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**Closing Statement
Ukrainian 2013 OSCE Chairmanship**

**First Preparatory Meeting of the 21st OSCE Economic and Environmental
Forum
Vienna, 4-5 February 2013**

**Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

We are now concluding the First Preparatory Meeting of the 21st OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum. I would like to express, on behalf of the Ukrainian 2013 OSCE Chairmanship, our satisfaction for the dynamic and constructive discussions we have had over the last two days and for the results we have achieved.

Let me in particular thank our speakers, who brought a lot expertise and of relevant ideas to our attention. Allow me to use this opportunity and thank Mr. Yigitguden and the staff of his Office for the excellent co-operation with our Chairmanship in preparing this event.

In our view, this Forum meeting has proved, once again, the necessity and importance of addressing the environmental footprint of energy-related activities in the OSCE region. The impact of energy-related activities on the environment has its own dynamic. Negative consequences may accumulate and become more serious year by year; they may have local as well as trans-boundary implications; if not properly and timely tackled, such issues can become a serious global concern.

In that regard, the 57 OSCE participating States have a shared responsibility. I am pleased to note the willingness, expressed by many of you during the debates, to deepen our co-operation on a number of challenging energy issues. I also want to stress that we are not alone in this effort and that, as we have heard over the last days, many international, governmental and non-governmental, public and private organizations share these concerns and can work together with the OSCE.

Regional and international organizations pay much attention to these energy issues which means that we should enhance our co-operation and coordination with them as well as to strengthen public-private co-operation.

No less important is dialogue between and with the scientists and researchers, and the civil society. The OSCE should be seen as a platform for sharing experiences, different views and best practices. On the global level, OSCE can advance partnerships among different regions and countries. I believe that the OSCE can bring added value and contribute to enhancing co-operation in the field of energy and the environment.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The issues at stake are very complex. During this two-day meeting we have received some answers to some of the questions that have been raised; for some questions we have received only partial answers and there are many questions which require further attention. We should therefore continue our discussions; we should advance our dialogue and co-operation and streamline our efforts directing them towards achieving concrete results.

Economic activity, development and growth require energy and the world's energy needs increase every day. But, energy production and consumption, particularly of fossil fuels, have a number of environmental impacts including air pollution, greenhouse gas emissions and adverse impacts on ecosystems. With the increase of energy demand, if policies do not change, the energy-related CO₂ emissions will also multiply and may reach unsustainable levels. Such environmental threats may even undermine security and stability in the OSCE region. For example, climate change may cause shortages of food and water and increased risk of flooding. In order to have sustainable development we need to implement all possible measures and instruments taking into consideration a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis. We should make long-term choices and efficiently manage the needed energy sources. Our cooperative actions should help to reduce environmental risks at regional and global level, and at the same time underpin the economic growth of our countries.

We should place these issues high on our agenda to promote energy savings and energy efficiency, and develop alternative and renewable sources of energy which have much less environmental footprint. This may also play a key role in reaching the goals of security of supply and reduction in greenhouse gas and air pollution emissions. Moreover, renewable energy technologies are expected to bring a number of social and economic benefits, including regional and local development opportunities.

Energy efficiency and renewables are the answer to some key challenges of our time: energy poverty, inequality, sustainable economic growth and environmental degradation.

We acknowledged the multiple benefits provided by renewable energy. Together with energy efficiency it provides energy access especially for the poor; creates economic and job opportunities; improves the environmental footprint and moderates climate change; and enhance energy security and sustainable development.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our general objective for the Forum process is to clearly define the role the OSCE can play, as a platform for co-operation, in the fields of energy and environment. The outcome of our meetings must be beneficial to all participating States.

In doing so we should build upon our existing experiences. We should dully take into account the conclusions of our past deliberations on similar topics - international and regional conferences and meetings of the Economic and Environmental Committee, as well as the outcomes of activities carried out by the

Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities or by the Economic and Environmental Officers in this Field Operations.

I do believe that if we, together, take such a pro-active approach, we will be able to reach, at the Concluding Meeting of this year's Forum process, a common understanding on how to best advance our dialogue and co-operation on energy issues and in particular on their environmental footprint in the OSCE region. By joining our efforts and sharing our expertise it would be able to reach better results than by working alone.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As in past years, the Office of the Co-ordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities will compile a Consolidated Summary which will be made available to all of you during the next weeks. It should serve as a background for further discussions in the framework of the Economic and Environmental Committee in Vienna. I am looking forward to that.

Our next benchmark is the Second Preparatory Meeting of the 21st OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum, which will take place on 16-17 April in Kyiv. Soon, a draft agenda will be shared with the OSCE Delegations.

Before closing this meeting, I would like to thank all those who contributed to its success, the Moderators, Speakers and Rapporteurs, the conference service staff and the interpreters.

I also want to thank all of you, dear participants, for your active contribution, and to wish you a safe trip back home.

I am looking forward to seeing you soon in Kyiv.

Thank you for your attention.