

Dear Mr. Chairman,

Dear members of Parliaments,

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to our Italian friends, first of all, to the Parliament of Italy and the Regional Assembly of Sicily, for the excellent organization of the autumn meetings of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in Palermo.

As the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, I am happy to have one more opportunity to exchange views with you on the most pressing issues of our common Organization.

Taking the opportunity of our meeting, I would like to express my deep appreciation to the Parliamentary Assembly and to all of you for the strong and consistent support for Kazakhstan's chairmanship, constructive and fruitful cooperation during the entire period of our OSCE leadership.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The exceptional importance of an effective response to organized crime and combating corruption, signified by the adoption 10 years ago here in Palermo of the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, is particularly clearly seen in Central Asia _ Today, security in the region is being tested not only because of the Afghan problem, but also due to a deep political crisis in Kyrgyzstan

Afghanistan remains the largest supplier of drugs to our countries, thus creating conditions for the development of organized crime and generating regional instability. Therefore, assistance to Afghanistan is an important foreign policy priority of Kazakhstan and is a top priority on the agenda of our chairmanship.

Moreover, because of its global negative consequence, we believe the Afghan issue should be one of the central issues at the upcoming OSCE Summit in Astana, on December 1-2 this year. We think the heads of state should consider the possibility of increasing the participation of the OSCE within the existing mandate of the international community's efforts in post-war reconstruction of Afghanistan.

For further cooperation in solving common problems for our countries to counter terrorism, crime and drug trafficking in Afghanistan, Kazakhstan finds it important for the OSCE to support the

Russian and U.S. efforts to expand the efforts of financial intelligence and law enforcement agencies to combat illicit financial flows related to drug trafficking from Afghanistan.

In this context, under the auspices of the Kazakh chairmanship, an international conference on combating drug trafficking was held in Vienna on July 8-9 this year, and the OSCE Conference on fighting terrorism will take place on October 14-15 this year in Astana.

On a bilateral level, Kazakhstan is helping to build medical and educational facilities and roads in Afghanistan, and provides significant humanitarian aid. Astana has allocated US\$ 50 million to train thousands of Afghan citizens in peaceful specialties under the educational initiative of the OSCE is and will be a key factor in solving the most important issues of security and cooperation on a vast Euro-Atlantic and Eurasia space. In a short period of its chairmanship, Kazakhstan has sincerely tried to make a worthy contribution to the strengthening and development of our common Organization, raising its noble role in creating a safer and better world

I believe the parliamentary debates that are taking place here will also help achieve this lofty goal.

I wish the conference participants fruitful work and success.

Thank you for your attention.