

**Remarks by Mrs.Madina Jarbussynova, Ambassador-at-Large
of Kazakhstan at the Closing reinforced plenary session
of the 2011 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
7 October 2011**

The delegation of Kazakhstan believes that the 2011 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting provided another good chance for the participating States and representatives of their civil society to share experience and identify actions to address outstanding problems.

This is the first Human Dimension Implementation Meeting held after the OSCE Astana Summit and the 2010 OSCE Review Conference. These two major events, held for the first time since 1999, have enabled all of us to take stock of what had been achieved and, most importantly, not achieved in the last decade. Therefore, we consider this year's annual HDIM as a good follow-up to the 2010 comprehensive review exercise.

This was demonstrated by many delegations' references to the Astana Declaration, where our leaders reiterated (quote) "that human rights and fundamental freedoms are inalienable, and that their protection and promotion is our first responsibility. We reaffirm categorically and irrevocably that the commitments undertaken in the field of the human dimension are matters of direct and legitimate concern to all participating States and do not belong exclusively to the internal affairs of the State concerned" (end of quote).

The delegation of Kazakhstan regrets that one of the participating States at the outset of this HDIM stated that the Chairmanship of Kazakhstan in the OSCE last year was "the chairmanship of missed opportunities for the reforms at home", say, in human dimension. The said statement seriously misrepresents the situation on the ground. Last year Kazakhstan as a Chair of the OSCE demonstrated an exemplary openness to a dialogue of the government with the civil society. The number of internal and international events that took place in Kazakhstan with the participation of NGOs on fostering reforms in Kazakhstan and events specially organized for NGOs is quite well-known to all OSCE participating States. As you have all witnessed, all participants from Kazakhstan,

representing both the civil society and the government, are one of the largest and the most active delegation at this HDIM. Same picture you all could observe in 2008, 2009, and 2010. This clearly indicates that Kazakhstan not only has a mature and outspoken civil society, but also a government which is strongly committed to its obligations, including to the dialogue with the civil society and NGOs.

I firmly believe that Kazakhstan should be given credit, not criticism, for moving so far towards a Western-style democracy in just 20 years of independence from the Soviet Union.

The overall situation around the OSCE HDIM is actually very strange.

The Helsinki Summit has established this meeting as “a meeting at expert level of all participating States” (para 9 of Chapter VI of the Helsinki Document). The main task of the HDIM is (I quote) “a thorough exchange of views on the implementation of human dimension commitments” (end of quote). Given this, we regret that some participating States either are absent or limit their participation at the HDIM to the experts from diplomatic missions in Vienna or to Embassy staff accredited in Poland. With such a limited scope of attendance this forum does not and cannot ensure a genuine dialogue.

By definition, and thanks to openness of our ODIHR, the HDIM is open to all NGOs from the OSCE region, without any restrictions. Attendance of HDIM by NGOs from a certain country is an indicator of the strength of the civil society in that country. However, we are very concerned by the tendency that most NGOs attending the HDIM are from CIS and East Europe. The poor and unbalanced attendance of the HDIM by NGOs is a very negative trend.

So, in the recent years the HDIM has almost lost its role as a forum for multilateral dialogue among all the participating States, and has become a place for bilateral exchange of views between NGOs and governments of the same country, and only few countries. This seriously undermines the interest of many participating States to attend the meeting, as there are plenty other places where any government can and actually, as it is in Kazakhstan, is arranging such a bilateral dialogue with its own civil society.

The geographically limited attendance by NGOs also prevents NGOs from Eastern Europe and Newly Independent States from better learning the experience and lessons from NGOs operating in the countries of "Western democracies".

Perhaps, western NGOs are less interested in attending our HDIM? Then why do we need such an HDIM which is not interesting for the civil society? If this is the case, than the participating States must seriously reconsider the substance and modalities of the HDIM. Then why not consider the possibility of convening HDIMs not in Warsaw, but in one of the Central Asian States, which would allow save significant financial and organizational resources both for the participating States and the Organization itself.

Perhaps, western NGOs do not have enough money to travel to Warsaw? Then why does not the OSCE provide financial help to them, in the same way as it does for NGOs from other regions? If the reason of poor attendance is in the lack of resources, than the participating States must seriously reconsider not only modalities of the HDIM, but also the modalities of handling OSCE extra-budgetary resources or the participating States could reconsider the venue of this event, by moving it in the western direction.

Perhaps, another reason of such attendance is a poor dissemination and lack of information among civil society in Western countries?

These are only few thoughts only about one problem – poor and unbalanced attendance of the HDIM. There are plenty of other problems with this event. Therefore, we strongly believe that the OSCE Permanent Council needs to discuss all issues related to the HDIM reform, and my delegation is ready to engage in these discussions with the main objective of increasing its effectiveness and strengthening OSCE human dimension events in general. As our Heads of States and Governments have agreed in Astana last December (quote) "to further work towards strengthening the OSCE's effectiveness and efficiency" (end of quote), we urge all participating States to improve things in this very important dimension.

In conclusion, let me express my sincere gratitude to the organizers of the event: our distinguished OSCE Lithuanian Chairmanship, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights headed by its very able

Director Ambassador Lenarcic, the Office of the Representative on Freedom of the Media and High Commissioner for National Minorities, the OSCE Secretariat, and our host country Poland for its warm welcome and providing good conditions and warm weather for the participants.

Special thanks to the civil society representatives for their active participation and valuable contribution made during the HDIM. It has been underlined before, that the great value of OSCE meetings resides in the ability of civil society organizations to actively take part in these meetings in order to foster a dialogue between governments and civil society.