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Delegation of Uzbekistan

**STATEMENT BY THE HEAD OF THE DELEGATION
OF THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN AT THE MEETING
OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

11 January 2007

Mr. Chairman,

Our delegation joins in welcoming the OSCE Chairman-in-Office and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Spain, Mr. Miguel Ángel Moratinos Cuyaubé, and thanks him for his informative statement.

We support the Spanish Chairmanship's intention to endeavour further to improve the work of the OSCE, adapting the Organization to the needs of the times and enhancing its role in ensuring regional and international security.

Our assessments of the OSCE's work and Uzbekistan's view of the basic priorities and tasks involved in reforming the Organization were set out in detail at the Ministerial Council meeting in Brussels. We should like to take this opportunity today to say a few brief words on the following points.

First, Uzbekistan is in favour of the OSCE regaining its role as a key forum for political dialogue on the basis of equal rights. For it to do so, it is necessary, first and foremost, to abandon the OSCE's artificial "specialization" in the problems of the post-Soviet space and to concentrate its efforts on resolving security matters that are relevant to all the participating States.

Within the process of reforming the Organization, we believe it is important to create effective mechanisms for the work of all its executive structures, including the field missions and institutions, and also to ensure their accountability to the collective bodies of the OSCE.

In the overall context of improving the work of the OSCE, we support the proposals to establish uniform criteria and methodology for the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights in the area of elections, including a review of procedures for the formation of monitoring missions on an equal basis for all participating States.

We hope that in 2007 the Spanish Chairmanship will be able to bring about a transition from mere discussions about reform to practical activities designed to truly improve the state of affairs within the OSCE, rectifying the existing geographical and thematic imbalance in the Organization's work.

Second, Uzbekistan believes it is essential to increase to a qualitatively new level the attention paid by the OSCE to combating current threats and challenges to security. In that context it is important to focus on the principle of the indivisibility of security throughout the OSCE area.

We are ready for close co-operation with the Chairmanship in dealing with the Spanish priority — the fight against terrorism — that has been set today by Mr. Moratinos.

In view of the urgency of strengthening inter-institutional co-operation in preventing and combating new threats and challenges, we also feel it would be useful to hold consultations in 2007 on greater interaction between European and Euro-Atlantic structures, including the OSCE, and the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Collective Security Treaty Organization, the Shanghai Co-operation Organization and other regional organizations.

Third, it is important to ensure the practical implementation of the OSCE Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension.

Uzbekistan supports the intention of the Spanish Chairmanship to draw the attention of participating States to the problems of land degradation, soil contamination and effective water management in the various regions of the OSCE area.

In this context we are in favour of stepping up the OSCE's involvement in the settlement of a number of socio-economic problems connected with the drying-up of the Aral Sea, along with questions concerning the prevention of soil salinization and water mineralization and the preservation of biodiversity in Central Asia.

Fourth, we have no intention of belittling the importance of the humanitarian component of the OSCE's work. However, as part of co-operation in this area it is necessary to take account of national values, mentality, culture, traditions and the historical experience of the peoples of our region.

Questions regarding democratic reforms and human rights in the Central Asian countries must be examined in the context of the entire region and subregion and must be resolved on the basis of objective assessments.

Uzbekistan is ready for constructive co-operation with the Spanish Chairmanship in the human dimension.

In conclusion, allow me to wish Mr. Moratinos every success in the post of Chairman-in-Office.

Thank you for your attention.