



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC  
OF UZBEKISTAN TO THE OSCE

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**Statement by the Delegation of the Republic of Uzbekistan  
at the 1179<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council  
(March 15, 2018)**

*On Tashkent International High-  
Level Conference on Afghanistan*

Mr. Chairperson,

The Republic of Uzbekistan has defined building up constructive, mutually advantageous and good-neighborly relations with Central Asian nations and cementing security in this part of the world as the principal foreign policy priority.

In this regard, I would like to note that today on the initiative of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan H.E. Mr. Shavkat Mirziyoyev, for the first time in the history, the leaders of all countries of Central Asia gathered in Astana, Kazakhstan to discuss regional cooperation.

Bordering on all countries of Central Asia, Uzbekistan is interested in the region becoming a zone of stability, sustainable development and good-neighborliness.

Peaceful, economically prosperous Central Asia is our most critical goal and key task. Meanwhile, it is impossible to achieve those objectives without addressing one of the most pressing regional and global issues, namely, the conflict in the neighboring Afghanistan, which historically and geopolitically is an integral part of our common region.

What comes to the fore of the problem is the formation of an extensive and solid international consensus on the basic issues of establishing peace and security in Afghanistan, supporting the efforts of Afghan-owned, Afghan-led process for national reconciliation in the country.

Uzbekistan has always been and remains a fundamental advocate of a political settlement of the situation in Afghanistan, making its feasible contribution to the country's socio-economic development.

In this regard, Uzbekistan's initiative to organize – on March 26-27 this year in Tashkent, jointly with the Afghan side – an international high-level conference on Afghanistan, "Peace Process, Security Cooperation and Regional Connectivity", is an important part of the Uzbek leadership's overall strategy to provide for regional security and stability.

President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev and President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Ashraf Ghani are to deliver keynote speeches at the opening ceremony of the conference.

As of the today, the foreign ministers of Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Russian Federation, Turkey, India, Iran and Pakistan as well as the EU High

Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and First Deputy Secretary of State of the United States have confirmed their attendance at the forthcoming conference.

It is expected that the forum participants will convey their consolidated stance – at the regional and global levels – on the need for the soonest start of direct talks between the Government of Afghanistan and the Taliban Movement without any preconditions.

The conference is projected to result in the adoption of Tashkent Declaration anticipated to reflect the following key points:

**First**, the peace process ought to be Afghan-led and Afghan-owned and in accordance with the provisions of resolutions and decisions of the UN General Assembly and Security Council;

**Second**, the guaranteed integration of the armed opposition into the political life of Afghanistan and its recognition as a legitimate political force is instrumental in the success of the peace process;

**Third**, the international community strongly opposes all forms and manifestations of terrorism without any distinction, and recognizes that the threats of transnational terrorism, drug trafficking and organized crime are common challenges to stability and sustainable development both for Afghanistan, the region and the world as a whole.

The Tashkent Conference is to follow the first meeting of the new format of cooperation, Central Asia + Afghanistan (“C5 + 1”), designed to discuss specific areas of interaction between the Central Asian nations and Afghanistan. The activity of this format will contribute to Afghanistan’s successful integration into the system of trade, economic and infrastructural relations with the states of Central Asia, the effective implementation of projects and programs of regional scale.

Initiating to hold the Tashkent Conference, Uzbekistan by no means intends to confine itself to arranging it as a one-time event, but continue with vigorous efforts – both bilaterally and multilaterally – to promote a peaceful political process in Afghanistan.

We express hope that the outcomes of the international meeting in Uzbekistan’s capital city will come to be a vital milestone in the stabilization of Afghanistan, in the delivery of prerequisites for its sustainable development, enhancement of the Afghan people’s welfare and the latter’s engagement in the constructive processes in the region and the world in general. The success of the Tashkent forum should demonstrate the ability of the region’s states to resolve common grave issues through joint efforts by opening up extensive opportunities for peace and progress.

Thank you for your attention.