

23RD ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM

“Water governance in the OSCE area – increasing
security and stability through co-operation”

2015
COMPIRATION OF
CONSOLIDATED
SUMMARIES

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Prague, 14-16 September 2015**

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PLEASE NOTE:

All documents and speakers' presentations of the respective Forum Meeting are available on the OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum website:

Concluding Meeting: www.osce.org/event/23rd_eef_2015
Consolidated Summary (EEF.GAL/15/15/), www.osce.org/secretariat/197446

Second Preparatory Meeting: www.osce.org/event/23rd_eef_prep2
Consolidated Summary (EEF.GAL/13/15), www.osce.org/secretariat/172366

First Preparatory Meeting: www.osce.org/event/23rd_eef_prep1
Consolidated Summary (EEF.GAL/7/15/Rev.1), www.osce.org/secretariat/144136

23rd OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum

CONCLUDING MEETING

Prague, 14-16 September 2015

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The Concluding Meeting of the 23rd OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum (EEF) on “Water governance in the OSCE area – increasing security and stability through co-operation” took place in Prague, Czech Republic, on 14-16 September 2015. Seven thematic areas were addressed during the three-day meeting:

- The benefits of good water governance across different levels
- Water governance at national level – best practices and new approaches in the OSCE region
- Water governance and co-operation at transboundary level: lessons learnt for water diplomacy
- Water governance and sustainable development
- Facilitating effective water governance in the context of new environmental challenges
- Governing waters for effective disaster risk reduction
- Strengthening participation and awareness raising for effective water governance

A session devoted to the possible follow-up to the 23rd OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum concluded the event.

More than 250 participants, including official representatives of OSCE participating States, OSCE field operations, as well as experts from international, regional and non-governmental organizations, the business community and academia attended the meeting and engaged in the discussions.

The CiO and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, H.E. Ivica Dacic opened the event with H.E. Didier Burkhalter, Head of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Jakub Kulhánek, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Czech Republic and Ambassador Lamberto Zannier, Secretary General of the OSCE.

The two keynote speeches as well as many other interventions during the Concluding Forum emphasized the urgency and relevance for the OSCE to step up its activities on water governance as well as climate change adaptation.

The review report by the UNECE on the “Implementation of OSCE Commitments in the Field of Water Governance” provided a comprehensive overview and a set of recommendations for further engagement.

Several participants highlighted that the OSCE’s comprehensive and co-operative approach to security and its experience in addressing environmental challenges provides the right basis for the Organization’s further engagement in the field of water governance.

It was underlined that the OSCE is a recognized platform for dialogue where security implications of global, regional, national and local water related challenges can be discussed. It was also emphasized that the OSCE should co-operate and co-ordinate with other specialized organizations active in the field of Water Governance.

REPORTS OF THE RAPPORTEURS

Opening Plenary Session

Moderator: Dr. Halil Yurdakul Yiğitgüden, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Rapporteur: Ms. Jenniver Sehring, Environmental Affairs Adviser, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Welcoming remarks:

H.E. Jakub Kulhánek, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Czech Republic

H.E. Lamberto Zannier, Secretary General, OSCE

Keynote speeches:

H. E. Ivica Dacic, OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia

H.E. Didier Burkhalter, President of the Swiss Confederation, Head of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs

H.E. Jakub Kulhánek, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Czech Republic, welcomed the timely and important topic of water governance. He reminded that there is no life without water and pointed out that water could be a reason for conflicts and be used as a strategic weapon. Water governance has always been a major factor in local, regional and global security. He underlined that uneven distribution of water is compounded by climate change, and that water co-operation at all levels is of vital importance. Since the Czech Republic is an upstream country and very prone to floods, it is highly devoted to co-operation, in particular within the frameworks of international commissions for Elbe, Odra and Danube Rivers. The efficiency of the long-term co-operation in these frameworks has been increasing with the development of information sharing technologies. He also stressed the indispensable role the International Organizations play in this matter.

H.E. Lamberto Zannier, Secretary General, OSCE, referred to the Sendai World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, the development of the Sustainable Development Goals and the upcoming UNFCCC COP21 in Paris that provided unparalleled opportunities for concerted action with partners related to water governance. He underlined three key points: (1) Water is a strategic resource and essential element of national and regional security, which is under stress and needs increased focus. (2) Water is a common good and governing water resources in transboundary context requires mechanisms that are equitable but adapted to specific context, taking local conditions into account. (3) OSCE pS have the advantage of a legally binding convention – the UNECE Water Convention. He stressed that the OSCE is well placed to support pS in good water governance, on such issues as inter-sectoral co-ordination, transparent and accountable decision-making, stakeholder participation, data sharing, and sound regulatory frameworks. The Secretary General also underlined the importance of involving local communities in water management, a topic where the OSCE Secretariat, field operations and Aarhus Centres were already engaged. He underlined that the OSCE would continue to support

good water governance, in close partnership with other international stakeholders. With regard to the global agenda, the speaker stressed the links between the Sustainable Development Goals and the upcoming UNFCCC COP21 in Paris. He noted that the OSCE could engage further in areas such as water, climate change, energy, land degradation and disaster risk reduction, as well as gender equality, promotion of inclusive societies and many others. Finally, he appreciated the co-operation and partnerships, which the OSCE had built in the field of water governance with a number of international organizations, including in the framework of the Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC).

H.E. Ivica Dacic, OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, highlighted the potential of the Economic and Environmental Dimension and the need to increase collective efforts in the Dimension. Referring to the fortieth anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act, he stated that the Economic and Environmental Forum process was an excellent example of how OSCE's comprehensive approach to security contributes to rebuilding trust and confidence. He noted that by bringing together a wide array of different stakeholders, the Forum facilitated the exchange of ideas and practical experiences on the most pressing economic and environmental issues affecting the OSCE region. He underlined that water was not a new topic for the OSCE, but that there was a need for greater political engagement, increased co-operation, and a better understanding of its complex connections with security. H.E. Ivica Dacic stressed that the Serbian Chairmanship was focusing on promoting dialogue and co-operation on good water governance through the sharing of best practices and lessons learned at all levels – transboundary, national, and local. He underlined that good water governance should also include a gender and youth perspective to maximize environmental, social, and economic benefits while contributing to increased security in the OSCE region. As the largest regional security organization under Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter, the OSCE could make a tangible contribution to security and prosperity by tackling contemporary challenges like water governance. He underlined the timeliness of this in light of the upcoming adoption of the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the UN conference on climate change in Paris. He announced that Serbia would start working towards a comprehensive Ministerial Council Decision on this topic. He concluded by reminding about the need for an integrated and cross-dimensional approach and co-operation among participating States, as well as with other international organizations, the private sector and civil society.

H.E. Didier Burkhalter, Head of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, underlined the great importance Switzerland attached to the Economic and Environmental Dimension and its commitment to strengthening it. Water and security figured highly on the Swiss foreign policy agenda as a strategic contribution to peace and security. He reminded that water crises were perceived as major security risks, but stressed that water could also be a powerful source for co-operation. The latter notion was at the heart of Swiss water diplomacy and should also guide the discussion of OSCE's role. Due to changing consumption patterns, population growth, raise in water use, climate change and pollution, water management was facing unprecedented challenges. It was noted that water is at the core of sustainable development; but it is also a security issue that could fuel conflicts, exacerbated by climate change. H.E. Didier Burkhalter referred to examples of water conflicts and of water used as a weapon of war, as could be seen during the Syrian crisis. Therefore, it was important to engage to ensure role of water as an instrument for peace and not a source of crisis. To highlight the potential for co-operation, he pointed to the example of an irrigation scheme used by opposing factions in Syria, where

opponents who were fighting during daylight, sat together and negotiated a fair quota of water in the evening.

Further on, the speaker introduced the lines of action on “water and security”, recently developed by the Swiss foreign ministry, making the case for a comprehensive approach when addressing the nexus of water and security. He also referred to Switzerland’s engagement in so-called “Blue Diplomacy” since 2009, building on the experience and expertise Switzerland had in transboundary water co-operation, for instance in the Rhine basin. Switzerland’s activities included the development of new mechanisms for water-policy negotiation and co-ordination in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, introduction of Integrated Water Management in Central Asia, and the appointment of a special envoy for water in Central Asia in order to facilitate interstate dialogue. He informed that Switzerland would launch, together with partner States, a Global High Level Panel on Water and Peace in Geneva in November. He stressed that strengthening the OSCE’s portfolio in water diplomacy and sustainable water management was a joint priority of the consecutive Swiss and Serbian OSCE Chairmanships. He stated that the OSCE has built a strong track record on supporting participating States in fostering good and joint water governance, but more could and should be done. He mentioned three reasons why Switzerland considered the OSCE a vital actor and multiplier in water governance:

(1) OSCE know-how in co-operative security and its comprehensive approach linking the environment and security were of great value when it comes to water governance. The OSCE could act as a facilitator and political platform, and could also bring in its own expertise. He referred to the examples of developing legal frameworks for water governance between Moldova and Ukraine, and between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, and OSCE’s regional training workshop on gender mainstreaming and conflict resolution in Central Asia’s water governance.

(2) The OSCE has partnerships with other institutions that have in-depth knowledge in water governance, such as the UNECE. Many water-related projects of the OSCE have taken place within the Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC). He pointed to the transboundary climate change adaptation strategy that Ukraine and Moldova endorsed this year for the Dniester basin, which had been facilitated by the OSCE and UNECE, and encouraged more such joint initiatives to follow.

(3) The OSCE is close to the people and has a strong presence on the ground. The OSCE works with civil society and many of its field operations have played important roles in promoting water co-operation, like the OSCE Office in Tajikistan in facilitating transboundary water co-operation between Tajikistan and Afghanistan, or the OSCE presence in Albania and OSCE Secretariat in training Aarhus Centres on how they could foster public participation in transboundary water management in South Eastern Europe. Switzerland regarded the almost 60 OSCE-supported Aarhus Centres in 14 participating States as useful platforms to engage citizens, governments and the private sector in a dialogue on environmental challenges.

H.E. Didier Burkhalter also commended the OSCE for its efforts to mitigate the serious water supply crisis in the conflict-affected regions in Ukraine. In concluding, he encouraged participating States to support the OSCE efforts to foster security through co-operative water governance and to promote water as an issue for the Belgrade Ministerial Council.

The floor was opened for statements from the Delegations.

A representative of the European Union, together with the aligned countries (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ukraine, Georgia, Andorra and

San Marino), underlined that sustainable water management could be an important factor to preserve peace, security and stability, and that water scarcity, climate change, droughts and floods could contribute to tensions and conflicts. Depriving people access to water and sanitation was depriving them of basic human rights. He stated that the EU attached great importance to regional and transboundary water co-operation, and encouraged regional and international co-operation as a concrete objective of EU water diplomacy. He highlighted that international agreements on water co-operation, including the UN and UNECE Water Conventions, were important instruments to promote the integrated management of transboundary water resources. He stated that the OSCE, as a regional security organization, was well placed to play a role in facilitating and enhancing dialogue and co-operation and thus contributing to increasing trust and confidence. He emphasized the growing relevance of water governance and water diplomacy in particular in Central Asia and encouraged the countries to engage in dialogue and co-operation on this issue. He appreciated that the meeting would try to explore the linkages water governance has with sustainable development and environmental challenges stemming from climate change, also referring to the importance of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Sendai Framework for DRR 2015-2030. Finally, the representative expressed his hope that the meeting would contribute to a possible Ministerial Council Decision in the area of water governance.

A representative of the Russian Federation stressed the need to increase transboundary co-operation, reinforce water management capacities at all levels, improve efficiency, and strengthen regional and sub-regional mechanisms between neighbouring countries, including through the resources and work of the OSCE Secretariat. She underlined that water deficit should not only be seen as a source of conflict, but water should be considered a catalyst for international co-operation. Exchange of experience could not only contribute to a better environment, but could also positively affect broader relations between countries. She stated that the OSCE is a useful platform for dialogue among participating States and finding new opportunities even if States may have different approaches, and the OSCE could make its own contribution without duplication efforts of other international organizations.

A representative of Turkey stressed the importance of bolstering and reinforcing the Second Dimension of the OSCE. He acknowledged the role of the OSCE as a significant platform to discuss various aspects of water governance, such as capacity building and enhancement, ensuring greater participation of women and youth, and the link between DRR and water governance. He reminded that water resources and the ecosystems that sustain them were under threat. Since water was a vital yet limited resource and one of the essential factors of sustainable development, all countries should introduce effective management and establish strong institutions for good water governance, which requires a participatory, co-operative and holistic approach at all levels. Since Turkey was located in the region vulnerable to climate change, it was committed to manage water in an efficient manner. Turkey considered water as a bridge-builder and its transboundary water policy was based on the principles of equitable, reasonable and optimal usage in the best interest of riparian states. Since every basin had peculiarities, transboundary water issues should be handled first and foremost by the riparian countries.

A representative of the Holy See referred to Pope Francis's Environmental Encyclical, which stated that access to drinking water was crucial. The Catholic Church taught that water could not

be treated as commodity, but should be considered as a public good and used rationally and in solidarity. He stressed that the right to water was a universal right. Given the urgency of the problem, the search for solutions should not be limited to statements and should not neglect thorny issues, but take urgent action to protect human life, including fostering co-operation, technology transfer, measures against corruption and pollution, and establishing regional and transboundary bodies. Finally, he expressed hope to find sustainable solutions as soon as possible, in particular for the most vulnerable groups and next generations.

A representative of Belarus stressed the importance of the topic and welcomed the opportunity to exchange views on best practices related to water governance, analyze the impact of climate change on water resources and discuss the contribution of the OSCE. The representative stated that Belarus was in favour of stepping up efforts of the participating States in the Economic and Environmental Dimension. Social and economic development and environmental protection were relevant to every individual, and further efforts of the OSCE could contribute to sustainable development and stability. He expressed his hope that the Forum would become an important milestone in the preparations for the OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in Belgrade in December.

A representative of Uzbekistan stated that efficient water management was crucial for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. He pointed to the risks and potential disasters associated with huge water infrastructure and the impacts of the Aral Sea crisis as major environmental disaster in the region. The worsening environmental situation and food security were major issues in the region. Through modernization of infrastructure, proper water management and agricultural diversification, Uzbekistan had managed to reduce water collection by more than 20 per cent. The representative also referred to the international conference on the Aral Sea disaster in Urgench in October 2014. Uzbekistan would be looking forward to a constructive approach to transboundary water management, based on the following main directions: (1) water usage should be based on the relevant international norms, (2) joint mitigation of negative impacts of the Aral Sea disaster, (3) strengthening of monitoring systems of transboundary waters, (4) modern water technology for irrigation and drinking water supply.

A representative of Armenia appreciated the link of the topic of the 22nd EEF - disaster risk reduction - with water governance. He welcomed the elaborated discussions on water governance during the preparatory meetings, particularly on the transboundary context and DRR, which also pointed to the comparative advantage of the OSCE as a security organization that could bring added value to the discussions of water co-operation. He expressed his expectations that the Forum should identify the way forward, including through new commitments, in water governance. He stated that Armenia saw the OSCE as a political organization that deals with sensitive issues, well placed to assist pS in transboundary co-operation. He welcomed the emphasis on water governance at transboundary level and water diplomacy from the angle of possible OSCE involvement. Also when difficulties of political nature prevented direct bilateral or multilateral action, the OSCE could address water governance and DRR issues. OSCE's involvement in the ENVSEC Initiative provided important points of reference, as well as the OSCE experience in dispatching fact finding missions. Climate change assessment and mitigation could create a de-politicized agenda among States. He urged OSCE pS not to try to resolve water scarcity in transboundary basins by unilateral actions. Water should also not be used as unilateral coercive measure.

A representative of Spain commended the Chairmanship for choosing the theme of water governance. Spain viewed this topic as crucial, also due to its own geographical and climate situation. She referred to the headquarters of the UN Water Decade in Zaragoza, and stressed that Spain would continue to contribute to water-related activities of the OSCE, which could bring added value. Spanish experience could be of interest for other pS, in particular with regard to integrated river basin management, natural disasters and transboundary co-operation, and water confederations which are independent bodies including also civil society and regional authorities. With regard to transboundary co-operation, the representative mentioned the strong co-operation between Spain and Portugal based on the Albufeira Convention of 1998. In the Mediterranean, Spain initiated in March 2015 jointly with Algeria the Western Mediterranean Initiative which identified improving water management as key priority. It will be followed by an action plan and a road map for implementation until the end of this year. She concluded by underlining Spain's full commitment to promote access to drinking water as a basic human right.

A representative of the United States of America stressed that for the OSCE, as an organization focused on security, it was important to examine how it could increase security by preparing for, mitigating, and responding to challenges related to water, since poor water governance could create instability and increase regional tensions. However, water problems also represented opportunities to promote cross-border co-operation and stimulate innovation and entrepreneurship. The representative referred to the ten-year anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, and the lessons learnt from such experiences:

(1) Governments must work together. During the recovery after Hurricane Katrina, partnership among different government agencies and jurisdictions led to a model of effective co-operation. Also internationally, co-operation on water governance required similar levels of co-operation and political will. Referring to the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement and the Columbia River Treaty with Canada, the representative stressed the importance of patience, sustained support, and dedication to achieving results. He stressed that across the OSCE region, co-operation between the pS, national and local governments, and communities was essential and that the upcoming discussions could determine which role the OSCE could play to support more effective co-operation.

(2) The representative also pointed to the need to actively promote economic opportunities to improve water governance through innovation and entrepreneurship. He challenged all delegations and OSCE missions to play an active part in promoting these opportunities.

(3) He also stressed the increased number of extreme weather events due to climate change and consequently the need to make better use of natural infrastructure, like wetlands, and ensuring that man-made infrastructure could adapt to a wide range of possible conditions. He suggested to explore how the OSCE could assist in this effort and expressed his appreciation of the upcoming OSCE Security Days conference on "Climate Change and Security."

The representative welcomed the fact that transparency and anti-corruption, which was an indispensable part of any dialogue on good governance, would be discussed during the Forum. Corruption could multiply losses from natural disasters and pose threats to neighbouring countries. Finally, the representative asked the Co-ordinator, in addition to providing a general summary of this Forum, to keep track on specific elements that could be part of the practical steps undertaken in the OSCE and by its participating States to be included in a potential Ministerial Decision. He called on the Secretariat, the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, and the Conflict Prevention Center to explore the creation of a series of

table-top exercises that could examine possible water-related risk scenarios, such as droughts and floods, and identify actions and specific OSCE tools that could be employed.

A representative of Tajikistan underlined the crucial importance of water governance for sustainable development, security and stability. Access to water was important, especially with regard to climate change and increased demand. The topic was important for Central Asia, where most water was used for agriculture, but also energy production was dependent on water, in particular in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. He outlined the following key aspects of water and security in Central Asia: (1) the unequal distribution and usage of water in the region and the resulting conflicts of interests between upstream and downstream states, (2) limited water availability, decreasing due to climate change, (3) increasing demand for water due to population growth and economic development, (4) the continuing deterioration of the Aral Sea, related to inefficient irrigation, (5) and, most important, the insufficient regional co-operation to solve the water problems. Tajikistan was willing to co-operate with all interested parties, in particular its neighbouring countries, in mutual interests. He referred to the international water initiatives of the President of Tajikistan, such as the International Year of Water Co-operation and several high level events. He reminded that for Tajikistan, water usage problems could not be discussed without considering energy issues due to the role of hydropower and its potential for the whole region. He stated that hydropower development should be part of measures taken to reduce the use of fossil fuels, foster renewable energy and improve green economy, and thereby could contribute to sustainable development in the whole region.

Review of the implementation of the OSCE commitments in the field of water governance

Moderator: Ambassador Dejan Šahović, Head of the OSCE Chairmanship Task Force

Rapporteur: Mr. Edvardas Aleksandras, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Speakers:

Mr. Sergiusz Ludwiczak, Acting Director of Environment Division, UNECE

Ms. Sonja Koeppel, Secretariat of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, UNECE

Ambassador Dejan Šahović, Head of the OSCE Chairmanship Task Force opened the session underlining that the concluding meeting of the EEF in Prague provided an opportunity to benefit from the results of the review of implementation of commitments of the OSCE participating States. In 2015, the review process was carried out by UNECE which is one of OSCE's close partners in water related issues and is the main organization in charge of developing tools and strategies for transboundary water governance. Ambassador Šahović indicated that for more than a decade, the OSCE and UNECE, together with other partners, have been co-operating in the framework of the Environment and Security (ENVSEC) Initiative to address environmental challenges related to security.

Mr. Sergiusz Ludwiczak, Acting Director of Environment Division, UNECE, reminded participating States that from 25 to 27 September 2015 in New York, the world leaders were expected to adopt the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. *Mr. Ludwiczak* emphasized that this framework is based on 5 pillars, 17 goals and 169 targets which promised to pave the way for the eradication of poverty and hunger and for promoting peace and prosperity in a healthy environment for future generations. He noted that water is key for sustainable development as emphasized in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The speaker specified that amongst the 17 Sustainable Developments Goals, goal number 6 and in particular its target 6.5 recognized that water governance was crucial for achieving all water-related targets. He also mentioned that the new 2030 Agenda contained a call for transboundary water co-operation noting that 60% of the world's freshwater courses cross borders and more than 50% of the population in the European and Asian parts of the ECE region live within shared river basins. He specified that any response to existing or emerging water challenges including equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water, water efficiency and sustainability, prevention and control of transboundary water pollution and related ecosystems, but also climate change adaptation requires co-operation between stakeholders across borders. In this regard, *Mr. Ludwiczak* underlined the UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) which provides the necessary legal and intergovernmental framework for transboundary water co-operation and for promotion of good water governance. He also noted that the Water Convention itself is a testimony of excellent co-operation between the UNECE and OSCE. The speaker emphasized that water is frequently a source for co-operation underlining the work which was done by the UNECE and OSCE leading up to the Sava agreement and establishment of the Sava River Commission between the countries in South-Eastern Europe after the devastating war. He also provided an example on how the OSCE together with the UNECE have been providing support to governments in response to water challenges in the framework of the ENVSEC Initiative, for example, by establishing legal and institutional frameworks. In particular, on the Chu and Talas River Basin in Central Asia the OSCE and UNECE, together with other organizations, have supported the establishment of the river basin commission which still remains the only bilateral commission in Central Asia. Referring to the floods in the Sava basin last year, *Mr. Ludwiczak* indicated that the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction also included provision on transboundary co-operation in disaster risk reduction. He underlined that OSCE and UNECE, together with other ENVSEC partners clearly demonstrated how this co-operation could be implemented on the ground by applying tools and methodologies that supported climate change adaptation and improved resilience to environmental risks in shared basins. He provided the example of the joint OSCE-UNECE project on "Climate Change and Security in the Dniester River Basin" that supported the development of a climate change vulnerability assessment as well as of a transboundary adaptation strategy, which is currently being implemented through concrete measures on the ground. Furthermore, the project supports the transboundary co-operation by providing a platform for co-operation and information exchange between the riparian countries. Furthermore, *Mr. Ludwiczak* emphasized that disaster preparedness and risk reduction activities have also been implemented by the network of 59 Aarhus Centres supported by the OSCE in 14 countries, by acting as a catalyst in promoting democracy and good governance, including good water governance as well as in advancing the implementation of the principles of the UNECE Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters. It was also noted that increasing public awareness, disseminating information and engaging public and civil society in the decision making could help to mitigate the risks associated

with natural disasters and could assist in adapting the long-term effects of natural disasters and adapt to climate change. Mr. *Ludwiczak* suggested that the OSCE, together with its OSCE field operations should continue to reinforce the capacities of Aarhus Centres related to good governance at different levels and should strengthen networking of Aarhus Centres within and across borders in shared river basins. Mr. *Ludwiczak* also identified a number of opportunities for further co-operation between the UNECE and the OSCE in the field of water governance, underlining that organizations could further enhance synergies to promote the benefits of transboundary water co-operation, to accelerate climate change adaptation and to promote co-operation on the ground. In this respect, he mentioned the example of the Dniester River Basin, which can be replicated to other basins interested to develop climate change adaptation strategies. In conclusion Mr. *Ludwiczak* informed participating States about the upcoming seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Water Convention, which planned to be held on 17-19 November, 2015 in Budapest and encouraged distinguished delegates to attend this important meeting.

Ms. Sonja Koeppel, Secretariat of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, UNECE presented the report on the review of the implementation of the OSCE commitments in the field of water governance. She highlighted that without proper water governance there would be increased competition for water between sectors and an escalation of water crises of various kinds which could trigger emergencies in a range of water dependent sectors. She noted that more than 150 rivers and lakes were shared by two or more of the 57 OSCE participating States. *Ms. Koeppel* presented several definitions of water governance and the principles that form the basis of good water governance and emphasised the importance of the Sustainable Development Goal 6, entirely dedicated to the water topic, of the target 6.5 as well as of the target 6b which foresees strengthening of public participation of local communities in improving water and sanitation management. *Ms. Koeppel* encouraged participating States to use other international frameworks and processes in supporting water governance, highlighting here the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses entered into force in 2014, the Aarhus Convention, Espoo Convention (Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context), the SEA Protocol at regional level and identified in particular the special role European Union was attaching to this matter. *Ms. Koeppel* identified required elements for improving water governance amongst which she highlighted: participatory decision making; delivering water supply and sanitation services in an affordable, accountable and sustainable manner; creating regulatory frameworks and promoting knowledge transfer and skills development, as well as the cross-sectorial co-ordination and co-operation. The speaker briefly spoke about the 1992 UNECE Water Convention and emphasised the advancement of transboundary co-operation in the OSCE region. *Ms. Koeppel* presented the OSCE forum processes devoted to and the documents that focused on the water or related topics, and with regards to the implementation of the OSCE commitments by the OSCE participating States, she noted that there was significant increase in ratification of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) amongst the participating States. She emphasised the importance that the OSCE participating States negotiated new transboundary agreements like Moldova – Romania, the Memorandum of Understanding on the (Drin River. She indicated that substantial number of participating States made progress in public availability of information on water as well as on the river basin management. The speaker informed the distinguished delegates that the OSCE participating States updated some existing agreements amongst which were the Albufeira

Convention (Spain and Portugal) and US-Mexico agreement. Ms. Koeppel presented a number of challenges regarding water governance in the OSCE region amongst which were: major gaps in the extent to which the river basin management approach was applied; huge lack of capacities and resources; difficulties in addressing new challenges such as climate change. The speaker highlighted that OSCE supports participating States in addressing these challenges, such as for example the support offered, in partnership with UNECE, to the riparian countries of the Kura River (Azerbaijan and Georgia) with drafting a transboundary river agreement.

In conclusion, Ms. Koeppel listed a number of concrete recommendations to the OSCE. The report called for the OSCE to:

1. Increase support for Good Water Governance including effective inter-sectoral co-ordination at local and national levels, transparent and accountable decision-making processes, stakeholder participation, data and information sharing, and sound regulatory frameworks;
2. Expand activities on water diplomacy, e.g. by enabling a discussion platform among water, foreign and security policy communities in order to increase understanding of water conflicts and develop strategic and practical solutions, as needed, in co-operation with partners;
3. Strengthen work, with international organizations e.g. with UNECE, to facilitate transboundary water co-operation in specific basins including through support for developing and implementing legal and institutional frameworks;
4. Make increased use of environmental co-operation, including in the area of water, as a tool in diminishing tensions as part of a broader effort to prevent conflict, build mutual confidence and promote good neighborly relations;
5. Further strengthen support for public participation and transparency, especially through Aarhus Centres which need more support and should be better linked;
6. Support accession to and implementation of MEAs, such as Water Convention;
7. Support participating States in implementation of water-related SDGs, as relevant;
8. Together with UNECE further support transboundary co-operation in climate change adaptation and support implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction;
9. Invest more in educating young generations on how to govern water more wisely, and strengthen its collaboration with youth organizations;
10. Strive to promote a gender perspective in its activities related to water governance and water diplomacy;
11. Continue to co-operate on water-related activities with other international and regional organizations active in this area, including through ENVSEC.

Ambassador Šahović thanked UNECE for their report underlining that recommendations provided by the speakers would be an excellent food for thought especially taking into account upcoming Ministerial Council meeting in Belgrade. *Ambassador Šahović* also indicated the importance of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development highlighting target 6.5 on water governance and asked Mr. *Ludwiczak* about the role that the OSCE could play in this regard.

Mr. Ludwiczak noted that in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the OSCE together with the UNECE should be ready to co-operate and work

together in order to assist participating States in complying with their commitments emphasizing the importance of transboundary water co-operation between the participating States.

