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**STATEMENT BY
THE HEAD OF THE DELEGATION OF UZBEKISTAN
AT THE THIRTEENTH MEETING
OF THE OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

Ljubljana, 5 and 6 December 2005

Mr. Chairman,
Esteemed Secretary General,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the first place I should like to welcome our colleagues who are taking part in this meeting and express our gratitude to the Slovenian authorities for their hospitality and for the excellent organization of the meeting.

Uzbekistan considers this meeting as one more opportunity to launch a process of comprehensive reform of the OSCE, a process designed to eliminate the functional, geographical and other imbalances which are hampering effective work by the Organization, and, what is particularly important, a process of adapting the OSCE to the new threats to security and the new international political realities confronting us today. These questions are becoming particularly urgent in view of the fact that there has been no OSCE summit since 1999, that is more than 6 years.

In this context, we support the conclusions and recommendations of the Panel of Eminent Persons regarding the need to bring about unanimity in participating States' understanding of the tasks confronting the OSCE and the role to be played by the Organization in the light of the requirements of the times.

Unfortunately, we are bound to conclude that the Organization is continuing to experience a systemic crisis in its activities and is playing at best a nominal role in the dialogue on key questions of security. Obviously, this situation is not appropriate to what we believe to be the necessary authority of the OSCE.

Effective work on the part of the OSCE is being hindered by a serious imbalance between the three "baskets" that constitute the basis of its work. We feel that it is a one-sided state of affairs when the OSCE, an Organization called upon in the first place to deal with problems of security, economics and the environment and democratic renewal of the OSCE area, focuses its attention almost completely on the monitoring of certain processes taking place on the territory of the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in connection with observation of human rights and freedoms — in particular a very strong focus on the monitoring of elections.

It is our profound conviction that one of the most urgent priority problems in the process of reforming the OSCE is a cardinal change in the nature of the tasks and the methods used by the OSCE in the sphere of electoral monitoring. The OSCE missions are sent by and large to CIS countries where, on the basis of one-sided monitoring of electoral processes the Organization draws subjective and largely biased conclusions which do not accurately reflect the true situation. This constant intense focus on certain countries while hushing up the very serious problems that exist in other States also shows that the Organization is pursuing a policy of “double standards”.

Another thing that gives rise to concern is the fact that the institutions of the OSCE are to some extent being used not to provide real assistance but as a means of exerting political pressure, something which is bound to reduce the Organization’s authority and diminish confidence in it altogether. We are proceeding on the assumption that the activities of the institutions should correspond to the political priorities established by the collective bodies and that the programmes of all OSCE structures should be defined with a long-term perspective in view and reflect changing conditions in the sphere of security.

In this context, a radical review of the tasks and working methods of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) is essential. The OSCE needs broadly acceptable and objective criteria for the assessment of elections throughout its whole area, including a comparative analysis of electoral legislation and a uniform approach to the assessment of electoral processes throughout the OSCE area.

In our view, the “field activities” of the Organization are not very effective in their present form because they are focused exclusively on monitoring of the situation as regards human rights and democratic institutions, ignoring almost all other vital questions in the territory of interest.

The Uzbek authorities believe that one of the reasons for the situation that has arisen in and around the OSCE is that the basic principles of fair and equal political dialogue are being violated. What we see is an effort to assign roles — those who are led and those who do the leading, us and them.

Tendencies of this kind are arising at a time when threats to the security and stable development of our States are increasing, threats which require not only a consolidation of the international community but also an adequate response at the national, regional and global levels — and among other things an adequate response from the OSCE.

Unfortunately, we are bound to conclude that there is still no unanimity in our perception of the nature of contemporary threats affecting the international community — within the OSCE and elsewhere — and that “double standards” are being applied in evaluating the anti-terrorist efforts of States. The OSCE, whose duty it is to co-operate in devising collective responses to the security threats that affect us all, has done essentially nothing to evaluate the unprecedented terrorist action which took place in Andijan in May 2005.

In this connection, Uzbekistan has drawn attention to the hasty, unfounded and, to say the least, incorrect statements made by certain representatives of the OSCE regarding the events that took place in Andijan. Completely ignoring the views of Uzbekistan — which

after all is a member of the OSCE — and relying exclusively on statements by biased non-governmental organizations and media, they have tried to represent the armed criminals as “fighters for democracy”.

Furthermore, fundamental principles based on the primacy of the OSCE’s collective bodies were grossly violated and the ODIHR grossly exceeded its authority, as did the OSCE’s Representative on Freedom of the Media and other officials who, in the name of the Organization, expressed opinions which had not been discussed or agreed with the participating States of the OSCE.

Even after the dreadful terrorist attacks in the United States of America and in a number of European countries, extremist movements are continuing to operate freely in a number of participating States of the OSCE, openly preaching religious intolerance and inter-ethnic discord, rejecting the whole idea of democracy, equality and human rights irrespective of sex and religious faith and thus endeavouring to bring progress to a halt.

We should therefore like to stress once again that, given the obvious consolidation of international terrorist forces, it is vitally important for us to concentrate our efforts first and foremost on opposing the ideological foundations and sources of terrorism, and to take joint steps to prohibit the activities of international extremist organizations throughout the OSCE area.

No less important today is an effective battle against one of the main sources of finance for international terrorism and religious extremism, namely drug trafficking.

All this being so, we support the draft decision before the Ministerial Council on the battle against drug trafficking which, if adopted, should do much to stimulate our efforts in this sphere.

On the basis of our evaluation of the OSCE’s activities and the problems involved in reforming the Organization, the priorities for action as seen by Uzbekistan are as follows:

First — Return the OSCE to the role of a key forum for fair and equal dialogue and the adoption of decisions on current problems of security, among other things by devising a statute and specific rules of procedure for the Organization.

Second — Give up the so-called “specialization” of the OSCE on the problems of the post-Soviet area, and recommend to the Belgian Chairmanship in 2006 that it should try to ensure a balanced application of OSCE activities to all three dimensions.

Third — Considering the present importance of stepping up international co-operation in the battle against terrorism, extremism, drug trafficking and other challenges to security, hold consultations in 2006 on possibilities for increasing inter-institutional collaboration between European and Euro-Atlantic structures and the CIS, the Shanghai Co-operation Organization and other regional bodies.

Fourth — It is absolutely essential to preserve and strengthen consensus as the basis of the OSCE’s activities, further enhancing the role and responsibility of the collective bodies in the adoption of decisions of vital importance, particularly those of the Permanent Council.

Fifth — Make sure that all institutions and structures of the OSCE fulfil their mandates conscientiously, including “field missions”, and consider the problems of increasing the responsibility of OSCE institutions.

Sixth — Take concrete steps, before the next meeting of the Ministerial Council, to work out uniform criteria and methodologies for the monitoring of elections on a basis of guaranteed equal treatment of all participating States, avoiding a situation in which attention is focused solely on countries to the east of Vienna; and finally, review the procedure for staffing monitoring missions.

Thank you for your attention.