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STATEMENT OF H.E. MS. SALOME ZOURABICHVILI,
MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF GEORGIA
ON BEHALF OF THE GUUAM
AT THE 12th MEETING OF THE OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

SOFIA, DECEMBER 6, 2004

Mr. Chairman,
Honored guests and Distinguished Delegates,

It is both, a pleasure and an honor to be in the midst of you and to have the opportunity to address this auspicious forum on behalf of the GUUAM member states – Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me stress in the beginning, that we commend dynamic processes of consolidating civil society, rule of law and democratic institutions currently taking place in Ukraine and welcome the will of the Ukrainian people to live in free, open and democratic society. GUUAM reiterates its support of the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of borders of Ukraine and warn against any attempts to interfere into its internal affairs.

Mr. Chairman,

We take pride that GUUAM has ultimately emerged as an important stage in the consolidation of geopolitical pluralism in the space of the former Soviet Union. In that respect it has both a strategic and practical dimension. The strategic dimension focuses on the importance of facilitating cooperation and strengthening the independence as well as consolidating regional security in all spheres of activity of the states involved in GUUAM. But its basic thrust is towards not only consolidation of their independence, but also the enhancement of access for the participating countries to all of the different facets of international cooperation, particularly the international economy and that brings me to the second dimension of GUUAM, namely the practical dimension. But most importantly, our countries are united by the shared democratic values – respect for the human rights, tolerance, entrepreneurship, and for international standards of conduct – that brings us together in a partnership for democratic peace.

Mr. Chairman,

GUUAM is grateful to those, who had placed trust in our Organization from the very beginning. I would like to thank the United States Government for its assistance and support in almost every aspect of our activities. I can not but express our profound gratitude to the OSCE for its significant contribution to GUUAM's consolidation. Suffice it to say, that OSCE was the first international organization where GUUAM started making regular joint statements on a widest range of matters, and holds regular consultations with the OSCE Chairmanship and other OSCE Delegations.

The ultimate goal of the GUUAM countries is our full integration in the European structures. We are actively involved in the Euro-Atlantic security architecture and are doing all in our power, to contribute to our common security and stability.

We have always been consistent in drawing the attention of the OSCE community to the need of achieving a speedy solution of the unresolved conflicts on the territory of the GUUAM States on the basis of respect for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and inviolability of international borders, compliance with relevant UN Security Council resolutions and the OSCE decisions.

OSCE has to prove its capability to safeguard the implementation of its own norms and principles in dealing with conflicts which present the major impediment for building of the indivisible European security. In this regard, we strongly believe that the issue of unresolved conflicts should always be at the forefront of the OSCE daily agenda. We call on the OSCE for more active engagement and decisive actions for the settlement of these unresolved conflicts on the territories of OSCE participating states.

I would like to mention the support of GUUAM for the efforts of the Republic of Moldova to contribute to the consolidation of regional security, through launching the project of the Declaration on Security and Stability of the Republic of Moldova.

At the same time, GUUAM supports the idea of forming an OSCE international inspection commission, put forward by Moldova at the Permanent Council on 30 November, 2004.

GUUAM has long placed the threat of terrorism on top of its agenda. The relevant Working Group, composed of experts from appropriate government agencies of our countries, holds its meetings on a regular basis. GUUAM is working on establishment of Virtual Center on combating terrorism, organized crime, drug trafficking and other dangerous types of crime and Interstate Information Management System (VC/IIMS) constituting principal and infrastructural basis of GUUAM cooperation in counter-terrorism sphere. Our States actively participate in the international anti-terrorist coalition. We have to keep in mind that criminal and terrorist groups, created and developed by separatist and extremist forces, usually are based on the territories uncontrolled by central government, in the so-called "Black Holes" that emerge as a result of armed separatism and external aggression. Revenues from the unlawful activities of these criminal groupings including drugs and arms trafficking are used for financing of terrorism and aggressive separatism, thus creating vicious circle of crime. We express our deep concern with economic links to certain foreign business and financial structures with separatist regimes, especially with financial operations as a matter of fact representing laundering of money raised from unlawful acts in conflict zones.

Next year we will celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act and the 15th anniversary of the Charter of Paris. In this connection we propose that at the next Annual Security Review Conference we discuss the implementation of principles and commitments enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of Paris, which continues to be a blueprint of our common approach to security in the Euro-Atlantic area.

There is no doubt, that the cornerstone of our common security is the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty). The timely ratification of the Adapted CFE Treaty and its entry into force will be a major achievement in the Euro-Atlantic security architecture. Azerbaijan, Georgia and Moldova have more than once reiterated that the main obstacle to the ratification process is the fulfillment of the overdue Istanbul commitments by the Russian Federation with regard to Georgia and Moldova. We want to once again express our strong confidence that through meaningful negotiations and for the sake of our mutual security, the Russian Federation will carry out its international obligations and thereby foster the lasting peace on the European continent.

We strongly believe, that the OSCE Border Monitoring Operation (BMO) in Georgia, is one of the most successful missions of our Organization, simultaneously making a tremendous contribution to Georgia's border security at

the most volatile and controversial segments of the Georgian-Russian border. Therefore, we strongly support the BMO's extension for the sake of peace and stability in the region.

Thank you