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**PERMANENT MISSION
OF TURKEY TO THE OSCE**

**STATEMENT BY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF TURKEY,
AMBASSADOR YUSUF BULUÇ**

**730TH MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL
4 SEPTEMBER 2008**

Mr. Chairman,

We have shared with colleagues at earlier Permanent Council meetings and informal settings our policies and actions in the wake of the grave developments in Georgia which resulted in severe human loss, suffering and material damage.

I would like to use this opportunity, offered especially by the intervention of the French Ambassador where he provided us the full extent of the EU Extraordinary Summit deliberations as reflected in the Presidency Conclusions, for a brief intervention on the current direction and thrust of our national efforts to contribute to what is being done internationally.

We are thankful, as I am sure other colleagues are too, to the Ambassador of France for his detailed remarks.

My Government has continued to be active, not least out of its definition and perception of common regional interests and denominators, in exploring several avenues to restore stability and a state of normalcy to the situation in Georgia. A fundamental and indispensable premise of our efforts is that this conflict should

be resolved through peaceful means, consistent with the general principles of international law, the OSCE principles, the UN Charter and relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council which embody a reaffirmation of sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia.

In this vein, and in tandem with our economic and reconstruction assistance and efforts for alleviating costly human suffering in Georgia, Ankara has hosted the high political representatives of the directly involved parties. In these meetings and through additional contacts the Turkish government has had an opportunity to share with the interlocutors its continued concern arising from certain outstanding obligations under the ceasefire arrangement and from lack of communication among the directly interested and involved parties. It remains our strong belief that maintaining multiple channels of dialogue is an absolute necessity, especially under the current precarious circumstances. Confidence among the countries of the region as a politically valuable commodity has increasingly become scarce resulting in an urgent requirement for repair and remedy.

It is out of this compelling need that my Government has been actively pursuing a forward looking initiative to create a platform which would be geared, as and when it is established, towards making good what we think are missing.

A platform for stability and cooperation in the Caucasus, no doubt is a challenging political undertaking. While we are heartened by expressions of welcome, support and, in the case of some, gratifying endorsement by the countries of the region; unilateral declarations of independence by the entities of South Ossetia and Abkhazia and their recognition, if I am allowed a deliberate understatement here, have put some strain on what this project seeks to achieve.

As we try to overcome it, through efforts by all who see the merits of the initiative, let me say a few words on the essential features of the project in order to acquaint colleagues more closely with it.

- It is geographically based, but ultimately not exclusive.
- Its initial composition is premised on the understanding that the security destiny of a given region, rather than be subcontracted, should be determined and the associated structures should be designed, in the first instance, by the constituent states comprised in that geography.
- It is not an alternative to any institution or mechanism which deal with the issues of the Caucasus, neither does it seek to substitute them.
- It would be guided by the principles and spirit of complementarity, thus barring competition.
- It both seeks to create synergies with other similarly oriented enterprises and also benefit from such synergy.

Our consultations are underway with increasing momentum and productivity to bring this project down from the blackboard to an operational level. It is of utmost importance that the states of the Caucasus will choose to further develop and put flesh on the bones of this initiative jointly and voluntarily, thereby fostering a true sense of cooperative security. What has been accorded to and achieved in the Balkans should not be denied for the Caucasus is our motto.

As a further act to complement the full gamut of international activities, we have designated two military observers to take part in the Mission the Permanent Council has recently decided to create, who are awaiting in Tbilisi for the establishment of requisite conditions for them to begin to discharge their observation functions.

Like the Permanent Council, my Government remains actively seized of this matter.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.