

**Second Preparatory Conference  
for the 16<sup>th</sup> OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum  
“Maritime and inland waterways co-operation in the OSCE area:  
Increasing security and protecting the environment”**

**Ashgabat, 6-7 March 2008**

**Concluding Statement**

**by Ms Tuula Yrjölä, Director, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland / OSCE Chairmanship**

Your Excellency Minister Babaev,  
Mr. Moderator,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the OSCE Chairmanship, I would like to express our appreciation to the Turkmen hosts for the facilitation of this Conference and the excellent arrangements, which allowed the smooth conduct of this Conference. I would also like to thank the Government of Turkmenistan for its gracious hospitality. We were honoured to accept the invitation by H.E. Berdymuhammedov, President of Turkmenistan to a concert to celebrate the international women's day.

During these two days we discussed relevant and topical perspectives of Central Asia, the Caspian Sea as well as the Mediterranean on maritime and inland waterways cooperation. We also received useful information concerning the challenges and opportunities related to security and the environment as well sustainable economic development.

The Conference also focused on the special needs of the landlocked countries. The discussion focused on the current situation including the main bottlenecks of multimodal transit transportation, with emphasis on promoting best practices. Specialized organizations such as UNECE and UNCTAD provided us with detailed information.

In order to encourage more in-depth discussion, the Conference was divided to parallel Working Groups, which combined various topics ranging from transit transportation, maritime environmental challenges and river basin co-operation, to port, ship and container security. The Working Groups proved to be well-placed for a thorough exchange of views and to guide our work forward. I wish to extend special thanks to the facilitators, who together with the panellists and participants formulated ideas for future deliberations of the Economic and Environmental Forum.

The discussions of the Conference demonstrated again that we need to work together in order to be able to address common challenges. With the involvement of all stakeholders, including

governments, international organizations, academia, private enterprises and non-governmental organizations it is possible to identify sustainable solutions.

There is a need for an integrated approach, and the OSCE can support this work as has been shown during these two days. The OSCE already has a long-standing record of activities aimed at promoting transboundary co-operation on economic and environmental matters, and it should be used to its full extent. To this end the role of the Field Operations should be further encouraged. They should also contribute to regional efforts whenever possible.

During the Conference we received some suggestions for themes and questions that merit further attention and follow-up. They will be included in the consolidated summary of this Conference to be distributed in due course.

So, how are we going to proceed from here? Already on 10-11 March an expert Workshop on "Oil Spills Response and Remediation" will be held in Turkmenbashi at the kind invitation of the Government of Turkmenistan, and organised by OSCE Center in Ashgabad and the Office of the Coordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities. The focus will be on available technologies and exchange of best practices from the OSCE region. Next the Second Segment of the Forum will convene in Prague in May, taking into account the discussions and suggestions made here in Ashgabat.

I wish to warmly thank the presenters for their highly professional introductions to the various sub-themes. I would also like to thank the moderators, facilitators and rapporteurs as well as the Coordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, Mr. Bernard Snoy and his team, and Ambassador Ibrahim Djikic and the team of OSCE Office in Ashgabad.

I would also like to express our appreciation to all participants for their contributions to the discussions. Together you all made this Conference a success, providing a valuable contribution to OSCE cooperation in the Caspian Sea region and in the OSCE area as a whole. Without the initiative and the commitment of the Government of Turkmenistan all this would not have been possible. On behalf of all the participants I would like to thank you most warmly Minister Babaev and wish you and your very able team best success in your endeavours.