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**First Preparatory Meeting of the 20th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum
Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism
6th – 7th February 2012, OSCE Congress Centre, Hofburg, Vienna**

**Closing Remarks by Ambassador O’Leary
Chairperson of the OSCE Permanent Council**

Ambassadors, Colleagues

Over the last two days our discussions have focused on identifying priority issues and possible future areas of engagement for the OSCE in tackling money laundering and the financing of terrorism.

Both issues thrive where governance is weak. Such practices threaten the security of our states, either through by facilitating organized crime and terrorism or by undermining legitimate enterprise and economic activity.

We have listened to a wide range of speakers, drawn from national experts; from international organisations; from the private sector; and from the media. We have learned more about current trends and developments at the international level in countering money laundering and terrorism financing. Let me highlight once again that next week the FATF Plenary meeting is expected to adopt revised Recommendations in this field. It is my belief that useful synergies can be further developed between the OSCE and other organizations active in this field.

I would like to warmly thank our panelists, speakers, moderators and those who made interventions from the floor for their valuable contributions to our discussions. My thanks also to our rapporteurs, the interpreters and all those involved in the organisation of this meeting for all your assistance in ensuring the success of this event.

When deciding on the OSCE's role in follow-up to the Forum - be it through consensus based documents adopted by the participating States or by designing and endorsing specific activities and projects to be implemented by the OSCE's executive structures - we should start from a sound understanding of the current situation, of the existing gaps and of the challenges ahead of us. From these perspectives, our meeting has been, in my view, quite enriching.

It appears clear from our discussions over recent days that there are a number of ways the OSCE can engage on this issue. Firstly, OSCE Meetings such as this could continue to provide a platform for multi-stakeholder dialogue. Another important activity where there may be further scope of the OSCE to play a role is in capacity building. In confronting such a complex and rapidly evolving challenge as money laundering and terrorism financing, it is important not only to adopt high standards, something other international organisations are working to define, but also to make sure that such provisions are effectively utilized and that they produce practical results. For that, capacity building and practical implementation should be strengthened. In this area the OSCE field operations can play an important role in identifying local needs and supporting coordinated national efforts. The OCEEA can in turn be instrumental in mobilizing advice and assistance from individual experts and other organizations. One existing example of this that has been highlighted over the last two days is the OSCE support to national risk assessments. Another activity currently being planned by the OCEEA and the OSCE field presences in Central Asia is a "Financial Intelligence Unit Regional Exchange of Experience" for the financial intelligence units of Central Asia, to be held in Bishkek this spring.

A final crucial element that the OSCE can offer in the fight against money laundering and terrorist financing is political will. As is stated regularly, not least over the last two days,

the OSCE is a political organisation that works to build consensus at a political level on security issues. Money laundering and terrorist financing are threats to security that require a political response.

As the Irish Chairmanship announced at the beginning of the year, we will endeavour to build consensus around a decision on good governance issues for adoption at the Dublin Ministerial Council in December. I am encouraged that this priority of the Irish Chairmanship has been so well received by participating States. I believe that is in no small part due to the broader challenging economic circumstances that confront the international community at this time. The financial crisis has shown how poor governance can lead to economic downfall and how good governance must be the foundation for the road to recovery. Moreover, there is nothing more corrupting to the concept of the rule of law than seeing a rich criminal untouched.

Political will to take on tough and sensitive issues is often forged during such times of crisis. Perhaps the challenging circumstances that we currently face will encourage us to be bold as we consider what further steps this organisation might take. The issues that we have discussed over the last two days affect all OSCE participating States. There is no East-West division. To tackle these problems we are reliant on one another. As has been repeatedly emphasized, the international AML/CFT system is only as strong as its weakest link. So too in progressing the work of this organisation, we can only move forward if we all agree to move forward together.

I look forward to ongoing discussions in this regard over the coming months. To facilitate follow-up discussion in the Economic and Environmental Committee, an executive summary will be prepared with the recommendations of this meeting together with the more detailed report of our discussions. We will also draw on the outcomes of this meeting and the next preparatory meeting when defining the agenda for the final meeting of the Forum in Prague in September.

Before concluding, I have the pleasure to warmly invite all of you to participate actively in the Second Preparatory meeting of the 20th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum, on the 23rd – 24th April, in Dublin. The theme for this meeting is “Promoting Good Governance and Combating Corruption in Support of Socio-Economic Development. A draft agenda for the meeting has already been circulated.

Once again can I express my thanks to all who contributed to this meeting. To those travelling back from Vienna may I wish you a safe and speedy journey home. We look forward to seeing you again soon in Dublin or Prague.

Thank you