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**Joint statement of Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia
Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the
Strengthening of the Role of the Organization
20 February 2024**

Mr. Chair,

I have the honor to speak on behalf of Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, and my own country Ukraine.

At the outset, let me express our gratitude to the Secretariat for the preparation of the current session and welcome you and the Bureau members. We look forward to a fruitful session this year.

Since the establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Charter, the purpose of its work was to enhance the ability of the United Nations and ensure effective functioning of the Organization. One of the key mandates of the Special Committee was to continue consideration of the questions of maintenance of international peace and security, as well as promotion of peaceful settlement of international disputes between states.

It would not be an understatement that one of the biggest accomplishments of the Committee, while producing a number of instrumental documents throughout its work, was 1982 Manila Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of International Disputes. It is clearly stated in the Declaration that its adoption should contribute to the elimination of the danger of recourse to force or to the threat of force, peace and respect for the independence and sovereignty of all States, to the enhancing of the role of the United Nations in preventing conflicts in settling them peacefully and consequently to the strengthening of international peace and security. Manila Declaration also reaffirmed “the

principle of the Charter of the United Nations that all States shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations”.

Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia are strong believers of the notion of a peaceful resolution of conflicts and attach particular importance to the means for a peaceful settlement of disputes, as enlisted in article 33 of the UN Charter.

This trilateral statement that our Group of States deliver every year before the Special Committee Sessions is a constant reminder to the UN members states that our three countries share the grim experience of having their sovereignty and territorial integrity violated by the same UN member state. In response to this violations, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia have been continuously applying the rich toolkit for a peaceful settlement of disputes, provided in article 33 of the UN Charter. Yet, despite mediation, as well as diplomatic and judicial efforts, Russian military troops are still illegally stationed on the territories of the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, while Russia extended its military presence in Ukraine in 2014, followed by unjustified, unprovoked and premeditated full-scale military aggression against Ukraine in February 2022. What the world has witnessed in Ukraine is the pattern of illegal actions and the repetition of Russia’s policy of Aggression against its neighbors, started in Georgia and the Republic of Moldova in early 1990s.

Mr. Chair,

Since the beginning of the Russian aggression in February 2014, Ukraine has filed two cases against Russia for the gravest violations of international law. In its 31 January judgment, the ICJ ruled that Russia had violated international law in three separate respects: Russia violated the International Convention on the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and its obligation to comply with the ICJ’s order on provisional measures under which Russia is obliged to suspend its ban on the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People. It is the first case since the ICJ’s inception in 1945 that has found the Russian Federation in violation of international law.

In its judgment of 2 February 2024, the ICJ concluded that it had jurisdiction over the dispute Ukraine brought days after Russia launched its full-scale

invasion, addressing the false allegations of genocide that were Russia's express pretext for invading. Moreover, the Court emphasized Russia's violation of the provisional measures order of 16 March 2022, which obliged Russia to "immediately suspend the military operations that it commenced on 24 February 2022 in the territory of Ukraine." It is obvious that Russia has for two years acted, and continues to act, in violation of this order.

In this regard, we recall 6 Resolutions of the eleventh Emergency Special Session of the UNGA adopted during more than a year of full-scale invasion in Ukraine, which explicitly demonstrated overwhelming support and unity of the UN Member States regarding sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of Ukraine, as well as underlined the need to reach a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine in line with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. Chair,

Russia continues illegal occupation of Georgia's Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions. Any military occupation, however temporary, resulting from the unlawful use of force, constitutes an act of aggression pursuant to UNGA Resolution 3314 of 14 December 1974. Facing ongoing military aggression by Russia, Georgia has been adhering to the peaceful conflict resolution policy, based on two main pillars – de-occupation of the Georgian regions on the one hand, and reconciliation and confidence building between the war-torn communities on the other. Furthermore, Georgia is committed to utilize every peaceful means at its disposal, including, inter alia, engaging in negotiation formats, namely the Geneva International Discussions (GID) and Incident Prevention and Response Mechanisms (IPRMs) under the GID.

Resorting to judicial remedies is another peaceful conflict resolution instrument used by Georgia. In this context, I wish to recall 4 historical rulings of the European Court of Human Rights, where the court confirmed Russia's illegal military occupation and effective control over the Georgian territories even before the 2008 war. The Court also stressed Russia's full responsibility for mass human rights violations in the occupied regions. Moreover, the International Criminal Court concluded its investigation on Situation in Georgia in 2022, issued arrest warrants against the representatives of the occupation regime for the war crimes committed during Russia's military aggression in 2008 and uncovered alleged role of Russian high military official.

Mr. Chair,

Negotiations, as key means of settling states disputes, have been continuously used by the Republic of Moldova since 1993. Moldova reiterates the call for the demilitarization of the Transnistrian region, including the complete, unconditional, and immediate withdrawal from its territory of the troops of the Russian Federation stationed illegally and the evacuation/ destruction of the ammunition stocks from the warehouse in Cobasna.

In this regard, Moldova recalls the relevant 5 UNGA resolutions adopted since 1999 on cooperation between the UN and the OSCE, and emphasize the commitments undertaken by the Russian Federation at the 1999 Istanbul OSCE Summit on the withdrawal of its military forces and armaments from the territory of the Republic of Moldova.

In conclusion Mr. Chair,

The peaceful settlement of international disputes is a fundamental principle of international law of a peremptory character and no state should be excepted from applying it in good faith. Ukraine, Republic of Moldova and Georgia believe in the purpose and capacity of this ad-hoc committee to enhance the ability of the United Nations to achieve its purposes – one of which being the maintenance and consolidation of international peace and security in all its aspects.

In the light of the above, we expect that the Report of this year's session will be impartial, balanced and accurate and will reflect current debates in a wholesome spirit.

I thank you!