

Review of commitments session  
Talking points of the Delegation of Azerbaijan  
15<sup>th</sup> OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum  
May 21-23, 2007  
Prague

1. My delegation would like to thank you, Mr. Barlund, and your team for the report produced within a relatively short timeframe. UNECE is a reliable OSCE partner when it comes to reporting. We had similar positive experience at a number of previous OSCE Fora, the most recent one devoted to transport issues.
2. We share the view of the authors on the importance of issues of environmental performance, public participation and access to information as well as compliance with MEA and capacity-building while addressing the question of environmental commitments.
3. However, simply to list these issues would do little to solve them. Authors correctly mentioned lack of financial resources and expertise, need for capacity-building and better coordination as important indicators. You are also right in saying that sometimes, proposals for cooperation on environmental projects are donor- rather than recipient-driven hence problems related to lack of interest and ownership.
4. Environmental Performance reviews produced by the UNECE provide useful factual and analytical material that helps our governments identify weak points in environmental management and try to address them. We noted with interest that with the assistance of the OSCE Project Coordinator in Ukraine the EPR was translated into the Ukrainian language. It would be helpful to engage the OSCE office in Baku in a similar activity.
5. Integration of environmental concerns in other sectors of economy is crucial. This issue is also in constant focus of my government – all major economic infrastructure and other projects currently being implemented in the country have an environmental impact assessment component.

6. Access to information on environmental issues – with the assistance of the OSCE office in Baku we have an Arhus centre operating in Baku, a second one will soon be opened. Continued support by OSCE and other relevant international organizations is needed at early stages of functioning of these centers.
7. Water issues are of particular importance for my Government. As a downstream country we experience serious problems in water quality and supply. We believe that joining the Water Convention by our neighboring states would help mitigate these problems and contribute to efficient water management.
8. Last reference – listing of potential cooperation projects. Though useful, some of these ideas would be difficult to implement given serious geo-political realities. Therefore engagement in a consultative process with related authorities would be necessary.
9. We noticed that the report deals primarily with CA, Caucasus, Central and Eastern as well as South-Eastern European countries. It would be also interesting to learn how similar problems are tackled in countries west of Vienna, references to them are very few in the report.
10. Finally, we know you are busy preparing for the Environment for Europe Conference to be held this October. What are the major expectations from this Conference?