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***Response to the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in
Human Beings***

**914th PERMANENT COUNCIL
31 May 2012**

I would like to join the previous speakers in warmly welcoming the OSCE Special Representative and the Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, Dr. Maria Grazia Giammarinaro, back to the Permanent Council, and thank her for her informative report on the main activities and plans of her Office in 2012.

The transnational threat posed by trafficking in human beings endangers respective aspects of the comprehensive security across the OSCE region. This being the case, we appreciate the Special Representative's holistic approach in promoting more co-ordinated, coherent and effective responses to the scourge of trafficking in human beings in areas of four "P"s, namely, prevention, prosecution, protection and partnership.

I would also like to thank the Irish Chairmanship for the timely selection of the topic of this year's Human Dimension Seminar and appreciate the dedication of ODIHR in highlighting the scourge caused by this modern-day-slavery. We believe that the seminar helped highlight the importance of human-based approach and the protection of the victims.

The Seminar offered a valuable opportunity for governments, international bodies and civil society actors to exchange views and information on the efforts aimed at identification of policy gaps and the areas where legislative updates are necessary.

Since it is more than evident that transboundary criminal networks are constantly developing ever more sophisticated ways for avoiding prosecution, we regard the Seminar as success in terms of drawing attention to

the urge for strengthened international cooperation, without which effective legal remedies can hardly be put at the disposal of victims.

I cannot agree more with Dr. Giammarinaro in her assessment that trafficked persons are among the most vulnerable populations in any society. The news story that Ms Giammarinaro has shared with us illustrates the very fact that the fate of victims in most cases might have gone unnoticed, an unfortunately widespread pattern followed in many societies.

The vulnerability is all the more tragic when victims are migrants with an irregular employment or status, who often face serious challenges in accessing justice and effective remedies. As evidence based data and various reports including those from the EU suggest, transnational criminal groups including terrorist organizations frequently resort to human trafficking through highly sophisticated methods and by making use of new technologies, a fertile ground for further victimization. In this regard, ensuring equal protection of victims and observing the principle of the rule of law, having constituted the main focus of the Seminar, should be among the priorities to be set in the fight against trafficking in persons.

As for the studies conducted as well as projects carried out by the Office of the Special Representative, I would like to emphasize the importance of the added-value Dr. Giammarinaro could introduce to the pool of international efforts in particular in the framework of the *Alliance against Trafficking in Persons*. Among these activities, the ones devoted to awareness raising and capacity building in partnership with relevant institutions and international organizations deserve our special appreciation. The contribution of the Special Representative to the one-week training programme, organized twice a year by the NATO Partnership for Peace Training Centre in Ankara is a good example of such valuable efforts.

In conclusion, I wish Dr. Giammarinaro further success in her future endeavors and express our full support for her work programme.

Thank you.