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Session 1: Preventing and Combating Terrorism

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TALKING POINTS

- While assessing the threat of terrorism and searching ways to effectively address this scourge there is a clear need to focus also on the issue of relationship between conflicts and terrorism (cases of Middle East, Balkans, Africa, South and South-East Asia, Caucasus etc.). OSCE area is not immune to these global developments.
- Terrorism in the OSCE area in some cases takes state-sponsored forms and is widely used during armed conflicts for destabilizing internal order, creating an atmosphere of fear and panic in a civilian society and inflicting damage on the economy of the adversary through its both direct (material destruction) and indirect (negative influence on capital flow and investment) consequences. In certain cases border between special or covert operations, carried on in conflict areas, and terrorist acts is blurred. Sometimes there is a spillover effect of terrorism when terrorist acts against a state are perpetrated on the territories of third countries. We have witnessed this "conflict-related" application of terrorism in many conflict zones, including in the OSCE area. As the only all-inclusive pan-European security organization entrusted to exercise the functions of early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation the OSCE has to intensify its efforts to address the conflicts in the OSCE area.
- As Azerbaijan has been forced to fight terror since the very first days of its independence, my country was among the first states in the aftermath of September 11 that joined a worldwide anti-terror coalition and has been sparing no effort in the struggle against this evil. Suspected foreign terrorists were arrested and brought to justice; in keeping with international and domestic legislation they were extradited to the countries of their origin. Azerbaijan granted overflight rights for the aircraft of the anti-terrorist coalition and sent its troops to Afghanistan. Implementing its international obligations in good faith Azerbaijan has become a party to and ratified all 12 UN anti-terrorist conventions.
- In pursuing a goal of eradication of terrorism one has to address its root causes, to define its links with international crime as well as effectively suppress its financing. The factors causing lawlessness and consequently terrorism, such as aggressive nationalism, violent extremism and armed separatism, identified by the 2001 Bucharest OSCE Action Plan, should be dealt with by the OSCE in an effective and consistent manner, free of double standards.
- Modern threats are often asymmetric and include terrorism. Consequently, responses to terrorism can also be asymmetric, including use of military force. Pre-emptive strikes can be considered as a necessary means of last resort. There is a role for the OSCE in studying politico-military and legal aspects of this situation.

- Combating terrorism is inseparably linked with preventing terrorists from gaining access to weapons and explosives, WMD and related materials through strengthening existing export control regimes such as, for example, Wassenaar arrangement. This could be effectively done through enlargement of these export control regimes to extend obligations and privileges arising out of the membership to those OSCE participating States who have not yet joined them.

- Though terrorist groups are often mobile and swift, they usually operate in the territories that are beyond an effective control of official authorities either because of a rough terrain or because of a predominant political situation there.

- Territories controlled, in particular, by armed separatists have turned into zones of criminal activity and are widely used for arms smuggling, drugs and human beings trafficking and money laundering. There are many examples of this deteriorating situation in the OSCE area. Trafficking of nuclear materials is a new emerging phenomenon. In this respect more OSCE's cooperation, inter alia, with IAEA is needed.

- Given the evident tendency of merge of different forms of criminal activity it is important to launch a thorough multifaceted investigation of financial and economic pillars of terrorism and organized crime. It is imperative to target ways and means of accumulating enormous financial assets feeding organized criminal groups, which have close operational ties with international terrorist networks and armed separatist movements. This process is a two-way street. The uncontrolled nature of the territories creates favourable conditions for rise in crime. As a result, the illicit profits gained in these regions are further used to feed armed separatism. Thus, these regions contaminated by lawlessness have become safe havens for criminals of all kinds and beyond any reach of justice.

- Responsible members of the international community should realize that any involvement of their citizens in illegal economic or commercial activities on the territories controlled by armed separatists and organized criminal gangs not only constitute breach of domestic legislation of respective countries and violation of international law, but also promotes terrorism and transnational organized crime in all of its manifestations. OSCE can accumulate and distribute best practices of preventing involvement of citizens of the OSCE participating States in such illegal activities.