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**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN AT THE
MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

23 September 2010

**In response to the regular report by Ambassador Herbert Salber,
Director of the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre**

Mr. Chairperson,

We have carefully familiarized ourselves with the statement delivered by Ambassador Herbert Salber, Director of the Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC), regarding the work of the CPC during the period covered by the report.

The CPC's work is on the whole in keeping with its mandate, although the Centre is not as active as many OSCE participating States would like it to be.

In particular, there is no mention in the report of the visits to Kyrgyzstan by Mr. Zhanybek Karibzhanov and Mr. Markus Müller.

In this context, we believe it appropriate to mention the tragic events that occurred in Kyrgyzstan in June 2010, which posed a serious threat to the efforts to stabilize the situation in the region.

The overthrow of the discredited president in April of this year, the existing tension and conflict as well as the vacuum of legitimate authority in the country set the scene for the provocation in southern Kyrgyzstan of atrocities fuelled by inter-ethnic rivalry, resulting in the deaths of hundreds of people and the suffering of thousands of peaceful citizens.

Today we have every reason for believing that what happened in southern Kyrgyzstan in June was a carefully thought out and well-organized action by third-party forces. It was intended to involve Uzbekistan in this violent carnage and, ultimately, turn inter-ethnic confrontation into an inter-State conflict between two neighbouring countries – Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan.

Only the knowledge of the simple truth that for many centuries Uzbek and Kyrgyz people have lived together on this land side by side and that their children and descendents will continue to do so for centuries to come gave the people of Uzbekistan the strength to prevent this tragedy from turning into a new large-scale seat of conflict in Central Asia.

There is no doubt that Kyrgyzstan is currently in need of humanitarian assistance and support from its neighbours and the international community. A no less important task, however, is the conduct of an independent international investigation of the pogroms, murders and violence that occurred in southern Kyrgyzstan between 11 and 14 June in order to bring to justice all those who were involved in instigating, organizing and carrying out these bloody crimes.

We are convinced that the firm principled position of the international community and the timely conduct of an objective and independent international investigation ruling out any bias or one-sided approaches may pave the way for reconciliation and harmony between the Kyrgyz people and the Uzbek minority in southern Kyrgyzstan. Any deviation from this position may result in a repeat of these tragic events and the emergence of a very dangerous source of tension in southern Kyrgyzstan.

In this connection, we have a right to expect the OSCE to provide all possible assistance in the conduct of an independent international investigation into these tragic events, which will make it possible to prevent the potential escalation of events in neighbouring Kyrgyzstan.

Mr. Chairperson,

It is impossible to ensure security in the OSCE area without taking into account the views of all its participating States. Security issues must be examined in all three dimensions, including the environmental sphere.

A clear example and graphic evidence of an irresponsible approach to environmental problems can be seen in the tragedy of the Aral Sea. During a single generation it has gone from being one of the most beautiful and unique seas to a body of water that is drying up and disappearing.

Over a period of 40 years there has been a more than sevenfold reduction in the area covered by the Aral Sea's waters, the volume of water has decreased by a factor of 13 and its salinity level has increased tenfold, making the sea unsuitable for living organisms and this in turn has resulted in the complete degradation and disappearance of virtually all forms of plant and animal life.

Today a difficult set of not only environmental problems but also socio-economic and demographic ones of global dimensions has emerged in the Aral Sea region.

In view of the continuing desiccation of the Aral Sea and the associated humanitarian disaster, a most important task today is to preserve the natural gene pool of the Aral Sea region and reduce the harmful effects of the Aral Sea crisis on the environment and, most importantly, the lives of the hundreds of thousands or even millions of people living here.

Account must be taken of the fact that the Aral Sea region is provided with water through the run-off of two main rivers – the Amu-Darya and the Syr-Darya – and that any reduction in the inflow of these rivers will cause major damage to the already fragile environmental balance throughout this vast region.

Under these circumstances, any attempts to implement projects that were drawn up 30 to 40 years ago during the Soviet period to build large-scale hydroelectric installations with huge dams along the upper reaches of these rivers may cause irreparable damage to the environment, particularly if we factor in the eight- to nine-point seismicity of the region where the installations were to be built. Projects of this kind are what have caused the terrible man-made disasters that we have witnessed in recent years.

It would make far more sense to do as many international environmental organizations and respected experts recommend and build less dangerous but more economical smaller hydroelectric power stations to obtain the same energy-generating capacity from these rivers.

The problem posed by the drying up of the Aral Sea is something that affects millions of people living in this region.

Distinguished colleagues,

Against the backdrop of the forthcoming OSCE Summit, whenever efforts are made to restore the viability of the Organization, we repeatedly hear calls regarding the need to implement OSCE decisions on various questions. In this context, we cannot but be alarmed that recently decisions of the Permanent Council – one of the decision-making bodies of the OSCE – have not been implemented in full, although they were adopted on the basis of consensus and with the agreement of all participating States.

One of the key principles of the Helsinki Final Act of 1975 is the fulfilment in good faith of obligations under international law. In signing that fundamental OSCE document, each participating State agreed to abide by the principles set out therein. Given the existing gaps as regards the fulfilment of obligations, there is no sense in insisting on a reaffirmation of these obligations. What we need in the first instance is to fulfil the existing obligations.

An important element in this connection is the institution of the Chairmanship, which in accordance with its mandate is responsible for the co-ordination of activities concerned with the OSCE's day-to-day affairs. We should like to call on the Chairmanship to ensure the implementation of the Permanent Council decisions aimed at ensuring stability, security and the observance of tolerance and non-discrimination in the participating States of our Organization.

Thank you for your attention.