The floor was opened for discussion.

The representative of Austria pointed out that there still were water governance challenges in Central Asia and inquired about the UNECE experience in addressing this issue.

Ms. Koeppel highlighted that for a number of years UNECE together with the OSCE worked in Central Asia on the basis of the UNECE Water Convention, on a number of technical issues, including dam safety, water quality issues and data exchange programs. She noted that transboundary relations were often difficult to deal with and therefore she suggested initiating discussions on a technical level first in order to start consultations on a higher political level.

The representative of Finland asked about the relations between the UN 1997 Convention on the Law of Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses and the 1992 UNECE Water Convention and its added value to the OSCE region.

Ms. Koeppel noted that the UN Convention on the Law of Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses entered into force in 2014 and it is a complementary framework to the UNECE Water Convention. With regard to the OSCE, Ms Koeppel noted that two conventions were based on the main principles of the international water law and OSCE was already, together with its partners, promoting these principles through different projects and activities on the ground.

Session I: The benefits of good water governance across different levels

Moderator: Ambassador Thierry Béchet, Permanent Representative of the European Union to the OSCE

Rapporteur: Ms. Dana Bogdan, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Speakers:

Mr. Eugene Z. Stakhiv, lecturer and researcher at John Hopkins University, and visiting scholar at the US Army Corps of Engineers, Institute for Water Resources, United States

Mr. Ahmet Saatci, President, Turkish Water Institute

Ms. Aziza Akhmouch, Head - Water Governance Programme, Regional Development Policy Division, Public Governance and Territorial Development Directorate, OECD

Mr. Massimo Cozzone, Chairperson of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes

Mr. Gazmend Turdiu, Deputy Secretary General, Regional Co-operation Council

Ambassador Thierry Béchet opened the session and encouraged speakers and the audience to look more into the practical aspects of good water governance, to explore how the objectives of the Concluding Meeting of the Forum could be translated into practical steps. He underlined the value of sharing experiences from different parts of the world in this session, with a focus on which things can work in the context of the OSCE.

Mr. Eugene Stakhiv presented the benefits of good water governance across different levels from a practitioner's perspective. He started by sharing a few observations on the roles and responsibilities of countries in the water sector, including policy-making and implementation, operational management as well as regulation and enforcement. *Mr. Stakhiv* noted that water resources management and 'governance' are inherently concerned with water security. The speaker referred to several definitions of 'water governance' as put forth by different international institutions and pointed to the distinct differences between developing and developed nations with regard to the Sustainable Development and the Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) Goals, from a water governance perspective. *Mr. Stakhiv* presented a list of necessary conditions required for effective national IWRM, emphasizing the need for consistent project planning and evaluation guidelines as well as effective regulatory and institutional enforcement infrastructure. Speaking on the transboundary development agenda, he emphasized that river basin commissions have a diplomatic function in the context of relations between the riparian states. In concluding his presentation, *Mr. Stakhiv* referred to activities implemented by the OSCE and mentioned the need for defining an effective organizational model for the future Dniester River Basin Commission to be established by the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. He also noted that, when developing this Commission's model, there are several examples around the world that could serve as stimulating examples in this case.

Mr. Ahmet Saatci outlined the sectoral water uses in the world and in Turkey and presented the Regional Development Projects (RDPs) implemented in Turkey based on the water-food-energy – ecosystems nexus. *Mr. Saatci* gave an overview on the water withdrawals by sectors in the country and referred to the current and future water use in Turkey for each main economic sector. Within the next decade, the water use for agricultural purposes is projected to decrease while the drinking water and industry sectors will slightly increase their share. The speaker touched upon the share of hydropower in electricity production and mentioned that from the perspective of the level of water stress, Turkey is estimated to be among the 30 most water stressed countries in the world within the next 25 years. *Mr. Saatci* noted the efforts undertaken by authorities in the field of water governance and presented the Regional Development Projects (RDPs) designed to decrease regional socioeconomic inequalities by utilizing available natural and financial sources. In particular, *Mr. Saatci* touched upon the Konya Basin Regional Development Project (KOP), the Thrace Regional Development Project (TRAGEP), the East Black Sea Development Project (DOKAP) or the East Anatolia & South Anatolia Basin Regional Development Project (GAP) in the context of the water- irrigation/Food – energy – ecosystems nexus.

Ms. Aziza Akhmouch presented the OECD Principles on Water Governance and shared the OECD projections regarding the increasing global water demand and water stress by river basin. She stressed that water crisis should be understood as a governance crisis and solutions should not be sought in a one-size-fits-all response but rather in overarching principles. *Ms. Akhmouch* emphasized that the water sector is a fragmented sector, sensitive to multilevel governance, and mentioned the importance of understanding the actors, their activities and levels of involvement. She outlined the OECD Water Governance Initiative which is based on a multi-stakeholder and bottom-up approach and referred to the OECD Principles on Water Governance developed within the framework of this Initiative. She then went on to identify the three main groups for

these principles, including effectiveness, efficiency, as well as trust and engagement. *Ms. Akhmouch* noted that 65 Major Groups committed to these principles during the 7th World Water Forum (South Korea, April 2015). In concluding her intervention, *Ms. Akhmouch* outlined the next OECD steps for implementation for the period 2015 - 2017 including the launch of an on-line database for scaling up good practices for each principle and several seminars and regional consultations with the stakeholders for outreach and dissemination of information.

Mr. Massimo Cozzzone provided a brief overview of the draft programme of work of the UNECE Water Convention for 2016-2018, noting the long-term partnership between the OSCE and the UNECE Water Convention in many of the activities undertaken within the Water Convention. He focused in particular on the two areas in the programme of work: water-food-energy ecosystems nexus in transboundary basins and the benefits of transboundary water co-operation. *Mr. Cozzzone* mentioned that water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus assessments not only aim at fostering transboundary co-operation but also contribute to good water governance in several ways, including improved sectoral resource management, optimized use of infrastructures, early sharing of information and consultation on plans, and informing co-operation, policy and decisions for reconciling different resource uses. He outlined the dynamics and modalities for undertaken nexus assessments, including their reliance on a participatory approach. *Mr. Cozzzone* identified nexus-related activities one of the areas where there could be potential for co-operation with the OSCE.

With regard to the assessment of benefits of transboundary water co-operation, *Mr. Cozzzone* mentioned that this exercise supports governments and other actors in comprehending the broad range of benefits generated by transboundary water co-operation. In concluding his intervention, *Mr. Cozzzone* shared two suggestions on the role the OSCE could play in this area. These include the promotion of application of the Policy Guidance Note on benefits transboundary river basins in the OSCE area as well as defining the level of ambition of the benefit assessment, selection of methodologies, involvement of stakeholders and strategies for communicating the results to be adapted to characteristics of the transboundary co-operation process.

Mr. Gazmend Turdiu presented the South East Europe 2020 Strategy (SEE 2020): developed by the Regional Co-operation Council (RCC) and modelled after the Europe 2020 strategy. He noted that SEE 2020 is an instrument for moving regional co-operation to a new phase and promoting European integration in South East Europe. He presented a brief overview on the nexus-related overall objectives and mentioned the launching of a political process of co-operation in SEE in transboundary water resource management, the advancement of the water-energy-food nexus approach at national and transboundary levels as well as the commencement of a Regional Integral Water Management Framework Agreement as main goals. Presenting the RCC's activities in the field, *Mr. Turdiu* mentioned that the RCC foresees a Regional Project on the nexus to enhance water-energy-food security and sustainable management of water/other natural resources for sustainable growth. The speaker mentioned that the project encompasses national as well as regional and transboundary actions, which include identifying trade-offs hampering water-food-energy security and development potential and the potential benefits to be shared among sectors and among different economies.

The floor was then opened for discussion.

A representative of Armenia thanked the speakers for a dynamic session and posed a question to Mr. Ahmet Saatci. He referred to the regional development projects, in particular the project in Eastern Anatolia, which includes the Ara(k)s River and the Ara(k)s River Basin. He expressed a concern that the project might reduce the water available for irrigation in Armenia's part of the basin and noted the importance of transboundary consultations in this regard. He also inquired whether potential repercussions of the project for the riparian countries had been calculated by the Turkish Water Institute and whether the OSCE could have a role to play in this context.

A representative of the United States of America asked what concrete actions that the OSCE could undertake to help overcome the water governance challenges identified throughout the session and what OSCE tools could be used in this regard?

In response to the question from Armenia, *Mr. Saatci* noted that the presented projects are at the feasibility stage and are subject to further assessments. He noted the potential reduction of the river water flow was based on an assumption and shared an example of successful co-operation on similar projects in the Tigris river basin. He underlined the importance of strengthening trust between the riparian countries in transboundary river basins and reconfirmed that the feasibility study results would be shared with Armenia once the study is concluded.

In response to the question from the U.S., *Ms. Akhmouch* provided an example of the OECD's approaches to trigger action on the soft law OECD produces. Her suggestions included raising awareness of the cost of inaction with national and regional stakeholders, bringing stakeholders together to discuss concrete actions and enacting policy dialogue, identification of problematic issues for triggering action and the use of peer-to-peer dialogue.

Mr. Cozzone supported *Ms. Akhmouch's* statement and mentioned that usually countries try to identify the gains and benefits of transboundary co-operation when implementing strategies or conventions.

The representative of Armenia indicated his country's strong will for dialogue on the issues raised and provided some comparative indications on the dam projects in the river basin.

The representative of Turkey noted the Working Group established under the 1927 Agreement as an example of good practice and an appropriate venue for discussing the issues raised at expert level.

The representative of Armenia confirmed that the Working Group is a venue for addressing more technical issues.

The following conclusions and recommendations could be drawn from the discussion:

- Water crises are often governance crises and could be addressed through water governance which aims at delivering services, solving key water challenges, and assigning responsibility and accountability for results and performance;
- Water resources management and governance is inherently concerned with water security;

- The Sustainable Development Goals and the Integrated Water Management Goals are perceived differently by developing and developed countries; if developing nations still aim at reducing the poverty level, ensuring access to clean water, establishment of sustainable irrigation/drainage systems as well as water supply and sanitation, the developed nations look into flood control, navigation, multipurpose storage, eco-restoration and biodiversity, as well as establishing hazard risk reduction plans;
- One of the challenges in the field of water management is that the goals of the various actors acting in the field (diplomats, engineers and ministries) do not always converge;
- The water sector is a fragmented sector that is sensitive to multilevel governance; in this respect, when aiming at identifying viable solutions for tackling the water management related challenges, overarching principles should be sought for rather than a one-size-fits-all response;
- Transboundary water co-operation generates more benefits than usually perceived, including social and environmental benefits, regional economic co-operation benefits as well as peace and security; the last two categories are a consequence of enhanced trust built among the parties;
- Assessing the benefits of water management can contribute to facilitating dialogue, launching co-operation process, consolidating existing co-operation through negotiations, supporting realization of advanced co-operation initiatives, such as joint projects;
- Regional development projects should be implemented taking into account the specificities and the relative strengths of each particular region.

Session II: Water governance at national level – best practices and new approaches in the OSCE region

Moderator: Ambassador Andreas Papadakis, Permanent Representative of Greece to the OSCE

Rapporteur: Mr. Uros Milanovic, Attaché, Permanent Mission of Serbia to the OSCE, 2015
Serbian OSCE Chairmanship

Speakers:

Mr. Berdi Berdiyev, Head of the Department of Coordination of the Ecological Programmes, Ministry of Nature Protection, Turkmenistan

Mr. Rob Uijterlinde, Dutch Association of Regional Water Authorities, The Netherlands

Ms. Tatsiana Minzhurava, Chief Expert, Ministry of Natural Resources, Belarus

Ambassador Andreas Papadakis opened the session by introducing the focus of the session and the speakers.

Mr. Berdi Berdiyev noted that this year there was a significant emphasis on climate change and rational use of water resources within the international community, recalling the forthcoming UN Climate Change Conference (COP21) in Paris and several high-profile global and regional water events. He referred to the previous discussions in the First and the Second Preparatory Meetings of the EEF, stressing the importance of the topic of water governance and highlighting close inter-linkages between climate change and water governance.

Mr. Berdiyev underlined the vulnerability of Central Asia to climate change and its impacts on water supply and food security in the countries of the region. The increasing water consumption in the region in the context of its growing population is expected to put more and more pressure on the rivers' water flow. Water is becoming one of the key defining factors for the region's development and environment. Mr. Berdiyev noted that regional consensus is the only acceptable platform for effective interaction between states in the Central Asia region. He indicated that Turkmenistan supports a rules-based approach to water and energy issues with due consideration of the interests of all the countries in Central Asia and involvement of international organizations. He referred to Turkmenistan's current chairmanship in the Interstate Commission on Sustainable Development for Central Asia (ICSD) and its forthcoming chairmanship in the International Fund for saving the Aral Sea (IFAS) as of 2016. Mr. Berdiyev went on to outline Turkmenistan's initiative on establishment of a new political and diplomatic form of multilateral communications, such as water diplomacy that would enable a consistent dialogue aimed at covering all issues related to generation and restoration of water sources and their sound and efficient use and drafting of the United Nations water document. He also referred to another initiative by Turkmenistan regarding the creation of a regional centre on climate change related technologies in Central Asia, with a role in addressing water issues in the region. In conclusion, Mr. Berdiyev stressed the priority of water governance issues in Central Asia in the context of co-operation with international organizations.

Mr. Rob Uijterlinde spoke about monitoring and assessment as drivers for improved water governance. Mr. Uijterlinde identified two (Principle 5 – water-related data and information and Principle 12 – regular monitoring and evaluation of water governance) of the OECD Water Governance Principles as most relevant in the context of monitoring and assessment. He gave a short overview of water governance in the Netherlands and detailed two types of assessments undertaken in the country: self-assessments by bench-marking and an external assessment by OECD in 2014. Mr. Uijterlinde went on to identify several recommendations arising from these assessments that can be useful in the OSCE context. Monitoring and assessment should be used as a tool for improvement, rather than judgement or shaming. It is important to focus on transparency and accountability in water governance, addressing the three layers of water governance: content, institutions and, importantly, relations. It is essential that transboundary water policies involve local and regional authorities. Finally, it is important to involve stakeholders at the earliest stage possible in monitoring and assessment.

Ms. Tatsiana Minzhurava, noted the relevance of this year's Economic and Environmental Forum in the context of global trends, including the critical importance of water resources. She presented the experience of the Republic of Belarus in the field of water governance with a focus on financing aspects. She underlined that the Republic of Belarus had introduced a basin approach for water management, including the establishment of basin councils and development of river basin management plans. Ms. Minzhurava outlined a number of states programmes and strategic documents designed to ensure sustainable and secure water resources. She noted that the bulk of water-related activities in these programmes are funded by the state and local budgets. At the same time, international financial institutions together with technical assistance projects also have a role to play in this context. As one of the examples she cited the development of a strategy for climate change adaptation in the Neman river basin with the support of the UNECE. In conclusion, she elaborated on the role of tax recovery and other taxation mechanisms in effectively governing water resources.

The floor was then opened for discussion.

A representative of UNISDR asked whether the OECD assessment of the Netherlands included an opportunity to exchange with other countries and if these countries were supported to undertake similar assessments.

A representative of Spain inquired about the correlation between water governance related laws in the Netherlands and the EU.

In response to the question from UNISDR, Mr. Uijterlinde stated that it was the OECD assessment of the adaptability of the Netherlands' water governance system at the request of the Netherlands. The experience from other international basins was considered as a reference for this assessment.

In this regard, a representative of the OECD noted that the OECD Secretariat also involved three policy-makers from both OECD and non-OECD countries in the assessment of the water governance in the Netherlands.

In response to the question of Spain, Mr. Uijterlinde said that laws in the field of water governance are mainly shaped by relevant ministries, and that there is a joint reporting system regarding the compliance of these laws with the EU legislation.

The following conclusions and recommendations could be drawn from the discussion:

- Water diplomacy could enable a consistent dialogue aimed at covering issues related to generation and restoration of water resources and their sound and efficient use;
- It is important to focus on transparency and accountability in water governance, addressing the three layers: content, institutions and relations;
- Monitoring and assessment could be used as an effective driver for improved water governance.

Session III: Water governance and co-operation at transboundary level: lessons learnt for water diplomacy

Moderator: Mr. Jan Dusik, Director of UNEP Regional Office for Europe

Rapporteur: Mr. Leonid Kalashnyk, Environmental Programme Officer, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Speakers:

Ms. Marina Seliverstova, Head of the Federal Agency of Water Resources, Russian Federation

Mr. Oliver Magnin, Water Policy Adviser, Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation

Mr. Sulton Rakhimzoda, First Deputy Minister of Energy and Water Resources, Republic of Tajikistan

Mr. Benedikt Mandl, Public Participation and Communication, ICPDR Secretariat

Mr. Ramiro Martínez, General Coordinator, Mediterranean Network of Basin Organizations (MENBO), Spain

Mr. Jan Dusik, ENVSEC Chair, Director of UNEP Regional Office for Europe, introduced the session by referring to the linkages between the use of natural resources, including water, climate change, sustainable development and stability. He outlined the role of the Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC) in the context of addressing water challenges in the OSCE region. Mr. Dusik noted that water could be a potential source of conflict as well as the unifying force and an opportunity for co-operation given the vital role of water for life, health, the environment, economic welfare and political and cultural linkages. He stressed that good governance of natural resources and the environment can contribute to peace-building by promoting confidence, co-operation and by triggering economic development and generating employment and sustainable livelihoods. While ecosystems recognize no political boundaries, environmental co-operation and diplomacy is an important tool for enhancing stability and promoting peace, he concluded.

Mrs. Marina Seliverstova, Head of the Federal Agency of Water Resources, Russian Federation, presented perspectives on water diplomacy as a tool for conflict prevention and trust building. Ms. Seliverstova noted a critical role that water resources have to play in the context of the growing water crisis and climate change. Water resources increasingly define economic sustainability, social and demographic development as well as help ensure global, regional and national security. She identified uneven spatial distribution of water resources as one of the major reasons for possible inter-state conflicts and underlined the need for coordinated collective action to address this challenge. She noted that the system of international organizations active in the field of water governance provides a viable mechanism for addressing the threats and challenges related to water and underlined that the OSCE as the largest regional security organization with a comprehensive approach to security provides a significant platform in this context. The UNECE Water Convention has a key role to play in the framework of international water law, as it provides for transboundary water co-operation and prevents potential conflicts. Ms. Seliverstova went on to draw attention to the phenomenon of hydroegoism at intra- and inter-state levels, proposing the development of an ethical code within the framework of international water law in order to prevent the use of water resources as an instrument of geopolitical pressure. In conclusion, she noted the need for expanding and intensifying co-operation between riparian states and water dialogue based on (1) further development of international water co-operation, its legal and institutional frameworks; (2) broadening of the geographic scope and the number of parties of the international water law; (3) exchange of knowledge and information, innovation and technology; (4) management of transboundary water resources at basin level; (5) water co-operation at basin level between states in the water-scarce regions; (6) rational use of water resources as a basis for national economic development plans of the riparian states; (7) integration of the norms of international water law and respective best practices into national legislation.

Mr. Oliver Magnin, Water Policy Adviser, Swiss Agency for Development, presented lessons learnt from the Innovative Technologies for Monitoring, Modeling and Managing Water (iMoMo) pilot project in the Chu-Talas river basins in Central Asia. He underlined the importance of sufficient and reliable data and information in the context of building confidence between transboundary water management organizations. Mr. Magnin noted that the transboundary co-operation in the Chu-Talas basins is a unique example in Central Asia and provides a fertile context for piloting

innovative solutions proposed by the project. He went on to list the achievements of the project, including regular data exchanges between water producers and users at national and transboundary level, fully digitalized management and exchange of the run-off data for the Chu river, a web-based mapping tool for information sharing, automatically generated hydrologic bulletin for the Chu river and, importantly, the willingness of water users and managers at all levels to work with this system. The project's lessons learned include the use of a demand-driven approach, voluntary upload and sharing of data, early demonstration of the technology and the system to get the buy-in from all the beneficiaries. He also underlined the access to reliable and accurate data as key to negotiations related to governing transboundary water resources and, indirectly, as a driver for co-operation and development. In conclusion, he outlined a number of recommendations including the consolidation of projects results and their replication in other transboundary river basins in the OSCE area.

Mr. Sulton Rakhimzoda, Deputy Minister of Energy and Water Resources, Republic of Tajikistan, spoke on the sustainable management of water resources with a focus on information systems and data exchange in Central Asia. Mr. Rakhimzoda noted the growing role of information systems, effective exchange of information and data quality in the context of the new challenges posed by climate change. He noted the need for appropriate legal frameworks at inter-state level to regulate the exchange of information and data and to define relevant modalities. Central Asian states have an agreement to exchange hydrometeorologic data, and the development of an agreement on data exchange in the Aral Sea basin is still on-going. He underlined the importance of the rights of the parties and economic mechanisms for data exchange, including the operation and maintenance of information systems and databases. In his view, the regional information system for the Aral Sea basin should be built upon the viable information systems of national-level water management organizations, as well as basin-level systems. In conclusions, he provided an update on the water sector reform in Tajikistan and the role of information systems at national and basin levels in this regard. The design and interface of such systems should be consistent with those of similar systems in the other countries of the Aral Sea basin.

Mr. Benedikt Mandl, Technical Expert – Public Participation and Communication, ICPDR Permanent Secretariat, presented the experience of the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) with a focus on public participation. He noted that ICPDR through its role in the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive and EU Floods Directive in the basin has the capacity to project requirements of EU environmental legislation, including in the areas relevant to public participation, across the Danube river basin shared by both EU and non-EU countries. Mr. Mandl outlined the four key avenues for public consultation and participation within the framework of the ICPDR including: (1) a wide spectrum of observers taking part in expert groups; (2) outreach, education and public information activities, mainly steered by the Public Participation and Communication Expert Group of the ICPDR, including the Danube Watch Magazine and the Danube Day; (3) ad-hoc public consultations in the context of the development of river basin management plans and flood risk management plans and (4) intersectoral dialogue with a focus on the inland navigation, climate change adaptation, sustainable agriculture and sustainable development of hydropower. Mr. Mandl concluded with a number of suggestions. It is essential to engage all stakeholders in a given river basin involving upstream and downstream stakeholders. National stakeholders, in particular authorities, have a critical role to play. There is a need to utilize the existing relevant frameworks (e.g. UNECE, EU, Ramsar Convention, relevant bilateral agreements etc.). It is important to identify strong and

engaged individuals in the riparian countries, e.g. civil society actors, and create on-going processes to cultivate this grassroots level.

Mr. Ramiro Martinez, General Coordinator, Mediterranean Network of Basin Organizations (MENBO), presented the experience of the Mediterranean Network of Basin Organizations. He noted that MENBO had been present in a number of the major regional initiatives, including the preparation of the Strategy for Water in the Mediterranean 2008 – 2010. Most recently, MENBO has acted as a technical secretariat for the development of the Water Strategy in the Western Mediterranean within the framework of the 5+5 Dialogue. The strategy comprises six fundamental pillars, including preservation of water quality and environment, prosperity and sustainable growth, global access to water, technological co-operation, capacity building as well as the peace and stability in the Western Mediterranean. Mr. Martinez emphasized the bottom-up approach accommodating inputs from all members as conducive to reaching consensus and unanimously adopting the strategy in March this year. The adoption of the strategy is a tangible step towards improving water governance in the Mediterranean region. A joint action plan for the strategy is currently under development. In conclusion, Mr. Matinez underlined the need for working towards achieving more ambitious targets for international co-operation, even in the less favorable circumstances, as well as the need for means to support such co-operative processes.

The floor was opened for discussion.

A representative of Ukraine stated that her country had entered into transboundary agreements on transboundary waters with seven neighboring countries and summarized the priority goals of such agreements. She noted that transboundary water co-operation is one of the top priorities for Ukraine.

A representative of Lithuania stressed the importance of collaborative and sustainable rules-based solutions in the context of appropriate frameworks for water co-operation and the role of water diplomacy as an important tool for such co-operation. She underlined that transboundary water co-operation should be based on international agreements related to the use, management and protection of water resources, and include effective implementation of transboundary environmental impact assessments, in particular with regard to large-scale energy and infrastructure projects. She referred to the co-operation between Lithuania and Belarus in the Neman river basin, expressing a hope for the conclusion of a bilateral river basin agreement at the 7th session of the Meeting of the Parties to the UNECE Water Convention in Budapest in November this year.

A representative of the Serbian Chairmanship of the OSCE inquired about the applicability of global-scale and regional-scale approaches in the case of water diplomacy. He also posed a question regarding the ways to demonstrate parties are working towards a common goal. He asked about how an organization in one of the ICPDR countries could approach ICPDR for help. He also inquired regarding further examples of technological co-operation within the framework of the 5+5 Dialogue in the Mediterranean.

A representative of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina stated the relevance of the network of the Aarhus Centers in South-Eastern Europe in the context of water co-operation and

governance, including at transboundary level. She referred to a regional meeting of Aarhus Centers in Tirana earlier this year to address transboundary water co-operation and the role of Aarhus Centers as well as the involvement of Aarhus Centers during ICPDR consultations on the river basin management plan.

In commenting on the questions, *Mr. Martinez* noted the need for both global-level and regional approaches in addressing water governance challenges. He underlined that in the case of the Western Mediterranean, one of the key aspects is a regional dimension requiring the involvement of as many countries as possible in this region.

In response to the questions, *Mrs. Seliverstova* stated that normative and implementation issues should go in parallel. Any norm of international water law should be operationalized and acquire its value within the framework of a bilateral agreement related to a specific transboundary water body. It is a reiterative and continuing process which, *inter alia*, requires an analysis of existing best practices and lessons learnt. She stressed the added value of an OSCE platform for learning about best practices and applying them in other regions.

In response, *Mr. Magnin* referred to a multilevel approach combining global and local dimensions. He noted that his country is striving to work on political level but also fill this dialogue related to water governance with concrete examples and substance. Starting at bilateral level can be advisable in those cases when starting a regional dialogue immediately is not possible.

Mr. Rakhimzoda referred to 2013 the International Year of Water Co-operation and the contribution of the Dushanbe conference dedicated to water co-operation in the context of governing transboundary waters. He also underlined the role of political will as a foundation for developing water diplomacy and effective governance of transboundary water resources.

In response, *Mr. Mandl* thanked for the support provided by the Aarhus Centers in the consultation on the river basin management plan for the Danube. He underlined the importance of regional water co-operation in the context of the OSCE region as it can more effectively take local conditions into account. As regards the interaction of individual organizations with ICPDR, in the event this organization operates in one country alone, it should approach an ICPDR contact point in this country. If it operates in more than one country, it is also possible to liaise with ICPDR directly.

The following conclusions and recommendations could be drawn from the discussion:

- Good governance of natural resources, including water, and the environment can contribute to peace-building by promoting confidence, co-operation and by triggering economic development and generating employment and sustainable livelihoods;
- The OSCE as the largest regional security organization with a comprehensive approach to security provides a significant platform for addressing water governance challenges;
- An ethical code could be developed within the framework of international water law in order to prevent the use of water resources as an instrument of geopolitical pressure;
- The availability of sufficient and reliable data and information has a key role to play in the context of building confidence between transboundary water management

organizations and governing water resources at transboundary level. It also contributes to promoting co-operation and development;

- The role of information systems and exchange of information related to water governance is increasing in the context of the new challenges posed by climate change, in particular in Central Asia. Exchange of such data and information should be backed by appropriate legal frameworks at inter-state level;
- It is essential to engage all stakeholders in a river basin involving both upstream and downstream stakeholders and to recognize that national stakeholders, in particular authorities, have a critical role to play in governing water resources at transboundary level;
- It is important to identify strong and engaged individuals in the riparian countries, e.g. civil society actors, and create on-going processes to cultivate this grassroots level for effective water governance and co-operation at transboundary level;
- Bottom-up approaches that accommodate inputs from all stakeholders are conducive to enabling agreement on strategic documents related to the governance of transboundary water resources;
- Working towards achieving ambitious targets for international co-operation, even in the less favorable circumstances, should be accompanied by the means to support such co-operative processes.

