



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

Office of the Secretary General
Section for External Co-operation



**2017 OSCE Asian Conference
on Common Challenges and
Common Opportunities**
19 - 20 June 2017
Federal Foreign Office, Berlin



Consolidated Summary

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1 General information

1.1 Venue

The Conference was held on 19 and 20 June 2017 at the conference centre ('Europasaal') of the Federal Foreign Office (Auswärtiges Amt) in Berlin.

1.2 Participation^{*)}

1.2.1 42 OSCE participating States, including Malta/EU, took part in the Conference.

1.2.2 All the Asian Partners for Co-operation (Afghanistan, Australia, Japan, the Republic of Korea and Thailand) were represented, and two Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation (Jordan and Morocco).

1.2.3 The OSCE Secretariat and the OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek were represented.

1.2.4 Five international organizations were represented and several civil society and academic institutions. At the invitation by the host country, the People's Republic of China was represented by two Delegates.

1.3 Timetable and organizational modalities

1.3.1 The Conference began with the opening session at 9.20 a.m. on 19 June 2017 and ended at 12.15 p.m. on 20 June 2017. The Conference was conducted in three thematic sessions. The opening session was chaired by H.E. Dr. h.c. Gernot Erler, Special Representative for the OSCE, Federal Foreign Office, Germany. The closing session was conveyed by H.E. Amb. Désirée Schweitzer, OSCE Chairmanship, Austria, and H.E. Dr. h.c. Gernot Erler, Special Representative for the OSCE, Federal Foreign Office, Germany. During the opening session, keynote speeches were delivered by H.E. Dr. h.c. Gernot Erler, Special Representative for the OSCE, Federal Foreign Office, Germany, H.E. Amb. Lamberto Zannier, Secretary General of the OSCE, and H.E. Amb. Désirée Schweitzer, OSCE Chairmanship, Austria.

1.3.2 A side-event entitled "Engaging with Afghanistan and its Neighbours - OSCE's Contribution to Confidence Building by Empowering Women" was held on the margins of the Conference. The side-event was chaired by Ms. Amarsanaa Darisuren, OSCE Senior Adviser on Gender Issues.

1.3.3 Each session had a moderator and a rapporteur.

1.3.4 The working language was English.

1.3.5 Arrangements were made for press coverage.

1.3.6 The rules of procedure and working methods of the OSCE were applied, *mutatis mutandis*, to the Conference.

^{*)} See part 5, list of participants.

1.4 Agenda

Monday, 19 June 2017

8–9.15 a.m. Registration of participants and welcome coffee

9.15 a.m. *Family photo with Heads of Delegations of OSCE Asian Partners*

9.20–9.50 a.m. **Opening remarks** (*open to the media*)

H.E. Dr. h.c. Gernot Erler, Special Representative for the OSCE, Federal Foreign Office, Germany, **H.E. Amb. Lamberto Zannier**, Secretary General of the OSCE, and **H.E. Amb. Désirée Schweitzer**, OSCE Chairmanship, Austria

Technical break (directly following the opening)

10 a.m.–1 p.m. **Session I: Confidence-building in times of geopolitical changes**
(high-level political segment)

This session will provide an opportunity to address common security challenges in the OSCE and Asia-Pacific regions.

Moderator: **H.E. Amb. Lamberto Zannier**, Secretary General of the OSCE

Keynote speaker:

H.E. Adela Raz, Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Afghanistan

Mr. Jang-keun Lee, Director-General for International Organizations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Korea

Mr. Kevin Magee, Assistant Secretary of the Northern, Southern and Eastern Europe Branch, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia

H.E. Amb. Alessandro Cortese, Coordinator for the Italian OSCE Chairmanship 2018, Italy

H.E. Amb. Bakhtiyor Khakimov, Special Representative of the President of the Russian Federation to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)

Rapporteur: Ms. Carolin Poeschke, Policy Officer, Permanent Mission of Germany to the OSCE

1–3 p.m. Lunch hosted by the OSCE Secretary General

3–5.15 p.m.

Session II: Connectivity and regional economic co-operation

This session will focus on:

- Improving economic connectivity to enhance economic opportunities and to strengthen political confidence-building
- Identifying potential for (cross-border) connectivity, trade and economic co-operation
- Economic co-operation – the role of regional organizations

Moderator: **H.E. Amb. Dr. Norbert Riedel**, Director for Asia and the Pacific, Federal Foreign Office, Germany

Keynote speaker:

Mr. Manabu Miyagawa, Deputy Director-General, European Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan

Mr. Naser Ahmad Faiq, Deputy Director of the Regional Cooperation Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Afghanistan

H.E. Roman Vasilenko, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Kazakhstan

H.E. Dinara Kemelova, First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Kyrgyzstan

Rapporteur: Ms. Chatvadee Chindawongse, Counsellor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand

5.30–6.30 p.m.

Side event: Engaging with Afghanistan and its Neighbours - OSCE's Contribution to Confidence Building by Empowering Women

Moderator: **Ms. Amarsanaa Darisuren**, OSCE Senior Adviser on Gender Issues

6.30–9 p.m.

Reception at invitation of **H.E. Amb. Ina Lepel**, Director General for Asia and the Pacific, Federal Foreign Office, Germany

Tuesday, 20 June 2017

9–11 a.m.

Session III: Regional contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals – the potential role of the OSCE and Asian Partners

This session will focus on:

- Promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, providing access to justice for all and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels (Goal 16)
- Ensuring inclusive and quality education for all and promoting lifelong learning (Goal 4)

- Achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls (Goal 5)

Moderator: **H.E. Amb. Vuk Žugić**, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA)

Keynote speaker:

Ms. Chanakod Chasidpon, Prime Minister's Office/ Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board of Thailand

H.E. David Zalkaliani, First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Georgia

Mr. Pierre Amilhat, Director Development Coordination, Asia, Central Asia, Middle East/Gulf and Pacific, European Union Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development

H.E. Amb. Ernst Peter Fischer, Deputy Director General for Energy & Climate Policy and Export Control, Federal Foreign Office, Germany

Rapporteur: Mr. Andrea De Bono Sant Cassia, Attaché/Policy Officer, European Union Delegation to the International Organisations in Vienna

11.15 a.m.–
12.15 p.m.

Closing session (*open to the media*)

H.E. Amb. Désirée Schweitzer, OSCE Chairmanship, Austria

H.E. Dr. h.c. Gernot Erler, Special Representative for the OSCE, Federal Foreign Office, Germany

12.15–1.15 p.m.

Lunch

1:45-3:45 p.m.

Cultural programme: Boat Cruise (optional)

2 Summary of the opening session

Report by Ms. Marietta König, External Co-operation Officer, OSCE Secretariat

The 2017 OSCE Asian Conference opened with remarks delivered by **H.E. Dr. h.c. Gernot Erler**, Special Representative for the OSCE, Federal Foreign Office, Germany, **H.E. Ambassador Lamberto Zannier**, OSCE Secretary General, and **H.E. Ambassador Désirée Schweitzer**, OSCE Chairmanship, Austria.

H.E. Dr. h.c. Gernot Erler said that the OSCE Asian Partnership represented a most valuable forum for dialogue on issues of common concern, which was aimed at sharing experiences and best practices for mutual benefit. He praised the Asian Partners for their contribution to an enriching dialogue on security issues within the OSCE. As the world grew ever closer, the forum was also of particular relevance to the OSCE participating States; Asia, with all its challenges and opportunities, was a key region.

In terms of opportunities, the Asian population was growing while poverty rates had significantly decreased over the last quarter-century and serious economic and trading partners had emerged. The challenges included the growing threats emerging in connection with the repeated missile tests and nuclear programme of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), which required a response from the international community comprising both a vigorous sanction regime and systematic mediation. In addition, he referred to the territorial disputes in the South China Sea, and advocated a commitment to the internationally agreed rule of law in particular case and to a rules-based world order in general.

The OSCE core principles and mechanisms could serve as a point of reference for similar initiatives in Asia aimed at promoting and strengthening regional institutions aiming to provide a forum for dialogue and for dealing with conflicts. Finally, he cited the motto of the German OSCE Chairmanship in 2016: "Renewing dialogue, rebuilding trust, restoring security".

H.E. Lamberto Zannier, OSCE Secretary General, noted how the OSCE Asian Partnership had evolved during his tenure.

First, he highlighted Mongolia's exemplary evolution from Asian Partner to participating State, the responsibilities Mongolia had carried within the OSCE over the years, and how its lasting commitment to the OSCE Asian Partnership had remained of particular value for that framework and added to the Eurasian dimension of the OSCE.

