

Record of the First Session of the Coordination Council of the Georgian and Abkhaz Parties

The first session of the Coordination Council, established on the basis of the concluding statement on the outcome of the meeting between the Georgian and the Abkhaz Parties (Geneva, 17 to 19 November 1997), took place in Sukhumi on 18 December 1997 under the auspices of the United Nations and the chairmanship of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Liviu Bota.

The Georgian Party was represented by a delegation consisting of Mr. Vazha Lordkipanidze, Mr. Rezo Adamia and Mr. Tamaz Khubua.

The Abkhaz Party was represented by a delegation made up of Mr. Tamaz Ketsba, Mr. Sergei Tsargush and Mr. Victor Khashba.

Opening the session, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General welcomed the arrival in Sukhumi of the members of the Georgian delegation, who were appointed by Mr. E. Shevardnadze and represent the Georgian Party exclusively in the Coordination Council.

Representatives of the Russian Federation in its capacity as facilitator, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and the States belonging to the Group of Friends of the Secretary-General – France, Germany, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States of America – acting as observers, participated in the work of the session.

Mr. Ardzinba made a statement at the opening of the session. Representatives of the Parties, the Russian Federation acting as facilitator, OSCE and the Group of Friends of the Secretary-General also made statements during the course of its work.

The participants in the session adopted the Statute of the Coordination Council, the text of which is annexed.

After the conclusion of the session of the Coordination Council, meetings of the Working Groups were held under the chairmanship of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. Agreement was reached on the programmes of work of the Working Groups.

Sukhumi, 18 December 1997 (Signed) L. Bota

Statute of the Coordination Council

1. General provisions

The Coordination Council (hereinafter referred to as “the Council”) is established in accordance with the concluding statement on the outcome of the meeting held in Geneva from 17 to 19 November 1997.

The Council is established in order to implement the provisions of the concluding statement.

2. Composition of the Council and organization of its work

The Council shall meet under the chairmanship of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Georgia or his authorized representative.

The Council shall consist of three representatives each from the Georgian and Abkhaz Parties. Representatives of the United Nations, the Russian Federation in its capacity as facilitator and the Group of Friends of the Secretary-General shall also participate in the work of the Council under the terms set out in paragraph 3 of the concluding statement. Experts may be invited to attend meetings at the request of the Parties.

The meetings of the Council shall be convened by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and shall be held as necessary but at least once every two months, alternately in Tbilisi and Sukhumi or at other venues agreed upon by the Parties.

Each Party shall have the right to call for an extraordinary meeting of the Council, which shall be convened by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General within three days or, in the case of urgent matters, immediately.

A preliminary agenda for meetings shall be prepared by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in accordance with the provisions of the concluding statement and previous decisions of the Council and shall be transmitted to the participants no later than 10 days prior to the convening of the meeting.

Each Party shall have the right to put forward proposals on changes in or additions to the agenda, which shall be transmitted to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General no later than five days prior to the meeting. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General shall hold consultations on such matters before the convening of the meeting.

The other participants in the Council may also put forward proposals concerning the agenda, which shall be considered by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and be agreed on by the Parties.

Decisions of the Council shall be taken on the basis of consensus between the Parties. In adopting decisions concerning the role and responsibility of the United Nations and the Russian Federation, and also decisions calling for the participation of the Group of Friends of the Secretary-General, their agreement shall be required. Decisions of the Council shall be binding on the two Parties. Obstacles to the implementation of the Council’s decisions shall be considered at subsequent meetings.

Where there is no consensus for adopting decisions, the Parties may state their opinion on the question under consideration for the record of the meeting.

The working language of the meetings shall be Russian.

The office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General shall serve as the Council’s secretariat.

3. Working groups

Working groups shall be the executive bodies of the Coordination Council. Working groups shall consist of two representatives each from the Georgian and Abkhaz Parties. The meetings of the working groups shall be chaired by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General or his authorized representative, with the participation of representatives of the Russian Federation acting as facilitator, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Group of Friends of the Secretary-General under the terms set out in paragraph 3 of the concluding statement. Meetings of the working groups shall be convened by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. At the request of the Parties, experts may attend the meetings.

The working groups shall carry out activities in the following areas:

- Working Group I – issues related to the lasting non-resumption of hostilities and to security problems;
- Working Group II – refugees and internally displaced persons;
- Working Group III – economic and social problems.

4. Groups of experts

Individual groups of experts may be established by the Council, the working groups or the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in order to examine specific aspects of questions relating to a comprehensive settlement of the conflict, as such questions arise.

5. Jurisdiction of the Council

(a) Issues related to the lasting non-resumption of hostilities and to security problems. Consideration of violations of the Agreement on a Ceasefire and Separation of Forces of 14 May 1994 and the relevant provisions of Security Council resolution 937 (1994) of 21 July 1994, and the adoption of decisions to prevent such violations.

Consideration of questions relating to the Parties' effective implementation of their obligations.

Adoption of effective measures to put an end to any activities by illegal armed formations, terrorist or subversive groups or individuals, including individuals who infiltrate into the conflict zone, as well as any activities that may destabilize the peace process or lead to a resumption of hostilities.

Assistance in mine clearance.

Working Group I shall investigate violations of the ceasefire regime, and terrorist or subversive activities, and shall draft proposals and recommendations on matters within its competence. Working Group I shall meet as necessary but at least once a week.

(b) Refugees and internally displaced persons

In accordance with the concluding statement of the Geneva meeting, consideration of proposals on the resumption of the organized process of the voluntary, safe return of refugees and displaced persons.

Working Group II shall deal with the drafting of appropriate recommendations.

(c) Economic and social problems

Consideration of questions of mutual interest to the Parties (energy, transport, communications, environment).

Consideration of proposals to remove obstacles to normal economic and social development.

Working Group III shall draft proposals and recommendations on the establishment of effective cooperation between the Parties in agreed areas.

Sukhumi on 18 December 1997.

(Signed) L. Bota

(Signed) T. Ketsba

(Signed) V. Lordkipanidze