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STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR TACAN İLDEM
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF TURKEY

(Closing Plenary Session of the “Internet 2013” Conference, 15 February 2013)

Thank you Mr. Chairperson.

In my brief remarks I would like to join the previous speakers in expressing our gratitude to the Representative on Freedom of the Media, Ms. Dunja Mijatovic, and her able team for organizing the “Internet 2013” conference. Thanks to their dedicated efforts, this important event, which has brought together stakeholders including from civil society, media, academia, the private sector, can be considered a great success. Although spanning only one and a half days, the conference boasted a diverse selection of sessions which addressed a great variety of salient and relevant issues.

Turkey fully upholds the principles of freedom of the media as well freedom of expression, which are safeguarded by our Constitution, other relevant legislation and international conventions to which we are a party. As a token of our stance, we are among the co-sponsors of the draft declaration on Fundamental Freedoms in the Digital Age, which we hope will find even broader support among the OSCE participating States this year.

The Internet, which has had an incalculable impact on our daily lives within the space of only a few decades, is now an indispensable tool for many people worldwide. The leap forward in the dissemination of ideas which the Internet has provided has been compared to the invention of the printed press. Needless to say, this major technological innovation also brings with it valuable opportunities to advance media freedom.

On the other hand, in order to have an exhaustive appraisal of the Internet, we also need to take up the many challenges that are related with the use of this outstanding medium of exchange. Otherwise we would be missing an important side of the coin. This question has been touched upon in several segments of the conference. Nevertheless, we believe our dialogue should continue and we count on the efforts of the Representative on Freedom of the Media to guide us into more focused discussions in this challenging aspect of the question as well, certainly without aiming at restricting fundamental rights and freedoms.

We appreciate that this conference has provided a broad participatory venue for discussing these important issues and we look forward to the future work in this direction that would yield concrete results.

Thank you.

