

ADDRESS

ENGLISH only

**by H.E Minister of Foreign Affairs of the
Republic of Tajikistan Mr. Hamrokhon Zarifi
at the 17th OSCE Ministerial Council Meeting
(Athens, 1-2 December 2009)**

**Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished colleagues,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

Let me express my gratitude to the Greek Government for excellent organization of our meeting, as well as my personal appreciation goes to H.E. Prime-Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Greece Mr. George Papandreu for his tireless efforts towards achievement of our goals and tasks.

I would also like to welcome the incoming Kazakh Chairman in Office, H.E. Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan Mr. Saudabaev Kanat Bekmurzaevich and wish him success in his forthcoming endeavor.

Mr. Chairman,

34 years after beginning of Helsinki process, the OSCE still has remaining a reliable platform for open discussions and exchange of views on a wide range of issues related to the maintenance of peace and security and point of balanced decisions for key tracks of cooperation in Europe. Historical mission of the OSCE - to realize the hope for stability, democracy and progress for all people from Vancouver to Vladivostok - has not lost its significance nowadays.

Tajikistan stands on continuation of the OSCE reforming process and its adaptation to modern challenges. Changing multicultural World, new threats and risks of security in the OSCE area task us to look at the situation in the area in a new manner and take urgent steps toward improvement of existing mechanisms and tools of our Organization in order to increase its effectiveness.

We are well aware of situation in the field of European security. Adoption of upcoming new basic document aimed at further strengthening of stability in Euro-

Atlantic area is very important for Central Asia also being one of key parts of the OSCE region. We deem that "Corfu Process" initiated by Greek Chairmanship during outgoing year, allowed us to understand better the nature of modern challenges and determine mainstream approaches to stand against those threats. We hope that the future legally binding document allows to strengthen security guarantees for all of us without any exception among the Participating States, as well as deepen confidence building measures and improves increasingly mutual interstate relations. Tajikistan supports the idea of the OSCE Summit with participation of all interested parties in order to review the outcomes of the Organization's activity in past and promote new initiatives.

At the same time, unfortunately, it is necessary to stress that today apart of certain successes, we could not put an end to international terrorism and manifestations of extremism, drug trafficking, transnational organized crime, epidemics and environmental challenges seriously threatening the security and stability in the OSCE region and around it. Latest bursting of global financial and economic crisis has considerably undermined efforts of World governments to overcome negative aspects of globalization. In this connection, we suggest fairly to move toward transition to the proactive actions, revision of the OSCE strategic cooperation with developing Participating States in order to increase its effectiveness, ensure practical assistance and enable them to meet urgent and priority tasks.

Distinguished colleagues,

All of us are witnesses of that in the beginning of the XXI century the problem of climate change and its catastrophic aftermath, gradual degradation of human habitat, natural cataclysms and related devastating wide-scale disasters, force out traditional challenges and become dominating in the World, including the OSCE region. What is concerning in particular, the permanent climate change stipulates appearance of tensions not only within the certain country, but might have also negative impact on the interstate relations, and thus as a result, to expose regional stability and security in serious risk.

During last 50 years the demographic growth in Central Asia and increase of its population from 20 million in 1956 to 63 million today has been provoked irrational and extensive manner of land and water resources utilization at the turn of the XXI century. It is a serious challenge to future of the region's well-being and prosperity,

and for counteraction to which the leading role of the OSCE as the key stakeholder is needed within its own area.

Madrid Ministerial Declaration–2007 endorses that climate change is a long-term challenge to the humanity. According to this document, and proceeding from the chapter VIII UN Charter, the OSCE along with United Nations is committed to play key role in addressing environmental problems within its area.

We deem that due to consequences of this threat and its negative implication on the security of the region - first of all, because of the shortage of drinking and irrigational water, desertification and wetlanding of huge territories, deficiency of food and massive migration, - the OSCE has to involve more actively into the process and elaborate mechanisms of early warning pending possible future conflict scenarios. In this respect, it is very important the OSCE promotion, along with other international institutions, of constructive dialogue and spirit of mutual cooperation among all Central Asian states.

It is well-known, that the problem of Aral Sea rose as alternative between economic and ecological needs of Central Asian countries. Irrational, mostly unreasonable use of water resources in second half of XX century, application of extensive agriculture ignoring any aftermath of environmental deterioration have led finally to gradual degradation and then extinction of the Aral Sea. Booming enlargement of irrigated lands in down-stream countries as well as negligence of natural law stipulated planetary catastrophe, which sad fruits we reap today.

