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Speech by Mr. Yasuhisa SHIOZAKI,
Senior Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs
at the Ministerial Council of the OSCE on December 6, 2005

Mr. Chairman, distinguished Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to express my sincere congratulations on the thirtieth anniversary year of the signing of the Helsinki Final Act of 1975. Since then, the OSCE has continued to progress in order to effectively address the changing situation in the region. I would like to highly appreciate the effort of the Chairman-in-Office, Minister Dimitrij Rupel, for the discussion he conducted through this year to revitalize the OSCE, and it is of great significance that a set of reform proposals are to be adopted at the Ministerial Council.

Japan, as a partner country that shares fundamental values with OSCE countries, has actively participated in a wide range of activities of the OSCE for many years. Japan has exchanged its knowledge and experiences with the OSCE through sending our experts and officials to field operations as well as election monitoring missions and providing financial assistance to seminars and other activities.

In the light of our long experience of cooperation with the OSCE, Japan believes that it is significant for Japan and the OSCE to tackle together a wide range of problems that we face in common.

Fight against terrorism is a case in point. We are aware that this Ministerial Council is to reconfirm the ministerial statement adopted in June this year regarding the signing of, and becoming parties to, the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. Prime Minister Koizumi signed the Convention on the occasion of the High-Level Plenary Meeting of this year's General Assembly of the United Nations in September. Japan is now working toward becoming a party to the Convention in the shortest possible time. Also it is our belief that in the fight against international terrorism, we should place importance not only in global frameworks that set international standards, but also in regional frameworks where participating countries can mutually monitor the implementation of counter-terrorism measures. In this regard, Japan highly appreciates the work of the OSCE and sent our experts to the workshop on container security in February and that on

combating the use of the internet for terrorist purposes in October this year. Japan also regards the work of the OSCE concerning the problems of MANPADS to be highly worthwhile, with which Japan will continue to cooperate.

Japan highly appreciates the work of the OSCE based on the concept of comprehensive security, encompassing not only the politico-military aspect of security, but also that of human dimension, economy and environment. In this respect, comprehensive security is similar to the concept of 'human security' on which we place great importance. We believe that incorporating the concept of 'human security' into OSCE activities is beneficial in obtaining cooperation from other countries and international institutions. In this context, we are pleased that the conference jointly held by the OSCE and Thailand next year will focus on the issues of poverty and epidemic, which are the important elements of 'human security'. Japan supports such efforts through the Trust Fund for Human Security established within the United Nations. We are prepared to cooperate with the OSCE on human security on any suitable projects.

As there is a growing need to jointly tackle the problems that the OSCE and Asia face in common, it is crucial that we have a mutual understanding on the respective security situations of Europe and Asia.

The security environment of Asia is significantly different from that of Europe, with much instability remaining in the region. In particular, the proliferation of weapons of mass-destruction including North Korea's nuclear issue and their means of delivery, is an important issue that needs to be solved to achieve peace and stability of the region as well as that of the international community at large. Also, we need to pay more attention to the rapid and untransparent military build-up in Northeast Asia.

Dialogues between the OSCE and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and other regional frameworks in Asia are important in this context, through which we hope Asian countries learn experiences of the OSCE while the OSCE countries deepen their understanding on the Asian security environment. We hope to continue to provide such opportunities, cooperating with partner countries in Asia.

Central Asia is a region on which both Japan and the OSCE put high priority. Amid a series of positive development in the region, we appreciate the OSCE's significant role in providing assistance for democracy. In particular, Japan highly values the initiative the OSCE took in the election monitoring at the July presidential election in Kyrgyz Republic. Japan has made a tangible contribution to the work of the OSCE in this regard. In the run-up to the

presidential election in Kyrgyz Republic last July, we provided assistance in improving the transparency of the election, in training government officials who were involved in the election and other means, which complemented the work of the OSCE. We have also sent our staff to the OSCE's election monitoring mission for the presidential election in Kazakhstan which took place on 4 December. We are assisting the OSCE's role in promoting democratization not only in Central Asia but also in other NIS countries including Ukraine.

Needless to say, Japan, in addition to strengthening bilateral relations with individual countries in the region, also attaches importance to promoting multilateral dialogue within the framework of 'Central Asia plus Japan.'

Consolidation of peace and economic development in the Western Balkan region are a shared concern for Japan and the OSCE. We have provided a total of more than 1.3 billion dollars to Western Balkan countries from 1991 to present. Japan is one of the top donors to most of the countries in the region. Japan highly values the OSCE's activities in this region and actively supported its effort. We have sent personnel to the OSCE's election monitoring missions to Kosovo as well as Bosnia and Herzegovina, and a Japanese official is working for the OSCE Mission in Macedonia. Following the Tokyo Ministerial Conference on Peace Consolidation and Economic Development of the Western Balkans that we hosted jointly with the EU last year, we co-hosted the Regional Conference on Tourism Development in the Western Balkans, with UNDP and government of Bosnia and Herzegovina this October with active participation of the OSCE. We will continue to share the responsibility to the peace and stability of the Western Balkan region in cooperation with the OSCE.

We welcome the fact that parliamentary and regional elections in Afghanistan were successfully held September this year, and commend the work of the OSCE following the presidential election of last year. Japan will continue to assist the effort of the Afghan people for building peace and democracy.

We would also like to emphasize that improvement of internal governance system and economic development need to take place simultaneously in order to promote and encourage democracy. We hope the OSCE makes use of its vast experiences to play a leadership role in this field for Afghanistan.

In closing, I hope that the OSCE will continue its progress even further under the leadership of the incoming Chairman in the Office H.E. Mr. De Gucht, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium, to enable OSCE to tackle security challenges it faces. I would like to emphasize

that Japan is willing to cooperate closer than ever with the evolving OSCE.

Thank you for your kind attention.