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**STATEMENT BY MR. MOHAMED BENHOCINE,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE DELEGATION OF
ALGERIA, AT THE NINETEENTH MEETING OF THE
OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

Dublin, 6 and 7 December 2012

Mr. Chairperson,

I should like first on behalf of the Algerian Government to express my gratitude to the Government of Ireland for its hospitality and excellent organization of the Ministerial Council meeting in Dublin and to congratulate it on the quality of its Chairmanship of the OSCE. I should also like to express my thanks to Ukraine for its chairmanship of the Mediterranean Contact Group and to wish it every success in its future Chairmanship of the OSCE.

Mr. Chairperson,

The indivisibility of security, particularly in the Euro-Mediterranean region, demonstrates the relevance of the Mediterranean dimension of the OSCE. The continued existence of old threats to security and the appearance of new ones as a result of the evolution of the regional and international situation are reason enough to “enhance the level of our interaction with our Partners”, as provided for in the Astana Commemorative Declaration.

The particular interest in the Mediterranean dimension at present because of the changes taking place in North Africa and the Middle East should result in further co-operation and mutual comprehension, notably through the development of a receptiveness to the Partners’ concerns and their greater involvement in the work of the Organization on questions that directly affect them.

In that regard, we welcomed the adoption by the Ministerial Council in Vilnius in 2011 of the ministerial decision on the Partnership, which reflects the desires of the Partners, not least by focusing the dialogue on questions of common interest and strengthening co-operation and sharing of the OSCE *acquis* according to the needs and priorities identified by the Partners themselves, as provided for in the decision.

With this in my mind, my country favours practical co-operation in those areas in which the OSCE has recognized added value compared with other frameworks for dialogue and co-operation. In the politico-military dimension, for example, this includes combating transnational threats to security and in particular combating terrorism, an area in which,

alongside border monitoring and combating organized crime and drug trafficking, Algeria intends to strengthen and expand its co-operation with the OSCE even further.

Mr. Chairperson,

It would be useful to recall that the mutual understanding we aspire to is developed through regular political dialogue between the Partners so as to exchange views based on respective experience, as occurred at the 2012 annual Mediterranean Conference held in Rome in November. This is the best way of understanding the extremely complex problems and their protean manifestations.

This is particularly true of the Sahel region, which, as you know, is experiencing an increase in dangers that call for a response that is both resolute and discerning.

There is a need to put an end to the strong presence of terrorists in the subregion with its multitude of human rights violations and violent acts of all kinds, while at the same time avoiding a hasty approach based solely on the use of force.

In fact there is nothing more dangerous than adopting an approach that might appear reassuring because it is based on the myth of force and nothing but force. The asymmetry in the fight against terrorism and drug trafficking in the region is conditioned more by the capacity to isolate terrorists and their drug trafficking allies so as to deprive them of all contact with the local inhabitants, whose main concern is peace and socio-economic welfare.

It is this albeit more laborious approach that Algeria favours because it takes account of the local situation and the lessons learned.

I note with satisfaction on this point that apart from the African Union, which is directly involved, the United Nations is also closely following developments in the region, not least through the appointment by the Secretary General of Mr. Romano Prodi as Special Envoy for the Sahel.

Regarding the elements of the strategy to fight terrorism, I should like in particular to highlight the combating of arms proliferation and also the blocking of the sources of financing terrorism. This includes the payment of ransoms to terrorists for the liberation of hostages, which should be made illegal since these payments only encourage the taking of yet more hostages. This non-exhaustive list of elements in the fight against terrorism could be used as a basis for work by the OSCE with its Partners.

Mr. Chairperson,

I have mentioned the challenges and opportunities born of the transformations taking place in the Arab world, sometimes by peaceful means, as is the case in Algeria, and sometimes by radical means at a very high cost, particularly in terms of the loss of human life. At all events, while the strengthening of democratic processes or deep and radical political transformations are necessary and the most visible manifestations of the desire for change, they should not obscure the need to attend to the socio-economic needs that are often at the root of the upheavals that these countries are experiencing.

Economic and financial efforts are thus required to improve the living conditions of the population. This is the price to be paid to ensure the countries in our region, which have seen a veritable revolution a smoother transition towards the rule of law, democracy and the enjoyment of freedoms. The OSCE could be called on not for economic co-operation, because it has neither the mandate nor the necessary resources for that, but to play the role to which it aspires as a platform for raising the awareness of its participating States and other international and regional organizations of the need to contribute to the economic development of these countries as the best guarantee of sustainable democracy.

In that context, I should like to recall that Algeria is committed to a practically continuous process of political and economic reforms to consolidate democracy, the rule of law and good economic governance with a view to satisfying the needs of its citizens both at the socio-economic level and in terms of democratic expression.

Suffice it to mention here the improvement of access to housing, youth employment and the quality of life in general as well as the development of communications networks and basic infrastructures. At the political level, I would point to the revision of electoral law to achieve greater electoral transparency and the representation of women in political life. On that subject, I am pleased to state that the legislative elections held on 10 May 2012 took place in a climate of transparency and resulted, in particular, in a major increase in the number of women in the National Assembly, who now hold 143 of the 482 seats, in other words a third of the house, a result well worth mentioning here.

Before concluding, I should like once again to point out to the OSCE participating States that it would be extremely desirable for them to respond positively to the application first made in 2004 by the Palestinian National Authority to become a Mediterranean Partner.

Finally, I should like to congratulate Mongolia on its admission to the OSCE as the 57th participating State in this Organization, whose appeal is proof of the OSCE's relevance and vitality.

Thank you.