

23rd ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM

“Water governance in the OSCE area – increasing security and stability
through co-operation”

SECOND PREPARATORY MEETING

Belgrade, 11-13 May 2015

CONSOLIDATED SUMMARY

Conference documents can be retrieved from the Website: http://www.osce.org/event/23rd_eef_prep2

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The Second Preparatory Meeting of the 23rd OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum (EEF) on “Water governance in the OSCE area – increasing security and stability through co-operation” took place in Belgrade on 11-13 May 2015. Five thematic areas were addressed during the three-day meeting:

- The 2014 flooding disaster in South-Eastern Europe-Experiences and lessons learnt in the context of water governance at regional level;
- Water, security and disaster risk reduction;
- Sharing of experience on water governance in the context of disaster risk reduction;
- Awareness-raising on the benefits of good water governance;
- Water governance from different stakeholders’ perspectives.

Around 250 participants, including official representatives of OSCE participating States and field operations, as well as experts from international, regional and non-governmental organizations and academia attended the meeting and engaged in discussions about various aspects of good water governance, including transboundary co-operation, stakeholder involvement and linkages with security and disaster risk reduction.

The meeting also included a field visit to May 2014 flood-affected areas in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia. Participants visited the municipality of Bijeljina where they saw the river embankment reconstruction project and heard first-hand accounts of the flooding disaster and its aftermath. Additionally, the participants visited Šabac and Obrenovac where they were informed by the civil protection and fire fighting authorities about the flooding that had affected the two municipalities.

A number of concrete recommendations concerning responses to challenges related to water governance in the OSCE area were made. They can be found at the end of each Session’s report of this Consolidated Summary.

REPORTS OF THE RAPPORTEURS

09:00 – 10:30 Opening Session

Welcoming remarks:

- **Mr. Aleksandar Nikolić**, State Secretary, Ministry of Interior, Serbia
- **Dr. Halil Yurdakul Yiğitgüden**, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Keynote speeches:

- **Mr. Dražen Kurečić**, President, International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River Basin, Ministry of Agriculture, Croatia
- **Mr. Marco Keiner**, Director, Environment Division, UNECE

Selected topics:

- **Water governance in the context of disaster risk reduction**
- **Awareness-raising and public participation with regard to water governance**
- **Water governance as a catalyst for co-operation and confidence-building**

Rapporteur: Ms. Olivera Zurovac-Kuzman, Environmental Adviser, Democratization Department, OSCE Mission to Serbia

Aleksandar Nikolić, State Secretary, Ministry of Interior, Serbia, recalled the devastating floods of May 2014, noting the importance of expert advice and transfer of good practices, efficient policies and practical tools among the participating States in dealing with such disasters. He also noted that the Serbian Chairmanship's choice of the theme of the Economic and Environmental Forum had been in partly formed by the flooding disaster experience, which saw the engagement of many national and international protection units. He added that 14 countries (22 teams with 563 members) had provided aid to Serbia based on bilateral and multilateral agreements, including the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. He also highlighted rapid OSCE response, which had donated water pumps. Reflecting on the recent 3rd World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai, Japan, he stressed the importance of integrating climate change and severe weather conditions as planning elements for other areas of activity. State Secretary Nikolić presented the staffing and financial challenges for risk assessment mapping in Serbia. He highlighted the importance of improving the co-operation with the scientific organizations, media and increasing the availability of public information on disaster risk reduction in order to improve public awareness. In this context, he referred to the recently developed *Family Guide for Emergency Preparedness and Response*, as a successful example of co-operation between his Ministry and the OSCE Mission to Serbia. He also highlighted the progress of Serbia in developing a database of disaster losses based on DesInventar, which the OSCE and other organizations are supporting. Finally, State Secretary Nikolić noted that a number of bilateral protocols had been signed by Serbia with a view to improve regional co-operation through sharing information and monitoring information exchange.

Dr. Halil Yurdakul Yiğitgüden, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (CoEEA), noted the importance of water governance for disaster risk reduction and drew the attention to the inclusion and participation of the public in water governance. Commenting on the

Chairmanship's choice of venue for the Second Preparatory Meeting, Dr. Yiğitgüden recalled that the same meeting of the Forum last year had been taking place during the peak of the floods in the region. Furthermore, he recalled that panellists of the Concluding Meeting of the 22nd Economic and Environmental Forum in Prague, last year, had agreed that cross-border co-operation in the aftermath of the floods was excellent and that civilian population, NGOs and volunteers were of tremendous support. He also presented an overview of the meeting's session, highlighting the topics proposed for discussion. Additionally, he invited the participants to a side-event which would feature posters and other visibility material presenting the practical activities on water governance and disaster risk reduction of the OSCE field operations and the Aarhus Centres in South-Eastern Europe (SEE). To that end, he highlighted the role of the field operations in supporting the implementation of the Aarhus Convention, namely through the Aarhus Centres. Stressing the importance of technological risk reduction during disasters, he drew participants' attention to another side event, organized by the Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit, which would present the experience of identifying industrial hazards during the 2014 floods in SEE and their possible impacts on human and environmental health.

Mr. Dražen Kurečić, Assistant Minister, Ministry of Agriculture of Croatia, President of the International Convention for the Protection of the Danube River Basin (ICPDR), welcomed the organization of the 2nd Preparatory Meeting with a focus on water governance and disaster risk reduction. He noted that an exchange of experience and joint efforts in forecasting systems among countries enable greater security for citizens. In that vein, he underlined Croatia's commitment to bilateral and multilateral co-operation given the transboundary character of the floods and the fact that successful flood defence depends on regional co-operation. He also underlined that ICPDR represents a successful multinational framework for dialogue. Referring to Croatia's adoption of the EU *acquis*, he noted its participation in the public consultation process for the Danube Basin Management Plan. He reiterated the need for improving weather forecasting through developing new models, improving data exchange and early warning systems. In conclusion, he expressed his hope that the discussions would result in clear and practical conclusions, since water related issues have always been on the OSCE's agenda and the International Community needs such a facilitating organization to bring together experts, organizations and politicians towards a common goal.

Mr. Marco Keiner, Director, UNECE Environment Division, stated that UNECE places great importance on water governance and highlighted the long standing successful co-operation with the OSCE. Speaking about awareness raising and public participation in water governance, he noted that ignoring public participation elements could be costly and might cause uncertainty. He also referred to various international treaties promoted by the UNECE in the past 20 years to strengthen water co-operation. Specifically, he highlighted the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) as an important legal framework to improve water governance and ecologically sound water resource management. Under the Convention, riparian parties are required to enter into agreements for shared waters and establish joint institutions for their management. To that end, he noted that related capacity building projects are carried out through co-operation between OSCE and UNECE, such is the Dniester River Basin – where the UNECE and OSCE have improved water co-operation through the Environment and Security (ENVSEC) initiative. Ultimately, this co-operation has led to the signing of the Dniester Treaty, enabling access to information and public participation in decision-making, as well as the development of a transboundary adaptation strategy promoting an understanding of climate change impacts and adaptation measures. In this context, Mr. Keiner thanked the OSCE for supporting the implementation of the UNECE Water Convention. Additionally, he mentioned the support of the OSCE in co-ordinating donor support and ensuring there was no duplication of activities vis-à-vis national policy dialogues in several countries, in the framework of the EU Water Initiative. Finally, he recognized the key role of the Aarhus Centres in promoting the implementation of the Aarhus Convention and its Protocol on PRTR, highlighting the Convention's requirement for international decision-making which includes the work of joint bodies for transboundary water co-operation.

Then the floor was opened for discussion.

Latvia, on behalf of the European Union, observed that sustainable water management was an important factor in stability and security and highlighted that floods may be a cause of tensions and conflict. The EU experience has demonstrated that transboundary co-operation is important for peace and stability. The EU representative stressed that water governance was a catalyst for co-operation and that the OSCE was well placed to increase trust, build confidence by linking climate change and DRR. The representative noted the EU Flood Directive which sets out the relevance of flood risk management plans. She proposed that the OSCE should review lessons learnt from 2014 regional flooding disaster and select particular actions for following up. Commenting on the assistance disbursed through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, she welcomed Serbia's recent membership in the mechanism. Finally, the EU representative pointed out that water governance and water diplomacy were of growing relevance, in particular but not only, to Central Asia and would welcome views of participating States and field operations on these topics.

A representative of the United States of America underlined the importance of learning from experience and the value of participating States' discussions in shaping future OSCE engagement in the area of water governance. Water governance has tremendous potential for increasing transboundary co-operation in locations where tensions exist. It is important for the OSCE to look closely at this potential and for delegations to consider how and where this role could be strengthened and increased. The connection between water governance and DRR could be one area where the OSCE may play an important co-ordinating function. The representative noted the discussions during the 2nd Preparatory Meeting would provide significant input in the context of a possible Ministerial Council decision at the end of the year. Recognizing the value of the field visit in the official programme of the meeting, the representative encouraged the participating States to carefully explore the role of the OSCE, through a wide ranging and creative discussion.

A representative of the Russian Federation, reflecting on the 2014 disasters in SEE, added that a large area of the Russian Federation was at serious risk of flooding, with losses evaluated at more than 10 billion euros, the worst affected being farming, logging, mining, loss of cultivated area and drained surfaces. The representative pointed to the multifaceted nature of the problem, need to reinforce and increase disaster response capacities and improve regional and sub-regional mechanisms. He noted that the Russian Federation's efforts to establish a sizeable section of aviation fleet dedicated to flood response and referred to the role and relevance of the Russian-Serbian emergency centre in Nis. Although, in his view, the EU agencies play a big role in this field, he stressed the contribution of the OSCE through capacity building, field missions and OCEEA support, and activities within the ENVSEC initiative. He, finally, pointed to the relevance of the OSCE in enhancing dialogue and international co-operation to increase water governance without duplicating efforts of other organizations.

A representative of Armenia noted the value brought by the OSCE in this area, as well as the need to identify concrete areas to further develop existing/established practices and engage stakeholders including civil society. In his view, the OSCE is well placed to assist in cross-border co-operation in water governance and DRR. As an example, he noted the field visit of this meeting to flood-affected areas in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Finally, the speaker noted the role the OSCE is playing in overcoming difficulties in regional and transboundary co-operation and in disaster risk reduction. Additionally, he highlighted the role of the OSCE field operations particularly in the implementation of the CASE NGO Small Grants Programme as well as in the promotion of the Aarhus Centres network. He also referred to the engagement of the Aarhus Centres Network in Armenia in the Armenian National Platform for DRR.

A representative of Turkmenistan noted the uniqueness of the Central Asian region due to its rich natural diversity. He also added that water resource management has been a contentious question for the region and that regional consensus should be used to address such a question. Turkmenistan has advocated for an approach in which water governance and DRR call for mutual respect of everyone's interest, and water management and climate change related activities undertaken by the UN are considered as essential. He expressed his support for furthering co-operation among Central Asian countries and with the international community. Finally, he stressed that Turkmenistan's

commitments were demonstrated by its involvement in international programmes, through new policies and diplomatic fora.

A representative of Switzerland referred to last year's 2nd Preparatory Meeting on DRR and recalled that the Serbian speaker had to cancel his participation to co-ordinate the flood response in his country. She pointed to the fact that DRR was placed as one of the key topics and was interested in learning about the lessons learned and experience of countries from a security point of view. Switzerland welcomed the continued attention to DRR issues in view of the Swiss-Serbian consecutive Chairmanships and follow-up to the Basel Ministerial Council decision. She also noted that the planned field trip would provide an opportunity to see affected areas and thanked the OSCE field operations in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Chairmanship for making it possible. Finally, she noted Switzerland's conviction that OSCE would address water governance and security benefits and expressed interest in inputs to a Ministerial Council decision that may be adopted at the end of the year.

The representative of Bulgaria stressed the importance of the availability of accessible and reliable data in the context of addressing flood risks, drew attention to the need for more research on the impact of climate change in the context of water governance and underlined the potential of sustainable land use practices for water resilience. He noted the role of the EU Flood Directive and the EU Water Framework Directive in providing a solid framework for sustainable water governance approaches and referred to the contribution of the UNECE Water Convention and the Danube River Protection Convention to increasing security and building confidence in the region. Finally, he noted the importance of the involvement of different stakeholders and sustainable use of resources in the context of water governance

Representatives of France and Spain noted their full alignment with the statement delivered by the European Union. However, they drew the audience's attention to the language issue, urging for the use of all six official OSCE languages in EEF meetings, and expressing their hope to receive assurances that a six-language regime would be applied as of 2016. The *Co-ordinator of the OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities* responded that this issue was addressed by the Serbian Chairmanship.

A representative of Hungary pointed to his country's approach of attaching high priority to water governance and management, and noted that the 7th Session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes would be held in Hungary in November 2015, with the participation of the President of Hungary. In conclusion, he underlined the high importance of the year 2015 in the context of water governance including the expected adoption of the post-2015 Development Agenda and the 2015 Paris Climate Conference (COP21). In this regard he also highlighted the inclusion of the transboundary water co-operation target as part of the sustainable development goal on water and sanitation.

A representative of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly underlined the need for more attention to water management issues, in light of the increase in demographic tensions. He emphasized the need for co-ordinated action to comprehensive security, highlighted the OSCE role, and encouraged participating States to improve water security.

A representative of the Chairmanship noted that the 2nd Preparatory Meeting would also present the activities of the OSCE Mission to Serbia on public participation in water management and expressed hope that subsequent deliberations would recommend greater streamlining of public participation into water management policies. She expressed thanks to the OSCE Mission to Serbia for implementing activities related to environmental protection, as well as the Ministry of Interior, the OSCE Missions to Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia for organizing the field visit. Finally, she expressed the hope that the meeting would feature productive discussions on disaster related co-operation.

The following conclusions and recommendations could be drawn from the discussion:

- OSCE is well placed to increase trust by linking climate change and DRR.
- Disasters are multifaceted in nature, therefore the need to reinforce and increase disaster response capacities and improve regional and sub-regional mechanisms.
- OSCE plays a role in overcoming difficulties in regional and transboundary co-operation and increase of disaster risk reduction.
- Effective use of resources is a chance to strengthen security and sustainable use of resources.

Session I: *The 2014 flooding disaster in South Eastern Europe – Experiences and lessons learned in the context of water governance at regional level*

Moderator: **Ambassador Tomislav Leko**, Permanent Mission of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the OSCE and International Organizations in Vienna

Rapporteur: **Mr. Uroš Milanović**, Attaché, Permanent Mission of Serbia to the OSCE, 2015 Serbian OSCE Chairmanship

Speakers:

- **Mr. Predrag Marić**, Assistant Minister, Head of the Department for Emergency Management, Ministry of Interior, Serbia
- **Ambassador Jonathan Moore**, Head of Mission, OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina
- **Ms. Marta Bonifert**, Executive Director, Regional Environment Centre for Central and Eastern Europe
- **Dr. Marijan Babić**, Head of Project Implementation Unit for Implementation of Flood-protection Projects Financed by CEB Loans and EU Funds, Croatian Waters, Croatia

Ambassador Tomislav Leko, Permanent Mission of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the OSCE and International Organizations in Vienna, introduced the session by recalling last year's devastating floods in South-Eastern Europe that resulted in fatalities, as well as over EUR 3.5 billion in damages.

Mr. Predrag Marić, Assistant Minister of Interior and Head of the Sector for Emergency Situation, provided a detailed overview of the flooding disaster in May 2014, indicating the unprecedented weather conditions in the region. Over 500 houses were completely destroyed, 16,000 were damaged. He noted that the rescue services saved around 32,000 people. Mr. Marić highlighted the important role of international co-operation in rescue operations, stressing that 14 different countries and 22 international rescue teams assisted Serbia during the disaster. He particularly highlighted the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, which provided wide-spread assistance for countries affected by natural disasters, and noting that Serbia would become its 33rd member. Mr. Marić commented on the OSCE's role – the OSCE organized DRR training sessions, workshops and exercises with rescue services of Serbia. Additionally, the OSCE Mission to Serbia sponsored the publication of a family guide by the Ministry of Interior on emergency preparedness and response as well as on fireproofing of skyscrapers. Finally, Mr. Marić highlighted a number of lessons learned from last year's disasters, including the need to increase prevention, to keep in mind that such events could happen again, to strengthen the early warning mechanisms and the capabilities of rescue services, and to enlarge the scope of international co-operation in this field, particularly through regional initiatives.

Ambassador Jonathan Moore, Head of OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, provided information on the field trip to be organized on the third day of the meeting. Ambassador Moore emphasized that the 2014 disaster was the largest humanitarian disaster in Bosnia and Herzegovina since the end of the war in former Yugoslavia. He noted that over 90,000 people lost their homes, and that a large number of schools, health centres and other buildings were destroyed. Additionally, the floods caused landslides, which dislocated previously marked mine fields. Ambassador Moore commended the response of rescue services which provided the necessary assistance to the affected areas, preventing further loss of life. He underlined the excellent examples of inter-ethnic solidarity during and in the aftermath of the disaster. He then presented the activities of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, which provided volunteers to assist with the rescue teams. The Mission also opened five additional offices in the most affected municipalities, which helped to strengthen its early warning capacities. He noted that the Mission was currently working on a report depicting how

certain municipalities were prepared for the floods and what was their initial reaction, in order to help prevent new disasters of such magnitude.

Ms. Marta Bonifert, Executive Director of the Regional Environment Centre for Central and Eastern Europe (REC), presented many ways where REC and the OSCE co-operate, especially through the Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC). She stated that economy of countries was playing a major role in preventing disasters and that countries that were affected by such disasters need to share their experiences and lessons learned to other regions in order to prevent similar events. Ms. Bonifert emphasized that the importance of good water governance has been affirmed by the EU in its Water Policy, and that this policy should be used to adapt the legislative systems of countries, enhance access to relevant information and cross-sectorial dialogue, as well as improve the education system as the primary tools of every prevention mechanism. In her view, the vulnerability of societies needs to be reduced in the most cost-efficient way, by enhancing co-ordination between relevant State institutions, exchanging information, knowledge and best practices between regions and by creating a platform for co-ordination and co-operation between countries.

Dr. Marijan Babić, Head of Project Implementation Unit for Implementation of Flood-protection Projects, presented Croatian experience with last year's floods and their efforts to enhance disaster risk reduction. Dr. Babić stated that the frequency and magnitude of flooding in Croatia increased significantly over the last few years, especially on the river Sava, where water levels were greater than their historic maximum. He explained that one of the main reasons for the floods in Croatia was due to high discharge and the breach of the Sava river dike in two places. The damages were estimated to be around EUR 200 million, and there were two fatalities. Dr. Babić pointed to the improper maintenance of flood prevention systems built in former Yugoslavia in 1964. In his view, the lessons to be drawn from 2014 disasters include: i. current flood defence systems are vulnerable and the public has become aware of this fact; ii. there is a greater chance of events of such magnitude repeating, which shows a clear connection to climate change; iii. there is a need to improve international mechanisms of co-operation in these matters; iv. goals of international co-operation should be to avoid new risks, increase disaster risk reduction and solidarity. Dr. Babić emphasized the importance of implementing flood protection measures that have common benefits for countries of the region.

The floor was then opened for discussion.

A representative of Azerbaijan explained his country's experiences with water reservoirs on the river Kur, and the methodology of managing excess and lack of water by properly predicting the melting of snow and distributing the water for irrigation purposes. He also enquired about the EU norms for construction of such facilities.

A representative of the Holy See emphasized the importance of solidarity in troubled times and close international co-operation.

Latvia, on behalf of the EU, stated that the EU values the lessons learned, as well as concrete suggestions on how the OSCE could contribute in these matters. She noted that the EU showed solidarity with Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Croatia during the floods by providing humanitarian assistance, rescue teams, satellite images and financial assistance. She highlighted the EU's assistance in strengthening of the early warning systems and disaster risk reduction in Mačva region in Serbia. Noting that the EU had donated over EUR 170 million to Serbia, the largest amount ever given to a disaster affected country, she expressed satisfaction that Serbia had signed the EU Civil Protection Mechanism.

A representative of Czech Republic stated that his country was willing to share its experiences and know-how regarding flood risk prevention with all interested parties, considering that after the introduction of new legislative measures, the Czech Republic had a considerable reduction of flooding.

A representative of Slovenia highlighted that regional co-operation and preventive measures were the most important factors in flood prevention. She informed the meeting that Slovenia was actively participating in the Framework Agreement on the Sava River Basin and ICPDR, and an extensive exchange of best practices was happening.

The following conclusions and recommendations could be drawn from the discussion:

- Solidarity during and in the aftermath of the flooding disaster in South-Eastern Europe has been remarkable; There is a need to further improve existing mechanisms of international co-operation for disaster risk management;
- Frequency and magnitude of floods is increasing, which is partially attributed to climate change;
- There is a need to strengthen flood prevention and early warning mechanisms, as well as upgrade flood defence systems;
- Capabilities of rescue services have to be further strengthened;
- Through OSCE's active engagement in the context of 2014 floods in South- Eastern Europe, the OSCE has demonstrated that it has proven capacity to support its participating States in strengthening DRR.

Session II: Water, security and disaster risk reduction

Moderator: Mr. Massimo Cozzone, Senior Officer, Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea, Italy

Rapporteur: Ms. Nino Malashkhia, Associate Environmental Affairs Officer, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Speakers:

- Mr. Goran Ždrale, Senior Officer for Analysis and Reporting, Mine Action Centre, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Mr. Luca Rossi, Programme Officer, Regional Office for Europe, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
- Mr. Jakub Gibek, Head, Water Policy Unit, Water Resources Department, Ministry of Environment, Poland
- Ms. Aušra Semaškienė, Ambassador at Large, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Lithuania
- Ms. Nilza Sena, Vice-Chair, Second Committee, OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

Mr. Massimo Cozzone, Senior Officer, Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea of Italy introduced the session and referred to the UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention). The moderator also informed participants about the launch of the report of the UNECE Water Convention and the International Network of Basin Organizations (INBO) on *Water and Climate Change Adaptation in Transboundary Basins: Lessons Learned and Good Practices* at the seventh World Water Forum. The report examines 50 different cases of climate change adaptation projects in transboundary basins and illustrates good practices.

Mr. Goran Zdrale, Senior Officer for Analysis and Reporting, Mine Action Centre, Bosnia and Herzegovina focused his presentation on the security implications of natural disasters in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Bosnia and Herzegovina is among countries with highest number of landmines and unexploded ordnance (UXOs). The mine affected area covers 2.3% of the whole territory of the country and estimated number of mines is over 100,000. Only last year, 16 people lost their lives due to UXOs. In 2014, 48.96 km² of mine-suspected area was affected by flooding and 35 landslides occurred in the minefields. Especially vulnerable in this regard is the canton Tuzla. The major challenges are associated with the mine dislodging and their exposure, as well as with mine destruction. The speaker also referred to the responsibilities of the Mine Action Centre, which include the detection and mapping of landmines. The Centre also conducts awareness raising campaigns for vulnerable communities. Mr. Zdrale highlighted the importance of regional co-operation in addressing the issues of landmines and UXOs in the context of natural disasters.

Mr. Luca Rossi, Programme Officer, Regional Office for Europe, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), briefly introduced the UNISDR's mandate. The organization is in charge of co-ordinating disaster risk reduction activities among UN agencies and is working in close co-operation with the UN country teams as well as other regional and international organizations that are active in the area. The primary counterparts of the UNISDR are the governments of countries. The organization also tries to create closer links with civil society. The speaker introduced the Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction and pointed out few important conclusions of the

assessment. Although significant progress has been achieved in reducing the mortality through enhanced preparedness and response and improved institutional capacity at national level, the progress in respect to risk management is still lagging. The financial and economic impacts of disasters are still significant. The speaker emphasized the enormous financial losses that occur in developed countries as a result of disasters. The economic losses in the OECD countries increased tenfold. The speaker also pointed out that disaster risks could seriously undermine the capacity of countries to develop. This is a challenge not only for low-income countries but for middle or high income countries as well. Mr. Rossi also pointed out the importance of considering the long-term impacts of natural disasters. The economic losses occur as a result of cancelled/ceased economic activities, vanished or uncreated jobs, unpaid taxes, etc. Mr. Rossi also spoke about the integrated and participatory approach reflected in several international strategy documents and focused on the key elements of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction for 2015-2030. The Sendai Framework builds on the Hyogo Framework and puts more emphasis on the risk prevention, reconstruction, guiding principles of DRR, clear measures at national / local and regional / global levels and highlights the role of stakeholders. The document defines the four priority actions for disaster risk reduction – understanding the risks, strengthening disaster risk governance, investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience and enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response. One of the important messages the document gives is that the design and implementation of DRR should not hamper development and urbanization and shall contribute to generation of jobs. It should be pursued as good investment in our future. The speaker also emphasized the need to tailor early warning activities to the response capacities of countries. Rebuilding better is very crucial for prevention of generation of new risks. In conclusion, Mr. Rossi proposed areas for co-operation with the OSCE - development of the road map for implementation of the Sendai Framework for DRR, contribution through the European Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction (EFDRR) to the UNFCCC COP21 agenda and the overall CCA strategy, development of a national strategies aligned with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, development of training on resilience at local level, sharing of the past experience, lesson learned and good practices developed with neighbouring countries.

Mr. Jakub Gibek, Head, Water Policy Unit, Water Resources Department, Ministry of Environment, Poland, spoke about the flood security issues in central Europe and Poland. The speaker recalled the 1997 extreme weather events that caused devastating floods in Poland resulting in 56 fatalities and USD 3.5 billion losses. After these devastating floods, Poland revisited its flood security measures. The main challenge was the distribution of responsibilities for water management among various stakeholders that makes planning of actions and crisis management difficult. In Poland, the water governance falls under the responsibility of five ministries and several other institutions. Mr. Gibek highlighted four main pillars of the flood management - improved weather forecasting, strategic planning, flood protection infrastructure and crisis management, which have to be supported by the robust legal framework, scientific base and adequate financial resources. The overarching framework for the effective disaster risk management is international co-operation. The speaker showcased the experience of Poland regarding the flood management in the Odra river basin. Mr. Gibek, spoke about the measures carried out for improving flood forecasting in the basin, which significantly benefited from concluding the bilateral agreements on the data transmission and exchange. For better strategic planning flood risk assessments and risk maps were developed and flood risk management plans are being elaborated. Special working groups were set under the bilateral transboundary water commission on this issue with the aim to develop flood risk assessment and flood risk management plans, which are currently under preparation by the International Commission for the Protection of Odra River. The speaker touched upon the infrastructure measures as well, that include flood protection programmes. Mr. Gibek noted that for improving the crisis management, Poland concluded the bilateral agreements between the rescue services and is regularly exchanging information. Currently Poland is working on the common rescue procedures. One of the major achievements of this work was improved co-operation between agencies and automated exchange of information within the country and across the borders. Mr. Gibek pointed out increased risks of flooding that occur due to climate change and emphasized the importance to balance structural and non-structural measures for reducing the flood risks. The speaker also highlighted the challenges associated with changing the attitudes of the society.

