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**STATEMENT BY MR. ANVAR AZIMOV,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

6 May 2010

**Regarding the report by Mr. Knut Vollebaek,
OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities,
on the situation in Kyrgyzstan**

Mr. Chairperson,

We should like to thank Mr. Knut Vollebaek for his informative comments on the results of his trip to Kyrgyzstan and his talks with the leaders of the Republic's Interim Government. We understand and agree with many of the High Commissioner's assessments of the continuing difficult inter-ethnic situation following the dramatic events of April of this year in that country, about which we too have spoken at meetings of the Permanent Council.

We share the High Commissioner's view regarding the particular vulnerability of the non-titular ethnic groups in Kyrgyzstan given the current situation, and this includes the Russians living there. In that connection, we note that the unfortunate consequences of the rioting in Maevka mentioned by Mr. Vollebaek would have possibly been less serious had there been a better and more timely settlement of the question of the repatriation of the Meskhetian Turks to Georgia.

Mr. Chairperson,

The current Kyrgyz authorities undoubtedly bear full responsibility for preserving harmony in the relations between the peoples living in the Republic, and despite the post-crisis problems the Interim Government is endeavouring to demonstrate this kind of responsible approach. Here we are pleased to note the new draft constitution preserves the Russian language, along with Kyrgyz as the main language, as an official language and one that plays an important role as a means of inter-ethnic communication.

At the same time, the Russian Federation resolutely condemns the increasingly frequent manifestations of nationalism in Kyrgyzstan and calls on the leadership of the country to take tough measures to suppress these developments as well as to counter instances of looting and attacks on company offices and houses belonging to ethnic minorities, including our compatriots.

We support Mr. Vollebaek's appeal to the new authorities to guarantee the security of all the citizens of the country regardless of their ethnic affiliation and also to involve minority representatives in the drafting of fundamental laws and to ensure that they are properly represented in government offices, the law enforcement agencies and other structures authorized to use force. We agree that it is important to strengthen as an institution the Assembly of Peoples of Kyrgyzstan, turning it into an effective instrument for the protection of the interests of non-titular ethnic groups.

We agree with the High Commissioner's focus on the question of ensuring the linguistic rights of national minorities. On this point, it is important to continue to respect the rightly held position that the enhancement of the status of the State language must not be at the expense of the use of national languages.

We trust that the High Commissioner on National Minorities will continue in the future to keep the Permanent Council regularly informed of his preventive efforts in dealing with events in Kyrgyzstan – something that is fully in accord with his mandate – in a way that does not interfere with the requirement for “quiet diplomacy”. We wish Mr. Vollebaek every success in his responsible and important mission.

Thank you for your attention.