Second, he commended the Asian Partners' continuous contribution of fresh ideas to the OSCE's security debates, based on their respective experiences and roles in promoting peace and security in their own region. For its part, the OSCE had been sharing lessons learned in an effort to make that partnership more practical and results-oriented. Confidence-building measures, addressing transnational threats, and enhancing economic co-operation had been recurring themes of the OSCE Asian Partnership and many of the events held within that partnership framework aimed at covering all three dimensions of security. He had personally attended numerous events and stressed the need for the OSCE Asian Partnership as a platform for engagement in a rapidly changing international security environment. In addition, that platform provided the opportunity to introduce new topics into the OSCE's debates, as seen in Bangkok at the 2016 OSCE Asian Conference, which had been the first

OSCE event to focus on the OSCE's contribution to the attainment of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. He thanked Germany for keeping the topic in the programme in 2017; the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development should feature more prominently in the OSCE's broader agenda and the possibilities for creating partnerships across national and regional boundaries should be discussed.

Turning to practical co-operation, he praised the Asian Partners for having contributed considerable financial and human resources to the OSCE; he expressed his sincere appreciation to Japan, the Republic of Korea, Australia and Thailand for their support and generous contributions to the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine and other OSCE activities.

With reference to the OSCE's engagement with Afghanistan, he encouraged the Organization to consider making renewed efforts to extend practical and sustainable support to Afghanistan as an OSCE Partner for Co-operation. The scope of co-operation had expanded significantly and more aspects of security with a broader scope should be included when developing and implementing projects to benefit Central Asia and Afghanistan.

Finally, he said that he had promoted inter-institutional co-operation with regional organizations in the Asia-Pacific, and working relations had been established with a number of regional frameworks in Asia during his tenure. Reaffirming the Asian Partners' outstanding role in supporting and fostering those co-operative efforts due to their membership of several regional arrangements, he affirmed that the OSCE Secretariat remained ready to explore further co-operation opportunities.

On behalf of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, **H.E. Ambassador Désirée Schweitzer** said that both the OSCE and its Partners were facing security challenges that ranged from war and destruction to serious violations of international law as well as radicalization and violent extremism leading to terrorism. All of that had led to violations of the OSCE's principles and values and damaged inter-State relations, leading to rising anxiety and increasing mistrust. As a consequence, the Austrian OSCE Chairmanship was focusing on three priorities, namely contributing to defusing existing conflicts in the OSCE area, creating a platform to assist States in their efforts to prevent and counter radicalization and violent extremism, and working on rebuilding trust and confidence.

With regard to the crisis in and around Ukraine, the Special Monitoring Mission was playing an outstanding role in its efforts to prevent the deterioration of the situation, and facilitating the repair of critical infrastructure. A further major challenge to security in the OSCE area was radicalization and violent extremism leading to terrorism, and the Chairmanship was committed to developing best practices and preparing concrete recommendations on how to prevent the radicalization of young people and how to reintegrate formerly radicalized people into society. The Austrian Chairmanship was actively working on fostering an open, constructive and respectful dialogue, for example in the fields of cybersecurity and social and economic co-operation, and on elaborating common solutions and renewed trust within the OSCE together with its Partners. With reference to the OSCE comprehensive concept of security, she highlighted the importance of a general respect for human rights, and a mutual commitment to the rule of law and democracy in order to strengthen the constitution of societies and their ability to maintain long-term stability and security.

The Chairmanship considered equal rights and opportunities for women and men an important prerequisite for comprehensive security, stability and prosperity and was gender mainstreaming all of its activities.

Finally, she said that Austria wished to contribute to a strengthened rules-based global order based on diplomacy and dialogue, making use of the OSCE's unique and comprehensive set of instruments. In turn, that would contribute to strengthening the Organization and its role in contributing to security in the OSCE region and beyond.



Speakers and high-level participants at the 2017 OSCE Asian Conference, Berlin, 19 June 2017, welcomed by State Secretary of the Federal Foreign Office Walter Lindner (6th from the right) and Special Representative of the Federal Government for the OSCE Gernot Erler (5th from the right) (Federal Foreign Office of Germany)

3 Reports by session rapporteurs

3.1 Session 1: Confidence-building in times of geopolitical changes

Report by Ms. Carolin Poeschke, Policy Officer, Permanent Mission of Germany to the OSCE

H.E. Lamberto Zannier, OSCE Secretary General and moderator of the high-level political segment, welcomed the inclusion of the topic of confidence-building in times of geopolitical changes and expressed confidence that the dialogue with the Asian Partners for Co-operation would continue to be comprehensive and mutually enriching. Regional security organizations such as the OSCE needed to look beyond their own area of responsibility and foster partnerships with other regional organizations and States to better meet common security challenges. The close link between the security of Europe and that of Asia was more pertinent than ever given today's globalized world with an increased number of transnational threats, environmental challenges and security crises.

The first speaker, **H.E. Adela Raz**, Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan, said that terrorism and its impact on the stability of countries and their economic development was the greatest current challenge. Against the background of recent terrorist attacks not only in Afghanistan but also in Europe and the Middle East, recent terrorist activities showed three trends. First, foreign terrorist fighters were increasingly operating across various regions around the world; second, the links between terrorism, narcotics and transnational organized crime were growing at the regional and global levels; and third, terrorist networks were exploiting unemployed youth to an ever greater extent. Such a complex security environment and interconnected security challenges called for integrated and sustained efforts at the national, regional and international levels. She stressed the continued commitment of the Afghan people and the central Government. Support was needed for the Government rather than for non-State actors in the fight against terrorism, a fight that could itself be seen as an opportunity for cohesive co-operation leading to integration and finally stability.

The link between security and economic co-operation was particularly apparent in the interaction between Central Asia and Afghanistan. Given its central location at the heart of Asia Afghanistan had great potential in terms of connectivity and economic integration; it stood ready to make its benefits available as a land bridge and hub between Central Asia, South Asia, the Far East and the Middle East and Europe. That Afghan vision was being pursued under two dedicated frameworks, namely the Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan (RECCA) and the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process in addition to other regional platforms that could exchange experience and information, including the OSCE. Promising regional projects included the Turkmenistan–Afghanistan–Pakistan–India gas pipeline project TAPI, the Central Asia South Asia Electricity Transmission and Trade Project CASA 1000 and the Lapis Lazuli Corridor. Finally, she extended an offer from Afghanistan to host the next OSCE Asian Conference.

The second speaker, **Mr. Jang-keun Lee**, Director-General for International Organizations at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea, said that the world was currently facing various geopolitical shifts. The last geopolitical shifts had become visible following

the fall of the Berlin wall and the start of a new post-cold war international order, which was however under threat now. Recent developments included the planned Brexit, as well as emerging protectionism and nationalism in Europe and the Western world, and such global trends also affected Asia. There was a need for nations to restore trust and confidence. The new Government of the Republic of Korea was in the process of structuring its policy around four pillars, namely peace, responsibility, co-operation and democracy. Its first task of restoring peace related primarily to the situation on the Korean peninsula, with DPRK's currently launching missiles almost on a weekly basis. The unwavering support of the international community to sustain the political pressure on the DPRK was indispensable in that regard. Secondly, the Republic of Korea would promote free trade instead of taking protectionist measures, by reducing social and economic gaps and subscribing to international shared values. Thirdly, the Republic of Korea was committed to co-operation in tackling the challenges of migration and in countering violent extremism and cyber threats. The Republic of Korea had demonstrated its commitment to fostering information and communications technology security (ICT) by hosting an interregional conference on ICT and cyber security in close co-operation with the OSCE Secretariat in April 2017. Finally, the Republic of Korea would further aim at strengthening the democratic values and principles the OSCE stood for. It was desirable to overcome the division between East and West; the OSCE could share valuable experience which could also be particularly useful to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The Republic of Korea had an interest in supporting development in Asia and would consider working together with regional and global partners. Finally, he noted the increased interest in the Asian Partners on the part of the OSCE participating States and he reaffirmed the Republic of Korea's willingness to contribute to regional initiatives with reference to the OSCE's model of regional co-operation.

The third speaker, **Mr. Kevin Magee**, Assistant Secretary of the Northern, Southern and Eastern Europe Branch, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia noted that in May 2017, the German Chancellor Angela Merkel had called for greater European self-reliance which, although surprising to many, would reflect the reality of a world returning to a multipolar structure. While the USA and Europe remained strong partners, it would be the growing wealth and strategic weight of rising Indo-Pacific powers such as India and China that changed the global strategic order. As a consequence the US-anchored rules-based order could no longer be taken for granted, as the assumptions that big and small nations played by the rules and respected each other's sovereignty, thereby underpinning strategic stability, were now in question.

