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## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

### **Statement on Elections in Afghanistan**

As delivered by Deputy Chief of Mission Gary Robbins  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
April 10, 2014

The United States congratulates the millions of Afghan men and women who participated in last Saturday's historic elections. These elections should usher in the first democratic transfer of power in Afghanistan's recent history. They represent another important milestone as Afghans take full responsibility for their country and the International Security Assistance Forces draw down.

We commend the Afghan people, security forces, and elections officials on the high turnout for the vote – which is in keeping with the spirited and positive debate among candidates and their supporters in the run-up to the election.

These elections are critical to securing Afghanistan's democratic future, as well as continued international support, and we look to the Afghan electoral bodies to carry out their duties in the coming weeks to tally votes, adjudicate complaints, and finalize the results.

ODIHR's Election Support Team (EST) is playing an important supporting role in these historic elections. We thank ODIHR for its commitment to Afghanistan in difficult circumstances, and for sharing its extensive electoral experience and technical expertise during this critical political transition. We also thank those participating States that provided financial support to the EST's activities.

We applaud the spirit and commitment of voters, election observers, and journalists covering the election who, despite terror attacks by extremists seeking to undermine the elections, would not be deterred. We condemn these attacks, including the deadly attack on the Serena Hotel where international election observers were staying, the March 29 attack on the Independent Election Commission offices, and the April 4 attack on two AP journalists covering the elections, which resulted in the tragic death of photographer Anja Niedringhaus.

The United States continues to support a sovereign, stable, unified, and democratic Afghanistan, and we look forward to continuing our partnership with the new government chosen by the Afghan people.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman