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**STATEMENT BY MS. MIROSLAVA BEHAM,
AMBASSADOR OF SERBIA,
AT THE 686th MEETING
OF THE REINFORCED PERMANENT COUNCIL**

8 November 2007

Mr. Chairman,

The delegation of Serbia aligned with the EU statement, but we would like to deliver some additional remarks.

Our delegation welcomes and commends this opportunity of drawing a kind of interim balance on the road to Madrid at a Reinforced Meeting of the Permanent Council, an interim balance on where we are, who we are and where we want to go. It is an opportunity to lean back, forget about the sometimes grueling discussions on wordings of draft decisions for a minute and engage in a sort of serious soul searching or stocktaking of oneself. If we do that in a candid and unbiased way and look back to where we come from, we will discern very easily, that the OSCE is an organization with a huge potential which seems to be somehow underachieved or is not focused enough on the priorities and main challenges we all face in a globalized world.

In this respect, Mr. Chairman, we welcome and support the efforts of having a Ministerial Declaration which would recall and reaffirm the true potentials of the OSCE and free them in order to focus them on dealing with priorities and challenges that all participating states share in increasing interdependence and in steadily changing surroundings and conditions.

One of the key principles on which the OSCE is based – if not *the* key principle - is to overcome partitions and dividing lines in a spirit of equal partnership, solidarity and confidence with the objective to make the region from Vancouver to Vladivostok a space safe and secure for all people to live inside and outside this area. The only way to get there is to engage in good faith in an open and fully transparent dialogue, which would bring about the indispensable trust needed for fruitful cooperation. Only with trust and confidence we can together identify and face existing threats and challenges, resolve conflicts and prevent new ones.

In this sense we see the Ministerial Declaration more like a programmatic political manifesto of 56 participating states committed to cooperation, mutual understanding and the promotion of peace and security based on universal principals and approaches, while mutually respecting the territorial integrity and sovereignty of our countries. This kind of self-affirmation or reaffirmation would give the organization the impetus necessary to deal adequately with important, complex and challenging issues. If we can in this way agree on the content and language of a Ministerial Declaration, we would also open the way to more constructive and result-oriented discussions on other important decisions for Madrid.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman