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## DELEGATION OF AFGHANISTAN

### STATEMENT

1189<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council

Agenda item 2.

Report by the Head of the OSCE Centre in Ashgabat

14 June 2018

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Thank you, Mr. Chair!

Afghanistan warmly welcomes Ambassador Natalya Drozd back to the Permanent Council and thanks the Head of the OSCE Centre in Ashgabat for her comprehensive report.

We greatly appreciate the increased number of activities offered by the Centre to Afghan stakeholders. This message was also conveyed at the high-level conference on “Good Governance and Economic Connectivity: Best Practices within the OSCE Region”, organized by the Centre and the Foreign Ministry of our friendly neighboring country Turkmenistan, earlier this year, at the end of May. At the conference, enhanced regional dialogue including with Afghanistan was promoted.

The areas of trade facilitation, transport and transit management and economic connectivity are among our foreign policy priorities and the OSCE's distinctive added value in these fields is of great importance to Afghanistan.

We also welcome that border police officials from Afghanistan were invited to participate in the Centre's training courses held in Turkmenistan. We look forward to further expand our collaboration with the OSCE Centre in Ashgabat.

Mr. Chair,

Let me thank the Government of Turkmenistan for taking the lead in the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India gas pipeline, known as TAPI, which has now reached the border of Afghanistan; we work hard to create a sustainable development and trade corridor along the entire TAPI route. Our regional connectivity efforts are showing real progress and Afghanistan now has three dry ports that are linked with railways to both Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

We also thank our Turkmen friends for co-chairing, together with Azerbaijan, the Regional Infrastructure Confidence Building Measure of the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process. This initiative was launched in Istanbul in 2011 and it provides a platform for regional co-operation for Afghanistan, located at the Heart of Asia, and our neighbors and regional partners, many of whom are also participating States of the OSCE. The OSCE is also a partner organization of the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process and is regularly invited to participate at its meetings and conferences.

In closing, let me thank you once again, Ambassador Drozd for your personal engagement and the valuable work of your staff in supporting Afghanistan.

Thank you, Mr. Chair!