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Delegation of Uzbekistan

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN AT THE
MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

13 January 2011

**In response to the statement by Mr. Audronius Ažubalis,
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Lithuania and Chairperson-in-Office**

The delegation of Uzbekistan joins in warmly welcoming the distinguished Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE, Mr. Audronius Ažubalis, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Lithuania.

We learned with interest of the tasks and priority areas of activity that the Lithuanian Chairmanship has in mind.

We are particularly impressed by Lithuania's plans to step up the Organization's work in combating cybercrime, trafficking in human beings and the illegal traffic in narcotic substances as well as in promoting tolerance and confidence in the OSCE region.

In our opinion, the Lithuanian Chairmanship's intentions to step up efforts in the second, economic and environmental, dimension would greatly contribute to restoring an inter-dimensional balance in the work of our Organization and to preserving the spirit of co-operation between countries on a basis of equality.

Of special interest are the Chairmanship's priority tasks in combating the narcotic threat in the OSCE area, particularly the flow of narcotic drugs emanating from Afghanistan.

In fact, the Afghan problem has to this day lost nothing of its urgency, at the same time that the financial proceeds produced by the trafficking in narcotic drugs can be used by destructive forces to undermine stability not only in the Central Asian region but in the entire OSCE area as well.

We should like to take this opportunity to again note that the situation in Afghanistan must be settled by exclusively peaceful means, while at the same time fully taking into account and respecting that country's many centuries of history along with its national and religious traditions.

Guided by its historical experience, Uzbekistan is building and intends to continue building its relations with its close neighbour, Afghanistan, on a bilateral basis only and in a

way that reflects our mutual national interests. For Uzbekistan, participation in programmes and projects undertaken on a collective basis or by a military bloc is unacceptable.

Regarding the transit of freight traffic to Afghanistan, it should be noted that only convoys carrying non-military cargoes pass through Uzbek territory.

We should like to point out that Uzbekistan's participation in providing assistance to Afghanistan remains quite substantial. Specifically, we might mention Tashkent's role in providing the capital of Afghanistan and its surrounding areas with electric power and in building scores of bridges, roads and social facilities as well as the recent building by construction workers from Uzbekistan of the first railway link from Hairaton to Mazar-i-Sharif, the first of its kind in the history of Afghanistan.

It is becoming increasingly evident that the strategy selected by the coalition forces to pacify Afghanistan is failing to produce the expected results. We note with regret that the year 2010 was marked by a continuation of the trend towards escalation and was the bloodiest year for the coalition for as long as it has existed. The families of 711 servicemen and women experienced the incomparable pain that accompanies the loss of a loved one.

In the situation that is emerging, the search for alternative ways of achieving peace and stability in Afghanistan takes on extraordinary importance. Among these ways, in our opinion, a significant role might be played by the creation under the aegis of the United Nations of a "6+3" contact group, which would imply the solution of the Afghan problem by the Afghans themselves, with the assistance of those countries that, on the basis of their security concerns, are interested in ending the war and moving towards a stable future in Afghanistan.

In this connection, priority attention in the Uzbek initiative is directed at the provision of economic assistance, the implementation of social, infrastructure and humanitarian projects, and the solution of problems of employment among the population and of combating poverty, indigence and deprivation of rights.

Mr. Chairperson,

Still fresh in our memory are the tragic events of last year in Kyrgyzstan, which led to the shedding of blood among the peaceful population, made hostage to the evil intentions of third forces.

In that context, we should like to note that for the OSCE it is important to devise clear rules and mechanisms to protect the interests of ethnic minorities with the goal of resolving, effectively and quickly, problems that may arise and also of making it impossible for particular forces to exploit situations of this kind for political ends.

We think it important that there should be, under the aegis of the United Nations or the OSCE, an independent international inquiry into the pogroms, killings and acts of violence that took place during the period from 11 to 14 June 2010 in the south of Kyrgyzstan. Bringing to justice all those who ordered, organized and carried out those bloody atrocities will make it possible to quickly restore confidence within Kyrgyz society.

The aforementioned issues, together with the adoption of a document providing a fully fledged legal basis for the work of the OSCE, reflect the priorities of the delegation of the Republic of Uzbekistan within our Organization.

We are convinced that the Lithuanian Chairmanship has at its disposal the necessary experience and potential to achieve the objectives facing us.

In conclusion, we should like to assure you that the delegation of Uzbekistan will continue in the future to support constructive and mutually advantageous co-operation on a basis of parity within our Organization.

Thank you for your attention.