



**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR TACAN İLDEM
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF TURKEY**

**In response to the address by Ján Kubiš
United Nations Special Representative for Afghanistan and
Head of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan**

(998th Permanent Council, April 30, 2014)

Thank you Mr. Chairperson,

I join the previous speakers in welcoming Ambassador Jan Kubis, United Nations Special Representative for Afghanistan and Head of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, back to the Permanent Council and thank him for his comprehensive presentation. It gave us valuable insight about the state of play in Afghanistan in the aftermath of the Presidential and Provincial Council Elections.

I shall begin by congratulating the State and the people of Afghanistan for the sensible attitude and political maturity they displayed during these elections. They were organized on schedule, on 5 April, in spite of numerous provocations and attacks by circles whose objectives are clear. The participation rate, estimated at around 60% according to initial reports, with important share of women voters, confirmed Afghan people's determination to rise and stand on their own feet. Moreover, the organization of the elections at an acceptable standard testifies to the capacity reached by Afghan public institutions and Afghan security forces. As such, it has given out a welcome and promising sign with regard to the future of the country. We also wish to pay tribute to the important role President Karzai's wisdom and leadership played in these positive developments.

Mr. Chairperson,

Afghanistan is passing through a transition process fraught with risks and challenges. Tackling them requires determined, sustained collective efforts. The firm establishment of long-lasting stability, peace and prosperity in the country, and the shoring up of Afghan institutions' capacities to modern standards depend on the maintenance of international interest and assistance, as well as the promotion of regional ownership.

I wish to use this opportunity to underline once again that the withdrawal of international forces from the country will not mark the end of international commitments to Afghanistan. On the contrary, it should mark the beginning of a new period of international assistance under a new format. This new chapter should be geared to assisting the Afghan authorities assume full control of the country.

One of the suitable formats and frameworks for these collective efforts with enhanced regional ownership and cooperation have been put forward by the “Heart of Asia” Ministerial Conference that was convened on June 2012 in Kabul. The Conference was an important milestone with all the participants repeating their commitment to working together to support Afghanistan.

On the other hand, we will also continue encouraging regional cooperation through the Afghanistan-Pakistan-Turkey Trilateral Summit Process, whose 8th summit we hosted in Ankara, on 12-13 February. At this last meeting, the participants converged on the need to improve cooperation between the relevant Afghan and Pakistani institutions.

As for the OSCE’s engagement with Afghanistan as a partner for cooperation, we are pleased to note that Afghanistan already makes good use of various OSCE instruments, such as Border Management Staff College in Dushanbe. We consider the participation of Afghan officials in the courses and activities offered by the College as an indispensable feature of our Organization’s added value in the region. The Patrol Programming and Leadership Project of the OSCE Office in Dushanbe is yet another example of fruitful cooperation between Afghanistan and its neighbours in Central Asia. We encourage further cross-border cooperation in the region. It would be essential to strengthen OSCE’s engagement with Afghanistan in the period ahead.

By way of conclusion, I wish to re-iterate Turkey’s will to remain in solidarity with friendly and brotherly Afghanistan in our joint quest for the country’s security, stability and welfare. We will work in close cooperation with the new Afghan administration reflecting the choice of the Afghan people, just as we did with the previous ones.

Thank you.