

**PERMANENT COUNCIL N°761
14 MAY 2009**

**Statement delivered by Mr. Didier Gonzalez,
Deputy Permanent representative of France to the OSCE
on behalf of Russia, the United States of America and France**

Madame Chairperson, on behalf of the three co-chairing countries of the Minsk Group, Russia, the United States of America and France, I would like to read the following statement issued on 11 May 2009 by the Co-Chairs of the Minsk Group.

« Fifteen years ago large-scale hostilities ceased in Nagorno-Karabakh, in what had become the most violent conflict on the territory of the former Soviet Union. The leaders at the time made a courageous and farsighted decision to instruct their military commanders to sign an agreement on an immediate ceasefire with no fixed term.

Unfortunately, this ceasefire has been imperfect and tragically every year lives are lost along the front lines. We sincerely hope that a peace settlement, towards which the parties are now working, will allow new generations to grow up in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh without experiencing the horrors of war.

Until then, we call on the parties to implement the provisions of the ceasefire, the "Proposals on strengthening the ceasefire in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict" agreed in 1995, as well as the Co-Chairs' proposals at the 2008 Helsinki Ministerial Conference to pull back snipers from the front lines.

We express our hope that the present leaders will be able to overcome the complex causes and difficult consequences of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and create an atmosphere of security, trust, cooperation and fruitful communication between peoples in the region, allowing them to live in peace as good neighbors. We further hope the leaders will succeed, in cooperation with the Minsk Group Co-Chairs, in finalizing their Basic Principles for a peaceful settlement. »

Thank you for your attention.