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**CANADIAN STATEMENT BY
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ASSISTANT DEPUTY MINISTER,
INTERNATIONAL SECURITY BRANCH,
AND
POLITICAL DIRECTOR
14TH OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL
BRUSSELS, DECEMBER 4-5, 2006**

Mr. Chairman,

- I am honoured to represent Canada at this Ministerial Council. Allow me to join others in extending thanks to you for the hospitality shown to us here in Brussels.
- I would also like to thank Belgium for its leadership role in the OSCE over the past year.
- For Canada, human rights and democratic principles are the foundations on which we stand together. Indeed, they are as important today as they were in Helsinki over thirty years ago.
- Harassing election observers, putting candidates in jail, and closing media and opposition offices – these practices do not correspond to the spirit of Helsinki.
- For our part, in January of this year, Canada received the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, and observers from Belarus to assess our federal elections. They found that the Canadian electoral process enjoyed the overall trust of candidates and voters.
- In performing election monitoring, the ODIHR is not a mechanism for implementing double standards – it is a mechanism for developing trust.
- Through it, we can better gauge the trust between participating States and their citizens.
- The effectiveness of the institutions we have created can only be guaranteed if they retain their autonomy of action. This is key to their credibility.
- We must also ensure that those of our citizens who defend human rights are themselves protected.
- In this context, we call on all OSCE participating States to help rekindle the spirit that prevailed when we agreed to the OSCE democratic commitments.

Mr. Chairman,

- To overcome the real threats and challenges that confront us all, a concerted, practical action is required.
- As Chair of the Forum for Security Cooperation for the last four months, Canada has seen how the OSCE can make meaningful contributions at the regional level in areas such as combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, and in implementing UN Security Council resolution 1540.

- Among the most dire of the challenges we face is international terrorism. Our response must be comprehensive and draw upon all of the OSCE's three dimensions.
- We are encouraged to see the OSCE responding to requests of Central Asian States for assistance in border security and policing. These efforts should be integrated into a single strategy. This would provide additional support to curb the Afghan drug trade.
- My own country's engagement in Afghanistan has heightened our appreciation for the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security. Indeed, it closely resembles our own whole-of-government approach to foreign policy.
- But this comprehensive approach requires leadership that values different perspectives and includes stakeholders in setting priorities.
- Leadership is an honour that brings obligations. For this reason, we look to States that lead by example. To us, this means adhering to both the letter and the spirit of the OSCE standards and commitments.

Mr. Chairman,

- The OSCE needs to keep its focus. This is why we support reform efforts to make the OSCE more effective.
- Moving forward on the legal status of the Organization, for example, would greatly facilitate the role played by OSCE field operations.
- Before closing, we would like to reiterate our call to all those involved in the "frozen conflicts" to find lasting peaceful solutions that respect the principles of territorial integrity and sovereignty. No unilateral measures should be taken that would foment turmoil in the OSCE region.
- With respect to Georgia and Moldova, we continue to believe that the fulfillment of the 1999 Istanbul Commitments is an integral part of conflict resolution and would support reconciliation among all parties involved.

Mr. Chairman,

- In closing, I would like to extend best wishes to Spain as it prepares to chair our Organization.