

**FORTY-FIFTH REGULAR SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**“PRESENT AND FUTURE OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES”**

**DIALOGUE OF THE HEADS OF DELEGATION, THE SECRETARY GENERAL, AND THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL WITH THE HEADS OF DELEGATION OF THE PERMANENT OBSERVERS**

**REMARKS BY AMBASSADOR SERDAR KILIC**

**PERMANENT OBSERVER** **OF TURKEY TO THE OAS**

**Washington, D.C., June 14, 2015**

Distinguished Ministers, Mr. Secretary General, Heads of Delegation, Ambassadors, Observers, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me start by joining the other participants in congratulating Secretary General Almagro for his election. Secretary General, I wish you every success in your new endeavors.

As the region settles into an era of democratic stability, steady economic growth and socio-economic development, the role of regional organizations and integration processes become more relevant. In the last decade Latin American and Caribbean countries have, for the most part, gone great lengths in lifting millions out of poverty, consolidating their democracies, attracting foreign direct investments and solving their inter-regional and domestic conflicts through peaceful means. Turkey’s outreach policy towards the Western Hemisphere is based on these observations.

All these achievements are accompanied and supported by the OAS, as the pioneer regional organisation of the Hemisphere. We are convinced that OAS will continue to help its member states address the challenges of the twenty first century. Therefore, we salute the vision of the Secretary General Almagro to initiate a process to revitalize the OAS.

Turkey’s past voluntary financial contributions to the projects of the OAS are testimony of its solidarity with the region. Indeed, in the past Turkey has donated 300.000 Dollars to the OAS Peace Fund for confidence building measures between Guatemala and Belize. It is my privilege to announce that this year we have purveyed 150.000 Dollars to the Peace Fund for the ongoing peace process between the Colombian Government and FARC. In addition, we have contributed with 15.000 Dollars to the election-monitoring missions of the OAS.

We will continue supporting the endeavors of the OAS aimed at consolidating peace in the region. In this regard, let me express my Government’s appreciation for the role that the OAS has been playing for the normalization of relations between the USA and Cuba. We are convinced that the OAS can do a lot in ensuring democratic and peaceful transition of power in the region. In this context, as Secretary General Almagro rightly pointed out in his inauguration speech, “the OAS should shore up its negotiation, mediation and consensus-building skills with a view to prevent the Hemisphere from relapsing into Cold War practices”.

Regional integration is a common trend in today’s world. Integrated blocks in different continents have much to gain from interacting with each other. Within this understanding, Turkey not only pioneers integration efforts in its region, but also establishes institutional ties with regional organizations across the globe and takes initiatives to bring them together.

As you are well aware, Turkey currently assumes the Presidency of the G-20 where five OAS countries are represented. Throughout our presidency we have placed a special emphasis on the problems of the developing world, especially on the reform of the international financial system. Our close dialogue with the region helped us to have a better understanding of the problems that developing countries as well as small economies face in this field. Let me assure you that we will also be your voice during the G-20 Summit that Turkey will host in November.

On another note, I would like to announce that Turkey will host the first ever Humanitarian Summit in İstanbul next year on 26-27 May. The Summit will aim to shape the future agenda of the humanitarian system at a global scale and will bring together traditional and emerging donor countries with the countries in need. We encourage the OAS members to be present in the Global Consultations in October in Geneva and to attend the Summit in Istanbul.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

To keep pace with the rapidly changing world we have to review our strategic thinking and take stock of our policies on a more regular basis than ever. Admittedly, today, when developing countries join their forces, their ability to tackle with the new challenges posed by globalization is much stronger than a decade ago. Within this understanding, Turkey will continue to stand by the OAS and contribute to its activities.

Thank you!