Australia welcomed the developments driving the shift, while at the same time aware that globalization and hyper-connectivity came at the cost of common threats, including conflicts in the Middle East and Africa, terrorism, economic and border instability in Europe, foreign interference, increased political alienation and economic nationalism. Against that background of increased vulnerability and complexity, States should embrace change, taking Australia's region as a model for how a complex global strategic system could work. The Indo-Pacific region had experienced unprecedented economic growth and human advancement which had also led to the intensification of regional flash points. In the absence of firm structures such as the OSCE, development in the region was based on factors such as a vested interest in each other's security, a unity of purpose, common commitment to resolving disagreement through dialogue and awareness of the consequences of actions.

The continued liberalization of trade links was important, as were inclusiveness and transparent rules. In that spirit China should fulfil any leadership role in a way that

strengthened the well-proven regional order. Regarding the disputes in the South China Sea, Australia reaffirmed the respect for international law. As a Strategic Partner of ASEAN since 2014, Australia supported ASEAN's contribution to regional security, stability and economic integration, and in March 2018 would, for the first time, host an ASEAN-Australia Special Summit. Other important regional initiatives included the East Asia Summit, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the Regional Forum of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ARF), and the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA). Major powers' wealth and strength were based on the respect for sovereignty, respect for the views and interests of all nations, commitment to free movement of goods, services and capital, and commitment to dialogue and trust-building. Upholding the values that also lie at the heart of the OSCE was the best way to continued peace and prosperity in the context of geopolitical change.

On behalf of the Undersecretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Italy **Benedetto Della Vedova, Ambassador Alessandro Cortese**, Co-ordinator for the Italian OSCE Chairmanship 2018, said that the OSCE was an effective forum for dialogue and co-operation and an example of successful multilateralism. In the light of new transnational threats and challenges, the OSCE was not self-sufficient, but had to interact and co-operate with its partners. Confidence-building needed to be approached on a day-by-day, comprehensive basis. Given the challenging situation faced by Afghanistan, he welcomed the launch of the Afghan-led and Afghan-owned Kabul Process for peace and security co-operation. He further encouraged Afghanistan to participate more in OSCE activities.

The anticipated priorities of the Italian 2018 OSCE Chairmanship would include the crises in the OSCE region, in particular in and around Ukraine, and the protracted conflicts. Italy would also consider focusing on issues of particular relevance to the southern region, ranging from the migrant and refugee crisis to a strengthened partnership with the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation. Finally, he said that the 2017 OSCE Mediterranean Conference would be hosted and chaired by Italy in Palermo, Sicily, on 24 and 25 October, starting with a ministerial segment dedicated to migration and human mobility in the Mediterranean Sea.

Ambassador Bakhtiyor Khakimov, Special Representative of the President of the Russian Federation to the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), noted the recent terrorist attacks that had affected the OSCE area. Agreeing with previous speakers that the world was changing and becoming more and more interdependent, he gave an overview of common challenges in the region, highlighting the unprecedented surge in terrorism and Russia's role in the broad anti-terrorist coalition. Various current situations were subject to United Nations Security Council resolutions, including the worrying situation on the Korean peninsula; Security Council resolution 2231 related to the Iranian nuclear issue. With regard to the situation in the South China Sea, he warned against a disproportionate build-up in the region, underlining the need to respect the principle of the non-use of force. The rise of protectionism contrary to World Trade Organization rules was of concern, as were growing competition and mutual mistrust. The Asia-Pacific region was one of the centres of global growth, but home to growing tension. Weapons of mass destruction were used by countries in the region as a token to ensure strategic importance. He reiterated Russia's commitment to the principles of the equality of States and the indivisibility of security and, in that context, he mentioned ASEAN's efforts along the same lines. In addition to the SCO, the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA) also played an important role in the region.

In the discussion that followed, a representative of the **European Union (EU)** commended the OSCE Asian Conference for providing an excellent opportunity to exchange experiences with a view to enhancing the shared security of the OSCE and its Asian partners. As stated in the 2016 Global Strategy on the EU's Foreign and Security Policy peace and stability in Asia were a prerequisite for European prosperity. The situation in the East and South China Seas was a cause for concern. It was important to settle maritime disputes peacefully in good faith and in accordance with international law. Another major cause for concern was the DPRK's nuclear weapons, other weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programmes, which aggravated tensions on the Korean peninsula to the detriment of all. The DPRK was called on to return to a meaningful dialogue with the international community. With regard to global joint action to fight terrorism and extremism, co-operation with Asian partners should be stepped up. The EU reiterated its support for ASEAN's role in the evolving regional architecture in East Asia, and acknowledged the co-operation in the framework of the ARF and the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM). In that context, the EU highlighted the relevance of the OSCE's comprehensive approach and confidence-building measures (CBMs) in the military field as well as in the fields of cybersecurity, connectivity and regional economic co-operation.

A representative of **Switzerland** said that the Asian Partners and OSCE participating States should increase their co-operation in the area of CBMs, especially with regard to cybersecurity challenges. The OSCE had led the way in developing voluntary CBMs in the cyber area. In that context, the interregional forum on information and communications technology and cybersecurity organized by the Republic of Korea in Seoul in April 2017 with the support of the OSCE Secretariat was welcomed. Switzerland stood ready to support Asian states in their activities aimed at promoting CBMs, in particular cyber-CBMs. Switzerland fully supported improving co-operation through the establishment of a regular dialogue between regional security organizations, such as the OSCE and ASEAN, fostering exchanges of best practices in the field of CBMs and others, and co-operation between the OSCE and ASEAN aimed at the implementation of multilateral agreements such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

A representative of **Mongolia** gave an overview of the history of the country's relations with the OSCE in evolving from Partner for Co-operation to participating State. The OSCE should continue to offer long-term support to Afghanistan and he welcomed initiatives aimed at contributing to security in Northeast Asia. In April 2013, Mongolia had launched the Ulaanbaatar Dialogue; the fourth conference had taken place in mid-June. Mongolia reaffirmed its commitment to continuing to provide such a platform for dialogue.

The Ambassador of **Thailand** in Vienna supported the views of previous speakers, namely that international efforts had to be stepped up in the field of confidence-building, and that a more effective exchange of information would be welcomed. Thailand highlighted the importance of addressing security challenges including terrorism, radicalisation and extremism from the root causes and attached importance to the participation of non-state actors, civil societies and youth. In this regard, Thailand encouraged the OSCE and the Asian Partners for Co-operation to work closely with relevant international forums e.g. the UN Alliance of Civilizations, Culture for Peace and Interfaith Dialogue. Likewise, co-operation between the ARF and other organizations such as the OSCE in promoting peace and security was welcomed. Thailand would host a workshop on 28-29 June on security co-operation between ASEAN member countries in order to develop an integrated effort in the area of cyber security and wished to invite the OSCE to participate in the said workshop. Last but not

least, Thailand reiterated the idea that 'soft security' approaches such as promotion of Connectivity, Sustainable Development and regional economic cooperation were essential to contribute to promoting peace and stability.

A representative of **Greece** particularly welcomed the session topic. Europe had to work closely with Asian partners and implement CBMs in order to strengthen and raise public awareness of CBMs.

There was general agreement that the current security environment presented risks (of regression) but also opportunities, and that work to recreate confidence in Europe and in Asia had to be a common priority.

Mr Lamberto Zannier, moderator, said that there was common agreement among speakers and delegations that the world was facing a changing environment with many common challenges. In response to the challenges of our time, the OSCE, which itself served as a CBM, was active in various areas, such as countering violent extremism and terrorism, the implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, engagement with non-State actors, involvement of civil society, especially women and youth, and strengthening regional co-operation. In engaging with Afghanistan, better use could be made of OSCE instruments and resources, in particular the OSCE Academy in Bishkek and the Border Management Staff College. Finally, he said that there were a number of opportunities for the further development of the OSCE Asian Partnership for Co-operation. In this regard, he would send a high-level delegate to participate in the ASEAN Workshop on Cybersecurity to be held in Thailand in late June, to develop co-operation between the two organisations in this area.

3.2 Session 2: Connectivity and regional economic co-operation

Report by Ms. Chatvadee Chindawongse, Counsellor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand

At the outset the moderator, **H.E. Ambassador Norbert Riedel**, highlighted the consensus reached at the Ministerial Council meeting in Hamburg on introducing a notion of the concept of connectivity into the OSCE. Economic co-operation could serve as a confidence-building measure contributing to peace and security in Europe and beyond, which was why connectivity had been a key concept during Germany's OSCE Chairmanship in 2016. Connectivity was also a concept developed in Southeast Asia, Eurasia and the European Union. Connectivity helped with economic integration and co-operation, while at the same time feeding into confidence-building measures. Connectivity could mean joint development of infrastructure, tapping into opportunities, enhancing digitalization and the alignment of common standards.

