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Statement

by the Minister of Foreign Affairs

of the Republic of Tajikistan

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at the 15th OSCE Ministerial Council Meeting

Madrid, 29-30 November 2007

Mr. Chairman,
Dear colleagues,
Ladies and gentlemen

First of all, I would like to sincerely congratulate His Excellency Mr. Miguel Moratinos, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Spain with successful completion of Chairmanship and express great appreciation for hospitality and excellent organization of our meeting. I would also like to welcome His Excellency Mr. Ilkka Kanerva, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Finland in the capacity of future OSCE Chairman and wish him every success in fulfilling responsible mission.

Dear colleagues,

Let me note that, despite of all existing problems, for more than 30 years the OSCE remains as a unique forum on security and stability by creating climate of confidence in the region. At the same time the degree of credit to the OSCE and its prestige in the world community in future mostly depends on the effective reform process and adaptation to the implementation of real tasks, confronting the participating states.

This year Tajikistan marked the 16th anniversary of its independence. Passing short, but very difficult way of development, my country, is continuing the establishment of democratic and secular state, based on social oriented market economy, strengthening civil society and observing fundamental human rights and freedoms. Today, Tajikistan is an active member of the world community and contributes to the process of providing regional security, fight against terrorism and extremism, strengthening integration processes and expanding regional cooperation.

Tasks on strengthening peace and accord in the society, as well as achieving sustainable economic development, always remain as the most important priorities of a long-term national development strategy of Tajikistan. Referring to our personal short historical way of development, we got evidence that lack of equal conditions for development, social-economic problems, may serve as the main sources of local crisis.

Therefore, in the beginning of 2007 the Government of Tajikistan identified the spheres of developing hydropower engineering, transport and communication, industry and agriculture as a priority directions of social economic development for the next years.

Mr. Chairmen,

The solution of water and energy resources problem in the region is the key task for the development of Central Asia. Taking into account the increasing demands for water and hydro power energy resources in the world and in our region, solving the issues of effective use of water resources are one of the strategic in order to achieve sustainable development and improve living conditions of the population. That is why, today, we have the necessity of constructing hydropower plants, which will provide an accumulation and delivery of water during the vegetative period and dry years. Realization of hydraulic facilities in Tajikistan is extremely profitable not only for my country, but it may contribute to sustainable development of other countries of the region. For example, only the completion of Rogun hydro power plant construction may additionally provide more than 3 mln. hectares of land in the territories of neighboring countries.

At the same time, it is necessary to take into consideration, that use of water for energy purposes does not withdraw water resources from nature and not worsening its quality. We need to create a balance of interests of participating states, which would allow reasonable use of available opportunities for growth on a mutually beneficial basis. There are enough examples of effective and civilized solution of such problems in Europe, both on bilateral and multilateral levels.

Today, the problem of access to pure clean water and safe sources of water supply is one of the urgent in our region. Therefore, I would like to confirm once again the proposal made by President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon concerning our readiness to use enormous reserves of fresh water of Sarez Lake in the interests of the countries of the region. The resources of Sarez Lake can potentially provide 30-40 million people of Central Asia with fresh water forever. In this connection, we propose under the framework of new partnership Strategy between the European Union and Central Asia, to carry out a feasibility study on shared use of the resources of Sarez Lake.

Dear colleagues,

It is difficult to talk today about the development of the region without solving the problems in the sphere of transport and communications. The OSCE participating states have different level of transit transport highways development. Creation of reliable and safe transport corridors, which provide the least transportation costs and it subsequent transformation into economic corridors, will enable to accelerate the economic development and poverty reduction in the region. I am sure, that realization of an initiative concerning establishing in Dushanbe an International Center on Improving Transit Transportation in Central Asia, marked in the final Declaration of the OSCE Conference in Dushanbe in

October 2007, will make significant contribution to increasing mutual trade and will serve for the benefits of all countries.

Tajikistan expresses serious concern with growing narcotic threat. The fight against this evil will remain as principle tasks of the Government of Tajikistan. Taking this opportunity, I would like to draw your attention once again to the necessity of accelerating real assistance to the Government of Afghanistan.

According to the UN assessment, poppy crops in Afghanistan make up 8 thousand tons at present time. 20 % of heroin is being delivered through Central Asian counties.

It is clear, that Tajikistan and Afghanistan are not able to tackle this huge problem alone. Today we protect not only the population of our country, but of the whole CIS and Europe from this evil. Therefore, we call on the OSCE, to combine efforts in the fight against it with other international partners.

Mr. Chairmen,

Taking into account the radical changes in economic and political life of the country and in accordance with Istanbul Declaration, the Government of Tajikistan propose to reconsider the present status of the OSCE Center in Dushanbe.

We reconfirm our proposal to consider the establishment of the OSCE regional Office on Economic and Ecological Issues in Tajikistan. I do hope that this proposal will find understanding among the OSCE community and be supported by all participating states.

Tajikistan attaches great importance to the cooperation with the OSCE in the humanitarian sphere and rely on the continuation of collaboration in the process of further democratization of society, human rights and mass media. The 9th Central Asian Media Conference held in November 2007 in Dushanbe may serve as a striking example.

We welcome the OSCE contribution to the implementation in Tajikistan the programs on demining, Small Arms/Light Weapons and Conventional Ammunitions, and as well as border strengthening.

Following Ljubljana “road map” and the necessity of the OSCE transformation into the full-fledged international organization, we express our support to Ministerial Council Meeting draft Decision “On the OSCE Charter”.

Tajikistan welcomes the results of the OSCE Conference on Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims, held recently in Cordova and decisively condemns any identification of terrorism and extremism with Islam.

We restate our firm support to adoption of a positive decision on Kazakhstan's Chairmanship in the OSCE in 2009. We convinced that this step may serve for the benefits of strengthening the responsibility and ownership within the OSCE by all participating states, situated east of Vienna.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairmen, I would like to stress that Tajikistan, which chosen the way of democratic development, reaffirming its readiness to continue collaboration and constructive dialog with the OSCE on the whole range of issues of cooperation.

Thank you for your attention.