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**STATEMENT BY
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GENERAL'S SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE CAUCASUS AND CENTRAL ASIA,
AT THE NINETEENTH MEETING OF THE OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

Dublin, 6 -7 December 2012
(delivered in written form only)

Mr. Chairperson,
Mr. Secretary General,
Your excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. Let me start off by thanking our host, the Irish Chairmanship-in-Office, for organizing this 19th Ministerial Council of the OSCE in the marvellous city of Dublin. I do so on behalf of NATO and Secretary General Fogh Rasmussen, who regrets not being able to personally attend this gathering.

2. NATO welcomes Switzerland as it is about to enter the OSCE troika. An equally warm welcome also to Mongolia, newly accepted as the 57th participating State to your Organization two weeks ago. The OSCE has increasingly come to encompass almost the whole stretch between Vancouver and Vladivostok indeed.

3. When SG Rasmussen addressed the Annual Security Review Conference of the OSCE in June 2011, he stressed that the OSCE is a crucial part of Europe's security architecture, sharing with NATO the aim of building a "*free, democratic, common and indivisible security community from Vancouver to Vladivostok*". With the Helsinki Final Act and the Charter for European Security, the OSCE has become a standard-bearer of democracy and human rights, playing a significant role in preventing and managing conflicts. The OSCE is also an important forum for pan-European arms control, and for confidence-building.

4. All of this makes the OSCE an important partner for NATO.

5. Our cooperation in promoting stability in the Western Balkans has been productive. Where NATO helped in stabilizing the situation and took the lead on defence reform, the OSCE provided the means for reform of the democratic and legal institutions.

6. Afghanistan is one of OSCE's partners for cooperation. Although the security situation in Afghanistan remains difficult and challenging, there has been progress. NATO remains fully supporting Afghan National Security Forces as we transition to full security control to them by the end of 2014.

7. By mid-2013, it is expected that the implementation of the final tranche of this transition will begin. This means that the Afghan National Security Forces will have lead security responsibility across the whole of Afghanistan. In mid 2013, the ISAF mission therefore will have shifted towards training, advising and assisting, to

be completed by the mission's end in December 2014. However, ISAF will remain combat capable until end 2014. NATO is now working to establish a post-2014 training, advising and assistance mission which will not be a combat mission.

8. Cooperation with other international actors will remain essential as we move towards and beyond 2014. There will continue to be a shared responsibility for the international community to help the country stay on its course. The OSCE is one of the organizations already to have taken upon themselves a sizeable chunk of that task. We are grateful for what the OSCE has done so far, and hope that the prolonged commitment can be maintained, mindful of the political specificities of the organization.

9. That specificity has led the OSCE to conduct the greater part of its activities aimed at Afghanistan from its participating States in Central Asia, where you benefit from your five field presences and extensive experience in the region.

10. The OSCE has distinguished itself in this region for many years, including combating terrorism and human trafficking, promoting good governance, human rights, media freedom, minority rights, policing and, last but not least, border management.

11. The OSCE Border Management Staff College in Dushanbe, for instance, provides a good framework for the training of officers from Afghanistan, side by side with officers from OSCE participating States in the region. There might be room for exploring the enhancement of cooperation between our two organizations in the area of border management, also involving other partner International Organizations.

12. The OSCE also plays an important role in addressing so-called protracted conflicts. We commend you for your co-chairing of the Geneva International Discussions regarding Georgia; the continued impetus to the OSCE Minsk Group – that travelled again to the region only recently; and your enabling of the 5 + 2 talks on the Transdniestrian settlement by the so-called '5 + 2', meetings on which have taken place only last week here in Dublin.

13. NATO is increasingly facing up to new threats such as cyber security, terrorism, transnational crime and energy security. The OSCE is also doing so, including through a new Directorate, as we did at NATO. Already the OSCE is working towards a body of Confidence Building Measures in the field of cyber security, profiting from the organization's vast experience in the adjoining field of more classic threats. We commend you for it and stand ready to work together. I would specifically like to mention our good relations on cyber defence and with your Anti Terrorism Unit, under its new dynamic leadership, enabling us to build on our clear synergies in this field.

14. The incoming Chairmanship-in-Office, Ukraine, has a challenging year ahead, including preparing a special occasion, the 40th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act. The 'Helsinki + 40' is a promising initiative, to be carried forward by the incoming CiO. We will follow these discussions with interest.

Thank you.