The first speaker, **Mr. Manabu Miyagawa**, Deputy Director-General, European Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, said that in recent years, Asia and Europe had faced many challenges such as terrorism, refugees and maritime security, as well as the crises in the Middle East, and Ukraine, and that the rule of law was currently being tested to an exceptional extent. The role of the OSCE as a confidence-building organization was therefore in the highest demand. Confidence-building could be achieved by strengthening connectivity, which could become a foundation for peace, stability, and prosperity. The Indo-Pacific and European regions had historically developed close ties through active maritime trade, and further strengthened connectivity between the two regions to help release the potential for forming a single economic sphere, which was necessary for stability in the regions and the international community as a whole. The process of enhancing connectivity not only involved individual countries, but also the development of a regional landscape. A high-quality infrastructure was an important component of sustainable economic development. Japan's quality infrastructure investment was aligned with the needs of the recipient country, and not only had cost benefits but also took into consideration life cycle and maintenance, environmental impact, job creation and human resource development. He reiterated Japan's commitment to quality and quantity infrastructure, particularly in Asia and Africa.

Japan's new Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy was aimed at improving connectivity through a free and open connection between the Indian and Pacific Oceans to promote the stability and prosperity of the entire region. Asia was growing rapidly and Africa possessed huge growth potential. The strategy was an overarching and comprehensive concept aimed at broadening the horizons of Japanese foreign policy. Enhancing connectivity between Asia and Africa would create a new economic sphere. In addition to infrastructure development, Japan was also committed to promoting trade and investment to enhance economic development in Southeast Asia, South Asia, the Middle East and Africa. Improving connectivity between Asia and Africa based on a mutual commitment to the rule of law would also help promote the stability and prosperity of the region as a whole. In that connection, Japan also recognized the importance of Central Asia, perceived as the heart of Eurasia and of inland connectivity between Asia and Europe. It would require Central Asia to remain an autonomous, free and open space. In other forums, the ASEM had notably just established the ASEM Pathfinder Group on Connectivity for a term of two years. Finally, he said that connectivity was indispensable for peace, stability and prosperity of the international community.

The second speaker, **Mr. Naser Ahmad Fariq**, Deputy Director of the Regional Cooperation Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan, said that connectivity and regional economic co-operation were high on Afghanistan's agenda. Given its strategic geopolitical location, Afghanistan could become an economic hub through enhancing connectivity and transport networks. The Afghan Government had strengthened its efforts aimed at enhancing connectivity at both the national and regional levels. Afghanistan had engaged with its neighbours and beyond through several regional and international organizations, such as the Asia Cooperation Dialogue, the Economic Cooperation Organization, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), and the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC) to enhance regional connectivity to improve transport routes, which would also help promote peace and prosperity in the region. Peace and stability were prerequisites for connectivity and economic development and combating terrorist financing was ultimately crucial to maintaining peace in Afghanistan.

The geographic location of Afghanistan was important for connectivity and regional economic development in South Asia, Central Asia, the Middle East, and the Far East. In the case of Central Asia and South Asia in particular, Afghanistan could help unlock trade potential by linking the two regions through their complementarities in terms of energy and electricity. Afghanistan participated in various regional energy co-operation projects, namely RECCA, CAREC, the Heart of Asia Istanbul Process, the TAPI Gas Pipeline Project and CASA 1000, as well as transport network projects, namely the Five-Nation Railway Corridor linking China to Iran, the Lapis Lazuli Corridor, and the One Belt, One Road Initiative comprising the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road.

The next speaker, **H.E. Mr. Roman Vasilenko**, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan, said that his country aimed to enhance regional connectivity and maximize the benefits of Kazakhstan's location through several national development programmes to improve infrastructure for growing trade and investment. Kazakhstan emphasized the promotion of multi-modal transport networks, such as new railways linking Western China to Western Europe, sea ports in the Caspian Sea, and logistics centres, leading to destinations in China, Russia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and the Middle East. Currently, 70 per cent of transit between China and Europe passed through Kazakhstan. Land transport through Eurasia was three times shorter than the maritime routes. The three pillars of the OSCE were of equal importance; the second pillar was crucial to achieving established OSCE commitments. Enhancing intra- and interregional connectivity would help to promote economic benefits for countries in the region. Kazakhstan was committed to working with other countries in the region through several frameworks such as the Eurasian Economic Union and the One Belt, One Road Initiative, as well as the SCO, recently joined by India and Pakistan, and the CICA which had been initiated by President Nursultan Nazarbayev in 1992.

The fourth speaker, **H.E. Dinara Kemelova**, First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kyrgyzstan, said that economic development merited more attention from OSCE participating States, as Europe was also very advanced in promoting economic rights. Kyrgyzstan's priority had been co-operation with its neighbours in Central Asia. The transit corridors in the region had led to closer trade and economic ties. As Kyrgyzstan was a land-locked country, the development of transport corridors based on a regional approach throughout Central Asia was needed to provide access to external markets. Kyrgyzstan welcomed several development programmes with the Asian Development Bank and in the framework of Central Asia Plus One with Japan, the Republic of Korea, and the European

Union. A regional approach to economic development had brought about a win-win solution, as there were advantages and complementarities in many areas such as energy, transport links, and natural resources. With regard to connectivity, Kyrgyzstan welcomed closer co-operation not only in the OSCE, but also in the SCO and the Eurasian Economic Union, which helped to further promote a free flow of goods, services and labour. Closer integration was necessary for economic growth as countries became more interdependent. Transport corridors helped to promote trade, investment and economic integration. As the railways in Central Asia were inadequate, the European Union-Central Asia railway initiative was highly welcomed to unlock the transit potential of the region.

A representative of the **European Union** supported the importance of enhancing regional connectivity. At the same time, the EU would work towards more connectivity with Asia through its economic diplomacy, for example with Japan, the Republic of Korea and ASEAN, as well as in forums like ASEM. Connectivity could play an important part in confidence-building and would thus contribute to peace and security in the region. The OSCE would be a vital platform for connectivity and economic co-operation.

A representative of **Thailand** reaffirmed that the country stood ready to work with the OSCE and the Asian Partners to enhance regional connectivity, particularly with regards to ICT hardware and software. Thailand had been working with ASEAN Member States on the implementation of the ASEAN Master Plan on Connectivity 2025 to improve infrastructure, logistics, and digital networks, and harmonization of rules and regulations as well as people-to-people contacts. ASEAN also worked with several Dialogue Partners to enhance regional connectivity, such as Japan, the Republic of Korea, India and the European Union. With regard to economic co-operation, the ASEAN Economic Community had become a single market and production base and ASEAN Member States were also negotiating with ASEAN's free trade agreement partners on the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, which was expected to be finalized in 2017. At the subregional level, Thailand had also been working to enhance transport links with its neighbours in the frameworks of the Greater Mekong Subregion, the Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle, and the Mekong-Lancang Cooperation, as well as with India in the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation and the Thailand-Myanmar-India Trilateral Highway. Thailand was also ready to co-operate with China on the Belt and Road Initiative. Thailand could serve as a connectivity hub in the region through the North-South Economic Corridor, East-West Economic Corridor and the Southern Economic Corridor.

A representative of **Switzerland** said that connectivity and economic co-operation played a very important role in promoting comprehensive security. The OSCE and the Asia-Pacific region could share best practices and common projects and initiatives in that regard, as economic connectivity had become an established concept of the comprehensive approach to security. Since all partners in the OSCE were World Trade Organization (WTO) members, the role of the WTO should be enhanced and trade disputes should be settled through WTO bodies. In the meantime, in enhancing connectivity, more focus should be placed on new transport routes and sound regulatory frameworks.

A representative of **Belarus** noted that the concept of connectivity was in the OSCE's genetic code. Regional and subregional co-operation on connectivity should be predictable, reliable and inclusive and take into account the interests of all. In addition to that, trade facilitation issues also had to be addressed. For Belarus, the OSCE remained a key platform for dialogue

on connectivity and regional economic co-operation, where participating States could share best practices and identify areas for second pillar co-operation.

A representative of the **United States of America** reiterated the support for the OSCE's focus on connectivity and regional economic co-operation which would not only remove barriers and benefit cross-border co-operation but also help to promote trade, investment, and customs co-operation. To enhance the regional investment climate, the United States was ready to work with partners in the OSCE and in other relevant initiatives to strengthen economic ties, such as the New Silk Road and the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation. Today, Afghanistan was working with its neighbours to improve transport routes in Eurasia. Such co-operation in the area of connectivity would help to bolster peace and security in the region, as well as enhance trade and investment and support sustainable growth.

