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STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF TURKEY

(AOB: Heart of Asia Ministerial Conference for Afghanistan)

**918th PERMANENT COUNCIL
21 June 2012**

Mrs. Chairperson,

The “Heart of Asia” Ministerial Conference was convened on 14 June 2012 in Kabul, Afghanistan, as the first follow-up ministerial meeting of the Istanbul Process. The Conference was co-chaired by the Foreign Ministers of Afghanistan and Turkey.

The Conference was an important milestone, as its participants reiterated their previous commitments made during the Istanbul Conference on Afghanistan held in November 2011 to work together in order to support Afghanistan in a regional setting. The first set of CBMs that will be implemented was also confirmed and several countries of the Heart of Asia volunteered to take the lead in this regard. Turkey will lead the implementation of the CBM on counter terrorism together with Afghanistan and the United Arab Emirates.

The fact that eight participating States of the OSCE are members of the Heart of Asia will allow them to distill the OSCE experience to this regional effort. The important role of regional organizations and their sharing of expertise was also recognized in the final communiqué of the Conference and the OSCE was mentioned among those organizations whose expertise can be utilized in this regionally owned process.

Thank you, Mrs. Chairperson.