

**Welcoming Speech of Ambassador-at-Large M.Jarbussynova
at the Opening Session of the Civil Society Forum
(November 26, 2010, Astana)**

**Dear colleagues!
Representatives of the civil society!**

First of all, on behalf of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office I would like to welcome you in Kazakhstan, in Astana, the very heart of our country! I hope that these events, including this Forum, the final part of the Review Conference and the OSCE Summit will be very interesting and beneficial for you in terms of exchange of best practices and experiences on the issues discussed these days.

All of our meetings will be taking place in this magnificent building – Palace of Peace and Accord, also known as the Pyramid. At the same time, it is quite symbolic that throughout our Chairmanship it has been the second event of the civil society from OSCE participating States and Partners for Cooperation held within the walls of this building. The first event, as most of you may know, was held this year on June 28 prior to the High-Level Conference on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination.

These meetings have focused on fostering the participation of the civil society in the work of the OSCE and on strengthening the cooperation between the OSCE participating States and the civil sector. Dialogue forums have helped to develop collective objectives and approaches to addressing relevant issues in human dimension which require timely response.

In this regard, within this Forum you can discuss the current topics of the Review Conference, share information and submit your recommendations to further resolve the issues at hand.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As you know, human dimension is one of the most public areas which covers democratization, protection and provision of fundamental human rights and freedoms, education, combating human trafficking, judicial independence, elections, promotion of the gender balance, etc., which determines its large and public significance. Besides, this dimension, which is based on the concept of common security, is the subject of close attention of the international community, which is a sign of effective work of the OSCE in this respect.

In this context, I would like to emphasize that development and support of the civil society are important areas of work of the OSCE, in particular the ODIHR, including on enhancing the dialogue between officials and NGOs. At

the same time, the Organization creates an environment for the participation of a wide range of NGOs in the OSCE activities. Let me note that Kazakhstan, as the Chairperson-in-Office, not only continues this tradition but also strengthens it.

Thus, taking into account the invaluable role of the civil society which greatly contributes to the implementation of the OSCE commitments, since the beginning of its Chairmanship Kazakhstan has been focusing on promotion of the issues within the human basket both domestically and across the OSCE region.

Specifically, all annual mandatory OSCE human dimension meetings, except for the Third Supplementary Meeting of the OSCE which will take place in Vienna on 9-10 December, as well as the events proposed by the Chairperson -in-Office including the Copenhagen Conference and the High-Level Conference on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination, were attended by a large number of non-governmental organizations. The latter was attended by 223 NGO representatives.

One of the distinguishing signs of the Kazakhstan's Chairmanship has been the consistent work of the state structures with the civil society and international experts.

A demonstrative proof of that is the initiative to establish the advisory body under the MFA of the Republic of Kazakhstan – the Consultative Council on the OSCE Human Dimension with the task to discuss issues within the human dimension during the chairmanship of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the OSCE in 2010. The Council consists of representatives of the state bodies and NGOs of Kazakhstan, as well as international experts from the U.S.A., Great Britain, Germany, the Netherlands and Estonia. Two meetings of the Consultative Council in Astana and Vienna have been held to date.

Two meetings of the civil society were conducted immediately prior to the Summit events in Almaty: on November 16-17 - a round table meeting for the Central Asian countries on the issue of interaction between NGOs and authorities, and on November 23-24 - NGO Forum of Kazakhstan.

On November 28-29, a number of international NGOs will host a Parallel OSCE Civil Society Conference in Astana.

All these meetings point to the fact that, currently, the role of the civil society is relevant to the development of its state and the international community, overall.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Taking into account your professional interest in the human dimension and in the OSCE events in this respect, we as the Chairmanship-in-Office have decided to hold this NGO Forum.

I hope that this event will make a worthy contribution to the further strengthening of cooperation between nongovernmental organizations and participating States they represent.

I wish us fruitful and constructive work within the framework of the Forum, the Review Conference and the OSCE Summit.

Thank you.