Ms. Aušra Semaškienė, Ambassador at Large, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Lithuania stressed the importance of co-operation in management of transboundary water resources. The speaker underlined the need to have a comprehensive, interdisciplinary and cross-sectorial approach in addressing water challenges. Ms. Semaškienė emphasized the need to look at transboundary issues in the context of water-energy-food nexus. Resolving issues surrounding water and energy priorities requires better and integrated policy frameworks and political engagement. The speaker noted that building effective co-operation is lengthy process and requires conscious multi-year effort by parties. Ms. Semaškienė referred to the international legal framework agreements, the transboundary environmental impact assessment and other platforms, which allow knowledge and experience sharing. Ms. Semaškienė emphasized the importance of the UNECE Water Convention in the OSCE area. The time spent for building effective communication, working relationships, level playing field for knowledge and skills of partners across the borders is essential investment for reaching sound negotiation outcomes. Ms. Semaškienė presented the case study of the Nemunas River basin. The river basin is shared by Lithuania, Belarus, the Russian Federation and Poland. There are a few treaties signed between Lithuania and Poland but there is no agreement with Belarus or Russia. Lithuania is currently working with Belarus on the Technical Protocol on Co-operation on the Protection and Use of the Water Resources in the Transboundary Neman River Basin between Lithuania and Belarus. Ms. Semaškienė expressed the hope that the plan to sign an agreement between Lithuania, Belarus, Russia and EU would be revived soon. The speaker also referred to the increased number of the hydropower stations in the basin and risks associated with the hydro- and nuclear power stations. Ms. Semaškienė emphasized the importance of proper functioning of wastewater treatment facilities for the river basin protection and referred to the treatment facilities in Kaliningrad, the Russian Federation. The speaker also stressed the role of the effective public participation for succeeding in transboundary co-operation. Participation allows public to express its concerns and enables public authorities to take due account of such concerns and to enhance the quality of their decisions.

Ms. Nilza Sena, Vice-Chair, Second Committee, OSCE Parliamentary Assembly emphasized the importance of co-operation for management of transboundary water resources in the OSCE area. The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly commends the OSCE for its work in facilitating negotiations between participating States on bilateral agreements on water resource management. The speaker highlighted the need to consider new challenges, such as diminished water supplies caused by climate change and unsustainable agricultural practices. She called on participating States to pursue the policies that mitigate climate change and ensure adaptation. She underlined the need to continue negotiations on new universal climate accord with binding limits on greenhouse gas emissions. Ms. Sena drew attention of participants to the issue of water allocation that presents a growing risk for conflicts. The speaker underlined that the water is a must-have element for security and social stability. The speaker noted that the OSCE participating States can benefit from a framework of multilateral co-operation by sharing their comparative advantages in the field of water treatment and water reclamation, by engaging partners through practical projects, educational seminars and the transfer of technology.

Then the floor was opened for discussion.

A representative of the Russian Federation responded to Ms. Semaškienė and noted that the Russian Federation is ready to engage in negotiations on the Nemunas River basin. On the matter of the construction of the nuclear facility, the speaker emphasized that Russia is always prepared to consider this issue but suggested to discuss this matter in the framework of an appropriate platform - the International Atomic Energy Agency.

A representative of the OSCE Chairmanship thanked the speakers and moderator for their comprehensive presentations and underlined the importance of the experience sharing for preventing future disasters. The representative also highlighted the need to raise awareness of disaster preparedness and risks. Question was posed to Mr. Goran Ždrale on the plans of the Mine Action Centre to address the risks from dislodged mines and how the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina could assist in this matter.

Mr. Goran Ždrale responded that as an initial step, the Mine Action Centre in co-operation with Croatia and Serbia recorded all minefields that had been flooded. In the second phase, the Centre hopes to be able to carry out humanitarian demining projects. Mr. Ždrale noted that the OSCE could help in exchanging data and in preparation of the demining.

The representative of Hungary drew attention of participants to the role played by the climatic and hydrological events in inflicting damages and pointed out that the majority impacts of the climate change relate to water. He also expressed the hope that UNFCCC COP 21 will address the water issue adequately.

The following conclusions and recommendations could be drawn from the discussion:

- Stronger focus on disaster risk prevention and preparedness is needed.
- A long term impact of cascading effects of disasters on the economy should be considered.
- The OSCE should continue supporting participating States in development of the legal frameworks for the cross-border co-operation and providing a platform for experience sharing.
- Additional security risks that emerge as a result of floods and landslides in areas contaminated with unexploded ordnance and mines should be considered.
- Public participation in decision making on issues concerning the water management and disaster risk management should be supported.
- Raising awareness of disaster risks and disaster prevention should be promoted.
- Countries' strategies and policies in the area of DRR with the Sendai Disaster Risk Reduction Framework should be aligned.

Session III: Sharing of experiences on water governance in the context of disaster risk reduction

Moderator: Ms. Irena Vojáčková-Sollorano, UN Resident Coordinator, UNDP Resident Representative for Serbia

Rapporteur: Ms. Alma Mirvić, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Speakers:

- Ms. Indira Akbozova, Head of the Kazakhstan part of the Secretariat of the Chu-Talas Commission and Ms. Gulmira Satymkulova, Head of the Kyrgyzstan part of the Secretariat of the Chu-Talas Commission
- Mr. David Elkaïm, Political Officer on Water and Sanitation, Climate and Environment Unit, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, France
- Ms. Carolin Schärpf, Scientific Officer, Federal Department of the Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications, Federal Office for the Environment, Switzerland
- Mr. Movses Poghosyan, Director, National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, Armenia

Mrs. Irena Vojáčková-Sollorano, UN Resident Coordinator, UNDP Resident Representative for Serbia, noted that the number of natural disasters has doubled in the last decade and that we need to quickly learn from each other. To that end, she underlined the call of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction to have all countries form national DRR platforms.

Mrs. Indira Akbozova, Head of the Kazakhstan part of the Secretariat of the Chu-Talas Commission, described annual flooding that happened in the Talas river basin prior to the construction of the Kirov reservoir in 1975. Unfortunately, experts assess that this basin would see further degradation. She explained that the Chu-Talas Commission set up in 2006 to apportion water reserves. The Commission also issued recommendations for equity financing of water facilities of interstate use. The joint commission also reviews projects and includes working groups involving professionals, experts and scientists. She reflected on the co-operation the Commission has with international expert communities and noted that an Agreement on Co-operation in the Field of Sustainable Development has been prepared. Of note is the issuance of quarterly forecasts for water availability. With assistance from the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea, there has been progress in availability of data. In addition, the Commission representatives also participated in meetings of international conventions.

Mrs. Gulmira Satymkulova, Head of the Kyrgyzstan part of the Secretariat of the Chu-Talas Commission, presented the general overview of the Chu and Talas rivers hydromorphological properties. She also noted that Kyrgyzstan has a national plan of action for climate change adaptation and that climate change has implications on the glaciers, as well as dynamics of population change in the Chu Basin. Namely, there has been a three-fold increase in the population since the 1970s. Recalling the extreme events in the last 10 years, she called for greater public availability of relevant information and the importance of drawing on international experience. More specifically, she highlighted the need to co-ordinate water management under extreme conditions of water shortages and flooding; invest in measures to reduce the effects of disasters; implement water quality standards and monitoring mechanism.

Mr. David Elkaim, Political Officer on Water and Sanitation, Climate and Environment Unit of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, France, explained that the OSCE participating States will experience water related problems due to climate change. Disasters have exacerbated by climate change,

increasing in intensity and frequency. Climate change as a security issue demonstrated through water, has accelerated glacial melt, extreme floods as well as changes in water use. Extreme climatic events happen everywhere, while rising sea levels threaten islands. He noted that experts forecast that by 2050, there will be significant displacements of population within and among countries due to climatic events. He reminded that the Conference of Parties in Paris should result in a new legal agreement for post-2020 climate regime under UNFCCC. He also noted that the Sustainable Development Goals would be developed with climate change in mind and that France believes that DRR should be integrated in the post-2015 agenda. Commenting on the role of the OSCE, he added that it could facilitate the containment of conflict, while harnessing water co-operation. Additionally, he noted that as a security organization, the OSCE should fully integrate DRR, sustainable development and climate change in its environmental activities.

Mrs. Carolin Schärpf, Scientific Officer, Federal Department of the Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications, Federal Office for the Environment, Switzerland referred to the Sendai Framework for DRR, noting seven targets and four priorities for action. She also underlined that, as compared to the Hyogo Framework for Action, the Sendai Framework treats DRR as a development issue for all countries, an all-of-society issue, with a new emphasis on health and role of human rights, while strengthening the transition from hazard to risk. She portrayed the example from Switzerland which defined six priorities for action, exemplified in flood hazard maps established for the entire populated area of Switzerland. Discussing awareness of natural hazards, she noted that the general public in Switzerland could get all information before, during and after an event, including general recommendation on action one should take, holistic planning of protection measures etc. She also presented examples of Swiss Development Co-operation's work on DRR, noting the development of Climate, Environment and Disaster Reduction Integration Guidance (CEDRIG) which was developed for programme and project planning. She underlined the strong focus Switzerland placed on DRR during its 2014 OSCE Chairmanship, whereby an OSCE Ministerial Decision in Basel reinforced the role of DRR as a confidence building measure. Finally, she made note of several OSCE projects that seek to strengthen DRR in the OSCE region, notably the strengthening of DRR capacities of Aarhus Centres; increased engagement in fire management, a project in Ukraine/Moldova with UNECE on Dniester River, as well as a new project on SEE and Central Asia regions. In conclusion, she encouraged joint efforts by participating States to promote DRR.

Mr. Movses Poghosyan, Director, National Platform for DRR, Armenia noted that a national platform for DRR was established in 2010. He stressed the co-operation with the OSCE and Aarhus Centres in Armenia on disaster risk management and the important role the Aarhus Centres play in promoting DRR culture. He added that a Memorandum of Understanding between DRR National Platform, OSCE and Aarhus Centers would be signed, whereby a specialised training of trainers on Flash Environmental Assessment Toolkit (FEAT) and Making Cities Resilient (MCR) courses will be organized. Additionally, joint projects on Disaster Risk Management and Environmental Emergencies would be developed and implemented. As part of the project on the strengthening of DRR capacities of Aarhus Centres, DRR will be mainstreamed into 4 community development plans. Disaster vulnerabilities of selected communities will be identified as well and Aarhus Centres would receive additional capacity development to support community-based DRR in partnership with National Platform for DRR and local NGOs. Concluding, Mr. Poghosyan noted that DRR cannot be a monopoly of just one organization. It is everybody's mission to make a country resilient.

Then, the floor was opened for discussion.

A representative of Kazakhstan reflected on the impact of climate change through the incidence of droughts and floods in his country, observing that 50 per cent of water resources are transboundary. He also presented the issues faced in the Syr Darya basin concerning pollution and contamination and the efforts in trying to ensure rational use of water resources. Co-operation is crucial in transboundary management of water resources.

A representative of Belarus explained that in late May a new water law would enter into force with changes incorporated into the country's approach. He noted that spring flooding is a significant factor

in disaster risk management and that mapping and modelling exercises are underway to prevent floods.

A representative of ECO-Tiras enquired on the use of the Chu-Talas River Basin Agreement vis-a-vis managing water resources and eco systems.

A representative of Hungary expressed interest in learning more about the UNFCCC Conference of Parties in Paris.

A representative of Italy noted the experience of Italy and other signatories of the Alpine Convention regarding the management of disasters in mountainous areas through exchange of experiences.

A representative of Armenia noted that although floods had been a familiar occurrence in the area, however, there was a challenge of droughts. Most notably, he highlighted the issue of dam construction on transboundary rivers. Finally, he noted that Armenia was ready to co-operate and it had made certain initiatives to that end. The country believes that OSCE would be a platform to sustain water resources and not water-related conflicts.

The representative of Uzbekistan noted that in dealing with hazards, a system of prevention is far more effective than recovery measures.

A representative of Turkey noted that Turkey's water policy acknowledges the needs of its neighbours and riparian states. He also stressed that Turkey's transboundary water policy aims at sharing the benefits of transboundary water resources through co-operation. The flow of the Aras river will not be affected by Turkey's dam construction plans. Ultimately, he noted that there is good co-operation between Armenia and Turkey on Arpacay – Akhouryan River and that delegations of the two countries meet regularly to make the river usable for all sides.

