

Opening speech
Ambassador Tesoriere, Head of OSCE Centre in Bishkek
Sub-regional Seminar “Practical Experience of application of the UNECE Convention
on Environmental Impact Assessment within Transboundary Context in Kyrgyzstan
and Kazakhstan”
Bishkek, 25 March 2009

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, experts, ladies and gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to address this Subregional seminar and the final activity of the Environment and Security (ENVSEC) project “Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context”.

First of all I wish to congratulate the work of the office of Mr. Arstanbek Davletkeldiev – Director of the State Agency on Environment Protection and Forestry under the Government of Kyrgyz Republic. It has been a pleasure for the OSCE to work with you and your staff.

If I may also continue – but in English - I am also happy to be here with one of our ENVSEC partners, the UNECE, and the Espoo Convention Secretary, Mr. Wiecher Shrage, whom has worked closely with us and whose expertise in the field of Environmental Impact Assessment has been of importance to this project.

The OSCE is seeing greater environmental cooperation in the region and the Environment and Security Initiative has certainly strengthened this. For this particular project, I believe the hands-on approach of implementing a pilot - and therefore quickly realising where gaps and improvements in legislation and procedures can be strengthened - has been particularly useful. I also believe the public consultations in both countries were very fruitful - and here I have to thank the OSCE office in Kazakhstan for their work.

As you know, the OSCE has been supporting activities in this region for several years. In Kyrgyzstan, within the framework of the ENVSEC initiative, we have implemented several projects in cooperation with our local partners, for example :

- Continuous Support of the Aarhus Centre in Osh
- Support of the Ministry of Emergency Situations to address the radioactive security issues in the region
- Natural disaster preparedness initiatives throughout the Southern region
- Regular support to the Central Asian Ecological Journalism Festivals
- Public ecological expertise and participation in decision making in a Transboundary Context

In acknowledging the theme of this seminar and the important transboundary and security context of the theme, we would like to assure you of the further commitment of the OSCE in response to the Environmental and Security priorities.

Before I close, I would like to thank Norway for their most generous contribution to this project and wish you all a fruitful seminar. *Once again, I warmly thank our Kyrgyz Hosts and wish you all a successful seminar.*