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## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

### **Statement on Needs Assessment Mission for Uzbekistan's Elections**

As delivered by Political Counselor, Samuel C. Laeuchli  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
November 8, 2007

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States would like to take this opportunity to welcome the Government of Uzbekistan's September 26<sup>th</sup> invitation for the OSCE to observe the upcoming presidential elections in December. We see this invitation as a positive step and a symbol of Uzbekistan's willingness to work with the OSCE. This is the first time in six years that the government has invited ODIHR to monitor elections in Uzbekistan. We have complete confidence in ODIHR's work and believe that the professionalism and impartiality it brings to its missions will be of benefit to Uzbekistan as it prepares for and conducts its presidential elections.

We would like to encourage the Government of Uzbekistan to issue visas promptly to the members of the ODIHR Needs Assessment Mission. The Needs Assessment Mission will need to travel to Tashkent as a preliminary step towards sending observers for the upcoming Presidential elections. The visa applications of the ODIHR members were submitted two weeks ago, with the hope of starting their work at the beginning of November. Needs Assessment Missions are standard procedure and are essential in order for ODIHR to undertake a viable observation mission.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.