Session IV: Panel debate - Water governance and sustainable development

Moderator: Ms. Biljana Filipović, Head, Department of International Co-operation, Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection, Republic of Serbia

Rapporteur: Ms. Nino Malashkhia, Associate Environmental Affairs Officer, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Speakers:

Mr. Jan Dusik, Director of UNEP Regional Office for Europe

Mr. Andrei A. Begeneev, Member of the Committee on Ecology and Nature, Majlis of the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan

Dr. Marian Patrick Neal , SIWI, Manager UNESCO-Centre for Water Co-operation

Dr. Wilhelm Vogel, Head of the Unit Surface Water, Austrian Environmental Agency

Ms. Filipović welcomed the speakers and introduced the main topic of the discussion - inter-linkages between water and security in the context of development and the role of water governance for socio-economic development and environmental protection. The moderator underlined the importance of engagement of all stakeholders in the post-2015 Development Agenda discussions. She also highlighted that the Sustainable Development Goals, a new agreement on Climate Change as well as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction are mutually reinforcing. Ms. Filipovic then gave the floor to the panelists.

Mr. Jan Dusik stressed the significance of water for sustainable development. He also emphasized the enabling role of water for strengthening the resilience of social, economic and environmental systems. The speaker then referred to the progress that has been achieved in

implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), nevertheless, he noted, attained results are unsatisfactory, since the large number of people around the world still do not have the access to improved drinking water sources, and safety and reliability of water supplies has been often overlooked. The speaker underlined that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in contrary to MDGs, integrate economic, social and environmental dimensions, as was visible in the water goal as well. Mr. Dusik also referred to the upcoming 21st session of the Conference of the Parties of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and its strong linkage with water and security and stressed the importance to address water issues and climate issues together. Mr. Dusik expressed the hope that the proposed SDG indicators will allow to assess the progress adequately. He also emphasized the importance of producing and sharing data for this purpose. The speaker stressed the importance of engagement of stakeholders at national level in the implementation of the SDGs. Actions carried out at national level must take into account specific priorities and interest of the people in the countries, nevertheless, these actions must be in cohesion with the global development agenda. In concluding, he stated that, since water and related eco-systems cross boundaries, also the actions to achieve the water goal require transboundary co-operation and national measures that reflect the challenges and needs of neighbouring countries as well.

Mr. Andrei Begeneev focused his statement on Kazakhstan's efforts to address water governance issues in the framework of five national reforms that are underway. The State management program of water resources for the period of 2015- 2020 was adopted last year. The parliament of Kazakhstan is working on a new legal basis for water management and ratified numerous international environmental conventions, including the UN Convention on Transboundary Watercourses,. The speaker also mentioned about the legislation that is being currently developed on "green economy". The new strategy of Kazakhstan for 2050 aims at building the economic system that enables "green" development and growth. Mr. Begeneev then spoke about the importance of hydro-technical structures in Kazakhstan and need to elaborate specific legislation and safe operation of hydro-technical structures in order to prevent disasters. Such legal framework would also allow creating the basis for transboundary co-operation between countries. Mr. Begeneev highlighted the prospects of basin corporations in Kazakhstan that can be created on the basis of the existing business entities operating in the basin. They can be granted the status of general water user. Such basin corporations later can be transformed into the cross-border corporations facilitating transboundary co-operation in the region. He also referred to the Kazakh proposal at the High Level International Conference on the implementation of the International Decade for Action "Water for Life", 2005-2015 in Dushanbe in June 2015 to establish a Central-Asian investment fund for water projects and a regional centre for water security. Mr. Begeneev emphasized the need of such an investment fund, which would facilitate development of partnerships in the sector. With the foreign assistance, the fund could obtain resources for the construction and repair of the hydraulic installations and cooperatively manage them. In concluding remarks, the speaker highlighted the need to create a Center of Water Security for prevention and liquidation of the emergency situations and natural disasters related to water. He also stressed that the joint management of water can lead to improved water security and environmental protection in the region.

Dr. Marian Neal focused her statement on two elements that are important for sustainable development and water co-operation – the scale and the time. She underlined the importance of multi-level approach for examining implementation of decisions and goals made at international

and state level. The main challenge of this approach is to develop a better understanding of the issue of scale. Decisions made at international level that are considered to be best practices, might have negative results at sub-national and local level. She mentioned that the choice of analytical approaches, methodologies and measurements have direct impact on results that are reported. Ms. Neal stressed the importance of measuring and translating benefits of transboundary water management mechanisms (such as River Basin Organizations and international agreements) not only at regional, but also at local level and creating an enabling environment for distributing these benefits at the local level. Therefore, linking of track-1 and track-2 diplomacy is needed. For achieving the SDGs, Dr. Neal emphasized the importance of water diplomacy at multiple levels and at multiple scales. Water diplomacy needs to be multi-disciplinary that entails food, climate, energy, ecological diplomacy, underlined the speaker. She also drew attention to data and information that is needed for measuring the progress and for decision-making. Dr. Neal stressed the need of having a programme that is similar to the Local Agenda 21, that is actionable for realization of the SDGs. The Speaker also highlighted one of the main challenges of the SDGs – time. Water diplomacy takes time and we need to be patient. SDGs and their targets are designed around desired future state but Dr. Neal suggested having so called “moving targets” for SDGs, which would take account of the constant changes that are happening. Another time-related factor to be considered is the cycles with different timeframes (for example short-term political election cycles, long-term landscape ecology cycles, immediate natural hazards, etc.) that have impact on development.

Mr. Wilhelm Vogel spoke about Austria's experience in water governance. He highlighted the progress Austria has made since the 1960s, when water pollution was a major problem in lakes which are important for the tourism sector. After implementation of targeted measures Austria achieved high water quality in lakes. Similar measures were carried out for assessing and improving the ecological status of rivers. This process was rather costly due to the high costs of the waste water treatment plants and the measures introduced in the industrial sector. The positive results have been achieved thanks to a combination of legal and administrative measures, and clear communication and visualization of the improvements contributed to the acceptance of the costly measures by citizens and industry. Mr. Vogel stressed the importance of co-operation that has been established between national, bilateral and international bodies and committees covering national and transboundary river basins. The EU Water Framework Directive (WFD), that introduced the general concept of the river basin management, strengthened the existing structures of co-operation in Austria by establishing a general obligation to ensure the mutual management of river basins in Europe. Mr. Vogel also spoke about other benefits of the WFD particularly underlining the sharing of benefits and the engagement of civil society in the basin management. Mr. Vogel then explained the institutional structure of water governance in Austria and distribution of responsibilities between the state institutions at national, provincial and local level, and highlighted mechanisms in conflict resolution between the water uses. One of them is the Environmental Impact Assessment that ensures that the balance between the economic gains and environmental goals is maintained.

The floor was open for discussion.

A representative from Moldova referred to the EU Association Agreement signed by Moldova and obligations undertaken by the country to achieve good water governance. The key aspect of water governance are effective legislation and institutional frameworks, underlined the speaker.

In this regard, the major challenge is to reform the institutional capacity of Moldova in order to implement new legal frameworks. The representative highlighted the support of Switzerland and Austria provided for this purpose.

A representative from Finland underlined that reflections on water can be found in many SDGs beyond the water goal. Water diplomacy as multi-disciplinary approach reflects this cross-cutting role of water. He also referred to Goal 16 on peace as important for water governance. The speaker also stressed the importance of multi-stakeholder engagement at the national level in the implementation of the post-2015 Development Agenda, underlining the role of the OSCE in this regard.

Mr. Jan Dusik stressed the need to have sustainable development strategies that are adapted to local needs and to ensure the cross dimensionality of implemented measures. He also spoke about the indicators that are essential for measuring the progress. In his final remarks, Mr. Dusik highlighted the relevance of the OSCE as a regional organization and its work for implementation of certain SDGs.

Dr. Neal reiterated the need to put together multi-disciplinary teams for water diplomacy to address all relevant questions.

A representative from Azerbaijan voiced the concern of Azerbaijan in regards to climate change impact on water resources and water availability on its territory. He also referred to the exposure of Azerbaijan to pollution through transboundary rivers and underlined the importance of water resources management and new infrastructure projects for responding to climate change challenges and the implementation of the SDGs.

A representative from the USA asked panellist how SDGs can be translated into actions that would bring benefits at local level and what the OSCE can do to further the implementation of SDGs.

Dr. Neal referred to the “Ecosystem Millennium Report” that applied multi-scale analysis by linking at results at local, regional and international levels. She also pointed out that the development of the actionable measures presents the real opportunity for scientists and policy makers to work together on methodologies that would link policy and practice. She underlined that often clear understanding of the processes at the level that is useful for the management and for decision-making is missing. Dr. Neal also stressed the importance of developing disaggregated data and conducting cascading analysis that would link the SDG indicators at different levels.

A representative from Serbia posed the question regarding the ENVSEC Initiative’s role in considering the OSCE commitments concerning the water governance and assist in implementing them.

Mr. Jan Dusik mentioned that the ENVSEC Initiative has been very active in the water sector and is actively looking at the SDGs and trying to identify its role. The speaker then remarked, the inefficiency and lack of governance is one reason that sustainable development has not been achieved yet, which is contributing or triggering conflict situations. Although the link between

the sustainable development and peace and security has not been translated into a stand-alone goal, it is a cross-cutting issue that needs to be further integrated into implementation of the SDGs.

The representative of Austria asked Mr. Vogel about the best practices in the management of the Danube River, and how transboundary problems have been mitigated and addressed.

Mr. Vogel underlined the importance of data and information sharing, as well as common methodologies and agreed definitions. The standards of water quality are outlined in the WFD, which allows countries of the basin to apply a standardized approach for generation of reliable and comparable data.

A representative of Belarus stressed that every country has the right to set up its infrastructure projects to achieve development, but also has to comply with international agreements and mechanisms for consultations with neighbouring countries. Belarus is party to the UNECE Water Convention and has a mechanism for consultation with the countries.

The following conclusions and recommendations can be drawn from the discussion:

- The water governance issues are a key aspect of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in the dedicated goal 6 as well as a cross-cutting issue;
- SDGs must be translated into actions that are tailored to national needs, at the same time they require transboundary co-operation;
- Involvement of the population and sharing and communication of benefits can increase acceptance of necessary policies;
- Coordinated action is needed at various levels of governance to achieve SDG targets;
- SDGs must have actionable indicators to measure achievements at multiple levels: local, national and global and to monitor and evaluate the progressive realization of the SDGs;
- Water diplomacy has to operate at multiple levels and scales and must apply a multi-disciplinary approach (engaging diplomats, scientists, practitioners);
- Common approaches are needed for measuring SDG indicators in order to have comparable data for decision making;
- The OSCE should engage in implementation of SDGs directly and through its partnerships within the ENVSEC Initiative.

Session V: Facilitating effective water governance in the context of new environmental challenges

Moderator: Ms. Marta Bonifert, Executive Director, Regional Environment Centre for Central and Eastern Europe

Rapporteur: Mr. Bernhard Romstorfer, Desk Officer, Permanent Mission of the Federal Republic of Germany to the OSCE

Speakers:

Mr. Benjamin Pohl, Senior Project Manager, Adelphi, Germany

Mr. Yuriy Nabyvanets, Deputy Director on Science, Ukrainian Hydrometeorological Institute

Mr. Iskandar Abdullaev, Executive Director, CAREC

Mr. Paolo Angelini, Head of Delegation to the Alpine Convention, Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea, Italy

Ms. Marta Bonifert, Executive Director of the Regional Environment Center for Central and Eastern Europe, referred to ongoing global policy processes such as the upcoming climate change negotiations in Paris, the adoption of the Sustainable Development Agenda, and the Sendai, while many concrete action in addressing global environmental challenges are happening on the ground and the OSCE was tackling these issues in a proactive way.

Mr. Benjamin Pohl, Senior Project Manager at Adelphi, state that water is the medium through which climate change will be felt most. He referred to two reports published by Adelphi „A New Climate for Peace“ and „The Rise Of Hydro-Diplomacy“, which identified seven compound climate-related risks that might threaten the stability of states and societies, namely: 1) local resource competition; 2) livelihood insecurity; 3) extreme weather events and disasters; 4) volatile food prices and provision; 5) transboundary water management; 6) sea-level rise and coastal degradation; and 7) unintended effects of climate policies. Most of these risks are related to water. Climate change can also be a tool in the political discourse for some actors to challenge the economic, political and legal status quo in basins, thus destabilizing existing agreements. But it also entails opportunities as a shared threat can create a platform for co-operation and significant financial resources are earmarked for adaptation, which could improve resilience to conflicts. He stressed the need to think about and implement climate change adaption, disaster risk reduction, peace building and conflict prevention in an integrated way. He concluded with practical recommendations for OSCE support: Strengthening water management institutions, strengthening transboundary co-operation mechanisms for data transparency and beyond, including through support of access of river basin organizations to Green Climate Fund developing joint and integrated vulnerability assessments, and support of networks of research co-operation

Mr. Yuriy Nabyvanets, Deputy Director of Science of the Ukrainian Hydrometeorological Institute, gave his presentation on adaption to climate change in the transboundary Dniester River Basin. He stated that basin-wide co-operation helps to prevent negative impacts of unilateral implementation and reduces uncertainty and costs. He gave an overview of the significant role of the Dniester River which is a key source for drinking water in this area. Baseline studies had been carried out which provide regional climate change models. With these models trends can be set out regarding climate change. Furthermore, there are vulnerability assessments and a joint adaption strategy has been created which functions as a framework for co-operation. And finally a Strategic Framework Implementation Plan was developed as well. Mr. Nabyvanets also pointed out the lessons learnt: consultation processes with stakeholders are complex and time consuming; co-operation with stakeholders needs to be improved; climate change adaption is not yet a priority for many agencies. He emphasized how much the Dniester River project promoted the transboundary co-operation between Moldova and Ukraine. He recommended the OSCE for this project to strengthen the co-operation between stakeholders, to facilitate the implementation of the Dniester Treaty and to support improved Dniester reservoirs management.

The moderator Ms. Bonifert emphasized that this project is a very good example for extended co-operation and she is very proud of the implementation of this project, which is supported by the European Commission, Finland and Austria.

A delegate from Ukraine stated that the transboundary project at the Dniester river is very important and highlighted the co-operation with Moldova and UNECE and OSCE; it could be an example for co-operation between Ukraine and Moldova on various projects. She also mentioned a monitoring programme for the river, which takes climate change into account.

A delegate from Moldova added that this project is also very important to Moldova and one of the most successful projects. She expressed her hope that international organizations will further support the agreement as there is political will one both sides to take it forward.

A delegate from the Czech Republic asked about the length of a period for floods forecasts.

Mr. Nabyvanets replied that models are being developed at the moment; while there is demand for long prediction (1 month), the current focus is on 7-day forecasts.

Mr. Iskandar Abdullaev, Executive Director of the Central Asian Regional Environmental Centre (CAREC), gave a presentation on how to strengthen local level institutions. He started by stating that there is a growing number of water related challenges such as droughts, floods or water shortage. Also, there is a growing pressure of new environmental challenges as the reduction of productivity of agriculture increases the potential of conflicts – not only between countries but also on local level. He pointed out that strong institutional arrangements at the local level are absent and local knowledge was dislinked from national processes. He emphasized the importance for national institutions of finding effective instruments to implement national plans and programs at a local level. He explained that the answer must be local level governance: the set-up of strong, inclusive governance systems at the local (community) level. While structures are de jure decentralized, de facto local governance is decapitalized in financial, technical and institutional respect. Mr. Abdullaev highlighted that financing is the key as funding mechanisms of governance structures at local level is a key to mobilization of stakeholders to act together. Private investments could also be increased and attracted. He pointed out that there are existing „best practices“ such as Basin Councils which are platforms for co-operation. Long-term basin planning is not only a tool to create a joint vision, but also to integrate stakeholders, mobilize resources, and share responsibilities.

Mr. Paolo Angelini, Head of Delegation to the Alpine Convention, Ministry for the Environment, Land and See, Italy, contributed with a presentation on the environmental challenges that water governance is facing with a focus on the Alpine Convention area. He declared that the 1991 Alpine Convention (8 countries participate as well as the EU) is a key example for an integrated approach including the different economic sectors linked with water. Also, a multi-level governance approach is needed so to enhance the preparedness and capacity to respond to the impacts of climate change at various levels. Important is to reduce vulnerability and to increase resilience and cost-effective measures. The Alpine Convention is a good example for this. He noted that there is close co-operation between the UNECE Water Convention and the Alpine Convention and that there is an on-going case study of the water-food-energy-ecosystem nexus

assessment on an Alpine transboundary basin: the Soca/Isonzo. He explained that the adaption to climate change in water-related sectors requires public awareness and the participation of civil society and local stakeholders.

The floor was opened for discussion.

A representative from Uzbekistan asked Mr. Abdullaev about rehabilitation of irrigation systems and development of information systems.

Mr. Abdullaev replied that there are examples in all countries, e.g. in Uzbekistan, where local users repaired the irrigation systems. Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan have good experience in water monitoring in transboundary basins, which helped to solve problems at local levels and shows that it makes sense to involve local stakeholders.

Mr. Nabyvanets stated that the Dnieper river project is a joint project between Russia, Belarus and Ukraine and mentioned that problems occur when there is no international funding anymore and necessary maintenance stalls. He suggested not to always ask only international donors but also to include investors from the local level.

A representative of the United States of America agreed with the suggestion of more private sector involvement. He referred to the severe droughts experienced in California, one of the largest economies in the world, where great potential for private investors lies. He also inquired in how far the OSCE could help in developing legal frameworks for financing.

A civil society representative from Kazakhstan explained about vulnerability assessments in Kazakhstan and suggested that policy measures to integrate findings into climate change adaptation policies was an area for co-operation with OSCE.

Mr. Pohl stated regarding financing that the problem is less the shortage of it but rather its discontinuity, e.g. when donors change their priorities to other sectors.

Mr. Abdullaev replied that financing that creates ownership is needed, i.e. national governmental or private money. There are good examples of involvement of the business community, but the right frameworks are needed.

Mr. Angelini added that investors need the support of local governments, and that the involvement of the business community together with local government worked in South-Tyrol.

The moderator Ms. Bonifert pointed out that the Alpine Convention is a good example for regional co-operation.

The Co-ordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities, Dr. Yurdakul Yiğitgüden, highlighted that the Forum cycle is the most important instrument for dialogue and co-operation which is supported by many projects. He concluded by stating his hope for a Ministerial Council Decision this year in Belgrade on these issues.

The following conclusions and recommendations can be drawn from the discussion:

- Identifying the best solutions that could be implemented and ensuring the policy coherence of the measures requires both coordination among different levels of government and exchange of experiences and best practices among different networks of co-operation;
- Water management in an integrated approach is a central priority to tackle climate change impacts;
- Water management institutions need to be strengthened as well as transboundary co-operation mechanisms;
- Integrated vulnerability assessments have to be developed and promoted;
- National institutions need to find effective instruments to implement national plans and programs at a local level.

Session VI: Governing waters for effective disaster risk reduction

Moderator: Ambassador Vuk Žugić, Chair of the Permanent Council, Permanent Mission of Serbia to the OSCE, 2015 Serbian OSCE Chairmanship

Rapporteur: Mr. Darren Perdue, Political Officer, United States Mission to the OSCE

Speakers:

Mr. Pavel Puncochar, Director General, Water Section Division, Ministry of Agriculture, Czech Republic

Dr. Ursula Schaefer-Preuss, Chair Global Water Partnership

Mr. Jan Lueneburg, Head of Democratization Department, OSCE Mission to Serbia

Ms. Paola Albrito, Head of the Regional Office for Europe, UNISDR

Mr. Jože Papež, Head of Development and Projects Department, Hidrotehnik, Slovenia

Ambassador Vuk Žugić, Chair of the Permanent Council, Permanent Mission of Serbia to the OSCE, 2015 Serbian OSCE Chairmanship, introduced the session and referred to the focus on three specific topics: (1) Cooperative water governance as a catalyst for preventive action; (2) Water and security in the context of the follow-up to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) 2015-2030; and (3) Water-related DRR as a tool for trust-building at all levels, including with its gender aspects. The Ambassador discussed the decision last year in Basel to focus the Economic and Environmental Forum on DRR, and also referred to the severe floods experienced in 2014 in South-Europe. As a result, a Ministerial Council Decision on DRR was reached in Basel. Following the 2014 Ministerial, the Serbian Chairmanship proceeded to link last year's work on DRR with Governance and Water Security, particularly within the Sendai Framework for DRR – part of the post 2015 development agenda.

Mr. Pavel Puncochar, Director General, Water Section Division, Ministry of Agriculture, Czech Republic, focused his presentation on the Czech Republic's experience with governance on flood protection in transboundary basins. With three international river basins that all flow to neighbouring countries – the Elbe, Oder, and Danube – the Czech Republic's position as the "Roof of Europe" means that decisions on water management directly affect other countries. For

all three rivers, international commissions have been established in the 1990s. Neighbouring countries, which must absorb the results of decisions made by the Czech Republic, always need to know what to expect – making effective communication vital. Thus, the Czech Republic has established a communication strategy to notify neighbouring countries of its national water plan, flood preparation, and implementation. This became acutely important during the catastrophic floods of 1997, the worst floods in one hundred years. In addition, Mr. Puncochar highlighted main flood protection measures and lessons learned from nine severe floods that have occurred since 1997. First, it is essential to pass DRR legislation that specifies responsibilities. The Czech Republic did so in 2000 and 2001, including Acts on fire rescue brigades, an integrated rescue system, crisis management, water management, a Decree of flood areas, and creation of the Central Flood Commission. This new legislation is generally recognized as among the best DRR laws in Central Europe. Second, developing an information system to quickly disseminate information to the general public is crucial. Data must be provided in a user-friendly format that the general public in the country and across the borders can understand. The Czech Republic devised a system backed with comprehensive data that indicates the severity of risk for any given area, and made the information available on both the internet and via mobile phones in six languages. The information system provides an easily understood flood preparation using green, yellow, or red indicators for different stages of emergency for each watershed. Additional data is available, including the flow rate, filling of reservoirs, and fluctuation of water volume in each reservoir, and is updated every ten minutes. Finally, continuous upgrades are made to improve the communication links between responsible authorities and provide additional relevant data. By doing so, individuals can access all of the information available, easily understand it, and make preparations and decisions about flood risk. On transboundary level, common bodies and joint strategies for flood protection are necessary.

Dr. Usrula Schaefer-Preuss, Chair, Global Water Partnership, Germany, stressed that water-related disasters are the most numerous disasters worldwide with the biggest economic losses. The World Economic Forum's 2015 Risks Report ranked water as the global risk with the greatest potential impact on economies and societies over the next ten years. Water insecurity costs are estimated at US\$ 500 billion annually. With the resulting environmental impacts, this could create a negative drag on global GDP of at least one percentage point. Flood damage from urban property damage alone is estimated at US\$ 120 billion. Conversely, the impacts of major droughts are estimated to reduce per capita GDP growth by one half of a percentage point. Investing in water security would mitigate many of these losses and promote long-term sustainable growth. For example, in particularly vulnerable economies, a 50 percent reduction in drought effects could increase per capita GDP by 20 percent over a thirty-year period. Dr. Schaefer-Preuss shared that the Global Water Partnership has contributed to the elevation of water as a global concern. She commended the OSCE's work with participating States to support co-operation and more effectively manage water resources. Effective water governance needs partnerships of all stakeholders. Dr. Schaefer-Preuss reminded participants of the main messages from the OSCE Forum in Belgrade in May, including the OSCE's important role in transboundary co-operation, improving existing international mechanisms for DRR co-operation, and a stronger focus on disaster prevention and preparedness. The main elements of the Sendai Framework were also reviewed, including its strong emphasis on disaster risk management, as opposed to mere disaster management, and on national and local ownership. However, a strong focus on water was missing; therefore the inclusion of a dedicated water goal in the Post-2015 Development Agenda to be adopted at next week's UN Summit was even more important.

Unfortunately, DRR aspects were not focused under the water goal, but are spread among the targets. She also reminded that DRR must be based on an inclusive, participatory approach that engages women, children, and the poor as crucial stakeholders and provided concrete examples of the benefits. She pleaded to continue strengthening water governance as part of active disaster risk reduction.

Mr. Jan Lueneburg, Head of Democratization Department, OSCE Mission to Serbia, provided a snapshot of how the OSCE Mission to Serbia (OMIS) has used water governance and water-related DRR as a means to build trust at all levels. He gave an overview on various activities, for example the Timok River Flood Risk Action Alliance, which requires working in the flood prone region between Serbia and Romania. The Alliance brought together state institutions, local governments, the private sector, media, community organizations, and OSCE-supported Aarhus Centres. The various groups established common goals, formalized their partnership, mapped vulnerable communities, developed an action plan, and conducted outreach. Through this, trust was built among actors which otherwise might not have come together. Now there are plans to duplicate this approach in two other flood-prone areas. OMIS has also worked to build the capacity of municipal authorities, Aarhus Centres and civil society to improve flood prevention practices in high-risk areas across Serbia. In doing so, part of its focus has been on understanding and addressing the gender impacts of water disasters. With a Gender Analysis of the impact of the 2014 floods, OMIS was able to demonstrate that women were disproportionately affected and developed specific recommendations to mainstream gender issues into DRR planning, including gender-based media reporting during emergencies, stronger co-operation with communities to identify vulnerable groups, and strengthened participation of women in DRR planning. In closing, Mr. Lueneburg stressed that all this was achieved with very modest budget allocations for environmental affairs, which are a good investment.

Ms. Paola Albrito, Head of the Regional Office for Europe, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), detailed the enormous economic costs of water-related disasters, citing specific examples in Bosnia & Herzegovina and Serbia resulting from the 2014 flooding in the Balkans. According to Serbia's Ministry of Finance, only 2 percent of the damage and losses were covered by insurance and reinsurance; the remainder was absorbed by the private sector. Therefore also the private sector is highly willing to engage in DRR and UNISDR initiated private-public partnerships. The inter-connection is clear between the extremely high economic losses from disasters, the immediate impact on sustainable development, and the long-term future loss of development. UNISDR's efforts to include DRR as a priority on the international agenda were discussed, including making it an integral part of sustainable development. In this respect, partnerships are essential, and the work and debates of the OSCE contribute to this. Ms. Albrito explained the Sendai Framework for DRR (2015-2030) and its linkages with the SDGs and the climate negotiations. She mentioned two ongoing areas of work where OSCE can contribute: (1) the creation of a technical experts working group to develop indicators and terminology, also in linkage with SDGs indicators; (2) development of guidelines for implementation. Here, an OSCE contribution in particular on water would be welcome. The Sendai Framework recognizes water as an essential element of national and regional sustainability, natural hazards may become disasters due to societal vulnerability and the mismanagement of ecosystems and natural resources, and that climate change may have an exacerbating effect on the frequency and magnitude of disasters, thus increasing the importance of climate change mitigation and adaptation to reduce disaster risk. Ms. Albrito reminded that the OSCE Ministerial Council

Decision 6/14 (a) encourages OSCE participating States to coordinate and implement DRR measures with adaptation and mitigation plans, and (b) tasks OSCE executive structures, particularly the OCEEA, to strengthen the exchange of knowledge and experience, build upon the OSCE's good practices in DRR, particularly in the fields of water management, flood risk management, and fire management. Finally, the importance of promoting investments in DRR was discussed. Including DRR measures in urban and industrial planning is important, as is adopting appropriate building codes and purchasing insurance and reinsurance to protect investments. Public and private partnerships are an essential part of this, and contribute to economic, social, health, and cultural resilience. Sustainable development cannot be achieved unless disaster risk is reduced and life conditions, security, and financial and economic capacity are ensured for all. As a political and policy entity, the OSCE can play an important part in sharing concepts and practices, and ensuring that this remains part of the international agenda.

Mr. Jože Papež, Head of Development and Projects Department, Hidrotehnik, Slovenia, emphasized the importance of integrated flood risk management, pointing to Slovenia's experience with large floods during the last 25 years, increasing in relation with climate change, which led to enormous damages. He commended the EU Flood Directive that obliged member states to implement integrated flood risk management. These issues were also addressed on transboundary level in the framework of the Natural Hazards Platform of the Alpine Convention (PLANALP), which prepared a strategy for climate change adaption in the field of natural hazards. With regard to infrastructure for flood protection, he stressed the importance of (often cost-intensive) maintenance. In this respect, communication and transparency is important for understanding of measures by local actors. Through its eWater Portal, Slovenia has made all of its data on hazard risks available online to the general public and to all concerned institutions. The portal is free of charge, is publicly available, and provides a critical communication platform to raise awareness of risks – an important non-structural preventive measure. Importantly, the portal also provides links to data provided by the governments of neighbouring countries, with which Slovenia shares water resources. Communication about disaster risks and increasing understanding among all authorities is important. Looking forward, activities should be focused on further developing efficient national systems of protection against disasters, strengthening bilateral and regional co-operation, and implementation of the EU flood directive – all these activities need sufficient financial resources. Policymakers need to ensure that today's solutions to water challenges do not become the problem of future generations, according to Mr. Papež. Finally, he called attention to the challenge of public perception, noting that the general public often underestimates the probability of future floods.

