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Group of Friends of Secretary-General Review Georgia-Abkhaz Peace Process

NEW YORK, 14 December (UN Headquarters) – Following is a statement attributable to the Spokesman for Secretary-General Kofi Annan, following the high-level meeting of the Secretary-General’s Group of Friends of Georgia in Geneva, on 13-14 December 2004:

On 13 and 14 December 2004, high-level representatives of the Group of the Friends of the Secretary-General (Germany, France, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, and United States) met in Geneva to review the state of the Georgian-Abkhaz peace process. The meeting was chaired by the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Georgia also participated. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees took part in the discussions on refugee returns and briefed the participants on his visit to the region.

The Friends discussed the complex situation in the peace process and key challenges related to security and political matters, return of refugees and internally-displaced persons, and economic cooperation, in preparation for a meeting that they are planning to hold with the Georgian and Abkhaz sides early next year. They expressed their hope that until then negotiations would resume and progress on these three issues could be achieved.

They assured the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of their continued support and stressed that the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) must continue to be in a position to fulfil its mandate unhindered. They reaffirmed the “Geneva Process” as a valuable instrument in the Georgian-Abkhaz peace process.

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