

**Statement by**  
**Ms. Eka Tkeshelashvili**  
**State Minister of Georgia for Reintegration**  
**at the 2nd Ministerial Review Conference on the Geneva Declaration**  
**on Armed Violence and Development**  
**Geneva, 31 October 2011**

Mr. Chairman,

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen,

The impact of armed violence on the lives of civilians is an issue of the greatest relevance to my country—one-fifth of which was occupied after a brutal military campaign three years ago. As such, I am especially grateful to the government of Switzerland and the United Nations Development Program for organizing this high-level meeting on one of the great moral and political issues of our day. Armed violence is an urgent topic not just for Georgia, but for too many communities across the globe.

Georgia shares the view of the United Nations family that security and development, along with human rights, are inseparable and mutually reinforcing notions. There cannot be true development without security. And we cannot have genuine security without development. Their interdependence is evident.

Put another way: When the rule of arms prevails over the rule of law, development is the victim.

The occupied territories in my country offer ample evidence of this proposition. The occupied Georgian regions of Abkhazia and S. Ossetia are characterized by a general atmosphere of chaos and lawlessness. Human rights violations are rampant, and

violence targeting specific ethnic groups is the norm. Organized crime has the first, and often, the only word.

In such a toxic context, any national development is profoundly challenged. The economic and social agenda suffer, as do healthcare, natural resource management, environment protection and other areas. Stability of any kind is elusive, especially since the occupying power continues to defy the terms of the 6-point ceasefire agreement.

But the Government of Georgia, even in the face of such dire conditions, cannot betray the profound responsibilities it has for the well-being of all of its citizens, including those in the occupied territories. Blame-shifting would never be acceptable to us. As such, Georgia has undertaken the unilateral obligation never to use force in the occupied territories, thus ensuring one necessary pre-condition for the establishment of true security in these regions of Georgia. However, the Russian Federation refuses to reciprocate Georgia's pledge not to use force.

Georgia is also doing a great deal more to advance development and human rights in the occupied territories, despite the fragile peace. Our Government has adopted the "State Strategy on Occupied Territories: Engagement through Cooperation" and a related action plan. These envisage concrete actions to improve all aspects of the economic, social, educational, and security conditions under which the residents of the occupied territories live. We believe these programs and commitments will gradually contribute to the process of securing stability in Georgia and will use peaceful means to eventually reverse the status quo established by the use of force. Obviously, these efforts should advance in concert with the active participation of the international community.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation hopes that all the views, proposals, and individual experiences shared during the conference will be adequately followed up and translated into concrete actions, which can strengthen peace, security, and development worldwide.

Thank you.