The floor was opened for discussion.

A representative of Uzbekistan detailed his country's work to implement the Sendai Framework for DRR, including establishment of the legal base and inclusion of the private and non-governmental sectors. However, efforts of one state without co-operation of other states were not productive, in particular in relation with managing transboundary water resources. He pointed also to the serious risks of outburst floods from high mountain and glacier lakes, which presented a risk in particular for the Fergana valley, which is surrounded by 187 lakes at high altitude in the neighbouring states. The representative highlighted that mountain and glacier lakes need long-term monitoring systems, emergency assistance systems, scientific research and establishment of a database to deal with emergencies. International donors could assist in (1)

joint comprehensive research on the glacier lakes, (2) joint mechanisms of the concerned countries for monitoring and emergency situations, (3) development of a unified risk assessment system, (4) inventory of geological objects and GIS data base.

A representative of Azerbaijan emphasized the importance of taking measures to deal with flash floods, noting that high volumes of water cannot be contained. He inquired about different aspects for developing solutions, like early warning, a second line of defense, and financial means.

A representative of Spain detailed the extreme climate conditions facing southern Europe. Managing water risks from climate change is becoming increasingly difficult, as Spain faces repeated periods of drought. Ensuring food security and the safety of populations from ongoing water shortages is crucial. Water must be managed in an integrated, sustainable way, as required in the EU Water Framework Directive with river basin management plans. Resolving water management issues in a fair, equitable way that takes into account gender equality is also important, according to the representative.

A representative of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina informed about an OSCE project activity in the municipality of Maglay, which was affected by the 2014 floods, causing a damage of estimated 85 million Euros. Upon request of the municipality, the OSCE financed a case study identifying lessons learnt and weaknesses and proposing recommendations and actions.

The following conclusions and recommendations could be drawn from the discussion:

- The work that the OSCE is undertaking with its participating States in supporting co-operation and helping them effectively manage water resources is important;
- The evidence is compelling that global and regional co-operation can help solve the many water challenges facing humanity;
- As detailed in the OSCE Forum in Belgrade in May:
 - The OSCE is well placed to increase trust by linking climate change and DRR. It plays a role in overcoming difficulties in regional and transboundary co-operation and increase of DRR.
 - There is a need to further improve existing mechanisms of international co-operation for disaster risk management.
 - Stronger focus on disaster prevention and preparedness is needed. The OSCE should continue supporting the participating States in developing legal frameworks for cross-border co-operation and providing a platform for experience sharing;
- DRR must be based on an inclusive, participatory approach that engages women, children, and the poor as crucial stakeholders;
- Water governance and DRR preparation can be used as a tool to build trust across borders and among different actors;
- OSCE field operations can play an important role in building the capacity of municipal authorities and civil society to upgrade flood prevention practices;
- The OSCE should explore opportunities to strengthen the role of Aarhus Centers in flood risk reduction;
- Data can provide critical insight into understanding the location of vulnerable residents;

- OSCE field operations can help provide gender-sensitive distribution of aid, financial assistance and donations, and assistance to recovery;
- The OSCE could potentially play an important role in implementing the Sendai Framework for DRR (2015-2030).

Session VII: Strengthening participation and awareness raising for effective water governance

Moderator: Ms. Désirée Schweitzer, Deputy Co-ordinator / Head, Environmental Activities, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Rapporteur: Mr. Zhaslan Nurtazin, Associate Environmental Governance Officer, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Speakers:

Ms. Biljana Filipović, Head, Department of International Co-operation, Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection, Republic of Serbia

Mr. Aleksandar Perovic, Manager, Aarhus Centre Niksic, Montenegro

Mr. Andreas Beckmann, Managing Director of WWF, Danube – Carpathian Programme

Ms. Desiree Schweitzer opened the session by recalling some of the major points of the discussions of the past two days. She stressed the need of raising awareness about the value of water and the need for economical use, in order to realize efficient water management, and underlined the need of participation of all stakeholders, including civil society and the private sector to ensure an effective implementation of the principles of good water governance. The 59 OSCE-supported Aarhus Centres are offering an appropriate platform for dialogue among different stakeholders in relevant areas including disaster risk reduction, hazardous waste management and flood risk management.

Ms. Biljana Filipović noted the important role of Arhus Centers in Serbia in strengthening participation and awareness-raising about water related issues. She also mentioned that Aarhus Centers proved to be an important tool for addressing environment and security challenges. She commended the co-operation between the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection and the Aarhus Centers, including the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection with four Aarhus Centers in July 2013 and their involvement in the areas affected by the floods in May 2014. *Ms Filipović* outlined examples of the OSCE support in the promotion of the UNECE Protocol on Water and Health (PWH) on national and local level, including the involvement of the Aarhus Centers in the preparation and delivery of workshops on the Protocol. She shared the lessons learnt from the implementation of these workshops: the importance of involving the public in decision-making concerning water and health; access to information and public participation are essential for building public awareness of issues related to water and health; political will at the national and local level was stressed as crucial for success, furthermore, this process created a shared vision and mutual understanding between all stakeholders. Awareness raising campaigns organized in close partnership with the OSCE Mission in Serbia through Aarhus Centers helped to improve the knowledge of vulnerable groups about the future implementation of the Protocol. They need to be complemented by additional interventions over a longer period of time.

Mr. Aleksandar Perovic presented the role of Aarhus Centers in Montenegro in fostering participation and raising awareness for better water management. He stressed the importance of enabling all stakeholders to participate in decision making processes since what is decided now will not only affect the present but also future generations. Speaking of the potential of the Aarhus Centres network comprising 13 Aarhus Centers in the SEE region (*Montenegro, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Albania*), he noted their capacity to enable timely dissemination of information, and raising participation as well as quality of public consultations and discussions. Mr. Perovic underlined that water management must be a top priority for all stakeholders and outlined activities for the Aarhus Center in Niksic that should be conducted in order to achieve positive results in water management, including the need to initiate public consultations on the state of water resources and plans for their valorisation, to conduct continuous monitoring (such as riverbed concessions, riverbeds channelling projects), to carry out surveys among citizens on the state of water resources and to conduct continuous monitoring on the transparency of the relevant institutions, cooperate with inspectors and inform the public about the outcomes. In conclusion, he suggested that Aarhus Centers can play a proactive role in improving inter-sectoral co-operation and trust between the Ministry of Agriculture, Water Management and Environmental Agency and Municipalities by initiating and amending legislative plans and strategies and by encouraging the involvement of citizens and NGOs in this process.

Mr. Andreas Beckmann noted that the only way to meet the growing challenges connected to water is by working together – across countries and across sectors. Referring to the vital role of governments, public authorities and inter-governmental organizations in the context of ensuring sustainable river basin management, he welcomed OSCE's engagement in the field of water governance. Mr. Beckmann noted that close involvement of civil society and the private sector is crucial in achieving substantial results in river basin management. According to the speaker, the private sector with its substantial water footprint is an important part of the solution to water challenges. Private companies should not only innovate and find solutions, but also make those solutions happen as they have the know-how, capacities, and resources needed to tackle water challenges. As a concrete example, *Mr. Beckmann* mentioned that Coca-Cola and some other private companies realize their increasing dependence on water, directly or indirectly, and recognize that to mitigate the risks from this dependence, they need to go beyond improving their own use of water, to address also the way that water is used in their supply chains, by their consumers and also in the broader river basins. In conclusion, *Mr. Beckmann* outlined specific recommendations for the OSCE and its participating States with regard to water governance. It is recommended to learn from best practices examples such as in the Danube Basin– the most international river basin embracing both EU and non-EU countries. In particular the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) is a good practice example for international governance and management of river basins. The effectiveness of the ICPDR lies not only in the progressive EU Water Framework Directive, the implementation of which underlies much of ICPDR's work, but also in the way that ICPDR engages and involves not only its member countries but also civil society and the private sector. He also noted the value of OSCE's involvement in addressing environmental issues that have transboundary implications.

The floor was opened for discussion.

The Moderator posed some questions to each of the speakers. Mr. Petrovic was asked about the next steps and activities planned by the SEE Aarhus Centres' network. Ms. Filipovic was invited to comment, from a government perspective, about the added value of engaging Aarhus Centres and Mr. Beckmann was asked to elaborate on benefits he sees regarding co-operation between WWF and OSCE.

A representative of the United States drew attention to the severe draught in California, where a lot of innovative solutions are being applied and where the private sector is driving investments to tackle this issue, but mentioned that much more could be done. He inquired about the involvement of Aarhus Centers in bringing the private sector into the promotion workshops on the Protocol, and about ways to work closer with the business sector and what should be the focus in this regard.

In response, *Ms. Filipovic* noted that Aarhus Centres are the appropriate places, where public consultations regarding environmental issues should take place. The benefit of Aarhus Centres: they can engage a large number of local communities, governmental officials, civil society and the private sector. She also underlined that a broad number of private companies, in particular in the waste water treatment sector participated in the public consultations in Serbia. As to future activities, she is expecting the support of the OSCE Mission in Serbia, especially in the process in setting targets related to water security.

Mr. Perovic responded by informing that they - within the regional network of Aarhus Centers - are currently working on a project proposal "Civil Society Facility for 2014-2015". He expressed the need for capacity building of the AC' network, as well as the need to develop a 5-year strategy and communication plan, and hoped for support from the Government of Montenegro, the OSCE, and other organizations, like WWF.

Mr. Beckmann referred to issues around transboundary protected areas in the Balkans. He noted the OSCE could provide support in helping address such issues of concerns in a transboundary context. He also underlined his organizations' help for private sector to realize the direct and indirect dependence on water resources in their business.

A representative of Ukraine referred to the establishment of basin councils in Ukraine. However, they have yet to begin to function effectively. In this regard, she inquired about possible best practices and positive experience in establishing basin councils in the Danube River Basin.

A representative of an Aarhus Center in Bosnia and Herzegovina informed about the activities of the Aarhus Centers in this country. Related to water issues, she noted several cases with mini-hydropower plants, where the public has yet to be sufficiently included in the decision making process. She also stated that all Aarhus Centers have a big potential which all stakeholders should use and she invited all donors to support their activities.

In response, *Mr. Beckmann* pointed to the positive example of the Danube Basin. One of the interesting parts of this experience is that in this basin there are EU and non-EU member states, including EU candidate countries, and very different economic and institutional conditions present for basin councils. He also mentioned that Ukraine had made a commitment to implement the provisions of the EU Water Framework Directive already before the signing of the

EU Association Agreement with the EU in 2014. Both Ukrainian authorities and civil society play a very important role in providing good expert advice for the work of ICPDR.

The following conclusions and recommendations could be drawn from the discussion:

- Aarhus Centers have proved to be an important tool for addressing environment and security challenges and play an important role in strengthening public participation and awareness raising on water related issues;
- Aarhus Centers can play an active role in improving inter-sectoral co-operation and trust between governmental and nongovernmental bodies on water related issues;
- Surveys among citizens on the state of water resources need to be carried out;
- Involvement of civil society and the private sector is crucial in achieving substantial results in river basin management.

Concluding Plenary Session – Follow-up to the 23rd OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum

Moderator: Dr. Halil Yurdakul Yiğitgüden, Co-ordinator of the OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Rapporteur: Mr. Edvardas Aleksandras, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Speakers:

Ambassador Vuk Žugić, Chair of the Permanent Council, Permanent Mission of Serbia to the OSCE, 2015 Serbian OSCE Chairmanship

Ambassador Antje Leendertse, Head of the Task Force for the 2016 German OSCE Chairmanship, Federal Foreign Office, Germany

Dr. Halil Yurdakul Yiğitgüden, provided an overview of the discussion during the Concluding Meeting on various aspects of water governance. He underlined that the Forum enabled a good exchange on linkages between water and security from various angles—from global processes related to climate change and sustainable development, to challenges associated with multi-sectorial and multi-stakeholder co-ordination, as well as water related disasters and their implications for security. He emphasized that the Forum was a strong plea for an enhanced focus on water governance in the Second Dimension. Dr. Yiğitgüden reminded participants that the keynote speeches by Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia H.E Ivica Dacic and the Head of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs H.E Didier Burkhalter, identified the urgency, relevance and appropriateness of the OSCE to step up its activities on water governance—at regional, national and local level. The Forum has also demonstrated the experience and expertise the OSCE has already acquired, in particular in its support to transboundary water co-operation. Dr. Yiğitgüden noted that during the Forum, several concrete suggestions were made on how the OSCE's engagement in water governance should be further reinforced and also referred to the recommendations of the UNECE Review Report. Dr. Yiğitgüden underlined the importance of partnerships in addressing environment and security challenges, including in the area of water and highlighted OSCE's longstanding partnership within the Environment and Security Initiative as well as the new partnerships such as within the OECD Water Governance

Initiative. He pointed out to the 2015 global processes including the upcoming UN Summit on Sustainable Development and the COP21. Regarding the latter, he underlined the strong links between water governance and climate change. In concluding, he informed the participants on the upcoming Security Days Event on Climate Change which would be organized by the OSCE Secretary General on 28 October 2015 in Vienna.

Ambassador Vuk Žugić highlighted that the Forum proved its added value in developing relevant political recommendations and interests in the economic and environmental dimension of the OSCE. Ambassador Žugić underlined that the Forum process had clearly demonstrated the linkages between water governance and security in the OSCE region. Referring to the devastating floods in the Western Balkans in 2014, he emphasized that the floods had demonstrated the transboundary impacts of natural disasters, importance of water governance for security and stability, and the need for co-operation across national borders. Ambassador Žugić underlined that the Forum discussions enabled an exchange on numerous best practices of co-operation between the participating States in addressing water-related challenges. Ambassador Žugić shared his following observations from the discussion during the entire Forum process: *First*, Water is a scarce resource that is critical for the well-being of people, security of whole communities and regions and at the same time it has the potential to impact the stability of countries; *Second*, multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder approaches are essential for decision-making in the area of water governance. The OSCE should use its unique expertise to strengthen national processes for multi-stakeholder engagement; *Third*, political will is critical to successful water governance when dealing with issues of security and stability; *Fourth*, the Forum process demonstrated the strong interest of participating States in the area of water governance. Ambassador Žugić emphasized that as the OSCE was moving towards the Belgrade Ministerial Council Meeting in December, it would be crucial to catch the momentum and translate political will expressed during the Forum into a sound and well-focused document, reaffirming and underpinning the OSCE mandate in the area of water governance. He provided a number of suggestions on the elements to be contained in this document: promoting public participation and transparency in water governance, use of environmental co-operation as a tool for conflict prevention and confidence building, support for implementation of UN Sustainable Development Goals and Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, promoting active engagement of youth, mainstreaming gender perspective to water governance and water diplomacy, co-ordination with other regional and international organizations, expanded role for the OSCE involvement in water diplomacy and in transboundary water co-operation. Ambassador Žugić stated that the Serbian Chairmanship would also advocate for a political declaration in the area of sustainable development at the Ministerial Council in Belgrade. He marked that the Forum's discussions repeatedly referred to the importance of the new UN Sustainable Development Goals and the role that water plays in achieving them and emphasized that the OSCE, as a regional security organization under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter should also contribute to this global process.

Ambassador Antje Leendertse, representing the incoming 2016 German OSCE Chairmanship, noted importance and timeliness of discussing the “water governance” topic within the 2015 Forum process and referred to the importance given to the water issue in the sustainable development goals which would be adopted in September 2015. Referring to the role of good water governance in promoting cross-border co-operation, conflict prevention and confidence building, Ambassador Leendertse emphasized that it is a highly relevant policy area for the OSCE and for the common goals and commitments of the OSCE participating States. She pointed out to

Germany's active engagement in water diplomacy and particularly referred to the "Berlin Process" through which a ministerial conference had been recently held in Berlin which brought together five Central Asian states on water issues. Dr. Halil Yurdakul Yiğitgüden, Co-ordinator of the OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities had also participated as a speaker in this event. Ambassador Leendertse encouraged the OSCE executive structures and the field operations to continue their work on water governance issues and encouraged participating States to strengthen co-operation in this field. Furthermore, Ambassador Leendertse presented 2016 Chairmanship priorities in the second dimension. She indicated that Germany would like to strengthen the second dimension in general and economic aspects in particular. Ambassador Leendertse informed the delegates on the topic for the EEF cycle 2016: "Strengthening stability and security through co-operation on good governance" which would address good economic governance, migration and good environmental governance with the primary focus being on economic aspects of these issues. She also informed participants that the incoming Chairmanship was planning to organize an event that would involve the business community and should address the issues of 'connectivity', in particular issues of transport infrastructure, issues in border and customs administration and other practical issues of good governance in the OSCE space. Ambassador Leendertse concluded underlining that OSCE should be used as a forum for exchange of experiences with a broad membership and should advance the dialogue on how economic governance could be improved.

The floor was opened for discussion.

The *representative from the European Union* referred to the importance of promoting collaborative and sustainable management arrangements of freshwater resources for preventing political tensions, instability or even conflicts related to the use and management of shared water resources. He also underlined the role of water issues as a catalyst for closer regional co-operation and integration which is especially relevant in the definition and implementation of key policies, agriculture and food security, energy and sustainable use of water resources. The representative reemphasized that there are clear security impacts associated with water governance and in this respect expressed their support to the Chairmanship's proposal to put forward a draft Ministerial Council Decision on water governance. The representative expressed his gratitude to the incoming German Chairmanship and appreciated the choice of good governance as theme for the 2016 Economic and Environmental Cycle.

The representative of *France* emphasized that water governance and its implications for security and stability was a key issue both in the OSCE area and globally. She pointed out that although the Millennium Development Goal regarding access to water was achieved in 2010, more than 750 million people still do not have access to water protected from contamination. She noted that water was an issue within the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 21) on food security, health, environment and energy, which will be held in Paris from November 30 to December 11, 2015. The representative emphasized that the Paris Conference was important due to the fact that the life of the planet was at stake. The representative later outlined the four components of the Paris Alliance.

The representative of *Switzerland* noted the contribution of the Serbian Chairmanship to significantly enhancing the potential of the Second Dimension, by devoting the 2015 Economic and Environmental Forum process to the topic of water governance as well as by, *inter alia*,

organizing the field trip during the Second Preparatory Meeting in Belgrade. The representative mentioned that this process contributes to enhancing the overall role of the Organization as a facilitator and a political platform in addressing collective security. Furthermore, the representative mentioned that water should be regarded not only as a development issue but also as a security issue that can both trigger conflicts but that also has the potential to create opportunities for co-operation between the participating States. He encouraged pS to support the OSCE efforts to foster security through cooperative water governance and looks forward to the Ministerial Decision on water governance in Belgrade.

The representative of Armenia noted that global climate change was the main challenge to water governance which can only be addressed by joint efforts. He added that climate change reveals different vulnerabilities and water scarcity is one of them. The representative emphasized that unilateral actions in addressing water scarcity challenges should be avoided. In this context he referred to the principle of the indivisibility of security in the OSCE area and added that this is particularly relevant in transboundary water governance. Furthermore, the representative underlined that in the absence of a multilateral framework, bilateral relations, or trust, transboundary water co-operation should be considered not only as a challenge but as an opportunity. He concluded that the OSCE remains as the platform for these discussions.

The representative of the *United States of America* highlighted the importance of the chosen theme of the Forum in increasing security and stability in the OSCE area and subscribed to the general remarks that emphasized the need for better co-operation across borders.

He further underlined the complexity of the topic of good water governance and mentioned that it would be important to focus the efforts on the issues where the OSCE could add its value rather than trying to tackle all the broad ranging aspects of water governance. The representative emphasized the United States encourages the participation of more representatives from the private sector in Economic and Environmental Forums and therefore supports the plans of the 2016 German OSCE Chairmanship to involve the business community more in the events organised within the Second Dimension. The representative concluded underlining that it would be important to receive specific elements and identify practical steps that could be undertaken by the OSCE and by participating States in addressing water governance.

The representative of Turkey expressed his satisfaction with the discussions which highlighted the importance of water governance and addressed the question of how the OSCE could better contribute to the work in this area. Furthermore, he referred to the concerns raised regarding ramifications of climate change and ideas to address these concerns. He emphasized that the Concluding Meeting reaffirmed the importance of diligent co-operation between and among States to tackle with these issues. Referring to the role of international organizations, especially the OSCE in this regard, he underlined that it is essential for the OSCE to avoid duplication and to play a complementary role. The representative added that Turkey will engage in the discussions for a Ministerial Council deliverable as constructively as possible. In conclusion the representative expressed full support to the plan which was presented by the incoming 2016 German OSCE Chairmanship.

The representative from CAREC expressed her satisfaction with the outcomes of the Forum noting that the topic of Disaster Risk Reduction was the top priority for Central Asia. She

expressed full support to the idea, which was suggested during Session VI of the Forum, to set up a regional hub for an exchange of information, data and experience with regards to national disasters. Furthermore, she stressed the importance of enhancing co-operation among regional and international organisations, institutions and funds working in this field.

Dr. Halil Yurdakul Yiğitgüden concluded the session noting that it would be very important to transfer advanced discussions which were held during the three days of the Forum into a constructed and comprehensive discussion and possibly decision on water governance during the Ministerial Council in Belgrade.

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

23RD OSCE ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM

“Water governance in the OSCE area – increasing security and stability through co-operation”

CONCLUDING MEETING

Prague, 14 – 16 September 2015

Venue: Czernin Palace, Loretánské nám. 5, 118 00 Prague

ANNOTATED AGENDA

Monday, 14 September 2015

09:30 – 11:30 Opening Plenary Session (*open to the press*)

Moderator: Dr. Halil Yurdakul Yiğitgüden, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Rapporteur: Ms. Jenniver Sehring, Environmental Affairs Adviser, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Welcoming remarks:

- H.E. Jakub Kulhánek, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Czech Republic
- H.E. Lamberto Zannier, Secretary General, OSCE

Keynote Speeches:

- H.E. Ivica Dacic, OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia
- H.E. Didier Burkhalter, Head of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs

Selected topics:

- Good water governance as a response to increasing water challenges
- Water governance as a tool to increase resilience to environmental challenges and disasters

Statements by Delegations / Discussion

11:30 – 12:00 Coffee/Tea break

Opening of the Exhibition „Helsinki +40“ by H.E. Lamberto Zannier, OSCE Secretary General, (ground floor)

12:00 – 13:00 Review of the implementation of the OSCE commitments in the field of water governance

Selected topics:

- Presentation of the UNECE Review Report
- Forward looking discussion on the Review Report's main findings and recommendations

Moderator: Ambassador Dejan Šahović, Head of the OSCE Chairmanship Task Force

Rapporteur: Mr. Edvardas Aleksandras, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Speakers:

- Mr. Sergiusz Ludwiczak, Acting Director of Environment Division, UNECE
- Ms. Sonja Koeppel, Secretariat of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, UNECE

Discussion

13:00 – 14:30 Lunch break

14:30 – 16:00 Session I: The benefits of good water governance across different levels

Selected topics:

- Co-operative approaches as a factor for security and stability
- Water-food-energy-ecosystems-nexus
- Framework for multi-level, multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder co-ordination
- Measuring the benefits of water governance and co-operation

Moderator: Ambassador Thierry Béchet, Permanent Representative of the European Union to the OSCE

Rapporteur: Ms. Dana Bogdan, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Speakers:

- Mr. Eugene Z. Stakhiv, lecturer and researcher at John Hopkins University, and visiting scholar at the US Army Corps of Engineers, Institute for Water Resources, United States
- Mr. Ahmet Saatci, President, Turkish Water Institute
- Ms. Aziza Akhmouch, Head - Water Governance Programme, Regional Development Policy Division, Public Governance and Territorial Development Directorate, OECD
- Mr. Massimo Cozzzone, Chairperson of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes

- **Mr. Gazmend Turdiu**, Deputy Secretary General, Regional Co-operation Council

Discussion

16:00 – 16:30 Coffee/Tea break

16:30 – 18:00 Session II: Water governance at national level – best practices and new approaches in the OSCE region

Selected topics:

- Best practices in OSCE participating States
- Methods for monitoring and assessing
- Fostering transparency and anti-corruption in the water sector
- Sustainable financing of water management

Moderator: Ambassador Andreas Papadakis, Permanent Representative of Greece to the OSCE

Rapporteur: Mr. Uros Milanovic, Attaché, Permanent Mission of Serbia to the OSCE, 2015 Serbian OSCE Chairmanship

Speakers:

- **Mr. Berdi Berdiyev**, Head of the Department of Coordination of the Ecological Programmes, Ministry of Nature Protection, Turkmenistan
- **Mr. Rob Uijterlinde**, Dutch Association of Regional Water Authorities, The Netherlands
- **Ms. Lotte Feuerstein**, Programme Coordinator, Water Integrity Network , Germany
- **Ms. Tatsiana Minzhurava**, Chief Expert, Ministry of Natural Resources, Belarus

18:30 Reception hosted by the Serbian 2015 OSCE Chairmanship

Tuesday, 15 September 2015

09:30 – 11:00 Session III: Water governance and co-operation at transboundary level: lessons learnt for water diplomacy

Selected topics:

- The role of regional organizations for enhanced water co-operation
- Water diplomacy as a tool for conflict prevention and trust building
- Good practices in information and data sharing
- Bottom-up approaches and public participation in transboundary context

Moderator: Mr. Jan Dusik, Director of UNEP Regional Office for Europe

Rapporteur: Mr. Leonid Kalashnyk, Environmental Programme Officer, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Speakers:

- **Ms. Marina Seliverstova**, Head of the Federal Agency of Water Resources, Russian Federation
- **Mr. Oliver Magnin**, Water Policy Adviser, Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation
- **Mr. Sulton Rakhimzoda**, First Deputy Minister of Energy and Water Resources, Republic of Tajikistan
- **Mr. Benedikt Mandl**, Public Participation and Communication, ICPDR Secretariat
Mr. Ramiro Martínez, General Coordinator, Mediterranean Network of Basin Organizations (MENBO), Spain

Discussion

11:00– 11:30 Coffee/Tea break

11:30 – 13:00 Session IV: Panel debate - Water governance and sustainable development

Selected topics:

- Water governance for socio-economic development and environmental protection
- Water and security in the context of the post-2015 Development Agenda
- Effective institutional and legislative frameworks for good water governance at all levels

Moderator: Ms. Biljana Filipović, Head, Department of International Co-operation, Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection, Republic of Serbia

Rapporteur: Ms. Nino Malashkhia, Associate Environmental Affairs Officer, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Speakers:

- **Mr. Jan Dusik**, Director of UNEP Regional Office for Europe
- **Mr. Andrei A. Begeneev**, Member of the Committee on Ecology and Nature, Majlis of the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan
- **Dr. Marian Patrick Neal**, SIWI, Manager UNESCO-Centre for Water Co-operation
- **Dr. Wilhelm Vogel**, Head of the Unit Surface Water, Austrian Environmental Agency

Discussion

13:00 – 14:30 Lunch break

14:30 – 16:00 Session V: Facilitating effective water governance in the context of new environmental challenges

Selected topics:

- Water in the context of the global climate change agenda

- Adaptation to new environmental challenges in transboundary river basins
- Adaptation to new environmental challenges at community level

Moderator: Ms. Marta Bonifert, Executive Director, Regional Environment Centre for Central and Eastern Europe

Rapporteur: Mr. Bernd Forster, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of the Federal Republic of Germany to the OSCE

Speakers:

- Mr. Benjamin Pohl, Senior Project Manager, Adelphi, Germany
- Mr. Yuriy Nabyvanets, Deputy Director on Science, Ukrainian Hydrometeorological Institute
- Mr. Iskandar Abdullaev, Executive Director, CAREC
- Mr. Paolo Angelini Head of Delegation to the Alpine Convention, Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea, Italy

Discussion

16:00 – 16:30 Coffee/Tea break

16:30 – 18:00 Session VI: Governing waters for effective disaster risk reduction

Selected topics:

- Co-operative water governance as a catalyst for preventive action
- Water and security in the context of the follow-up to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030
- Water-related DRR as a tool for trust-building at all levels, including with its gender aspects

Moderator: Ambassador Vuk Žugić, Chair of the Permanent Council, Permanent Mission

of Serbia to the OSCE, 2015 Serbian OSCE Chairmanship

Rapporteur: Mr. Darren Perdue, Political Officer, United States Mission to the OSCE

Speakers:

- Mr. Pavel Puncochar, Director General, Water Section Division, Ministry of Agriculture, Czech Republic
- Dr. Ursula Schaefer-Preuss, Chair Global Water Partnership
- Mr. Jan Lueneburg, Head of Democratization Department, OSCE Mission to Serbia
- Ms. Paola Albrito, Head of the Regional Office for Europe, UNISDR
- Mr. Jože Papež, Head of Development and Projects Department, Hidrotehnik, Slovenia

Discussion

18:00

Reception hosted by the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Wednesday, 16 September 2015

09:30 – 10:30 Session VII: Strengthening participation and awareness raising for effective water governance

Selected topics:

- The growing role of civil society – experience from OSCE participating States
- Fostering participation and raising awareness: the role of Aarhus Centers
- The role and engagement of the private sector in addressing water challenges

Moderator: Ms. Désirée Schweitzer, Deputy Co-ordinator / Head, Environmental Activities, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Rapporteur: Mr. Zhaslan Nurtazin, Associate Environmental Governance Officer, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Speakers:

- **Ms. Biljana Filipović**, Head, Department of International Co-operation, Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection, Republic of Serbia
- **Mr. Aleksandar Perovic**, Manager, Aarhus Centre Niksic, Montenegro
- **Mr. Andreas Beckmann**, Managing Director of WWF, Danube – Carpathian Programme

Discussion

10:30 – 11:00 Coffee/Tea break

11:00 – 12:30 Concluding Plenary Session – Follow-up to the 23rd OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum

- General Discussion
- Closing statements

Moderator: Dr. Halil Yurdakul Yiğitgüden, Co-ordinator of the OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Rapporteur: Mr. Edvardas Aleksandras, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Speakers:

- **Ambassador Vuk Žugić**, Chair of the Permanent Council, Permanent Mission of Serbia to the OSCE, 2015 Serbian OSCE Chairmanship
- **Ambassador Antje Leendertse**, Head of the Task Force for the 2016 German OSCE Chairmanship, Federal Foreign Office, Germany

23rd OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum

SECOND PREPARATORY MEETING

Belgrade, 11-13 May 2015

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Second Preparatory Meeting of the 23rd OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum (EEF) on “Water governance in the OSCE area – increasing security and stability through co-operation” took place in Belgrade on 11-13 May 2015. Five thematic areas were addressed during the three-day meeting:

- The 2014 flooding disaster in South-Eastern Europe-Experiences and lessons learnt in the context of water governance at regional level;
- Water, security and disaster risk reduction;
- Sharing of experience on water governance in the context of disaster risk reduction;
- Awareness-raising on the benefits of good water governance;
- Water governance from different stakeholders’ perspectives.

