

Secretary General's Conclusions:

# OSCE High-Level Conference on Climate Change

## Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

Vienna, 7 July 2023

Climate change is accelerating and intensifying. Its impact on the OSCE region and around the world is creating challenges and risks that are redefining the security landscape. For years, the OSCE has been working to address climate change and its impact on security in Central Asia, the South Caucasus, Eastern Europe and South-Eastern Europe. At the OSCE Ministerial Council in Stockholm in 2021, participating States agreed to “strengthening co-operation to address the challenges caused by climate change”. Our progress has been substantial.

### Snapshot: the OSCE's work on climate change

- **Climate change needs regional responses:**

The OSCE is promoting transboundary and regional solutions to climate change-related challenges. We assess climate-related security risks at the regional level, and work with governments, civil society, and experts to develop a joint vision to tackle them. We also work at the local level to build capacities and facilitate co-operation among neighbouring communities to implement risk-reduction measures. For example:

- In the Shar/Šara Mountains and Korab Massif Area, a shared nature reserve in South-Eastern Europe, we are bringing together government agencies, park management authorities, and local communities to address illegal logging and fire management and promote sustainable livelihoods;
- In the South Caucasus, we are fostering cross-border co-operation among neighbouring communities in Northern Armenia and Southern Georgia to reduce the risk of wildfires;
- In Central Asia, we are working together with governments, civil society and international partners to address climate change and security challenges in high mountain areas.

- **Climate-related security concerns need to be part of national policies and strategies:**

With our network of field operations and our broad mandate, the OSCE supports participating States to improve understanding of climate and security concerns and build capacities for integrating climate considerations into relevant national policies and strategies.

- **Climate action needs staying power:**

The OSCE is a reliable partner at every step of the way to tackle climate change challenges. We are supporting participating States in identifying these risks, developing risk reduction measures, and implementing practical action on the ground. We also offer training courses and capacity building workshops to ensure key stakeholders are well-equipped to build a more climate-resilient future.

- **Climate action is everyone's business:**

The OSCE is a vital part of a broad ecosystem of actors working to address the impacts of climate change. We work across our participating States – from civil society to local governments and high-level national officials – and are partnering with other relevant regional and international organisations, and specialized institutions. In particular, the OSCE invests in women and youth to address climate-related challenges, sustainable management of natural resource and promote energy security.

As a result of the discussions held during the OSCE High-Level Conference on Climate Change, we have generated ideas and suggestions to stimulate further OSCE action to address these complex issues in line with our comprehensive security mandate.

## Suggested actions from the Secretary General to the OSCE participating States and Partners for Co-operation:

- **Invest in preventive and risk-informed policy-making:**

Given the need for reliable data to inform foresight, early-warning and analysis, I suggest we enhance our capacity to collect, process, and analyze data. This will help strengthen our understanding of the impact of climate change in specific regions and of emerging good practices to manage these risks.

- **Develop an integrated approach to address heightened climate vulnerabilities in conflict or crisis:**

As highlighted through the expert analysis report, “The impact of Russia’s war against Ukraine on climate security and climate action”, armed conflict not only harms our societies, economies and environments, but it drains resources and impedes government action towards building a climate-resilient future. To help address specific vulnerabilities and challenges related to climate action in the context of conflict or crisis, I suggest that the OSCE develop an integrated approach that draws on our experience with conflict and crisis management and integrates a climate lens.

- **Mainstream climate considerations at the OSCE:**

Every step we take as an organization today has the potential to shape tomorrow. Climate challenges relate not only to the economies and the environment, but to all aspects of our work. The OSCE could reflect that by building a network of knowledgeable practitioners across OSCE executive structures to raise awareness around climate considerations and mainstream it throughout our work.

- **Establish an OSCE Climate Fund:**

More action requires more resources. In order to do more to concretely support participating States in their efforts to address the impacts of climate change on security, I suggest that we establish a central Climate Fund to help generate more resources for this vital work.

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For more information about the OSCE and climate change, visit <https://www.osce.org/oceea/446296>

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