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**Russian MFA Information and Press Department Commentary Regarding
Implementation of the Medvedev-Sarkozy Plan**

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In the discussions around the situation in South Ossetia and Abkhazia our Western partners urge full implementation of the six principles agreed by the Presidents of Russia and France in Moscow on August 12, 2008. Not infrequently, allegations come along with this that Russia has not fully complied with the accords spelt out in these principles.

The evidence-backed explanations that Moscow has carried out all the actions provided for in the principles have been made by us repeatedly at the highest level. We would like to once again dwell at length on this question so as to clear it up once and for all.

The first principle reads: "to renounce the use of force." It is addressed, first and foremost, to the Georgian leadership, which carried out an aggressive attack on South Ossetia on the night of August 7-8 in violation of all its obligations and commitments and the existing accords. Russia had during the last year sought consistently, particularly via the OSCE and UN Security Council to get Tbilisi to conclude a legally binding agreement with Tskhinval and Sukhum on the inadmissibility of the settlement of conflicts by force. Our proposals had repeatedly been rejected by the regime of Saakashvili, and its backers had refused to try to influence the Georgian leader. It is undoubted therefore that compliance with the first principle of the Medvedev-Sarkozy initiative depends entirely on Tbilisi and those who support it.

The second principle presupposes the definitive cessation of all hostilities. Here likewise the most important thing is to keep Saakashvili from new military adventures and prevent the rearmament of a regime which over the last four years has repeatedly demonstrated for what purposes it uses the weapons supplied overtly and covertly to it. Unfortunately, there is information that the rearmament of the Saakashvili regime has already begun. The participants of this process ought to

become conscious of their responsibility. As to Russia, the military actions of our reinforced peacekeeping contingent, undertaken to force the aggressor to peace, were halted by order of the Supreme Commander in Chief of the Russian Armed Forces on August 12, 2008.

The third principle concerns free access to humanitarian aid. There are no obstacles in its path from the Russian side. Such aid has been coming in from the territory of the Russian Federation in significant quantities. Our peacekeepers, controlling the security zone around South Ossetia, also have the order to let through any humanitarian supplies agreed with Tskhinval from the territory of Georgia in accordance with generally accepted procedures. Of course, such procedures presuppose control to ensure that the cargo declared as humanitarian aid should really have an entirely humanitarian character.

The fourth principle, requiring that Georgian armed forces be returned to their places of permanent deployment, that is, to the barracks, merits special attention, because the evidence so far does not make it possible to speak of its having been implemented by the Georgian side. It is necessary that the OSCE Mission in Georgia should play its role in ensuring strict implementation of this principle.

The fifth principle consists of two parts. As to the pullback of Russian Armed Forces to previous positions, this process is now over. All the units of our armed forces that had been introduced into South Ossetia to repel the Georgian aggression have been returned to the territory of Russia, with the exception of those stationed in South Ossetia in response to the request of its leadership for the fulfillment of their peacekeeping functions. In addition, Russian peacekeeping forces, as envisaged in the second part of the fifth principle, have taken additional security measures. A security zone has been formed around South Ossetia for these purposes, the regime of which is currently ensured by checkpoints of Russian peacekeeping forces totaling up to 500 men.

Closely linked to the fifth principle is the sixth one of the convening of international discussions on lasting security arrangements for South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Such discussions are already under way in the OSCE, where a decision has been taken to dispatch an additional 100 military observers for the OSCE Mission in Georgia. The Russian side is ready for their further increase. With the sad experience linked to the aggressive proclivities of the present Georgian leadership, the OSCE military observers' functions should focus on patrolling the security zone with special attention to its outer perimeter. Russian peacekeepers stand ready for the closest cooperation with them. In addition, an international police presence should advisably be provided in the security zone. That presence could be deployed under an OSCE mandate with reliance upon EU capabilities, given the interest shown by EU members in this. We will be ready to examine the possibility of participation of Russian representatives in the international police presence in the security zone. The

regime for this zone, first of all the parameters for its demilitarization, will have to be agreed on.

When the international mechanisms (additional military observers, a police component and possible other forms of international participation) are established and begin to operate on a full scale, it will be possible to analyze the operational situation in the security zone to make certain that its regime is effective from the viewpoint of preventing any new attacks on South Ossetia and a resumption of hostilities.

Analogously we are ready to consider expanding Russian peacekeeping forces' cooperation with international presences in the security zone around Abkhazia as well, given the already available useful experience of interaction in this area between our peacekeepers and UN military observers.

The Russian side has no intention to always retain its peacekeeping forces outside South Ossetia and Abkhazia. At the same time we will insist on ensuring in the spirit set out above a reliable international control in Georgia's areas abutting their territory so as to prevent preparation by the Tbilisi regime of any new military adventures.

The agreeing of all the specific aspects of an effective regime in the security zones must eventually be juridically formalized and confirmed by the signing by the Georgian side with South Ossetia and Abkhazia of documents on mutual guarantees of the nonuse of force.

All of this will make it possible to advance consistently towards a situation where monitoring activities in the security zones will be carried on by the international presences on the basis of the above-mentioned guarantees.

September 1, 2008