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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,  
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE  
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

8 July 2010

**In response to the report by the Head of the OSCE Office in Tajikistan**

Mr. Chairperson,

We associate ourselves with the words of welcome addressed to Ambassador Ivar Vikki, the Head of the OSCE Office in Tajikistan, and thank him for his detailed report on his work and careful assessment of the situation in the host country.

We note with satisfaction the happy and fruitful relationship between the Office and the Tajik authorities, which, as is said in the written report, has reached the level of a “strategic partnership”. We trust that this close co-operation will continue in the future. We welcome Ambassador Vikki’s intention not to place the emphasis on the quantity of projects or on looking for immediate results, but to plan the projects with the long term in view, giving priority attention to areas where the OSCE can ensure tangible benefits for the development of Tajikistan’s national potential.

We consider that continuation of the positive practice of holding “task force” meetings involving the Chairmanship, the Secretariat, the OSCE Office and representatives of Tajik government bodies will contribute towards strengthening mutual understanding.

At the same time, we should like to stress the importance of concentrating on the needs of Tajikistan and not looking at matters through the prism of the OSCE’s interaction with Afghanistan. In view of the continuing complex situation in Afghanistan and the threats stemming from that country, including drug trafficking, we believe that it will be counter-productive to attempt to gear work in Tajikistan to a partial transfer of the activities of our Organization to Afghan territory.

In this connection, we see as a priority area for the Centre’s activities further efforts to strengthen national instruments for countering new challenges, including combating the inflow of drugs and terrorism, and ensuring the security of the southern borders of Tajikistan. The specialized Russian agencies are ready to co-operate actively with the Office in these areas, in the interests of international and regional security.

No less important, in our view, is assistance by the Centre to the authorities of Tajikistan in tackling the problems of socio-economic development, the regulation of labour migration, environmental security, the development of civil society and the promotion of regional co-operation. Implementation of the project for the destruction of surplus stockpiles of small arms, light weapons and ammunition also remains a topical issue. We should like particularly to note the contribution of the Office to demining work and the importance of efforts to enhance the technical capacity and expertise of the Ministry of Defence of Tajikistan in this field.

We also consider that it would be useful to assist the Tajik authorities in creating conditions for the study of the Russian language, and thus preserving its constitutional status as a medium of inter-ethnic communication. Such an intention, we would recall, was confirmed in the joint declaration of the presidents of Russia and Tajikistan signed in October 2009.

Mr. Ambassador, we wish again to thank you for your efforts and to wish you and the staff of the Centre success under the difficult conditions prevailing.

Thank you for your attention.