Statement by the Minister of Foreign Affairs

Statement by Mr. Kanat Saudabayev, Chairman-in-office of the OSCE and Secretary of state and Minister for foreign affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, at the 789th meeting of the OSCE permanent council

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Speaking here before the Permanent Council two and a half years ago, I expressed the hope that on 30 November 2007 the foreign ministers of the OSCE participating States would adopt a fair decision in Madrid on Kazakhstan’s Chairmanship of the Organization in 2010. Thank God that is what happened. As a result of that decision, I now have the honour today to address you, my distinguished colleagues, as the Chairman in Office of the OSCE.

The decision adopted in Madrid was not only a sign of the objective recognition by the international community of the impressive achievements of Kazakhstan and President Nursultan Nazarbayev in building an economically powerful and dynamically developing democratic State, its worthy contribution in ensuring regional and global security during the short period that the country has been independent, but also served to demonstrate the desire of the OSCE itself to really bring the countries to the east and the west of Vienna closer together and to modernize and strengthen the Organization in order to adapt it to the present day realities. In the address that we have just heard, President Nazarbayev outlined the main challenges facing our Organization today along with ways of finding appropriate responses to them and the most important priorities of our OSCE Chairmanship. For my part, I should merely like to outline a road map for the implementation of our Head of State’s strategic vision.

We are extremely grateful to Greece for its effective Chairmanship and we intend to continue its positive trends, first and foremost development of the Corfu Process.

In the context of the dialogue on the future of European security we support the willingness expressed by a number of countries in Athens to discuss the different ideas on strengthening the indivisible security from Vancouver to Vladivostok, including the Russian Federation’s initiative on a Treaty on European Security.

We share the opinion that the strengthening the Vienna Document 1999 should be carried out in parallel and without detriment to the existing regime of confidence and security building measures (CSBMs). It is our hope that 2010, a special year in many respects, will see us draw a step closer to the entry into force of the Agreement on Adaptation of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe.

Kazakhstan will give particular attention to the preparations for the Annual Security Review Conference (ASRC) and will look into the possibility of making its meetings more representative, productive and result-oriented.

We shall continue to work to strengthen the OSCE’s co operation with other international organizations and institutions and will intend to invite their representatives more frequently for an exchange of views.

Assisting in resolution of “protracted conflicts” remains a priority for any Chairmanship and we shall endeavour to do all we can to make a contribution to this difficult process. At the same time, our Organization must try to find a way of preventing the emergence of similar conflicts which result in human tragedy and humanitarian disasters.

To that end, my first visit as Chairman in Office is scheduled for mid February to the countries of the South Caucasus. I would be grateful for any recommendations you might have and for your help and ideas in resolving the problems concerned with the conflicts there.

In line with the Ministerial Declaration adopted in Athens on non proliferation, Kazakhstan will, as a recognized leader in the worldwide process of non proliferation, try to increase the OSCE’s contribution to achieving the goals of UN Security Council Resolution 1540 and supporting the global efforts in the area of nuclear disarmament.

We shall pay greater attention to the work to combat illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs and to counter terrorism and other new challenges of the modern age, and welcome the decision taken in this regard at Athens.

In view of the experience of previous Chairmanships, Kazakhstan intends to co operate closely with the Secretariat’s Action against Terrorism Unit, to support specific projects as a donor and assist in the holding of thematic seminars. We are planning to hold a conference in Astana on the prevention of terrorism as the main event in this area. We urge our partners to ensure a high level of participation in this Conference.

Today the concept of European security goes far beyond the borders of the European continent and encompasses the vast expanse of Eurasia. Accordingly, we intend to focus particular attention on Afghanistan.

We view the development of the situation in that country from the point of view of global security and the fight against terrorism, religious extremism and drug trafficking. Helping the Afghan people to transform their war-torn country into a peaceful, productive and self-sustained society based on democratic principles and values, is an important task for the OSCE and the whole international community.

We hope that the forthcoming international conference on Afghanistan in London at the end of January, which I plan to attend as Chairman in Office of the OSCE, will be an important step in that direction.

