



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

THE 19th OSCE ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM

1st Preparatory Meeting
7-8 FEBRUARY 2011, VIENNA

Opening Remarks by Goran Svilanovic Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Ladies and Gentlemen,

By adopting last year the PC Decision No 959 regarding the 19th Economic and Environmental Forum, the 56 participating States accepted the challenge of discussing *the promotion of common actions and co-operation in the fields of development of sustainable energy and transport*. Some of these issues have been addressed separately in previous Forum meetings or other conferences and activities. But today it is for the first time we approach them in an inclusive, interrelated and comprehensive fashion through this year's high level Forum process. By doing so, not only do we confirm our strong interest towards them, we create new opportunities for dialogue and co-operation

I would like to commend the Lithuanian Chairmanship for placing these extremely relevant areas so high on our agenda and for keeping this very valuable continuity in our work. Indeed, as mentioned in the *Report on the Future Orientation of the Economic and Environmental Dimension of the OSCE* (CIO.GAL/97/09), the Economic and Environmental Forum should take advantage of both the knowledge acquired and the networks established in previous years. I am convinced it will be the case throughout this year's Forum process.

I would also like to note that this year the Forum process has a new structure. I am convinced that the synchronization of the EEF process with the Chairmanship year will enhance the quality and better define the results of this meeting.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today, experts from participating States, representatives of governments, state institutions and international organizations, together with members of the business sector, civil society and the academic community are meeting here for the First Preparatory Meeting of the 19th Economic and Environmental Forum. As the Secretary General highlighted, one of our main added values lies in the involvement of such a wide range of participants. Please, allow me to warmly welcome all of you. I am convinced that by joining our efforts and sharing our expertise, we will reach a holistic and productive approach on the topic proposed by the

Lithuanian Chairmanship. I strongly encourage you to engage in dynamic and constructive discussions.

As indicated in the agenda for this First Preparatory Meeting, during this two-day event, the presentations and debates should focus on a number of key issues related to the development of sustainable energy.

The pertinence of the topic is undeniable for all of us. The world is currently facing interrelated challenges such as energy scarcity, degradation of the environment and economic downturn. We cannot deny the risk this reality entails for the security and stability in our region. This is one side of the coin but coins always have two faces. This critical situation can of course be perceived as a potential source of conflicts, but allow me to rather consider it as a golden opportunity for co-operation. It is in our interest to focus on responding to these challenges in such a manner that may benefit all of us. To this end, dialogue among all of us and sharing of experiences and best practices is fundamental. I am confident that our Forum offers a perfect framework to establish a fruitful collaboration.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The last World Energy Outlook 2010 of the International Energy Agency indicates that, assuming no changes in the current governments' policies, world primary energy demand is projected to increase by 1.4% per year over the period 2008-2035. Taking into account the uncertainty of energy reserves and the issues we have faced in the past in terms of energy management, we urgently need to join efforts in order to find a way to secure our future.

Some of the activities the OSCE has supported or promoted so far reflect the importance participant States attach to this situation. Beside the regional conferences mentioned by the Secretary General, let me also refer to a number of national and field level activities. Recently, in Azerbaijan, training programmes have been conducted on the topic of *diversification and non-oil sector development*, as well as *on international best practices for the legal and regulatory framework for renewable energy*. Furthermore, we have contributed in Belarus to the *Workshop on Policies and Tariffs for Alternative Energies*. So did we in Georgia for the *9th Georgian International Oil, Gas, Energy and Infrastructure Conference*. In Armenia, we promoted the application of the *Kyoto Protocol's Clean Development Mechanisms* in the Syunik region. In Serbia we supported a *Conference on "Social Corporate Responsibility and Energy Efficiency"*. And in Turkmenistan we contributed to the organisation of a seminar on *Solar and Wind Systems Sustainability*.

All these activities were developed and implemented through the tireless efforts of the Economic and Environmental Officers working in the OSCE field presences. I would like to take this opportunity to warmly thank them and commend their dedication.

In 2011, the OCEEA will continue to implement the MC Decision No. 12/06 and the MC Decision No. 6/09 on energy security dialogue in the OSCE area. My Office will be actively involved in different activities related to energy issues. Allow me to announce that we are working together with the OSCE Centre in Ashgabat and Turkmen authorities to develop a training event in Ashgabat during spring 2011 on the subject of Energy Diplomacy.

We stand ready to provide support to other initiatives of the Chairmanship or the participating States and provide support to organising regional events, such as a proposed meeting of heads of energy agencies in the OSCE area.

We also intend to further deepen our co-operation and creating synergies with partner organizations. My Office will continue to work with the UNECE Sustainable Energy Division, the Energy Charter Secretariat in Brussels, the organizations which make up the Vienna Energy Club: Energy Community Secretariat, IAEA, IIASA, IRENA, OFID, OPIC, UNIDO, REEEP or with regional organizations such as BSEC.

These past, ongoing and planned activities show that the OSCE can bring added value and contribute to enhancing co-operation in the field of sustainable energy and energy security. However, there still is a long way to go. We have to be aware of our responsibilities towards future generations. Quoting the Nobel Peace Prize winner Al Gore "*What we take for granted might not be here for our children*". Indeed, it is in our hand to guarantee future generations with a secure and sustainable world. We cannot postpone taking action. Dealing now with the development of sustainable energy, we mitigate the consequences of previous errors - and thus - prevent potential economic and environmental risks.

I am confident that the discussions and debates that will be initiated today will help us to better co-operate and reach this final goal. We should be able throughout this collective process to reach consensus on practical and balanced recommendations.

Ladies and Gentlemen

I would like to conclude by thanking the Lithuanian OSCE Chairmanship for their important contribution in the preparation of the Economic and Environmental Forum.

I wish you all a vivid and fruitful meeting.

Thank you.