

Australian Statement to the OSCE Summit

ENGLISH only

Astana, Kazakhstan

2 December 2010

Mr Chairman

I am pleased to be here in the spectacular capital of Astana.

I salute the achievement of our host, Kazakhstan, in convening the first OSCE summit in 11 years.

Australia appreciates the warm welcome we have received since joining the OSCE as an Asian Partner for Cooperation in December 2009.

Why Australia Joined – a Common Outlook

Why did we join?

We share the same values as the OSCE:

A belief in multilateral institutions;

A passion for human rights and democracy;

Support for the rule of law.

But, above all, we joined because Australia admires the OSCE's willingness to make a practical difference on the ground.

We're in the OSCE because Australia wants to be part of the solution to challenges the international community faces – not just point to the problems.

Australia is already an active player in the challenges which confront the OSCE.

Our shared strategic and security interests converge in Afghanistan.

Like so many in the OSCE community, Australia is intensively engaged in international efforts in Afghanistan to prevent it ever again becoming a safe haven for terrorists or extremists.

Australia's position as the largest non-NATO contributor to the International Security Assistance Force underpins the strength of our commitment.

Conflict in Afghanistan cannot be settled by military force alone.

We support a comprehensive approach which embraces military and civilian efforts.

Afghanistan is at a critical juncture as it prepares to take the lead on security by the end of 2014.

ISAF has made good progress in denying terrorists a base for activity in Afghan territory, but threats remain.

The recently foiled parcel bomb plot reminds us that Al-Qa'eda-inspired terrorism remains intent on mass-casualty attacks.

Australia has forged successful partnerships between law enforcement agencies in our own region to counter terrorism.

The Jakarta Centre for Law Enforcement Cooperation (JCLEC) – a joint initiative of Australia and Indonesia – was established in 2004 to train law enforcement officers to fight terrorism.

As a result of its success, I am pleased that eight OSCE countries now also contribute to JCLEC's work.

It is important for the international community to take steps to prevent or disrupt the ability of terrorists to raise and move funds.

Australia is pleased to have supported an OSCE anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing project in Uzbekistan.

Australia was also pleased to have partnered with Kazakhstan and the United States in conducting a conference here in Astana, earlier this year, on countering the financing of nuclear terrorism.

Australia shares with the OSCE a keen interest to combat other forms of transnational crime.

From the smuggling of people and narcotics, to the instability caused by years of conflict, our challenges are clear before us.

Australia has pledged A\$100 million over four years to work towards a world free from landmines, cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war.

I am pleased to announce today that Australia will contribute toward demining in Azerbaijan and Georgia.

The projects being funded in Georgia and Azerbaijan will save lives and allow a return to normal rural livelihoods in communities ravaged by past conflict.

Mr Chairman

One pressing current issue is recent developments on the Korean peninsula.

We condemn North Korea's violent attack on South Korea earlier this month.

This hostile and provocative act follows North Korea's attack on the South Korean navy vessel the Cheonan in March, and new evidence that North Korea is developing a uranium enrichment program – in violation of UN Security Council resolutions 1718 and 1874.

North Korea's erratic behaviour is threatening stability in North Asia.

We call on North Korea to adhere to international norms of behaviour and cease its hostile acts.

I'd also like to acknowledge our friends and colleagues from Japan with whom we jointly chair a cross-regional group of countries to give effect to the consensus outcomes that we as member states committed to implementing at the 2010 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference.

It is important that we find a way to action those recommendations and that they don't gather dust on the shelf.

Mr Chairman

Human Rights

Australia welcomes the OSCE's focus on human rights.

As one of the world's oldest continuing democracies, Australia welcomes the OSCE's work to support democracy, freedom of speech, and election monitoring.

As a nation built on diversity, Australia welcomes the work of the OSCE on the protection of minorities

And the emphasis placed of building good relations between religious and ethnic communities.