Around 250 participants, including official representatives of OSCE participating States and field operations, as well as experts from international, regional and non-governmental organizations and academia attended the meeting and engaged in discussions about various aspects of good water governance, including transboundary co-operation, stakeholder involvement and linkages with security and disaster risk reduction.

The meeting also included a field visit to May 2014 flood-affected areas in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia. Participants visited the municipality of Bijeljina where they saw the river embankment reconstruction project and heard first-hand accounts of the flooding disaster and its aftermath. Additionally, the participants visited Šabac and Obrenovac where they were informed by the civil protection and fire fighting authorities about the flooding that had affected the two municipalities.

A number of concrete recommendations concerning responses to challenges related to water governance in the OSCE area were made. They can be found at the end of each Session’s report of this Consolidated Summary.

REPORTS OF THE RAPPORTEURS

Opening Session

Welcoming remarks:

Mr. Aleksandar Nikolić, State Secretary, Ministry of Interior, Serbia

Dr. Halil Yurdakul Yiğitgüden, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Keynote speeches:

Mr. Dražen Kurečić, President, International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River Basin, Ministry of Agriculture, Croatia

Mr. Marco Keiner, Director, Environment Division, UNECE

Rapporteur: Ms. Olivera Zurovac-Kuzman, Environmental Adviser, Democratization Department, OSCE Mission to Serbia

Aleksandar Nikolić, State Secretary, Ministry of Interior, Serbia, recalled the devastating floods of May 2014, noting the importance of expert advice and transfer of good practices, efficient policies and practical tools among the participating States in dealing with such disasters. He also noted that the Serbian Chairmanship's choice of the theme of the Economic and Environmental Forum had been in partly formed by the flooding disaster experience, which saw the engagement of many national and international protection units. He added that 14 countries (22 teams with 563 members) had provided aid to Serbia based on bilateral and multilateral agreements, including the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. He also highlighted rapid OSCE response, which had donated water pumps. Reflecting on the recent 3rd World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai, Japan, he stressed the importance of integrating climate change and severe weather conditions as planning elements for other areas of activity. State Secretary Nikolić presented the staffing and financial challenges for risk assessment mapping in Serbia. He highlighted the importance of improving the co-operation with the scientific organizations, media and increasing the availability of public information on disaster risk reduction in order to improve public awareness. In this context, he referred to the recently developed *Family Guide for Emergency Preparedness and Response*, as a successful example of co-operation between his Ministry and the OSCE Mission to Serbia. He also highlighted the progress of Serbia in developing a database of disaster losses based on DesInventar, which the OSCE and other organizations are supporting. Finally, State Secretary Nikolić noted that a number of bilateral protocols had been signed by Serbia with a view to improve regional co-operation through sharing information and monitoring information exchange.

Dr. Halil Yurdakul Yiğitgüden, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (CoEEA), noted the importance of water governance for disaster risk reduction and drew the attention to the inclusion and participation of the public in water governance. Commenting on the Chairmanship's choice of venue for the Second Preparatory Meeting, Dr. Yiğitgüden recalled that the same meeting of the Forum last year had been taking place during the peak of the floods in the region. Furthermore, he recalled that panellists of the Concluding Meeting of the 22nd Economic and Environmental Forum in Prague, last year, had agreed that cross-border co-operation in the aftermath of the floods was excellent and that civilian population, NGOs and

volunteers were of tremendous support. He also presented an overview of the meeting's session, highlighting the topics proposed for discussion. Additionally, he invited the participants to a side event which would feature posters and other visibility material presenting the practical activities on water governance and disaster risk reduction of the OSCE field operations and the Aarhus Centres in South-Eastern Europe (SEE). To that end, he highlighted the role of the field operations in supporting the implementation of the Aarhus Convention, namely through the Aarhus Centres. Stressing the importance of technological risk reduction during disasters, he drew participants' attention to another side event, organized by the Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit, which would present the experience of identifying industrial hazards during the 2014 floods in SEE and their possible impacts on human and environmental health.

*Mr. Dražen Kurečić, Assistant Minister, Ministry of Agriculture of Croatia, President of the International Convention for the Protection of the Danube River Basin (ICPDR), welcomed the organization of the 2nd Preparatory Meeting with a focus on water governance and disaster risk reduction. He noted that an exchange of experience and joint efforts in forecasting systems among countries enable greater security for citizens. In that vein, he underlined Croatia's commitment to bilateral and multilateral co-operation given the transboundary character of the floods and the fact that successful flood defence depends on regional co-operation. He also underlined that ICPDR represents a successful multinational framework for dialogue. Referring to Croatia's adoption of the EU *acquis*, he noted its participation in the public consultation process for the Danube Basin Management Plan. He reiterated the need for improving weather forecasting through developing new models, improving data exchange and early warning systems. In conclusion, he expressed his hope that the discussions would result in clear and practical conclusions, since water related issues have always been on the OSCE's agenda and the International Community needs such a facilitating organization to bring together experts, organizations and politicians towards a common goal.*

Mr. Marco Keiner, Director, UNECE Environment Division, stated that UNECE places great importance on water governance and highlighted the long standing successful co-operation with the OSCE. Speaking about awareness raising and public participation in water governance, he noted that ignoring public participation elements could be costly and might cause uncertainty. He also referred to various international treaties promoted by the UNECE in the past 20 years to strengthen water co-operation. Specifically, he highlighted the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) as an important legal framework to improve water governance and ecologically sound water resource management. Under the Convention, riparian parties are required to enter into agreements for shared waters and establish joint institutions for their management. To that end, he noted that related capacity building projects are carried out through co-operation between OSCE and UNECE, such is the Dniester River Basin – where the UNECE and OSCE have improved water co-operation through the Environment and Security (ENVSEC) initiative. Ultimately, this co-operation has led to the signing of the Dniester Treaty, enabling access to information and public participation in decision-making, as well as the development of a transboundary adaptation strategy promoting an understanding of climate change impacts and adaptation measures. In this context, Mr. Keiner thanked the OSCE for supporting the implementation of the UNECE Water Convention. Additionally, he mentioned the support of the OSCE in co-ordinating donor support and ensuring there was no duplication of activities vis-à-vis national policy dialogues in several countries, in the framework of the EU Water Initiative. Finally, he recognized the key role

of the Aarhus Centres in promoting the implementation of the Aarhus Convention and its Protocol on PRTR, highlighting the Convention's requirement for international decision-making which includes the work of joint bodies for transboundary water co-operation.

Then the floor was opened for discussion.

Latvia, on behalf of the European Union, observed that sustainable water management was an important factor in stability and security and highlighted that floods may be a cause of tensions and conflict. The EU experience has demonstrated that transboundary co-operation is important for peace and stability. The EU representative stressed that water governance was a catalyst for co-operation and that the OSCE was well placed to increase trust, build confidence by linking climate change and DRR. The representative noted the EU Flood Directive which sets out the relevance of flood risk management plans. She proposed that the OSCE should review lessons learnt from 2014 regional flooding disaster and select particular actions for following up. Commenting on the assistance disbursed through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, she welcomed Serbia's recent membership in the mechanism. Finally, the EU representative pointed out that water governance and water diplomacy were of growing relevance, in particular but not only, to Central Asia and would welcome views of participating States and field operations on these topics.

A representative of the United States of America underlined the importance of learning from experience and the value of participating States' discussions in shaping future OSCE engagement in the area of water governance. Water governance has tremendous potential for increasing transboundary co-operation in locations where tensions exist. It is important for the OSCE to look closely at this potential and for delegations to consider how and where this role could be strengthened and increased. The connection between water governance and DRR could be one area where the OSCE may play an important co-ordinating function. The representative noted the discussions during the 2nd Preparatory Meeting would provide significant input in the context of a possible Ministerial Council decision at the end of the year. Recognizing the value of the field visit in the official programme of the meeting, the representative encouraged the participating States to carefully explore the role of the OSCE, through a wide ranging and creative discussion.

A representative of the Russian Federation, reflecting on the 2014 disasters in SEE, added that a large area of the Russian Federation was at serious risk of flooding, with losses evaluated at more than 10 billion euros, the worst affected being farming, logging, mining, loss of cultivated area and drained surfaces. The representative pointed to the multifaceted nature of the problem, need to reinforce and increase disaster response capacities and improve regional and sub-regional mechanisms. He noted that the Russian Federation's efforts to establish a sizeable section of aviation fleet dedicated to flood response and referred to the role and relevance of the Russian-Serbian emergency centre in Nis. Although, in his view, the EU agencies play a big role in this field, he stressed the contribution of the OSCE through capacity building, field missions and OCEEA support, and activities within the ENVSEC initiative. He, finally, pointed to the relevance of the OSCE in enhancing dialogue and international co-operation to increase water governance without duplicating efforts of other organizations.

A representative of Armenia noted the value brought by the OSCE in this area, as well as the need to identify concrete areas to further develop existing/established practices and engage

stakeholders including civil society. In his view, the OSCE is well placed to assist in cross-border co-operation in water governance and DRR. As an example, he noted the field visit of this meeting to flood-affected areas in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Finally, the speaker noted the role the OSCE is playing in overcoming difficulties in regional and transboundary co-operation and in disaster risk reduction. Additionally, he highlighted the role of the OSCE field operations particularly in the implementation of the CASE NGO Small Grants Programme as well as in the promotion of the Aarhus Centres network. He also referred to the engagement of the Aarhus Centres Network in Armenia in the Armenian National Platform for DRR.

A representative of Turkmenistan noted the uniqueness of the Central Asian region due to its rich natural diversity. He also added that water resource management has been a contentious question for the region and that regional consensus should be used to address such a question. Turkmenistan has advocated for an approach in which water governance and DRR call for mutual respect of everyone's interest, and water management and climate change related activities undertaken by the UN are considered as essential. He expressed his support for furthering co-operation among Central Asian countries and with the international community. Finally, he stressed that Turkmenistan's commitments were demonstrated by its involvement in international programmes, through new policies and diplomatic fora.

A representative of Switzerland referred to last year's 2nd Preparatory Meeting on DRR and recalled that the Serbian speaker had to cancel his participation to co-ordinate the flood response in his country. She pointed to the fact that DRR was placed as one of the key topics and was interested in learning about the lessons learned and experience of countries from a security point of view. Switzerland welcomed the continued attention to DRR issues in view of the Swiss-Serbian consecutive Chairmanships and follow-up to the Basel Ministerial Council decision. She also noted that the planned field trip would provide an opportunity to see affected areas and thanked the OSCE field operations in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Chairmanship for making it possible. Finally, she noted Switzerland's conviction that OSCE would address water governance and security benefits and expressed interest in inputs to a Ministerial Council decision that may be adopted at the end of the year.

The representative of Bulgaria stressed the importance of the availability of accessible and reliable data in the context of addressing flood risks, drew attention to the need for more research on the impact of climate change in the context of water governance and underlined the potential of sustainable land use practices for water resilience. He noted the role of the EU Flood Directive and the EU Water Framework Directive in providing a solid framework for sustainable water governance approaches and referred to the contribution of the UNECE Water Convention and the Danube River Protection Convention to increasing security and building confidence in the region. Finally, he noted the importance of the involvement of different stakeholders and sustainable use of resources in the context of water governance.

Representatives of France and Spain noted their full alignment with the statement delivered by the European Union. However, they drew the audience's attention to the language issue, urging for the use of all six official OSCE languages in EEF meetings, and expressing their hope to receive assurances that a six-language regime would be applied as of 2016. The *Co-ordinator of the OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities* responded that this issue was addressed by the Serbian Chairmanship.

A representative of Hungary pointed to his country's approach of attaching high priority to water governance and management, and noted that the 7th Session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes would be held in Hungary in November 2015, with the participation of the President of Hungary. In conclusion, he underlined the high importance of the year 2015 in the context of water governance including the expected adoption of the post-2015 Development Agenda and the 2015 Paris Climate Conference (COP21). In this regard he also highlighted the inclusion of the transboundary water co-operation target as part of the sustainable development goal on water and sanitation.

A representative of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly underlined the need for more attention to water management issues, in light of the increase in demographic tensions. He emphasized the need for co-ordinated action to comprehensive security, highlighted the OSCE role, and encouraged participating States to improve water security.

A representative of the Chairmanship noted that the 2nd Preparatory Meeting would also present the activities of the OSCE Mission to Serbia on public participation in water management and expressed hope that subsequent deliberations would recommend greater streamlining of public participation into water management policies. She expressed thanks to the OSCE Mission to Serbia for implementing activities related to environmental protection, as well as the Ministry of Interior, the OSCE Missions to Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia for organizing the field visit. Finally, she expressed the hope that the meeting would feature productive discussions on disaster related co-operation.

The following conclusions and recommendations could be drawn from the discussion:

- OSCE is well placed to increase trust by linking climate change and DRR;
- Disasters are multifaceted in nature, therefore the need to reinforce and increase disaster response capacities and improve regional and sub-regional mechanisms;
- OSCE plays a role in overcoming difficulties in regional and transboundary co-operation and increase of disaster risk reduction;
- Effective use of resources is a chance to strengthen security and sustainable use of resources.

Session I: The 2014 flooding disaster in South Eastern Europe – Experiences and lessons learned in the context of water governance at regional level

Moderator: Ambassador Tomislav Leko, Permanent Mission of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the OSCE and International Organizations in Vienna

Rapporteur: Mr. Uroš Milanović, Attaché, Permanent Mission of Serbia to the OSCE, 2015 Serbian OSCE Chairmanship

Speakers:

Mr. Predrag Marić, Assistant Minister, Head of the Department for Emergency Management, Ministry of Interior, Serbia

Ambassador Jonathan Moore, Head of Mission, OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina
Ms. Marta Bonifert, Executive Director, Regional Environment Centre for Central and Eastern Europe
Dr. Marijan Babić, Head of Project Implementation Unit for Implementation of Flood-protection Projects Financed by CEB Loans and EU Funds, Croatian Waters, Croatia

Ambassador Tomislav Leko, Permanent Mission of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the OSCE and International Organizations in Vienna, introduced the session by recalling last year's devastating floods in South-Eastern Europe that resulted in fatalities, as well as over EUR 3.5 billion in damages.

Mr. Predrag Marić, Assistant Minister of Interior and Head of the Sector for Emergency Situation, provided a detailed overview of the flooding disaster in May 2014, indicating the unprecedented weather conditions in the region. Over 500 houses were completely destroyed, 16,000 were damaged. He noted that the rescue services saved around 32,000 people. Mr. Marić highlighted the important role of international co-operation in rescue operations, stressing that 14 different countries and 22 international rescue teams assisted Serbia during the disaster. He particularly highlighted the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, which provided wide-spread assistance for countries affected by natural disasters, and noting that Serbia would become its 33rd member. Mr. Marić commented on the OSCE's role – the OSCE organized DRR training sessions, workshops and exercises with rescue services of Serbia. Additionally, the OSCE Mission to Serbia sponsored the publication of a family guide by the Ministry of Interior on emergency preparedness and response as well as on fireproofing of skyscrapers. Finally, Mr. Marić highlighted a number of lessons learned from last year's disasters, including the need to increase prevention, to keep in mind that such events could happen again, to strengthen the early warning mechanisms and the capabilities of rescue services, and to enlarge the scope of international co-operation in this field, particularly through regional initiatives.

Ambassador Jonathan Moore, Head of OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, provided information on the field trip to be organized on the third day of the meeting. Ambassador Moore emphasized that the 2014 disaster was the largest humanitarian disaster in Bosnia and Herzegovina since the end of the war in former Yugoslavia. He noted that over 90,000 people lost their homes, and that a large number of schools, health centres and other buildings were destroyed. Additionally, the floods caused landslides, which dislocated previously marked mine fields. Ambassador Moore commended the response of rescue services which provided the necessary assistance to the affected areas, preventing further loss of life. He underlined the excellent examples of inter-ethnic solidarity during and in the aftermath of the disaster. He then presented the activities of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, which provided volunteers to assist with the rescue teams. The Mission also opened five additional offices in the most affected municipalities, which helped to strengthen its early warning capacities. He noted that the Mission was currently working on a report depicting how certain municipalities were prepared for the floods and what was their initial reaction, in order to help prevent new disasters of such magnitude.

Ms. Marta Bonifert, Executive Director of the Regional Environment Centre for Central and Eastern Europe (REC), presented many ways where REC and the OSCE co-operate, especially through the Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC). She stated that economy of countries

was playing a major role in preventing disasters and that countries that were affected by such disasters need to share their experiences and lessons learned to other regions in order to prevent similar events. Ms. Bonifert emphasized that the importance of good water governance has been affirmed by the EU in its Water Policy, and that this policy should be used to adapt the legislative systems of countries, enhance access to relevant information and cross-sectorial dialogue, as well as improve the education system as the primary tools of every prevention mechanism. In her view, the vulnerability of societies needs to be reduced in the most cost-efficient way, by enhancing co-ordination between relevant State institutions, exchanging information, knowledge and best practices between regions and by creating a platform for co-ordination and co-operation between countries.

Dr. Marijan Babić, Head of Project Implementation Unit for Implementation of Flood-protection Projects, presented Croatian experience with last year's floods and their efforts to enhance disaster risk reduction. Dr. Babić stated that the frequency and magnitude of flooding in Croatia increased significantly over the last few years, especially on the river Sava, where water levels were greater than their historic maximum. He explained that one of the main reasons for the floods in Croatia was due to high discharge and the breach of the Sava river dike in two places. The damages were estimated to be around EUR 200 million, and there were two fatalities. Dr. Babić pointed to the improper maintenance of flood prevention systems built in former Yugoslavia in 1964. In his view, the lessons to be drawn from 2014 disasters include: i. current flood defence systems are vulnerable and the public has become aware of this fact; ii. there is a greater chance of events of such magnitude repeating, which shows a clear connection to climate change; iii. there is a need to improve international mechanisms of co-operation in these matters; iv. goals of international co-operation should be to avoid new risks, increase disaster risk reduction and solidarity. Dr. Babić emphasized the importance of implementing flood protection measures that have common benefits for countries of the region.

The floor was then opened for discussion.

A representative of Azerbaijan explained his country's experiences with water reservoirs on the river Kur, and the methodology of managing excess and lack of water by properly predicting the melting of snow and distributing the water for irrigation purposes. He also enquired about the EU norms for construction of such facilities.

A representative of the Holy See emphasized the importance of solidarity in troubled times and close international co-operation.

Latvia, on behalf of the EU, stated that the EU values the lessons learned, as well as concrete suggestions on how the OSCE could contribute in these matters. She noted that the EU showed solidarity with Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Croatia during the floods by providing humanitarian assistance, rescue teams, satellite images and financial assistance. She highlighted the EU's assistance in strengthening of the early warning systems and disaster risk reduction in Mačva region in Serbia. Noting that the EU had donated over EUR 170 million to Serbia, the largest amount ever given to a disaster affected country, she expressed satisfaction that Serbia had signed the EU Civil Protection Mechanism.

A representative of Czech Republic stated that his country was willing to share its experiences and know-how regarding flood risk prevention with all interested parties, considering that after the introduction of new legislative measures, the Czech Republic had a considerable reduction of flooding.

A representative of Slovenia highlighted that regional co-operation and preventive measures were the most important factors in flood prevention. She informed the meeting that Slovenia was actively participating in the Framework Agreement on the Sava River Basin and ICPDR, and an extensive exchange of best practices was happening.

The following conclusions and recommendations could be drawn from the discussion:

- Solidarity during and in the aftermath of the flooding disaster in South-Eastern Europe has been remarkable; There is a need to further improve existing mechanisms of international co-operation for disaster risk management;
- Frequency and magnitude of floods is increasing, which is partially attributed to climate change;
- There is a need to strengthen flood prevention and early warning mechanisms, as well as upgrade flood defence systems;
- Capabilities of rescue services have to be further strengthened;
- Through OSCE's active engagement in the context of 2014 floods in South- Eastern Europe, the OSCE has demonstrated that it has proven capacity to support its participating States in strengthening DRR.

Session II: Water, security and disaster risk reduction

Moderator: Mr. Massimo Cozzone, Senior Officer, Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea, Italy

Rapporteur: Ms. Nino Malashkhia, Associate Environmental Affairs Officer, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Speakers:

Mr. Goran Ždrále, Senior Officer for Analysis and Reporting, Mine Action Centre, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Mr. Luca Rossi, Programme Officer, Regional Office for Europe, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction

Mr. Jakub Gibek, Head, Water Policy Unit, Water Resources Department, Ministry of Environment, Poland

Ms. Aušra Semaškienė, Ambassador at Large, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Lithuania

Ms. Nilza Sena, Vice-Chair, Second Committee, OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

Mr. Massimo Cozzone, Senior Officer, Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea of Italy introduced the session and referred to the UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention). The moderator also informed participants about the launch of the report of the UNECE Water Convention and the International Network of Basin Organizations (INBO) on *Water and Climate Change Adaptation in*

Transboundary Basins: Lessons Learned and Good Practices at the seventh World Water Forum. The report examines 50 different cases of climate change adaptation projects in transboundary basins and illustrates good practices.

Mr. Goran Zdrave, Senior Officer for Analysis and Reporting, Mine Action Centre, Bosnia and Herzegovina focused his presentation on the security implications of natural disasters in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Bosnia and Herzegovina is among countries with highest number of landmines and unexploded ordnance (UXOs). The mine affected area covers 2.3% of the whole territory of the country and estimated number of mines is over 100,000. Only last year, 16 people lost their lives due to UXOs. In 2014, 48.96 km² of mine-suspected area was affected by flooding and 35 landslides occurred in the minefields. Especially vulnerable in this regard is the canton Tuzla. The major challenges are associated with the mine dislodging and their exposure, as well as with mine destruction. The speaker also referred to the responsibilities of the Mine Action Centre, which include the detection and mapping of landmines. The Centre also conducts awareness raising campaigns for vulnerable communities. Mr. Zdrave highlighted the importance of regional co-operation in addressing the issues of landmines and UXOs in the context of natural disasters.

Mr. Luca Rossi, Programme Officer, Regional Office for Europe, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), briefly introduced the UNISDR's mandate. The organization is in charge of co-ordinating disaster risk reduction activities among UN agencies and is working in close co-operation with the UN country teams as well as other regional and international organizations that are active in the area. The primary counterparts of the UNISDR are the governments of countries. The organization also tries to create closer links with civil society. The speaker introduced the Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction and pointed out few important conclusions of the assessment. Although significant progress has been achieved in reducing the mortality through enhanced preparedness and response and improved institutional capacity at national level, the progress in respect to risk management is still lagging. The financial and economic impacts of disasters are still significant. The speaker emphasized the enormous financial losses that occur in developed countries as a result of disasters. The economic losses in the OECD countries increased tenfold. The speaker also pointed out that disaster risks could seriously undermine the capacity of countries to develop. This is a challenge not only for low-income countries but for middle or high income countries as well. Mr. Rossi also pointed out the importance of considering the long-term impacts of natural disasters. The economic losses occur as a result of cancelled/ceased economic activities, vanished or uncreated jobs, unpaid taxes, etc. Mr. Rossi also spoke about the integrated and participatory approach reflected in several international strategy documents and focused on the key elements of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction for 2015-2030. The Sendai Framework builds on the Hyogo Framework and puts more emphasis on the risk prevention, reconstruction, guiding principles of DRR, clear measures at national / local and regional / global levels and highlights the role of stakeholders. The document defines the four priority actions for disaster risk reduction – understanding the risks, strengthening disaster risk governance, investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience and enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response. One of the important messages the document gives is that the design and implementation of DRR should not hamper development and urbanization and shall contribute to generation of jobs. It should be pursued as good investment in our future. The speaker also emphasized the need to tailor early warning activities to the response capacities of countries. Rebuilding better is very crucial for prevention of generation of new risks. In conclusion, Mr. Rossi proposed areas for co-operation with the OSCE -

development of the road map for implementation of the Sendai Framework for DRR, contribution through the European Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction (EFDRR) to the UNFCCC COP21 agenda and the overall CCA strategy, development of a national strategies aligned with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, development of training on resilience at local level, sharing of the past experience, lesson learned and good practices developed with neighbouring countries.

Mr. Jakub Gibek, Head, Water Policy Unit, Water Resources Department, Ministry of Environment, Poland, spoke about the flood security issues in central Europe and Poland. The speaker recalled the 1997 extreme weather events that caused devastating floods in Poland resulting in 56 fatalities and USD 3.5 billion losses. After these devastating floods, Poland revisited its flood security measures. The main challenge was the distribution of responsibilities for water management among various stakeholders that makes planning of actions and crisis management difficult. In Poland, the water governance falls under the responsibility of five ministries and several other institutions. Mr. Gibek highlighted four main pillars of the flood management - improved weather forecasting, strategic planning, flood protection infrastructure and crisis management, which have to be supported by the robust legal framework, scientific base and adequate financial resources. The overarching framework for the effective disaster risk management is international co-operation. The speaker showcased the experience of Poland regarding the flood management in the Odra river basin. Mr. Gibek, spoke about the measures carried out for improving flood forecasting in the basin, which significantly benefited from concluding the bilateral agreements on the data transmission and exchange. For better strategic planning flood risk assessments and risk maps were developed and flood risk management plans are being elaborated. Special working groups were set under the bilateral transboundary water commission on this issue with the aim to develop flood risk assessment and flood risk management plans, which are currently under preparation by the International Commission for the Protection of Odra River. The speaker touched upon the infrastructure measures as well, that include flood protection programmes. Mr. Gibek noted that for improving the crisis management, Poland concluded the bilateral agreements between the rescue services and is regularly exchanging information. Currently Poland is working on the common rescue procedures. One of the major achievements of this work was improved co-operation between agencies and automated exchange of information within the country and across the borders. Mr. Gibek pointed out increased risks of flooding that occur due to climate change and emphasized the importance to balance structural and non-structural measures for reducing the flood risks. The speaker also highlighted the challenges associated with changing the attitudes of the society.

