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**STATEMENT BY MR. NIZOMIDDIN ZOHIDOV,
DEPUTY MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC
OF TAJIKISTAN, AT THE TWENTIETH MEETING OF THE
OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

Kyiv, 6 December 2013

Mr. Chairperson,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I should like to take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude to His Excellency Mr. Leonid Kozhara, Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, for the excellent organization of our work here in Kyiv. I should also like to congratulate His Excellency Mr. Didier Burkhalter, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Switzerland, on his election to the high-ranking position of Chairperson-in-Office of our Organization.

Focused and fruitful work has been carried over the past year under the Ukrainian Chairmanship of the OSCE, and this has undoubtedly helped to improve the Organization's activities.

The Republic of Tajikistan supports balanced development of all three OSCE dimensions. Our country is making every effort to implement its commitments within the Organization.

Tajikistan regards the OSCE as an important platform for equitable dialogue on existing security issues and believes that particular attention should be given to the problem of finalizing its institutional basis, which would serve to strengthen the Organization.

Within the framework of the Helsinki+40 process initiated by the Irish Chairmanship of the OSCE in 2012 and continued by our Ukrainian colleagues this year, work has already begun on what is known as the 2015 road map, which involves developing the main strategic approaches and long-term prospects and continuing our joint work towards a security community. We hope that this joint work on developing a future vision of the role and activities of the OSCE will bear fruit, and we are ready to play an active part this process.

We continue to advocate an active role for the OSCE in protecting and promoting fundamental freedoms and human rights. At the same time, we note that the problems regarding fundamental freedoms and human rights should be examined in a balanced manner, taking into account the need to safeguard security and stability within society.

An important political event in the life of our country took place this year – the presidential elections. We are grateful to the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly for their careful attention to the preparations for and holding of the elections, and also for sending an observation mission to our country. Despite the differences in their approaches and assessments of the results, we are willing to continue constructive co-operation in the future with the OSCE and its bodies on the subject of elections.

The economic and environmental dimension is an integral part of the OSCE's early warning and conflict prevention activities. We believe that the OSCE's work in this dimension could be more effective. In that connection, it is important to make an effort to implement projects and programmes aimed at achieving specific results. We call upon the OSCE to assist in the implementation of projects concerned with mitigating the consequences of environmental crises and water and energy resource management and, in this way, to make its contribution to strengthening confidence-building measures in Central Asia.

Energy, especially hydropower, is a major contributor to sustainable development and poverty reduction in developing countries. In this context, the development of Tajikistan's hydropower capacities is one way of achieving stability in the region's energy sector. Our country's hydropower resources exceed Central Asia's current electric power consumption more than threefold. We take the position that the right of every State to develop their energy and transport sectors and obtain independence in them should be respected. This will undoubtedly help to create conditions for equitable development, thereby ensuring stability and security in the region.

The security situation in Afghanistan is closely bound up with security not only in Central Asia but also in the entire OSCE region. We look forward to further co-operation and assistance for our country in ensuring border security and countering serious challenges such as illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs, weapons and human beings. These challenges are becoming increasingly relevant in view of the withdrawal of coalition forces from Afghanistan in 2014 and the changes expected to occur in that country.

We also welcome the OSCE Permanent Council decision to send an election support team for the presidential and Provincial Council elections in Afghanistan, which are scheduled to take place in April 2014.

The OSCE's assistance in strengthening the capacity of the law enforcement agencies of the participating States of the Organization, including Afghanistan as an OSCE Partner for Co-operation, is important. We should also mention the role of the OSCE Border Management Staff College in Dushanbe, which is a major component of the Organization's work in this area and serves to train specialists from different countries. We note with regret that the proposal to include the financing of the College in the OSCE Unified Budget was not approved this year either. I should like to take this opportunity to express our hope that a positive solution will be found in this matter.

We are faced with the task of further improving the OSCE's work and expanding and strengthening its co-operation with other international and regional organizations.

In this context, we welcome the steps being taken by the OSCE Secretary General to find areas for collaboration with important structures in the region such as the Collective

Security Treaty Organization, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and other partners. We are ready to examine proposals to amend OSCE procedures regarding the development of contacts with these international and regional institutions.

In conclusion, I should like to express the hope for continued close and fruitful co-operation within our Organization and to wish our Swiss colleagues every success in their activities during their OSCE Chairmanship. We should also like to express our readiness to lend every possible support to the Swiss Chairmanship of the OSCE in 2014.