I noted with interest the statement by the President of Kazakhstan H.E. Nursultan Nazarbayev on interfaith dialogue and cooperation as an instrument of advancing cooperation between states.

I fully support the President's statement.

Australia has actively supported interfaith dialogue across the Asia-Pacific region and will continue to do so in partnership with Indonesia – the largest Muslim country in the world.

I believe it is important for all of us, looking across decades ahead, to grasp the centrality of interfaith, interreligious and intercivilizational dialogue in building a peaceful global order for the 21st century.

Mr Chairman

I am pleased to announce today Australia's contribution to the promotion of effective human rights teaching and learning strategies in Central Asia, including through encouraging the adoption of a Human Rights Education Compendium of Best Practice by states in the region.

I am also pleased to announce today Australian funding for the Ukraine component of a program against human trafficking in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. Support will be provided to Ukrainian authorities and civil society in the establishment of a National Referral Mechanism for victims of trafficking and development of a comprehensive legislative and operational framework to combat trafficking and assist victims.

Mr Chairman

Cooperative Security

Australia is a partner in the OSCE because, like you, we believe in cooperative security.

For more than three decades the OSCE has played a valuable role building security in the Eurasian region.

In Australia's own region, the Asia-Pacific, we were without a regional institution with wide membership and wide mandate, and meeting at summit level, to deal with the breadth and depth of political, security, economic and environmental challenges we will face in the 21st century.

In October, with the expansion of the East Asia Summit to include the United States and Russia, we can begin to carve out a regional rules-based order for the future.

None of this happens by accident

Effective responses to security challenges require multilateral institutions, like the OSCE, which are premised on the principles of cooperative security.

Australia has long been committed to multilateral institutions.

We have always known the United Nations' importance in promoting a rules-based international order that enhances our security and economy.

We believe that those who share the benefits of these systems must share the responsibilities to support and enhance them.

That's why Australia makes a significant contribution to global security.

Hence our readiness to serve in 2013-14 on the world's pre-eminent body on international peace and security – the United Nations Security Council.

We bring a unique perspective, creativity, energy and a problem-solving ethos, combined with a determination to fulfil the spirit of the UN Charter.

Mr Chairman

The Caucasus, Central Asia and Australia

Being part of the OSCE gives Australia a broader appreciation of the countries of the Caucasus and Central Asia.

We can learn from Armenia's ancient and distinguished history.

We acknowledge Azerbaijan's rapid economic growth and its important contribution to regional energy issues.

We join the World Bank in saluting Georgia's role as a leader in business transparency.

We welcome the OSCE's increasing focus on Central Asia

Australia and this region have geographical features in common.

Geography has presented us with similar economic opportunities; and similar domestic challenges.

Geography has also kept us at a great physical distance.

But we recognise that we need to work to address some of the most urgent international challenges together.

Australia would like to be considered a friend, and not a stranger, to the region.

And we are building that friendship.

This year Australia provided over \$2 million in humanitarian assistance to Central Asian countries affected by humanitarian and natural disasters.

Yours are young states, but represent ancient civilisations, and proud peoples.

You aspire to a secure, stable and prosperous future.

Australia applauds the courage of the Kyrgyz Government and people in the orderly conduct of the October Parliamentary Election.

We note Turkmenistan's robust economic growth and exciting potential as a major energy supplier.

Tajikistan now helps promotes stability in its neighbour, Afghanistan.

Uzbekistan likewise supports Afghanistan through its productive economic relations.

Finally, Australia commends the Kazakhstan Government for the stewardship of its economy in recent years.

You recognise the importance of encouraging firms from around the world to invest in your good fortune.

And the importance of deepening your international engagement: the Kazakhstan students we see in Australia on Bolashak [phon. Bola-Shack] scholarships demonstrate your openness.

Finally, I would like to congratulate Kazakhstan for its energetic and successful chairing of the OSCE this year, and the hosting of this Summit.

Thank you.