia, H.E. Mr. Miroslav Lajčák**

**as delivered by Mr. Vahe Gevorgyan, Deputy Permanent Representative of Armenia at the 1211<sup>th</sup> Special Meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council  
January 10, 2019**

Mr. Chair,

The Delegation of Armenia warmly welcomes the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of Slovakia, H.E. Mr. Miroslav Lajčák and thanks him for outlining the priorities of the Slovak Chairmanship.

We have already had an opportunity to offer Armenia's position with regard to the approaches of the Slovak Chairmanship last July at the level of the Permanent Council. As today these approaches have been crystallized in three priorities, namely addressing conflicts, the Chairmanship's commitment to safer future and effective multilateralism, we are pleased to continue this dialogue in more streamlined manner.

However, before referring to each of them, let me underline that these priorities are strongly interlinked and interdependent. It is difficult to provide a safer future in the absence of effective multilateralism and without taking into account plight of people affected by conflicts.

We see strong merits in approaching conflicts from the perspective of the people. Conflicts are not merely about principles or diverging views on their application but first and foremost they are about people: their needs, choices and will. Any attempt to detach people from the issues, which are key to the conflict prevention, mitigation and resolution, cannot create sustainable environment for peace.

In this regard, Armenia will support efforts of the Slovak Chairmanship to reach out to the people of Nagorno-Karabakh, their elected representatives by building on already existing practice of previous Chairmanships and in close coordination with OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs. We would welcome support of the Slovak Chairmanship to the efforts of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs whose strong engagement and good-faith mediation along with the activities of the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office were recognized in the Joint Milan MC Statement by the Heads of Delegation of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair Countries, Armenia, and Azerbaijan.

We expect similar good faith, neutral and impartial stance from all other OSCE mandates related to the NK conflict. Unfortunately, the current composition of the HLPG remains strong source of concern and we call on the Chairmanship to ensure neutrality and impartiality of this mandate.

Strong adherence to three principles of conflict resolution, including equal rights and self-determination of peoples, put forward by the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs for the conflict resolution, as well as the previous Summit-level agreements aimed at reducing tensions can be important contribution of Slovak Chairmanship to the peace process.

We took good note of the CiO's intention to pay visit to our region. In our view, these visits are very important as they provide unique opportunity to get first-hand information and interact with all sides and thus they need to be well-prepared and serve their purpose in the most efficient and forward looking manner.

That being said, let me refer to another priority which framed as commitment of the Chairmanship to a safer future. We agree that upholding human rights and fundamental freedoms, preventing and countering radicalization and extremism, addressing risks of new technologies and innovation, and good governance are important elements of a safer future. However, this context of a safer future is not complete without preventing the build-up of capacities of war, which is also pursued through destabilizing accumulation of offensive weaponry and illegal exports of military items. Thus, the Chairmanships along with all other participating states have an important role in upholding all OSCE commitments on arms control particularly in the sensitive security environment.

In our view, the effective multilateralism in the OSCE context means first of all a readiness to contribute towards the European security and cooperation in responsible manner. The ability to go beyond national or bilateral agenda is a key to effective multilateralism. This is true for all participating states but it is even more relevant for the Chairmanship as it is bound to lead by example. In this regard, we pledge all our support to the incoming Chairmanship in its future efforts of putting effective multilateralism in action.

Nowadays, it is not possible to contemplate effective multilateralism without strong involvement of non-governmental organizations. The long standing OSCE commitments and practice have turned the civil society into valuable partner of governments particularly in the Human Dimension. Domestic political issues should not undermine this important component of effective multilateralism

In conclusion, the Delegation of Armenia would like to warmly thank the outgoing Italian Chairmanship and wish every success to you, Mr. Minister, to the Chairman of the Permanent Council Ambassador Boháč being supported by his able and competent team.

Thank you.