



Statement by the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan 2016 Annual Security Review Conference

Working session III: Bolstering the OSCE's conflict cycle toolbox

Mr. Moderator,

The Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan thanks distinguished keynote speakers for their valuable contributions today.

In line with decisions and documents of the OSCE, the Organization is a key instrument for conflict resolution, as well as early warning and early action, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation. Each of these elements comprises integral parts of entire OSCE concept of conflict cycle, thus, each of them are of equal importance and deserves equal attention in the context of efforts of bolstering OSCE's toolbox. In this context, selective promotion of some directions, preparations and circulations of non-consensus guidance papers, which usually attempted to be introduced as OSCE tools in conflict cycle, lack of or insufficient work in such areas as conflict resolution, post-conflict rehabilitation, including protection of rights of displaced persons remain to be source of concern when it comes to strengthening Organization's capacity within the conflict cycle.

The Azerbaijani Delegation is of the view that the Vilnius MC Decision 3/11 should guide any initiative taken by the OSCE Secretariat, institutions or field missions in those areas that specifically identified in the Decision. We believe that substantive work and discussions on elements of this decision is still needed. For tangible progress, it is necessary to ensure that the aim of deliberations on conflict cycle is to assess how better implement the decision, based on previous OSCE related documents.

At the same time, while continuing deliberations on various elements of the conflict cycle, it is important to pay renewed attention what were the reasons of non-implementation by the OSCE structures and participating States of the commitments throughout its late history, as we could not use effectively early warning, early action, conflict management, conflict resolution and post-conflict rehabilitation tools which were in possession of the OSCE. We should address the question whether to make more use of existing OSCE mechanisms and procedures or to develop new mechanisms. It is within this context that our Delegation would like to share its assessment on current state of affairs in implementing OSCE's functions with regard to different elements of conflict cycle. Identifying areas of concern can serve for relevant structures to streamline their activities with regard to bolstering Organization's capacities in conflict cycle.

As for early warning and action, it goes without saying that to produce desired outcome proper collection, collation and analysis of information is of vital importance. In this regard, we are of strong view that the OSCE Secretariat and relevant institutions should pay utmost attention to credibility and reliability of any information they receive. The relevant actors involved in OSCE's early warning activities should exercise utmost care that their sources are of *bona fide* nature, as reflected in their mandate. Past experience demonstrates serious deficiencies in this direction.

Comprehensiveness of early warning process is equal importance. Unfortunately, on many occasions, we observe tendency of not paying due attention to analyze a situation in a comprehensive manner. In many cases, the OSCE institutions tend to act before properly analyzing the underlying context, which in turn does not serve to the aims of early warning exercise. In this regard, we would encourage the CPC to elaborate on this issue and inform us on the steps taken with a view to ensuring the comprehensiveness in the course of early warning and early action.

As early warning is undeniably interlinked with early action, we would like to stress the central and primary role of respective decision taking bodies of the Organization, in particular the Permanent Council. The Secretariat, institutions and field missions while exercising their functions in terms of early warning should act in their advisory capacity supporting the decision making bodies in formulating any action.

Conflict resolution and crisis management capacities of the OSCE should be maintained and updated in line with the requirements of today's security environment. In fact, this Organization has internationally mandated specific role in the settlement of the conflicts. Accordingly, any process aimed at strengthening the role of the OSCE and increasing its relevance for today's European security system cannot succeed without properly addressing the conflicts. These are test cases for the OSCE to prove its relevance in the European security architecture.

The same also applies to organization's crisis management capabilities. Since the beginning of our participation at the OSCE, we have been proponent of strong OSCE capabilities in conflict resolution and crisis management. Recent developments in our region only strengthen our conviction, in this regard. We are of the view that crisis management capacities of the OSCE needs to be strengthened and modernized on the basis of civilian and police components, taking into account the recent experiences in peacekeeping.

Mediation is another important area that requires close attention. We have clearly expressed our position with regard to mediation activities of the Organization, in particular in the context of activities of the co-chairmanship of the OSCE Minsk Group. Taking this opportunity we would like to reiterate that mediation, as an element of the OSCE conflict resolution efforts, should be conducted always in line with the norms and principles of international law, the UN Charter and Helsinki Decalogue, the principles of neutrality, impartiality, compliance with the agreed mandate, respect for sovereignty of states and in conformity with their obligations under international law. In this regard, it is imperative for the OSCE to effectively oversee the settlement processes of existing conflicts on the basis of mandates of respective negotiation formats and decisions and documents adopted with regard to specific conflicts and give proper guidance for the mediation efforts. In particular, the much-needed revitalization of the OSCE Minsk Group in its full format could re-establish OSCE's ownership over the process and provide valuable channel for dialogue within the Organization.

We acknowledge possible role of OSCE field presences could play in all elements of conflict cycle, acting always in line with their mandate. Being structure of the OSCE, all the field missions should always act in accordance with the norms and principles of the Organization, most notably respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the participating States and taking into due account their legitimate interests. Needless to say that, any deviation from this rule can only undermine confidence, and may lead to cessation to support for their activities.

In light of above-mentioned, we once again remind that the participating States continue to be the sole master of activities of the Organization, including in the sphere of conflict cycle and any decision related to reviewing of existing capacities or creating new ones in these area can only be taken by relevant decision-taking bodies of the Organization in accordance with established rules.

I thank you, Mr. Moderator.