For a number of years Kazakhstan has been providing considerable humanitarian aid to Afghanistan. Following an agreement signed with the Afghan Government, this year will see the start of a programme to provide vocational training for a thousand Afghan citizens at our universities. Astana has allocated 50 million US dollars for that purpose. Furthermore, it is our intention to play an active part in implementing and co sponsoring projects to strengthen Afghanistan’s borders with Central Asian countries, to develop cross-border co operation and to enhance law enforcement activities.

In selecting its priorities in the economic and environmental dimension, Kazakhstan proposed the promotion of good governance at border crossings and development of secure and efficient land transportation. We thank all participating States for their support in the selection of the theme of the 18th Economic and Environmental Forum, which we believe is very important as we emerge from the global crisis.

The III Astana Economic Forum in July of this year on the theme of “Crisis Lessons and Post Crisis Model of Economic Development in Globalization Conditions” should impart an additional impetus to discussions in this area.

Another important and highly topical sphere of work in the second dimension is environment and security. It is important over the long term to create a comprehensive system for monitoring and responding to environmental threats, devising common approaches and generating political will. In this context, activities to address challenges of the Aral Sea region may serve as a model for resolving environmental problems within our Organization’s area of responsibility.

Work must continue on migration issues and on ensuring energy security in line with the decisions adopted at the Ministerial Council meeting in Athens.

The human dimension remains a key theme on the agenda of our Organization and our Chairmanship. Kazakhstan will continue to support the work of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), the High Commissioner on National Minorities and the Representative on Freedom of the Media.

Given our extremely positive experience in securing inter ethnic and interconfessional harmony in our own country, we intend to make tolerance and intercultural dialogue within the OSCE area a major priority of our Chairmanship.

I hope that the High Level OSCE Conference on Tolerance and Non Discrimination to be held in Astana on 29 and 30 June of this year will make a worthy contribution to the process of further strengthening interaction among different cultures and civilizations and the practical implementation of decisions adopted earlier. In that connection, I would ask you all, my distinguished colleagues, to play a most active part in the preparatory and substantive work of the Conference. The three Personal Representatives of the Chairman in Office for religious tolerance and non discrimination will also be actively involved in this process.

Another no less acute problem is trafficking in human beings, with particular focus on trafficking in children, which has taken on a global scale and become a component of transnational crime. This being the case, one of the supplementary human dimension meetings will be devoted to a discussion of how to improve the mechanisms for combating trafficking in human beings.
In view of the importance of promoting gender policy, we plan to hold a meeting on the promotion of gender balance and the participation of women in public and political life and to co sponsor an ODIHR programme to increase the participation by women in State structures.

The rule of law is a fundamental commitment in the human dimension, directly concerned with human rights and democracy. In this context, we intend to pay particular attention to independence of judicial systems and to other important issues that have lost none of their relevance such as the prevention of hate crimes, freedom of movement, the situation of Roma and Sinti and others.
In addition to the annual Human Dimension Implementation Meeting held in Warsaw, a conference to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Copenhagen Document will be of great importance. We are providing both organizational and financial support for that event. The conference will include a review of the implementation of commitments regarding fundamental human rights and freedoms, the rights of national minorities and elections. I should like to express our gratitude to Denmark and the ODIHR for their help and support in preparing for this event.

This year, presidential and parliamentary elections will be held in 15 OSCE participating States. We urge the ODIHR and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly to co ordinate their work and to do everything possible to ensure that the election monitoring process is objective and constructive.

Attaching great importance to the human dimension of the OSCE’s work, we are demonstrating a firm commitment to this process, first and foremost in our own country. Further steps in the area of democratization in Kazakhstan will be fully in line with the goals and tasks that we have set ourselves during our Chairmanship.

