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**The Fourteenth Meeting of the OSCE Economic Forum:  
Introductory Statement by Norway**

As delivered by Ambassador Mette Kongslem,  
Permanent Representative of Norway to the OSCE,  
Prague, May 22, 2006

Mr. Chairman,

Norway joins other delegations in expressing its gratitude to the Government of the Czech Republic for hosting yet another meeting of the OSCE Economic Forum. Their hospitality is as gracious as always. We would also like to thank the Belgian Chairmanship and the Office of the Economic Co-ordinator for their excellent and result oriented preparations of this second part of the Economic Forum. Our appreciations also go to the two key note speakers for providing us with the framework for this introductory plenary session.

Transportation in the OSCE area is the topic for this year's Economic Forum process, and during this process we have been focusing on a number of important aspects related to secure transportation networks and transport development to enhance regional economic co-operation and stability. Let me add that this process has contributed successfully to enhancing the importance of the economic and environmental dimension of the OSCE. Now the time has come to sum up our work, conclude and make recommendations as to the way ahead for the OSCE on how to take the work done this year further, as well as concrete projects related to transportation. And hopefully what we will achieve can be brought forward to the Ministerial meeting in Brussels, as well as the years ahead.

Mr. Chairman,

The paper on “The transport dialogue in the OSCE – Results of the 14<sup>th</sup> Economic Forum” prepared by the Chairmanship and the Co-ordinator’s Office, in our opinion provides us with a thorough overview of the work undertaken in order to identify and develop action oriented ideas and suggestions presented during the process.

These suggestions are all related to issues of considerable interest to the OSCE and its participating States, and should be further pursued in the OSCE context. Norway looks forward to the further follow up in areas such as good governance, including the fight against corruption in the transport sector and at border crossings, with regard to transport security issues, and regarding transport and conflict resolution, where the model used for the Georgian-South Ossetian conflict zone is most interesting, as economic development can be a useful tool in seeking reconciliation, and in building a common future. In this regard, Norway would also like to highlight the valuable contributions the OSCE field presences can make in implementing a number of the activities identified.

Mr. Chairman,

The link between transport, environment and security is an issue of particular interest to Norway, and at the OSCE Ministerial Conference in Ljubljana, the Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Jonas Gahr Støre, expressed Norway’s readiness to share with interesting participating States the experiences from activities in the Nordic region and in the Euro-Artic region.

In the inter-related areas of development of multi-modal transport corridors, security and environmental protection, Norway and its partners in the Nordic region and in the Barents region have developed mechanisms of regional co-operation that appear to have made possible significant progress in these areas. At the Baku Preparatory Conference Norway made a presentation on “Environmental risks linked to increasing maritime traffic in the High North”, outlining the work method of Norway and other countries towards developing safe and secure corridors in that region.

Transport and logistics are key elements in trade and economic development for all countries and regions. It plays a crucial role in order to access markets. Land-locked states face particular challenges in this respect. Today poor logistics, together with political tensions, hamper trade and sustainable development in parts of the OSCE area. In addition, the various transport modes face new security risks and have different effects on the environment. These issues need to be more systematically addressed.

As a follow up, Norway is aiming at presenting during this second part of the Economic Forum a food-for-thought paper aiming at the possible organization of a workshop later this year in which, together with its partners in the Nordic and Barents regions, it could share the experiences in regional co-operation in the High North towards promoting safe and secure multimodal corridors while protecting the region's fragile environment. The sharing of these experiences could hopefully be of special interests to other OSCE participating States and Partners for Co-operation that face similar challenges in other regions and could inspire the adoption of best practices in these areas combining the requirements of transport development, security and environmental protection.

We will consult with interested countries also with a view to further develop our ideas and we aim at providing delegations with a more detailed presentation of our proposal during the session on Wednesday on the link between transport and the environment, after which further consultations will follow.

I thank you.