

**Statement by Ambassador Tacan Ildem
Permanent Representative of Turkey
20th OSCE Ministerial Council
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Mr. Chairperson, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to start, on behalf of my Minister, by thanking the Ukrainian Chairmanship for the warm hospitality extended to us. I would also like to express our sincere appreciation to Minister Kozhara for having steered our Organization, together with his able team, in a most commendable fashion throughout 2013.

We wish to see this Ministerial Council Meeting constitute a milestone for our future orientation. Let us bring together a new vision for the OSCE to help realize the objective of creating an environment of security from Vancouver to Vladivostok, where dialogue, cooperation and solidarity will be the keywords for addressing problems and challenges in the OSCE geography.

This is, in fact, the drive and philosophy that should guide our work during the Helsinki +40 process. This process should give us a chance to address the deficit of trust among the participating States by generating a new culture of engagement. We also need to revise and refine the working methods of our organization with a view to enhancing its efficiency.

We have no doubt that the consecutive Swiss and Serbian Chairmanships will spare no effort in order to move this incremental process further, towards 2015, when we hopefully could agree on a landmark document to guide us in the years to come.

Mr. Chairperson,

The prevention and settlement of conflicts lie at the heart of OSCE's work. We therefore need to give highest priority to efforts aiming to resolve the protracted conflicts that our Organization was tasked to deal with.

Instability and uncertainties still prevail in many parts of the world. The South Caucasus is one of them. Conflicts in this geography have prevented the region from realizing its full potential of cooperation. This, in turn, adversely affects regional wealth and prosperity. We welcome the recent meeting between the Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan. We appreciate and support the efforts of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs which unfortunately have so far not been crowned with a visible success. We support regional integration initiatives to serve as a game-changer by projecting a common future of security and prosperity for the peoples of the region that could trigger the necessary political will for conflict resolution. The status-quo in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is unacceptable. The effective utilization of the Minsk Group in order to foster creative ideas and projects that will bring new prospects for settlement is therefore imperative.

Stability and security in the Balkans have a direct bearing on stability and peace in the whole OSCE area. This is a region where peaceful and harmonious transition and consolidation need

to be nurtured. We need to entice all actors at all levels to achieve closer cooperation among them. Turkey's input in this direction shall continue unabatedly.

Central Asia is a region where we were pleased to observe sustained positive developments on a number of fronts. There yet remains considerable ground to be covered, therefore, lending our strong support to all relevant stakeholders.

In Afghanistan, which is not only a partner for cooperation but a neighbor of our Central Asian participating States, long-term security and stability can only be built on the basis of local ownership, strong regional co-operation and long-term political commitment of the international community. The international community including the OSCE should continue its long term engagement to assist Afghanistan.

Dear Participants,

Turkey attaches importance to the work of the Forum for Security Cooperation (FSC) and the modernization of the Vienna Document with a view to increasing military stability, predictability and transparency.

The fight against transnational threats (TNTs) is an area where our organization is increasing its footprint. Fight against terrorism, counter narcotics, police activities and cyber security are some areas where Turkey will continue contributing actively to the OSCE work in the coming period ahead.

We support the adoption of an initial set of CBMs in the field of information communication technologies. Turkey is also one of the co-sponsors of the draft decision on an OSCE-wide action plan on women, peace and security. My country attaches great importance to enhancing OSCE capacities to assist participating States in implementing the UN Security Council resolutions in this field.

Mr. Chairperson,

The economic and environmental dimension of the OSCE is part and parcel of the overall cross-dimensional efforts towards consolidation of security. Activities in this dimension have direct repercussions on confidence building measures as well as a positive impact enhancing equal opportunities in the economic sphere.

Our commitments in the human dimension are vital for the OSCE's comprehensive security concept. It is therefore pleasing that we are close to achieving concrete deliverables in the human dimension here in Kiev after an unwelcome hiatus of two years.

The challenges posed by intolerance and discrimination in the OSCE region is of particular and pressing importance. Two years ago at the Vilnius Ministerial Council we drew attention to the alarming increase of racism, xenophobia and Islamophobia, as well as to the increased vulnerability of migrants. At the end of 2013, the situation on the ground in many participating States has become worse. We must step up our vigilance, strengthen our efforts and unite in the common cause of combating this scourge.

I would like to touch upon another point after having heard the statement made on behalf of the United States, in which my country was also mentioned. I believe we would all agree that,

when it comes to the implementation of our human dimension commitments, none of us are perfect. Shortcomings in this regard can be observed in all participating States. However, drawing attention to certain shortcomings of others by naming and shaming does not and cannot contribute to the trust and cooperation which we are striving to strengthen within our Organization. This is in fact something we should take into consideration while developing a new culture of engagement, as I have alluded to earlier within the context of the Helsinki +40 process.

Mr. Chairperson,

We are witnessing calls for reform, democracy and more freedom in some Mediterranean countries. Cooperating with our Partners in their quest for reforms is ultimately a service to our own security. Our dialogue and cooperation with our Partners needs to be a demand-driven process, and be based on requests and priorities of the Partner countries.

Our engagement with our Asian Partners for Co-operation is an important means for our political dialogue and cooperation in enhancement of security while addressing the challenges of our time. The Conference on Interaction and Cooperation in Asia- CICA- draws much from the OSCE and constitutes a point of reference in bridging the OSCE with Asia in strengthening dialogue and mutual understanding while creating synergies.

Mr. Chairperson,

As underlined by our Heads of State and Government in the Astana Declaration, the security of the OSCE area is inextricably linked to that of adjacent areas. Bearing this in mind, I wish to briefly touch upon the dreadful situation in Syria.

At our doorstep, one of the most vivid struggles for democracy against tyranny is underway. For almost three years this violence has left more than 110 thousand dead and many more wounded. Extremists and terrorists are now exploiting fertile ground that this conflict offers.

The humanitarian situation is beyond description. Appalling human rights violations such as massacres, summary executions, shelling of schools, hospitals and religious sites testifies to the most horrible human tragedy in this century.

On our part, we have welcomed and accommodated all Syrians who came to us to flee from the regime terror in their country.

A political solution to this issue in accordance with the legitimate aspirations and demands of the Syrian people is long overdue. We hope that the Geneva-II Conference which we strongly support would not only lay the ground for a sustainable political solution of the conflict but also help save lives.

I wish to repeat our call for a concerted effort by the international community for a speedy transition to democracy in Syria in accordance with the aspirations of the Syrian people so that the security and stability in our immediate neighborhood as well as the OSCE region as a whole could be reinstated.

Mr. Chairperson,

On a positive note, related to the region adjacent to the OSCE area, a new phase has begun for a durable and mutually satisfactory solution to the issue of the Iranian nuclear program. We always believed in diplomacy as a means towards a solution and today contentedly see that diplomacy indeed prevailed. This is the first tangible result after the Tehran Declaration of 2010 secured by the joint efforts of Turkey and Brazil. Naturally, if the steps enumerated by the Tehran Declaration had been put into action then, we would not have lost three and a half years.

Mr. Chairperson,

We would like to express our gratitude to the Chairperson-in-Office of Ukraine for inviting the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States to the OSCE Ministerial Meeting, as a guest. We are of the view that participation of the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States, as a regional cooperation mechanism, in the work of the OSCE will contribute to the achievement of the goals shared by the two organizations.

In concluding let me assure you that we will continue to work constructively and diligently to see that our Organization is brought to par with where it truly belongs. I wish to extend to the incoming Swiss Chairmanship our best wishes for success and to pledge them our full support and cooperation.