Distinguished colleagues,

For Kazakhstan, everything I have outlined so far represents a seamless and responsible continuation of the efforts of our predecessors in the post of Chairman in Office of the OSCE in resolving the problems currently facing our Organization as well as problems that may re emerge. As President Nazarbayev has already stressed, a most important task for the Organization today is to prepare for and hold an OSCE summit in 2010. A specific recommendation regarding a summit was set out in documents adopted at the Ministerial Council meeting in Athens. This will allow the participating States you represent here to begin work without delay on giving substance to a summit agenda and providing organizational support for its preparation. In this connection, I should like to urge you all – distinguished colleagues, the Secretary General and the OSCE Secretariat – to actively and purposefully begin the process of reaching agreement among all our partners on a substantive agenda for a summit and a time frame that is acceptable to all and based on consensus.

We understand that this is an extremely difficult task. However, as the great Francis Bacon once said “all rising to a great place is by a winding stair”.

Kazakhstan also intends to continue the fine tradition initiated by our predecessors Greece by inviting the foreign ministers of the OSCE participating States to an informal meeting in Almaty this summer. Here in the Alatau mountains rising 3000 metres above sea level and among the flowering alpine meadows we could in the spirit of Corfu continue the open and free exchange of views on the most pressing problems in the OSCE’s area of responsibility and ideally reach a consensus on an agenda and time frame for the summit. I would ask all of you to take an understanding and enthusiastic approach to the preparations for this important event.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I should like to thank our Greek friends for their tireless efforts throughout 2009. As the Chairman in Office of the OSCE I am counting on close co operation with Greece and Lithuania in the Troika in 2010.

I am also relying on the support of all my appointed personal and special representatives. The broad geography of the countries represented by them should ensure the objectivity and impartiality of the work ahead of us.

I regard the support of the Secretary General and the OSCE Secretariat and institutions as a major factor for the success of our Chairmanship and for ensuring the continuity and effectiveness of the Organization’s work. In this connection, we shall continue to examine different ways of strengthening the legal status of the OSCE, including the possibility of setting up a working group to draw up proposals on the basis of consensus.

The Kazakh Chairmanship attaches great importance to the work of the OSCE missions in the field. We firmly believe that at the request of the host authorities the OSCE field operations can provide vital support.

We intend to pay particular attention to strengthening the parliamentary dimension. Kazakhstan is pleased to note the atmosphere of co operation and mutual understanding that exists between us and the President of the Parliamentary Assembly Mr. João Soares and its leadership as a whole. An OSCE Trans Asian Parliamentary Forum is to be held in Almaty on 13 and 14 May of this year. Its agenda reflects our intention to pay greater attention in our work to the Asian dimension of the OSCE and to co sponsor specific events in this area.

This summer Turkey will host the third summit meeting of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA). The Asian partners of the OSCE – all members of the CICA or having observer status – as well as the OSCE Troika, the Secretary General and the President of the Parliamentary Assembly, have been invited to take part in that event, making it possible to intensify co operation between the OSCE and the CICA with a view to strengthening security in the vast Eurasian region.

Your Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Year after year it has been said unfortunately that the delay in the adoption of the budget has become a customary practice, which has a negative effect on both the activities and the authority of the OSCE. Today, however, I should like to thank all the participating States for the constructive approach taken to the discussions on the 2010 budget, which for

the first time in recent years was adopted within the prescribed time frame. I hope that this is a good sign for the start of our Chairmanship. May this positive outlook continue to apply to all our joint co ordinated work throughout 2010.

In keeping with the priorities of our Chairmanship, Kazakhstan intends to allocate 1 million euros for the financing of extrabudgetary projects in all three OSCE dimensions.

In conclusion I should like to say that during the 35 years since the adoption of the Helsinki Final Act, the OSCE has gained unique experience and devised an unparalleled system of collective, comprehensive and indivisible security.

However, as our President noted in his address, today the OSCE’s positive and historic resources have their limits. For that reason, in view of the new threats and challenges our common task is to make the Organization even more valid, useful and effective.

In keeping with this lofty goal and firmly committed to the fundamental principles and values of the OSCE, in its work in chairing this Organization Kazakhstan will be guided by the interests of all the OSCE participating States for the sake of the security and prosperity of their peoples.

Thank you for your attention.

14 January 2010