



**PERMANENT MISSION
OF TURKEY TO THE OSCE**

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR NACI SARIBAŞ
(High Level Conference on TND, 29-30 June 2010)**

**(Session VII, Strategies for promoting tolerance and understanding, interethnic and
intercultural dialogue, including with respect to religion, in the OSCE area)**

Thank you Mr. Moderator,

We join others in thanking the introducers for their comprehensive presentations. We consider it also meaningful that this discussion takes place in the capital city of Kazakhstan-a country that has a distinct reputation for hosting various ethnic and religious communities in harmony for many years.

In previous sessions that we had yesterday and today underscored the magnitude of challenges which our societies confront in building and developing tools to address different types of intolerance and discrimination. Indeed, these challenges are formidable and pose serious threat to democracy, peace and security. On the other hand, this threat also provides an opportunity to join our efforts for reaching sustainable and long lasting solutions.

Different types of intolerance and discrimination have specific characteristics and require different, tailor made responses. However, there are some crosscutting remedies which could be applied particularly in addressing the root causes of intolerant and discriminatory trends and affiliations. Meaningful dialogue among cultures, religions, ethnic groups is one of them and finds its place in the forefront of our actions. Therefore, we applaud the dedication of this very last session to the value of dialogue as well as to mutual respect and understanding at this high level gathering.

If we take a look at the conflicts and disputes within the OSCE area, regardless of their content and specifications, lack of dialogue and understanding appears as one of the leading common denominators. Distrust and lack of information among nations, religions and communities have always served as obstacles to peace, security, upholding human rights and advancement of our values and principles within the OSCE geography and beyond.

It is exactly with this understanding that the UN has decided to mark the year 2010 as the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures. In his statement delivered on the occasion of this decision, UN Secretary-General requested to strengthen cooperation – expand the space for dialogue – and replace barriers of distrust with bridges of understanding.

Mr. Moderator,

Another valuable instance is the UN Alliance of Civilizations Initiative in which Turkey, together with Spain, take the pride in co-sponsoring. I am glad to note that this initiative, by now has received the support of more than 120 States and international organizations, and as such striving to overcome prejudice among nations, cultures and religions.

Turkey will continue to exert every effort in order to improve intercultural dialogue both in its region and beyond, and will further encourage international community, including the OSCE, to remain committed to achieve mutual respect and understanding worldwide.

Thank you.