According to strategic 2003 the OSCE Ministerial Decision, Participating States are committed to promote consistently open dialogue in the sphere of energy security and energy resources. Energy, and hydro energy, is the crucial condition for securing sustainable socio-economic development, well-being and poverty reduction in developing countries, including Tajikistan. **Guided by internationally recognized norms and standards, including the United Nations Stockholm Conference 1972, we are standing, and will stand on the granting of equal and fair right to all for development, energy, communication and food independence, as a indispensable condition of maintenance of stability, security and well-being for our state.**

We are deeply convinced that only coordinated and mutually beneficial approach of all Central Asian countries on rational use of water and energy and other natural resources could affect positively on solution of our common interdependent energy and

economic problems, provide stable and sustainable development of the region in the future. Occupying eighth place in the World in term of stocks of hydro-power capacity, which is 527 billion kVt/hrs, Tajikistan continue consumption over the last 18 years only 5 % of that potential. It is absolutely fair that because of lack of reconnoitered sources of mineral resources within its territory, and energy crisis consequences, the Government of Tajikistan since has essentially started since last few years the process of development of hydro-energy as well as construction of hydro-power facilities as a prioritized national target for the nearest perspective. **We are firmly convinced that further development of hydro-energy potential of Tajikistan, exceeding real needs of the region three and more times, allows us not only to satisfy the growing demands of neighboring countries for cheap and non-polluting electric power, but also increase considerably irrigation capacities of lands located in the down-stream countries.**

Striving toward development of water and energy, we clearly understand that our hydro-energy security would not be ensured on the interests of neighboring countries. In this regard, we deem that way-out from that deadlock is possible only through coordinated regional policy, sustainable functioning of the scheme of water-energy exchange and joint utilization of whole hydro energy potential of the region. **Tajikistan firmly intends to continue open and transparent implementation of national projects in the sphere of water and energy with participation of all regional and international partners taking into account the conclusions and recommendations of recognized independent organizations and institutions, such as the Center of development of the Brooklyn Institute, Potsdam university etc.**

The modern history of formation of independent Central Asian states shows that Tajikistan really was and remains in forefront of active actions in favor of rational utilization and collective management of water resources of the region. **Numerous personal initiatives of President Emomali Rahmon witness about it, both on regional and global levels related to the establishment of international consortium on the construction of Roghun hydro-power station as well as use of Sarez Lake's water resources. Taking this opportunity, I call Delegations of the OSCE Participating States upon active participation in upcoming High Level International UN Conference on the midterm comprehensive/global review of the implementation of International Decade of actions «Water for life» 2005-2015 to be held in June, 2010 in Dushanbe and support the initiative of Tajikistan for conducting High-Level Dialogue of the UNGA in New York on March 22nd, 2010-World Water Day. We also appeal to the OSCE community for co-sponsoring**

special resolution of UN General Assembly prepared by Tajikistan , as well as to join our initiative on announcement within the framework of United Nations the year of 2012 - as an International Year of Water Diplomacy. We hope that our joint and crucial actions on the matter will serve in the future the milestone in order to address the important ecological and energy problems of the region.

Mr. Chairman,

It is well-known for all of us that the effective action against narcotic threat is the important part of common antiterrorist efforts of the OSCE Participating States. Tajikistan traditionally is leading country in the post-soviet area in term of narcotic drug seizure, occupying thus the 4th place in the World . According to the statistical data, over the last 10 years only heroin has been seized within the territory of Tajikistan is one billion hundred twenty million USD that consequently saved lives of more than 36 million narcotic-dependent citizens. **Noting considerable contribution of the OSCE in the field of effective border management and implementation of counter narcotic programs in Tajikistan, we are keen to consider our own boundaries as buffer on the way of terrorism, extremism and drug trafficking to Europe, which apparently need the adequate approach of international community with respect to further strengthening and promotion of equipment and technical assistance to the national border-guarding units.**

Tajikistan is extremely interested in stabilization of situation and peace in the neighboring Afghanistan. It is obviously, the protracted conflict in this country could not have only military solution. The security threat from Afghanistan insistenty dictates us to take complex and effective steps toward considerable international social and economic, financial, technical and other assistance to Afghanistan with the purpose of its soonest rehabilitation.