The following conclusions and recommendations could be drawn from the discussion:

- Co-operation is crucial in transboundary management of water resources.
- OSCE may serve as platform to sustain water resources.
- OSCE should fully integrate DRR, sustainable development and climate change in its environmental activities
- Climate adaptation is a conflict prevention measure.

Session IV: Awareness-raising on the benefits of good water governance

Moderator: Ms. Dragana Milovanović, Head, Department for Participation in Strategic Planning, Management and International Water Co-operation, Water Directorate of the Republic of Serbia

Rapporteur: Ms. Jenniver Sehring, Environmental Affairs Adviser, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Speakers:

- Ms. Daniela Scheetz, Desk Officer, Division on Climate and Environmental Foreign Policy, Sustainable Economy, Federal Foreign Office, Germany
- Mr. Srđan Sušić, Senior Expert on Sustainable Growth, Regional Co-operation Council
- Mr. Tagoimurod Gulov, Head of Main Department on Water Resources, Ministry of Energy and Water Resources, Republic of Tajikistan
- Mr. Toshiya Abe, Resident Representative for Balkan Office, Japanese International Co-operation Agency

Ms. Dragana Milovanović, Head, Department for Participation in Strategic Planning, Management and International Water Co-operation, Water Directorate of the Republic of Serbia introduced the topic of the session by stressing the importance of awareness raising to prevent problems in implementation especially at the local level. She also underlined the need to synchronize needs and funds in development assistance and to acknowledge the responsibility of all who use water, as is done in water stewardship approaches. Finally, she expressed her hope that the Sustainable Development Goals would be adopted this autumn, including the Goal No. 6 dedicated to water.

Ms. Daniela Scheetz, Desk Officer, Division on Climate and Environmental Foreign Policy, Sustainable Economy, Federal Foreign Office, Germany, underlined the importance of water issues for foreign and security policy, referring also to the effects of floods and droughts on vulnerable and fragile states, as was the case in Syria. She stressed that lack of comprehensive water governance can further aggravate the implications of population growth and climate change on water availability. However, transboundary water co-operation, underpinned by good water governance, could also bear many benefits for every country in a specific river basin. Ms Scheetz referred to several examples of such benefits, as security benefits (reduction of tensions between neighbouring countries), environmental benefits (joint monitoring to improve water quality), economic benefits (more effective infrastructure investments, more foreign investments).

Ms. Scheetz also referred to the nexus concept and introduced the “Berlin Process”, an initiative of the German government since 2008 aiming at fostering regional co-operation on water issues in Central Asia. The “Berlin Process” comprises among others institutional capacity building, technical support, a scientific network for training and exchange of experiences and a Master programme on Integrated Water Resource Management at the German-Kazakh university in Almaty. It follows a holistic approach and is targeted at different levels: national governments of the Central Asian states, sub-regional institutions like Basin Water Organizations, and regional institutions like EC IFAS and CAREC. In conclusion, Ms. Scheetz commended the increased OSCE activities on water and stated that, as an organization with a long standing tradition of dealing with all aspects of security issues and its experience and people on the ground in the field offices, the OSCE is in an ideal position to act as facilitator for finding solutions to the water challenges in the OSCE region. She pointed to the agreement between Moldavia and Ukraine on the Dniester river basin as a guiding example.

Mr. Srđan Sušić, Senior Expert on Sustainable Growth, Regional Co-operation Council (RCC), introduced the South East Europe 2020 development strategy and its relevance for water and security. The SEE 2020 was adopted in 2014 and is the main development framework of the region. With regard to water, the SEE 2020 strategy aims to introduce the nexus approach to SEE. Also, it will establish the first regional political mechanism to address environmental issues, which will be launched this week. Mr. Sušić explained that under the environment dimension of the SEE 2020, two of the key actions relate to water: (1) to identify steps and measures necessary for advancing the water, energy and food nexus approach at national and transboundary levels and investigate opportunities for launching a political process under the RCC for the enhancement of co-operation in the SEE in the field of transboundary water management, and (2) to initiate a Regional Integral Water Management Framework Agreement. Concrete activities will be an SEE Nexus Policy Dialogue with Regional Roundtables and SEE Nexus Directors Meetings, as well as structured national and transboundary Nexus Policy Dialogues, including Stakeholders Analysis, Nexus Assessment, Participatory process at the national/transboundary levels, and Nexus Strategies/Roadmaps.

Mr. Tagoimurod Gulov, Head of Main Department on Water Resources, Ministry of Energy and Water Resources, Republic of Tajikistan started his presentation with an overview of the water resources of Tajikistan, which form more than half of the total water resources of the Aral Sea Basin and are for a big part used for irrigation. He pointed to the strategic importance of irrigation agriculture for development, food security, and employment. Mr Gulov then stressed Tajikistan's vulnerability to water-related disasters such as mudslides and flooding, which cause enormous economic losses and damages. He further underlined that hydropower generation is of utmost importance for Tajikistan's economic development. Much of its huge hydropower capacity is not yet used, though. Mr. Gulov stated that Tajikistan recognizes the importance of co-operation with neighbouring countries, and that peace and stability in Central Asia depends on availability of water resources and smooth inter-state co-operation. Tajikistan has since its independence aimed at promoting water issue at every level, including at global level where Tajikistan had been leading all UN resolutions in last 10 years, such as the International Year of Freshwater 2003, the International Decade for Action Water for Life 2005-2015, and the International Year of Water Co-operation 2013. Finally, Mr. Gulov informed about and invited all interested participants to the high-level international conference to take stock of the international water decade 2005-2015, which will take place on 9-11 June in Dushanbe. The aim of the conference is also to develop recommendations for post-2015 Development Agenda, including ways to promote the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Mr. Toshiya Abe, Resident Representative for Balkan Office, Japanese International Co-operation Agency (JICA), introduced the general mission of JICA to achieve inclusive and dynamic development and its engagement in the European region, which started in 1989. With regard to the water sector, JICA's goals are (1) Safe and stable water supply; (2) Flood management to protect lives and properties; (3) Protection of sound water environment; and (4) Integrated water resources management (IWRM). He stressed the relevance of prevention of water-related disasters in the South-Eastern European region, as disasters pose a major obstacle for sustainable economic development of the countries. He also pointed to transboundary water challenges related to pollution. Mr. Abe presented several examples of JICA's approach in SEE: technical co-operation (e.g. training courses, feasibility studies, dispatch of Japanese experts), financial co-operation (ODA loans with concessional terms for environment and climate change related projects, e.g. for sewage system improvement in Tirana), private sector support (grant aid as response to urgent demand, e.g. rehabilitation of water supply systems in Belgrade, Podgorica, and Skopje). He concluded that JICA's engagement in water management in South-Eastern Europe will continue with a focus on DRR and flood prevention.

The floor was opened for discussion.

A representative of the Aarhus Centre in Dushanbe stressed that Tajikistan is one of the most vulnerable countries to disasters and climate change. He referred in particular to the danger of glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs) and the importance of environmental monitoring. Another urgent issue was the threat to mountain ecosystems due to logging. He thanked the Swiss Development Agency

and the OSCE for their support to the restoration of mountain ecosystems. Finally, he pointed to the flood risks, especially at the Pjandzh river bordering Afghanistan. In this respect, a joint Tajik-Afghan commission had been established. He pointed also to the co-operation of the Aarhus Centre in Khorog with border regions in Afghanistan, financially supported by JICA, UNDP and the Japanese government.

A representative of the Kyrgyz Republic agreed that sharing water resources is a part of regional and foreign policies. Regarding the inclusion of water resources in security policies, he asked about the reasoning and instruments to be used. He underlined that Kyrgyzstan follows a comprehensive approach to water in order to achieve the best economic benefits for the region. Kyrgyzstan is concerned to ensure that water and energy resources are seen indivisible. Shared water use has to be seen against the backdrop of sustainable development and the SDGs.

A representative of Armenia stated that the panel led to the idea that water use can become a priority in security and foreign policy and mainstreamed in regional co-operation. Referring to Ms. Scheetz' reference to the drought in Syria and its impact on the civil war, he pointed out that dam construction on rivers in Syria in border areas contributed to drought. Therefore, Armenia was concerned about dam construction on the Aras river in the South Caucasus. Referring to the statement of Turkey on the day before, he questioned the expressed approach. It is important to share information and burdens, take security implications into account and discuss all concerns. He expressed the appreciation for the existing co-operation between Turkey and Armenia, however indicating that its range is too narrow and the 1991 construction agreement between the USSR and Turkey should be revisited. Armenia would be happy to co-operate with Turkey through the OSCE or bilaterally.

A representative of Uzbekistan stressed that in the context of Central Asia, aligning with international criteria is crucial in particular in countries with limited water resources. He pointed to the importance of ensuring drinking water supply and food security, but also the water needs of industry.

A representative of Turkey following on the presentation from Germany, expressed a different view from the statement that water is a problem for security. He pointed that in the OSCE region, there are much more conflicts due to other reasons than from water. With regard to Armenia's concerns raised, he welcomed to discuss this and stated that this could be dealt within the existing frameworks. The representative stressed that there were no concrete new dam projects and all plans would be discussed in good co-operation with all neighbours for the benefit of the whole region.

A representative of Serbia underlined the importance of raising awareness and pointed to Serbia's endeavours to include all stakeholders in regional processes, e.g. the provisional institutions in Pristina. He asked the representative of Tajikistan if the OSCE Office in Tajikistan and the participating States could help Tajikistan in some of the issues he mentioned.

The floor was given to the speakers for final comments.

Mr. Gulov reiterated that Tajikistan has huge water capacities to be used for sustainable development and we will co-operate with neighbouring countries to ensure benefit for the whole region.

Mr. Abe stated that JICA will continue to support the water sector by raising awareness on the importance of management and the linkages with energy efficiency and DRR. He stressed the importance for development assistance to be engaged in DRR and the need to address water as a potential cause of conflict.

Mr. Susic underlined that co-operation and political dialogue on water to be effective needs to be well-structured, have a clear mandate from the participating entities and governments, a clear political goal, and should yield concrete results that make a change in the everyday life of people. He concluded that the processes started by the OSCE are tremendously important in this regard, and although time-consuming, produce good results.

Ms. Scheetz further explained the linkage between water and security, as shown in many studies and also the OSCE Security Day on Water Diplomacy in July 2014. Nevertheless, water is never the only factor of tensions, but part of complex situations, as was also exemplified in the nexus approach. Therefore, it is important to find equitable solution for all riparians as is attempted by the Berlin Process.

Ms. Milovanović concluded that awareness can contribute to increasing stability in the OSCE region.

The following conclusions and recommendations could be drawn from the discussion:

- Water is an issue of foreign and security policies due to its complex inter-linkages with many aspects of development and stability, as exemplified in the nexus-concept.
- Transboundary water co-operation along with good water governance holds many benefits: security benefits (reducing tensions), environmental benefits (improved water quality), economic benefits (infrastructure, e.g. dams, at most suitable place of the river, attraction of foreign investments).
- Political dialogue processes on water need to have clear mandate from participating entities and governments, must have clear political goal, and should yield concrete technical results.
- The critical importance of water in Central Asia was highlighted.
- JICA engagement in water management in SEE is a good example of addressing DRR issues within the context of water.
- OSCE has shown that it can holistically address water – from DRR to water diplomacy. With its longstanding tradition of dealing with all aspects of security and its presence on the ground, it is in an ideal position to act as a facilitator to find solution to water challenges in OSCE area.
- The discussion highlighted the importance of mutual consultation and information sharing in case of water projects at transboundary rivers.

Session V: *Water governance from different stakeholders' perspectives*

Moderator: Ms. **Desirée Schweitzer**, Deputy Co-ordinator/Head, Environmental Activities, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Rapporteur: Mr. **Leonid Kalashnyk**, Environmental Programme Officer, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Speakers:

- Ms. **Olivera Zurovac-Kuzman**, Environmental Advisor, Environmental Affairs Section, Democratization Department, OSCE Mission to Serbia]
- Ms. **Rozemarijn ter Horst**, Member of the Advisory Board, World Water Forum Working Group, Water Youth Network
- Mr. Ilya Trombitsky, Director, Eco-TIRAS, International Environmental Association of Dniester River Keepers, Moldova
- Ms. **Anastasiya Saidmakhmudova**, Team Leader on Strengthening Relationship with International Environmental NGOs and Movement, Ecological Movement of Uzbekistan

Ms. Desirée Schweitzer, Deputy Co-ordinator/Head, Environmental Activities, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities opened the session by referring to the importance of perspectives and roles of different stakeholders in water governance. She underlined that enhanced co-operation, public participation and dialogue among the stakeholders are crucial to ensure good water governance. Engaging the broad public is also often a challenge, and raising awareness is therefore a first and crucial step. It is important to explore how different stakeholders within the OSCE area perceive water governance and how they strive to manage water resources sustainably.