A representative of the **Russian Federation** stated that connectivity was a promising area but questions remained as to what exactly connectivity would entail. In general terms, connectivity would cover three dimensions - physical connectivity, institutional connectivity and people-to-people connectivity. A lot of initiatives and projects on connectivity were being discussed regarding how to connect Asia and Europe, for example the Eurasian Economic Union, the One Belt, One Road Initiative, as well as the maritime silk route. ASEM would also start its work and discussion on connectivity. The OSCE could be one of the platforms to discuss connectivity and regional economic co-operation. A proper approach had to be sought, however, as one initiative should not be neglected in favour of another.

A representative of **Greece** supported the importance of connectivity to improve infrastructure and promote people-to-people interactions between Europe and Asia. Vast co-operation opportunities could be explored from the perspective of investment. Emphasis should be placed on the ASEM framework as a key platform for dialogue and synergies between Europe and Asia, not only on transport infrastructure but also on cultural interactions to enhance mutual understanding between the two regions. Greece therefore supported the formal mandate for the ASEM Pathfinder Group on Connectivity that had been established by the ASEM Leaders at the 11th ASEM Summit in Ulaanbaatar in July 2016.

3.3 Side-event: Engaging with Afghanistan and its Neighbours - OSCE's Contribution to Confidence Building by Empowering Women

Report by Ms. Ulrike Schmidt, Adviser on Gender Issues, OSCE Secretariat

The side event was chaired by **Ms. Amarsanaa Darisuren**, Senior Advisor on Gender Issues at the OSCE Secretariat, with an introduction by **Ms. Sandra Sacchetti**, Head of the External Co-operation Section at the OSCE Secretariat and a welcome by Afghanistan's **Deputy Foreign Minister Adela Raz**. The panellists were **Mr. Mohammad Qasim Yahyah**, Head of the Water Engineering Department at Balkh University, **Ms. Balzhan Zhumagazina**, environmental management programme specialist at the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC) and **Ms. Jenniver Sehring**, Environmental Affairs Adviser, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA). **Ms. Madina Khalmirzaeva**, Deputy Director of Nazar Business Technology LLC, Uzbekistan, contributed to the panel with a video message.

Introducing the topic of the side event, the OSCE project "Women, water management and conflict resolution in central Asia and Afghanistan", **Ms. Sandra Sacchetti** called the project an example of the OSCE's holistic approach to security. Gender equality was a cross-cutting priority and one of the cornerstones of the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security. The project would support women in taking responsibility for matters that directly affected them and their communities. Through their engagement, women would have the potential to strengthen good governance and environmental security, and thus contribute to sustainable development, conflict prevention and a more secure future for all.

A second OSCE-specific aspect of the project was its regional approach: with all five Central Asian countries as participating States and with the Organization's extensive field presence in the region, the OSCE was particularly well placed to promote regionally owned initiatives. Afghanistan was an important Partner for Co-operation, and while the Organization would not operate inside Afghanistan, it involved Afghan women and men in OSCE activities. The confidence-building element of the project brought together Afghanistan and its neighbours in using their shared water resources sustainably and equitably. The project should be seen in the larger context of the United Nations global agenda. As a regional arrangement under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, the OSCE supported the implementation of the UN's priorities in its geographical area. That also applied to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Empowering women to increase their economic participation and access to resources was one of the most promising ways to contribute to sustainable development, peace and stability.

In her welcome note, **Deputy Minister Raz** said that the Government of Afghanistan attached priority to ensuring women's access to education, resources and employment; challenges still lay ahead in realizing their full access. In the past two and a half years, the government had particularly focused on women's economic empowerment; it was now time to reflect on how that empowerment could be better advanced. There was a need to grant women access to finances to enable them to become entrepreneurs, and the Government had put together a women's economic empowerment plan indicating areas of focus for the Government and partners, considering also the needs of women running small and medium-sized businesses. While extensive capacity-building for women as entrepreneurs had provided women with the necessary skills, the focus should now be on supporting women entrepreneurs' access to global markets. In the area of water management, it had been critical to for the Afghan Government engage in water diplomacy. There was a lack of technical

training and knowledge of existing resources; with the help of the donor community, it was crucial to engage in water management and conflict resolution, in line with the OSCE project. That was all the more important because in Afghanistan, the main sources of water were rain and snow; with global warming, there was a greater need to find ways to manage that ever scarcer natural resource, and Afghanistan would gladly co-operate in that area.

In her video address, **Ms. Madina Khalmirzayeva** shared her experience as a participant in the first phase of the project. In terms of professional growth, she had been promoted from national to international environmental expert, she had expanded her area of competence to gender and social aspects, and she had participated in most projects as a team leader or deputy. Secondly, the company had made significant improvements in developing a gender strategy and establishing gender profiles in projects. Thirdly, her experience had led to an improved human resources policy in the areas of employees' assessment and motivation and management capacity. Gender mainstreaming and increasing women's involvement in the decision-making process would improve water resources management and would decrease the potential for conflict at all levels of water resources management. The OSCE could further contribute to that by assessing the implementation of the mentoring programme in Central Asia, disseminating the results of the project widely, and by paying more attention to the educational sector and addressing the lack of women representatives in the area of water resources management.

The next speaker, **Mr. Mohammad Qaasim Yahyah**, had participated in a three-day regional training workshop in July 2015 in Almaty on gender mainstreaming and conflict resolution in water governance, organized by the OSCE in co-operation with CAREC. The Women's Economic Empowerment National Priority Programme set out Afghanistan's global commitments to women's rights ensuring their full access to education and health services, and advancing women's participation in government and business. Policies in support of enabling women's full participation in the economy, as also anchored in Afghanistan's national peace and development framework for 2017 to 2021, still needed to be translated into a gender balance among staff in all spheres in Afghanistan.

The first female students had successfully enrolled in the Water Engineering Department at Bakh University and now further efforts were needed to encourage women to engage as decision makers in water management. The existing gap between water managers and users could be further bridged by educating women and thus encouraging them to get involved in technical and managerial roles relating to water management. Only then female voices at the community level could be better heard and their needs incorporated into local and national water planning. The OSCE could support women's increased involvement by organizing short training programmes at the regional and local levels, conducting an awareness programme to encourage women to engage in water management, supporting field trips for Afghan women working in water user associations or regional directorates to Central Asian countries to exchange experience and knowledge, and by conducting long-term mentoring programmes for women water professionals.

Ms. Balzhan Zhumagazina (CAREC) had co-organized with the OSCE a regional training on gender mainstreaming and conflict resolution in water governance (Almaty 2015), and had also participated in the mentoring programme with Danish water professionals.

She assessed that at the local level, trainings and educational programmes for women managing farms; support for water infrastructure renewal was required. At the national level, develop special programmes as well as educational programmes for women working in the

water sector should be developed. A sex-disaggregated database should be maintained by ministries and departments as an open source for analysis. At the regional level, encouragement, dissemination and awareness programmes as well as capacity-building and workshops for women working at the ministry and regional directorate levels should be created. A monitoring system to assess the success of actions promoting women's empowerment in the water management sector should be developed.

A representative of **Switzerland** commended the project as a practical example of women's empowerment in water management. In relation to Afghanistan and women's economic empowerment, society could only be sustainable when inclusive.

A representative of the **Austrian Chairmanship-in-Office** asked about the continuity of the project and the next steps planned by the OSCE and the Gender Section, and whether the women empowered through the project would also be trained to pass on their knowledge.

A representative of **Canada** asked what aspects of the project could be included in other OSCE projects.

Mr. Yahyah replied that without security in Afghanistan, it would be very difficult for the Government to implement projects. **Ms. Zhumagazina** recommended the mentoring part of the project to be replicated in other projects to empower mentees to apply and pass on their knowledge to their work colleagues.

Ms. Jenniver Sehring, project manager of "Women, water management and conflict resolution in Central Asia and Afghanistan" in the OSCE Office of the Co-ordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities, informed that the next phase of the project would start in the second half of 2017 and would run until 2019. The two-fold approach would continue: empowering female water professionals through training in water diplomacy with a focus on gender and conflict resolution, whereby the OSCE would draw on the co-operation with partners from the first phase with strong expertise in those areas, such as the Stockholm International Water Institute. The training would be complemented by a strong mentoring component and the establishment of a regional network of female water professionals, in order to guarantee sustainability, as mentoring could have a long-term impact. Both components would enable mutual learning across the OSCE regions, as they would bring female water professionals from Central Asia and Afghanistan to international events. Other components of the project aimed at empowering female water professionals as drivers of change, and disseminating their experiences as female role models in Central Asian and Afghan societies.

Ms. Darisuren concluded the panel by emphasizing the importance of a comprehensive approach to women's economic empowerment, combining capacity-building and mentoring activities. Continuous support would be needed to develop women as managers. The added value of mentoring could last for many years, expressed in continuing professional relations. Gender-based violence remained a serious obstacle to women's full participation in economic life, and needed to be addressed. There would be a need to change behaviours, social norms and mind-sets in societies. Activities to empower women also had to be applied to other environmental projects such as connectivity and energy security, where women could greatly contribute and should be involved more systematically.

