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**STATEMENT BY
MR. ANDREY KELIN, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1053rd MEETING OF
THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

21 May 2015

**In response to the statement by the
Minister for Women's Affairs of Afghanistan**

Mr. Chairperson,

We thank Ms. Dilbar Nazari, Minister of Women's Affairs of Afghanistan, for her informative statement on the issues of women's participation in the national reconciliation process in Afghanistan, and also on the results of the round table held yesterday on this subject.

We welcome the efforts of the Afghan authorities to eliminate discrimination against women and involve them in various spheres of public life. Improving women's access to education, employment, social protection and culture is an important condition for democracy. Ensuring that account is taken of the interests of women who wish to combine family responsibilities and raising children with participation in social, economic and cultural life is also of no small importance. Implementing a balanced policy in ensuring equal opportunities for men and women and gradually solving existing problems, taking into account the specific features of Afghanistan and without pursuing quotas, is the key to success in this area.

Russia supports the Afghan people's aspiration to achieve national reconciliation, which should be based on respect for Kabul's leadership and observance of the three principles of national reconciliation – laying down arms, recognizing the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, and severing ties with Al-Qaida and other terrorist organizations once and for all.

We note the growing understanding around the world of the importance of the regional context of an Afghan settlement. We believe that such an influential regional organization as the OSCE, in accordance with its mandate and with the United Nations playing the co-ordinating role, is able to provide Afghanistan with effective assistance in promoting peace and stability, taking into account its real needs, specific conditions and the wishes of the Afghan Government itself. We believe that such work by the OSCE should be closely co-ordinated with the efforts of other regional organizations, including the Collective

Security Treaty Organization and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. Virtually all the countries of the region, including Afghanistan, are gathered together in the latter organization as members, observers or dialogue partners.

For our part, we will continue to provide Afghanistan with the support we can, both within the framework of international organizations and on a bilateral level.

Thank you for your attention.