Ms. Olivera Zurovac-Kuzman, Environmental Advisor, OSCE Mission to Serbia presented the work of the Mission to Serbia in the area of civil society participation in water governance. She noted the Mission's projects in this area that started before the disastrous floods in South-Eastern Europe in May 2014 and are the means for enhancing human security and democratization with a focus on enhancing state authorities' accountability and transparency. Ms. Zurovac-Kuzman referred to the role of the Aarhus Centres in Kragujevac, Nis, Novi Sad and Subotica in ensuring an extensive country-wide geographical coverage. The Aarhus Centres' continued partnerships with state institutions ensure long-term sustainability of joint projects. She identified the Aarhus Centres' ability to facilitate dialogue among stakeholders, their connections with the academic world, and their expertise in building partnerships between community members and local authorities as an important part of successful activities, including the establishment of the Flood Risk Action Alliance for the Timok River basin in east Serbia. Ms. Zurovac-Kuzman went on to outline the Mission's support in promoting aligning of water legislation with international standards, capacity-building on disaster risk reduction in flood-prone areas and long-standing disaster preparedness and response programme with the Ministry of Interior and local self-governments. She concluded by underlining the cross-border nature of flooding as an opportunity for co-operation among countries from the Western Balkan region, through a participatory approach.

Ms. Rozemarijn ter Horst, Member of the Advisory Board, World Water Forum Working Group, Water Youth Network, presented the role of youth in water governance, including the ways for benefiting from young people's involvement in water governance more effectively. She noted the increased attention for young people's participation in the water sector and their role as a new

generation of professionals and decision-makers in the water and other sectors. Ms. ter Horst presented the vision and goals of the Water Youth Network and its role as a bridge between local and national youth organizations and as a catalyst for intergenerational co-operation. She highlighted the importance of youth as agents of change with regard to water issues and as a stakeholder for speaking up about issues related to water and sanitation. Young people can co-operate more easily across boundaries even in the context of situations when relations between states are not good. Ms. ter Horst referred to the acknowledgement of the importance of youth within the OECD Water Governance Initiative's Report on Stakeholder Engagement for Inclusive Water Governance and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. She outlined areas for youth's involvement, including one of the Toolbox for Resilience dedicated to Disaster Risk Reduction. She underlined informing, involving and empowering as the main principles for youth involvement in water governance and disaster risk reduction and referred to the need for more opportunities for youth engagement and empowerment in policy, science and practice at all levels. She concluded by outlining the ways for making more use of youth, including in the OSCE context. This includes more detailed information about what organizations are doing, meaningful involvement in the organizations' work, for example, through taking interns and investing in creating a more enabling environment for young stakeholders to participate.

Mr. Ilya Trombitsky, Director, Eco-TIRAS, International Environmental Association of Dniester River Keepers, Moldova, made a presentation about the role and experience of civil society organizations in raising awareness and uniting stakeholders in integrated transboundary river basin management. He noted that non-governmental organizations are faced with different conditions depending on economic development and political systems of the respective states. The UNECE Water Convention and the EU Water Framework Directive were identified as a useful tool for demonstrating best solutions for the governments. Mr. Trombitsky outlined key elements for effective public involvement, including basin and multi-stakeholder approaches. He identified a number of challenges affecting the involvement of civil society, including possible lack of access to information and the need for more transparency. He noted several ways for raising NGOs' efficiency. For example use of scientific expertise and best practices as well as the creation of transboundary NGO coalitions. Mr. Trombitsky noted the role of NGO community with regard to contributing to building confidence in a transboundary context as environmental issues could be a subject of co-operation, involving different stakeholders from both sides. He concluded by listing a number of practical activities that can be undertaken by civil society organizations to raise awareness and bring together stakeholders.

Ms. Anastasiya Saidmakhmudova, Team Leader on Strengthening Relationship with International Environmental NGOs and Movement, Ecological Movement of Uzbekistan, made a presentation about public participation in water management in Uzbekistan. She noted the increasing prominence of effective water governance and DRR in the context of a changing climate. She outlined the legal framework for public participation, specifically, provisions of the Law on Water and Water Use. Water Consumers Associations provide a way for the public to engage in governing waters. Another tool for public involvement is through the environmental NGOs. Ms. Saidmakhmudova outlined a number of public actions, information campaigns and contests undertaken by the mass media to make the public more aware about water-related issues. She referred to the important role and value of awareness raising activities related to water-related disaster risk reduction. Ms. Saidmakhmudova concluded by outlining a range of measures undertaken to address the environmental and economic challenges related to the Aral Sea, including the 2013 "Programme of measures on eliminating the consequences of the drying up of the Aral Sea and averting the catastrophe of the ecological systems in the Aral Sea region".

The floor was opened for discussion.

A representative of the Serbian Chairmanship commended the comprehensive presentations and underlined the involvement of non-state actors, particularly NGOs and young people, as crucial for comprehensive awareness raising. He expressed full support to the work of the OSCE Mission to Serbia in this and all other areas.

A representative of the United States noted the important role of private sector's in water governance and enquired about the speakers' insights about private sector's involvement and possible areas for such involvement.

A representative of Armenia was interested in the main challenges of confidence building activities undertaken between civil society organizations.

A representative of UNECE enquired where the speakers saw the added value of UNECE and OSCE in supporting the work of their organizations in the future.

Then the Moderator gave the floor to the speakers to answer questions and for final remarks.

Ms. ter Horst commented on the question about the role of the private sector indicating the importance of having a discussion together with all stakeholders, including the private sector. She highlighted the issues of ethics and dealing with adverse impacts on the environment as priority areas for the private sector's engagement. She noted water governance, including the involvement of stakeholders in water governance, is very important in the event of risk as well as prevention of risks.

Mr. Trombitsky highlighted the importance of political will from politicians and the role of mass media in conflict resolution. He noted that in any conflict situation there should be room for civil society organizations to undertake joint activities, create contacts and strengthen confidence between common people and the environment is one of the key areas for such engagement. He also mentioned that the added value of international organizations, namely OSCE and UNECE, as regards water governance is that they can promote transboundary water co-operation as they have expertise, authority and complementary strengths.

Ms. Olivera Zurovac-Kuzman noted the OSCE's Mission to Serbia contribution to enhancing good environmental governance practices through reaching out to the grass-root level as well as through cross-sectoral co-operation across the country. With regard to the private sector, she noted the importance of interest in triggering such engagement and cited two successful examples of the private sector in the OSCE's work in Serbia in the areas of disaster risk reduction and in the promotion of legislation on hazardous substances. She highlighted the establishment of the network of Aarhus Centers as a valuable tool of public participation in governing water.

Ms. Anastasiya Saidmakhmudova commended the opportunity to share experience in the area of water governance, including raising awareness of the public with regard to the risk of water-related disasters. She highlighted the importance of exchange of experience including on transboundary issues.

Before closing the session, the Moderator referred to the two OSCE projects related to water governance: one project in the area of women, water management and conflict prevention and the other project with a focus on gender mainstreaming in Aarhus Centres.

The following conclusions and recommendations could be drawn from the discussion:

- Enhanced co-operation, public participation and dialogue among stakeholders are critical to ensuring good water governance. Awareness raising activities are very important in the context of addressing water-related disaster risks.
- Aarhus Centres are an effective tool for public participation in governing waters and for strengthening water-related disaster risk reduction in particular at community level.
- Youth are important agents of change and future decision-makers with regard to water governance and have the potential to effectively interact across boundaries in addressing such issues.
- Civil society organizations are well placed to raise awareness on water governance issues at transboundary level and facilitate the effective involvement of public and other stakeholders

in addressing such issues. They can also contribute to building trust and co-operation related to water governance issues in a transboundary context.

- The OSCE has an important role to play in creating a more enabling environment to ensure meaningful involvement of youth in water governance and DRR at different levels.
- With its expertise and authority, the OSCE has the added value in the context of promoting co-operation on water governance issues at transboundary level and supporting civil society organizations active in this field.

Concluding Session

Moderator: Mrs. Tamara Rastovac-Siamshvili, Deputy Head of OSCE Task Force, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Serbia

Rapporteur: Ms. Alma Mirvić, Office of the Co-ordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities

Speakers: Dr. Halil Yurdakul Yiğitgüden, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Mrs. Tamara Rastovac-Siamshvili, Deputy Head of OSCE Task Force, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Serbia underlined that the choice of the Economic and Environmental Forum theme signalled once again the priority the Serbian Chairmanship assigns to the topic of water governance and disaster risk reduction. She noted that the Chairmanship is devoted to advancing this issue on the OSCE's agenda.

Dr. Halil Yurdakul Yiğitgüden, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, outlined the discussions under all sessions of the meeting. He underlined that keynote speakers spoke of participatory and accountable water governance in the context of disaster risk reduction. Challenges associated with disasters can also present opportunities for greater co-operation and solidarity across borders. Lessons from the SEE 2014 flooding disaster are valuable for the entire OSCE region. He added that a number of important linkages were identified especially security benefits of transboundary water governance for disaster risk reduction. He highlighted that this year was marked by a number of important global processes, including the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals as well as the Paris Climate Change Conference. The OSCE's ongoing endeavours to translate political commitments on DRR into practical outcome on the ground were highlighted as relevant for water governance. From DRR to water diplomacy, he noted, the OSCE has shown that it is in an ideal position to act as facilitator and find solution to water challenges in the OSCE area. Moreover, he added that the role of the Aarhus Centres was highlighted as catalyst of public participation. He underlined his Office's continued engagement in this field, including through the Environment and Security Initiative. He announced that a review of OSCE commitments in this field would be prepared by the UNECE for the Forum Concluding Meeting in Prague on 14-16 September.

The floor was then opened for statements.

Latvia, on behalf of the European Union, observed that transboundary co-operation was crucial in water governance. She referred to the statements made about the OSCE's tools and means to support a multi-stakeholder approach, through CASE projects or the broad network of Aarhus Centres. OSCE has the necessary expertise and comparative advantage in this area. Additionally, she recalled the references made to international treaties, specifically of the UNECE, and the good co-operation that was noted between the OSCE and UNECE. A reference was made to climate change adaptation and its linkages with disaster risk reduction. She noted that security implications of climate change issues are an area for further OSCE engagement. Finally, water is an issue with security aspects and the representative encouraged the Chairmanship to shape future OSCE engagement through a ministerial decision.

A representative of the United States noted that water governance issues attract a lot of interest and with that, opportunities for co-operation. He thanked the OCEEA, the Chairmanship and field missions in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina for the organization of the meeting and field visit.

The representative of the Russian Federation noted that this meeting has shown once again the importance of the OSCE as a forum for discussion. He expressed his hope that a relevant decision would be taken at the Ministerial Council in Belgrade.

A representative of Switzerland underlined that OSCE expertise in water governance and DRR, particularly with regards to flood was demonstrated through many examples, most notably the presentation of the OSCE missions in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Many speakers mentioned the network of Aarhus Centres as a network to be used in public participation processes. Switzerland is convinced should build on this OSCE expertise and that participating States should define the pillars that should be strengthened in the field of water governance. She encouraged the Chairmanship to start the process of reflecting on a possible ministerial council decision on water governance to be adopted in Belgrade at the end of the year. This decision should stress the security benefits of such OSCE involvement.

A representative of Slovenia noted that water-related challenges require comprehensive responses given the interlinkages with energy, climate change, food security, economy and international security. She added that water security could be a key foreign policy concern and a field for many co-operation opportunities.

A representative of Turkey noted that water should not be seen as a source of conflict, underlining that in the world there are more examples of co-operation rather than conflict over water. He encouraged all participating States to adopt a positive approach in advance of the Prague Forum.

A representative of Uzbekistan thanked the organizers for the opportunity to bring together a variety of speakers and perspectives around an important issue.

A representative of Armenia noted that there was a growing consensus that the lack of water could be a cause of conflict. In his view, the OSCE could become a facilitator for addressing the issues of water governance between participating States, peoples and communities in the entire OSCE region. Examples of confidence building measures could serve as reference points for developing thematic approaches, including through a Ministerial Council decision in Belgrade.

A representative of Azerbaijan noted that this meeting showed that the OSCE could provide a constructive forum for discussion and exchange of views on the issue. He reiterated that Azerbaijan believes that transboundary water co-operation should be compliant with international norms and law, and that in case of conflict co-operation could take place only after security concerns have been addressed.

The following conclusions and recommendations could be drawn from the discussion:

- Security implications of climate change issues are an area for further OSCE engagement.
- Participating States should define the pillars that should be strengthened in the OSCE regarding water governance.
- The OSCE can become a facilitator for addressing the issues of water governance between participating States, peoples and communities in the entire OSCE region.