3.4 Session 3: Regional contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals – the potential role of the OSCE and Asian Partners

Report by Mr. Andrea De Bono Sant Cassia, Attaché/Policy Officer, European Union Delegation to the International Organizations in Vienna

H.E. Ambassador Vuk Žugić, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA) and session moderator opened the discussion by highlighting the central role of the OSCE, the world's largest regional security organization, as an important platform for dialogue. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognized the close relationship and interdependence between peace and security and development, and the OSCE could make specific contributions to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The OSCE had a long record in facilitating co-operation in the management of shared natural resources, such as water (Goal 6 on clean water and sanitation), in promoting exchanges on the subject of disaster risk reduction (Goal 11 on sustainable cities and communities), in promoting sustainable climate change, for example in the area of dealing with hazardous waste (Goal 7 on affordable and clean energy and Goal 12 on responsible consumption and production), in facilitating international economic co-operation and enhancing the economic climate, for example by countering corruption and money laundering (Goal 8 on decent work and economic growth, Goal 9 on industry, innovation and infrastructure and Goal 10 on reduced inequalities).

He further emphasized the role of the youth, as well as the gender component of sustainable development; all young people needed a quality education, and the empowerment of women and girls remained a cornerstone of the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security. Finally, he said that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development could only be attained through joining forces and forging partnerships.

Ms. Chanakod Chasidpon from the Prime Minister's Office/Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board presented Thailand's policy and progress in attaining the SDGs. Thailand's approach was guided by the "sufficiency economy principle", a three-pronged concept recognizing that the planet's resources were finite (the concept of moderation), that the implications of actions should be taken into account (the concept of rationality), and that a risk management approach needed to be incorporated at all levels of policy-making (the concept of self-immunity). Thailand had prioritized the realization of the 2030 Agenda, as evidenced by its institutional structure which was chaired by the Prime Minister and included all societal actors.

With regard to Goal 4 on quality education, Thailand recognized the need to ensure access to education for all people. Measures to improve the provision of early childcare and to change the low demand levels for secondary and tertiary education needed to be implemented. In order to address those issues, the Government had set up a specific fund that would direct more resources to the educational sphere. In relation to Goal 5 on gender equality, Thailand, apart from being a full member of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, had passed domestic legislation, such as the 2005 Child Protection Act and the 2015 Gender Equality Act, to prevent violence against youths and girls, and similarly to ensure gender equality. Thailand was similarly working further to increase the levels of female participation in all stages of government. In order to create peaceful and inclusive societies, and therefore implement Goal 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions, Thailand had set up a national anti-corruption committee, had adopted a

zero tolerance policy on human trafficking, and had set up institutions to oversee issues of peace and justice, and to promote good governance. Co-ordination should be ensured amongst the different government agencies working in the area of sustainable development. Another challenge was the need to adopt a long-term approach of monitoring and evaluation, particularly as most indicators might not show progress in the short term.

H.E. David Zalkaliani, First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Georgia, emphasizing the mutual dependence of peace and security and development, said that regional formats like the OSCE could play a useful role in advancing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Upholding the rule of law, the promotion of gender equality, the creation of inclusive societies and the fostering of democratic institutions were all key factors ensuring progress towards the realization of the SDGs.

The Georgian Government's development agenda prioritized citizens and their equal human rights whilst simultaneously advancing the 2030 Agenda. That national strategy included ongoing reforms in the justice sector, efforts to prevent corruption, measures to promote human rights, the inclusion of internally displaced persons, combating crime and corruption, and positive economic and educational reforms. Goal 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions remained a priority focus for Georgia. Georgia's emergence from a vicious cycle of corruption and economic collapse was even more commendable given the strife in the regions in the 1990s. Georgia was pursuing efforts to fortify peaceful development, to enhance social justice, and to promote transparent and accountable governance in furtherance of that particular SDG. Work towards the attainment of Goal 5 on gender equality included gender sensitive policies in all State entities, ongoing legislative reforms aimed at addressing domestic violence, and ongoing attempts to ensure that Georgia's domestic law complied with international standards. In relation to Goal 4 on quality education, the comprehensive set of reforms initiated by the Ministry of Education ensured a quality education from early childhood and the promotion of lifelong opportunities for all bore witness to Georgia's efforts in that area. Finally, he said that the situation in Georgia's occupied territories resulted in persistent violations of the fundamental rights of internally displaced persons, and that the existing conflicts posed a major security threat, which in turn jeopardized the realization of the SDGs.

Mr. Pierre Amilhat, Director of Development Coordination, Asia, Central Asia, Middle East/Gulf and Pacific, European Union Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development, said that the European Union (EU) had been closely involved in the initial development of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The EU and its Member States were the largest donor of Official Development Assistance; the recently-adopted European Consensus on Development affirmed Europe's role as a global leader in development and outlined the eradication of poverty as the primary objective, also integrating the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. He further stressed the link between sustainable development and other policies, such as those on peace and security, humanitarian aid, migration and climate.

With regard to the EU's contribution to the realization of the SDGs in Asia, he stressed the importance of embracing a concept of partnership. The home-grown development successes of Asian States such as the Republic of Korea and Singapore indicated the potential for mutual learning. Sustainable development was closely linked with wider objectives; the overall development package included issues such as trade, climate change, connectivity, migration, gender and security. The EU and its Member States were and aspired to continue

to be a strong development ally for Asia. EU development assistance to Asia in the period 2014-2020 totalled 7.4 billion euros and was evidence of a commitment to the region that would continue to be manifested by the EU's continued assistance to the poorest countries in the region, primarily through traditional forms of development co-operation. The EU would also develop new partnerships with more advanced developing countries.

The EU had made various contributions related to Goal 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions, including the October 2016 Brussels Conference on Afghanistan and the EU's dialogue on human rights throughout the region. In relation to Goal 4 on quality education, the EU recognized the provision of education and training to all young people as a strategic investment with numerous benefits. Many challenges would persist in Asia in that regard including concerns regarding the quality of teaching and the overall management of education systems. To address those issues, the EU had been supporting bilateral and regional educational programmes to promote education reforms and provide better education opportunities for youths in Asia and Central Asia for many years. In relation to Goal 5 on gender equality, he reiterated the EU's position on continuing to actively promote such equality. The EU was developing a programme specific to the Pacific Region on bolstering the fight against violence against women and girls. Similarly, the EU was preparing a 25 million euro programme with ASEAN in support of women migrants. Finally, he praised the potential role of the OSCE as a good framework for discussing the SDGs.

H.E. Ambassador Ernst Peter Fischer, Deputy Director General for Energy and Climate Policy and Export Control, Federal Foreign Office, Germany underlined that his country recognized the link between the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and peace and security. The two were mutually dependent. Without peace, there would be no opportunity to focus on sustainable development and without a proper engagement in sustainable development, it was inevitable that stability would be threatened, potentially leading to conflict. He praised the universal agreements reached in 2015, namely the framework of the SDGs and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change; the negative consequences of climate change created stresses in societies and affected other issues such as migration. The international community needed to address the root causes of migration, for example by ensuring that people had the opportunity for a good livelihood in their home countries. That would not be possible if climate change was not addressed, and many people would be forced to flee. The OSCE could play a role in that regard, for example by facilitating a peer review of national strategies and goals in the area of sustainable development. Germany's national strategy to advance the 2030 Agenda was co-ordinated by the Chancellor's Office and sought to establish partnerships with other sovereign States in the field of sustainable development. Finally, he said that there was strong interest from other States in co-operating with Germany in the fields of renewable energy, environmental technology, and vocational training.

During the discussion that followed the presentations, a representative of the **Republic of Korea** underlined the important role of regional organizations in realizing the 2030 Agenda. The newly elected Government was establishing a national implementation policy, whilst internationally it continued to engage on that subject, especially within the UN context. Particular mention was made of Goal 5 on gender equality, which remained a national priority. The Republic of Korea also drew attention to the idea of "global citizenship education", a concept that sought to promote mutual respect, and an understanding of diversity through education. The Republic of Korea appealed to all OSCE participating States to promote that initiative, including through the UN.

A representative of **Afghanistan** highlighted the national importance attached to Goal 4 on quality education, especially in combating extremist ideologies, and to Goal 5 on gender equality. In furtherance of that Goal, Afghanistan had implemented a national priority programme seeking to empower women in all national public areas.

A representative of **Kyrgyzstan** said that several of the country's universities were designed to provide opportunities for students all over Asia and Europe as evidence of efforts in relation to Goal 4 on quality education. Many goals encapsulated in the SDGs such as the reduction of poverty, improved access to good health and clean water and the provision of affordable and clean energy remained high national priorities. Finally, the SDGs should become a more prominent subject of discussion within the OSCE, while avoiding the duplication of efforts of other international forums.

