

Statement
by Mr. Kassymzhomart Tokaev, Minister of Foreign Affairs
of the Republic of Kazakhstan at the 12th Meeting
of the OSCE Ministerial Council
Sofia, December 6, 2004

Mr. Chairman,
Dear Colleagues,

This Ministerial Meeting, from my point of view, is of critical importance for the OSCE which is undergoing the process of transformation. In this regard I wish to share with you some ideas and concerns as follows:

First. Kazakhstan strongly believes in high values pursued by the OSCE and confirms its commitment to the obligations and standards within the Organization.

Second. We expect the OSCE to properly address the acute challenges of the contemporary world to gain the objectives that are on the agenda of the Organization. First of all we bear in mind the growing threat of international terrorism. In other words, it is security which has to be a top priority of the OSCE for the years ahead. In this respect we welcome the institutional arrangements against terrorism made within the OSCE and relevant decisions based on the Bishkek Program and Bucharest Plan of Actions.

There are also such issues like illegal migration, human trafficking, illicit drug trafficking and sales of small arms that have to be addressed by the OSCE.

Third. We believe that there should be a balance between all three dimensions in the activities of the OSCE, at least in our part of the world, without domination of one of the dimensions whatever it is important and topical. We expect more attention from the OSCE to the problems of economic cooperation and protection of environment in the region.

Forth. We support the ideas of reforming the OSCE to make it more efficient and adaptable to the current challenges. In this respect we highly appreciate the efforts done by the Chairman-in-Office Minister Solomon Passy and look forward to continuing consultations on this issue with his successor Minister Ruppel. Kazakhstan also supports the proposed strengthening of the role and status of the Secretary General of the OSCE.

Fifth. The situation in Ukraine has become a matter of concern for all countries concerned since the current political and economic crisis will have a strong impact on the future of this very important European country in terms of preserving unity of the nation. Kazakhstan

stands for free and fair elections in every part of the world, including Ukraine. However, we believe that elections in any country should be free from interference from outside. The process of monitoring of the elections must be unbiased and politically neutral.

Sixth. Kazakhstan made a bid to the Presidency in the OSCE in 2009. Therefore we are the first country among the post soviet states to do so. We don't overestimate our own possibilities and understand that this is a serious challenge to our country in terms of continuing the process of political reforms where we have already done a lot. However, we understand that it is a challenge for our organization itself, whether the organization is ready to accept such a bid from one of the Central Asian countries. Therefore, there should be a substantial dialogue within the OSCE on all issues concerned.

Finally, I want to express our appreciation towards the cooperation with the OSCE Centre in Kazakhstan. We also appreciate the hospitality of the Bulgarian Government which successfully arranged this important gathering.

Thank you.