



## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

### **Response to the Co-Chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group**

As delivered by Ambassador Ian Kelly  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
March 22, 2012

We would like to welcome the three Co-Chairmen of the Minsk Group to the Permanent Council and thank them for their tireless efforts to assist the sides in reaching agreement on a peaceful resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

The United States reiterates its strong commitment and dedication to the OSCE's Minsk Process. As a result of efforts by the parties and the Co-Chair countries at all levels, progress has been made in the past few years towards a peaceful settlement. We commend the parties' expressed readiness to accelerate agreement on the Basic Principles based on the work that has been done until now, as stated in the joint statement made in Sochi on January 23, 2012. We urge all the sides to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict to work with the Co-Chairs to make progress towards a peaceful settlement.

We recall the statement made in Deauville in May 2011 by the presidents of France, Russia, and the United States. The statement noted that only a negotiated settlement can lead to peace, stability and reconciliation, and that these accomplishments will, in turn, open opportunities for regional development and cooperation.

The use of force created the current situation of confrontation and instability. Its use again would only bring more suffering and devastation, and would be condemned by the international community. We strongly urge the leaders of the sides to prepare their populations for peace and prosperity, not war.

The United States encourages the parties to put into action the January 2012 Sochi statement, including the confidence-building measures it foresees. We fully support the parties' decision to continue work on an investigative mechanism, as well as the development of humanitarian and people-to-people contacts.

As the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Minsk Process approaches, we recall in particular that the peoples of the region have suffered most from the consequences of war. Any further delay in reaching a settlement only prolongs their hardships and displacement.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.