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2 December 2010

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STATEMENT
BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TAJIKISTAN
HIS EXCELLENCY EMOMALI RAHMON
AT THE OSCE SUMMIT

Astana, 1 December 2010

Excellency Mr. Chairman,

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Excellencies heads of state and government,

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Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to express deepest appreciation and sincere gratitude to the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan His Excellency Nursultan Nazarbayev for the initiative of convening this Summit and for a warm welcome and generous hospitality extended to all participants of the Summit.

Our meeting takes place during the anniversary year for the OSCE: Helsinki Final Act was signed thirty-five years ago and the Charter of Paris for a New Europe had been signed fifteen year later. These two major historic events paved the way for bringing states and peoples together in the spacious area from Vancouver to Vladivostok and provided a powerful stimulus for collective efforts to further strengthen security and confidence-building measures in the OSCE region.

Next year, Tajikistan will mark the twentieth anniversary of its independence. Joining the OSCE was one of the most important steps forward towards building a young state and strengthening sovereignty. Cooperation and interaction within the Organization helped to build a secular society in my country based on modern democratic principles and universal values. The main lesson which we learned over the years of partnership comes to the fact that only close cooperation and confidence building measures among Member States of the Organization can contribute to building a stable, safe and prosperous region.

Tajikistan supports the OSCE's efforts in combating new threats and challenges of security and continues making a worthy contribution to this issue. Speaking about the consequences of these threats, we urge primarily to eliminate the root causes of these threats and challenges, which are poverty, unemployment, lack of fair conditions for sustainable development and artificial barriers on this way, cultural and inter-civilization conflicts.

Tajikistan is interested in further developing and strengthening good-neighborly relations and mutually beneficial cooperation with all friendly countries, since it would be difficult to achieve goals without fruitful collaboration and constructive partnership.

Economic and environmental dimensions are key terms which future of the OSCE depends on. Activity of the Organization in this area should be focused on the ability to take into account the real interests of States Parties.

We need to get at creating prerequisites for an implementation of the OSCE concept of sustainable economic development and the benefits of globalization for the interest of all. In this context, initiative on environment and security adopted in 2003 in Maastricht remains topical.

Economic and environmental challenges, particularly climate change and lack of energy security are serious threat to stability in the OSCE region and can heighten the tension both among nations and within individual country. OSCE as a responsible regional organization should contribute to the study and development of impactful measures to address these challenges.

Given the devastating consequences of climate change, in particular, the shortage of drinking and irrigation water, desertification, waterlogging of vast areas and food deficit, we believe it is very timely to raise the issue upon the active involvement of the OSCE into the process of developing appropriate mechanisms and tools for early warning and prevention of possible conflicts scenarios.

Promotion of constructive and open dialogue on the complex solution of water-energy and environmental issues in Central Asia should be an important task for the near-term prospects.

Construction of hydropower facilities in Tajikistan will enable to secure guaranteed irrigation of more than 3 million hectares of land in the Amu-Darya basin in dry years and low-water seasons. Moreover, cheap and environmentally safe electricity generated by hydro-power plants could meet the growing needs of not only Tajikistan, but also neighboring countries, including Afghanistan.

It should be emphasized that by virtue of the use of hydropower as one of renewable energy sources, Tajikistan ranks last in the region for gas emission into the atmosphere, which is our particular contribution to the environmental rehabilitation of Central Asia. Along with this, despite the fact that almost 60% of the river flow in the Aral Sea basin is generated in Tajikistan, our country uses slightly more than 7% of these waters.

Republic of Tajikistan adheres to the constructive position of taking into account regional interests, despite the fact that, in compliance with the numerous instruments of international law and realities of modern life, natural resources located in the territory of any country are above all - the national wealth of that country.

Ladies and gentlemen,

One of the commitments undertaken within the OSCE is to help landlocked developing countries. These countries are faced with a number of serious challenges, conditioned by dependence on transit services and limited access to markets. In this connection, satisfying the economic needs of landlocked developing countries requires an immediate attention.

Free movement of people and capital, goods and services, efficient functioning of the existing transport corridors in the OSCE region is the basis for the development of economic cooperation and partnership among member states.

We are inclined to review further simplification of border and customs procedures, as well as ensuring free running of international freight transit corridors as an integral part of our commitments within the OSCE, which are consistent with its comprehensive concept of security.

Tajikistan, 93% of whose territory is mountainous, is taking definite steps to get to the main transit routes and regional markets.

We express our dissatisfaction with the state of affairs in this sphere in Central Asia. Attempts to create artificial obstacles and barriers towards cargo and goods transit to Tajikistan via international rail and road routes, preventing power interchange and gas supplies from third countries continue to inflict severe damage on the economy, social sector, infrastructure and people.

We have increasingly state recent years that security of Central Asia is inseparably linked with the situation in Afghanistan - the OSCE partner State.

Developments in this country which Tajikistan shares a long border with in Central Asia with a tough mountainous terrain, we see in the light of the fight against terrorism, extremism and drug trafficking.

