

MC.DEL/59/07
30 November 2007

ENGLISH
Original: FRENCH

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR TAOUS FEROUKHI,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE AND HEAD OF THE
ALGERIAN DELEGATION, AT THE FIFTEENTH MEETING OF
THE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

Madrid, 30 November 2007

Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the Algerian delegation, I should like to express my gratitude to the Spanish authorities for their hospitality and the excellent organization of the work of this fifteenth meeting of the Ministerial Council and to congratulate His Excellency Miguel Angel Moratinos, Minister for Foreign Affairs, and his team in Vienna for their wise chairmanship of the Permanent Council.

Permit me also to express our appreciation to Finland, Chairman of the Contact Group, while wishing it every success for its future chairmanship of the Permanent Council in 2008, and to assure the new Chairman of the Contact Group of the co-operation of my delegation.

As is the case each year, the work of the Ministerial Council provides us with an opportunity to take stock of the progress made within the Mediterranean partnership, a partnership which we should like to see strengthened.

We welcome the improvements and initiatives advanced by the Spanish Chairmanship to promote the Mediterranean partnership, including the new seating arrangement for the partners enabling them to be seated alongside the participating States, reinforcing in this way the legal right that constitutes the invitation of the partners to attend the work of the executive bodies of the Organization.

The adoption, for the first time, of a Ministerial Declaration on the partnership reaffirming the commitment of the OSCE to enhancing dialogue and co-operation with the partners merits a mention.

Furthermore, the presentation of an annual report on the activities of the Contact Group to the Permanent Council as well as the establishment of a fund to finance the partnership's activities constitute important milestones in the promotion of the Mediterranean dimension as proposed by the Mediterranean partners in document PC.DEL/873/05 of 14 September 2005.

In this context, improvement of the decision-making process within the Contact Group in a way that makes it respectful of consensus will be one of the priorities worth examining. Bearing in mind efforts to encourage the voluntary implementation of OSCE principles and norms, it would be advisable to involve the partners in the work and decisions that concern them directly.

The selection of themes for workshops and seminars in 2007, in which Algerian experts participated, is particularly satisfying, specifically with respect to the interdependent nature of security and the OSCE's comprehensive and multidisciplinary approach to security.

Algeria, which is in the process of intensifying its programme of reforms and implementing a policy of national reconciliation, is in favour of increased co-operation with the partners to combat common scourges which affect security and stability in the Mediterranean region: terrorism, organized crime, arms trafficking, migration, trafficking in human beings and protection of the environment.

In this regard, the link between the environment and security introduced by the Spanish Chairmanship opens up new possibilities for the Mediterranean partnership. Evidence of this is the interest shown in the work of seminars and workshops on soil contamination, combating desertification and sustainable management of water resources, all of which warrant further consideration.

Even though we support the migration/development approach, it is important to ensure that the fight against criminal networks involved in trafficking in human beings does not become an obstacle to the free movement of persons, which is, after all, a human right. In this context, Algeria is in favour of a mutually beneficial economic partnership with the European Union (EU) allowing the men and women of the sub-Saharan region who are fleeing misery and coming to seek refuge in Algeria and elsewhere in Europe to live in dignity. Accordingly, the Africa/EU Summit soon to be held in Lisbon should provide an opportunity for a shared commitment to intensified regional co-operation with the African Union in this strategic area.

A similar priority is coping with terrorism, which constitutes a violation of human rights and, what is more, jeopardizes the stability of States. The seminar held in Madrid on travel documents in the Mediterranean region proved particularly useful. Furthermore, I should like to welcome the contacts established by the African Centre for Study and Research on Terrorism based in Algiers with the OSCE Action against Terrorism Unit to foster regional co-operation in combating this scourge of the twenty-first century.

Algeria appreciates the OSCE's efforts in support of the dialogue among civilizations, intended to improve awareness of cultural and religious diversity with a view to mutual understanding, particularly in the context of the crisis that relations between the West and the Islamic world are currently undergoing, encouraged by the tendency to associate Islam with terrorism.

In this context, the mandate of the three Personal Representatives and the efforts to obtain reliable information and statistics on manifestations of hatred and discrimination should be supported. The Algerian delegation pays tribute to the Spanish Chairmanship for having organized in Cordoba the Chairmanship Conference on Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims. This represents a gesture of solidarity towards Muslims who

are subjected to violence committed in the name of Islam, violence which strikes at the heart of global peace and security.

The Algerian delegation encourages the OSCE to continue its efforts with regard to the dialogue of civilizations and also in the area of education to assist in the development of strategies to promote tolerance and non-discrimination and foster mutual understanding on the basis of cultural and religious diversity. In this context, the establishment of a partnership between the OSCE and the Alliance of Civilizations adopted by the United Nations General Assembly — the first annual forum of which is to take place in Madrid in January 2008 — merits support.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.