

Welcoming remarks
by H.E. Mr. Roman Vassilenko,
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan,
at the Opening Session of the Second Preparatory Meeting for the 25th OSCE
Economic and Environmental Forum “Greening the Economy for Sustainable
Development, Security and Stability”
(09.30-11.00, 15 June 2017)

**Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,
Distinguished participants of the Second Preparatory Meeting,**

On behalf of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, I would like to warmly welcome all of you to our young and dynamic capital Astana. Since the turn of the new millennium, Astana has become a centre of international politics and high level meetings, including such significant OSCE events as the 2010 OSCE Summit and the “OSCE Helsinki+40 and Astana+5 International Conference”. Today, we are proud to host yet another important OSCE event with the participation of more than 130 diplomats, academics and NGO representatives.

I would like to express my gratitude to the OSCE Austrian Chairmanship for convening the Second Preparatory Meeting for the 25th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum in Astana, and for appointing the Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan, Ambassador Kairat Sarybay, as the Chair of the OSCE Economic and Environmental Committee for 2017.

Kazakhstan’s delegation to the OSCE will contribute its utmost for ensuring the success of the Austrian Chairmanship, and will explore the full potential of the Second Committee.

As an active participant in second dimension activities, Kazakhstan fully supports the main theme of today’s meeting, as formulated by the Austrian Chairmanship: “Greening the economy and building partnerships for security”. An equal emphasis must be made on economic and environmental security, and the indicative work plan of the Economic and Environmental Committee is evidence of this approach in action.

The OSCE’s Economic and Environmental Dimension is a unique bridge-builder between the First and Third Dimensions. It contributes to enhancing confidence among participating States and to promoting good governance and security within the OSCE region. The OSCE should play a key role in assisting participating States in developing the vast potential of the Second Dimension, and in the same vein make real progress towards establishing a security community stretching from Vancouver to Vladivostok – the vision enshrined in the Astana Commemorative Declaration of the 2010 OSCE Summit.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I believe that many of you have attended the opening of the Austrian and OSCE pavilions at EXPO and toured the exhibition grounds. There, you have seen first-hand how Kazakhstan and other like-minded states, many of whom are OSCE members, plan to address the most pressing energy challenges that directly influence many important aspects of human life, including global warming and climate change, fair opportunities for the economic development of all nations, energy security and distribution of resources, access to water, protection of biodiversity, and the promotion of the rule of law.

Kazakhstan attaches special importance to the development of advanced technologies and innovations for economy and sustainable development, energy efficiency and green research. This past Sunday, OSCE Secretary General Lamberto Zannier participated as a keynote speaker

in the Ministerial Conference on Energy for Sustainable Development, held on the sidelines of EXPO 2017, where he spoke of the Organization's activities in this increasingly-important sphere.

I would like to emphasize at this point that the infrastructure built for EXPO 2017 will continue serving a prominent role after the exhibition's end – that of the site for a future International Centre for Green Technologies and Investments and a new research complex of Nazarbayev University. One of the main objectives of this endeavour is to exchange best practices and latest advancements in research, and facilitate the transfer of environmentally-conscious technologies into economically-viable projects.

Availing myself of this opportunity, I would like to thank Nazarbayev University for hosting this important OSCE event.

Dear delegates,

I believe holding the Second Preparatory Meeting in Astana, on the sidelines of EXPO 2017, will contribute to an active exchange of knowledge, opinions, and discussions among OSCE participating States, Partners for Cooperation, and other interested parties actively participating in the work of the Economic and Environmental Dimension, and hopefully pave the way for a possible Vienna Ministerial Council decision on “green economy”.

I would like to once again extend my country's deep appreciation to the 2017 Austrian OSCE Chairmanship and the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities for their trust in holding the Second Preparatory Meeting in Astana, and also for preparing a substantive working and cultural program for its participants, many of whom have traveled great distances and are visiting our country for the first time. I am sure that the holding of this special event in the halls of Nazarbayev University, the premier higher learning institution of Kazakhstan, will encourage a broad exchange of opinions and a productive working schedule.

This evening, at the conclusion of the first working day's discussions, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan invites all delegations to a reception which will be held in Nazarbayev University.

Thank you for your attention.