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**Working session I: Early warning, conflict prevention,
crisis management, conflict resolution and post-conflict rehabilitation:
Lessons learned and the way ahead**

Mr. Chairperson,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I should like to thank the organizers of the Annual Conference for the invitation to the Secretariat of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) to address such a representative international forum.

In today's world, the early warning, prevention and settlement of conflicts and crises and post-conflict rehabilitation are a priority for the CSTO, as defined by its Collective Security Strategy until 2025, and for the work of the Republic of Belarus, which chairs the CSTO in 2017.

Prime importance is attached to political measures for prevention and settlement. However, I should like to talk here about the creation of the CSTO collective mechanism for crisis response, an urgent need for which first manifested itself after the events in the south of the Kyrgyz Republic in 2010.

According to the Regulations on the Procedure for Responding to Crisis Situations adopted by the CSTO Collective Security Council in 2010, a crisis situation is the "increasing aggravation of a situation in one or several CSTO Member States that directly threatens its (their) security, stability, territorial integrity or sovereignty and in the absence of the necessary assistance by the CSTO Member States could lead to its (their) inability to fulfil its (their) functions and/or to destabilization of the collective security region."

The work of the CSTO constituent bodies in this connection is governed by laws and regulations. The time-frame for adopting decisions in response to a crisis, including by videoconference, for providing material, technical and humanitarian aid and for offering information and political support in the event of the emergence of crisis situations in the CSTO's area of responsibility is very short.

Great importance is attached to the monitoring of the situation in Member States. This is carried out on a permanent basis by the CSTO Secretariat with a view to identifying the conditions in which a crisis (emergency) situation could occur.

In the event that such conditions are identified, the CSTO Secretary General immediately convenes the CSTO Permanent Council, consults with the leaders of the CSTO Member States on whose territory the conditions for the emergence of a crisis situation have been identified, and makes proposals for priority measures to prevent (or settle) the crisis.

By decision of the Collective Security Council, an intelligence mission consisting of representatives of the Member States can be sent to the crisis region to monitor the situation.

By order of the Collective Security Council, the CSTO Secretary General will inform the United Nations and other international organizations of the aims and nature of the joint measures undertaken by the CSTO to prevent (or settle) the crisis situation.

In order to improve the crisis-response mechanism by which a decision on the use of the CSTO Collective Rapid Reaction Force (CRRF) is made, a surprise test was undertaken in 2015 involving the deployment of a force to an area where a worsening of the situation was anticipated. Over the course of two days, 1,500 soldiers from all Member States were deployed to an area of Tajikistan close to Afghanistan with standard-issue weapons and equipment. Transport aircraft carried out over 80 sorties.

At the same time, units of the armed forces of the Kyrgyz Republic successfully completed a forced march to the target region of almost 1,000 km on mountain paths. The test made it possible to adjust the way in which the combat readiness of the CRRF could be improved. As a result, a collective airborne force made up of military transport aircraft from all CSTO Member States was established.

In order to improve the crisis-response system even further, the Collective Security Council adopted a decision in October 2016 to create the CSTO Crisis-Response Centre. Its basic tasks include co-ordinating the national bodies with the Centre; receipt, analysis and exchange of necessary information; forecasting the development of situations in the CSTO area of responsibility so as to identify indicators of crisis situations; and drafting and agreeing proposals for the protection of the security, stability, territorial integrity and sovereignty of Member States and also for joint measures to counter threats and challenges to collective security.

The most recent exercise by the Joint Staff and CSTO Secretariat, organized by the Military Academy of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, in April 2017 concerned the normalization and stabilization of a situation in the Caucasus collective security region. It involved military personnel from the CSTO Joint Staff, officials and staff of the CSTO Secretariat, operative groups from Member State ministries, and members of the CSTO Permanent Council.

The exercise successfully tried out the work procedure of the CSTO Centre for dealing with a crisis situation in the putative State.

In this way, it can be said that on the whole the CSTO crisis-response system, including monitoring and analysis of the situation in the crisis region, elaboration of

proposals for normalizing it and providing military, technical and other assistance if need be, has been established and is being continuously improved.

The CSTO arranges international co-operation on conflict prevention and crisis settlement. In October 2016, the Director of the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre, Marcel Peško, and his deputy, Paul Picard, together with the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General and Head of the UN Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia (UNRCCA), Petko Draganov, and the CSTO Secretary General, Nikoalay Bordyuzha, held a tripartite meeting in Moscow. Discussion focused on crisis prevention, particularly with reference to Central Asia. It was decided to hold such meetings on a regular basis in future. The CSTO Secretariat has held a videoconference with the UNRCCA on the threat emanating from Afghanistan, and recently Mr. Draganov and colleagues from the Regional Centre took part in a meeting of the CSTO Council of Foreign Ministers Working Group on Afghanistan.

In conclusion, I should like to mention that we would also be willing to enter into a relationship with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Secretariat with a view to similar concrete co-operation.

Thank you for your attention.