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**STATEMENT BY THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
KINGDOM OF MOROCCO AT THE MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

4 June 2009

**In response to the report presented by the OSCE Secretary General on the
Alliance of Civilizations**

Madam Chairperson,
Mr. Secretary General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Moroccan delegation, I should like first of all to thank Mr. Marc Perrin de Brichambaut, Secretary General of the OSCE, and pay tribute to the content and quality of his report on the “OSCE contribution to the implementation phase of the Alliance of Civilizations initiative” which he has just presented to the Permanent Council.

The Moroccan delegation would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm the support of the Kingdom of Morocco for all the efforts made towards giving concrete expression to the principles and values of dialogue and understanding among civilizations.

Mr. Ahmed Toufiq, Minister for Habous and Islamic Affairs, who led the Moroccan delegation at the second Forum of the Alliance of Civilizations, held in Istanbul on 6 and 7 April 2009, underscored in his statement the historic role of Morocco and its openness to other cultures and religions. He also mentioned the efforts undertaken by our country to ensure that this openness stands the test of time.

During the ministerial segment of the meeting of the Group of Friends of the Alliance of Civilizations, which took the form of five round tables, the Moroccan delegation’s contribution (at the round table on combating radicalism and extremism) focused on the country’s strategy for combating radicalism and extremism, a strategy based on a comprehensive approach combining education, socio-economic development and restructuring in the area of religion.

The Minister also recalled that the Kingdom of Morocco had presented some specific proposals at the Madrid forum, notably the proposal to establish a global or regional network of universities actively involved in the dialogue between civilizations and cultures. This network, which has since become a reality, brings together teachers and researchers of various nationalities who meet periodically in Morocco at a conference to review the international efforts to promote the dialogue between civilizations.

My country believes that the success of the second Forum of the Alliance of Civilizations held in Istanbul on 6 and 7 April 2009 is demonstrated by:

- The increase in support for the Alliance, raising its profile and ensuring its durability within the United Nations system;
- Consolidation of its special role as a platform for the generation of ideas, with a focus on youth, migration and the media;
- The launch of specific projects and the consolidation of the partnership network with various players, notably non-governmental organizations, research centres, think tanks and civil society;
- The trend towards giving this initiative a regional dimension so as to preserve its ability to provide specific responses for each region. The report by the OSCE Secretary General notes in particular the adoption of two regional strategies to implement the objectives of the Alliance of Civilizations, one dealing with the East European countries and the other concerned with the Euro-Mediterranean region.

After this brief evaluation of the Istanbul forum, it seems appropriate to look again at the remarks made by Mr. André Azoulay, Adviser to His Majesty King Mohammed VI, as a member of the High-Level Group for the Alliance of Civilizations during the closing session of the first Forum of the Alliance held in Madrid. “In Madrid, the international community has acknowledged a fundamental achievement of the Alliance of Civilizations which confirms the importance of politics in the relations between the West and the Arab-Muslim world and which challenges the use of religion as a tool as much as an excuse for the clash of civilizations, a false pretext for the most suspect theories.”

As it happens, the Andalusian era with its dialogue of civilizations and coexistence of religions was a concrete historical reality that clearly demonstrated that the theory of the clash of civilizations is groundless.

Madam Chairperson,

The goal of the Alliance of Civilizations, which was launched in 2005 as an initiative of two OSCE participating States – Spain and Turkey – under the auspices of the United Nations and with Mr. Jorge Sampaio, former President of Portugal, as its High Representative, is to bring institutions and civil society closer together and propose ways of combating the divisions, prejudices and misunderstandings between different cultures. The OSCE for its part is notable for the indisputable added value from its activities, in particular in those areas associated with the human dimension.

This being so and since 41 OSCE participating States and 9 Partners for Co-operation are members of the Group of Friends of the Alliance, there is an opportunity here for the OSCE to promote its norms and values by setting up a partnership with the Alliance in a form and framework considered appropriate by the 56 OSCE participating States, bearing in mind that at the request of certain participants during the high-level segment of the meeting of the Group of Friends of the Alliance, intercultural dialogue could be included as a new pillar of the United Nations in the context of its comprehensive reform.