



United States Mission to the OSCE

**First Preparatory Meeting of the
2013 Economic and Environmental Forum
United States Closing Statement**

As delivered by Deputy Assistant Secretary Matthew Murray
Vienna, Austria, 5 February 2013

The United States would once again like to thank the Ukrainian Chairman-in-Office, Secretary General Zannier, Coordinator Mr. Yigitguden, and our Austrian hosts for convening the First Preparatory Meeting of the 21st OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum. As we all know, promoting the sustainable use of energy resources and improving the environmental impact of energy related activities are key priorities of the Second Dimension. Our multilateral forum has generated a dynamic discussion and support for common themes repeated throughout our sessions that should be pursued as opportunities for future engagement this year.

First, delegations and non-government officials have agreed that the OSCE serves as a neutral platform to promote energy dialogue without politicizing the discussion. Existing Ministerial Decisions and Declarations reflect a shared commitment to reduce the harmful effects of carbon emissions, protect critical energy infrastructure, and enhance accountability and integrity in the energy field. Furthermore, our work with partner organizations demonstrates the OSCE's ability to create synergies that further extend our reach within the region to improve the environmental conditions for our citizens. We applaud the OSCE's ten-year support of Aarhus Centers, which includes 41 centers across 12 participating States, raising awareness of environmental challenges and building the capacity of civil society groups to engage in the policy decision-making process.

Second, 21st century challenges such as natural disasters, oil spills, and terrorist attacks against energy infrastructure have stimulated strong interest in increasing information sharing and exchange of best practices between participating States. The session's review of the Montara oil spill as a case study to enhance incident prevention and response capabilities underscored the importance of prevention and management of energy supply disruptions. As mentioned by our panel members, a mechanism to collect data and exchange new technologies could enhance preparedness for participating States to reduce the economic costs and environmental damage caused by natural or man-made disasters.

Furthermore, participating States have reiterated support for implementing the Good Governance Declaration and initiatives endorsed in the document. Initiatives such as the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) should remain a part of the on-going discussion in our fora. EITI embodies good governance principles, bringing together governments, private companies, and civil society to improve the investment climate and promote social and economic stability.

Lastly, public participation and civil society engagement must be encouraged in the 2nd Dimension. The United States is pleased to see non-governmental organizations, technical

experts, and members of the business community attending today's forum. This dialogue should be enhanced at the Economic and Environmental Dimensions Implementation Meeting (EEDIM) in October. Participating States must welcome attendance of non-government actors to ensure that the EEDIM is a robust discussion that reviews the activities of the 2nd Dimension and provides a balanced assessment of its effectiveness from state institutions, the business community, and citizens of the OSCE region.

The United States is encouraged by the ideas and proposals shared today. We look forward to continued discussions on the Organization's comprehensive and equitable approach to energy cooperation. We believe the themes discussed to promote public participation, implement good governance principles, and enhance our prevention and response capabilities will lead to robust deliverables for the 2nd Dimension this year.