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**PERMANENT MISSION
OF TURKEY TO THE OSCE**

**SPEAKING NOTES OF AMBASSADOR NACI SARIBAŞ
IN RESPONSE TO H.E. JORGE SAMPAIO, HR OF THE AoC
(17 June 2010, 815th PC)**

Thank you Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the Delegations of Turkey and Spain, I would like to warmly welcome H.E. Sampaio, High Representative of the Alliance of Civilizations to the Permanent Council and express our sincere appreciation for his presentation.

As the co-sponsors of this initiative under the auspices of the United Nations, we take pride in the achievements of the Alliance of Civilizations in ensuring that its goals and principles have gained overwhelming worldwide support since 2005.

Indeed the three Forums that have been organized since 2008 in Madrid, in Istanbul and lately in Rio last month, served as invaluable opportunities to contribute to the overall goal of the Alliance, namely *“to improve understanding and cooperative relations among nations and peoples across cultures and religions and, in the process, to help counter the forces that fuel polarization and extremism”*. In this respect, we would also like to convey our gratitude to the Secretary General Brichambaut for his active participation and contribution to the Forums.

Testimony to the achievements of as well as the growing interest to the Alliance of Civilizations is the fact that there are now more than 120 members of the Group of Friends and 44 of them are also the participating States of the OSCE. We particularly welcome the recent decision of the USA to join the Group of Friends and its participation in the Rio Forum. We believe this latest addition to the Group will make a major contribution to the enhancement and progress of the Alliance. Furthermore, UN General Assembly resolution on

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Alliance of Civilizations as well its adoption by consensus last year constitutes another indication of growing recognition and support expressed for this initiative.

Your Excellency,

We fully agree with your assessment that Alliance of Civilizations Initiative and the OSCE, should join their efforts and develop common partnership in addressing ethnic, cultural and religious tensions which have negative implications for security in the OSCE area, including through exploring the possibility to upgrade their constantly developing contacts to a more formalized relationship, such as by a Memorandum of Understanding.

In the framework of the steady progress in the activities of the Alliance of Civilizations as pointed out by H.E. Sampaio, we would like to highlight the importance and relevance of the regional strategies of the initiative for the OSCE. Following the decision taken at the Istanbul Forum last year, Alliance has been working on such strategies in addition to the national plans in order to transform its global objectives and aspirations into local deliverables.

Within this context, first South East Europe Ministerial Conference, which took place in Sarajevo last December, has adopted the “Alliance of Civilizations Regional Strategy on Intercultural Dialogue and Cooperation in South East Europe”. We are pleased to note that second strategy document for the Mediterranean region is expected to follow.

Regional strategies are focused on developing common and/or transnational activities in the fields of education, youth, media and migration. These strategies rely upon a close cooperation with and between a wide array of stakeholders, such as civil society, governments and international and regional organizations.

In this respect, we are of the opinion that the OSCE, with its expertise and experience in the above mentioned areas, could contribute to the implementation of some projects within the framework of regional strategies where it can bring added value and consider it mutually beneficial.

In concluding, we wish H.E. Sampaio every possible success in his future endeavors and assure him with the continued support of the co-sponsors.

Thank you.