

United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement Marking Earth Day



As delivered by Acting Deputy Chief of Mission Elisabeth Rosenstock-Siller
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
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Today is Earth Day, and this year's theme is "Restoring Our Earth." On this occasion, it is fitting that President Biden convened a *Leaders' Summit on Climate* today and tomorrow. As the U.S. government reenters the global climate fight, President Biden values close coordination with key players in the international community at the highest levels of government.

The *Leaders' Summit* is a milestone on the road to the *UN Climate Change Conference (COP26)* this November in Glasgow aimed to deliver meaningful outcomes on global climate action. The Summit will reconvene the *Major Economies Forum (MEF)*, which includes 17 of the world's largest economies and helped deliver the *Paris Agreement*. President Biden also welcomed other crucial voices into the conversation—including leaders of countries that demonstrate strong climate leadership, are especially vulnerable to climate impacts, or are charting innovative pathways to a net-zero emissions' economy.

One of the Summit's goals is to galvanize efforts by the world's major economies to limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius. Accordingly, the Biden-Harris administration will announce an ambitious new climate target by the Summit (also known as our "nationally determined contribution") to put the United States on an irreversible path to net-zero emissions by 2050. Other key Summit themes include mobilizing public and private sector finance to drive the net-zero transition and recognizing the economic benefits of climate action, with a strong emphasis on job creation. It will also focus on spurring transformational technologies that can help reduce emissions and adapt to climate change, while also creating enormous new economic opportunities and building the industries of the future. Finally, we see this launch as an opportunity to showcase adaptative solutions that will protect lives and livelihoods from the impacts of climate change and address the global security challenges posed by it.

These economic opportunities are not mere afterthoughts. As President Biden has said, "This is a case where conscience and convenience cross paths, where dealing with this existential threat to the planet and increasing our economic growth and prosperity are one and the same."

Nor are the security implications of climate change merely abstract notions. Accordingly, the United States strongly supports the work in the Economic and Environmental Committee to consider climate-related security risks.

We encourage delegations to consider the full extent to which environmental challenges, and their potential solutions, have evolved in the eight years since the last environment-focused Ministerial Council Decision. The OSCE, like all regional security organizations, must adapt to a changing context.

Let's consider areas where the OSCE can add value based on its specific role and capacities. But this community must also be ready to lead by example. Many expert organizations have produced best practice guides and risk assessments. We need to take up the task of reviewing those contributions and discussing how to advance those ideas in this community. Let's consider what steps we as OSCE participating States can take to address the broader impacts of climate change on regional security. The Office of the Coordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA) might develop a best practices' guide to assist participating States, at their request, to conduct assessments of national and economic security impacts of climate change and recommend risk management strategies. OCEEA should continue to map vulnerable regions and assist with transboundary adaptation measures for shared ecosystems, where requested. OSCE Executive Structures and Institutions might integrate climate considerations into broader, existing Conflict Prevention measures, like developing early warning systems to monitor rising tensions over crucial resources, such as food or water.

The United States will be fully engaged in these discussions in the weeks and months ahead. As we mark today's occasions of the 51st Earth Day and the *Leaders' Summit*, we believe the OSCE can have a focused role and add value in addressing security risks stemming from climate change.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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