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**STATEMENT BY MR. ESEN AYDOGDYEV,
HEAD OF THE DELEGATION OF TURKMENISTAN, AT THE
SEVENTEENTH MEETING OF THE OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

Athens, 1 and 2 December 2009

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished ministers and heads of delegations,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me to express my gratitude to the organizers of this meeting, first and foremost to the Government of Greece and also the OSCE Secretariat for the fine working conditions.

The items on our agenda are of great importance, primarily in the context of developing long-term co-operative relations, taking into account the future prospects for peace and security at both the regional and global level. In this context, we see joint action to further strengthen the security system both within the OSCE area and globally as one of our primary tasks.

The processes taking place in the various spheres of international life testify to the diversity of factors on which stability and sustainable development depend. The present-day realities require ever closer and more co-ordinated interaction on the part of States and the major international organizations if we are to achieve our primary common goal of ensuring peace and security on a global scale. The principle of the integrity and indivisibility of universal security is of fundamental importance to us in that regard. The question of global security needs to be considered in both the regional and the national context. More precisely, the politico-military aspect of security cannot be completely ensured unless the economic, environmental, water-, energy- and food-related, and other dimensions are also taken into account.

When it comes to global security, there are a number of objective factors that make energy security a priority concern for our country – to be dealt with through the formation of a framework under international law and the adoption of multilateral consensual decisions as a basis for a new model for mutual relations in the global energy space. In our opinion, this model should be designed with account taken of the need to reconcile and combine the interests of suppliers, transit countries and consumers of the energy resources and to arrive at a common view on the future configuration of supply routes for energy resources.

The President of Turkmenistan, Mr. Gurbanguly Berdymukhammedov, has put forward a number of important initiatives in the United Nations, which would enable us to create a platform to resolve critical problems in the Central Asian region and the Caspian Basin.

In particular, Turkmenistan has proposed that universal mechanisms should be devised to ensure a reliable and secure international energy supply infrastructure, access to energy resources and their effective exploitation.

With a view to providing political safeguards under international law for the security of the transport of energy to international markets and protection against the various risks, Turkmenistan raised this problem in the General Assembly of the United Nations, leading to the adoption of a resolution at the 63rd session of the General Assembly on 19 December 2008 on reliable and stable transit of energy and its role in ensuring sustainable economic development and international co-operation, which had been introduced by Turkmenistan. As a follow-up and to promote its international initiative to safeguard the security of energy supplies to global markets, Turkmenistan has offered to help in the creation of an expert group under the auspices of the United Nations to draw up a document under international law on energy transit, taking into account the proposals by interested countries and international organizations. The creation of an expert group of this kind would provide an effective framework for this work.

The rational use of the water and energy resources of the region is of great importance to the countries of Central Asia and an area in which the OSCE can make a positive contribution. Turkmenistan has a clear and precise position on this matter. In principle, all the issues in this sphere need to be dealt with on the basis of mutual respect, with due account taken of the generally recognized norms and principles of international law, in particular the United Nations conventions governing the use of the of the water resources of transboundary watercourses and international lakes and also the protection of the environment in a transboundary context.

Urgent regional water and energy issues must be examined with the participation of all the Central Asian States and also the involvement of the major international organizations. The involvement of the United Nations through its Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia is an example of positive participation in this context.

In this respect I believe that the OSCE could make a contribution to the constructive resolution of this problem through the elaboration and implementation of programmes and projects in this area.

This kind of comprehensive approach derives from the fact that Turkmenistan has positive experience in examining and resolving water issues with contiguous countries, with mutual interests being taken into account as much as possible. The use of the water resources of boundary rivers is based on bilateral agreements regulating water consumption on the principle of mutual benefit. Turkmenistan believes it is a matter of urgency to resolve these problems in a balanced way to satisfy the demand for water by the Central Asian States for electricity production and agricultural, manufacturing and domestic purposes.

The question of universal disarmament, the reduction of the size of weapons arsenals and efforts to combat their proliferation remains one of the key items on the global agenda. Today, the presence of surplus weapons in various parts of the world constitutes a provocation rather than a deterrent and is a possible source of conflict. As a neutral State that does not accept military force as an argument in international politics, Turkmenistan urges the global community to take a most responsible approach to this problem.

The first consultative meeting of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Central Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone took place in Ashgabat on 15 October 2009 with the participation of government delegations from all five States of the region along with representatives of the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia. This meeting was the first concrete step towards implementing Turkmenistan's proposal for an international conference on disarmament problems in Central Asia and the Caspian Basin region to be held under the auspices of the United Nations in Ashgabat in 2010.

Turkmenistan is engaged in constructive collaboration within the framework of the International Monitoring System of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization. Its accession to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty – the document under international law to prevent the further development of nuclear weapons and their proliferation – is an illustration of our country's commitment to its international obligations as a neutral State, unswervingly pursuing broad-based international co-operation in the interests of peace and universal security.

Clearly, this also applies to Afghanistan, a most sensitive problem for the Central Asian region and the world as a whole. Resolving the problems of Afghanistan requires the utmost responsibility, patience and understanding of the situation. The required approach cannot be mechanically copied from the matrixes used to resolve situations in other parts of the world.

The revival of Afghanistan and the establishment of lasting peace on Afghan soil is one of the priorities for our country in our work to maintain peace and security in the region. While assisting Afghanistan in the restoration of its economy and the construction of social and humanitarian facilities, we believe that the United Nations is called upon to play an important role in the Afghan settlement through broader and more targeted involvement of its institutions and regional structures.

Afghanistan is an OSCE Asian Partner for Co-operation and has observer status within the Organization. In this connection, we believe that the range of co-operation activities with Afghanistan could be expanded beyond mere border and customs programmes. Guided by the principles of good-neighbourliness and mutual assistance, Turkmenistan is today proposing its own non-military model for resolving a number of Afghan problems and conflicts. This model is based on our country helping Afghanistan to build social infrastructure facilities and supplying electricity and humanitarian goods. The policy and its implementation in practice are what is required to restore peaceful structures within the country, helping to increase the standard of living for the Afghan people and eliminating the social and economic basis for terrorism, extremism and drug trafficking.

We should sincerely like to see Afghanistan as a peaceful and prosperous State, a good neighbour and partner of Turkmenistan and all the countries of the region. For that reason, our country is proposing that we make greater use of the political and diplomatic mechanisms available for resolving the situation in Afghanistan, with the active involvement of the peacekeeping potential of the United Nations in Afghanistan and the capabilities of its Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia. This approach based on goodwill, authority and responsibility on the part of the global community represented by the United Nations lies at the heart of Turkmenistan's world view with respect not only to the

Afghan problem but also to other pressing issues connected with the development of Central Asia, the Caspian Basin and the entire OSCE area.

In conclusion, I should like to assure you that our joint agreed action based on a broad view of security problems will be in line with the proclaimed principles of peaceableness, mutual trust and a determination to achieve the global goals of peace, stability and sustainable development.

Thank you for your attention.