

**Statement**  
**by Amb. Altai Efendiev,**  
**Secretary General of the Organization for Democracy & Economic**  
**Development – GUAM**  
**during the 12th Session of the GUAM Parliamentary Assembly**

*27 November 2019, Kyiv*

Mr. Chairman,  
Mr. Speaker of Verkhovna Rada,  
Mr. Minister,  
Honourable Heads & members of national delegations,  
Excellences,  
Distinguished participants,  
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is my great honour and privilege to address the 12th Session of the GUAM Parliamentary Assembly held under the Ukrainian Chairmanship. At the outset I would like to thank our hosts, Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, for the hospitality and organization of the work, as well as to congratulate for the productive work yesterday. And I wish you a successful session today. I'm confident that outcomes of the deliberations will provide additional impetus for our work on the subjects discussed. And I wish that passion and commitment manifested during our work these days, coupled with consistency and coherence, will be preserved and further developed.

Since it is our first gathering after recent parliamentary elections held in Ukraine, I would like to use this opportunity to congratulate and warmly welcome newly elected representatives of the national delegation and wish all members every success in their activity. Also, I would like to welcome new members of national delegations from Georgia and Moldova.

Mr. Chairman,  
Distinguished participants,

As was mentioned during the statements of the national delegations, our countries living through the challenging times, exacerbated by the harsh external environment. As a result, we have territories under occupation, millions of refugees and IDPs.

We all observed important, I would say fateful, events during this year in Ukraine which through democratic electoral processes have radically changed the internal political landscape. And this happened in the conditions of the ongoing military aggression. We sincerely wish Ukraine authorities every success to all the efforts undertaken at all branches of power, to deliver on the promises made to Ukrainian

people. Success of Ukraine is our common success, and we sincerely wish you national unity and consolidation to overcome all the differences and difficulties, and to assure you of our full solidarity and support.

We are closely following worrying developments along the occupational border line in Georgia. Using this opportunity would like to express solidarity with the Georgian people on the occasion of illegal detention of prominent doctor Mr. V. Gaprindashvili.

The situations in our countries also indicate that the system of international relations is failing to ensure the observance of the norms and principles of international law, implementation decisions of the international supreme bodies. Moreover, the world order is drifting towards more uncertainty and unpredictability. It is my firm believe that in such an international environment our member states (MS) have no other choice but to stay closer together and get stronger.

The ODED-GUAM, as a full-fledged regional organization with the HQ in Kyiv, uniting friendly nations and strategic partners, is providing a unique platform for that. Our countries share similar problems, but most importantly, we are united by our common and shared interests. And we should renew our efforts towards achieving our common strategic objectives – strengthening of independence and sovereignty of our member state, restore their territorial integrity, ensure close integration into international community.

And, availing of this opportunity, I would like to thank the Chairmanship of Ukraine, in spite of enormous transformational difficulties and mentioned challenges, for the commitment and willingness to uphold and further develop the momentum of the cooperation in the framework of the ODED-GUAM, launched during the Georgian Chairmanship in 2017 and continued by the Chairmanship of the Republic of Moldova in 2018.

As you may know, 2017 of the Georgian Chairmanship was a year of milestone events that triggered two important processes within the Organization.

First – the meeting of the Heads of Government of the GUAM MS on March 27 in Kyiv, the first ever initiative at this level, that not only has renewed and demonstrated unity, political will and commitment to the cooperation in the framework of GUAM, but, most importantly, initiated the process of practical implementation of GUAM flagship initiatives – the development of the GUAM Transport Corridor and the implementation of the Agreement on the Establishment of Free Trade Area among the GUAM MS.

In 2018 in Chisinau we held the second meeting of the Heads of Government which endorsed important decisions and assigned us with new tasks.

This year, on December 12, here in Kyiv at the third meeting of the Heads of Government we will discuss the progress made, celebrate some achievements and most importantly, define a new set of tasks to expedite the advancements in these priority areas of our cooperation.

It is very important that we preserve these dynamics, and I hope, in 2020 the Chairmanship of Azerbaijan will take the baton and will further contribute to the process.

Of course, we have a wide spectrum of cooperation in many other fields. But I would describe these initiatives as the backbone of our cooperation with potentially enormous spill-over effect. We aim to make the implementation process open and inclusive of all interested and willing partners and actors who share same vision, our objectives and principles. Our aim is to develop and promote this area as the zone free for trade, investments and transit.