Annex I



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Permanent Council**

PC.DEC/1131
24 July 2014

Original: ENGLISH

1012th Plenary Meeting

PC Journal No. 1012, Agenda item 4

Decision No. 1131

Theme, Agenda and Modalities for the Twenty-Third Economic and Environmental Forum

The Permanent Council,

Pursuant to Chapter VII, paragraphs 21 to 32, of the Helsinki Document 1992; Chapter IX, paragraph 20, of the Budapest Document 1994; Ministerial Council Decision No. 10/04 of 7 December 2004; Ministerial Council Decision No. 4/06 of 26 July 2006; Permanent Council Decision No. 743 of 19 October 2006; Permanent Council Decision No. 958 of 11 November 2010; and Permanent Council Decision No. 1011 of 7 December 2011,

Relying on the OSCE Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension (MC(11).JOUR/2) and Ministerial Council decisions related to the environment, energy and water management,

Building on the outcomes of past Economic and Environmental Forums, as well as on the results of relevant OSCE activities, including follow-up activities,

Decides that:

1. The theme of the Twenty-Third Economic and Environmental Forum will be: “Water governance in the OSCE area – increasing security and stability through co-operation”;
2. The Twenty-Third Economic and Environmental Forum will consist of three meetings, including two preparatory meetings, one of which will take place outside of Vienna. The concluding meeting will be held from 14 to 16 September 2015 in Prague. These arrangements shall not set a precedent for future meetings of the Economic and Environmental Forum. The Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, under the guidance of the OSCE Chairmanship for 2015, will organize the above-mentioned meetings;
3. The agenda of the Forum will focus on the impact of the following topics on the comprehensive security of the OSCE area:
 - Water governance as a prerequisite for environmental sustainability and for economic and social prosperity and stability;
 - Promotion of dialogue in good water governance within the OSCE area through sharing best practices and lessons learned;

- Raising awareness of the importance of water governance at all levels;
 - Water governance within the context of disaster risk reduction.
4. The agendas of the Forum meetings, including timetables and themes of the working sessions, will be proposed and determined by the OSCE Chairmanship for 2015, after being agreed upon by the participating States in the Economic and Environmental Committee;
 5. Moreover, having a view to its tasks, the Economic and Environmental Forum will review the implementation of OSCE commitments in the economic and environmental dimension. The review, to be integrated into the agenda of the Forum, will address OSCE commitments relevant to the theme of the Twenty-Third Economic and Environmental Forum;
 6. The discussions at the Forum should benefit from cross-dimensional input provided by other OSCE bodies and relevant meetings organized by the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, under the guidance of the OSCE Chairmanship for 2015, and from deliberations in various international organizations;
 7. Moreover, having a view to its tasks, the Economic and Environmental Forum will discuss current and future activities for the economic and environmental dimension, in particular the work in implementation of the OSCE Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension;
 8. The participating States are encouraged to be represented at a high level by senior officials responsible for shaping international economic and environmental policy in the OSCE area. Participation in their delegations of representatives from the business and scientific communities and of other relevant actors of civil society would be welcome;
 9. As in previous years, the format of the Economic and Environmental Forum should provide for the active involvement of relevant international organizations and encourage open discussions;
 10. The following international organizations, international organs, regional groupings and conferences of States are invited to participate in the Twenty-Third Economic and Environmental Forum: Asian Development Bank; Barents Euro-Arctic Council; Organization of the Black Sea Economic Co-operation; Central European Initiative; Collective Security Treaty Organization; Commonwealth of Independent States; Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia; Council of Europe; Council of the Baltic Sea States; Economic Co-operation Organization; Energy Community; Eurasian Economic Commission; Eurasian Economic Community; European Bank for Reconstruction and Development; European Environment Agency; European Investment Bank; Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; Green Cross International; European Investment Bank; International Atomic Energy Agency; International Energy Agency; International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA); International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea; International Maritime Organization; International Monetary Fund; International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement; International Committee of the Red Cross; North Atlantic Treaty Organization; Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC); OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID); Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development; Organization for Democracy and Economic Development – GUAM; Organization of Islamic Co-operation; Regional Co-operation Council; Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification; Southeast European Cooperative Initiative; Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; Shanghai Co-operation Organization; United Nations Development Programme; United Nations Economic Commission for Europe; United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific; United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development; United Nations Environment Programme; United Nations Human Settlements Programme; United Nations Industrial Development Organization; United Nations Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs; United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction; United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees; UN Women; United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia; World Bank Group; World Health Organization; World Meteorological Organization; World Trade

Organization; Advisory Group on Environmental Emergencies; Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit; International Strategy for Disaster Reduction; United Nations Children's Fund; Capacity for Disaster Reduction Initiative (CADRI); United Nations Disaster Assessment and Co-ordination; International Civil Defence Organization; World Food Programme; Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery; Inter-Parliamentary Union; Caucasus Environmental NGO Network (CENN); Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe (REC); and Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC); and other relevant organizations;

11. The OSCE Partners for Co-operation are invited to participate in the Twenty-Third Economic and Environmental Forum;

12. Upon request by a delegation of an OSCE participating State, regional groupings or expert academics and business representatives may also be invited, as appropriate, to participate in the Twenty-Third Economic and Environmental Forum;

13. Subject to the provisions contained in Chapter IV, paragraphs 15 and 16, of the Helsinki Document 1992, the representatives of non-governmental organizations with relevant experience in the area under discussion are also invited to participate in the Twenty-Third Economic and Environmental Forum;

14. In line with the practices established over past years with regard to meetings of the Economic and Environmental Forum, the outcomes of the preparatory meetings will be reviewed at the concluding meeting of the Twenty-Third Economic and Environmental Forum. The Economic and Environmental Committee will further include the conclusions and policy recommendations of the Twenty-Third Economic and Environmental Forum and the reports of the rapporteurs in its discussions so that the Permanent Council can take the decisions required for appropriate policy translation and follow-up activities.

Annex II: Opening Remarks

Check against delivery

23rd ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM

“Water governance in the OSCE area – increasing security and stability through co-operation”

SECOND PREPARATORY MEETING

Belgrade, 11 - 13 May 2015

Opening address of Mr. Aleksandar Nikolić, State Secretary, Ministry of Interior, Republic of Serbia

Dear guests, dear colleagues,

First of all on behalf of the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Serbia I would like to take this opportunity to wish you a warm welcome and fruitful work during the 23rd OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum and your stay in Serbia.

The leading topic chosen for this Seminar is the water governance, and it is not just one more environmental issue but one of the most important challenges we are currently dealing with, especially concerning last year flooding that occurred in Western Balkans region. Therefore, we would like to see discussion not only about improvement of the entire water governance, as the set of rules, practices, and processes related to the management of water resources and water courses, but to hear your expert opinions on good practices and developing practical tools to assist state agencies and other stakeholders in the OSCE countries in engaging effective and sustainable water governance policies.

You are all probably aware that during the May 2014 floods Serbia faced not only unprecedented emergency situation in its history but also experienced unprecedented engagement of foreign civil protection and rescue units. Therefore, we learned from our own experience how co-operation can increase security and stability and this was one of main reasons for organizing this kind of Seminar during the Serbian Chairmanship in the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

A natural disaster caused by extreme floods that last year struck Serbia had certainly disrupted most, if not all the aspects of daily life, including the lives of citizens, their basic social and related needs, the local economic activities, functioning of public services, transportation, the production of energy, just to name a few. Therefore, we would like also to see a discussion on organizational issues regarding the worst scenarios for related emergencies and planning of coping capacities for large scale disasters. In our case, and what I think it is the situation with the majority of the OSCE countries, the engagement of all available national resources in protection and rescue activities is possible, but at one moment it will be clear that these resources will not be sufficient and eventually you will have to ask for a humanitarian assistance in terms of the international flood rescue teams, the teams for high capacity pumping, etc. both on bilateral basis, as well as multilaterally through the European Union Civil Protection Mechanism. Therefore, during the Emergency Situation, we accepted assistance from 14 countries (22 teams with 563 members in total). Another kind of international humanitarian assistance was related to delivery of food and water, equipment, etc. Beside many countries, organizations and other private donors, it is important to emphasize that the OSCE reacted promptly

during floods and donated one high capacity pump and three others that were useful in that very moment.

As it was said at the beginning, in dealing with a large scale disasters there must be co-operation with other countries but as it was said during the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, in Sendai, Japan, there is a general agreement that we must move from managing disasters to managing disaster risk. Therefore, regarding severe weather conditions and apparent climate changes disaster risk reduction and specifically water governance is something we surely will be dealing in future years and thus it is important to emphasize its importance on every occasion. With the completion of the assessment for the entire state territory, the Republic of Serbia will be covered with prospected potential risks that may threaten the territory of cities and municipalities, and at the same time the establishment of civil protection structures at the local level (the level of cities and municipalities) will be completed.

The main limiting factor in planning and undertaking preventive operational measures is unfortunately, the continual deficiency of financial resources on the territories of local authorities (cities and municipalities), which has impact on reducing the effects of the consequences of disasters. But something needs to be done and, as disaster risk reduction is becoming national and local priority with strong institutional basis for implementation, disaster risk reduction policy is generally accepted by all stakeholders.

Regarding identification, assessment and monitoring of risks and enhancement of early warning system, Serbia is adopting standards and assessment methodology and identifying risks from natural and other disasters are in accordance with the recommendations of the European Union. Guidelines on the methodology for the development of risk assessment and plans for protection and rescue in emergency situations have been adjusted to EU regulations.

Beside this there is a constant work on improvement of functioning of protection and rescue system stakeholders at national and local level by connecting with scientific and research organizations, and good co-operation with the media with goal to promote a policy of disaster risk reduction with the availability of information to citizens in order to strengthen the public awareness and culture of safety in the field of protection, rescue and disaster risk reduction. This is also a good place to mention one more aspect of co-operation between Sector for Emergency Management of the Ministry of Interior and the OSCE Mission to Serbia which was presented in the form of a joint work on a Family Guide for Emergency Preparedness and Response.

Accurate, comparable and appropriately scaled information on disaster losses, hazards, vulnerabilities and risks is fundamental for designing and implementing effective policies and programmes that reduces disaster risk. In partnership with the OSCE and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), UNDP and CIMA Foundation, the SEM/MoI recently organized the Workshop "Learning from past disasters: from recording loss data to fostering prevention policies" regarding development of a database on disaster losses based on DesInventar. Beside this the OSCE Mission to Serbia provided necessary donation for organizing several Emergency Management table top exercises for county level across Serbia.

Also in order to improve regional co-ordination and operational co-operation through joint monitoring information exchange and joint trainings, a number of protocols with neighbouring and other countries were signed.

Once again enjoy your stay in Serbia. Thank you for your attention.

23rd ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM

“Water governance in the OSCE area – increasing security and stability through co-operation”

SECOND PREPARATORY MEETING

Vienna, 26 - 27 January 2015

Opening address of Dr. Halil Yurdakul Yiğitgüden, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Excellences,

Distinguished participants,

It is an honour to address this opening session of the First Preparatory Meeting of the 23rd OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum. The focus of this year’s Forum is linked to security in a profound way: in the absence of good water governance, water might become a source of conflict. At the same time, well governed water provides opportunities to build confidence and help prevent conflict between those sharing water resources.

I am very pleased to welcome so many reputed experts who joined us to share their in-depth knowledge on different aspects of water governance. Today, we have with us many government officials from the OSCE participating States and Partners for Co-operation, representatives of international and bilateral organizations, of international NGOs, academia and the private sector.

Within the Economic and Environmental Dimension, water has always been high on our agenda. Over the years, we have built a strong record of projects supporting participating States in strengthening water governance at national level as well as in a transboundary context. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe – also as the holder of the UNECE Water Convention- has always been one of our main partners in this endeavour.

I would like to use this opportunity to give you a few examples of what my Office and our colleagues in the Field operation have been doing in the field of water governance:

In South-Eastern Europe, we have been involved in the International Framework Agreement on the Sava River Basin since its early stages and also contributed to the work of the International Sava River Basin Commission. Currently, our engagement in the region is more targeting community-based disaster risk reduction, particularly through the network of Aarhus Centres. At this point, I would also like to refer to the OSCE Mission to Serbia which has a long track record in supporting participative flood risk management. They have done so already long before the May 2014 floods. The Mission has invested significant efforts towards capacity building and community engagement in flood risk reduction, often together with the Aarhus Centres network. Similarly, the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina continues to support policy makers in addressing disaster risk reduction plans from a regional perspective, as well as the Aarhus Centres network in their work with local communities to increase their engagement in shaping local flood response plans.

Let me now turn to Eastern Europe, where eight years of our joint work with Moldova and Ukraine has led to the signing of the Treaty on the Dniester River Basin in 2012. This is a crucial step towards establishing a sound legal framework for good water governance at transboundary level. The Treaty broadens the existing co-operation to cover the entire river basin and all sectors that are important for the management and protection of shared waters. We continue our support to the Dniester Basin

through several projects within the framework of the Environment and Security (ENVSEC) Initiative. One of the most recent results is a draft basin-wide strategic framework for climate change adaptation developed within the framework of an OSCE-led ENVSEC project on climate change and security. The project is financed mainly by the European Union's Instrument for Stability and the Austrian Development Agency and implemented together with UNECE, UNEP, UNDP and REC.

In the South Caucasus, together with UNECE, we have facilitated negotiations between Azerbaijan and Georgia on a co-operation agreement on the management of the Kura River Basin. We organized six rounds of bilateral consultations to develop a legal framework for co-operation on water pollution, biodiversity, emergency situations, information sharing and public participation. The draft Agreement also envisages the establishment of a joint commission for protection and rational use of water resources of the Kura River Basin. The Agreement is currently under consideration by Azerbaijani and Georgian Ministries of Foreign Affairs. The OSCE stands ready to continue its support and facilitate the finalization of the agreement.