Ms. Aušra Semaškienė, Ambassador at Large, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Lithuania stressed the importance of co-operation in management of transboundary water resources. The speaker underlined the need to have a comprehensive, interdisciplinary and cross-sectorial approach in addressing water challenges. Ms. Semaškienė emphasized the need to look at transboundary issues in the context of water-energy-food nexus. Resolving issues surrounding water and energy priorities requires better and integrated policy frameworks and political engagement. The speaker noted that building effective co-operation is lengthy process and requires conscious multi-year effort by parties. Ms. Semaškienė referred to the international legal framework agreements, the transboundary environmental impact assessment and other platforms, which allow knowledge and experience sharing. Ms. Semaškienė emphasized the importance of the UNECE Water Convention in the OSCE area. The time spent for building effective communication,

working relationships, level playing field for knowledge and skills of partners across the borders is essential investment for reaching sound negotiation outcomes. Ms. Semaškienė presented the case study of the Nemunas River basin. The river basin is shared by Lithuania, Belarus, the Russian Federation and Poland. There are a few treaties signed between Lithuania and Poland but there is no agreement with Belarus or Russia. Lithuania is currently working with Belarus on the Technical Protocol on Co-operation on the Protection and Use of the Water Resources in the Transboundary Neman River Basin between Lithuania and Belarus. Ms. Semaškienė expressed the hope that the plan to sign an agreement between Lithuania, Belarus, Russia and EU would be revived soon. The speaker also referred to the increased number of the hydropower stations in the basin and risks associated with the hydro- and nuclear power stations. Ms. Semaškienė emphasized the importance of proper functioning of wastewater treatment facilities for the river basin protection and referred to the treatment facilities in Kaliningrad, the Russian Federation. The speaker also stressed the role of the effective public participation for succeeding in transboundary co-operation. Participation allows public to express its concerns and enables public authorities to take due account of such concerns and to enhance the quality of their decisions.

Ms. Nilza Sena, Vice-Chair, Second Committee, OSCE Parliamentary Assembly emphasized the importance of co-operation for management of transboundary water resources in the OSCE area. The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly commends the OSCE for its work in facilitating negotiations between participating States on bilateral agreements on water resource management. The speaker highlighted the need to consider new challenges, such as diminished water supplies caused by climate change and unsustainable agricultural practices. She called on participating States to pursue the policies that mitigate climate change and ensure adaptation. She underlined the need to continue negotiations on new universal climate accord with binding limits on greenhouse gas emissions. Ms. Sena drew attention of participants to the issue of water allocation that presents a growing risk for conflicts. The speaker underlined that the water is a must-have element for security and social stability. The speaker noted that the OSCE participating States can benefit from a framework of multilateral co-operation by sharing their comparative advantages in the field of water treatment and water reclamation, by engaging partners through practical projects, educational seminars and the transfer of technology.

Then the floor was opened for discussion.

A representative of the Russian Federation responded to Ms. Semaškienė and noted that the Russian Federation is ready to engage in negotiations on the Nemunas River basin. On the matter of the construction of the nuclear facility, the speaker emphasized that Russia is always prepared to consider this issue but suggested to discuss this matter in the framework of an appropriate platform - the International Atomic Energy Agency.

A representative of the OSCE Chairmanship thanked the speakers and moderator for their comprehensive presentations and underlined the importance of the experience sharing for preventing future disasters. The representative also highlighted the need to raise awareness of disaster preparedness and risks. Question was posed to Mr. Goran Ždralje on the plans of the Mine Action Centre to address the risks from dislodged mines and how the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina could assist in this matter.

Mr. Goran Ždralje responded that as an initial step, the Mine Action Centre in co-operation with Croatia and Serbia recorded all minefields that had been flooded. In the second phase, the Centre hopes to be able to carry out humanitarian demining projects. Mr. Ždralje noted that the OSCE could help in exchanging data and in preparation of the demining.

The representative of Hungary drew attention of participants to the role played by the climatic and hydrological events in inflicting damages and pointed out that the majority impacts of the climate change relate to water. He also expressed the hope that UNFCCC COP 21 will address the water issue adequately.

The following conclusions and recommendations could be drawn from the discussion:

- Stronger focus on disaster risk prevention and preparedness is needed.
- A long term impact of cascading effects of disasters on the economy should be considered;
- The OSCE should continue supporting participating States in development of the legal frameworks for the cross-border co-operation and providing a platform for experience sharing;
- Additional security risks that emerge as a result of floods and landslides in areas contaminated with unexploded ordnance and mines should be considered;
- Public participation in decision making on issues concerning the water management and disaster risk management should be supported;
- Raising awareness of disaster risks and disaster prevention should be promoted;
- Countries' strategies and policies in the area of DRR with the Sendai Disaster Risk Reduction Framework should be aligned.

Session III: Sharing of experience on water governance in the context of disaster risk reduction

Moderator: Ms. Irena Vojáčková-Sollorano, UN Resident Coordinator, UNDP Resident Representative for Serbia

Rapporteur: Ms. Alma Mirvić, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Speakers:

Ms. Indira Akbozova, Head of the Kazakhstan part of the Secretariat of the Chu-Talas Commission and **Ms. Gulmira Satymkulova**, Head of the Kyrgyzstan part of the Secretariat of the Chu-Talas Commission

Mr. David Elkaïm, Political Officer on Water and Sanitation, Climate and Environment Unit, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, France

Ms. Carolin Schärf, Scientific Officer, Federal Department of the Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications, Federal Office for the Environment, Switzerland

Mr. Movses Poghosyan, Director, National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, Armenia

Mrs. Irena Vojáčková-Sollorano, UN Resident Coordinator, UNDP Resident Representative for Serbia, noted that the number of natural disasters has doubled in the last decade and that we

need to quickly learn from each other. To that end, she underlined the call of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction to have all countries form national DRR platforms.

Mrs. Indira Akbozova, Head of the Kazakhstan part of the Secretariat of the Chu-Talas Commission, described annual flooding that happened in the Talas river basin prior to the construction of the Kirov reservoir in 1975. Unfortunately, experts assess that this basin would see further degradation. She explained that the Chu-Talas Commission set up in 2006 to apportion water reserves. The Commission also issued recommendations for equity financing of water facilities of interstate use. The joint commission also reviews projects and includes working groups involving professionals, experts and scientists. She reflected on the co-operation the Commission has with international expert communities and noted that an Agreement on Co-operation in the Field of Sustainable Development has been prepared. Of note is the issuance of quarterly forecasts for water availability. With assistance from the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea, there has been progress in availability of data. In addition, the Commission representatives also participated in meetings of international conventions.

Mrs. Gulmira Satymkulova, Head of the Kyrgyzstan part of the Secretariat of the Chu-Talas Commission, presented the general overview of the Chu and Talas rivers hydromorphological properties. She also noted that Kyrgyzstan has a national plan of action for climate change adaptation and that climate change has implications on the glaciers, as well as dynamics of population change in the Chu Basin. Namely, there has been a three-fold increase in the population since the 1970s. Recalling the extreme events in the last 10 years, she called for greater public availability of relevant information and the importance of drawing on international experience. More specifically, she highlighted the need to co-ordinate water management under extreme conditions of water shortages and flooding; invest in measures to reduce the effects of disasters; implement water quality standards and monitoring mechanism.

Mr. David Elkaim, Political Officer on Water and Sanitation, Climate and Environment Unit of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, France, explained that the OSCE participating States will experience water related problems due to climate change. Disasters have exacerbated by climate change, increasing in intensity and frequency. Climate change as a security issue demonstrated through water, has accelerated glacial melt, extreme floods as well as changes in water use. Extreme climatic events happen everywhere, while rising sea levels threaten islands. He noted that experts forecast that by 2050, there will be significant displacements of population within and among countries due to climatic events. He reminded that the Conference of Parties in Paris should result in a new legal agreement for post-2020 climate regime under UNFCCC. He also noted that the Sustainable Development Goals would be developed with climate change in mind and that France believes that DRR should be integrated in the post-2015 agenda. Commenting on the role of the OSCE, he added that it could facilitate the containment of conflict, while harnessing water co-operation. Additionally, he noted that as a security organization, the OSCE should fully integrate DRR, sustainable development and climate change in its environmental activities.

Mrs. Carolin Schärfp, Scientific Officer, Federal Department of the Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications, Federal Office for the Environment, Switzerland referred to the Sendai Framework for DRR, noting seven targets and four priorities for action. She also underlined that, as compared to the Hyogo Framework for Action, the Sendai Framework treats DRR as a

development issue for all countries, an all-of-society issue, with a new emphasis on health and role of human rights, while strengthening the transition from hazard to risk. She portrayed the example from Switzerland which defined six priorities for action, exemplified in flood hazard maps established for the entire populated area of Switzerland. Discussing awareness of natural hazards, she noted that the general public in Switzerland could get all information before, during and after an event, including general recommendation on action one should take, holistic planning of protection measures etc. She also presented examples of Swiss Development Co-operation's work on DRR, noting the development of Climate, Environment and Disaster Reduction Integration Guidance (CEDRIG) which was developed for programme and project planning. She underlined the strong focus Switzerland placed on DRR during its 2014 OSCE Chairmanship, whereby an OSCE Ministerial Decision in Basel reinforced the role of DRR as a confidence building measure. Finally, she made note of several OSCE projects that seek to strengthen DRR in the OSCE region, notably the strengthening of DRR capacities of Aarhus Centres; increased engagement in fire management, a project in Ukraine/Moldova with UNECE on Dniester River, as well as a new project on SEE and Central Asia regions. In conclusion, she encouraged joint efforts by participating States to promote DRR.

Mr. Movses Poghosyan, Director, National Platform for DRR, Armenia noted that a national platform for DRR was established in 2010. He stressed the co-operation with the OSCE and Aarhus Centres in Armenia on disaster risk management and the important role the Aarhus Centres play in promoting DRR culture. He added that a Memorandum of Understanding between DRR National Platform, OSCE and Aarhus Centers would be signed, whereby a specialised training of trainers on Flash Environmental Assessment Toolkit (FEAT) and Making Cities Resilient (MCR) courses will be organized. Additionally, joint projects on Disaster Risk Management and Environmental Emergencies would be developed and implemented. As part of the project on the strengthening of DRR capacities of Aarhus Centres, DRR will be mainstreamed into 4 community development plans. Disaster vulnerabilities of selected communities will be identified as well and Aarhus Centres would receive additional capacity development to support community-based DRR in partnership with National Platform for DRR and local NGOs. Concluding, Mr. Poghosyan noted that DRR cannot be a monopoly of just one organization. It is everybody's mission to make a country resilient.

Then, the floor was opened for discussion.

A representative of Kazakhstan reflected on the impact of climate change through the incidence of droughts and floods in his country, observing that 50 per cent of water resources are transboundary. He also presented the issues faced in the Syr Darya basin concerning pollution and contamination and the efforts in trying to ensure rational use of water resources. Co-operation is crucial in transboundary management of water resources.

A representative of Belarus explained that in late May a new water law would enter into force with changes incorporated into the country's approach. He noted that spring flooding is a significant factor in disaster risk management and that mapping and modelling exercises are underway to prevent floods.

A representative of ECO-Tiras enquired on the use of the Chu-Talas River Basin Agreement vis-a-visa managing water resources and eco systems.

A representative of Hungary expressed interest in learning more about the UNFCCC Conference of Parties in Paris.

A representative of Italy noted the experience of Italy and other signatories of the Alpine Convention regarding the management of disasters in mountainous areas through exchange of experiences.

A representative of Armenia noted that although floods had been a familiar occurrence in the area, however, there was a challenge of droughts. Most notably, he highlighted the issue of dam construction on transboundary rivers. Finally, he noted that Armenia was ready to co-operate and it had made certain initiatives to that end. The country believes that OSCE would be a platform to sustain water resources and not water-related conflicts.

The representative of Uzbekistan noted that in dealing with hazards, a system of prevention is far more effective than recovery measures.

A representative of Turkey noted that Turkey's water policy acknowledges the needs of its neighbours and riparian states. He also stressed that Turkey's transboundary water policy aims at sharing the benefits of transboundary water resources through co-operation. The flow of the Aras river will not be affected by Turkey's dam construction plans. Ultimately, he noted that there is good co-operation between Armenia and Turkey on Arpacay – Akhouryan River and that delegations of the two countries meet regularly to make the river usable for all sides.

The following conclusions and recommendations could be drawn from the discussion:

- Co-operation is crucial in transboundary management of water resources;
- OSCE may serve as platform to sustain water resources;
- OSCE should fully integrate DRR, sustainable development and climate change in its environmental activities;
- Climate adaptation is a conflict prevention measure.

Session IV: Awareness-raising on the benefits of good water governance

Moderator: Ms. Dragana Milovanović, Head, Department for Participation in Strategic Planning, Management and International Water Co-operation, Water Directorate of the Republic of Serbia

Rapporteur: Ms. Jenniver Sehring, Environmental Affairs Adviser, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Speakers:

Ms. Daniela Scheetz, Desk Officer, Division on Climate and Environmental Foreign Policy, Sustainable Economy, Federal Foreign Office, Germany

Mr. Srđan Sušić, Senior Expert on Sustainable Growth, Regional Co-operation Council

Mr Tagoimurod Gulov, Head of Main Department on Water Resources, Ministry of Energy and Water Resources, Republic of Tajikistan

Mr. Toshiya Abe, Resident Representative for Balkan Office, Japanese International Co-operation Agency

Ms. Dragana Milovanović, Head, Department for Participation in Strategic Planning, Management and International Water Co-operation, Water Directorate of the Republic of Serbia introduced the topic of the session by stressing the importance of awareness raising to prevent problems in implementation especially at the local level. She also underlined the need to synchronize needs and funds in development assistance and to acknowledge the responsibility of all who use water, as is done in water stewardship approaches. Finally, she expressed her hope that the Sustainable Development Goals would be adopted this autumn, including the Goal No. 6 dedicated to water.

Ms. Daniela Scheetz, Desk Officer, Division on Climate and Environmental Foreign Policy, Sustainable Economy, Federal Foreign Office, Germany, underlined the importance of water issues for foreign and security policy, referring also to the effects of floods and droughts on vulnerable and fragile states, as was the case in Syria. She stressed that lack of comprehensive water governance can further aggravate the implications of population growth and climate change on water availability. However, transboundary water co-operation, underpinned by good water governance, could also bear many benefits for every country in a specific river basin. Ms Scheetz referred to several examples of such benefits, as security benefits (reduction of tensions between neighbouring countries), environmental benefits (joint monitoring to improve water quality), economic benefits (more effective infrastructure investments, more foreign investments).

Ms. Scheetz also referred to the nexus concept and introduced the “Berlin Process”, an initiative of the German government since 2008 aiming at fostering regional co-operation on water issues in Central Asia. The “Berlin Process” comprises among others institutional capacity building, technical support, a scientific network for training and exchange of experiences and a Master programme on Integrated Water Resource Management at the German-Kazakh university in Almaty. It follows a holistic approach and is targeted at different levels: national governments of the Central Asian states, sub-regional institutions like Basin Water Organizations, and regional institutions like EC IFAS and CAREC. In conclusion, Ms. Scheetz commended the increased OSCE activities on water and stated that, as an organization with a long standing tradition of dealing with all aspects of security issues and its experience and people on the ground in the field offices, the OSCE is in an ideal position to act as facilitator for finding solutions to the water challenges in the OSCE region. She pointed to the agreement between Moldavia and Ukraine on the Dniester river basin as a guiding example.

Mr. Srđan Sušić, Senior Expert on Sustainable Growth, Regional Co-operation Council (RCC), introduced the South East Europe 2020 development strategy and its relevance for water and security. The SEE 2020 was adopted in 2014 and is the main development framework of the region. With regard to water, the SEE 2020 strategy aims to introduce the nexus approach to SEE. Also, it will establish the first regional political mechanism to address environmental issues, which will be launched this week. Mr. Sušić explained that under the environment dimension of the SEE 2020, two of the key actions relate to water: (1) to identify steps and measures necessary for advancing the water, energy and food nexus approach at national and transboundary levels and investigate opportunities for launching a political process under the RCC for the

enhancement of co-operation in the SEE in the field of transboundary water management, and (2) to initiate a Regional Integral Water Management Framework Agreement. Concrete activities will be an SEE Nexus Policy Dialogue with Regional Roundtables and SEE Nexus Directors Meetings, as well as structured national and transboundary Nexus Policy Dialogues, including Stakeholders Analysis, Nexus Assessment, Participatory process at the national/transboundary levels, and Nexus Strategies/Roadmaps.

Mr. Tagoimurod Gulov, Head of Main Department on Water Resources, Ministry of Energy and Water Resources, Republic of Tajikistan started his presentation with an overview of the water resources of Tajikistan, which form more than half of the total water resources of the Aral Sea Basin and are for a big part used for irrigation. He pointed to the strategic importance of irrigation agriculture for development, food security, and employment. Mr Gulov then stressed Tajikistan's vulnerability to water-related disasters such as mudslides and flooding, which cause enormous economic losses and damages. He further underlined that hydropower generation is of utmost importance for Tajikistan's economic development. Much of its huge hydropower capacity is not yet used, though. Mr. Gulov stated that Tajikistan recognizes the importance of co-operation with neighbouring countries, and that peace and stability in Central Asia depends on availability of water resources and smooth inter-state co-operation. Tajikistan has since its independence aimed at promoting water issue at every level, including at global level where Tajikistan had been leading all UN resolutions in last 10 years, such as the International Year of Freshwater 2003, the International Decade for Action Water for Life 2005-2015, and the International Year of Water Co-operation 2013. Finally, Mr. Gulov informed about and invited all interested participants to the high-level international conference to take stock of the international water decade 2005-2015, which will take place on 9-11 June in Dushanbe. The aim of the conference is also to develop recommendations for post-2015 Development Agenda, including ways to promote the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Mr. Toshiya Abe, Resident Representative for Balkan Office, Japanese International Co-operation Agency (JICA), introduced the general mission of JICA to achieve inclusive and dynamic development and its engagement in the European region, which started in 1989. With regard to the water sector, JICA's goals are (1) Safe and stable water supply; (2) Flood management to protect lives and properties; (3) Protection of sound water environment; and (4) Integrated water resources management (IWRM). He stressed the relevance of prevention of water-related disasters in the South-Eastern European region, as disasters pose a major obstacle for sustainable economic development of the countries. He also pointed to transboundary water challenges related to pollution. Mr. Abe presented several examples of JICA's approach in SEE: technical co-operation (e.g. training courses, feasibility studies, dispatch of Japanese experts), financial co-operation (ODA loans with concessional terms for environment and climate change related projects, e.g. for sewage system improvement in Tirana), private sector support (grant aid as response to urgent demand, e.g. rehabilitation of water supply systems in Belgrade, Podgorica, and Skopje). He concluded that JICA's engagement in water management in South-Eastern Europe will continue with a focus on DRR and flood prevention.

The floor was opened for discussion.

A representative of the Aarhus Centre in Dushanbe stressed that Tajikistan is one of the most vulnerable countries to disasters and climate change. He referred in particular to the danger of

glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs) and the importance of environmental monitoring. Another urgent issue was the threat to mountain ecosystems due to logging. He thanked the Swiss Development Agency and the OSCE for their support to the restoration of mountain ecosystems. Finally, he pointed to the flood risks, especially at the Pjandzh river bordering Afghanistan. In this respect, a joint Tajik-Afghan commission had been established. He pointed also to the co-operation of the Aarhus Centre in Khorog with border regions in Afghanistan, financially supported by JICA, UNDP and the Japanese government.

A representative of the Kyrgyz Republic agreed that sharing water resources is a part of regional and foreign policies. Regarding the inclusion of water resources in security policies, he asked about the reasoning and instruments to be used. He underlined that Kyrgyzstan follows a comprehensive approach to water in order to achieve the best economic benefits for the region. Kyrgyzstan is concerned to ensure that water and energy resources are seen indivisible. Shared water use has to be seen against the backdrop of sustainable development and the SDGs.

A representative of Armenia stated that the panel led to the idea that water use can become a priority in security and foreign policy and mainstreamed in regional co-operation. Referring to Ms. Scheetz' reference to the drought in Syria and its impact on the civil war, he pointed out that dam construction on rivers in Syria in border areas contributed to drought. Therefore, Armenia was concerned about dam construction on the Aras river in the South Caucasus. Referring to the statement of Turkey on the day before, he questioned the expressed approach. It is important to share information and burdens, take security implications into account and discuss all concerns. He expressed the appreciation for the existing co-operation between Turkey and Armenia, however indicating that its range is too narrow and the 1991 construction agreement between the USSR and Turkey should be revisited. Armenia would be happy to co-operate with Turkey through the OSCE or bilaterally.

A representative of Uzbekistan stressed that in the context of Central Asia, aligning with international criteria is crucial in particular in countries with limited water resources. He pointed to the importance of ensuring drinking water supply and food security, but also the water needs of industry.

A representative of Turkey following on the presentation from Germany, expressed a different view from the statement that water is a problem for security. He pointed that in the OSCE region, there are much more conflicts due to other reasons than from water. With regard to Armenia's concerns raised, he welcomed to discuss this and stated that this could be dealt within the existing frameworks. The representative stressed that there were no concrete new dam projects and all plans would be discussed in good co-operation with all neighbours for the benefit of the whole region.

A representative of Serbia underlined the importance of raising awareness and pointed to Serbia's endeavours to include all stakeholders in regional processes, e.g. the provisional institutions in Pristina. He asked the representative of Tajikistan if the OSCE Office in Tajikistan and the participating States could help Tajikistan in some of the issues he mentioned.

The floor was given to the speakers for final comments.

Mr. Gulov reiterated that Tajikistan has huge water capacities to be used for sustainable development and we will co-operate with neighbouring countries to ensure benefit for the whole region.

Mr. Abe stated that JICA will continue to support the water sector by raising awareness on the importance of management and the linkages with energy efficiency and DRR. He stressed the importance for development assistance to be engaged in DRR and the need to address water as a potential cause of conflict.

Mr. Susic underlined that co-operation and political dialogue on water to be effective needs to be well-structured, have a clear mandate from the participating entities and governments, a clear political goal, and should yield concrete results that make a change in the everyday life of people. He concluded that the processes started by the OSCE are tremendously important in this regard, and although time-consuming, produce good results.

Ms. Scheetz further explained the linkage between water and security, as shown in many studies and also the OSCE Security Day on Water Diplomacy in July 2014. Nevertheless, water is never the only factor of tensions, but part of complex situations, as was also exemplified in the nexus approach. Therefore, it is important to find equitable solution for all riparians as is attempted by the Berlin Process.

Ms. Milovanović concluded that awareness can contribute to increasing stability in the OSCE region.

The following conclusions and recommendations could be drawn from the discussion:

- Water is an issue of foreign and security policies due to its complex inter-linkages with many aspects of development and stability, as exemplified in the nexus-concept;
- Transboundary water co-operation along with good water governance holds many benefits: security benefits (reducing tensions), environmental benefits (improved water quality), economic benefits (infrastructure, e.g. dams, at most suitable place of the river, attraction of foreign investments);
- Political dialogue processes on water need to have clear mandate from participating entities and governments, must have clear political goal, and should yield concrete technical results;
- The critical importance of water in Central Asia was highlighted;
- JICA engagement in water management in SEE is a good example of addressing DRR issues within the context of water;
- OSCE has shown that it can holistically address water – from DRR to water diplomacy. With its longstanding tradition of dealing with all aspects of security and its presence on the ground, it is in an ideal position to act as a facilitator to find solution to water challenges in OSCE area;
- The discussion highlighted the importance of mutual consultation and information sharing in case of water projects at transboundary rivers.

Session V: Water governance from different stakeholders' perspectives

Moderator: Ms. Desirée Schweitzer, Deputy Co-ordinator/Head, Environmental Activities, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Rapporteur: Mr. Leonid Kalashnyk, Environmental Programme Officer, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Speakers:

Ms. Olivera Zurovac-Kuzman, Environmental Adviser, Environmental Affairs Section, Democratization Department, OSCE Mission to Serbia

Ms. Rozemarijn ter Horst, Member of the Advisory Board, World Water Forum Working Group, Water Youth Network

Mr. Ilya Trombitsky, Director, Eco-TIRAS, International Environmental Association of Dniester River Keepers, Moldova

Ms. Anastasiya Saidmakhmudova, Team Leader on Strengthening Relationship with International Environmental NGOs and Movement, Ecological Movement of Uzbekistan

Ms. Desiree Schweitzer, Deputy Co-ordinator/Head, Environmental Activities, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities opened the session by referring to the importance of perspectives and roles of different stakeholders in water governance. She underlined that enhanced co-operation, public participation and dialogue among the stakeholders are crucial to ensure good water governance. Engaging the broad public is also often a challenge, and raising awareness is therefore a first and crucial step. It is important to explore how different stakeholders within the OSCE area perceive water governance and how they strive to manage water resources sustainably.

Ms. Olivera Zurovac-Kuzman, Environmental Adviser, OSCE Mission to Serbia presented the work of the Mission to Serbia in the area of civil society participation in water governance. She noted the Mission's projects in this area that started before the disastrous floods in South-Eastern Europe in May 2014 and are the means for enhancing human security and democratization with a focus on enhancing state authorities' accountability and transparency. Ms. Zurovac-Kuzman referred to the role of the Aarhus Centres in Kragujevac, Nis, Novi Sad and Subotica in ensuring an extensive country-wide geographical coverage. The Aarhus Centres' continued partnerships with state institutions ensure long-term sustainability of joint projects. She identified the Aarhus Centres' ability to facilitate dialogue among stakeholders, their connections with the academic world, and their expertise in building partnerships between community members and local authorities as an important part of successful activities, including the establishment of the Flood Risk Action Alliance for the Timok River basin in east Serbia. Ms. Zurovac-Kuzman went on to outline the Mission's support in promoting aligning of water legislation with international standards, capacity-building on disaster risk reduction in flood-prone areas and long-standing disaster preparedness and response programme with the Ministry of Interior and local self-governments. She concluded by underlining the cross-border nature of flooding as an opportunity for co-operation among countries from the Western Balkan region, through a participatory approach.

Ms. Rozemarijn ter Horst, Member of the Advisory Board, World Water Forum Working Group, Water Youth Network, presented the role of youth in water governance, including the ways for

benefiting from young people's involvement in water governance more effectively. She noted the increased attention for young people's participation in the water sector and their role as a new generation of professionals and decision-makers in the water and other sectors. Ms. ter Horst presented the vision and goals of the Water Youth Network and its role as a bridge between local and national youth organizations and as a catalyst for intergenerational co-operation. She highlighted the importance of youth as agents of change with regard to water issues and as a stakeholder for speaking up about issues related to water and sanitation. Young people can co-operate more easily across boundaries even in the context of situations when relations between states are not good. Ms. ter Horst referred to the acknowledgement of the importance of youth within the OECD Water Governance Initiative's Report on Stakeholder Engagement for Inclusive Water Governance and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. She outlined areas for youth's involvement, including one of the Toolbox for Resilience dedicated to Disaster Risk Reduction. She underlined informing, involving and empowering as the main principles for youth involvement in water governance and disaster risk reduction and referred to the need for more opportunities for youth engagement and empowerment in policy, science and practice at all levels. She concluded by outlining the ways for making more use of youth, including in the OSCE context. This includes more detailed information about what organizations are doing, meaningful involvement in the organizations' work, for example, through taking interns and investing in creating a more enabling environment for young stakeholders to participate.

Mr. Ilya Trombitsky, Director, Eco-TIRAS, International Environmental Association of Dniester River Keepers, Moldova, made a presentation about the role and experience of civil society organizations in raising awareness and uniting stakeholders in integrated transboundary river basin management. He noted that non-governmental organizations are faced with different conditions depending on economic development and political systems of the respective states. The UNECE Water Convention and the EU Water Framework Directive were identified as a useful tool for demonstrating best solutions for the governments. Mr. Trombitsky outlined key elements for effective public involvement, including basin and multi-stakeholder approaches. He identified a number of challenges affecting the involvement of civil society, including possible lack of access to information and the need for more transparency. He noted several ways for raising NGOs' efficiency. For example use of scientific expertise and best practices as well as the creation of transboundary NGO coalitions. Mr. Trombitsky noted the role of NGO community with regard to contributing to building confidence in a transboundary context as environmental issues could be a subject of co-operation, involving different stakeholders from both sides. He concluded by listing a number of practical activities that can be undertaken by civil society organizations to raise awareness and bring together stakeholders.