A representative of **Spain** said that the 2017 OSCE Youth Conference organized by Spain in Malaga had explored ways in which youths could be better incorporated with regard to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The **OSCE Senior Adviser on Gender Issues** focused on the role of women in the implementation of the SDGs, reaffirming the importance of establishing synergies between national policies and a gender equality agenda. There was a need to provide financial credit to women to enhance business opportunities and simultaneously to break gender stereotypes in labour markets, and she called for a greater focus on reproductive health laws and policies to facilitate economic and social development.

A representative of **Greece** stressed the universality of the SDGs and the importance of incorporating the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in all internal and external policies.

A representative of the **Holy See** said that the true, fair and effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development represented a sign of hope, and a priority that needed the international community's undivided attention. The Holy See also expressed reservations about some of the concepts contained in the 2030 Agenda, including the Holy See's interpretation of "gender" as being grounded in the binary sexual identity of male and female, and that the term "gender equality" reflected the idea that "male" and "female" were equal, yet different and complementary.

A representative of **Switzerland** supported the view that both the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Climate Agreement were examples of responsible global policy and provided an opportunity to move towards a more sustainable and therefore more secure world, particularly given the link between security and sustainable development. The OSCE could be an effective catalyst for the implementation of the SDGs with both the OSCE participating States and its Partners for Co-operation; women should be involved in the sustainable development movement, and more broadly, women should be part of all political processes. On the basis of the recently held second OSCE Gender Equality Review Conference and the OSCE Youth Conference organized by Spain in Malaga, Switzerland proposed that gender and youth issues be examined and developed further between the OSCE and its Asian Partners, that the OSCE systematically included gender and youth perspectives in its activities, and that more co-ordination was fostered between the chairs of the various OSCE bodies in order to facilitate the exchange of best practices on the issues discussed in the present session.

In conclusion, **Ambassador Fischer** expressed appreciation for the intervention by the Afghan Delegation and its focus on gender equality. **First Deputy Minister Zalkaliani** referred further to Georgia's activities directed specifically at youth, referring to the establishment of a university centre in Kutaisi to facilitate youth engagement in the field of modern technology education, and the launching of a project to supply high speed Internet access throughout the country. **Ms. Chasidpon** said that the OSCE could play a role in addressing the transboundary issues related to the 2030 Agenda, such as combating transboundary crime, and pollution. **Ambassador Žugić** concluded by reflecting on the engaging discussions during the session, which underlined the importance of fully realizing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the need for further co-operation also in the OSCE context.

4 Summary of the closing session

Report by Ms. Marietta König, External Co-operation Officer, OSCE Secretariat

The 2017 OSCE Asian Conference ended with closing remarks delivered by **H.E. Dr. h.c. Gernot Erler**, Special Representative for the OSCE, Federal Foreign Office, Germany, and **H.E. Ambassador Désirée Schweitzer**, OSCE Chairmanship, Austria.

Speaking on behalf of the German Chairmanship of the Asian Contact Group, **H.E. Dr. h.c. Gernot Erler** reflected on the current activities within the OSCE Asian Partnership for Co-operation, customarily focused on five Contact Group meetings per year. As the highlight of the year, the Conference enabled more intense discussion on issues of common concern, complementing the expert discussions in the regular Contact Group meetings and providing a platform for a broader political exchange.

He expressed special gratitude to the Conference speakers and moderators for their active participation and valuable contributions to all sessions, including the side event. He further thanked the OSCE Secretariat for organizing the Conference together with Germany.

Summing up the discussions of the two-day event, he said that the first session had focused on the interconnectedness of the security situation in the OSCE and the Asia-Pacific regions and the crucial role of regional institutions in fostering peace and prosperity. The discussions in session two had further reconfirmed the sense of a joint commitment to better connecting both regions physically and digitally. The panellists had jointly acknowledged that economic co-operation, and the accompanying commitment to economic development, constituted an important element of the OSCE's comprehensive security concept. Session three, finally, had highlighted the relevance of the OSCE in contributing to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. The panellists had shared valuable experiences and lessons learned on active contributions to that UN initiative. With reference to the side event, he stressed that the project "Women, water management and conflict resolution in Central Asia and Afghanistan" was a striking example of practical co-operation between the OSCE and the Asian Partners and the positive impact of such initiatives on the ground. All in all, the event, once again, successfully reflected all three OSCE dimensions and demonstrated that the concept of comprehensive security was an integral part of the debate between the OSCE and its Partners for Co-operation.

He concluded by thanking the Asian Partners for their steady commitment to, and their active participation in and engagement with the OSCE. The financial and human resources support of the Partners to the OSCE and its field operations as well as the shared experiences added to the mutual benefit of that partnership.

On behalf of the OSCE Austrian Chairperson-in-Office, **H.E. Ambassador Désirée Schweitzer** expressed her appreciation to Germany as the host of the Conference and its able Chairmanship of the Asian Contact Group in 2017.

In the broader context of global dependencies, efforts aimed at defusing existing conflicts within the OSCE area also affected peace and stability outside the area. Based on its concept of comprehensive security, comprising general respect for human rights, the rule of law and democracy, the OSCE remained in the lead in providing an open platform for exchanging best practices and lessons learned. In that context, the steady exchange with the Asian

Partners for Co-operation was particularly fruitful as interests converged on many issues, particularly in the politico-military dimension. With regard to the OSCE's Economic and Environmental Dimension, promoting connectivity among and within countries was crucial in order to overcome existing divisions, both at the political and economic levels, as were combating unemployment and providing economic perspectives when committing to youth involvement. She reaffirmed the Chairmanship's commitment to addressing the economic and social causes of radicalization and violent extremism and re-emphasized the OSCE's role as a regional platform for dialogue and co-operation between countries of origin, transit and destination of migration and highlighted the relevance of involving both the Asian and Mediterranean Partners in relevant discussions.

Finally, she reaffirmed Austria's commitment to the OSCE Asian Partnership framework, both during its current OSCE Chairmanship and its upcoming Chairmanship of the Contact Group.

5 List of Participants

Country	First name	Family name	Position
OSCE Participating States			
Albania	Inid	Milo	Counsellor, Political Affairs
Albania	Irida	Laci	Counsellor
Germany	Gernot	Erlor	Special Representative for the OSCE
Germany	Norbert	Riedel	Ambassador, Director for Asia and the Pacific
Germany	Eberhard	Pohl	Ambassador
Germany	Ina	Lepel	Ambassador, Director General for Asia and the Pacific
Germany	Ernst Peter	Fischer	Ambassador, Deputy Director General for Energy & Climate Policy and Export Control
Germany	Corinna	Hülhagen	Counsellor
Germany	Jan	Janowski	Counsellor
Germany	Mareike	Geipel	Counsellor
Germany	Petra	Sigmund	Deputy Head of Unit
Germany	Thomas	Wimmer	Head of Unit
Germany	Lewe	Paul	Counsellor
Germany	Isabelle	Gras	Counsellor
Germany	Annette	Knobloch	Deputy Head of Unit
Germany	Stefan	Roeken	Head of Unit
Germany	Hendrik	Selle	Deputy Head of Unit
Germany	Heinrich	Haupt	Minister

Country	First name	Family name	Position
Germany	Thomas	Lenk	Head of Unit
Germany	Stefanie	Seedig	Head of Unit
Germany	Sebastian	Gerhardt	Deputy Head of Unit
Germany	Justyna	Bartkiewicz-Godlewska	Counsellor
Germany	Matthias	Friese	Counsellor
Germany	Juliane	Ziegler	Counsellor
Germany	Carolin	Poeschke	Desk Officer
Germany	Jürgen	Klimke	Member of Parliament
USA	Janice	Helwig	Representative of the Helsinki Commission
Austria	Desirée	Schweitzer	Ambassador
Austria	Gerhard	Mayer	Minister Task force for the Austrian OSCE Chairmanship 2017
Azerbaijan	Marat	Kangarlinski	Counsellor
Belarus	Denis	Sidorenko	Ambassador
Belarus	Alena	Kupchyna	Ambassador, Permanent Representative
Belarus	Aleksei	Barbuk	Counsellor
Belarus	Ruslan	Shamankov	Second Secretary
Belgium	Ghislain	D'Hoop	Ambassador
Belgium	Paul	Huynen	Ambassador, Permanent Representative
Belgium	Else	Keyers	First Secretary
Bulgaria	Plamen	Bounzin	Envoy

