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DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA
ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE

Statement

**In Response to the Address of Navi Pillay, the UN High Commissioner for
Human Rights
delivered by Ambassador Arman Kirakossian at the 1006th Meeting of the
OSCE Permanent Council
July 03, 2014**

Mr. Chairman,

We would like to warmly welcome the distinguished UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Ms. Navi Pillay and thank her for the comprehensive presentation.

At the outset we would like to stress the high level of cooperation between the Government of Armenia and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, which we enjoyed during the whole period of able leadership of Ms. Pillay. We particularly appreciate personal engagement and dedication of Ms. Pillay in addressing the issues of human rights and fundamental freedoms, raised by our Delegations in New York and Geneva.

We value UN Special Procedures and Universal Periodic Review Process of the Human Rights Council, which are important mechanisms for assessment of implementation of commitments by the UN member states.

In the same vein we also acknowledge the high relevance of annual reports of Your esteemed Office. We would like to mention two important developments outlined in the last report of the OHCHR, namely the creation of a database on practical means to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and adoption by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination a general recommendation on combating racist hate speech. It is an important early warning signal, indicating that hate speech, if not prevented or halted, might lead to genocide. We also welcome attention of Ms. Pillay to the hate crimes in the OSCE area, which was manifested in the statements of the OHCHR.

Genocide prevention and protection of ethnic and religious communities are among key priorities of my country and its interaction with the OHCHR. We appreciate participation and contribution of Ms. Pillay in the High level Panel discussion dedicated to the 65th Anniversary of the Convention on the Prevention and

Punishment of the Crime of Genocide within the frames of the 25th Meeting of the Human Rights Council. We also highly value the role and involvement of the OHCHR in addressing the issue of protection of ethnic and religious communities in Syria, particularly the Christian communities suffering from the terrorist attacks. We are grateful to Ms. Pillay for her operative and positive response in regard to the terrorist attack against the town of Kessab and surrounding villages, which resulted in forced displacement of its Armenian population.

We fully share the view of Ms. Pillay that human rights violations are among the root causes of every form of insecurity. We would like to add that upholding human rights is the key to the settlement of conflicts.

We were pleased to hear about the effective interaction between the OHCHR and the ODIHR. My Delegation would support closer cooperation between the OSCE and the OHCHR in such important spheres as freedom of media, freedom of expression, strengthening civil society institutions, combating impunity and hate speech. We share Your concern on addressing the problem of forgotten rights-holders, including people living in disputed territories. Their rights and fundamental freedoms should be upheld regardless the status of the territories they live in. In this regard we deem important ensuring unrestricted humanitarian access of the international community, in particular UN special procedures and the UNHCR to such territories.

We encourage further cooperation also at the level of field presences. The latter are important assets, enabling us to reach practical results on the ground, supported by the host country authorities.

In conclusion, we would like once again to extend our sincere gratitude for the fruitful cooperation with Ms. Pillay during her term and wish her all success in future endeavours.

Thank you.