

PC.DEL/291/14
14 March 2014

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY KELIN,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 989th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

13 March 2014

**In response to the statement by Mr. Mobarez Rashidi,
Minister of Counter-Narcotics of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan**

Mr. Chairperson,
Mr. Minister,

It is a pleasure for us to welcome you to today's meeting of the Permanent Council. We also wish to offer our condolences on the occasion of the death of Marshal Mohammed Fahim, Vice-President of Afghanistan.

We wish to thank you for the interesting information that you have provided regarding the activities of the ministry that you head and of other government agencies in combating illicit narcotics in Afghanistan.

We regard the narcotics produced in great quantities in Afghanistan as representing a serious threat to stability in that country, the surrounding region and the world as a whole. Current trends cause us concern. Afghanistan, according to United Nations data, is the world leader in the cultivation and production of opium. In this connection, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime predicts a deterioration of the situation with regard to the illicit distribution of narcotics.

Apart from the direct harm that it causes, narcotics production provides substantial resources to fund extremist activities and terrorism.

As a result of the conclusion of the operations of the International Security Assistance Force, a serious responsibility now falls on the Afghan authorities to combat illicit trafficking in narcotics, naturally with extensive support from the world community.

In this context, of priority importance is the strengthening of the central co-ordinating role of the United Nations in dealing with the worldwide drugs problem, of which illicit opiates from Afghanistan constitute a component. A key task is to ensure strict compliance with the relevant international conventions. Russia opposes all attempts to undermine the international legal regime in this area.

An important role in countering the spread of illicit heroin and other opiates from Afghanistan is played by the Paris Pact mechanism, which is one of the most effective instruments in this sphere.

The OSCE has an important function to perform in the struggle against this global evil in the framework of its Concept for Combating the Threat of Illicit Drugs and the Diversion of Chemical Precursors.

We consider that the recommendations in this document can facilitate better focused and more systematic work by the OSCE in the counter-narcotics field, taking into account the views of all interested parties. One acclaimed tool in this area is the annual OSCE counter-narcotics conference, permitting a discussion at the expert level of problems arising and ways of resolving them.

Another important area of work consists of OSCE projects to help Afghanistan to ensure security and strengthen its borders. We are interested in seeing the continued implementation of the OSCE project for the training of specialists for the counter-narcotics services of Afghanistan and the Central Asian States at the All-Russian Advanced Training Institute of the Ministry of the Interior of the Russian Federation in Domodedovo.

Questions relating to the combating of illicit trafficking in narcotics, including narcotics of Afghan origin, are an important field for co-operation between the OSCE and other regional organizations, including the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. Recent contacts in Moscow between representatives of the Transnational Threats Department of the OSCE Secretariat and the Secretariat of the CSTO in the context of a working group on Afghanistan have created a good basis for continued co-operation between the two organizations in this area.

There is definite potential in the activities of the Counter-Narcotics Working Group of the Istanbul Process for Afghanistan. Under its aegis, an international seminar on the problems of combating narcotics of the cannabis group took place on 5 March at the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Moscow. The participants agreed on an exchange of information regarding persons involved in narcotics production and smuggling, locations used for the bulk storage of narcotics products and the uncovering of financial infrastructures in Afghanistan and the surrounding region.

The above facts indicate that the world community does not intend to leave Afghanistan to cope alone with today's global challenge – the worldwide narcotics threat. Afghanistan must receive substantial social and economic assistance, including alternative development projects aimed at creating the necessary conditions for a choice that as in the interests of the healthy and sustainable development of Afghan society, for adequate compensation of honest labour and for protection of the human right to live in security and dignity.

In conclusion, we should like to wish Mr. Rashidi and his colleagues every success in their far from easy but very important work.

Thank you for your attention.