Along with this, we are convinced that effective counteraction to these threats and challenges is only possible owing to our concerted collective efforts with the participation of the Afghans themselves. To this end, in 2009, we, together with the OSCE have initiated the inauguration of the OSCE Border Management Staff College in Dushanbe, which is called to provide training and retraining of law enforcement bodies' officers of not only Central Asia, but throughout the OSCE region, including Afghanistan. This institution of the OSCE has demonstrated its effectiveness in improving mechanisms for border protection with Afghanistan within a short period of its existence.

Given the increasing threat of terrorism, extremism and drug trafficking, we urge the OSCE, all States parties to further contribute to the success of this important institution, as well as continue to provide practical support to the Tajik Government in further strengthening of borders.

It has recently become prevailing an understanding that there is no military solution for Afghanistan issue. And it is gratifying. Processes and developments happening in this country affirm an unambiguous signal of the urgency of transforming an emphasis from military actions to complex solution of socio-economic challenges in Afghanistan.

Tajikistan makes a real contribution to the economic restoration of a friendly neighboring country on the basis of bilateral and multilateral agreements with Afghanistan to build a high-voltage power transmission lines, training and retraining of personnel, construction of railways, roads and bridges connecting our country with other routes. We express our willingness to engage all our potential and infrastructure to this end. We urge the international community to double its efforts to provide economic assistance to Afghanistan, which were voiced at the International conference in Kabul.

The problem of illegal production and drugs trafficking and precursors seriously undermines security and stability in the OSCE region. According to recent UN data, in 2010, opium production in Afghanistan is estimated at 3,600 metric tons, which is significantly less than opium produced in 2009. We should in every way promote the adoption of this trend, since drug trade creates a powerful financial support for terrorist and extremist groups attempting to destabilize the situation in Central Asia.

Today Tajikistan serves as a key element in preventing ongoing flow of drugs coming from the northern route. Bearing this in mind, we do hope that the OSCE will strengthen this trend of its activity in Tajikistan in the process of developing projects and programs within the first dimension.

Drug crime merged with international terrorism and transnational organized crime represents a threat to security of not only in Central Asia and Russia, but Europe and the USA as well.

Given a magnitude of the problem, its solution requires collective efforts of the OSCE states parties, the United Nations and the SCO, CSTO and other international organizations with an active involvement of Afghanistan.

Tajikistan expresses deep concern in regard to ongoing mine threat in Central Asia which kills innocent civilians.

Taking into account the recommendations of the OSCE Dushanbe Regional Conference on Mines in 2009, we call upon the Organization and the International Trust Fund to make further strenuous efforts to counter mine threats in Central Asia, in particular, in Tajikistan, where there are extensive mine-planted fields representing the mortal threat to civilian population.

Affirming the invitation of the Government of Tajikistan, we encourage the OSCE and upcoming Lithuanian presidency to accelerate the launch of Regional Mine Action Coordination Council of the OSCE in Dushanbe. It will comply with the goals and objectives of the Ottawa Convention.

The Government of Tajikistan places great emphasis on further strengthening of democratization, strengthening civil society, ensuring human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of belief and freedom of expression.

We continue to maintain an active dialogue with civil society institutes and exert efforts to implement our commitments within the humanitarian dimension.

Effective management of migration processes is mutually beneficial both to countries of origin and destination countries. We are deeply convinced that migration can never be an obstacle for development. In this context, we support the efforts of the OSCE in improving the protection of migrants' rights, eliminating artificial barriers to migration and adaptation of migrants in destination countries.

In today's rapidly changing world, no country and no international organization can survive without adequate reforms and timely adaptation to new conditions.

Consequently, in our opinion, such important initiatives as increase of effectiveness of field missions, improvement of the methodology for electoral monitoring, improvement of program and budget activities, ensure of a geographical balance and the balance among the three dimensions correspond the interests of most fruitful work of the OSCE.

Strengthening the functions and authorities of the OSCE Secretary General, as well as an optimization of the structure of the Secretariat are intended to increase the effectiveness of the OSCE. A realization of all these tasks would be in line with the adoption of a fundamental document, like the charter of our Organization.

Topical issues of the future agenda of the OSCE should be considered not only in the context of potential threats to security, but also as an aspect of multilateral and regional cooperation and a sound basis for confidence building measures among nations.

This summit has demonstrated the desire and aspiration of the States Parties to improve the activities of the OSCE and enhance its potential. We hope that our summit will allow us all to take a sober view at the past, to properly assess new threats and challenges and develop coordinated approaches to further promote lasting peace and overall stability in the OSCE region. Tajikistan will provide all possible assistance to the OSCE in addressing new challenges it faces.

In conclusion, let me join in congratulating the President of the Republic of Lithuania Mrs. Dalia Grubauskayte on her election to the OSCE Chairmanship in 2011 and wish Her Excellency every success in future responsible mission.

Thank you for your attention!