Government of Tajikistan appreciates the OSCE and its Participating States efforts for establishment of the OSCE Staff College in Dushanbe and practical assistance to work out the National Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan on Border Management, as well as implementation of a number of projects and programs in this sphere. Taking note the regional context of the mandate of the OSCE Office in Tajikistan, we consider the given educational institution as one of the OSCE's important institutions designed not only to educate professional experts for post-Soviet countries, but also for Afghanistan and other the OSCE Partners. **Remaining strong supporter of the development of regional cooperation, prompt integration processes in Central Asia and further**

strengthening of the OSCE role in the region, Tajikistan reiterates its readiness to host the OSCE regional institutions, such as centers for land degradation, crisis management under the Committee on emergency situations, transit and transportation, as well as the branch of the Water Institute.

We emphasize major contribution of the OSCE to the implementation of SALW Program in Tajikistan also. As a result of completion of its second phase and financial support of a number of friendly countries this year it have been destructed of 26.000 pieces of SALW and 34 tones of ammunition, as well as 9 new storage facilities has been constructed etc.

Tajikistan shares the aspiration of international community toward achieving comprehensive prohibition of anti-personnel mines in the World and in the OSCE region. Anti-personnel mines are impediment on the way of peace and democracy. Since 1992 till present personal mines explosions caused in Tajikistan suffering of more than 800 citizens, part of them killed and another seriously injured. Majority of fertile land has been turned out from circulation. During current year 7 individuals have already been suffered, two of them killed and five got wounds.

Existence of mine fields along the borders and explosion of civilians in Central Asia - is our tragedy. And we are remaining committed to provisions of Ottawa Convention, urge the OSCE and its Participating States to share our concern and make efforts to provide practical assistance to meeting this problem. Let every explosion on the borders of the region's states perishing lives of innocent people, will voice as an alert for all other states committed to the principles of humanism.

On 17 – 18 November, 2009 the Regional Conference entitled «Facilitation of Central Asian Co-operation in Mine Action» had been organized in Dushanbe This event has been discussed opportunities for establishment of regional coordination body on Mine-Action in Central Asia. It is tremendous step forward. The setting up of such structure aimed at further strengthening of confidence building measures would facilitate bilateral and multilateral dialogue in the region on mine clearance of joint borders and creates the background for Central Asian transformation into the free mines region.

Dear friends,

In the framework of multidimensional cooperation with the OSCE we continue to pay great value to the collaboration in the field of human dimension, strengthening of democratic processes in the society and promotion of basic human rights and

freedoms. Establishment of the Institute of Ombudsman in Tajikistan has marked a major milestone on the way of approaching of Tajikistan to constant democratic values of the OSCE. According to the index of freedom of press conducted this year by the non-governmental organization «Reporters without borders», Tajikistan placed in best position among all other Central Asian countries, to that witness certain achievements in this sphere in 2009. As a whole, in accordance with estimations of international experts, Tajik society is characterized by religious tolerance and multiculturalism based on the permanent improvement and adoption of relevant legislation as well as conducting the balanced and wise internal policy by political leadership. Nevertheless, I would emphasize that **the Government of Tajikistan does not stop at this end and remains opened for continuation of dialogue with the OSCE and other interested international partners on all scope of issues related to third dimension.**

We welcome efforts of the Participating States on the OSCE reforming process and improvement of its effectiveness. We believe important to accelerate and complete a long time discussions on legal status of the OSCE. In this regard, we express our full support to joint proposal of CSTO member-countries on adoption of the OSCE Charter and Convention simultaneously in order to give an impulse to the process of the OSCE legal personality.

On February 2010 the next parliamentary elections of Majlisi Namoyandagon Majlisi Oli (Parliament) of the Republic of Tajikistan will take place in our country. **In this regard, and pursuant to Copenhagen and other the OSCE basic documents, we invite Bureau on Democratic Institutes and Human Rights, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly as well as all the OSCE Participating States to send its observers for participation in that important for us political event. Government of Tajikistan will make efforts to organize elections in the atmosphere of openness and in the framework of law.**

Mr. Chairman,

We are confident that only through cooperation and open dialogue it would be possible to reach consensus and agree on common approaches in order to overcome obstacles. Tajikistan as one of active supporters of regional cooperation development and strengthening of confidence building measures and security in the OSCE area will make further efforts in favor of achievement of noble goals and ideals of the Organization.

Thank You for attention.