



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe**

**22<sup>ND</sup> OSCE ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM**

**“Responding to environmental challenges with a view to promoting co-operation and security in the OSCE area”**

**SECOND PREPARATORY MEETING**

**Montreux, 19-21 May 2014**

**Closing Statement**

**by Dr. Halil Yurdakul Yigitguden**

**Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities**

Dear Ambassadors,  
Dear Participants,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

In concluding the Second Preparatory Meeting of the 22<sup>nd</sup> OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum, please allow me to express my gratitude for the constructive discussions, the comprehensive presentations, the competent moderations as well as the ideas put forward today.

The keynote speeches by Dr. Tipson and Mr. Rottländer have pointed to the various aspects of natural disasters and their implications for security. Dr. Tipson warned that natural disasters are likely to become the biggest threat to security and co-operation in our era. He called for a renewed commitment of the OSCE towards addressing this new set of threats. Mr Rottlaender reiterated one of the key messages of the first preparatory meeting: that increasing resilience to natural disasters requires concerted action of different levels and stakeholders. He further emphasized the relevance of the tools provided by the existing Hyogo Framework for Action and the new post-2015 framework in advancing this process.

The focus of this Second Preparatory Meeting is very relevant not only to the policy and decision-makers but also to ordinary people in all 57 participating States. In the coming years, one of the greatest challenges will be to adapt societies to a changing environment. Only then can they successfully cope with the effects of climate change, including growing climate-related disaster risks. In our first session we have examined different ways for reducing these risks at local level. As an example, we have learned how an Aarhus Centre in Tajikistan has been providing effective tools to this end.

The second session was dedicated to a discussion of cross-dimensional impacts of disasters, including in the context of population movements. In this regard, presentations by UNHCR, the Norwegian Refugee Council and by OSCE's Conflict Prevention Centre gave a good opportunity to develop a more nuanced understanding of this topic.

In the third session, we addressed disaster risk reduction from another perspective, looking at reduction of risks in international, cross-border and national contexts. The speakers highlighted the need for robust co-operative arrangements at different levels, including at the cross-border level. We also had a chance to learn of a self-assessment tool developed by the OSCE applicable also to increase states' preparedness for cross-border implications of disasters.

Our today's discussions have resulted in a number of recommendations from the experts and the participants about the possible areas where the OSCE could provide its support. Mr Kemp provided a concise summary of these recommendations and gave us food-for-thought for our preparations of the Concluding Meeting in Prague.

I wish to highlight two areas of our work that were once again emphasized as being highly relevant: first, to further promote capacity development on disaster risk reduction at all levels in close collaboration with national and local authorities. And second, to continue fostering dialogue and co-operation among the participating States in this area. This should include enhanced co-operation among different national agencies as well as among civil society and the private sector.

We will closely review the recommendations that are generated today and assess possible follow-up activities. My Office will continue to build on the experience acquired by the OSCE and our ENVSEC partners to support disaster risk reduction efforts. This will include further advancement of our activities in the areas of wildfire management, flood risk reduction and climate change risk assessment and adaptation. My Office will also support the implementation of last year's MC Decision on the protection of energy networks from natural and man-made disasters, a topic related to this year's Economic and Environmental Forum.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would also like to say a few words about the Concluding Meeting in Prague in September. One of the essential elements of a concluding meeting is a review of the OSCE commitments related to the topic of the Forum of that year. We are looking forward to the results of this year's review to be prepared by the United Nations Development Programme.

What is very important is that the Concluding Meeting will consolidate the outcomes of the Forum discussions throughout the year. It will help crystalize conclusions and recommendations for OSCE action in the area of disaster risk reduction, also taking into account a possible Ministerial Council decision at the end of the year.

Reverting to today's meeting and concluding my speech, I wish to note that a Consolidated Summary including the key suggestions and recommendations made by participants during today's deliberations, will be compiled by my Office and made available to all of you within the next weeks.

Thank you.