



**Statement by the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan
1092th Meeting of the Permanent Council,
10 March 2016**

in response to the State Secretary of the Federal Ministry of Germany for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, Mr. Ralf Kleindiek

Mr. Chairperson,

The Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan warmly welcomes Mr. Ralf Kleindiek at the Permanent Council and thanks him for the comprehensive presentation.

Advancement of women is an important element of maintenance of international peace and security, as well as dialogue and harmony within society. With equal rights, women can be more important agents of changes contributing to comprehensive security in all three dimensions. Therefore, Azerbaijan remains to be a proponent of a cross-dimensional approach towards addressing gender perspective taking into account economic, political, social and cultural peculiarities of different societies.

Azerbaijan has a proud history of enabling women to play a greater role in society: first ever secular school for girls in the Muslim world was established in Baku in the beginning of the XX century; the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic was one of the first countries in the world to grant women the right to vote in 1918. This tradition of equality has been continued since Azerbaijan regained its independence with the rights of women and men enshrined in the National Constitution and with Azerbaijan ratifying the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), as well other relevant national and international legal documents in this field. Protection of the rights of women and increasing participation of women in social and political life of the country - are the main objectives and purposes of the State policy.

Mr. Chairperson,

Azerbaijan attaches utmost importance to implementation of the landmark United Nations Resolution 1325 and subsequent resolution in all their aspects, in particular those related to ensuring the rule of law in armed conflicts and post-conflict situations, and comprehensively promoting justice and accountability in ways that further equal rights of women and the rights to participation in decision-making.

During its presidency in the United Nations Security Council in October 2013, Azerbaijan convened an open debate on women, rule of law and transitional justice in conflict affected situations.

Azerbaijan, with 297.731 IDP and 156.000 refugee women, attaches particular importance to the issue of protection of women in armed conflicts. As a result of the ongoing aggression of the Republic of Armenia thousands of women have been forcefully dispelled from their homes, hundreds were killed or taken hostage, and the whereabouts of some of them are still unknown. According to the estimates of the State Commission on Prisoners of War, Hostages and Missing Persons of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the fate of close 255 women still remains unknown, as a result of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

The protection of women, as well as fight against impunity for the most serious crimes of international concern against women and girls in the context of 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 this regard, we recall, in particular the Ljubljana decision of 2005, where participating States agreed to take into account the important role and the particular needs of women and girls in implementing government policies on protection and durable solutions including voluntary return, resettlement, rehabilitation, (re)integration or repatriation of refugees and internally displaced persons in safety and dignity.

It is with this understanding we welcome the discussions on the Addendum to the OSCE Gender Action plan and deem it extremely important to adequately reflect and elaborate on all priority areas identified in the Action Plan with a view to delivering a comprehensive document.

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 women in the OSCE area, in particular in the context of armed conflicts.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.