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**Protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and
their implications for international peace,
security and development**

**Security Council
Sixty-eighth year**

**Identical letters dated 12 November 2013 from the Permanent
Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the
Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council**

I have the honour to transmit herewith a statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, dated 7 November 2013, regarding the twenty-fifth round of the Geneva international discussions (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex issued as a document of the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 34, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Kaha **Imnadze**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative



Annex to the identical letters dated 12 November 2013 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia regarding the twenty-fifth round of the Geneva international discussions

The twenty-fifth round of the Geneva international discussions was held on 6 November 2013. The participants of the Geneva discussions took part, in their individual capacity, in the two Working Groups: Working Group I, focusing on security and stability in the occupied Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions of Georgia, and Working Group II, focusing on issues related to the safe and dignified return of internally displaced persons and refugees to the places of their original residence. The discussions were co-chaired by the representatives of the European Union, the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and attended by participants from Georgia, the Russian Federation and the United States of America. The Head of the Provisional Administration of the former South Ossetian Autonomous District and the Chairman of the Government of the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia, as well as the representatives of the Sokhumi and Tskhinvali occupation regimes also took part in the twenty-fifth round of the Geneva discussions.

On 5 November, an information session was held on pragmatic approaches to freedom of movement. The invited experts familiarized participants with the practical aspects of freedom of movement in a conflict setting, and stressed that humanitarian access and unhindered movement should be guaranteed under all circumstances. In the framework of Working Group I, participants from Georgia focused extensively on the security situation in the occupied regions and their adjacent areas, which continues to pose a direct threat to stability in the country. The Georgian participants condemned the installation of barbed-wire fences and embankments by the Russian occupation forces along the occupation line in the Tskhinvali and Abkhazia regions, an activity that has further intensified and has been extended in recent months. It was once again clearly emphasized that the installation of barbed-wire fences and embankments by the Russian occupation forces along the occupation line in the Tskhinvali and Abkhazia regions and the expansion of the area of occupation are illegal under international law as they blatantly violate the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and the inviolability of internationally recognized borders, and are a clear breach of the 12 August 2008 ceasefire agreement. The incidents of intimidation and acts of violence against the local residents that accompanied the latest wave of installations of barbed-wire fences in the villages of Ditsi (Gori district) and Dvani (Kareli district) have been brought to the attention of the co-Chairs. The participants from Georgia once again called upon the Russian Federation to reverse these illegal activities, and welcomed the readiness of the co-Chairs to organize an agreed joint visit of the participants of the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanisms to the sites. In the course of the meeting, the necessity of ensuring the access of the European Union Monitoring Mission to both regions, which will enable the mission to fully implement its mandate in Georgia, was particularly stressed. The Georgian participants emphasized the urgency of resuming the work of the Gali Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism without precondition, and in its full composition, particularly in the context of the increased

practice of imposing detention for crossing the occupation line. Furthermore, the deteriorating security situation in the occupied regions proves the crucial importance of the creation of effective international security arrangements in both regions. In the framework of the discussions of Working Group I, the participants addressed one of the central items on the agenda pertaining to the non-use of force. Unfortunately, regardless of a unilateral legally binding commitment to the non-use of force made by the President of Georgia in 2010, and reiterated by the Parliament of Georgia in March 2013, the Russian Federation has not yet undertaken to make a reciprocal pledge. The Georgian side once again called upon the Russian side to make a unilateral legally binding declaration on the non-use of force.

The Georgian participants value the efforts of the co-Chairs, the European Union, the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, in facilitating Moscow's pledge on the non-use of force and believe that their initiative to advance work at the expert level on a draft statement by the participants of the Geneva international discussions on the non-use of force was a step in a right direction. The participants from Georgia therefore encouraged all participants to constructively engage in the drafting process at the expert level, and again reiterated their readiness to reflect on the key aspects of the document during the twenty-sixth round of the discussions.

In Working Group II, the Georgian participants expressed their deep concern over the humanitarian and human rights impact of the installation of barbed-wire fences and embankments in the Tskhinvali and Abkhazia regions, which represent the violation of fundamental human rights. It was emphasized with deep regret that the installation of artificial obstacles along the occupation line significantly affects the livelihoods of the local population, divides families and communities and prevents people-to-people contacts. The Georgian participants brought to the attention of the co-moderators the concrete consequences of such illegal activities, which have blocked the access of local populations to their agricultural lands, water systems and cemeteries, and prevented residents from gaining access to emergency services. The evidence of the restriction of the right to liberty and security, protection of property, freedom of movement, right to education and other civil, social and economic rights were extensively discussed. The participants from Georgia noted that Russia, as an occupying power, exercising effective control over the Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions of Georgia, bears the responsibility under international humanitarian and human rights law for ensuring the protection of the fundamental rights and freedoms of the population residing in the occupied territories.

In the course of the meeting, the Georgian participants once again stressed the priority of addressing the existing humanitarian needs of the conflict-affected population and the persistent violation of human rights in an effective, non-politicized and sustainable manner. The Georgian participants reiterated their offer to ensure the supply of gas to the Akhalkalaki residents, and emphasized the significance of the continuation of confidence-building mechanisms. The importance of the creation of human rights monitoring mechanisms in the occupied regions and the urgency of facilitating humanitarian access for international organizations to those regions were particularly underscored.

In Working Group II, the Georgian participants stressed the importance of respecting the right of internally displaced persons to safe and dignified return and

called upon other participants to make concrete moves in that direction. The co-moderators emphasized the efforts of Georgia to address the issue of missing persons and appealed to all participants to continue cooperation to that end.

The twenty-sixth round of the Geneva international discussions will be held on 17 and 18 December 2013. Georgia will continue its traditionally constructive cooperation with the co-Chairs to ensure the substantive discussions in both Working Groups.

Tbilisi, 7 November 2013
