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

**In response to the Address by the Minister of Counter Narcotics
of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan**

**989th Meeting of the Permanent Council
13 March 2014**

Thank you Mr. Chairperson.

I would also like to warmly welcome H.E. Minister Rashidi, Minister of Counter Narcotics of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to the Permanent Council and thank him for his comprehensive presentation. We attach great importance to our bilateral relations with Afghanistan as well as to Afghanistan's further engagement with the OSCE. Therefore, we highly appreciate this opportunity to exchange our views on this topical issue today.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express our condolences for the sad demise of First Vice-President Fahim and share the grief of the friendly nation of Afghanistan.

As mentioned by the distinguished Minister during his presentation, Afghanistan is still facing significant challenges, which are of transnational and inter-connected nature, requiring a coordinated and comprehensive approach. As it has been stressed with the inception of the Istanbul Process, we continue to believe that a concerted effort towards Afghanistan's stability and prosperity remains essential through bilateral, regional and international cooperation in order to address the multi-faceted challenges in Afghanistan. Counter narcotics is no exception in this regard.

Afghanistan's efforts in the field of fight against drugs, including their illicit production, trafficking and consumption, are praiseworthy. We are confident that the Afghan Government will continue to do its utmost to address this serious threat to Afghanistan's economic and social development. Turkey stands ready to support capacity building efforts of Afghanistan in this area, also through training of police and border officials. Turkish International Academy against Drugs and Crime, also known as TADOC, offers several specialized training programmes, which we hope Afghan officials will continue to benefit from in the upcoming period.

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 the 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 with a view to addressing common transnational challenges.

Mr. Chairperson,

We have never considered the withdrawal of the International Security Assistance Force at the end of 2014 from Afghanistan as an end date for our engagement. Our cooperation with Afghanistan on bilateral, regional and international levels will certainly continue and deepen in all areas beyond this date, including in the field of counter narcotics. Contributing to the capacity building efforts of Afghan institutions as well as to the sustainability of the international assistance to Afghanistan, particularly through the regional ownership processes already underway, such as the Istanbul Process, will continue to be my country's priorities in the period ahead. Needless to say that the needs of the Afghan Government and people will be the main guidance for our endeavors.

Before I conclude, I would like to thank Minister Rashidi once again and wish him all success in his most challenging task.

Thank you.

