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Regional Centre for Preventive
Diplomacy for Central Asia



Ashgabat, Turkmenistan

UNRCCA

**ОРГАНИЗАЦИЯ
ОБЪЕДИНЕННЫХ НАЦИЙ**
Региональный Центр по Превентивной
Дипломатии для Центральной Азии

Ашхабад, Туркменистан

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**Opening Statement by Ambassador Miroslav Jenča, SRSG, Head of
UNRCCA**

**at the Follow-up Meeting of the 2010 SPECA Economic Forum
“Developing a Plan of Action to Strengthen Stability and Sustainable
Development of Afghanistan through Regional Economic
Cooperation in Central Asia”**

Ashgabat, 7 June 2011

Dear Mr. Deputy Prime Minister
Dear Participants,

I would like to welcome all you here in Ashgabat and thank the Turkmen Government, UNECE and ESCAP for our joint work in addressing such an important issue as the regional cooperation between Central Asian states and Afghanistan.

The UNRCCA as a UN special political mission with a regional mandate is well positioned to promote regional cooperation and supplement efforts made by UNECE, ESCAP, UNAMA and other UN offices. In the SPECA context, the UNRCCA could put economic issues in the broader framework of security, stability and sustainable development in the region.

I myself recently visited Afghanistan and all interlocutors, with whom I met, underlined that economic and social rehabilitation is a key for stability and prosperity in Afghanistan and the whole region. It goes along the lines of Central Asian states which see the stabilization of the situation in Afghanistan first of all through the economic revival of Afghanistan as the main long term solution. All countries in the region advocate for complex steps towards socio-economic, technical and other assistance.

Afghanistan definitely deserves more than the current precarious situation. As Mr. Jan Kubis already mentioned, the country has a unique geographical position and could be developed as a bridge between Europe, Central Asia and the Far East and could benefit from transit of energy from Central Asian countries. Development of transit corridors could be fundamental for a regional amity. Afghanistan has also diversity of mineral resources and extractive industries definitely have a potential there.

It is a common understanding that the Central Asian states have to play more important role regarding Afghanistan using their comparative advantages of geographical proximity, cultural similarities and experience in political and economic transition. Energy, infrastructure, transport and capacity building in Afghanistan are the areas where all countries of the region could be interested in being involved. I am glad that all these areas are reflected in the agenda of the today's event.

Regional cooperation is particularly important concerning shared water and energy resources in Central Asia. There should be understanding in the region that with economic development in Afghanistan questions related to efficient and fair distribution of energy resources could become even more crucial.

Taking into consideration the importance which the Central Asian states give to the situation in Afghanistan UNRCCA identified strengthening the cooperation between Central Asian states and Afghanistan as one of its priorities. UNRCCA is pleased to provide assistance in organizing such events as the Follow-up Meeting of the 2010 SPECA Economic Forum and the Centre is planning to be engaged in similar activities in the future.

In this regard we would be glad continue our cooperation with the governments of Central Asian states and Afghanistan and, of course, with our UN partners including UNECE and UNAMA, and with other international and regional organizations.

I am looking forward to fruitful discussions and concrete outcomes during this event.

Thank you very much for your attention.