

Joint Statement by Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation Sergey Lavrov, Secretary of State of the United States Hillary Rodham Clinton, and Foreign Minister of France Alain Juppé

March 22, 2012

On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the formal request to convene a conference on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, we, the Foreign Ministers of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair countries, call upon the sides to demonstrate the political will needed to achieve a lasting and peaceful settlement. As Presidents Medvedev, Obama, and Sarkozy reiterated in their joint statement at Deauville on May 24, 2011, only a negotiated settlement can lead to peace, stability, and reconciliation, and any attempt to use force to resolve the conflict would bring only more suffering to a region that has known uncertainty and insecurity for too long.

We recall that the peoples of the region have suffered most from the consequences of war, and any delay in reaching a settlement will only prolong their hardships. A new generation has come of age in the region with no first-hand memory of Armenians and Azeris living side by side, and prolonging these artificial divisions only deepens the wounds of war. For this reason, we urge the leaders of the sides to prepare their populations for peace, not war.

Progress toward peace has been made. The joint statements of our three Presidents at L'Aquila in 2009, Muskoka in 2010, and Deauville in 2011 outlined elements of a framework for a comprehensive peace settlement. Recently, the January 23, 2012, joint statement in Sochi, Russia, by Presidents Aliyev, Sargsian, and Medvedev expressed the commitment of the two sides to accelerate reaching agreement on the Basic Principles. We urge the leaders of the sides to complete work as soon as possible on the framework agreement and subsequent final settlement – based on the Helsinki Final Act principles of non-use or threat of force, territorial integrity, and self-determination and equal rights of peoples; the United Nations Charter; and norms and principles of international law – which will allow the entire region to move beyond the status quo toward a more secure and prosperous future.