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Statement by the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan *2017 Annual Security Review Conference*

Working session III: Conventional arms control and confidence-and security- building measures: challenges and prospects

Mr. Moderator,

At the outset, I would like to join previous speakers in thanking today's distinguished keynote speakers for their insightful presentations.

Arms control and confidence-and security building measures enshrined in the relevant OSCE documents, lies at the core of our common vision of creating a security community based on mutual trust and confidence.

We approach to dialogue on arms control and CSBMs not as an end in itself, but as a way of finding solutions to numerous threats and challenges to our security and stability. We remain firm in our belief that updating and modernizing CSBMs should start with comprehensive review of current security environment and challenges. Equally, we should have sober analysis of current state of affairs around the level of implementation of existing regimes and difficulties in this regard. In this regard, we recall that Ministerial Council Declaration adopted in Hamburg stressed the interrelation between CSBMs and conventional arms control, and the wider politico-military context.

Large portion of existing CSBMs were developed for the purpose of alleviating potential risks stemming from miscalculations or misperceptions. Yet, miscalculations or misperceptions become irrelevant in face of harsh reality of aggression and occupation. Under these circumstances, we need those measures that can be effective in dealing with reality of active military conflict.

Such measures can be part of updating and modernizing of current Vienna Document helping find comprehensive solution to conflicts. A measure designed for mere prevention of tensions may be counterproductive, if it is not synchronized with conflict resolution process and withdrawal of occupying forces. Our dialogue should not pave the way for abusing the value of CSBMs for consolidation of status-quo or propagation of the results of illegal use of force.

In this context, the Delegation of Azerbaijan is of the view that in parallel to efforts of modernizing the CSBM regime in accordance with evolving security environment and military-technological developments, due attention must be paid to elaboration of measures aimed at preventing and reversing illegal military activities in the territories beyond the legitimate control of participating States. This is the way how CSBMs regime can maintain its relevance for the regions suffering from illegal military presence and occupation of territories.

Mr. Moderator,

Due to continued military occupation by Armenia, part of internationally recognized territories of Azerbaijan is turned into a grey zone with accumulation of undeclared, unaccounted and uncontrolled military equipment. The occupying state conceals its military potential from relevant control and verification mechanisms, as it illegally transfers and diverts weapons and ammunitions to these territories and engages in illegal military build-up therein. As a result, the zone of application of agreed CSBMs is fragmented to the detriment of functioning of entire regime. Such a continued non-compliance with the letter and spirit of agreed commitments undermines the core principle of reciprocity, and thus, erodes relevance of the confidence-and-security building measures in our region.

In parallel, we face a situation that the participating State acting against basic principles of inter-State relations, such as respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, fabricate allegations and claims transparency from the aggrieved State, which is forced to deal with serious security challenges stemming from the former's aggression.

In light of the above-mentioned, protracted conflicts in the OSCE area, as the most imminent threat to stability and security, should be in the center of our dialogue, in particular in the context of addressing the challenges stemming from existence of foreign military forces in territories of participating States without their consent.

In conclusion, we once again thank the panelists for their contributions and wish them every success in their future endeavors.

Thank you, Mr. Moderator.