

**United States Mission to the OSCE**

**Opening Remarks**

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Thank you, Moderator.

Good morning fellow delegates, representatives, and distinguished guests. We would like to thank the Irish Chairman-in-Office, Secretary General Zannier, Coordinator for Economic and Environmental Activities Svilanović, and our host,

– the government of the Czech Republic – for bringing us together for the concluding meeting of the 20<sup>th</sup> OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum (EEF). As we all know, good governance is central to the OSCE's economic and environmental mission, and the United States looks forward to discussing the fundamental principle that strengthening good governance and combating corruption contribute to prosperity, stability, and security.

Our preparatory meetings this year have helped to chart a clear path forward to advance the OSCE's collective efforts to strengthen governance and increase transparency across the region. The United States fully supports the Chairmanship's objective to develop a Ministerial Council declaration on good

governance, and we commend the Irish Chairmanship's initiative in moving the organization's work forward through this food for thought paper on good governance. The United States is developing a response in collaboration with the Russian Federation and other delegations, and we are eager to review the written responses from OSCE participating States.

The adoption of a Ministerial Council declaration is particularly relevant at this time. The United States believes firmly that deepening the OSCE's commitment to good governance principles and policies will benefit all participating States by enabling economic growth and stimulating investment in their countries. As participating States strive to overcome the weak economic situation we have been facing in recent years, strengthening our commitment to good governance, transparency, and the rule of law can only help to improve conditions by raising the confidence of investors.

A commitment to good governance will also help reduce barriers to trade and promote international commerce. As I have noted in this body before, corruption continues to be a top market access barrier across the globe. Ambassador Boucher, in his keynote, mentioned the changed nature of the global market, the rise of global servicing and supply chains, and the increasing interdependence of our economies. So our efforts here are critical to our shared growth and, importantly, to the creation of jobs to put our people to work.

In addition, OSCE leadership in this area can facilitate international progress in addressing governance issues. Based on the OSCE's core values, wide geographic platform for dialogue, its field presence and unique body of political

commitments relating to the concept of comprehensive security, the OSCE can provide a new institutional pillar of support for good governance across the globe.

Now, in addition to promoting the economic benefits I have described, the OSCE is in a unique position to strengthen the connection between human rights, accountable and responsive government, and economic prosperity. Because human rights, the rule of law, and transparent government are interconnected, we must always ensure that efforts to counteract criminal activities do not infringe upon civil liberties and human rights. Good governance is greatly assisted by a vibrant civil society throughout the OSCE space, in each participating State, that is informed about their governments' decisions and their governments' decision making process. Our work, therefore, must be carried out in the context of government institutions that are transparent and accountable to their citizens, including strong, independent judiciaries that are capable of adjudicating disputes and dispensing justice. As the OSCE Maastricht strategy document states, "Peace, good international relations, the security of the State and the security of the individual within the State are crucial for the creation of the climate of confidence, which is essential to ensure positive economic and social development."

Despite the fact that good governance is at the core of the OSCE's mission, no single existing OSCE document contains a clear enunciation of its commitment to good governance principles in a cohesive way. This is why we support the goal of developing a robust Ministerial Council declaration in Dublin. This declaration will serve as a powerful tool for the field

missions – whose focus on good governance and the rule of law has grown in recent years – in assisting participating States to fulfill their commitments.

Over the next two and a half days, we will also examine the crippling effects that money laundering, corruption, and the financing of terrorism have on economic growth, ways to expand and strengthen our efforts to combat these security threats, and look at the important contributions that civil society and international partners can make in the fight against these challenges. The OSCE plays an important role in building the capacity of civil society and the public sector at the national and local levels, and is well positioned to facilitate progress in these important areas.

In recent years, new international standards, recommendations, tools, and approaches have been developed that can help participating States meet commitments in promoting and sustaining good governance. For example, the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) is a useful instrument in combating corruption, and we look forward to discussion of this tool during our meeting here. The United States continues to encourage countries to ratify and implement the UNCAC and supports drawing upon the best practices and lessons learned from other institutions in order to prevent and eliminate corruption, money laundering, and the financing of terrorism. Another valuable tool is the World Trade Organization Agreement on Government Procurement, which we will discuss tomorrow in more detail during Session IV. But there are also other important initiatives to promote transparency and good

governance, and we look forward to discussing how the OSCE can support those efforts as well.

In the United States, as part of our commitment under the Open Government Partnership, we are addressing the link between transparency and good governance through enhanced reporting requirements for oil, gas and mining companies that list on U.S. stock exchanges. Not only will it improve investor confidence in the energy sector, it will also help improve governance and accountability in resource-rich countries. We look forward to sharing the experience the United States has gained in working with international partners, and we encourage the examination of effective measures that have been adopted in other fora that are consistent with OSCE principles and can be considered by participating States in their respective efforts to promote good governance.

To conclude, we hope these meetings will present new opportunities to support participating States' efforts to promote good governance and establish the foundation for a Ministerial Council declaration on this subject. In addition, the United States is ready to engage in a constructive and substantive dialogue on how best to improve our collective ability to combat money laundering and the financing of terrorism, in ways that are in consistent with, and supportive of, the OSCE's comprehensive concept of security across all three dimensions.

Thank you, Moderator.

