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

22 July 2010

Regarding the Kabul International Conference on Afghanistan

Mr. Chairperson,

Together with other delegations, we should also like to mention the importance of the recent Kabul International Conference on Afghanistan, in which the Russian delegation headed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Sergey Lavrov, took part. The recent conference was a crucial step in terms of support by the international community for the efforts of the Afghan leadership to bring about Afghanistan's renewal and in terms of commitment to the policy of gradually transferring responsibility to the Afghan authorities for governance of their country. And indeed we now need to help Afghanistan solve many urgent problems.

I am referring primarily to the elimination of the terrorist threat and the formation of Afghan power structures that could reliably ensure the security of the country. No less important is the task of achieving national reconciliation. In this connection, the Russian Federation supports the policy being pursued by the Afghan leadership for the reintegration into society of the members of illegal armed formations who are not tarnished by crimes against their own people and who have met the demands of the country's authorities to cease their armed struggle, recognize the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and sever their ties with Al-Qaida and other terrorist groups.

The task of preventing Afghan drug trafficking, which is threatening international peace and security, is becoming ever more acute. In this regard, we expect the Afghan Government and the International Security Assistance Force to be more decisive in their efforts to combat the production and spread of narcotic drugs. We are looking forward to greater co-ordination with such key regional organizations as the Collective Security Treaty Organization and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation in combating drug trafficking. It is necessary to regulate the situation not only in Afghanistan, but also in the border regions between Afghanistan and Pakistan. In this connection, we support the efforts by Kabul and Islamabad to establish closer co-operation in countering all these current threats. The second meeting of the presidents of Russia, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Tajikistan, which will be held in Sochi this August, will be helpful in achieving these goals.

The restoration of Afghanistan's neutral status should help create an atmosphere of good-neighbourly relations and co-operation in the region once the situation there has been stabilized. This idea was expressed in the joint declaration by the presidents of Russia and the United States of America adopted on 24 June of this year in Washington. We are confident that it will find support among all the Afghan people.

In conclusion, I should like to emphasize in particular that the Kabul Conference was a convincing example of effective co-operation among all the interested countries and international organizations in the interests of resolving the Afghan problem as quickly as possible and establishing Afghanistan as a safe, prosperous, democratic and neutral State.

Thank you for your attention.