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**PERMANENT MISSION
OF TURKEY TO THE OSCE**

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR NACI SARIBAŞ
(High Level Conference on TND, 29-30 June 2010)**

**(Session III, Combating racism, xenophobia and discrimination, also focusing on
intolerance and discrimination against Christians and members of other religions)**

Thank you Mr. Moderator,

I would like to begin by thanking the Kazakh Chairmanship, ODIHR as well as the representatives of the civil society for initiating a lively debate in such an important issue. Our thanks also go to the distinguished introducers for their thought-provoking presentations.

Since the last High Level Tolerance Conference in Bucharest, the facts on the ground confirm the enduring gravity of the threat posed by the gradual advancement of intolerance, racism, xenophobia and disrespect to inherent dignity in almost all segments of our societies. We echo the concerns expressed by many participants on the steady rise of intolerance and discrimination that are usually fuelled by racist and xenophobic motives.

Recent facts and figures presented by reputable non-governmental and international organizations portray an unpleasant picture of racist and xenophobic violence; hate motivated incidents, ethnic profiling and hostility against migrants within the OSCE area. These phenomena can no longer be qualified and contained as the so-called isolated actions of ultra nationalist and extreme right wing groups. The scope and frequency of these incidents are neither narrow nor far between. Mass media coverage depicting the migrants as the scapegoats of negative trends in the society, finger pointing the Muslims as the prime suspect of terrorism, growing anti-Semitic manifestations and intolerance against Christians and Roma-Sinti are only a few examples of recurrent challenges that require urgent and careful deliberation of the participating States.

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We would like draw the attention to the vulnerability of migrants and their families. The situation of migrants, in an existing climate of xenophobia and discrimination, has been worsened by additional challenges, such as global economic downturn. We call participating States that attract migrant workers to ensure the equal exercise of their rights and freedoms as it is the case for their citizens. We would like to encourage ODIHR to pay greater attention to the vulnerable status of migrants and extend its valuable expertise also for the human dimension of migration.

Mother tongue education of migrants is important. Therefore, we would like the concerned countries to provide facility and incentive for mother tongue education.

Mr. Moderator,

The role and responsibility of political leaders and representatives in eliminating racism and xenophobia deserves particular attention. They should lead decisive and result-oriented action against discrimination, segregation and hate, rather than contributing prevalent practices of alienating `others` and stemming tensions among societies. Resurgence of intolerance ahead of and during elections constitutes another important aspect that requires further study and awareness raising. We welcome positive developments in some participating States, in the way of better legislation, or efficient official responses in combating intolerance, racism and xenophobia.

Let me conclude by reiterating the appreciation and support of my Government to ODIHR for its efforts in assisting participating States and the civil society in addressing these scourges that are detrimental for the cohesion of our societies.

Thank you