Country	First name	Family name	Position
Canada	Jonathan	Tan	Second Secretary
Cyprus	Andreas	Hadjichrysanthou	Ambassador
Cyprus	Mariana	Chralambous	Second Secretary
Croatia	Ante	Cicvarić	Minister Plenipotentiary, Embassy in Berlin
Spain	Luis Manuel	Costa Civis	Deputy Permanent Representative for Politico-Military Issues
Spain	Juan Antonio	Martín Burgos	Deputy Head of Mission
Finland	Jaana A. H.	Rantanen	Second Secretary
France	Eveline	Mathey	Politico-Military Counsellor
France	François	Devoto	First Secretary
Georgia	David	Zalkaliani	First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs
Georgia	Tea	Maisuradze	Director, Department for International Organisations
Georgia	Zurab	Khamashuridze	Minister Counsellor
Georgia	Levan	Diasamidze	Envoy
United Kingdom	Madeline	Knox	First Secretary, Foreign and Security Policy
United Kingdom	Vincent	Venturotti	Second Secretary Political
Greece	Theodoros	Daskarolis	Ambassador
Greece	Efstathios	Paizis-Paradellis	Minister Counsellor
Greece	Stephanos	Ioannides	First Secretary
Hungary	Viktoria	Bere	Second Secretary
Ireland	Nigel	Clarke	First Secretary

Country	First name	Family name	Position
Italy	Benedetto	Della Vedova	Undersecretary of State
Italy	Alessandro	Cortese	Coordinator of the Italian OSCE Chairmanship
Italy	Lorenzo	Galanti	Chief of the Office of the Undersecretary of State
Italy	Pietro	Benassi	Ambassador
Italy	Andrea	Vitolo	Chief of the Political Office
Italy	Stefano	La Tella	First Secretary
Kazakhstan	Roman	Vasilenko	Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs
Kazakhstan	Bolat	Nussupov	Ambassador
Kazakhstan	Dauren	Akberdiev	Second Secretary
Kyrgyzstan	Dinara	Kemelova	First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs
Kyrgyzstan	Erines	Otorbaev	Ambassador
Kyrgyzstan	Askhat	Ryskulov	Counsellor
Lithuania	Diana	Mickevičienė	Deputy Director, Latin America, Africa, Asia and Pacific Department
Luxembourg	Gabriel	Baptista	Head of Asia Division
Malta/EU	Pierre	Amilhat	Director Development Coordination, Asia, Central Asia, Middle East/Gulf and Pacific
Malta/EU	Richard Nikolaus	Kühnel	Head of Representation of the European Commission in Germany
Malta/EU	Dr Albert	Friggieri	Ambassador
Malta/EU	Sharon	Zarb	Counsellor
Malta/EU	Sephora	Gauci	Second Secretary
Malta/EU	Andrea	De Bono Sant Cassia	Policy Officer

Country	First name	Family name	Position
Moldova	Oleg	Serebrian	Ambassador
Mongolia	Battungalag	Gankhuurai	Ambassador, Permanent Representative
Mongolia	Bolor	Tsolmon	Ambassador
Mongolia	Navchaa	Tseveen	First Secretary
Mongolia	Munkhbaatar	Davaasambuu	First Secretary
Mongolia	Mandakhbileg	Birvaa	Embassy in Berlin
Uzbekistan	Aziz	Aliiev	Head of the division in the Department for UN
Uzbekistan	Ilkhom	Ochilov	Charge d' Affaires a.i.
Netherlands	Daniel	Kooij	Deputy Head Political Section
Netherlands	Leila	Cornips	Economic Affairs
Portugal	Ivo	Inacio	First Secretary
Romania	Ioana	Manolescu	First Secretary
Russian Federation	Bakhtier	Khakimov	Ambassador, Special Envoy of the President of the Russian Federation on the Shanghai Cooperation Organization
Holy See	Andrea	Francia	Secretary of the Apostolic Nunciature
Serbia	Jasmina	Velickovic	First Counsellor
Slovakia	Ivan	Kratochvil	OSCE Desk Officer
Slovenia	Maja	Brdnik	First Counsellor
Sweden	Johan	Palsgård	Counsellor
Switzerland	Claude	Wild	Ambassador, Permanent Representative
Switzerland	Esther	Neuhaus	Deputy Head Political Affairs

Country	First name	Family name	Position
Switzerland	Thomas	Meier Nidecker	Deputy Regional Coordinator for Asia and the Pacific
Switzerland	Raphaël	Bez	Political Adviser
Switzerland	Christian	Schläpfer	Attaché
Czech Republic	Šárka	Strahalová	Second Secretary
Turkmenistan	Toyly	Atayev	Ambassador
Turkmenistan	Yazmyrat	Durdymyradov	Consul
Turkey	Ufuk	Gezer	Minister Counsellor
Turkey	Ali Ihsan	Izbul	Counsellor
Ukraine	Serhii	Ilchuk	First Secretary
Partners for Co-operation			
<i>Asian Partners for Co-operation</i>			
Afghanistan	Adela	Raz	Deputy Minister for Economic Cooperation
Afghanistan	Naser Ahmad	Faiq	Deputy Director, Regional Cooperation Department
Afghanistan	Mohammad Naeem	Poyesh	Counsellor and Chargé d' Affaires a.i.
Afghanistan	Hamid Abdulhai	Formuli	Executive Assistant to the Deputy Minister for Economic Cooperation
Afghanistan	Abdul Rahim	Esmat	
Afghanistan	Abdul Jabar	Ariyae	
Australia	Kevin	Magee	Assistant Secretary, Northern Southern and Eastern Europe Branch
Australia	Eugenie	Hwang	Second Secretary
Japan	Manabu	Miyagawa	Deputy Director-General, European Affairs Bureau

Country	First name	Family name	Position
Japan	Chihiro	Sugisawa	Third Secretary
Republic of Korea	Jang-keun	Lee	Director General for International Organizations
Republic of Korea	Kyung-soo	Lee	Ambassador
Republic of Korea	Jeehyun	Shin	Second Secretary
Republic of Korea	Kiseok Michael	Kang	Second Secretary
Thailand	Songsak	Saicheua	Ambassador
Thailand	Chatvadee	Chindawongse	Counsellor
Thailand	Paveena	Sutthisripok	First Secretary
Thailand	Yada	Hattatammanoon	Second Secretary
Thailand	Chanakod	Chasidpon	Plan and Policy Analyst, Senior Professional Level
<i>Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation</i>			
Jordan	Mutaz Mahmoud	Masadeh	Second Secretary
Morocco	Ouafae	Sehhar	Political Counsellor
OSCE			
OSCE Secretariat	Lamberto	Zannier	Secretary General
OSCE Secretariat	Vuk	Žugić	Ambassador/Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities
OSCE Secretariat	Sandra	Sacchetti	Head of External Co-operation
OSCE Secretariat	Marietta	König	External Co-operation Officer
OSCE Secretariat	Delia	Rahmonova-Schwarz	Senior Afghanistan Engagement Support Adviser
OSCE Secretariat	Amarsanaa	Darisuren	Senior Adviser on Gender Issues

Country	First name	Family name	Position
OSCE Secretariat	Ulrike	Schmidt	OSCE Adviser on Gender issues
OSCE Secretariat	Jennifer	Sehring	Environmental Affairs Adviser
OSCE Secretariat	Aldona	Szymanski	Senior External Co-operation Assistant
OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek	Dumitru	Minzarari	Senior Political Officer
International Organizations			
CICA	Jianwei	Gong	Ambassador / Executive Director, Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia
CICA	Avinash Chander	Pandey	Consultant
The Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia	Balzhan	Zhumagazina	Environmental Management Programme Specialist
Commonwealth of Independent States	Dmitry	Olisov	First Secretary
SCO	Mikhail	Konarovskii	Ambassador, Advisor to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Secretariat
UNODC	Flavio	Mirella	Chief, Regional Section for South Asia, East Asia and the Pacific
UNDP	Gerd	Trogemann	Manager of Istanbul Regional Hub
Civil Society			
Körber Foundation	Dr Janka	Oertel	Program Director International Affairs
BBG e.V.	Ilona	Wiener	CEO
BBG e.V.	Thomas C.	Hermann	Board
TDA	Burak	Yusmak	Executive Director, Transnational Diplomacy Association

Country	First name	Family name	Position
Academic & Business Community			
IFIMES	Anis	Bajrektarevic	Head of Mission
LLC	Madina	Khalmirzaeva	Deputy Director, Nazar Business and Technology (through video contribution)
GIISA	Nicole	Birtsch	Research Assistant, German Institute for International and Security Affairs
Balkh University, Afghanistan	Mohammad Qaasim	Yahyah	Head of Water Engineering Department, Faculty of Engineering
German Chambers of Commerce	Dr Volker	Treier	Deputy Chief Executive Officer, International and European Economic Affairs
Guests of the Host Country			
PRC	Wenyan	Fu	Head of Division
PRC	Yong	He	Third Secretary