

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1181st MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

12 April 2018

In response to the report by the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan

Mr. Chairperson,

We join in welcoming distinguished Ambassador John MacGregor to today's meeting. We see that in the period since last year's report to the Permanent Council, co-operation between the OSCE office that he heads and the host country, as well as Uzbekistan's contacts with our Organization in general, have intensified considerably. We welcome this development and will do all we can to support it, including by approving an increase of four posts for the office's staff. We take the view that expanding co-operation is fully in keeping with the main principle of the field operation's work, namely, close co-ordination with the Uzbek authorities. We believe that only this kind of link will guarantee maximum results.

It is pleasing to see that the Co-ordinator's work remains balanced in nature and is based on the national priorities set out, in particular, in the 2017–2021 Strategy for Uzbekistan's Development. The specific projects elaborated by the office are linked to the provisions of the Road Map for Co-operation between Uzbekistan and the OSCE, signed in December 2017. It is strange that this document has not been circulated in our Organization.

Given the ongoing tension in Central Asia's neighbour, Afghanistan, and the risks related to terrorist groups such as Islamic State and similar "organizations", we follow particularly closely the Co-ordinator's co-operation with the Uzbek authorities on the first dimension. We support efforts to build Uzbekistan's capacity to address the challenges of terrorism and radicalism and to combat the drugs threat. We see potential for greater efforts to develop co-operation by experts from Uzbekistan's law enforcement agencies with their colleagues abroad and with specialized regional organizations. There are good prospects in this respect for work with the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and the Collective Security Treaty Organization. We note the progress in establishing a national database on drug-related crimes, access to which will soon be opened for international organizations (the OSCE, INTERPOL and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime) and other countries' agencies.

We assess positively the Co-ordinator's work on the environmental and economic dimension. The consistent line to support national policy to fight corruption, strengthen risk assessment mechanisms for money laundering and financing of terrorism, and promote a green economy are, we believe, examples of the kind of practical assistance that a field operation can provide. It is important to take into account the increasing economic integration processes under way in the region and the establishment of common markets under the auspices of the Eurasian Economic Union.

We are happy with the continuity of project work in the humanitarian "basket". We believe that the long-term strategy of providing assistance by concentrating the office's resources on specific areas will be productive.

Mr. Chairperson,

Building on the foundations of our common history and our mutual desire to expand and diversify co-operation, Russia and Uzbekistan are also developing their bilateral ties. This work is consistent, practical and long-term in nature and follows the outlines set by the major agreements reached during the visit to the Russian Federation by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, in April 2017 and the visit to Uzbekistan by the Prime Minister of the Russian Federation, Dmitry Medvedev, in November 2017. It is pleasing to see that these agreements cover the full spectrum of issues on the bilateral agenda, as well as the issue of maintaining security and stability in Central Asia, and reaffirm our countries' mutual desire to build relations based on the principles of good-neighbourliness, strategic partnership and alliance. We will continue to provide every possible support to our Uzbek friends.

In conclusion, I should like to wish Ambassador MacGregor and his team continued success in their work.

Thank you for your attention.