

STATEMENT

**delivered by Dr. Gagik Hovhannisyan, Director of Arms Control and International Security
Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia at the 2017 Annual Security
Review Conference**

**Working Session III: Conventional arms control and confidence and security building
measures: Challenges and opportunities**

29 June, 2017

Mr Chairperson,

We would like to thank all speakers for their interesting and thorough remarks.

Effective and verifiable Conventional Arms Control regime and Confidence and Security Building measures remain crucial tools to stabilize our security environment. Given the complex nature of current security challenges, we believe that the reinvigoration of interlocking web of CSBMs and Arms Control through meaningful dialogue is timely and important step forward in addressing the deficit of trust and confidence in our region. At the same time, implementation of our commitments remains an indispensable prerequisite.

The persistence of existing conflicts can not be a justification for stepping down from politically and legally binding commitments undertaken in the field of arms control and CSBMs. The implementation of existing commitments in their letter and spirit will stabilize the security environment, increase trust and predictability and impact positively on conflict resolution.

Mr Chairperson,

Against evolution of global strategic environment and introduction of small and mobile force structures as well as military spending, yet one participating state in the OSCE region Azerbaijan continues its heavy and uncontrolled military buildup in stark contradiction to its legally and politically binding commitments as well as guiding norms of the Arms control regime, namely transparency, sufficiency, verifications and limitations.

These dangerous tendencies resulted in accumulation of heavy offensive weaponry used for the conduct of unnotified large- scale military exercises in close proximity of our borders, which receives no clarifications at all to dispel our concerns. Unfortunately, the silence or unaddressed calls of all other participating states encourages Azerbaijan to continue its unapologetic policy posing uncontrollable security risk and threat for the whole region. Moreover, our requests for clarification on military exercises with Azerbaijan by Turkey remain similarly unanswered under technical pretexts, which doubles our concerns undermining military transparency, predictability and security.

Mr Chairperson,

Armenia remains committed to implementation of its obligations in the field of Arms Control and CSBMs in their letter and spirit. In this vein, in the spirit of military transparency and openness let me reiterate information about the joint military below threshold exercise “Cooperation 2017”,

which will be conducted jointly with the Russian Federation to be held in Armenia from 25 to 29 September, 2017. The total number of troops involved in the exercise will be 3800. The initial information about the exercise has been reflected in the annual calendar and distributed through OSCE Communication Network.

Finally, in the light of the changes of our security environment, we see the modernization and update of the Vienna Document as an opportunity to adapt it to the needs of current security environment. This should certainly be achieved through dialogue in the shared interest of all OSCE participating states.

Thank you.