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**STATEMENT BY MR. KANAT SAUDABAYEV,
SECRETARY OF STATE AND MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF KAZAKHSTAN, AT THE SEVENTEENTH MEETING OF
THE OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

Athens, 1 and 2 December 2009

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished colleagues,
Ladies and gentlemen,

First of all, I should like to sincerely thank Greece in the person of the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. George Papandreou, for its impressive Chairmanship of the OSCE and the splendid organization of our meeting here in Athens.

I should also like to express my gratitude to the OSCE Secretariat headed by the Secretary General, Mr. Marc Perrin de Brichambaut, for the high level of organizational and substantive support for the work of our Organization.

Distinguished colleagues,

The Corfu Process initiated by the Greek Chairmanship has given an important impetus to the understanding of comprehensive and indivisible security in the OSCE region. We have all agreed on the need for joint action, and Kazakhstan as the future holder of the Chairmanship intends to do all it can to continue this noble initiative.

In that connection, I should like to make it known that in chairing the Organization Kazakhstan will be strictly committed to the fundamental principles and values of the OSCE and guided by the interests of all its participating States in strengthening confidence and mutual understanding among the countries to the west and the east of Vienna, and it will endeavour to ensure that all three “baskets” of the Organization’s work are given equal attention.

Mr. Chairman,

Kazakhstan will continue the efforts to counter the new challenges in the OSCE area and intends to co-sponsor a number of projects to combat terrorism and various forms of trafficking and to strengthen borders.

We reaffirm our commitment to further strengthen confidence and security within the OSCE’s area of responsibility. We firmly believe that all States must make a maximum effort

to overcome today's deadlock regarding the adapted Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty) and take a very serious and responsible approach to the Russian draft Treaty on European Security.

Given the global recession, it is natural to pay increased attention to the problems dealt with in the second "basket".

We are grateful to all the OSCE States for their participation in the work of the first preparatory conference to the 18th Economic and Environmental Forum, which was successfully held in Astana in October of this year.

The promotion of good governance and a simplified border crossing regime for persons, goods and services is in the interests of the entire OSCE community, and we hope that this will now be put into practice.

The problem of environmental security in the OSCE area remains extremely important. One of the most critical problems concerns the tragedy of the Aral Sea, and our Organization must exploit its potential to the full in helping to solve this problem.

We also believe that the dialogue within the OSCE on energy security should continue, taking into account the positions of all the parties concerned, and also the great potential of Kazakhstan as an energy power.

Kazakhstan supports the work of the most important and unique element of the OSCE, namely the work of the Organization's field missions in co-operation with the host countries.

Distinguished colleagues,

I should also like to mention the successful annual Human Dimension Implementation Meeting held in Warsaw, in which more than 50 non-governmental organizations from Kazakhstan participated alongside the official delegation.

Kazakhstan intends to preserve the importance of the humanitarian component of the OSCE's activities. The observance and protection of fundamental rights and freedoms, the development of democracy and the fight against intolerance and discrimination on any grounds are an integral part of multifaceted security in the OSCE area. The work of the previous chairmanships in this area will be continued.

We trust that a Ministerial Council decision will be adopted on the holding in 2010 of a high-level OSCE conference on tolerance and non-discrimination. This would reaffirm the Organization's commitment to promoting tolerance and dialogue among cultures and civilizations in the OSCE area.

Kazakhstan regards tolerance and non-discrimination as one of the overriding factors influencing stability, and intends to do all it can to exploit the potential of the OSCE to develop a dialogue among religions, cultures and civilizations and to overcome chauvinism, religious intolerance, racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism.

In our multi-ethnic and multiconfessional country, we have gained considerable positive experience in ensuring peace and harmony. What is more, under the leadership of President Nazarbayev, we are successfully projecting our experience in the international arena.

Next year, we intend to devote one supplementary OSCE meeting to the promotion of gender balance and participation of women in political and public life and another to combating trafficking in children. We are also looking into the possibility of co-sponsoring a number of projects by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR).

We are giving particular consideration to the holding in 2010 of a conference on the 20th anniversary of the Copenhagen Document, a seminal document in the human dimension. The agenda of that event, with our co-sponsorship in terms of organization and financing, will include a review of the implementation by the OSCE countries of their commitments to observe fundamental human rights and freedoms. We should like to express our gratitude to Denmark and the ODIHR for their support and assistance in the organization of that event.

Distinguished colleagues,

We attach great importance to the humanitarian sphere of the OSCE's work and intend to make our contribution to the further development of this most important dimension.

We are demonstrating a firm commitment to this process, first and foremost in our own country. This can be seen in the concrete steps taken to improve our legislation. For example, this year in line with OSCE recommendations, substantive amendments have been made to the laws on elections, political parties, the media and local self-government.

We recently adopted the National Action Plan on Human Rights for 2009–2012 and the Concept of Legal Policy for 2010–2020, which have substantially brought Kazakhstan's legislation into line with international standards.

In the near future, we intend to adopt laws on equal rights and equal opportunities for men and women and on countering domestic violence, and to introduce amendments to the laws protecting the rights of the child.

Further steps taken by Kazakhstan in the area of democratization will be fully in keeping with the goals and tasks that we have set ourselves during our Chairmanship of the OSCE.

As the country chairing the Contact Group with the OSCE Mediterranean Partners, Kazakhstan would like to thank all the partner States for their support and understanding and for their active involvement in the OSCE's work. In order to increase stability and security in as broad a geographic area as possible, we are planning next year to focus on stepping up our work with the Asian partners, in view of Kazakhstan's geographical location and our aspirations in this regard.

In this context, we shall promote all the stated approaches not only in our Chairmanship of the OSCE, but also in other multilateral structures, such as the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Commonwealth of Independent States. We also intend to help to develop

co-operation among different institutions with a view to making these processes more dynamic.

Distinguished colleagues,

In 2010, Kazakhstan will do all it can to ensure that our Organization continues to play a most important role as an effective platform for political dialogue in resolving the common threats and challenges facing all of us.

Recognizing this, President Nazarbayev has proposed that an OSCE summit should be held in the year that marks the 35th anniversary of the signing of the Helsinki Final Act, the 65th anniversary of the end of the Second World War and the 20th anniversary of the Charter of Paris.

The summit could consider such topical issues as the promotion of the Corfu Process, the construction of a common transatlantic and Eurasian security architecture and the rehabilitation of and assistance to Afghanistan.

Just a few days ago, I signed a long-term agreement in Kabul with the Government of Afghanistan on co-operation in the field of education, under which Kazakhstan is to allocate 50 million US dollars for the training of more than a thousand Afghan citizens in various civilian professions at our universities. In this way, we should like to make our contribution towards the involvement of the citizens of that country in its development and a peaceful life.

As shown by our consultations, both earlier and today, and in the statements by heads of delegations, President Nazarbayev's idea of holding a summit is supported by many OSCE participating States.

We are convinced that today ten years after the Istanbul Summit Meeting, it is time for an evaluation at the highest level of the current challenges and for us to set the OSCE's priorities for the immediate future in ensuring security and co-operation in the area from Vancouver to Vladivostok.

In this connection, I should like once again to ask my distinguished colleagues to show the necessary political will and strategic foresight and adopt a Ministerial Council decision on the holding of an OSCE summit in 2010.

Distinguished colleagues,

In conclusion, I should like to assure you once again that in chairing the Organization Kazakhstan will endeavour to ensure that its work is in keeping with today's challenges and the expectations and interests of all the OSCE participating States.

Thank you for your attention.