



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on Geneva Talks

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Carol Fuller
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
November 12, 2009

The United States appreciates the joint coordination of the November 11 Geneva discussions on security and stability arrangements in Georgia, and remains committed to the success of this process.

We welcome the relatively constructive exchange of views among participants, and continue to urge all parties to work together in a cooperative and practical spirit to make concrete progress on issues of concern. The Joint Incident Prevention and Response Mechanisms have helped in this regard, and demonstrate what can be achieved when all parties to the conflict work together. We hope the mechanism meetings will continue to take place regularly, and urge all parties to participate actively and pragmatically, and to work together to prevent and respond to incidents.

While we can all agree that the mechanisms have been a success, Madam Chair, we all know very well that problems remain. The security situation in Georgia remains tense, and civilians continue to suffer from a precarious humanitarian and human rights situation. We must do everything we can to resolve these problems, and to reduce the tension and unpredictability facing ordinary citizens. We do believe the international community has a valuable role to play, and we remain convinced that an international presence in the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia is critical. We will continue to urge respect for the human rights of all individuals in the conflict areas; to call for free and unhindered access to the whole of Georgia for groups addressing humanitarian and human rights concerns; and to call for the safe, dignified, and voluntary return of internally displaced persons and refugees.

As we have consistently stated, Russia's ongoing failure to implement fully the provisions of the August 12 and September 8 agreements remains a matter of grave concern. Russia committed not only to withdraw its troops to positions held prior to the start of hostilities, but also to provide free access for humanitarian assistance to the South Ossetia and Abkhazia regions of Georgia. We remind Russia that its characterization of these regions as independent does not relieve it of these commitments.

The United States remains committed to the success of the discussion process in Geneva, and to achieving real progress on security and humanitarian matters. Our commitment to Georgia's sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders is unwavering.

Thank you, Madam Chair.