



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Secretary General on the 2019 Program Outline

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires, a.i. Harry Kamian
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
May 17, 2018

The United States welcomes the 2019 Program Outline and expresses our appreciation to the Secretary General, the fund managers, and their staffs for the hard work that went into preparing this important document. We look forward to productive discussions as we work to leverage most effectively the Organization's expertise and available resources in responding to ongoing security challenges across the entire OSCE space in all three dimensions.

The Program Outline is the first concrete step in the OSCE's planning and budget process for the upcoming year and must be carefully considered. As the Secretary General noted, the delays in approving the last two Unified Budgets impeded planning, delayed necessary organizational changes, prevented implementation of scheduled program activities, and increased costs across the Organization. We hope that the discussions on the 2019 Program Outline will lead to constructive discussions on the 2019 Unified Budget and timely consensus.

As consideration of the 2019 Program Outline moves forward over the coming weeks and months, the United States will continue to champion the efforts of the OSCE's independent institutions – the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the High Commissioner on National Minorities, and the Representative on Freedom of the Media – and will seek to ensure that these institutions have sufficient resources. We will also continue to support the Organization's field operations – the face of the OSCE – on the ground where they contribute to regional integration, democratic reforms, good governance, and promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms.

I recently returned from a week-long trip to visit three OSCE field missions where I had the opportunity to meet with the heads of the mission, their staffs from multiple countries, members of civil society, other international organizations, as well as host nation. And I think in all three cases I found a highly-dedicated, committed group of international staff working in support of the OSCE and in furtherance of the mandates on the ground. And I feel much more confident that there are people on the ground that are contributing in providing value-added.

Mr. Secretary General, as we look ahead to 2019, we ask that you continue to consider ways to reduce the administrative burden – both on our delegations and the Secretariat staff – through further reforms to the budget process, especially a transition to a multi-year budgeting process. Such reform should be a simplification of the current process, retain

participating States' control of the budget, and be in accordance with OSCE principles and commitments.

Mr. Secretary General, I agree with you: we participating States must be the ones that set the priorities for our Organization. And it is the responsibility of all OSCE participating States to provide the Organization with the guidance and resources necessary to effectively address the areas of greatest need, and to support its highest priorities while maintaining fiscal discipline.

Earlier today, we heard from some delegations, Mr. Secretary General, that the OSCE can and should do more. I would encourage those delegations to look deep into their pockets to ensure they, too, are doing their part to provide the Organization with resources that it needs in order to meet these increased demands.

Mr. Chair, we are committed to working with you, the fund managers, other participating States, and the incoming Slovakian Chairmanship on constructive budget discussions, with the aim of reaching timely consensus on the Organization's 2019 priorities.

Thank you.

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