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**OPENING SPEECH OF THE CHAIRPERSON-IN-OFFICE,
SECRETARY OF STATE AND MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN K. SAUDABAYEV, AT THE
OPENING OF THE OSCE HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCE ON
TOLERANCE AND NON-DISCRIMINATION**

Astana, 29 June 2009

Distinguished Mr. President,
Honourable participants in the Conference,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I sincerely welcome you to our wonderful capital Astana and to today's forum, which gains special significance thanks to the participation of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev not only as the Head of the State chairing the OSCE, but also as a person who has ensured peace and harmony in multi-ethnic and multiconfessional Kazakhstan and who freed the planet from the world's fourth largest arsenal of nuclear missiles.

These particular historical decisions became the foundation of the impressive progress of our country in its socio-economic and socio-political development during the years of independence.

Today, the successful experience and effective leadership of the Head of our State in promoting tolerance and the rapprochement of cultures and peoples is justly acknowledged all around the world.

Convincing evidence of this has been the holding in Astana of the three Congresses of the Leaders of World and Traditional Religions and the proclamation of the year 2010 as the "International year of rapprochement of cultures" by the United Nations General Assembly upon the initiative of Kazakhstan's Leader. I believe that our present Conference is continuing along the same lines.

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great honour and privilege for me to give the floor to the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Nursultan Abishevich Nazarbayev.