



Statement by the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan

1056th Meeting of the Permanent Council 04 June 2015

on the International Day for Protection of Children

Mr. Chairperson,

The Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan joins other Delegations in marking the June 1 as the International Day for Child Protection.

Protection of children is a priority of the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The State Program of the Republic of Azerbaijan on Child Policy encompasses actions on improvement of living conditions, health, education and future employment of children. Series of events are being organized with a special focus on children from vulnerable groups, such as children deprived of parental care, with disabilities, from national minorities, as well as refugee and IDP children.

It is with deep regret that more than 250 thousands of Azerbaijani children mark the International Children's Day in the shadow of continued violations of their basic human rights and fundamental freedoms. As a result of the ongoing aggression of the Republic of Armenia thousands of children have been forcefully expelled from their homes, hundreds became orphans and disabled, were killed or taken hostage, and the whereabouts of some of them are still unknown. In the course of military operations hundreds of schools, kindergartens, boarding schools for orphans, medical and cultural institutions were completely destroyed. Moreover, almost on a regular basis children residing in the vicinity of the conflict zone fall victim to deliberate attacks of the armed forces of Armenia, including by booby traps, mines, snipers and shelling on civilian objects.

In this regard, we recall the OSCE commitments regarding the protection of children. In particular, in 1999 in Istanbul, the OSCE participating States agreed to regularly address the issue of rights of children, especially in conflict and post-conflict situations, including refugees and internally displaced children in the work of the OSCE. The protection of children in armed conflicts should be regarded as an important aspect of any comprehensive strategy to resolve conflicts and thus, should be properly addressed within the OSCE.

In light of the above-mentioned, we call on all OSCE participating States, OSCE executive structures to pay close attention to the issue of the protection of the children in the OSCE area, in particular in the context of armed conflicts.

Thank you Mr. Chairperson.