

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY KELIN,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 950th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

2 May 2013

**Regarding the Ministerial Conference of the
Istanbul Process on Afghanistan**

Mr. Chairperson,

First of all, we should like to associate ourselves with the words of gratitude addressed to our Kazakh and Afghan colleagues for the organization of the Almaty Ministerial Conference of the Istanbul Process on Afghanistan. A representative Russian delegation participated in the work of this forum, which is devoted to current issues of regional co-operation with the aim of facilitating the stabilization and socio-economic revival of Afghanistan.

Russia regards the Istanbul Process as an important dialogue format that promotes regional co-operation. Its contribution may become a useful pillar of support for the multilateral organizations active in the region. I am referring to the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), of which many partners in the Istanbul Process are members.

The Istanbul Process is now entering the next, more complex phase of its activities, namely implementing the specific measures developed in the working groups and agreed upon by the senior officials. Russia is involved in five of the six expert groups of the Istanbul Process that are developing confidence-building measures, and it co-chairs the anti-drugs group together with Azerbaijan. In that connection, we believe it is essential within the Istanbul Process to focus efforts on combating drugs belonging to the cannabis group as well as synthetic narcotics. We are looking forward to active and high-quality participation by our Istanbul Process partners in the activities of the working groups.

There are new challenges ahead for all of us in the light of the 2014 factor. The escalation of tension in the northern provinces of Afghanistan and the possibility of it spreading to Central Asia pose a heightened threat to Russia and its allies. The current situation calls for a considerable stepping up of measures to create effective Afghan armed forces and a functioning economy.

Russia takes the Afghan problems to heart. Programmes to train civilian, police and military specialists from Afghanistan are successfully under way in our country. The Afghan Ministry of the Interior is provided with military and technical assistance on a regular basis free of charge. We are actively involved in the helicopter project under the auspices of the NATO-Russia Council. There are economic assistance measures, along with the provision of humanitarian aid to the Afghan people.

We take the position that only through collective efforts can we counter the common threats to security emanating from Afghan territory. To that end, we need more than ever before to strengthen co-operation between the leading security organizations, in particular co-operation between NATO and the CSTO. We hope that the OSCE will also contribute what it can within the framework of its mandate and existing resources.

Thank you for your attention.