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**Statement Delivered by Ambassador J. Tabibian at the
506th Meeting of the Permanent Council
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Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First, it is good news that the CiO has been able to make this appointment and for that we congratulate the appointee, the Special Representative, Dr. Helga Konrad. We truly welcome the fact that after so many months, this combat can get going. Considering how much time and effort we had put to get to Maastricht, concentrated effort, political effort, co-operative effort, we have, I think, spent five months without moving it forward. Now it is time for Dr. Konrad with her new position, to make sure we can restart a process that if not stalled, had been temporarily suspended. In that sense, we would most likely hope to see that the most immediate internal challenge that faces Dr. Konrad is overcome. As we listen carefully and read carefully the documents, allow me to be very direct and candid about this issue, since my delegation had been second to none last year in the preparation of that Action Plan. Our delegation participated in its preparation rather assiduously, seriously, at the highest possible level in our delegation here, because we really believed that it was an important item. We do not have to convince anybody that it was for us an important task. It is in that context that we will say that the first and most immediate challenge is to make sure that the Support Unit, as some people referred to, is *her* Unit and not *the* Unit, no matter what the document says. In this sense, we promise our full support to the Special Representative to make sure that the Support Unit actually supports her, because she is going to need all of its support.

As to Dr. Konrad's competence, experience, personality, her ability to pool together all the relevant strands both here and with other organizations, we have no doubt, absolutely no doubt. You can tell from her to do list, there is not a single stone unturned within what she thinks to be the full landscape in which she has to operate: governments, non-governmental organizations, the Strategic Police Unit. They are all there and we truly believe that if anybody can pool them together, Dr. Konrad can and she has demonstrated that ability previously.

As to what the whole process has to achieve, we share the ambitious vision of our colleague from the US delegation. They have a more ambitious statement and our perception is the same.

Getting to the last reflection I want to make, let me say that one reason Armenia can speak with some confidence is that though our problem is relatively not on the same scale, in matters of such importance relativity does not count. We have the problem

and we are somewhat encouraged, maybe more than that, to announce that our National Action Plan exists, has been developed, we have even presented it to the Working Group on Gender Equality and Anti-trafficking. However, between an Action Plan and its full implementation, there are many difficulties and challenges ahead. We intend to do something about them and we will be very grateful if the Unit, the full OSCE mechanism here, can be of assistance to Armenia in the future.

Our final comment on this is very specific. Often, many of our colleagues who may be thinking about this, should realize that it is not correct to believe that what is lacking about trafficking is awareness. Awareness or the task of raising awareness are most frequently and conveniently used notions to justify or explain away things that should not be dismissed so easily. It is really difficult to assume that this trafficking business in peoples' mind lacks awareness. The problem is not awareness. The challenge is not to equate knowledge with priority. People know about it, but they do not make a priority out of it for a variety of reasons and, at the national level at least mostly for, let's face it, political reasons. Particularly, in democratic societies problems bubble to the surface under pressure, not pressure of brute force, nor military pressure or police pressure, but the double pressure of votes and what lubricates politics: votes plus electoral support which may come in many forms. There is also the pressure of international opinion, international judgment and international pressure: why not, otherwise we would not be at the OSCE. When the two pressures combine, domestic pressure and international pressure, suddenly you realize that there is already awareness. Awareness-raising by any other means is essentially, if you excuse my cynicism in this matter, political theater. People know, but people do pretend or act like they do not know and there is an enormous amount of energy spent in making them "aware". Our job is to put an end to a complicity of silence, a complicity of indifference, a complicity of trivializing, a complicity of relativizing, of saying, "it is not as bad in our case, it is more elsewhere". But I will never say: "complicity of ignorance"; it is too easy to deny through rationalization and evasion. Our job is, with the help of the Special Representative and all our efforts together, to make sure that we make the "unacceptable" becomes "impracticable". It is no more and no less than that. How do we make the practice of trafficking become impracticable, to make sure people who engage in trafficking cannot continue to engage in trafficking. The transformation from unacceptable to impracticable assumes what everybody knows and everybody always repeats: "trafficking is genuinely a bad thing, a scourge". We should not spend any more time in repeating and reminding ourselves how bad this new slavery is, because that redundant reminder really takes up too much unnecessary energy. The task is to make trafficking in human beings impracticable. For that we will look forward to see what our new Special Representative will do and we commit full support to her work.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.