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**PRESS RELEASE**

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**SRSG TAGLIAVINI MEETS WITH PRESIDENT PUTIN'S SPECIAL ENVOY FOR SETTLEMENT OF THE  
CONFLICT IN ABKHAZIA, GEORGIA MR. LOSHCININ**

On 17 November, 2003, Ambassador Heidi Tagliavini, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Georgia (SRSG), and Mr. Valeri Loshchinin, First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation and Special Representative of President Putin for a settlement of the conflict in Abkhazia, Georgia, met in Moscow.

The SRSG informed Mr. Loshchinin about the recent consultations of the UN Security Council on the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia held on 12 November 2003 and her discussions in New York. They exchanged views on the present situation in the region and upcoming endeavors in the framework of the Georgian -Abkhaz peace process, including the planned Third meeting of high-level representatives of the Group of Friends of the UN Secretary-General in Geneva, as well as activities of the working groups established by the Sochi agreement between Presidents Vladimir Putin and Eduard Shevardnadze.

The sides particularly emphasized the importance of the prompt commencement of the process of return of refugees/IDPs in the first instance to the Gali district of Abkhazia, Georgia. In this context, they welcomed the deployment of the UNOMIG Civilian Police Component in the conflict zone. The SRSG used this opportunity to brief Mr. Loshchinin on the October visit of the Georgian and Abkhaz parties to Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo, Republic of Serbia and Montenegro. The sides agreed to continue their consultations, particularly on the complex of questions concerning the refugees/IDPs return.

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