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2008
Working Session III
Statement by the Delegation of Sweden**

Mr Moderator,

Since last year's ASRC, we have seen a return of conflict prevention, crisis management, conflict resolution and confidence-building to the very top of the OSCE agenda. Indeed, recent developments have also demonstrated that OSCE mechanisms and procedures, many of which were shaped in a different security context, are still highly relevant.

Ambassador Heikki Talvitie, the Special Envoy of the Chairman-in-Office, has just updated us on the current efforts of the Finnish Chairmanship in the protracted conflicts in Transnistria, South Ossetia, Abkhazia and Nagorno-Karabach. Sweden wholeheartedly supports those efforts, and the pragmatic and constructive approach of the Chairmanship.

In the Georgian breakaway regions, we continue to have an unstable situation that gives rise to serious concern. The situation is particularly stressed in Abkhazia, where Russia has recently taken a number of steps that have contributed to deteriorated relations between Georgia and Russia. The UAV-incident in April also added to tensions in this region. The OSCE's Vienna Document provided Russia and Georgia with a useful format for dialogue and risk reduction.

One positive element regarding Abkhazia is the peace plan recently presented by president Saakashvili. Discussions on this initiative, along with a direct dialogue between Tbilisi and Sukhumi, would go a long way towards possible conflict resolution and reducing tensions. In this context, we call on all parties to respect Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and to take action to rebuild confidence and seek a peaceful and long-term solution to the conflict.

We all agree that the United Nations has the leading role in the international efforts aimed at the peaceful resolution of the Abkhazian conflict. But the OSCE has a responsibility to address *every* crisis within its region and should make full use of its mechanisms in support of the UN-led peace process.

Mr Moderator,

In the past year, and in particular during the last months, we have seen perhaps the most decisive developments in the protracted conflicts over the last decade. This entails opportunities and challenges alike. One of the key questions brought to the forefront is how the OSCE responds to crises.

As the recent incidents in Georgia have demonstrated, there is a serious potential that events in and around areas of protracted conflicts will escalate out of control. In such situations, not only efforts at true conflict resolution, but also the firm handling of different incidents arising, are of critical importance. Let me stress some points in this context:

- 1. To be relevant, the OSCE must be able to respond quickly.** Our late response as an institution to the Georgian missile incident last August was not acceptable. However, the more expeditious handling of the UAV-incident showed that the OSCE can play a useful role.
- 2. It is a major asset to have recourse to both PC and FSC,** including in joint meetings. The specific politico-military competence of the organization enables us to discuss political and military matters – even quite technical ones – in an integrated and fact-focused manner. We saw good examples of this when the expert group on the Georgian missile incident reported, as well as during the recent UAV-related debates.
- 3. It is also an asset to have agreed and established mechanisms for crises or emergencies.** The OSCE has a unique tool-box of politico-military instruments for crises, including chapter III of the Vienna Document 1999, on risk reduction and the MC Decision number 3 from Bucharest, which have been used during this last year. I would also like to mention the simple possibility of calling together an extra meeting of the PC, which was a useful tool *inter alia* after the Declaration of Independence in Kosovo.
- 4. It is an advantage that the crisis dialogue in the OSCE occurs, as everything in this organization, in the context of commitments to values.**
- 5. The concrete results of such a dialogue are of course largely a question of political will. But the political dialogue itself is precious and the OSCE is indispensable in this regard.** This is the one international organization

where all participating states have a great interest in the conflicts and at the same time all interested and concerned states participate. It can provide for transparency, continuous dialogue as well as diplomatic and political attention.

6. The Chairman-in-Office is in charge of the organization's crisis management. Sweden would like to commend the Finnish chairmanship for its proactive handling of the Georgia crisis, including the activities of the Chairman-in-Office and Special Envoy Talvitie, its public communication as well as the Chairmanship's steady conduct of various meetings in Vienna in co-operation with the FSC chair.

Mr Moderator,

If and when we have to deal with a serious crisis in the OSCE region again, we all share the responsibility to act promptly, using our different platforms and if necessary the appropriate mechanisms to reduce tensions, build confidence and manage a way forward. To find ways to further develop cooperation and strengthen the complementarity between the OSCE, the European Union, the Council of Europe and the United Nations in this regard is of utmost importance.

The recent experiences show that conflict prevention, crisis management, conflict resolution and confidence-building together with the organization's cross-dimensional competences must remain at the core of the OSCE and our future work. They also show that we have the necessary means and mechanisms, if there is a common will among participating states to make use of them.

I thank you.