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**WELCOMING REMARKS BY  
AMBASSADOR JANEZ LENARČIČ,  
CHAIRMAN OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL,  
TO THE EXPERTS WORKSHOP ON COMBATING THE USE  
OF THE INTERNET FOR TERRORIST PURPOSES**

VIENNA, 13-14 OCTOBER 2005

Ladies and Gentlemen, Distinguished Participants,

On behalf of the Slovenian Chairmanship, it is my privilege to warmly welcome you at this important workshop. I am particularly pleased since this is the fourth major OSCE-wide counter-terrorist event, organised this year, more than in any previous year since counter-terrorism was introduced to the OSCE agenda. Thus, under the Slovenian Chairmanship counter-terrorism, with the support and resolve of the OSCE participating States, was consolidated as an OSCE priority.

Preventing and combating terrorism enjoys broad consensus and firm support among the OSCE participating States. They are united in their desire to effectively deal with the terrorist threat. I'm glad that international acknowledgement of the usefulness and added value of the OSCE contribution to the global fight against terrorism is growing. Continued and improved interaction with other international and regional organisations is also demonstrated by the number of their representatives here today.

We are all gathered here today because of the Sofia Ministerial Meeting last December. The ministers decided that the OSCE participating States would “[*I quote*] exchange information on the use of the Internet for terrorist purposes and identify possible strategies to combat this threat, while ensuring respect for international human rights obligations and standards, including those concerning the rights to privacy and freedom of opinion and expression” “[*end of quote*].

This is in fact not an easy task, because the Internet has developed into one of the most valuable means for nourishing fundamental values and freedoms, such as democracy and freedom of speech and of opinion. This has become possible to a great extent due to low degree of regulation of the Internet, possibilities for its anonymous use, easy access, wide, almost universal audience and presence. These same features that make Internet so important in a democratic society are unfortunately widely abused by terrorists. They use it to prepare and organize terrorist acts, identify and recruit potential members, collect and transfer funds, incite terrorist acts, in particular through the use of propaganda. Terrorist organizations attribute great importance to the use of the Internet resources for their purposes. The mere fact that the number of terrorist web sites grew from about 15 in 1998 to more than 4500 now and is growing even more every day is just one example of that. I am sure that during this workshop we'll hear a lot about the abuse of the Internet by terrorists and the methods they employ.

I wanted to mention just one method among others, that of incitement to commit terrorist acts. This issue was included by the OSCE Ministers in the decision, therefore also merits our attention at this workshop. A month ago the UN Security Council, having met at the Heads of State and Government level, addressed the issue of incitement and adopted the resolution 1624. The resolution makes it obligatory for all UN members to prohibit by law incitement to commit terrorist acts and to prevent such conduct. We would welcome expert advice on how to deal with abuse of the powerful medium of the Internet for incitement of terrorism. The OSCE, like it did in many other instances of supporting UN counter-terrorist action, could consider how it could assist in achieving the objective set forth by the UN Security Council.

The OSCE has already clearly demonstrated with its former and current counter-terrorism activities, that it can substantially contribute and assist the OSCE participating States in the implementation of their commitments and legal obligations, including in the framework of the UN and other relevant international organisations. It also raises awareness and serves as a platform for exchange of information and best practices. It is successfully doing this in a number of areas. There is no reason, why we

could not build upon this and contribute to elaborating common approaches to dealing with the abuse of the Internet by terrorists and their supporters.

Let me conclude by expressing my appreciation for the work of the Action against Terrorism Unit in preparing this workshop and wishing you every success and a productive meeting. I look forward to the discussion which will certainly give us the impetus and substance to carry on this important work.

Thank you.