



United States Mission to the OSCE

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

As delivered by Deputy Assistant Secretary Matthew Murray
Vienna, Austria, 4 February 2013

Good morning, fellow delegates, representatives, and distinguished guests. We would like to thank the Ukrainian Chairman-in-Office, Secretary General Zannier, and the Coordinator for Economic and Environmental Activities, Mr. Yigitguden, for bringing us together to open the 21st Economic and Environmental Forum. The United States welcomes the opportunity to focus this year's forum on energy and the environment, which we consider vital components of stability in the OSCE region.

The OSCE is uniquely positioned to address the broad challenge of how to facilitate economic growth through energy development strategies that are environmentally friendly and safe. Through multilateral dialogue and our network of field missions, the Organization can enhance cooperation among participating States to increase both energy efficiency and sustainability. Indeed, as the chair pointed out, the Organization has already begun this work by addressing potential threats to critical energy infrastructure, promoting energy dialogue between participating States, and providing training to communities that aim to develop renewable energy resources. We must now build upon these efforts and incorporate the OSCE's 2012 Good Governance Declaration as a dynamic mechanism to improve transparency, accountability, and integrity in energy markets.

Environmental degradation and the unsustainable use of natural resources have a substantial effect on the stability and security of each participating State in the region, and on the health and well-being of all our citizens. The OSCE continues to meet this challenge by building the capacity of civil society organizations in order to maximize their contributions to policy and decision making. For example, our office in Baku provides training seminars to local non-government organizations to increase their knowledge of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) and their ability to hold governments accountable for reporting revenues earned from mining, oil, and gas companies. This activity aims to ensure that governments are transparent and that citizens will benefit from the revenues of their natural resources.

As the world's largest regional security organization, spanning an area from Vancouver to Vladivostok, the OSCE is well placed to promote dialogue and cooperation on energy issues, bringing together countries that are producers, consumers, and transporters of energy. The Organization's multilateral framework encourages a process that begins with the ideas that we will generate in today's proceedings and leads to projects, actions and assistance implemented in our field missions. These ideas and these solutions will enhance awareness, build capacities and foster accountability in the pursuit of energy efficiency, sustainability, and transparency.

The United States applauds the Organization's work to renew and deepen our political commitments to achieve these objectives. From Astana to Dublin, participating States have agreed that the promotion of good governance and transparency remains a vital component in our efforts to develop and use energy resources responsibly. We are pleased to see that the Chairman has organized a panel discussion on sustainable management of energy resources and good governance, and look forward to engaging with members of the panel. We welcome EITI's participation at this forum and its work to increase transparency and accountability among governments, extractive industries, and their citizens. These principles are key tools to enhance energy security, and without their implementation the OSCE's objectives in this field are simply not attainable.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, our most ambitious goals in the energy field, including safe extraction of resources, marketing of renewables, environmental management, and energy efficiency all require significant private sector investment. Fiscal transparency, active participation of civil society, and respect for rule of law are key elements that will improve the business climate; enhance investor confidence and help attract such private investment. Likewise, accountability and integrity at customs and border crossings will increase the efficiency of transport corridors, leading to greater trade and economic integration in the OSCE region. Therefore, it is clear that good governance plays a central role in all aspects of energy development.

The United States is confident that the discussions that will take place over the coming days will be informed by the transcendent importance of transparency and good governance.

And that these discussions will contribute meaningfully to our efforts to establish common language regarding how to promote economic growth, environmental sustainability and energy security both in the OSCE region and in global markets.

Thank you.