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**STATEMENT BY MR. SIRODJIDIN ASLOV,
MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF
TAJIKISTAN, AT THE TWENTY-SECOND MEETING OF THE
OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

Belgrade, 3 December 2015

Madam Chairperson,
Esteemed colleagues,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I should like to take this opportunity to join my colleagues in expressing our sympathy at the loss of life in the tragic incident in San Bernardino, California. We offer our condolences to the families and friends of the victims.

I should like to thank the Government of the Republic of Serbia and the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, Mr. Ivica Dačić, for the warm welcome and excellent organization of today's meeting.

I should also like to congratulate the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany, Mr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier, on his appointment to the high-ranking position of future Chairperson-in-Office of our Organization and to wish him every success in the complex work ahead of him.

Madam Chairperson,

The Republic of Serbia through Minister Dačić and his professional team has made tremendous efforts this year to exploit the potential of our Organization fully and effectively in order to address urgent problems and challenges. As you know, there have unfortunately been many such problems of late, in particular the crisis in Ukraine, which previous speakers have already mentioned today. We have all seen how the OSCE has dealt with this serious political crisis, continuing its efforts to find a peaceful settlement and exploiting its conflict- prevention and-resolution capacities.

At the same time, we must recognize that this is a difficult and responsible task, requiring impartiality, the utmost patience and consistency.

It is therefore worth mentioning the professional endeavours of the Serbian Chairmanship and the OSCE institutions to resolve this crisis and make some progress in this

regard. It has been clear from the outset that the OSCE has an important role to play in this process, and the Organization has proved its effectiveness in practice.

I should also like to mention the role and contribution of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, which has demonstrated its capacity for timely and effective action. We believe it important for the Trilateral Contact Group to continue its work with the involvement of the OSCE's representatives to further advance a political settlement in Donbas on all relevant issues. In that connection, we welcome the role played by the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office to the Trilateral Contact Group, Ambassador Martin Sajdik.

Tajikistan continues to advocate an exclusively peaceful settlement of the conflict through national dialogue in strict accordance with the Minsk agreements.

Esteemed colleagues,

This year in Finland, we marked the 40th anniversary of the adoption of the Helsinki Final Act. Despite the dramatic changes over the past 40 years, the Helsinki agreements remain as relevant as ever.

We shall continue to support the Helsinki+40 process as an important initiative for improving the OSCE's activities and renewing its strategic vision and role in the future. We believe that it is important for the Organization to enhance its role as a platform for dialogue between countries on an equal basis and in accordance with the principles of mutual respect during discussions and decision-making on important issues of security and co-operation throughout the OSCE area.

Esteemed colleagues,

We believe it extremely important to continue the work in the three OSCE dimensions. We need to improve the mechanisms for co-ordinating collective OSCE action in such areas as strengthening borders and combating terrorism, illicit trafficking in drugs and trafficking in weapons and human beings.

The fight against terrorism is particularly relevant, especially in the light of the recent terrorist attacks in Paris, Bamako, Beirut, Mali and Tunisia as well as in the skies over the Sinai Peninsula. All this points to the increased activity of terrorist organizations, including the so-called Islamic State. The events that occurred in Kunduz in the middle of the year when the Taliban captured this provincial centre in northern Afghanistan not far from the border with Tajikistan for a short period cannot but alarm us all.

Against this background, the current situation requires us all to co-operate actively with the countries concerned to find ways of resolving the Afghanistan crisis, given the importance of countering threats and challenges to security and actively involving Afghanistan in regional co-operation.

Madam Chairperson,

It is also important to develop a multifaceted mechanism for the OSCE's co-operation with its Mediterranean and Asian Partners as well as other international and regional organizations to address the problems facing the Organization more effectively.

A practical example of such co-operation was the participation of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Mr. Dačić, in the meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Collective Security Treaty Organization in Dushanbe in April 2015. This was the first time this has happened in the history of the OSCE. We regard this as a clear example of the interest of both organizations in developing close co-operation.

In conclusion, I should like once again to thank our Serbian colleagues for their successful OSCE Chairmanship in 2015 and to wish our German colleagues success for their OSCE Chairmanship in 2016. We look forward to further close and fruitful co-operation within our Organization.

Thank you for your attention.