



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement at the Opening Session of the 21st OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum

As delivered by Deputy Assistant for Commerce Matthew Murray
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Good morning, fellow delegates, representatives, and distinguished guests. I would like to thank Foreign Minister Kozhara, our Chairman-in-Office, along with Secretary General Zannier, the Coordinator for Economic and Environmental Activities, Dr. Yigitguden, and our host – the Government of the Czech Republic – for bringing us together for the concluding meeting of the OSCE’s 21st Economic and Environmental Forum (EEF).

During the EEF conferences and monthly committee meetings this year, participating States have demonstrated a strong interest in fully utilizing the OSCE to address environmental challenges and improve the management of our natural resources. The 2nd Dimension’s field mission activities adopted a multi-stakeholder approach, providing technical training to local governments, private industries, and non-governmental organizations. Our regional fora brought together member states that are energy producers, consumers, and transport countries to develop sustainable solutions and deepen a collective commitment to promote renewable sources of energy, increase energy efficiency, and implement transparency measures in the energy field. It is evident that the OSCE’s Economic and Environmental Dimension (EED) serves as a valuable platform for increasing stability and security on energy related issues and, in particular, highlighting the link between security, energy, and the environment. As we look toward the Kyiv Ministerial and the Helsinki+40 process, we must build upon this work and examine how the 2nd Dimension can be further strengthened to advance solutions to today’s economic and environmental challenges.

First, our engagement of civil society in the 2nd Dimension must be more strategic. During the February and April preparatory sessions, participating States agreed that civil society participation at EEF fora will improve the effectiveness of the organization’s field mission activities, produce comprehensive solutions to today’s systemic problems, hold participating States accountable to adhere to their adopted commitments, and advance 2nd Dimension deliverables. For example, Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) Head of Secretariat Jonas Moberg’s participation in the February forum resulted in strong interest from delegations to continue the conversation on combatting corruption in the energy field. Field missions responded to this engagement by increasing capacity-building seminars to enhance the understanding of EITI for civil society members and government officials. We appreciate that the Chairmanship kept this topic on the agenda of subsequent EEF conferences, and we look forward to this evening’s special event: “Promoting Transparency and Good Governance in the Energy Sector.” This session will bring together a panel that includes government representatives, civil society organizations, and Albania’s EITI Director, to discuss experiences and lessons learned from their work on transparency in energy production and

use. As participating States, we must reach out to a new wave of civil society leaders, and include them systematically in the Economic and Environmental Forum to generate public awareness, develop innovative new projects, and monitor and assess their effectiveness.

Second, we must use the upcoming Economic and Environmental Dimension Implementation meeting (EEDIM) as an opportunity to review the implementation of our recent OSCE commitments and field mission activities. The organization's practice of holding participating States accountable for their commitments is exercised heavily in the Human Dimension; there is ample room to do the same in the Economic and Environmental Dimension. The Economic and Environmental Committee (EEC) meeting on "Implementation of the 2012 Good Governance Declaration" invited participating States to share their progress in carrying out the commitments adopted in the Ministerial document. Participation from delegations and civil society members was heavily subscribed, with representatives agreeing that good governance must underpin the work of the 2nd Dimension. The Good Governance Declaration is comprehensive, laying out the EED's strategy to combat corruption, strengthen civil society development, and enforce accountability measures in the public and private sectors. The EEC's implementation review meeting should serve as a model for the EEDIM, where all participating States can focus upon specific commitments and evaluate our actions to adhere to these principles.

Finally, our discussions leading to the Kyiv Ministerial should strengthen the EED's capacity to address 21st century challenges. The organization's work to increase energy dialogue, improve energy sector transparency, and address potential threats to critical energy infrastructure has already begun and can be further capitalized. The OSCE's long-standing partnership with the Aarhus Centers serves as a key component to enhancing dialogue on the energy and environmental connection, and serves to strengthen civil society development. Our support for these centers must continue. Likewise, the Good Governance Declaration is a comprehensive strategy document used to counter corruption and enhance the rule of law. We encourage the Secretariat to develop projects to help participating States in their implementation of priority action areas adopted in this declaration. Our efforts to protect critical energy infrastructure have achieved great progress across dimensions, and we want to thank Ambassador Algayerova for her work as Chair of the Economic and Environmental Committee on this subject. We encourage delegations to attend the side event scheduled tomorrow at 1:00 PM, to promote the release of the new "Good Practices Guide on Non-Nuclear Critical Energy Infrastructure Protection (NNCEIP) from Terrorist Attacks, Focusing on Threats Emanating from Cyberspace." Delegations should consider how the best practices presented during the presentation can apply to 2nd Dimension solutions to enhance prevention and response capabilities against natural disasters.

The Economic and Environmental Dimension plays a critical role in strengthening stability and security in the OSCE region. This year, the OSCE has worked to promote sustainable energy solutions, advocate transparency and accountability methods through EITI, and to build capacity at all levels of society – government, private sector, and its citizens. These achievements represent a foundation for further enhancing the 2nd Dimension. Looking ahead, we urge participating States to consider investing in long-term commitments that will elevate the EED platform and improve its effectiveness to address 21st century challenges. I am confident that this forum will lead us in that direction.

Thank you.