



**Statement by the delegation of Georgia
At the OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
Warsaw, September 19-30, 2016**

**Working session I: Democratic institutions, including address by the Director
of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights**

Thank you Madam Moderator.

While Georgia aligns itself with the statement delivered by Poland on behalf of the European Union, allow me to make the following national remarks.

We highly value the excellent and long-standing cooperation with the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). Throughout the years, ODIHR's recommendations and assistance have been instrumental for enhancement of democratic developments in my country.

As 2016 marks the year of parliamentary elections for Georgia, it is of utmost importance for the Government of Georgia to hold free and fair elections scheduled for 8 October in full compliance with international standards and the best democratic practices.

In order to ensure maximum transparency and accountability, the Government of Georgia has extended invitation to monitor the elections to the ODIHR and the OSCE PA, along with a number of other key international organizations and partner States.

I would like to underline that the 2013 presidential and 2014 municipal elections were held in a free, fair and transparent environment, thus demonstrating the advancement of democratic processes in Georgia. These elections concluded Georgia's first ever cycle of democratic elections and peaceful transfer of power.

We are determined to record even more progress and demonstrate maturity of our democracy at the upcoming elections.

Distinguished delegates,

Allow me to say few words in connection to the Russian State Duma elections held yesterday. We express our concern that the Russian Federation had illegally opened 21 polling stations in Georgia's occupied territories on the election day. Russia's Central Election Commission registered more than one hundred thousand people residing in occupied Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Regions as voters in different federal subjects of the Russian Federation.

It should be stressed that as early as 2000s Moscow started the process of illegal, forced "passportisation" in Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Regions and in 2011-2012 made these people to illegitimately participate in the Parliamentary and Presidential Elections of the Russian Federation. Furthermore, in 2016 they were included in the voters' lists for the elections in Russia's federal districts, including for the purposes of voting for majoritarian candidates from the respective federal subjects.

It should also be underlined that State Duma elections were illegally held in Ukraine's occupied regions, namely in Crimea and the city of Sevastopol.

Georgia condemns holding the Russian State Duma elections in the occupied regions of Georgia and Ukraine and considers it as yet another manifestation of Moscow's annexation policy, which grossly violates fundamental norms and principles of international law. Through the aforementioned actions, the Russian Federation neglects the essential

principles, enshrined in the UN Charter and the Helsinki Final Act, such as inviolability of internationally recognized borders and non-interference in domestic affairs.

Georgia calls upon the international community to give a proper assessment to this illegal act of the Russian Federation.

In the end, I would like to take this opportunity and invite the delegations to the side-event hosted by Georgia, which will be dedicated to the human rights in prisons and other closed institution in Georgia. The side-event will take place on September 22, at 13:00 hrs in room Belvedere.

Thank you.