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**STATEMENT BY MR. ANVAR AZIMOV,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

27 May 2010

Illicit drug trafficking and the role of the OSCE

Mr. Chairperson,

The growing scale of drug trafficking is one of the most serious threats to global security. In spite of efforts at all levels, the world community has still not managed to achieve a breakthrough. There is an evident need to elaborate a more effective multilateral system. We are basically against liberalizing existing international legislation on the control of narcotics.

An even more acute global problem is the burgeoning drug business originating in Afghanistan, which remains the unquestioned leading supplier of opiates, accounting for more than 95 per cent of world production. There has also been a rapid growth recently in cannabis cultivation in Afghanistan, which has become the leading producer in the world of this group of narcotics.

According to United Nations data, 100,000 people die from Afghan narcotics every year. The total annual profits by the transnational drug mafia from illicit operations involving narcotics from Afghanistan is put at 500 billion dollars. The connection between producers of narcotics and the financing of terrorism in Afghanistan and beyond is also becoming increasingly evident. Every year the Taliban receives between 100 and 500 million dollars from drug lords.

Given the fact that the Afghan narcotics problem is complex and multidimensional, the approach to countering this phenomenon must be equally systematic. The Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Co-operation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem set forth in United Nations General Assembly resolution 64/182, which sets itself the aim of significantly reducing heroin, cocaine and cannabis production in the world by 2019, is seen by us as a serious undertaking. We believe that the international community should make every effort to achieve this aim.

We support the development of co-operation within the Paris-Moscow process under the aegis of the United Nations. The launch of the third phase of the project (2010–2012) will be an important step in this development. It would also be useful to hold the third conference

of the Paris Pact at the ministerial level in the second half of this year in one of the countries playing an active role in these activities.

We welcome the decisions adopted at the International Conference on Afghanistan held on 28 April this year in London on the need to combat the illicit trafficking in Afghan narcotics at all stages, from the destruction of drug crops to stopping the smuggling of “finished products”, the flow of drug-related finances and trafficking in precursors.

It is vital to step up international efforts to fulfil the commitment undertaken in United Nations Security Council resolution 1817 of 11 June 2008 to stop the illicit trafficking of precursors to Afghanistan.

One key factor is to combat the laundering of the proceeds from drug trafficking. We believe that specific measures should be taken to include Afghan drug barons in the sanctions regime under United Nations Security Council resolution 1267. The Russian initiative to establish “financial security belts” in the region was designed for this very purpose.

We attach special importance to the decisions approved at the special Conference on Afghanistan under the aegis of the Shanghai Co-operation Organization (SCO) in Moscow in March 2009, which call for extensive co-ordinated international co-operation to put an end to the danger of drugs and contain an impressive set of specific measures.

We believe that co-ordination of anti-drug efforts by the International Security Assistance Force in particular, both within and beyond the borders of Afghanistan, carried out within the framework of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) operation Canal and also by the SCO, would help to improve the effectiveness of joint efforts with regard to Afghanistan.

We are interested in the continuation of projects by the NATO-Russia Council and the OSCE for training specialists for the Afghan drug control service at the Domodedovo Centre. We also intend to develop these programmes further.

The Russian Federation supports the efforts being taken by Afghanistan to combat narcotics, in particular the work of the Afghan Government to implement a national drug control strategy. We welcome the conclusion in March 2009 by the governments of Russia and Afghanistan of a co-operative agreement to combat illicit trafficking in narcotics, psychotropic substances and their precursors, which opens up new prospects for co-operation in this area.

We are gratified to note the new level of Russo-American co-operation in drug control, most notably through the Bilateral Presidential Commission and the working group on narcotics that has already started working within it.

We are interested in further strengthening anti-drug co-operation with our European partners. We are seriously concerned about the smuggling into Russia of synthetic drugs from the countries of western Europe and the Baltic. We are in favour of the elaboration of a common approach to counter this phenomenon and the adoption of specific practical measures to close down the distribution channels for synthetic drugs and precursors in the OSCE region.

According to the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction and Europol, cocaine abuse has exploded in western Europe. We are also willing to co-operate in this regard at both the bilateral and the multilateral levels.

We are in favour of stepping up the OSCE's various efforts to combat the drug threat, in particular by fulfilling the provisions of the three conventions of 1961, 1971 and 1988 and other major United Nations documents, by assisting in the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1817, by continuing the practice of annual narcotics conferences in Vienna and regional seminars and by carrying out practical projects, including the training of specialists for the drug control services of Afghanistan and the countries of Central Asia.

We believe that it is important for the OSCE to develop its co-operation in combating drug trafficking with the International Narcotics Control Board, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime within the framework of the Paris-Moscow process, and the CSTO and other specialized bodies.

We welcome the decision by the Kazakh Chairmanship to hold the next large-scale conference on combating the drug threat in Vienna on 8 and 9 July. We are in favour of making this forum an annual platform for the exchange of experience and agreement on joint measures in the OSCE region.

An equally important and logical step for the OSCE would be to elaborate a comprehensive work programme to combat drugs that would promote the harmonization, co-ordination and consolidation of the work and the communication of best practices in this area.

Thank you for your attention.