

Statement by H.E. Mr. Gombojav Zandanshatar, Minister for Foreign Affairs
and Trade of Mongolia at the 18th Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council

7 December, 2011

Vilnius, Lithuania

Esteemed Mr. Chairperson,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset I would like to express my honor in taking part in this Ministerial Council meeting. My delegation joins the previous speakers in congratulating the Lithuanian chairmanship on the impressive results achieved in steering this important regional organization in 2011. The result of this Ministerial Council meeting, the balanced and yet forward-looking decisions speak for themselves. Our words of thanks go to the Government of the Republic of Lithuania for the excellent arrangement of this meeting and for their warm hospitality.

Mongolia sees OSCE as an important regional organization that espouses comprehensive, co-operative, equal and indivisible security in the vast Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian space. Mongolia fully supports the concept, reiterated in Astana last year, that the security of each participating state is inseparably linked to that of all others, that each participating state has an equal right to security and enjoys the freedom to choose its security arrangement and that each state has the right to neutrality. Furthermore, Mongolia fully shares OSCE concept that no state, group of states or organization can have any pre-eminent responsibility for maintaining peace and stability in the OSCE area or can consider any part of the OSCE area as is sphere of influence. Though much would need to be done to build such a security structure, the agreement to jointly move in that direction is most welcome. That is why we will follow with great interest the joint research initiative of France, Germany, Poland and Russia on the vision of future Eurasian and Euro-Atlantic security community to be conducted in 2012 and presented to the Dublin Ministerial Council. As a small country, Mongolia would be happy to submit its views on this important for all issue.

Visions and concepts are important elements for understanding and promoting security. However, they are not enough. Experience and tools to provide security are also important.

OSCE has rich experience on which it can draw on. As to tools and capacity, they can be developed and agreed upon, if there is a genuine political will to do so. In this respect Mongolia welcomes the adoption of the 2011 Vienna Document and looks forward to its implementation and further improvement in the years to come.

Mongolia joined the OSCE in December 2004 as its Asian partner for cooperation. Since then it has been closely following its activities. As Asian partner for cooperation, it organized together with the OSCE two conferences focusing on issues of common interest. Our close work with the OSCE and its participating states led us this year to the decision to apply for full membership. Mongolia is interested in integrating in OSCE family of nations that aims to build a common security on the vast Eurasian space and promote cooperation in all the three areas of its activities.

Committed to common security, my country tries to make its contribution in this area. It is known for its commitment to peace-keeping. Though a small country, it has sent around 5000 peace-keepers to Chad, Sierra Leone, Iraq, Sudan, Afghanistan and some other countries. It has participated in the Bonn conference on Afghanistan held a few days ago. It supports the decision of the OSCE to further broadening its engagement with Afghanistan. On its part, it has offered to train mid-level afghan diplomats as a contribution to Afghanistan capacity building. We are looking forward to welcoming afghan diplomats in the spring of 2012.

Mongolia agrees with the comprehensive approach to security. Hence it believes that economic and ecological dimensions of security are important areas of cooperation. It follows with great interest the issues of energy security and strengthening transport dialogue. With respect to the latter, it believes that its geographical location provides an opportunity to serve as an alternative rail link or transport corridor between Europe and Asia, the volume of trade of which is nearing 1 trillion dollars. Therefore it is looking forward to working with the participating states and the OSCE in this important area that can contribute to lowering of transport costs and shortening delivery time of goods between Europe and Asia.

Mongolia believes that promoting human rights and freedoms today is one of the pillars of national and international security. In this respect it welcomes the decision on enhancing the safety of journalists and on pluralism in the digital media. In the past 20 years Mongolia was able to change its form of government from an authoritarian into a democratically elected one. It holds regularly free and fair elections and is now working to further improve its electoral system. Internationally, a few years ago it chaired the Conference of new or restored democracies and has gained experience in developing national democratic governance indicators against which the public can assess the state of democracy, its progress or lack of it in the country. It has also developed ninth Millennium Development Goal that focuses on democratic governance and zero tolerance of corruption. At present Mongolia is chairing the Community of Democracies and is working to promote democracy education, supporting NGOs and civil society as well as strengthening of the community's regional cooperation and sharing of experience. Mongolia would be open to working with participating and partner states in these areas.

My country fully supports OSCE's approach to security, an important element of which is working with its partners for cooperation, the security of which is intrinsically linked with those of the participating states and the OSCE as a whole. It shares the view that each country is different and has the right to develop its own political model that respects universal values of human rights and dignity. In that sense it supports the Ministerial Council decision to enhance further the partnership for cooperation.

The Ministerial Council is well aware of my country's interest in joining OSCE as its member. In this connection I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Chairmanship, the European Union, Croatia, Canada, Luxemburg, Kazakhstan, Turkey, Finland, Portugal, Montenegro, Ukraine, Cyprus, Italy, Bulgaria, Austria, Kyrgyzstan, Belgium, Malta and others for expressing their support for our application. I express the hope that my country would be able to join the family of OSCE nations in the near future and contribute to its common noble goals.

In conclusion, allow me to wish success to the incoming Chairmanship, Ireland, and assure it of my country's fullest support and cooperation in its stewardship of this important organization.