



**REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA**  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATION  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA TO THE  
UN, OSCE AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL  
ORGANISATIONS IN VIENNA

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## **22nd OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum**

“Responding to environmental challenges with a view to promoting cooperation  
and security in the OSCE area”

Prague, 10-12 September 2014

**Address by the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Slovenia  
Ambassador Blanka Jamnič**

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Disaster risk reduction is high on the Slovenian political agenda. International cooperation in this area is very much in our focus, as well and we remain open to further enhance this cooperation in the OSCE region and beyond.

With its diverse landscape, Slovenia can be affected by several disasters and has therefore developed a comprehensive system of protection against natural, as well as other disasters and our experts are sharing it with others. However, challenges we are facing today are becoming more and more complex, interdisciplinary and require ever greater prevention and preparedness measures. Modern and effective disaster management systems have to address three complementary goals:

- prevent the creation of new risks with coordinated activities in all interrelated areas and with all stakeholders,
- reduce the existing risks with effective prevention measures and
- strengthen the resilience to disasters, in order to minimise disaster losses and provide conditions for quick recovery.

In February 2014, Slovenia was heavily affected by sleet, which caused blackout all over the country. 3000 kilometres of electrical grid was affected, 10% of Slovenian population were without electricity for up to 5 days. Slovenia requested and received international assistance in the form of power generators from 11 countries for which we were very grateful. In a couple of

days, normal living conditions were re-established for most of the population. It will, however, take decades to mitigate damages in the forests, namely 51 % of forests in Slovenia suffered the consequences and damage on infrastructure. A long-term reconstruction of electrical grids is required as well.

I wanted to share this information with you since the lesson we have experienced is that the negative impact of large scale disasters can be reduced with various preventive and preparedness activities. Cost effective steps today can reduce risks and save lives tomorrow.

On the other hand, Slovenia was one of the countries, which responded instantly to the request for assistance in case of catastrophic floods in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina in May this year. Our rescue units were activated for immediate search and rescue activities. Later on, Slovenian experts also helped in disaster loss assessment and are involved in the projects of rehabilitation and recovery.

International future efforts need to stress the importance of ensuring proper institutional capacities and financial resources for disaster risk reduction. Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) for the period 2005-2015 provided grounds for building disaster risk resilient communities all over the world. However, there is still a lot to do. Post-2015 Hyogo Framework for Action process for disaster risk reduction has to be a constitutive part of the broader post-2015 development agenda, including the work on a new global climate agreement.

Activities of different actors, stakeholders, international organisations should be mutually supportive and contribute, in a coordinated manner, to achieving sustainable development and more disaster resilient societies on global and national levels. To this end, Slovenia has already started consultations with all relevant national stakeholders, as well as the private sector and non-governmental organizations and is also actively engaged in the negotiations in the EU and UN frameworks.

I am also pleased to inform you that in July 2014 Slovenia established a National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in a form of Council as Advisory Board to the Government. One of its main activities is to facilitate cooperation of stakeholders in all phases of disaster management cycle – prevention, preparedness, response to disasters, and recovery.

The national commitments in the area of disaster risk reduction will be reflected in the new five-year Resolution on the National Programme on Protection against Natural and Other Disasters that will be adopted in 2015. Special emphasis will be devoted to the areas of risk assessment and risk management, which require the cooperation of stakeholders at national and local levels, as well as from the private sector.

In conclusion, I would like to warmly thank the Swiss Chairmanship and the Office of the Coordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities for preparing this meeting, as well as the Czech authorities for hosting it. The OSCE efforts and this process provide an excellent opportunity for strengthening our cooperation and efforts to build more disaster resilient communities in the OSCE area and worldwide. We also look forward to the future efforts of the incoming Serbian Chairmanship and welcome the focus on water governance for our next Economic and Environmental Forum.

Thank you for your attention.