Second – the Special meeting of the CMFA held on October 8, in Tbilisi, to commemorate the 20th Anniversary of GUAM. This meeting has launched the process of elaboration of the strategic vision of our cooperation based on Chairman's Vision Paper. This was also for the first time in the history of GUAM. We hope that the process of the elaboration of the GUAM Strategic Roadmap will be finalized next year during the Chairmanship of the Republic of Azerbaijan. It will give us all a clear vision and directions to follow through all our working institutions.

The ultimate task of the process is to recalibrate and to recharge GUAM and make it relevant and adequate to the tasks and challenges that our countries and our region are facing.

Close interaction in both these directions, undoubtedly, will lead our countries to closer integration, as well as to the development of the ODED-GUAM as an important regional stakeholder and instrument for developing this increasingly important geostrategic area as the zone of peace, security, stability and development.

However, I want to be frank and honest, in order to succeed with above tasks, we need strong and committed national institutions, close interaction at national level among respective authorities, as well as within the GUAM. We can't afford any more of keeping our Organization on a stand-by regime, we need to act.

To keep all our partners and observers at the comfort, here I want to emphasize once more that our cooperation is not directed against any third country but peaceful and based purely on our national interests.

Mr. Chairman,

During the last years, we have also increased our political interaction. Due to the initiatives of the respective Chairmanships and coordination among our diplomatic missions, we have seen also important advancements in mutual support of the GUAM MS and promotion of our consolidated stance on matters of interest and concern on international arena. Our countries continued joint efforts to mobilize international support in addressing unresolved conflicts on the territories of the GUAM countries.

Our joint initiatives also helped to raise awareness about the Organization, promote GUAM and manifest our unity on the issues important to our member states. As an example, I would like to refer to three events. In February of 2017 GUAM Secretary General participated at the hearings at the UN Security Council dedicated to regional conflicts, initiated by Ukraine, during its Chairmanship at the UN Security Council.

In April of 2017, by the initiative of the Georgian GUAM Chairmanship, GUAM Secretary General was invited to the OSCE Permanent Council to inform members about the Organization and its activities.

On April 26, 2018, by the initiative of the Republic of Moldova, during their Chairmanship in the GUAM, we have organized a promotional meeting during the Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe to raise awareness about the GUAM.

We should do more of such activities. I would like to appeal to the national delegations here to use all available opportunity to promote the cause and the objectives of the ODED-GUAM and to mobilize support for our countries.

Mr. Chairman,  
Distinguished participants,

Major impediment to the regional cooperation and sustainable development, are the conflicts on the territories of our MS. Their resolution will unleash disproportionate to the size of our geography enormous potential of our region to the benefits of wider international community.

GUAM MS consolidated position towards the resolution of the conflicts on the territories of the MS is crisp and clear: they should be resolved on the basis of norms and principles of international law and provisions of the UN and the OSCE basic documents – upon full and unequivocal restoration of the sovereignty and territorial integrity within internationally recognized borders.

We should continue our efforts to expand the number of partner countries and international organizations. Here, in particular, I would like to thank our partners – Japan, the USA and others who show interest and support.

I would like to express our gratitude to our friends from the Baltic countries and in particular, the Baltic Assembly, and to its current President Prof. Janis Vucans, who is present here, for their consistent and continuous support of our countries.

Mr. Chairman,

In 2020 the Republic of Azerbaijan will assume the helm of the Chairmanship in our Organization, as well as in the GUAM PA.

We have the assurances of the respective authorities of Azerbaijan of their will and commitment to continue and further develop the momentum of our cooperation provided by three previous Chairmanships of Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. In 2020 we will continue to focus on the implementation of our main initiatives and activities launched during the last years. And I invite all to be a part of this cooperation exciting process.

I would like also to wish every success to the Chairmanship of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the GUAM PA and want to assure that the GUAM Secretariat stands ready and willing to render all necessary assistance for successful Chairmanship.

Parliamentary domain is one of the most important pillars of cooperation within the GUAM. We are looking forward to closer interaction aimed at better coordination of our joint activities to develop better synergies and bring better results of our cooperation in the interest and for the benefit of our nations, as well as wider international community.

Thank you for attention!