



United States Mission to the OSCE

Remarks to the Opening Session of the Second Preparatory Meeting of the 25th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum

As delivered by U.S. Ambassador to Kazakhstan George A. Krol
Astana, Kazakhstan
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Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Good morning fellow delegates, representatives, and distinguished guests, including many of you who have joined us from capitals, other international organizations, the private sector, and civil society. On behalf of the delegation of the United States, I would like to offer our deep gratitude to the Government of Kazakhstan and Nazarbayev University for hosting this week's Second Preparatory Meeting of the OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum.

As Ambassador of the United States to Kazakhstan, I would like to welcome you to this splendid capital and this magnificent university. Kosh Keldinezder!

The United States is pleased to be an active participant in this event, which brings together civil society, academic experts, government officials, and business representatives to discuss opportunities to strengthen security through a greener economy and stronger partnerships. We wholeheartedly support this approach, which enables the voices of all stakeholders to be heard, particularly those at the grassroots level who are working hard to bring positive change. Economic and environmental issues can have profound effects on citizens; promoting their involvement in policies and decision-making results in better outcomes and increases in our collective security.

With a network of 17 field operations and partnership with 60 Aarhus Centers, the OSCE is well positioned to assist participating States with implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. As we have said on numerous occasions, significant overlap exists between the UN Sustainable Development Goals and OSCE commitments on economic and environmental issues.

The OSCE's Second Dimension offers a unique platform for participating States to share best practices and insights, as each of our countries mobilizes efforts to end all forms of poverty, enhance human dignity, fight inequalities, and tackle climate change. Thus, we welcome the focus of this meeting on the links between sustainable development, security, and stability; and look forward to our discussions on renewable energy and resource efficiency, energy security, and strengthening good environmental governance.

Energy security has long been a foreign policy priority for the United States. Increasing the supply of energy, providing the right investment and regulatory environment, diversifying energy sources and suppliers, protecting critical energy infrastructure, and promoting

responsible environmental practices are each essential components of the policy of our country.

The United States provides an attractive investment and regulatory environment, which has helped to unleash market forces necessary for a clean energy revolution. The business sector is responding and driving change toward cleaner energy. Renewable energy continues to expand rapidly, and now generates hundreds of billions of dollars in economic activity in the United States. To date, 22 of the Fortune 100 companies have committed to eventually procuring all of their energy from renewable sources, including diverse industry leaders in retail, technology, manufacturing, finance, and insurance. There is tremendous economic opportunity for countries that develop, manufacture, and export clean energy technologies.

The announcement on June 1 that the United States intends to exit the Paris Agreement followed my President's determination that our climate policy needs a balanced approach. In announcing this decision, my President at the same time affirmed that the United States will continue to be environmentally friendly. As my Secretary of State has said, we believe that global engagement on climate change continues to be important, and we will remain involved in many ways. America has been a leader in clean energy technology and environmental protection, and we will continue that leadership. The United States already has an impressive record of reducing our own greenhouse gas emissions, including a dramatic reduction in carbon dioxide emissions. Since 2005, these emissions have fallen by 11.5 percent, and are expected to continue to decline.

Mr. Chair, the OSCE has chosen an auspicious time to meet in Astana. As you are well aware, this OSCE Forum is taking place alongside Expo 2017, an extraordinary effort by the Government of Kazakhstan to engage the international community on sustainable development, research, innovation, and energy. The United States welcomes the increasingly important role Kazakhstan has taken on the global stage, both through the Expo 2017 and in other areas, and applauds Kazakhstan for its leadership in the international community. As a demonstration of our commitment to clean energy and the environment, and in support of the strong and ongoing relationship between the United States and Eurasia, the United States is proud to showcase America's 'Infinite Energy' at Expo 2017. This public-private partnership showcases America's leadership in technology and innovation.

In closing, the United States would like to thank the Government of Kazakhstan, the Austrian OSCE Chairmanship, the Office of the Coordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, and the OSCE Program Office in Astana for planning this week's events. We look forward to the various sessions and working groups, and a lively exchange of views.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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