Ms. Anastasiya Saidmakhmudova, Team Leader on Strengthening Relationship with International Environmental NGOs and Movement, Ecological Movement of Uzbekistan, made a presentation about public participation in water management in Uzbekistan. She noted the increasing prominence of effective water governance and DRR in the context of a changing climate. She outlined the legal framework for public participation, specifically, provisions of the Law on Water and Water Use. Water Consumers Associations provide a way for the public to engage in governing waters. Another tool for public involvement is through the environmental NGOs. Ms. Saidmakhmudova outlined a number of public actions, information campaigns and contests undertaken by the mass media to make the public more aware about water-related issues. She

referred to the important role and value of awareness raising activities related to water-related disaster risk reduction. Ms. Saidmakhmudova concluded by outlining a range of measures undertaken to address the environmental and economic challenges related to the Aral Sea, including the 2013 “Programme of measures on eliminating the consequences of the drying up of the Aral Sea and averting the catastrophe of the ecological systems in the Aral Sea region”.

The floor was opened for discussion.

A representative of the Serbian Chairmanship commended the comprehensive presentations and underlined the involvement of non-state actors, particularly NGOs and young people, as crucial for comprehensive awareness raising. He expressed full support to the work of the OSCE Mission to Serbia in this and all other areas.

A representative of the United States noted the important role of private sector's in water governance and enquired about the speakers' insights about private sector's involvement and possible areas for such involvement.

A representative of Armenia was interested in the main challenges of confidence building activities undertaken between civil society organizations.

A representative of UNECE enquired where the speakers saw the added value of UNECE and OSCE in supporting the work of their organizations in the future.

Then the *Moderator* gave the floor to the speakers to answer questions and for final remarks.

Ms. ter Horst commented on the question about the role of the private sector indicating the importance of having a discussion together with all stakeholders, including the private sector. She highlighted the issues of ethics and dealing with adverse impacts on the environment as priority areas for the private sector's engagement. She noted water governance, including the involvement of stakeholders in water governance, is very important in the event of risk as well as prevention of risks.

Mr. Trombitsky highlighted the importance of political will from politicians and the role of mass media in conflict resolution. He noted that in any conflict situation there should be room for civil society organizations to undertake joint activities, create contacts and strengthen confidence between common people and the environment is one of the key areas for such engagement. He also mentioned that the added value of international organizations, namely OSCE and UNECE, as regards water governance is that they can promote transboundary water co-operation as they have expertise, authority and complementary strengths.

Ms. Olivera Zurovac-Kuzman noted the OSCE's Mission to Serbia contribution to enhancing good environmental governance practices through reaching out to the grass-root level as well as through cross-sectoral co-operation across the country. With regard to the private sector, she noted the importance of interest in triggering such engagement and cited two successful examples of the private sector in the OSCE's work in Serbia in the areas of disaster risk reduction and in the promotion of legislation on hazardous substances. She highlighted the establishment of the network of Aarhus Centers as a valuable tool of public participation in governing water.

Ms. Anastasiya Saidmakhmudova commended the opportunity to share experience in the area of water governance, including raising awareness of the public with regard to the risk of water-related disasters. She highlighted the importance of exchange of experience including on transboundary issues.

Before closing the session, the *Moderator* referred to the two OSCE projects related to water governance: one project in the area of women, water management and conflict prevention and the other project with a focus on gender mainstreaming in Aarhus Centres.

The following conclusions and recommendations could be drawn from the discussion:

- Enhanced co-operation, public participation and dialogue among stakeholders are critical to ensuring good water governance. Awareness raising activities are very important in the context of addressing water-related disaster risks;
- Aarhus Centres are an effective tool for public participation in governing waters and for strengthening water-related disaster risk reduction in particular at community level;
- Youth are important agents of change and future decision-makers with regard to water governance and have the potential to effectively interact across boundaries in addressing such issues;
- Civil society organizations are well placed to raise awareness on water governance issues at transboundary level and facilitate the effective involvement of public and other stakeholders in addressing such issues. They can also contribute to building trust and co-operation related to water governance issues in a transboundary context;
- The OSCE has an important role to play in creating a more enabling environment to ensure meaningful involvement of youth in water governance and DRR at different levels;
- With its expertise and authority, the OSCE has the added value in the context of promoting co-operation on water governance issues at transboundary level and supporting civil society organizations active in this field.

Concluding Session

Moderator: *Mrs. Tamara Rastovac-Siamshvili*, Deputy Head of OSCE Task Force, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Serbia

Rapporteur: *Ms. Alma Mirvić*, Office of the Co-ordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities

Speaker:

Dr. Halil Yurdakul Yiğitgünden, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Mrs. Tamara Rastovac-Siamshvili, Deputy Head of OSCE Task Force, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Serbia underlined that the choice of the Economic and Environmental Forum theme signalled once again the priority the Serbian Chairmanship assigns to the topic of water governance and disaster risk reduction. She noted that the Chairmanship is devoted to advancing this issue on the OSCE's agenda.

Dr. Halil Yurdakul Yiğitgüden, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, outlined the discussions under all sessions of the meeting. He underlined that keynote speakers spoke of participatory and accountable water governance in the context of disaster risk reduction. Challenges associated with disasters can also present opportunities for greater co-operation and solidarity across borders. Lessons from the SEE 2014 flooding disaster are valuable for the entire OSCE region. He added that a number of important linkages were identified especially security benefits of transboundary water governance for disaster risk reduction. He highlighted that this year was marked by a number of important global processes, including the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals as well as the Paris Climate Change Conference. The OSCE's ongoing endeavours to translate political commitments on DRR into practical outcome on the ground were highlighted as relevant for water governance. From DRR to water diplomacy, he noted, the OSCE has shown that it is in an ideal position to act as facilitator and find solution to water challenges in the OSCE area. Moreover, he added that the role of the Aarhus Centres was highlighted as catalyst of public participation. He underlined his Office's continued engagement in this field, including through the Environment and Security Initiative. He announced that a review of OSCE commitments in this field would be prepared by the UNECE for the Forum Concluding Meeting in Prague on 14-16 September.

The floor was then opened for statements.

Latvia, on behalf of the European Union, observed that transboundary co-operation was crucial in water governance. She referred to the statements made about the OSCE's tools and means to support a multi-stakeholder approach, through CASE projects or the broad network of Aarhus Centres. OSCE has the necessary expertise and comparative advantage in this area. Additionally, she recalled the references made to international treaties, specifically of the UNECE, and the good co-operation that was noted between the OSCE and UNECE. A reference was made to climate change adaptation and its linkages with disaster risk reduction. She noted that security implications of climate change issues are an area for further OSCE engagement. Finally, water is an issue with security aspects and the representative encouraged the Chairmanship to shape future OSCE engagement through a ministerial decision.

A representative of the United States noted that water governance issues attract a lot of interest and with that, opportunities for co-operation. He thanked the OCEEA, the Chairmanship and field missions in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina for the organization of the meeting and field visit.

The representative of the Russian Federation noted that this meeting has shown once again the importance of the OSCE as a forum for discussion. He expressed his hope that a relevant decision would be taken at the Ministerial Council in Belgrade.

A representative of Switzerland underlined that OSCE expertise in water governance and DRR, particularly with regards to flood was demonstrated through many examples, most notably the presentation of the OSCE missions in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Many speakers mentioned the network of Aarhus Centres as a network to be used in public participation processes. Switzerland is convinced should build on this OSCE expertise and that participating States should define the pillars that should be strengthened in the field of water governance. She

encouraged the Chairmanship to start the process of reflecting on a possible ministerial council decision on water governance to be adopted in Belgrade at the end of the year. This decision should stress the security benefits of such OSCE involvement.

A representative of Slovenia noted that water-related challenges require comprehensive responses given the interlinkages with energy, climate change, food security, economy and international security. She added that water security could be a key foreign policy concern and a field for many co-operation opportunities.

A representative of Turkey noted that water should not be seen as a source of conflict, underlining that in the world there are more examples of co-operation rather than conflict over water. He encouraged all participating States to adopt a positive approach in advance of the Prague Forum.

A representative of Uzbekistan thanked the organizers for the opportunity to bring together a variety of speakers and perspectives around an important issue.

A representative of Armenia noted that there was a growing consensus that the lack of water could be a cause of conflict. In his view, the OSCE could become a facilitator for addressing the issues of water governance between participating States, peoples and communities in the entire OSCE region. Examples of confidence building measures could serve as reference points for developing thematic approaches, including through a Ministerial Council decision in Belgrade.

A representative of Azerbaijan noted that this meeting showed that the OSCE could provide a constructive forum for discussion and exchange of views on the issue. He reiterated that Azerbaijan believes that transboundary water co-operation should be compliant with international norms and law, and that in case of conflict co-operation could take place only after security concerns have been addressed.

The following conclusions and recommendations could be drawn from the discussion:

- Security implications of climate change issues are an area for further OSCE engagement;
- Participating States should define the pillars that should be strengthened in the OSCE regarding water governance;
- The OSCE can become a facilitator for addressing the issues of water governance between participating States, peoples and communities in the entire OSCE region.



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

Vienna, 8 May 2015

23rd OSCE ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM

"Water governance in the OSCE area – increasing security and stability through co-operation"

SECOND PREPARATORY MEETING

Belgrade, 11-13 May 2015

Venue: Palace of Serbia, 2 Mihajla Pupina Boulevard

ANNOTATED AGENDA

Monday, 11 May 2015

09:00 – 10:30 **Opening Session (*open to Press*)**

Welcoming remarks:

- **Mr. Aleksandar Nikolić**, State Secretary, Ministry of Interior, Serbia
- **Dr. Halil Yurdakul Yiğitgüden**, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Keynote speeches:

- **Mr. Dražen Kurečić**, President, International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River Basin, Ministry of Agriculture, Croatia
- **Mr. Marco Keiner**, Director, Environment Division, UNECE

Selected topics:

- Water governance in the context of disaster risk reduction
- Awareness-raising and public participation with regard to water governance
- Water governance as a catalyst for co-operation and confidence-building

Rapporteur: **Ms. Olivera Zurovac-Kuzman**, Environmental Adviser, Democratization Department, OSCE Mission to Serbia

Statements by Delegations / Discussion

10:30 – 11:00 **Coffee Break**

11:00 – 12:30	Session I: The 2014 flooding disaster in South Eastern Europe – Experiences and lessons learned in the context of water governance at regional level
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Selected topics:

- Assessment of the regional and international co-operation in flood response
- Security challenges associated with flooding
- Role of the OSCE Field operation in flood response and recovery
- Environmental risks and challenges as opportunities for co-operation

Moderator: Ambassador Tomislav Leko, Permanent Mission of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the OSCE and International Organizations in Vienna

Rapporteur: Mr. Uroš Milanović, Attaché, Permanent Mission of Serbia to the OSCE, 2015 Serbian OSCE Chairmanship

Speakers:

- Mr. Predrag Marić, Assistant Minister, Head of the Department for Emergency Management, Ministry of Interior, Serbia
- Ambassador Jonathan Moore, Head of Mission, OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Ms. Marta Bonifert, Executive Director, Regional Environment Centre for Central and Eastern Europe
- Dr. Marijan Babić, Head of Project Implementation Unit for Implementation of Flood-protection Projects Financed by CEB Loans and EU Funds, Croatian Waters, Croatia

Discussion

12:30 – 14:00	Lunch break
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14:00 – 15:30	Session II: Water, security and disaster risk reduction
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Selected topics:

- Security risks resulting from climate change and extreme weather events as related to water governance (floods and droughts)
- Water governance in the context of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030
- Security benefits of transboundary water co-operation with a focus on disaster risk reduction

Moderator: Mr. Massimo Cozzzone, Senior Officer, Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea, Italy

Rapporteur: Ms. Nino Malashkhia, Associate Environmental Affairs Officer, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Speakers:

- **Mr. Goran Ždrále**, Senior Officer for Analysis and Reporting, Mine Action Centre, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- **Mr. Luca Rossi**, Programme Officer, Regional Office for Europe, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
- **Mr. Jakub Gibek**, Head, Water Policy Unit, Water Resources Department, Ministry of Environment, Poland
- **Ms. Aušra Semaškienė**, Ambassador at Large, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Lithuania
- **Ms. Nilza Sena**, Vice-Chair, Second Committee, OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

Discussion

15:30 – 16:00	Coffee Break
16:00 – 17:30	Session III: Sharing of experiences on water governance in the context of disaster risk reduction

Selected topics:

- Best practices on flood and drought response in participating States
- OSCE activities on disaster risk reduction: from policy to action
- Effective governance approaches for addressing water-related disasters and climate change

Moderator: Ms. Irena Vojáčková-Sollorano, UN Resident Coordinator, UNDP Resident Representative for Serbia

Rapporteur: Ms. Alma Mirvić, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Speakers:

- **Ms. Indira Akbozova**, Head of the Kazakhstan part of the Secretariat of the Chu-Talas Commission and **Ms. Gulmira Satymkulova**, Head of the Kyrgyzstan part of the Secretariat of the Chu-Talas Commission
- **Mr. David Elkaïm**, Political Officer on Water and Sanitation, Climate and Environment Unit, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, France
- **Ms. Carolin Schärpf**, Scientific Officer, Federal Department of the Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications, Federal Office for the Environment, Switzerland
- **Mr. Movses Poghosyan**, Director, National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, Armenia

17:30 Side event on activities of the OSCE field operation and Aarhus Centres in South-Eastern Europe related to water and DRR

19:00 **Reception hosted by the Government of Serbia**

Tuesday, 12 May 2015

09:30 – 11:00

Session IV: Awareness-raising on the benefits of good water governance

Selected topics:

- Mainstreaming water governance in foreign and security policies
- Water governance in the context of investments and development assistance
- Water stewardship approaches
- Water governance and the Sustainable Development Goals

Moderator: Ms. Dragana Milovanović, Head, Department for Participation in Strategic Planning, Management and International Water Co-operation, Water Directorate of the Republic of Serbia

Rapporteur: Ms. Jenniver Sehring, Environmental Affairs Adviser, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Speakers:

- Ms. Daniela Scheetz, Desk Officer, Division on Climate and Environmental Foreign Policy, Sustainable Economy, Federal Foreign Office, Germany
- Mr. Srđan Sušić, Senior Expert on Sustainable Growth, Regional Co-operation Council
- Mr Tagoimurod Gulov, Head of Main Department on Water Resources, Ministry of Energy and Water Resources, Republic of Tajikistan
- Mr. Toshiya Abe, Resident Representative for Balkan Office, Japanese International Co-operation Agency

Discussion

11:00 – 11:30

Coffee Break

11:30 – 13:00

Session V: Water governance from different stakeholders' perspectives

Selected topics:

- Public participation in water governance
- Raising awareness among different stakeholders (civil society, local communities, youth)
- Gender and water governance

Moderator: Ms. Desirée Schweitzer, Deputy Co-ordinator/Head, Environmental Activities, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Rapporteur: Mr. Leonid Kalashnyk, Environmental Programme Officer, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Speakers:

- **Ambassador Peter Burkhard**, Head of Mission, OSCE Mission to Serbia
- **Ms. Rozemarijn ter Horst**, Member of the Advisory Board, World Water Forum Working Group, Water Youth Network
- **Mr. Ilya Trombitsky**, Director, Eco-TIRAS, International Environmental Association of Dniester River Keepers, Moldova
- **Ms. Anastasiya Saidmakhmudova**, Team Leader on Strengthening Relationship with International Environmental NGOs and Movement, Ecological Movement of Uzbekistan

13:00 – 14:30

Lunch Break

Side event: Identifying hazards during flood response – Sharing the 2014 South-Eastern Europe flood experience

14:30 – 15:30

Concluding Session

- Wrap-up
- Organizational remarks concerning the field visit

Moderator: Ambassador Dejan Šahović, Head of OSCE Task Force, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Serbia

Rapporteur: Ms. Alma Mirvić, Office of the Co-ordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities

Speaker:

Dr. Halil Yurdakul Yiğitgüden, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Closing Statements

16:30

Departure on Field Visit

Field Visit to May 2014 Flood-affected Areas

Tuesday, 12 May 2015

16:30	Departure from Belgrade, Palace of Serbia towards Bijeljina, Bosnia and Herzegovina
18:00	Crossing into Bosnia and Herzegovina at the Rača Border Crossing
18:30	Arrival at the Ethno-village Stanišići (Bijeljina, Bosnia and Herzegovina) with an overnight stay at the hotel
20:00	Dinner hosted by the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina

Wednesday, 13 May 2015

07:00 – 09:00	Breakfast at the hotel (including check-out)
09:00 – 09:05	Welcome by Ambassador Jonathan Moore, Head of the OSCE Mission to BiH
09:05 – 09:10	Welcome by Mr. Mijo Krešić, Deputy Minister of Security of BiH
09:05 – 09:35	Welcome and presentation by Mayor of Bijeljina, Mr. Mićo Mićić
09:35 – 10:00	Presentation by Assistant Minister of Security of BiH, Mr. Samir Agić
10:00 – 10:15	Placement in buses and departure from hotel
10:30 – 11:10	Stops at village Rača – sightseeing and press opportunity
11:30	Crossing into Serbia at the Badovinjci Border Crossing
12:15 – 13:15	Visit to the town of Šabac
13:30 - 13:45	Visit to Mrđanovac village
14:15 – 15:30	Visit to the town of Obrenovac
15:00	Return transfer to Belgrade

23rd OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum

FIRST PREPARATORY MEETING

Vienna, 26-27 January 2015

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The First Preparatory Meeting of the 23rd OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum (EEF) on “Water governance in the OSCE area – increasing security and stability through co-operation” took place in Vienna on 26-27 January 2015. Six thematic areas were addressed during the two-day meeting:

- Water governance – approaches, elements, actors;
- Water governance across sectors: Fostering food and energy security;
- Water governance and the environment: Protecting ecosystems and increasing water efficiency;
- Water governance at different levels;
- Good water governance and transparency;
- Opportunities for exchange of knowledge and experience in water governance.

Around 250 participants, including official representatives of OSCE participating States and Field Operations, as well as experts from international, regional and non-governmental organizations and academia attended the Economic and Environmental Forum and engaged in discussions about various aspects of good water governance, including basin-wide co-ordination and co-operation across sectors, exchange of information, stakeholder involvement and protection of the environment.

Furthermore, they discussed how to deepen the OSCE’s political commitments and engagement in supporting water reforms, water diplomacy, good water governance and sustainable water management.

A number of concrete recommendations concerning responses to challenges regarding water governance in the OSCE area were made. They can be found at the end of each Session’s report of this Consolidated Summary.

REPORTS OF THE RAPPORTEURS

Opening Session:

Welcoming Remarks

Ambassador Vuk Žugić, Chairperson of the Permanent Council, Permanent Representative of Serbia to the OSCE, 2015 OSCE Serbian Chairmanship

Ambassador Lamberto Zannier, OSCE Secretary General

Dr. Halil Yurdakul Yiğitgüden, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Keynote speeches

Ms. Stana Božović, State Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection, Republic of Serbia

Prof. John Anthony Allan, Professor of Geography, King's College, London

Dr. Mohamed Ait Kadi, Chair, Global Water Partnership Technical Committee, Ministry of Agriculture and Marine Fisheries, Kingdom of Morocco

Rapporteur: Mr. Andrew Peebles, EU Delegation to the International Organizations in Vienna

Ambassador Vuk Žugić, Chairperson of the Permanent Council, welcomed all participants to the First Preparatory Meeting of the 23rd OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum (EEF). He expressed that during the course of this year the CiO will strive to determine and specify how water governance can better contribute to the increased security and stability in the OSCE region. Ambassador Žugić emphasized that the devastating floods in the Western Balkans in May 2014 have illustrated how co-operation on the transboundary, national and local levels, can be of upmost importance. He outlined that the meeting would see the deliberation of improving integrated and cross-sectoral approaches to water resource management, fostering food and energy security, the protection of ecosystems and increasing water productivity, reducing pollution and the treatment and re-use of water. He reiterated that it is one of the tasks of the Serbian Chairmanship to promote synergies between the OSCE's three dimensions and use the ongoing "Helsinki +40" process to tackle the issue of good water governance.

OSCE Secretary General Lamberto Zannier stated that the 1975 *Helsinki Act*, the 2003 *Maastricht Strategy Document*, the 2007 *Madrid Declaration on Environment and Security* and the 2014 *Ministerial Council Decision No.6/14 on Enhancing Disaster Risk Reduction*, have all committed OSCE participating States to improve environmental governance by, among other things, strengthening the sustainable water management. The Secretary General underlined water has a two-way security aspect – water as a source of conflict and water co-operation as a tool for conflict prevention. He took note that in its yearly Global Risk Report, the World Economic Forum listed water as one of the highest global risks in terms of possible impacts to humanity. Ambassador Zannier underscored that in 2014, the OSCE held the *Workshop on Environment and Security Issues in the Southern Mediterranean Region and the Security Days Event on Water Diplomacy* which both stressed that the OSCE needs to focus on policy and not politics as well as a multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary approach to water security. He reiterated that when discussing water we should be mindful of climate change and negotiations that continue under

UN guidance and that will culminate at the Paris Climate Change Conference in December. He concluded by stating that the OSCE will discuss ways to further develop its role in water governance in close concert with its international partners, in particular the Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC).

Dr. Halil Yurdakul Yiğitgüden, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (CoEEA), noted that in the absence of good water governance, water might become a source of conflict. Dr. Yiğitgüden illustrated some key examples of how his office and the Field Operations have been actively engaged in water governance, mainly through the Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC). He expressed that in South-Eastern Europe (SEE), the OSCE has been involved in the *Framework Agreement on the Sava River Basin* and that the OSCE field operations in the region support disaster risk reduction with various activities, including through the Aarhus Centres network. In Eastern Europe, the OSCE has continued to support activities targeting the Dniester Basin through several projects within the framework of the ENVSEC initiative. He mentioned that one of the most recent results has been a draft basin-wide strategic framework for climate change adaptation developed within an OSCE-led ENVSEC project on climate change and security. In the South Caucasus, together with the UNECE, the OSCE has facilitated negotiations between Azerbaijan and Georgia on a co-operation agreement on the management of the Kura River Basin, which in turn envisages the establishment of a joint commission for protection and rational use of water resources in the basin. In Central Asia, the OSCE has been engaged in facilitating transboundary water co-operation along the Upper Amu Darya River between Tajikistan and Afghanistan and has helped establish a bilateral water commission between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in the basins of Chu and Talas Rivers.

Ms. Stana Božović, State Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Serbia, underlined the importance of regional co-operation concerning the issues of environmental protection and good water governance. The State Secretary highlighted that Serbia gives high priority to the protection of the Danube River, the sustainable use of natural resources and mitigation of the impact of water-related disasters, ensuring the quick and efficient exchange of information between all countries in the region. Although these priorities have been complemented by the ratification of the Danube River Protection Convention, the ongoing European Union accession process stipulates and will entail the full compliance with the *EU Water Framework Directive*, the *EU Nitrates Directive* and the *Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive*. Within the OSCE context, Ms. Božović placed special emphasis on the five following issues important for achieving progress: 1) the implementation of the principles of good water governance, which includes the reduction of the impact of pollution caused by urban waste water; 2) giving priority to the security dimension of sustainable management of aquatic ecosystems, as well as considering the impact of climate change; 3) providing an opportunity for establishing a partnership framework for environmental protection and the efficient use of water at local, national and transboundary level; 4) maximizing the use of economic instruments for greater efficiency in the field of water protection; 5) focusing on transparency in the water sector at local, regional and national levels.

Prof. John Anthony Allan, Professor of Geography at King's College London, stated that it is necessary to understand not only the hydrology, but also the political economy of water. As 90 per cent of water is used for food and fiber production, trade in food is an important element in the "Virtual Water Trade". This concept (also known as trade in embedded or embodied water)

refers to the hidden flow of water if food or other commodities are traded from one place to another. For example, when a country imports one ton of wheat instead of producing it domestically, it is saving about 1,300 cubic meters of real indigenous water. If this country is water-scarce, the water that is “saved” can be used towards other ends. He emphasized that as 15 per cent of food in the world is traded and 50 countries out of the 210 countries in the world are net importers. The need to maintain trade and co-operation is crucial in preventing conflict. On the other hand, if food trade was disrupted by conflicts, the real danger of water conflicts would emerge. Prof. Allan reminded that water governance needs government (.gov), private sector (.com) and civil society (.org) involvement. Professor Allan also highlighted that although we place a high emphasis on co-operation as a means to prevent conflict, co-operation can be risky if it is highly asymmetrical and some partners feel powerless. He concluded by stating that ultimately, development and political stability is not determined by water availability but by the political economy.

Dr. Mohamed Ait Kadi, Chair of the Global Water Partnership (GWP) Technical Committee posed two questions: 1) Why is water security a global concern? 2) What actions do we need to enable effective governance and sustainable use of water resources? In addressing his first question, he raised the issue that, at present, water-scarce regions account for 36 per cent of the global population (2.5 billion) and 22 per cent of global GDP (\$9.4 trillion). He noted that if we continue with a “business-as-usual” approach, then by 2050, half of the world’s population, half of the grain production and 45 per cent of GDP will be in regions at risk of water stress. He stressed that the effects of the financial crisis on capital markets and recurrent spikes in food prices have exposed the vulnerability of national food security and constrained investment in water security in many countries. He argued that in the long-run, the ecological crisis and the economic crisis are intrinsically part of the same problem. In response to his second question, he called for: 1) major shifts in conceptual approaches to water governance to limit calamities that can otherwise be foreseen; 2) OSCE participating States to recognize that poorer countries often suffer from the curse of variability in their hydrology and limited capacities to deal with climate change; 3) creating an enabling environment based on an adequate set of mutually supportive policies and a comprehensive legal framework that contains a coherent set of incentives and regulatory framework; 4) strengthening or creating institutions and mechanisms that can transcend the geographical boundaries between countries as well as boundaries between sectors. In conclusion, he stated that knowledge can stimulate behavioural changes towards creating a new “water culture”.

Then the floor was opened for discussion.

Latvia on behalf of the European Union (aligned by the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Ukraine, Georgia, Andorra and Monaco) stated that reconciling different uses of water resources such as drinking water and sanitation, agriculture, food production, industry and energy are major water security challenges. According to the EU, its water policy has successfully contributed to water protection over the past three decades, for example, in the Rhine and Danube river basins. However, some challenges remain because of a lack of transboundary river basin agreements with some EU neighbouring countries. The EU referred to the Council Conclusions on Water Diplomacy of 2013 and stated that the *UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Helsinki 1992)* and *United Nations Convention on the Law of the Non-Navigational Uses of*

International Watercourses are important instruments in promoting equitable, sustainable and integrated management of transboundary water resources. The European Union noted that the OSCE has only two documents specifically relating to water, *Ministerial Council Decision 7/07 on Follow-Up to the Fifteenth Economic and Environmental Forum: Water Management* and *Ministerial Council Decision 9/08 on the Follow-up to the Sixteenth Economic and Environmental Forum on Maritime and Inland Waterways Co-operation*. He added that perhaps there are possibilities of finding new areas of co-operation. Since environmental challenges often are of transboundary nature, the OSCE is well placed in responding to these and implementing confidence-building measures.

The representative of Switzerland pointed out that increasing competition and stress on water resources pose a significant security risk that the OSCE, with its comprehensive security approach, must address. The Swiss representative expressed that Switzerland is looking forward to deliberating the water-security-climate nexus at the Second Preparatory Meeting in Belgrade. In conclusion, Switzerland referred to the Security Days Event on Water Diplomacy organized last year and called to build upon its outcomes and recommendations in order to reinforce the role of the OSCE in water diplomacy.

The representative of the Russian Federation noted that water resources affect the socio-economic and political conditions of every country. In Russia alone, 17 of its important and heavily populated river basins are transboundary. In addition, to ensure that its river basins are kept unpolluted, Russia is actively participating in the Global Water Partnership, and has ratified international legal instruments such as the 1992 Helsinki Convention, as well as signed 10 international agreements with its neighbours to be able to respond to and deal with emergencies as well as strengthen good governance. The representative stressed that the OSCE should promote good examples of sharing hydrological and meteorological information. The Russian Federation believed that the OSCE should continue to promote the sharing of information, best practices. This would provide added value without duplicating activities of other international organizations and participating States.

The representative of Uzbekistan highlighted that good water governance is an important field of ecological security and is being increasingly raised on the global agenda. In particular, food security is of growing concern due to population growth, climate change and environmental degradation. The representative conveyed that Uzbekistan has implemented comprehensive agrarian reforms, including Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) and new systems of water distribution. He warned that the drying out of the Aral Sea is having a profound effect on the region, and informed that the recent conference “Development of Co-operation on Mitigation of Ecological Disaster’s Consequences in the Aral Sea Basin” in October 2014 in Urgench raised 3 billion USD for local and regional projects. He stressed that in Central Asia, proper water management is the basis for the well-being of 60 million people, the lack of it can create security risks and negative effects in particular for the downstream areas.

