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PRESS RELEASE

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RESUMED COORDINATING COUNCIL CONVENED

The first session of the resumed Coordinating Council of the Georgian and Abkhaz sides convened on 15 May 2006 in Tbilisi, under the auspices of the UN and under the chairmanship of Madame Heidi Tagliavini, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General. Representatives of the Russian Federation as facilitator, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Group of Friends of the UN Secretary-General - Germany, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, France and the United States of America in their capacity as observers participated in the meeting.

The Georgian delegation was led by Mr. Giorgi Khaindrava; the Abkhaz delegation by Mr. Sergey Shamba.

The Coordinating Council, which was established pursuant to the Final Statement of the Georgian and Abkhaz sides (Geneva, 17-19 November 1997), suspended its work in 2001. The agenda of the resumed Coordinating Council included discussions on security-related issues, refugees and IDPs, social and economic, as well as other matters.

Welcoming the initiative of the Georgian and Abkhaz sides to resume activities of the Coordinating Council, the Special Representative highlighted the UN Security Council's call on the two sides to make use of all existing mechanisms in order to come to a peaceful settlement, as contained in its resolutions and emphasized the upcoming visit of the senior representatives of the Group of Friends to the region, which demonstrates the importance of the Geneva format as the overarching instrument of the UN-led peace process.

Representatives of the sides made statements and exchanged proposals and ideas on ways to promote the peace process, and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General recalled the position on the matter expressed by the Security Council in its resolutions. Representatives of the Russian Federation in their capacity as facilitator, the OSCE and the Group of Friends took part in the discussions. Representatives of UNDP and UNHCR also took part in the deliberations on the respective items on the agenda.

The first session of the resumed Coordinating Council concluded with the adoption of a protocol, which envisages, inter alia, the re-activation and concrete dates of meetings of its three Working Groups in May and June 2006.

The next session of the resumed Coordinating Council is scheduled for 17 July 2006 in Sukhumi.

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