In Central Asia, thanks to our Office in Tajikistan, the OSCE has long been engaged in facilitating transboundary water co-operation along the Upper Amu Darja River - also known as the Panj River - between Tajikistan and Afghanistan. I would also like to mention our support, together with UNECE, to the establishment and operation of a bilateral water Commission between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in the basins of the Chu and Talas Rivers. A new follow-up project on the Chu and Talas Rivers is currently under preparation. At this point, let me underline the support and commitment of particularly the Centre in Astana. Their support to basin councils and to capacity building for Integrated Water Resources Management requires special recognition. Efficient irrigation is another area where several OSCE Field operation in Central Asia are actively engaged.

Let me underline that most of our activities related to water governance are taking place in the framework of the Environment and Security Initiative. For over a decade now, ENVSEC has been a unique mechanism to create synergies and jointly address environmental challenges, inter alia, related to water.

Excellencies,

Good water governance based on the principles of co-operation has an essential role to play for building trust and strengthening security. The fundamental importance of good and co-operative water governance for security and stability within and across borders calls for continuous dialogue and involvement of a broad spectrum of stakeholders at different levels.

Our agenda for the next two days will provide an opportunity for this. Allow me a few words on the specific sessions of this meeting:

Water is a medium that links air and land through the hydrological cycle. Water is also a vital link between people, communities and countries that are sharing it. Well governed water is essential to maintain public health and sound environment as well as to foster stability. In the first session, we will discuss the water governance concept, principles underlying good water governance, as well as best practices in implementing it.

Energy and food production heavily depend on freshwater supply. Pressure on water and land resources in the OSCE area is increasing due to population growth, changing consumption patterns and climate change. Responding to these challenges requires more effective accommodation of future energy and food demands as well as environmental considerations.

The second session today will be dedicated to water governance across sectors with a focus on fostering food and energy security. The session's deliberations will in particular touch on the water-energy-food nexus and new approaches to sustainable hydropower and efficient irrigation.

Freshwater ecosystems are among the most extensively altered systems on Earth. Rivers, streams, and lakes have experienced various changes as a result of large-scale water diversions, introduction of invasive species, overharvesting, pollution, and climate change. The third session will discuss

protection of ecosystems and increasing of water efficiency. The session will also look at climate change in the context of water governance.

Governing water resources involves a range of stakeholders at local, national, regional, and international levels. While water often appears to be a local issue, even local water challenges may have implications transcending boundaries and national borders. In the fourth session, we will take a closer look at water governance at different levels with a focus on community-based water governance and basin management.

Lack of transparency and corruption are both a cause and a result of poor water governance. Transparency, access to information, and integrity build a sustainable foundation for good water governance and reduce the potential for conflict. The fifth session will focus on transparency as the vital prerequisite of good water governance including the roles of economic instruments, civil society and the business sector.

Exchange of knowledge and experience is crucial to develop evidence-based policy, make informed decisions, raise awareness and build trust and confidence between different stakeholders, including at transboundary and regional level. Sharing of technology and innovation on water management has a valuable role to play in this process. The sixth session will enable us to have a lively discussion on these aspects.

In concluding, I would like to welcome you all once again and I strongly encourage you to actively participate and contribute to our Forum's deliberations. I am looking forward to fruitful discussions.

Thank you for your attention.

Annex III: KEYNOTE SPEECHES

**Dražen Kurečić, President
International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River
Assistant Minister, Ministry of Agriculture, Republic of Croatia**

For a long time floods were not open threat to security but in last ten years this has radically changed, among other, due to climate changes. The fact that this issue is on the agenda of meeting under umbrella of Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, clearly shows that we all recognize flood risk as one of our main threat. By mutual help, through learning from experiences of the countries which were severe hit by floods and with joint efforts when it comes to development of forecasting systems we can prevail this threat and give our citizens security they need.

Both European and regional security from the adverse effects of water and protection mechanisms we have today has primarily been maintained through the building up of bilateral security agreements on water management co-operation. In addition to that, bilateral and multilateral frameworks of dialog are established with multilayered arrangements, and the best example of such international body dealing with all water management issues, and in particularly flood issues is ICPDR.

The necessity and benefits of promoting dialogue and co-operation among stakeholders is inevitable. Meeting like this is opportunity to bring together awareness and knowledge from professionals, actually, from practitioners. European basins are inseparable, sharing knowledge and experience in these fields is of vital importance in planning for the future.

Since July the 1st 2013 Croatia is the youngest, 28th member of European Union. By adopting the EU acquis, the Republic of Croatia has also adopted legislation, among other, Directive on the assessment and management of flood risks (Flood Directive).

At this moment, most of EU countries, including Croatia, go through the public consultation process for Draft of the 2nd River Basin Management Plan and 1st Flood Risk Management Plan, as part of 2nd RBMP. The Plan will be adopted by the Government of the Republic of Croatia by December 1st 2015.

Countries of Danube basin in the same time are also finalizing the 2nd Danube Basin Management Plan and 1st Danube Flood Risk Management Plan. In this regard, stakeholder workshop for the Plan will take place in Zagreb, on 2nd and 3rd July 2015.

Experience and help of other countries in water management, as it is well known, is especially valuable when it comes to flood prevention and flood management. In this respect, going back to catastrophic floods in May 2014, which took the most important- human lives- and caused severe material damage in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, shows that nature has its own scenario and sometimes it cannot be foreseen.

There are many opportunities for joined projects which can improve existing or develop new models for hydrological forecasting e.g. improvement of data exchange and early warning system and this is what we specially support and emphasize in ICPDR but also in bilateral meetings.

According to agenda, meeting will end up with clear and practical conclusions; water related issues have always been on OSCE agenda and international community needs such facilitators who bring experts, organizations, politicians and other community members together towards a common goal.

Keynote speech

Mr. Marco Keiner
Director of the Environment Division
United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to address you at this second preparatory meeting of the OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum, having already contributed to the first meeting. As you may recall from that meeting, water governance, the focus of this year's Forum, is an issue of importance to the member States of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe – UNECE – and is a topic on which UNECE has a long and successful history of co-operation with OSCE.

Today I will address a particular aspect of water governance –awareness-raising and public participation – because participatory and accountable water governance is necessary for well-informed choices and can help prevent or reduce negative effects of investments on development and on water resources. Ignoring a wide participatory approach can be costly and lead to uncertainty for government, civil society and business alike. And without awareness there cannot be participatory governance.

For the past 20 years, UNECE has worked to strengthen water governance and water co-operation through environmental treaties and policy instruments and by working with countries in strengthening institutions and capacities.

The UNECE member States have negotiated treaties that provide crucial frameworks for water governance and environmental democracy in the pan-European region and beyond:

The Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes – or Water Convention – and its Protocol on Water and Health;

The Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context – or Espoo Convention – and its Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment; and

The Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters – or Aarhus Convention – and its Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers.

The Water Convention and the Espoo Convention both operate in a transboundary context. This is of tremendous importance in the pan-European region where more than half of all freshwater resources cross-national boundaries. We need to cooperate in the management of natural resources, in tackling environmental threats and in increasing security and stability. And that means the involvement of numerous stakeholders and good water governance at many levels, from local to regional.

The Water Convention is an important legal framework for improving water governance and integrated water resources management, in particular at the basin level. It strengthens transboundary water co-operation and measures for the ecologically-sound management and protection of transboundary surface waters and groundwaters. The Convention requires intersectorial co-operation, public participation, transparency through data exchange for example and much more. In addition, and very importantly, the Convention requires riparian Parties to enter into agreements for their shared waters and establish joint institutions for their management.

The Water Convention provides an intergovernmental forum for discussing transboundary water co-operation and sharing good practices, but also supports countries through assessment, capacity-development, guidance and projects on the ground.

Many of these projects on the ground are carried out in co-operation with OSCE. I will pick out one particular example, of the Dniester River Basin shared by Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, where UNECE and OSCE have supported the riparian countries in the framework of the Environment and Security Initiative for several years to improve their water co-operation.

This led to, among other successes, the development and signature in November 2012 of the bilateral Dniester Treaty. That agreement was developed in a process that included civil society, first through the participation of NGO representatives in the expert consultations on the draft text then in public hearings organized in the two countries. The public's comments were then taken into account in the revision of the draft text. The resulting Treaty provides for public access to information and public participation in decision-making.

Indeed many of the basin-level and bilateral agreements that countries have established within the framework of the Water Convention provide strong opportunities for the public. That is not by chance as the Convention requires that its Parties ensure that information is made available to the public on the conditions of transboundary waters, on measures taken or planned to be taken to prevent, control and reduce transboundary impact, and on the effectiveness of those measures.

The co-operation between UNECE and OSCE on the Dniester continues. At the end of April, a strategy for adaptation to climate change for the Dniester, facilitated by UNECE and OSCE was launched at a high-level event in Kyiv. The strategy aims to increase the effectiveness of adaptation by locating measures where they have the optimum effect and it promotes a common understanding on climate change impacts and necessary adaptation measures from the transboundary perspective. With this, the Dniester is now one of the very few basins worldwide with a transboundary adaptation strategy.

Let me thank OSCE again for the good co-operation and for supporting countries to implement the UNECE Water Convention.

UNECE does not only play a role in transboundary water governance. Indeed, transboundary water co-operation can hardly be sustainable without well-functioning co-ordination between different ministries and stakeholders within countries. Water policies must not be shaped just by respective national water agencies, there must be broad discussions, taking into account interests of different water users. UNECE has therefore supported the development of platforms for such regular water policy discussions in nine countries through the process of National Policy Dialogues in the framework of the EU Water Initiative. Over the past eight years, these national platforms have helped to modernize water policies in many countries. NGO representatives participate in the intersectorial dialogues and, in some countries, the main meetings are supplemented by stakeholder events. Again, OSCE has been involved, as these national dialogues always feature a co-ordination role between donors active in the field of water to make sure there is no duplication of activities.

The UNECE Water Convention is supplemented by a Protocol on Water and Health that aims to protect human health and well-being by better water management, including the protection of water ecosystems, and by preventing, controlling and reducing water-related diseases. It is the first international agreement of its kind adopted specifically to attain an adequate supply of safe drinking water and adequate sanitation for everyone. Parties to the Protocol commit to set national or local targets in relation to the entire water cycle.

Therefore, the Protocol on Water and Health also has an important role to play in water governance in our region. It recognizes that access to information and public participation are essential. It builds public awareness of issues related to water and health. The Protocol specifically commits its Parties to make appropriate provisions for public participation, within a transparent and

fair framework, and ensure that due account is taken of the outcome of the public participation while setting targets to ensure a high level of protection against water-related disease, when developing water-management plans and when reviewing and assessing progress.

Numerous countries have followed this path with the assistance of the Protocol's joint secretariat, provided by UNECE and the WHO Regional Office for Europe. For example, in December we assisted Serbia with the setting of its targets in a participatory process. In the Republic of Moldova we are working with many national stakeholders to implement measures to achieve the country's targets for water and sanitation.

The experience under that Protocol is that public participation can be hard to achieve due to a lack of awareness among the public of its rights and among the public authorities of their obligations, as well as the lack of national legal frameworks and cross-sectoral co-operation. There may also be political reluctance to engage the public, lack of access to information and budgetary constraints to running public-participation processes.

However, public participation gives the public the opportunity to express its concerns. It also enables public authorities to take due account of such concerns, which is vital to enhance the quality and the implementation of the decisions adopted to improve access to drinking water and sanitation and to protect human health.

In this regard, I would like to mention another key instrument: the Aarhus Convention and its Protocol on PRTRs which go to the heart of the relationship between people and their government thereby promoting environmental democracy. Their aims include not only environmental protection and sustainable development, but also such overarching themes as government accountability, transparency and responsiveness what make their provisions relevant for implementation of other instruments. Water management therefore should be applied in the light of concepts and principles of the Aarhus Convention and its Protocol.

Furthermore, the Aarhus Convention requires its Parties to promote the application of the Convention's principles in international environmental decision-making, which also include the work of joint bodies for transboundary water co-operation.

The Aarhus Convention has proved to have an unprecedented value for transboundary water co-operation as it grants the rights to be exercised by the public "without discrimination as to citizenship, nationality or domicile".

The Protocol sets forth a specific regime for wastewaters, for example an off-site transfer of pollutants in wastewater beyond the boundaries of a facility via a sewer or any other means, such as containers or tank trucks. Many provisions of the Protocol are most important for transboundary water management, when it comes to the use of relevant data from various economic sectors for the purposes of water management and transboundary water co-operation. The Protocol too promotes informed public participation

And again, I would like to thank OSCE for the valuable co-operation. Aarhus Centres and the OSCE are key partners of the UNECE for implementing the Aarhus Convention and its Protocol on the ground through building capacities and raising awareness. Aarhus Centres serve as an essential resource base for spreading environmental democracy and a valuable multiplier of the Aarhus principles.

That conclusion can be drawn under much of UNECE's work on environmental governance: yes, there are gaps in implementation and capacity needs. But the good governance practices and legal frameworks that the UNECE policy instruments introduce and define have enormous benefits in terms of well-informed decision-making. Good decisions lead to actions that can be implemented effectively

and efficiently, have public support and foster sustainable development. Good environmental governance is in everyone's interest.

Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen, UNECE is pleased to work with you in preparation for the twenty-third OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum. I look forward to our continuing co-operation in the coming months on this important topic

Annex IV: Closing Remarks

Check against delivery

23rd ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM

“Water governance in the OSCE area – increasing security and stability through co-operation”

SECOND PREPARATORY MEETING

Belgrade, 11-13 May 2015

Closing Statement of Dr. Halil Yurdakul Yiğitgüden, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Dear Ambassadors,

Dear Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In concluding the Second Preparatory Meeting of the 23rd OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum, please allow me to express my gratitude for the constructive discussions, the insightful presentations, the competent moderation and the ideas put forward.

Let me shortly outline the main discussions we have had over the last two days. The keynote speeches by President of ICPDR, Assistant Minister Kurečić and Mr. Keiner of UNECE have underlined the importance of participatory and accountable water governance, in particular, in the context of disaster risk reduction. The keynote contributions highlighted a number of legal and institutional multilateral frameworks that offer the potential and tools for more effective decision-making in governing waters and addressing associated disaster risks.

We have been able to learn extensively about the management of the 2014 flooding disaster in South Eastern Europe, including valuable insights about individual countries' approaches, regional and international co-operative responses and the role of the OSCE. As noted by many of the speakers, challenges associated with the disasters can also provide opportunities for building further co-operation and solidarity, including across borders. I would like to commend those who have presented a range of useful lessons and reflections from South-Eastern Europe - which are also relevant across the OSCE region.

An extensive discussion was dedicated to addressing water, security and disaster risk reduction in a more global context. These deliberations benefited from a presentation on the recently adopted Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015 – 2030). A number of important linkages between water governance, disaster risk reduction, climate change and security were identified, including security benefits of transboundary water co-operation for disaster risk reduction.

The year 2015 has on several occasions been highlighted as an important year for acting on synergies between these areas, also in the OSCE context, given this year's conclusion of several

global processes, including the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai, expected adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals in New York and negotiations for the Paris Climate Change Conference.

A number of best practices on flood and drought response and examples of effective governance approaches for addressing water-related disasters and climate change from several participating States were presented. The OSCE's on-going endeavours to translate political commitments on disaster risk reduction into practical outcomes on the ground were also referred to as having an important role in the context of water governance.

Discussions referred to water as an issue of foreign and security policies due to its complex interlinkages with many aspects of development and stability, as exemplified in the nexus-concept. Transboundary water co-operation along with good water governance holds many benefits ranging from security to environmental and economic benefits. The OSCE has shown that it can holistically address water – from DRR to water diplomacy. With its longstanding tradition of dealing with all aspects of security and its presence on the ground, it is in an ideal position to act as a facilitator to find solution to water challenges in the OSCE area.

Our deliberations underlined the indispensable role of different stakeholders in the process of formulation and implementation of effective strategies and plans to address water governance issues. The OSCE network of Aarhus Centres was highlighted as an effective instrument in catalysing public participation. The role of youth as the agents of change and future decision-makers makes youth particularly well placed to be active players in water governance. Non-governmental organizations active in the field of environment and water were noted as important contributors to endeavours aimed at building confidence and trust.

We will thoroughly review the recommendations that have been generated over the last two days and look at possible follow-up activities. My Office has significant experience in the area of water governance and will continue to build on this experience also within the framework of the Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC) to support OSCE participating States.

I believe the exchange of experience will continue during a field visit to the municipalities in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia that have been affected by the 2014 flood. Those of you who join the field trip will have an excellent opportunity to be exposed to first-hand accounts and experience of these municipalities in facing up to the disaster.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would also like to say a few words about the Concluding Meeting in Prague in September. An important component of every concluding meeting is a review of the OSCE commitments related to the theme of the Forum on that specific year. Allow me to note that this year's review is being prepared by UNECE, a long-term key partner of the OSCE, also within the ENVSEC Initiative. We are looking forward to the outcomes of this year's review.

The Concluding Meeting will consolidate the outcomes of the Forum discussions throughout the year. It will help crystalize conclusions and recommendations for OSCE's continued action in the area of water governance.

Thanks to the rapporteurs, a Consolidated Summary including the main key suggestions and recommendations made by the participants during the deliberations will be prepared by my Office and shared with all of you in the coming weeks.

I would like to thank the Serbian Chairmanship, the moderators, speakers and rapporteurs, the interpreters, the conference service staff, as well as the colleagues from my Office for their joint contribution to the success of this event.

I also want to thank all of you for your active contribution and wish an informative field visit and a safe trip back home.

Annex V: Annotated Agenda



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
The Secretariat**

Vienna, 8 May 2015

The 23rd OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum

“Water governance in the OSCE area – increasing security and stability through co-operation”

SECOND PREPARATORY MEETING

Belgrade, 11-13 May 2015

Venue: Palace of Serbia, 2 Mihajla Pupina Boulevard

ANNOTATED AGENDA

Monday, 11 May 2015

09:00 – 10:30 **Opening Session** (*open to Press*)

Welcoming remarks:

Mr. Aleksandar Nikolić, State Secretary, Ministry of Interior, Serbia

Dr. Halil Yurdakul Yiğitgüden, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Keynote speeches:

Mr. Dražen Kurečić, President, International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River Basin, Ministry of Agriculture, Croatia

Mr. Marco Keiner, Director, Environment Division, UNECE

Selected topics:

- Water governance in the context of disaster risk reduction
- Awareness-raising and public participation with regard to water governance
- Water governance as a catalyst for co-operation and confidence-building

Rapporteur: Ms. Olivera Zurovac-Kuzman, Environmental Adviser, Democratization Department, OSCE Mission to Serbia

Statements by Delegations / Discussion

10:30 – 11:00 **Coffee Break**

11:00 – 12:30 **Session I: The 2014 flooding disaster in South Eastern Europe – Experiences and lessons learned in the context of water governance at regional level**

Selected topics:

- Assessment of the regional and international co-operation in flood response
- Security challenges associated with flooding
- Role of the OSCE Field operation in flood response and recovery
- Environmental risks and challenges as opportunities for co-operation

Moderator: Ambassador Tomislav Leko, Permanent Mission of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the OSCE and International Organizations in Vienna

Rapporteur: Mr. Uroš Milanović, Attaché, Permanent Mission of Serbia to the OSCE, 2015 Serbian OSCE Chairmanship

Speakers:

Mr. Predrag Marić, Assistant Minister, Head of the Department for Emergency Management, Ministry of Interior, Serbia

Ambassador Jonathan Moore, Head of Mission, OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina

Ms. Marta Bonifert, Executive Director, Regional Environment Centre for Central and Eastern Europe

- **Dr. Marijan Babić**, Head of Project Implementation Unit for Implementation of Flood-protection Projects Financed by CEB Loans and EU Funds, Croatian Waters, Croatia

Discussion

12:30 – 14:00 **Lunch break**

14:00 – 15:30 **Session II: Water, security and disaster risk reduction**

Selected topics:

- Security risks resulting from climate change and extreme weather events as related to water governance (floods and droughts)
- Water governance in the context of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030
- Security benefits of transboundary water co-operation with a focus on disaster risk reduction

Moderator: Mr. Massimo Cozzone, Senior Officer, Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea, Italy

Rapporteur: Ms. Nino Malashkhia, Associate Environmental Affairs Officer, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Speakers:

Mr. Goran Ždrale, Senior Officer for Analysis and Reporting, Mine Action Centre, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Mr. Luca Rossi, Programme Officer, Regional Office for Europe, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction

Mr. Jakub Gibek, Head, Water Policy Unit, Water Resources Department, Ministry of Environment, Poland

Ms. Aušra Semaškienė, Ambassador at Large, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Lithuania

Ms. Nilza Sena, Vice-Chair, Second Committee, OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

Discussion

15:30 – 16:00 **Coffee Break**

16:00 – 17:30 **Session III: Sharing of experiences on water governance in the context of disaster risk reduction**

Selected topics:

- Best practices on flood and drought response in participating States
- OSCE activities on disaster risk reduction: from policy to action
- Effective governance approaches for addressing water-related disasters and climate change

Moderator: Ms. Irena Vojáčková-Sollorano, UN Resident Coordinator, UNDP Resident Representative for Serbia

Rapporteur: Ms. Alma Mirvić, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Speakers:

Ms. Indira Akbozova, Head of the Kazakhstan part of the Secretariat of the Chu-Talas Commission and **Ms. Gulmira Satymkulova**, Head of the Kyrgyzstan part of the Secretariat of the Chu-Talas Commission

Mr. David Elkaïm, Political Officer on Water and Sanitation, Climate and Environment Unit, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, France

Ms. Carolin Schärpf, Scientific Officer, Federal Department of the Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications, Federal Office for the Environment, Switzerland

Mr. Movses Poghosyan, Director, National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, Armenia

17:30	Side event on activities of the OSCE field operation and Aarhus Centres in South-Eastern Europe related to water and DRR
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19:00 **Reception hosted by the Government of Serbia**

Tuesday, 12 May 2015

09:30 – 11:00 **Session IV: Awareness-raising on the benefits of good water governance**

Selected topics:

- Mainstreaming water governance in foreign and security policies
- Water governance in the context of investments and development assistance
- Water stewardship approaches
- Water governance and the Sustainable Development Goals

Moderator: Ms. Dragana Milovanović, Head, Department for Participation in Strategic Planning, Management and International Water Co-operation, Water Directorate of the Republic of Serbia

Rapporteur: Ms. Jenniver Sehring, Environmental Affairs Adviser, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Speakers:

Ms. Daniela Scheetz, Desk Officer, Division on Climate and Environmental Foreign Policy, Sustainable Economy, Federal Foreign Office, Germany

Mr. Srđan Sušić, Senior Expert on Sustainable Growth, Regional Co-operation Council

Mr. Tagoimurod Gulov, Head of Main Department on Water Resources, Ministry of Energy and Water Resources, Republic of Tajikistan

Mr. Toshiya Abe, Resident Representative for Balkan Office, Japanese International Co-operation Agency

Discussion

11:00 – 11:30 **Coffee Break**

11:30 – 13:00 **Session V: Water governance from different stakeholders' perspectives**

Selected topics:

- Public participation in water governance
- Raising awareness among different stakeholders (civil society, local communities, youth)
- Gender and water governance

Moderator: Ms. Desirée Schweitzer, Deputy Co-ordinator/Head, Environmental Activities, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Rapporteur: Mr. Leonid Kalashnyk, Environmental Programme Officer, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Speakers:

Ambassador Peter Burkhard, Head of Mission, OSCE Mission to Serbia

Ms. Rozemarijn ter Horst, Member of the Advisory Board, World Water Forum Working Group, Water Youth Network

Mr. Ilya Trombitsky, Director, Eco-TIRAS, International Environmental Association of Dniester River Keepers, Moldova

- **Ms. Anastasiya Saidmakhmudova**, Team Leader on Strengthening Relationship with International Environmental NGOs and Movement, Ecological Movement of Uzbekistan

13:00 – 14:30 **Lunch Break**

Side event: Identifying hazards during flood response – Sharing the 2014 South-Eastern Europe flood experience

14:30 – 15:30 **Concluding Session**

- Wrap-up
- Organizational remarks concerning the field visit

Moderator: **Ambassador Dejan Šahović**, Head of OSCE Task Force, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Serbia

Rapporteur: **Ms. Alma Mirvić**, Office of the Co-ordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities

Speakers:
Dr. Halil Yurdakul Yiğitgüden, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Closing Statements

16:30 **Departure on Field Visit**

Field Visit to May 2014 Flood-affected Areas

Tuesday, 12 May 2015

16:30 Departure from Belgrade, Palace of Serbia towards Bijeljina, Bosnia and Herzegovina

18:00 Crossing into Bosnia and Herzegovina at the Rača Border Crossing

18:30 Arrival at the Ethno-village Stanišići (Bijeljina, Bosnia and Herzegovina) with an overnight stay at the hotel

20:00 Dinner hosted by the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina

Wednesday, 13 May 2015

07:00 – 09:00	Breakfast at the hotel (including check-out)
09:00 – 09:05	Welcome by Ambassador Jonathan Moore, Head of the OSCE Mission to BiH
09:05 – 09:10	Welcome by Mr. Mijo Krešić, Deputy Minister of Security of BiH
09:05 – 09:35	Welcome and presentation by Mayor of Bijeljina, Mr. Mićo Mičić
09:35 – 10:00	Presentation by Assistant Minister of Security of BiH, Mr. Samir Agić
10:00 – 10:15	Placement in buses and departure from hotel
10:30 – 11:10	Stops at village Rača – sightseeing and press opportunity
11:30	Crossing into Serbia at the Badovinjeci Border Crossing
12:15 – 13:15	Visit to the town of Šabac
13:30 - 13:45	Visit to Mrđanovac village
14:15 – 15:30	Visit to the town of Obrenovac
15:00	Return transfer to Belgrade

Note:

Participants attending the Field Visit are requested to bring their luggage to the Forum venue (Palace of Serbia) on Tuesday, 12 May 2015, as the departure to the Field Visit is scheduled at 16:30 on that same day. Also, all luggage needs to be loaded on the buses by 09:00 on 13 May.

The return transfer will be provided to:

- a) Belgrade Airport – arrival to Nikola Tesla Airport is envisaged at 16:00 OR
- b) Belgrade city centre – arrival is envisaged at 16:00.