



**STATEMENT OF THE GUAM MEMBER STATES  
AT THE 15<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE OSCE ECONOMIC  
AND ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM (PART 1)**

**Opening Session**

**Vienna, January 22, 2007**

Mr. Chairman,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

As I am taking the floor for the first time today, on behalf of the GUAM Member States – Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, I would like to express our appreciation to the Spanish Chairmanship and to the office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities for the preparation of the Forum.

Mr. Chairman,

The keynote speakers have informed us of global efforts to combat land degradation and soil contamination and shared their views on possibilities to strengthen the existing cooperation in this area not only globally but also regionally and the OSCE's role in this regard. They rightly indicated that in most cases these problems emerge as a result of anthropogenic activity and if not duly addressed, they will not only have negative repercussions on global economy but, most importantly, endanger human security and health.

Therefore, the question of appropriate coordination of multilateral efforts with a view to ensure necessary technical, technological, financial and other forms of cooperation among all stakeholders comes to the fore of our discussions.

And GUAM as an organization that strives to promote regional cooperation on issues of sustainable economic development is well-placed to contribute to these discussions.

Mr. Chairman,  
Distinguished participants,

GUAM member states share the rising concerns that dynamic technological developments occurring in the world today tend to have negative impact on the global environment and human well-being. Challenges run high for all of us to ensure sound development patterns in line with global commitments on sustainable development.

As it was stated before, global environmental cooperation is mostly undertaken in the framework of the United Nations. At the UN Millennium Summit in September 2000, world leaders committed to halve, by the year 2015, the number of people who are unable to obtain or afford safe drinking water. Serious advances have been made in order to combat desertification and land degradation and pollution.

As parties to global partnership in the field of environment, GUAM member states believe that these efforts provided the world community with important follow-up guidelines, such as understating of an inextricable linkage between land, poverty and food security in the context of sustainable agricultural development.

GUAM countries experience serious environmental challenges: Azerbaijan as a downstream country has scarce freshwater resources; Ukraine is exerting all efforts to overcome destructive impact of the Chernobyl Nuclear Plant catastrophe on the land, soil and water of the country thus preventing diffusion of radioactive substances to the territories of other states.

In some of GUAM member states environmental challenges are aggravated by continued occupation of parts of their territories by military forces of other states that, despite some people's view that the fact that these territories are not under the control of legitimate governments does not mean that they are totally uncontrolled, inevitably lead to inconsiderate/irrational use of water resources, soil contamination as well as forcible deforestation and result in considerable ecological damage that will be hard to repair in the forthcoming future.

Recent experience in dealing with serious environmental concerns connected to conflict-related issues in the OSCE area clearly demonstrated the necessity for the OSCE to establish appropriate tools in order to timely and effectively address emergency situations.

GUAM states also support the view that protection and sound management of land and water resources in the long-run require implementation of a wide range of measures ranging from infrastructure rehabilitation and pollution prevention to enactment of an effective legal framework and financial support schemes.

There are approximately 200 international legal instruments in the environmental field in place today. We believe that accession to these instruments as appropriate and their subsequent implementation would help to create a common ground for joint actions and enable to determine the extent of responsibility of the parties concerned in environmental projects that could be elaborated by Governments in partnership with international organizations and financial institutions.

In this regard, the OSCE's role as a catalyst for international assistance and platform for multilateral discussions is hard to be under-estimated. Taking this opportunity, GUAM member states turn to OSCE field missions with the request to keep environmental issues on their development assistance agenda during elaboration of relevant projects in cooperation with respective governments.

Dear colleagues,

In conclusion, on behalf of GUAM member states let me wish the Forum successful deliberations and a positive outcome to be followed up during the 2<sup>nd</sup> preparatory conference Zaragoza conference and Prague's part of the Forum.

Thank you.