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I would like to thank the keynote speakers for their comprehensive and direct assessment of the challenges that lie ahead for the OSCE and the international community as a whole.

This year, the OSCE is conducting a review on partnership and related issues. Many speakers have already made references to OSCE partnership and the relations of the Organization with its Asian and Mediterranean Partners.

In Decision 571 on partnership and related issues it was suggested that newly emerging threats and challenges could be addressed, inter alia, at the second Annual Security Review Conference.

As chairman of the informal group on the implementation of Decision 571 I would like to share some aspects regarding our work so far. As we still have some parts of the tasking under discussion, it would be too early to draw conclusions. I prefer to express some of the main questions exactly in the form of questions.

First of all, the tasking in Decision 571 is seen as part of the implementation of the OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century. It is not seen as an isolated exercise.

The notion of partnership as a whole has been under some discussion. Is the OSCE interested in cooperating with Partners and adjacent regions because it regards them as potential sources of threats and challenges? Or are we proceeding from the basis that security is indivisible, not only in the OSCE region but also with our neighbours? Can these two aspects be reconciled?

Another question under debate has been how the Partners and others could implement the OSCE acquis, in other words its principles, norms and commitments on a voluntary basis. Do Partners know what the OSCE is expecting of them? The participating States has developed the OSCE acquis as a whole over three decades. The OSCE is known for its comprehensive concept of security, reflected in its acquis. But what if choices have to be made? What is the order of priority in the voluntary implementation of the acquis by the Partners? For example, which comes first, human rights or anti-terrorism? Who makes the choices?

The participating States and the Partners - all of them - have actively participated in consultations and discussions. The Partners have emphasized that they are interested in cooperation with the OSCE because it is an international security organization.

Both the participating States and the Partner States have emphasized the need of mutually reinforcing cooperation between the various international and regional organizations to which they belong.

There have been issues - outside the group that I chair - where some Partners have expressed their differing views on some OSCE activities. However, I would like to claim that their points view have been listened to. Perhaps there has been more dialogue with Partners this year than ever before.

I am looking forward to further ideas on the development of partnership and related issues and hope that our work will make enough progress to be recognized at the Sofia Ministerial meeting. The question of utilizing OSCE partnership for the security of all those concerned is, of course, a long-term issue. It cannot be solved in one year. That is why it is appropriate to take it up in the session on the way forward.