



## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

# **Opening Statement at the 27<sup>th</sup> OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum in Prague**

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires, a.i. Harry Kamian,  
Prague, Czech Republic  
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Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to begin by thanking Ambassador Azzoni and Ambassador Žugić for organizing this year's Economic and Environmental Forum. We appreciate the commitment by the Czech Foreign Ministry for again hosting this event. I would also like to thank Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister Picchi and Director General Viola for your remarks.

The United States shares the views expressed by several earlier speakers that the concepts of digitalization and developing human capital warrant our attention, and we need to consider how technology is driving our future security and prosperity. Our colleagues in the First Dimension already pay close attention to cybersecurity; the Second Dimension allows us to look at both the benefits and challenges of technology from another security perspective. Unlike the aggressive nature underlying cyberattacks or the defensive mindset of cybersecurity, digitalization is a multifaceted issue, which can promote both security and opportunity.

We read with interest the food for thought paper closely and will have more fulsome comments later in the Fall. Today, a few initial thoughts. We clearly see in the paper and from our discussions that new technologies can be disruptive and our new digital landscape has had positive and negative impacts for some job sectors. Hence, the second priority of this Forum: human capital development. Changes in employment patterns have the potential to threaten security. At the same time, new technologies and education can offer ways to address to changes in employment patterns, and create opportunities for workers in new sectors of the economy. We will hear in Session I from one of the founders of one of America's most well-known on-line education programs. Paul Marca from Stanford University will describe ways in which we can help put technology to use, training people in new careers – even in remote areas – without forcing people to relocate to obtain an education.

Another opportunity to improve security through digitalization is in the area of good governance, an important U.S. priority. In our USAID development projects around the OSCE region and the world, we have seen technology deliver public services directly to citizens. 'Single windows' greatly reduce opportunities for bribes, eProcurement combats cronyism in contracting, advances in digital forensics expose and impede money laundering

and criminality, and eGovernment expedites citizens' access to the governments that, in a democracy, must answer to them. When criminality and corruption thrive, economic distress can lead to social unrest.

With such technologies in place, however, corruption loses and the investment and business climate improve. Citizens enjoy greater opportunities to secure a rewarding job or can start or expand a business. What can we do to encourage the potential for digitalization to enable entrepreneurship and growth? We look forward to hearing ideas from the Italian Chairmanship and others on how to harness digitalization's potential to enable innovation and drive economic growth, while protecting intellectual property rights, privacy rights, and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of expression and the free flow of information. After reading the Chairmanship's food-for-thought paper, the United States looks forward to hearing how these ideas can be packaged into one or more deliverables at the OSCE Ministerial Council that make sense and meet the needs of our Organization, and that add value.

The food for thought paper references several existing OSCE mandates. These include very recent mandates from 2016 and 2017, as our Kazakh colleague noted. The paper correctly notes that any new Ministerial Council decision should build on existing related mandates. We share this view. While we consider whether to pursue new mandates, or add mandates, I would also encourage states to continue to identify ways and opportunities to implement our existing mandates and dedicate the appropriate level of resources to fulfill their mandates.

Once again, the United States wishes to express our appreciation to the Italian Chairmanship and OSCE Coordinator for Economic and Environmental Activities for organizing this week's forum. We look forward to engaging actively in these conversations.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.