Principals Welcome Joint Statement On Return

The Principals of OHR, UNHCR, SFOR, UNIPTF, OSCE note with great interest the attached Statement delivered by the Minister of Civil Affairs and Communications of Bosnia and Herzegovina, on behalf of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Council of Ministers, the Government of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Federation and the Republika Srpska, to the Expanded Regional Meeting of Ministers and Commissioners responsible for refugee matters in Geneva on 21 March 1997.

The Principals very much welcome the fact that it has been possible to present such a statement in common and hope it will be a prelude to similar joint commitments in other areas of governmental concern.

The Principals welcome that the Statement of government representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska has confirmed their commitment to fully allow safe freedom of movement on the whole territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Principals welcome that the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina and of both entities fully support the commencement of the return process to municipalities, towns and villages within the so-called minority areas.

The Principals further welcome that the authorities have jointly confirmed their respect for the established Procedure aimed at unhindered, safe and voluntary return of all refugees and displaced persons to the places where they originally lived within the Zone of Separation in both entities.

The Principals also welcome that the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina, of the Federation, as well as of the Republika Srpska will, in the coming period, fully harmonise all legal

acts of theirs with the Dayton Peace Agreement and with international law and conventions with the aim to remove all obstacles to the repatriation and return process.