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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1101st MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

26 May 2016

**In response to the report by the
Head of the OSCE Centre in Ashgabat, Ambassador Ivo Petrov**

Mr. Chairperson,

We highly appreciate the level of co-operation between the OSCE Centre in Ashgabat, headed by the distinguished Ambassador Ivo Petrov, and the authorities in Turkmenistan, particularly with regard to the co-ordination and agreement of programmatic activities. We regard this approach as a vital prerequisite for the successful work of any field presence within our Organization, which is called upon to contribute to the capacity-building of the host country.

We would mention in particular the Centre's efforts to increase the capabilities of the law enforcement authorities of Turkmenistan to combat illicit drug trafficking. We have taken note of the practical exercise in the controlled delivery of narcotics carried out for the first time in July 2015 by the OSCE Mission.

We note the Centre's contribution to safeguarding the security of Turkmenistan's land borders. This is particularly relevant given the build-up of transnational threats in the immediate proximity to the borders of Central Asia. We hope that the OSCE Mission will involve experts from specialist Russian departments to a greater extent in events held in Turkmenistan to exchange experience in these areas.

No less important in our view is co-operation in stepping up counter-terrorism activities in Turkmenistan, notably by strengthening the security of air transport and the transport infrastructure. We support the Centre's involvement in reforming the prison system. Greater co-operation between the Centre and the Ministry of Finance is clearly of added value in countering money laundering and the financing of terrorism and also in the fight against corruption.

Mr. Chairperson,

Turkmenistan is traditionally one of Russia's most important partners in Central Asia. Co-operation with Ashgabat in the different fields is highly appreciated in our country, and a friendly neutral Turkmenistan is seen as a strategic partner. During the working visit to Ashgabat at the end of January this year by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Sergey Lavrov, the full range of bilateral relations and the situation in Central Asia was considered in detail and the united position of our countries in favour of a political settlement of the problems that continue to exist in Afghanistan was confirmed. Russia and Turkmenistan continue to support the development of Central Asia as region of peace and good-neighbourliness. In that connection, we particularly appreciate the constructive contribution by Turkmenistan to the elaboration of a convention on the legal status of the Caspian Sea that would enable the Caspian States themselves to resolve all questions connected with its exploitation.

In conclusion, we should like to thank Ambassador Petrov for his work as Head of the OSCE Mission and wish him all the best.

Thank you for your attention.