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**STATEMENT BY MR. MIGUEL ANGEL MORATINOS, MINISTER
FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND CO-OPERATION, AT THE CLOSING
CEREMONY OF THE OSCE CONFERENCE ON ANTI-SEMITISM
AND ON OTHER FORMS OF INTOLERANCE**

Cordoba, 9 June 2005

Mr. Chairman,
Ministers and Delegates,

As this conference draws to a close, I should like to restate my thanks to all those who have made it possible, following on from the offer made a year ago in Berlin.

I should like to thank all the delegations for their enthusiastic participation as well as the very many representatives of non-governmental organizations and special guests.

I should also like to express my very special thanks to all the people who have helped prepare the conference, the Slovenian Chairmanship, the Office of the Secretary General of the OSCE, and the Spanish and local teams. Nor would the conference have been run so successfully without all the interpreters, security staff, police, media and many others.

In view of my strong links with this city, it gives me great pleasure to congratulate the local and autonomous authorities and all the people of Cordoba for the extraordinary hospitality they have shown us, so typical of their savoir faire and ability to live together.

The strong symbolism of Cordoba, its demonstrated hospitality and its association with Maimonides were the main reasons that prompted me to suggest this city as the conference venue. I am sure that we have all been able to appreciate the judiciousness of this choice over the last two days and that the high temperatures typical of this season have not been a barrier to constructive and effective discussion.

By offering to organize this conference, the Spanish Government also demonstrates its deep commitment to the fight against anti-Semitism. As we have seen yesterday and today, it is, unfortunately, not a transitional or residual problem. It crops up again and again in very different situations and obliges us not only to be vigilant but also to act in order to nip any nascent signs in the bud.

At the conference in Brussels last year I also stressed our determination to combat all forms of intolerance and discrimination. We have reaffirmed here that there is never any justification for racism, xenophobia and discrimination.

I should like to mention at this point that Cordoba represents a model in its attitude to all of the various forms of intolerance and discrimination, none of which, I believe, should be regarded as more important than the others.

For the first time in history, the OSCE has addressed discrimination against Muslims, Christians and members of other religions in a plenary session. In my opinion, by treating each of the problems differently, we exacerbate rather than alleviate them. The worst thing we could do would be to trivialize them through a general approach that made no distinctions between problems that would appear to require different solutions.

This conference recalls the testimony of the previous conferences in Vienna, Berlin and Brussels and the meeting in Paris and rounds off a cycle in the fight by our Organization against anti-Semitism, intolerance and discrimination.

We have now moved from recommendations to action. It is no coincidence that the theme of this conference has been one of putting words into action. I am confident that we have been able to demonstrate to our citizens and, above all, to the victims of intolerance and discrimination that we are listening to them and are keeping our word and that we all support the commitment to developing specific plans of action at the national level.

It gives me particular pleasure to mention some of the measures adopted by Spain to meet the OSCE's commitments regarding tolerance and non-discrimination. Regarding anti-Semitism, important measures have been adopted, although there still remains much to be done. Spain has made anti-Semitism and xenophobia criminal offences. Recently, in December last year, the Government decreed that 27 January should be an official day of remembrance of the Holocaust and of prevention of crimes against humanity.

Furthermore, in accordance with the Berlin Declaration and OSCE Permanent Council Decision No. 607, Spain has helped finance the project on education on the Holocaust and anti-Semitism by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). I trust that it will be a lasting reference at a time when, with the passage of years, there is a risk that the memory of the Shoah will be lost with the disappearance of its last survivors.

Spain has also participated, in collaboration with the ODIHR, in financing a project to register Internet data on tolerance and non-discrimination, an example of how it is possible to use the Internet positively to fight those attempting to exploit it to disseminate their messages of hate.

Apart from education and the communication media, the security forces represent another horizontal instrument that can be used against various forms of intolerance. Here, too, my country has endeavoured to show an example by participating in the ODIHR project on security forces in the fight against hate crimes in the OSCE area, which I hope more States will soon join.

Spain also has a certain amount of experience with regard to discrimination against Christians and members of other religions, especially Muslims. This year marks the 25th anniversary of the Law on Religious Freedom, which strengthens the concept of a secular State and, at the same time, is open to the religious reality. It is a secular model that does not preclude co-operation with religious communities but, on the contrary, allows for and

promotes it through co-operation agreements with the status of laws which, in political, ethical and social terms, put each of the three main religious communities in our country at the same level in terms of their interaction with the State and society.

Finally, I should like to mention the establishment at the end of 2004 of the Foundation for Pluralism and Coexistence which, with government funding, will promote preventive and proactive programmes and initiatives to foster coexistence and inter-confessional dialogue by heightening awareness of the reality of the different religions, their rights and aspirations.

I am aware of the effort and interest shown by all of you to ensure the successful outcome of this conference held in a city whose name is synonymous with the spirit of tolerance and dialogue that we are committed to upholding and promoting. I am extremely gratified that we will be adopting a declaration that does honour to the spirit of the city that has welcomed us.

I trust that we have moved beyond the sterile and paralyzing discussions on the best way of confronting intolerance and discrimination. I should like to restate the Spanish position, which I believe is in line with the best practice of this Organization. Spain holds that the globalization of manifestations of intolerance calls for the adoption of specific measures to combat these manifestations that, in the light of historical precedents and current tendencies, have quite specific features.

Now we need to look to the future. I should like to see the conclusions of this conference, consolidated in the Cordoba declaration, incorporated in a decision that would give stimulus to the measures discussed here, if possible by means of an action plan with a set time frame. This is the great challenge for us all, and I call upon everybody to rise to it.

Thank you very much.