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**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY KELIN,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 907th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

29 March 2012

**Regarding the elections in Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Moldova and
the appointment of the special representatives of the President of Russia**

Mr. Chairperson,

First of all, I should like to thank my Georgian colleague for drawing attention to the important subject of the emergence of the new independent States of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. I had not intended to speak on this subject, but since it has been touched upon, permit to explain the actual state of affairs there.

The second round of elections to the People's Assembly (parliament) of this young independent State in the Trans-Caucasus was indeed held in the Republic of Abkhazia on 24 March of this year. The elections were held in the 20 constituencies where during the first round of elections on 10 March there were no actual winners. According to the Central Election Commission of Abkhazia, the elections were recognized as having taken place. In this way, the process of forming the country's highest legislative body was completed.

The international observers present for the first and second round of the elections noted that voting had taken place in strict conformity with the Republic's laws and met the generally recognized criteria for the holding of democratic elections. No serious irregularities that could have had an impact on the free expression of the people's will were observed.

On 25 March South Ossetia held repeat presidential elections. Voter turnout was more than 70 per cent. According to the Central Election Commission of South Ossetia, the second round is scheduled for 8 April of this year, at which time the two candidates who gained the most votes on Sunday will run against one another.

Scores of international observers, including representatives of socio-political and non-governmental organizations from Russia, Israel, Italy, France and a number of other countries, monitored the elections. In their view, the elections in South Ossetia were fully in line with the country's electoral laws, met the international standards for the holding of elections and were consistent with democratic principles. A large number of journalists covered these elections.

The young developing democracies in Abkhazia and South Ossetia have taken another important step on the path to sovereign statehood and the emergence of a civil society based on genuinely democratic principles and values.

We hope that the close attention focused by certain countries and organizations on the situation in the new independent countries in the Trans-Caucasus will contribute to a better understanding of the gradual processes that are successfully under way in these young republics.

As for the appointment of Mr. Alexander Tkachev, governor of Krasnodar Krai, as the special representative of the President of the Russian Federation for Abkhazia, and of Mr. Taymuraz Mamsurov, head of the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania, as the President's special representative for South Ossetia, these appointments were made in line with Russia's current practice of appointing special representatives of the President of the Russian Federation for individual regions of the world or specific countries. By way of example, I might refer to similar appointments of special representatives for co-operation with African countries, for the development of relations with Kyrgyzstan and for Afghanistan.

The work of the special representatives for Abkhazia and South Ossetia will be aimed at developing closer and mutually advantageous inter-State co-operation between Russia and these young independent republics in trade-related, economic and humanitarian areas.

Mr. Chairperson,

We should like to say a few words as a follow-up to the statement by the distinguished delegation of Moldova here in the Permanent Council on 22 March of this year.

We believe that in electing the new President of Moldova, Mr. Nicolae Timofti, the Moldovan Parliament has created the conditions for overcoming the constitutional crisis that has beset that country.

The Russian Federation trusts that the completion of the formation of governmental structures in the Republic of Moldova will impart an additional impetus to the Russo-Moldovan political dialogue.

Attaching as it does great importance to the development of multifaceted relations with the Republic of Moldova, the Russian leadership on 21 March of this year adopted a decision to appoint Mr. Dmitry Olegovich Rogozin, Vice-Premier of the Russian Government, as chairman of the Russian side of the Intergovernmental Commission for Economic Co-operation between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Moldova and as special representative of the President of the Russian Federation for Transdniestria.

We firmly believe that raising the level of Russian representation will promote political dialogue and will help to make full use of the potential of bilateral co-operation in the trade-related, economic and humanitarian spheres.

It is planned that particular attention will be given to the issue of a Transdniestrian settlement and to the search for a viable formula for resolving the conflict on the Dniestr river. In this context, we also need to resolve a wide range of issues having to do with

stabilizing the socio-economic situation in the region and ensuring a decent standard of living for the population of Transdnistria, including strengthening its multilateral ties with the constituent entities of the Russian Federation and protecting the rights and interests of the Russian citizens living in that region.

Thank you for your attention.