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**AZƏRBAYCAN RESPUBLİKASININ
ATƏT YANINDA
DAİMİ NÜMAYƏNDƏLİYİ**



**PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN
TO THE OSCE**

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**Statement by the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan
2021 Annual Security Review Conference
Opening Session
31 August 2021**

Madam Moderator,

The Delegation of Azerbaijan warmly welcomes distinguished keynote speakers, Chairperson-in-Office, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, H.E. Ms. Ann Linde and OSCE Secretary General, H.E. Ms. Helga Maria Schmid. We thank you, Excellencies, for your opening remarks.

We are pleased that despite challenges it was possible to reach a consensus on the agenda of Annual Security Review Conference (ASRC) agreed in previous years and organize this year's conference in fulfillment of the task of the 2002 Porto Ministerial Council decision. The Delegation of Azerbaijan is looking forward to discussions on a wide spectrum of security issues affecting the OSCE participating States.

The overall security environment in the OSCE region remains complex in light of growing transnational threats stemming from terrorism, violent extremism and separatism, organized crime, human trafficking, illicit trafficking of weapons and other goods, to name just a few. Security of States as well as harmony and cohesion of our societies are under attack amidst rising ethnic and religious intolerance and discrimination.

Azerbaijan, being a non-block and non-aligned country, has always regarded the OSCE as a major pillar of the pan-European security architecture and custodian of the fundamental principles guiding inter-State relations. We believe that the Organization still holds significant comparative advantages based on its unique concept of comprehensive security and broad membership. It is the collective responsibility of all participating States to transform this potential of the Organization into practice in defense of fundamental principles it is built on. This gains particular relevance against the background of the current challenges such as erosion of multilateralism and growing rivalry among politico-military blocks.

The theme of this year's ASRC "Back to basics: our commitments, our security, our OSCE" is very pertinent. Building security and restoring confidence among the OSCE participating States is possible only through unconditional respect for the principles enshrined in the core OSCE documents, starting from the Helsinki Final Act, in particular those related to respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of internationally recognized borders. These are the foundational principles that are not subject to any re-interpretation or negotiation. They must be observed and implemented

equally and unreservedly without any exception, double standards, geographic or any other preferences.

The OSCE with its agreed principles, wide-ranging commitments and developed toolbox was meant to be a mechanism for promoting international and regional peace and security. Some degree of self-evaluation is necessary. Let's face it. At the current juncture, the Organization cannot boast the ability, political will and institutional capacity to ensure that it effectively responds to numerous risks and challenges to our security and stability. Failure of the OSCE and its related structures to resolve the conflicts on the territories of participating States requires review and in-depth evaluation of programmes and specific operational and functional aspects of the OSCE activities. It is obvious that there can be no business as usual. The Organization must adapt to new situations and address the needs and requests from participating States to remain relevant.

Restoration of Azerbaijan's infringed sovereignty and territorial integrity last year brought considerable changes to political and security landscape in the South Caucasus region and opened up greater prospects for cooperation and development. The trilateral statement signed on 10 November 2020 by the leaders of Armenia, Azerbaijan and the Russian Federation put an end to the armed conflict and provided a clear guidance for attaining sustainable peace, security and stability in our region. Furthermore, the trilateral statement of 11 January 2021 signed by the leaders of the three countries envisages the implementation of a number of practical steps to open economic and transport links in the region.

With the end of the armed conflict, Azerbaijan entered into a new phase of post-conflict rehabilitation, reconstruction and reintegration. Sustaining and consolidating peace, implementing rehabilitation activities, facilitating the return of IDPs to their homes is the absolute priority for Azerbaijan in the post-conflict period. In the post-conflict stage in the region OSCE's wide-ranging toolbox can be utilized in order to contribute to and support the realization of aforementioned trilateral statements. In this regard, we are looking forward to discussions within Working Session IV on conflict cycle and its post-conflict rehabilitation phase in particular.

Azerbaijan has also repeatedly expressed its readiness to normalize relations with Armenia on the basis of mutual recognition of and respect for each other's sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of internationally recognized borders, including through signing a peace treaty based on these principles. This has no alternative for long-term peace and stability in the region. Armenia is yet to reciprocate on this offer.

In conclusion, we thank once again the distinguished speakers for their remarks. We are looking forward to constructive discussions and wish the participants a successful conference.

Thank you, Madam Moderator.