The representative of Turkey indicated that OSCE’s work on transboundary water issues should be in tune with that of principal fora, and be very cautiously crafted in light of the nature of some of the issues that cause divergence among countries, including some participating States. The representative highlighted climate change as one of the biggest obstacles in water efficiency and added that water-impacting climate change is already present in the form of severe, frequent

droughts and that higher temperatures and changes in extremes are creating uncertainties in availability and distribution of water resources necessitating development of appropriate climate change adaptation strategies. The representative indicated that the underpinning principle of the Turkish transboundary water policy is the utilization of the transboundary rivers in an equitable, reasonable and optimal manner in the interest of riparian States. Turkey considers water as a source of co-operation and believes that riparian States should adopt a comprehensive approach to water issues. It considers that since transboundary waters have their own specific characteristics and peculiarities, transboundary water issues should be handled first and foremost among the riparian countries. In this regard, possible contributions by third parties and entities may be envisaged once such a process is complete.

The representative of Armenia raised the issue that access to water is an individual human right and as such it should be protected by human rights covenants. The OSCE can bring added value by identifying needs and assessing gaps. To identify the current needs, it is essential that the OSCE can engage in processes in which there is an absence of bilateral and multilateral negotiations. Additionally, it was highlighted that the OSCE's involvement in ENVSEC provides a good framework for such discussions on good water governance, to which the work of the field operations brings a significant added value. Furthermore, the representative of the Armenian Delegation mentioned the support provided by the Aarhus Centres on the ground and by projects addressing the grassroots level, such as the Civic Action for Security and Environment (CASE)-Small Grants Initiative. In summarizing, the representative expressed that water diplomacy cannot be a zero-sum game and that confidence building measures are one of the most important tools of water diplomacy.

The representative of Slovenia noted that the country is actively striving to enhance cross-border co-operation and consensus for planning and implementing coordinated measures to reduce the negative effects of climate change by: 1) drafting the Sustainable Development Strategy for the Adriatic; 2) heading the drafting of the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region; 3) enhancing co-operation in the Sava river basin at a sub-regional level, with the implementation of the Danube River Protection Convention and the adoption of the Sava River Basin Management Plan (December 2015); 4) drafting the Flood Risk Management Plan in the Western Balkans; 5) drafting an initiative to enhance co-operation on the preservation of biodiversity in the Dinaric Arc.

The representative of the United States of America expressed his strong support for the focus on water governance and outlined three key points: 1) Water scarcity and poor water quality will increase disease, undermine economic growth, limit food productions, and become a threat to peace and security in many regions of the world. Climate change will exacerbate these issues; 2) Good governance plays a key role in meeting water demands, and there is a need to push the tools and capacities of the OSCE to their highest potential; 3) One should not shy away from the potential of the OSCE as a platform for dialogue on these issues.

The representative of Spain welcomed the topic and outlined three main areas of importance to Spain: (1) a holistic approach to river basin management, (2) the fight against extreme events, and (3) transboundary co-operation. Regarding the last point, he recalled that Portugal and Spain signed the Albufeira Convention in 1998. He underlined that Spain is fully engaged in the promotion of access to water and sanitation as a basic human right. Noting Spain's joint

engagement with Germany in the UN in this respect, he expressed his wish for continuity on this topic with the incoming Chairmanship.

The representative of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly reiterated that the Vilnius, Monaco, Istanbul, and Baku Declarations have raised the issue of water security and have provided an extensive list of recommendations.

The following conclusions and recommendations can be drawn from the discussion:

- The multiple water challenges related to global growth and climate change can threaten social and political stability;
- Good water governance is key in meeting water demands and preventing conflict.
- The OSCE needs to focus upon a multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary approach to water security;
- The need to maintain trade and co-operation is crucial in preventing conflict;
- The need to create and enable an environment based on an adequate set of mutually supportive policies and a comprehensive legal framework;
- The OSCE should enforce its engagement in water diplomacy through interdisciplinary co-operation and confidence building measures;
- The OSCE should promote good examples of best sharing practices on hydrological and meteorological information;
- Climate change remains one of the biggest obstacles in water efficiency;
- Water scarcity and poor water quality will increase diseases, undermine economic growth, limit food productions, and become a threat to peace and security.

Session I: Water governance – approaches, elements, actors

Moderator: Ambassador Tomislav Leko, Permanent Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the International Organizations in Vienna, Chairperson of the Economic and Environmental Committee

Rapporteur: Ms. Jenniver Sehring, Environmental Affairs Adviser, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Speakers:

Mr. Håkan Tropp, Managing Director, Knowledge Services Department, Stockholm International Water Institute

Mr. Peter Glas, President, Netherlands Association of Regional Water Authorities, Chair of OECD Water Governance Initiative

Dr. Benjamin Pohl, Senior Project Manager, Adelphi

Ms. Eileen Hofstetter, Water Policy Adviser, Global Programme Water Initiatives, Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation

Ambassador Tomislav Leko introduced the session by stressing that water governance is about joint decision making and identifying values, which requires public discourse and rule of law.

Mr. Håkan Tropp, Stockholm International Water Institute, introduced the general concept of water governance, which UNDP defines as the range of political, social, economic and

administrative systems that are in place to develop and manage water resources and the delivery of water services, at different levels of society. The insight that the water crisis is a governance crisis reversed the focus and entry point to address water challenges. He stressed the role and importance of politics, the quality of institutions and interaction between organizations, as well as that water governance should be neutral and forward looking.. Water governance approaches moved from state-centric to polycentric governance, which advocates for shared responsibility between government, civil society and private sector. While water reforms were often successful in terms of legislation, there are still many challenges in implementation. This shows that stronger governance is needed, in particular transparency, accountability, and integrity. He pointed to corruption as a relatively new issue in water governance, which needs more attention. Mr. Tropp recommended following a practical approach to water governance with concrete tools, looking more closely into water integrity, social equity and anti-corruption matters and strengthen research on the nexus between water governance and security in broad sense.

Mr. Peter Glas, Chair of the OECD Water Governance Initiative (WGI), stressed the importance of water governance for security, stability and welfare. The OECD, through its Water Governance Initiative (WGI) as a multi-stakeholder platform, is aiming to advise governments on the design and implementation of water policies. He gave an overview of the draft OECD Water Governance Principles, which are currently being developed in a bottom-up fashion within WGI and extensively discussed with OECD members in the relevant subsidiary bodies. These 12 principles aim to increase efficiency, effectiveness, and engagement and trust, and include concrete indicators. They are expected to be endorsed by the OECD Ministerial Council in June 2015. The draft principles are currently under consultation and OSCE participating States are invited to comment on them. Mr. Glas highly welcomed that the OSCE has already established connections with the OECD WGI and considers a membership.

Mr. Benjamin Pohl, Adelphi, focused on how foreign policy could better address transboundary water co-operation and water policy. Based on a recent report commissioned by the German Federal Foreign Office, he argued that there was a trend to support technical co-operation but this would not automatically translate into political collaboration. Foreign policy makers need to come in as they have the mandate and skills to address political issues. Instead of only using technical co-operation and keep politics out, strategies for water co-operation should reflect and harness political realities in basins. In general, the political opportunities of co-operation are bigger than risks. He called to persuade foreign policy makers that transboundary water issues are worth their attention. He identified the following as three main challenges: the need for facilitating agency, improving co-ordination among and within countries, as well as enabling actors and developing institutional capacities.

Ms. Eileen Hofstetter, Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation (SDC), stressed that only a small percentage of all financing dedicated to the water sector is focused on water governance. This could have adverse implications as the global water crisis is not just a threat but a threat multiplier, with implications for food and energy security, as well as political and social stability. In order to achieve good water governance, it is imperative to provide better information for planning, management and policy making, to strengthen institutions, and to ensure sustainable infrastructure measures. She gave examples of three SDC projects that support best practices in the implementation of good water governance: The iMoMo Central Asia project which focuses on access to information and transparent monitoring in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan; the

Integrated Water Resources Management in the Ferghana Valley project (Central Asia) to improve water management through IWRM-driven institutional changes; and the Water and Sanitation Project Moldova with a multi-level approach focusing on investment and infrastructure. In a reference to the Sustainable Development Goals, she also welcomed that the water goal as adopted by the Open Working Group calls for “the implementation by 2030 of integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary co-operation as appropriate”.

Then the floor was opened for discussion.

A representative of Albania asked for mechanisms for stronger international pressure on governments that do not follow sustainable water policies, referring to the example of contracts of the previous Albanian government with private companies to construct 600 small hydro-power plants without taking environmental impacts into account.

A representative of the European Union (EU) commended River Basin Management (water management according to hydrological unit) as best model for water management. Criteria for successful water governance are clear objectives, meaningful sectoral and stakeholder involvement, resource allocation, and effective institutional setting at river basin level. He stressed that adequate governance and co-operation at regional and transboundary level ensure peace and security.

A representative of the Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe (REC) informed the participants about a recent project funded by Switzerland in MENA region, which aimed to support capacities for IWRM, dialogue on water issues, and adaptation to climate change in the water sector at national and regional levels.

Mr. Tropp reminded that the River Basin Management approach is often difficult to implement, for example due to resistance from government to devolution of power, or insufficient transfer of finances and capacities. He urged to view water reform as an iterative process, and to be realistic about human and financial capacities and resources.

A representative of the Republic of Serbia welcomed the clear link of water governance and security in all presentations.

A representative of UNECE welcomed the Swiss engagement in Moldova and informed about ongoing work on a policy-guidance on benefits of water co-operation in the framework of the *UNECE Water Convention*. An upcoming workshop will focus on geopolitical and regional economic benefits. He would welcome co-operation with the OSCE to test these benefits in different basins.

A representative of UNISDR expressed his appreciation of last year's Ministerial Decision on Enhancing Disaster Risk Reduction (MC.DEC/6/14), which will be considered in further discussions of the post HFA framework. He requested guidance how UNISDR could work closely with the OSCE on implementation and reporting.

In the speakers' concluding remarks, *Mr. Tropp* reminded about the importance to not only develop policies, but also take care of their proper implementation.

Mr. Glas supported this by adding that policies have to be formulated in a pragmatic way. He stressed that the WGI process with its wide array of stakeholders was rather unique and new for the OECD. Finally, he pointed to the role of the current OECD Secretary General Angel Gurría, who chose water as one of his three priorities.

Mr. Pohl reiterated that a focus on the technical level alone is often insufficient, and politics have to be targeted.

Ms. Hofstetter added that apart from implementation and pragmatism, long term commitment and flexibility in approaches are key for effective water governance.

The following conclusions and recommendations can be drawn from the discussion:

- Pursue a pragmatic approach to water governance with concrete tools;
- Strengthen research and application on the nexus between water governance and security as well as critical governance elements;
- Bring water issues to the agenda of foreign policy-makers;
- Contribute to the work of the OECD WGI in developing draft Water Governance Principles;
- Combine support for technical co-operation with a political engagement reflecting and harnessing political realities in basins;
- Co-operate with UNECE on case studies on the geopolitical and regional economic benefits of transboundary water co-operation;
- Co-operate with UNISDR in the implementation and follow-up of the Ministerial Decision on Enhancing Disaster Risk Reduction (MC.DEC/6/14).

Session II: Water governance across sectors: Fostering food and energy security

Moderator: *Mr. David Wiberg*, Acting Director of the Water Programme, International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis

Rapporteur: *Mr. Manav Sachdeva*, Environmental and Economic Officer, OSCE Centre in Bishkek/Osh Field Office

Speakers:

Mr. Gheorghe Constantin, Director, Ministry of Environment, Romania, Chair of the EU Water Initiative's Working Group on Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia

Mr. Cameron Ironside, Programme Director, Sustainability, International Hydropower Association

Mr. Nicholas Bonvoisin, Secretary, UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes

Mr. Tom Mollenkopf, Senior Vice-President, International Water Association

The moderator Mr. David Wiberg, Acting Director of the Water Programme, International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA), welcomed the participants to the second session and presented IIASA's mandate which is to conduct policy-oriented research into problems that are too complex to be handled by a single country or discipline. He noted that water falls under this scope as water needs to be managed across different scales. He added that water would become a globally scarce good which is why we must work together to manage water security as solutions cannot be reached locally anymore. He recognized the challenge of bringing all stakeholders together would not always be easy.

Mr. Gheorghe Constantin, Director at the Ministry of Environment of Romania and Chair of the EU Water Initiative's Working Group on Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia stated that the EU Water Initiative (EUWI) has two main objectives: a) to promote water and sanitation in order to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and b) to promote the implementation of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM). The main operational instrument of the EUWI are the "National Policy Dialogues (NPDs)" at senior political level, which serve as a cross-sectoral platform for negotiating water management and result in the preparation and implementation of "policy packages". The NPDs on IWRM have addressed water legislation, issues of drinking water quality, national policies for management of transboundary waters, and adaptation of water sector to climate change. Several projects with successful results have been mentioned focusing on different areas of water management, such as water quality, water supply and sanitation, and water and health.

Mr. Cameron Ironside, Programme Director for Sustainability, International Hydropower Association (IHA), highlighted two main elements of sustainable hydropower: (1) build the right dams, and (2) build dams the right way. To achieve this, the IHA has developed the *Hydropower Sustainability Assessment Protocol*. He stressed that sustainability is not a question of size, as the effects of many small hydro-power plants can cumulate to larger impacts. The sustainability in hydropower projects is more of a concern than the size of a project. In view of climate change, storage of water is of key importance. 'Building the right dams the right way' involves using the right tools to look at alternatives, and long-term costs to the country and holistic environmental costs rather than construction-of-project costs only. He added "the true cost of a dam never shows up on the balance sheet". Societal costs and social/environmental costs must also be considered. The *Hydropower Sustainability Assessment Protocol* took ten years to develop and encompasses all aspects of sustainability: It helps to address the concerns highlighted above so that stakeholders, having refined the tool, may look at integrated topics including benefits, gender issues, displacement, feasibility, labour conditions and other comprehensive assessments such as cultural heritage etc.

Mr. Nicholas Bonvoisin, Secretary of the UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, stressed the nexus between water, food security, energy security, climate change and ecosystems that required co-ordination and co-operation between water management agencies and other sectors. Mr. Bonvoisin, underlined the importance of transboundary co-operation and presented various examples of UNECE activities in this respect. He commended the immense support of the Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC) on these processes. Climate change adaptation also remains important to address these concerns. This approach of nexus helps to bring people together in workshop-type programs with representatives from the agriculture and energy sector, water and environment

administrations, state companies, the private sector as well as civil society, to tackle challenges and look at inter-sector linkages to address these concerns. Finally there are more benefits of looking at the basin as a whole that is achievable only through joint action. He requested the OSCE to promote the Water Convention with a view to encouraging its participating States to become parties to the Water Convention. He also underlined the role that the Aarhus Centres could play in providing impetus at national level to the implementation of the Convention.

Mr. Tom Mollenkopf, Senior Vice-President of the International Water Association, contributed a perspective from the OSCE's Partner for Co-operation, Australia, that faces huge challenges of water scarcity and climate change impacts and which at the same time needs a good co-ordination between the federal states. He stressed that, as technical efficiency is already well developed and technical innovation is marginal at best, efforts have to focus improving allocative efficiency. Mr. Mollenkopf introduced different approaches such as the building of water markets with their ability to negotiate and allocate remaining water to market forces with the governments playing a regulatory framework role. Australia's National Water Initiative of 2004 committed federal and state governments to economically efficient water use and improved environmental outcomes. For urban water supply, "security through diversity" helped Australian cities to not rely on one single source of water supply. Valuing and pricing water may be helpful to address water scarcity. Water efficiency, measurement, and tradable entitlements have been improving in rural and agricultural water management. Moving away from central control to an area of mix of control, regulation, and markets to address water markets via a "cap and trade" approach while needing to be looked at critically, may be instructive. He concluded by reiterating that allocative efficiency, although still less understood, offers greater potential gains than technical efficiency and that markets are key to allocate scarce water resources for its highest and best use.

The *moderator Mr. Wiberg*, stated that water does not respect political boundaries and water, energy and food security must be managed together in order to address this challenge. Improved frameworks for water management are vital. Implementation is critical and widest possible consortiums are needed to arrive at wide political consensus.

Then the floor was opened for discussion.

A representative from Lithuania stated that transboundary water co-operation has the potential to create significant benefits; it can enhance economic growth, human development, political stability and human security. This should be based on international legal agreements and transboundary environmental impact assessments. She noted that the implementation of *UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Trans-boundary Watercourses* is of crucial importance for the OSCE area. The representative regretted that some countries still have no agreements despite long-term negotiations, as it is the case with the Neman River Basin. She stressed that no country should implement large-scale projects without consulting neighbouring countries and expressed Lithuania's concern about nuclear power projects in the Russian Federation and Belarus, on locations close to Lithuania's borders.

A representative from Italy expressed support to the co-operation in the field of water governance and OSCE work in this respect. Social, economic and holistic approaches to water at regional level will be extremely helpful. The representative informed about a nexus case study on

the Isonzo/Soca River shared by Italy and Slovenia, which is conducted in the context of the Alpine Convention and will be presented at the 7th Meeting of the Parties of the UNECE Water Convention in Budapest in November this year. This could be seen as a good practice example of co-operation through international treaties and transboundary conventions, and may serve as a starting point for a wider application in other regions of the world.

A representative from Tajikistan stated the Republic of Tajikistan occupies the eighth place in the world in terms of water resources with a huge hydropower potential, of which it uses only less than 4 per cent. Tajikistan could provide cheap and clean energy to Central Asia to cover growing demands and reduce oil and coal consumption and emissions. He concluded that stability and development in the region would improve if the countries would co-operate to cope with challenges and manage water jointly.

A representative of the International University of Development Studies stated the importance of safe deactivation of chemical weapons at the bottom of the Baltic and North Seas and suggested to establish a group of specialists with OSCE mandate for this purpose.

A representative from the Czech Republic asked Mr. Mollenkopf whether Australia was able to achieve water security merely by demand management without any new water storage capacities.

Mr. Mollenkopf, in his reply, mentioned that, depending on the region, water efficiency might not be sufficient for ensuring water supply. In West Australia, it is complemented by desalination plants and groundwater recharge with recycled water.

A representative of the Regional Environmental Centre (REC) expressed appreciation that water governance is being discussed and commended the contribution of Aarhus Centres. She informed about an ongoing project on transboundary water co-operation in SEE, stating that the main driving process in SEE is the SEE 2020 strategy which is very important for the region. The REC representative further stated that the nexus approach is clearly the approach for SEE 2020. The main conclusions of SEE 2020 discussions are that the nexus approach can assist sustainable development, but it should be implemented in a practical and pragmatic way.

A representative from the Russian Federation objected that Russia would impede an agreement on the Neman River and referred to a number of agreements Russia has on other transboundary rivers. With reference to the nuclear power plant in Kaliningrad, he stated that construction has been stopped and if continued it will be based on IAEA standards.

In the speakers' concluding remarks, *Mr. Bonvoisin* reiterated the importance of transboundary water co-operation and dialogue. While the nexus approach will not solve all problems, it is a useful additional tool.

Mr. Ironside echoed this by pointing to beneficial role transboundary water issues can play in regional integration discussions.

Mr. Constantin reiterated the importance of dialogue among different sectors and reminded that all actions have costs – if not financial than other.

Mr Mollenkopf stressed that solutions have to be multidimensional.

The following conclusions and recommendations can be drawn from the discussion:

- Transboundary water issues offer more opportunity for co-operation in the region rather than source of conflict;
- Energy, food, and water ultimately should be looked at comprehensively in a nexus approach and co-ordination between different sectors and stakeholders is paramount;
- Water efficiency is a key strategy to ensure water security and has to involve multiple instruments beyond technical measures;
- Sustainability of hydropower has to include financial, economic, social, environmental aspects;
- Promising tools are existing for ensuring water, food and energy security and taking cross-sectoral needs into account, for example the EUWI National Policy Dialogues, the UNECE Nexus Assessments, the IHA Hydropower Sustainability Assessment Protocol, or the ENVSEC Initiative.

Session III: Water governance and the environment: Protecting ecosystems and increasing water efficiency

Moderator: *Mr. Walter Kling*, Secretary General, International Association of Waterworks in the Danube Catchment Area

Rapporteur: *Mr. Leonid Kalashnyk*, Environmental Programme Officer, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Speakers:

Dr. Dejan Komatina, Secretary, International Sava River Basin Commission

Mr. Rolf Olsen, Senior Technical Lead, Institute for Water Resources, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Alliance for Global Water Adaption

Ms. Ekaterina Strikeleva, Head, Water Initiatives Support Programme, the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia

Ms. Jovana Husemann, Research Associate, Institute for Sanitary Engineering, University of Stuttgart

The moderator Mr. Walter Kling, Secretary General, International Association of Waterworks in the Danube Catchment Area, explained that the third session will focus on security-related benefits of sustainable management of water ecosystems, climate change and water governance as well as partnership frameworks for environmental protection and efficient use of water at local, national and transboundary level. Furthermore the speaker would present technological innovations for efficient collection, treatment and re-use of water.

Mr. Dejan Komatina, Secretary, International Sava River Basin Commission, commenced his presentation by providing a historical background on the co-operation in the Sava River basin

which was the largest national river of the former Yugoslavia and is currently an international watercourse. He underlined that the need for economic development of the riparian countries became a strong driver for co-operation in the river basin and presented the existing legal and institutional framework, including the Framework Agreement on the Sava River Basin and the International Sava River Basin Commission. The scope of co-operation includes both management plans and economic activities (navigation and river tourism) coupled with endeavours to harmonize relevant national legislation with EU requirements. The Commission co-ordinates a wide range of activities and most of them are implemented through projects agreed by all the riparian countries. A broad spectrum of stakeholders is involved horizontally and across all sectors of society, while the Commission ensures inter-sectoral co-ordination. Mr. Komatina noted the importance of developing a wide range of tools to involve stakeholders and the public at large in decision-making processes. He also pointed out that the co-operation in the basin is aligned with the processes under the UNECE Water Convention and the EU Directives. The benefits of this on-going co-operation include not only harmonization of regulations, methodologies and procedures and enhancement of cross-sectoral co-operation at national level but also increased level of mutual trust among the countries, which is a security-related benefit. Mr. Komatina also encouraged making best use of basin organizations and providing them with necessary support to further increase benefits of such co-operation. Mr. Komatina also referred to the relevance of the OSCE's possible support to activities implemented by basin organizations.

Mr. Rolf Olsen gave a brief overview about the mission of the Alliance for Global Water Adaptation (AGWA) and elaborated on the linkages between management of water resources and security, particularly in the context of future climate uncertainty. He then outlined top-down and bottom-up approaches for climate adaptation decision making and presented two case studies of such decision making: International Upper Great Lakes Study (U.S. and Canada) and management of reservoirs in the Dniester river basin (Moldova and Ukraine). Mr. Olsen presented an AGWA-supported development of a risk framework for reservoir management to more effectively adapt to climate change in the Dniester basin, which is part of the climate change adaptation measures supported through the OSCE-UNECE joint work in this river basin. He underlined the relevance of bottom-up process for decision-making related to climate change adaptation, the capacity to meet regulation objectives under a broad range of possible future conditions, and flexible and adaptive management.

Ms. Ekaterina Strikeleva outlined a range of environmental challenges faced by countries in Central Asia, including demographic and economic pressures, resource intensiveness, aging infrastructure and climate change. Ms. Strikeleva then detailed the work of small basin councils (SBC) supported by the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia to involve local communities in Central Asia in the management of water. She stressed the importance of a bottom-up approach coupled with involvement of all relevant stakeholders to be responsive to local needs and to develop basin plans together with water and other relevant authorities. The small basin council model also makes it possible for transboundary co-operation between communities in neighbouring countries. Ms. Strikeleva listed a number of good practices including the development of IWRM basin plans, implementation of specific projects, reduction of water losses during irrigation, and the use of more advanced irrigation techniques, as well as the reduction of the risk for conflict through local decisions to install water-measuring equipment. While financial sustainability and insufficient legal knowledge remain a challenge, the success of the small basin councils depends on the involvement of interested people and the

willingness of leaders to promote basin councils and plans. Ms. Strikeleva noted the role of the OSCE field operations as a catalyst for developing such basin councils.

Ms. Jovana Husemann presented traditional and optimized models for wastewater management. While traditional approaches may fall short of ensuring sustainable application, new models facilitate reduction of energy demand and address the growing scarcity of phosphorus, which is lost with wastewater. She referred to the existing potential for the optimization of wastewater management practices at two levels – wastewater treatment plant and local level (households). Ms. Husemann noted the need for an integrative nexus approach allowing water, waste and energy sectors to operate jointly with each other. An example of energy and material flows generation potential at municipal level was also presented to the audience. Ms. Husemann concluded by stressing the importance of sanitation both for rural and urban areas and need for local level-based innovation.

The floor was opened for discussion.

A representative of the EU referred to the importance the EU attaches to Central Asia, which it also identified as one of the priority areas in terms of water security in the July 2013 Council Conclusions on EU Water Diplomacy. Reference was also made to the associated financial resources the EU allocates for water and sanitation projects in the region. He noted the European Water Initiative as a policy framework for several projects at national level to provide support in this region and gave examples of some concrete projects in Central Asia. Water and sanitation is another important area for the EU and these issues should be reflected in designing the future Sustainable Development Goals. Security impacts of climate change are an important topic for the EU. He noted the OSCE as a security organization has a role to play in this regard, and the EU would welcome further deliberations in this context.

A representative of Italy highlighted the importance of the adaptation of water governance to climate change, particularly in the mountainous regions. He noted the local authorities' important role in responding to natural hazards, but also their limited knowledge to deal with climate change at local level. He drew attention to the guidelines on local adaptation to climate change for water management and natural hazards in the Alps, adopted during the 2013-2014 Italian Presidency of the Alpine Convention and underlined their relevance for other mountainous areas.

A representative of Kazakhstan thanked for citing Kazakhstan as a positive example in the area of water governance and referred to a recent forecast of water situation in Kazakhstan through 2040. He highlighted the most pressing issues and measures already taken by Kazakhstan to address an anticipated deficit of water. He underlined the need to tackle pollution of both local and transboundary water resources coupled with long-term planning. He also noted the active co-operation with the OSCE regarding safety of hydrologic installations as a successful example of disaster risk reduction activities.

A representative of Belarus noted that Belarus's new water code will enter into force in April 2015. The code takes into account the provisions of the EU Water Framework Directive, including environmental status of surface waters, basin principle, and involvement of civil society and basin councils with the involvement of different stakeholders. He gave examples of projects with

which Belarus strives to expand transboundary water co-operation with its neighbours, in particular with the Baltic countries. He drew attention to the importance of planning next steps as the International Decade for Action “Water for Life” ends in 2015.

The representative of Azerbaijan referred to measures taken to strengthen water governance in Azerbaijan, development of a roadmap on IWRM and national programme for groundwater resources. He noted the challenge of water pollution as result of economic, household and other activities by the upstream countries in the context of the trans-boundary Kura-Araz basin and the wider implications of such pollution for Azerbaijan as a downstream country as well as the Caspian Sea. The representative noted the efforts by UNECE, GWP and other actors to support international principles related to water and called upon the OSCE and other relevant international organizations to promote the soonest accession of upstream countries to international legal instruments in the area of water protection including The Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes.

A representative of the Chairmanship thanked the speakers for their in-depth presentations. He underlined the security-related benefits of transboundary water co-operation and role of OSCE field operations in water governance. He inquired about the challenges in the implementation of new advanced solutions to wastewater management.

A representative of Moldova highlighted the importance of having a partnership framework at transboundary level. She referred to the Dniester Treaty signed by Moldova and Ukraine in 2012 and encouraged the completion of ratification procedures by Ukraine in the nearest future. She also noted the importance of support by international organizations in strengthening transboundary water co-operation, in particular for the economies in transition.

A representative of IFAS informed that he would make a statement on the second day.

In response to the question by the Chairmanship, *Ms. Husemann* noted institutional capacity and the quality of data, along with the availability of state-of-the-art technology. Lessons learnt are specifically important to ensure context-sensitive application of new approaches and methodologies.

Mr. Glas highlighted the importance of treating wastewater as a valuable asset. He also noted the value of coupling the concept of small basin councils with a decentralized local finance system.

The following conclusions and recommendations can be drawn from the discussion:

- Importance of developing a wide range of tools to involve stakeholders and the public at large in decision-making processes;
- Make best use of basin organizations and provide them with necessary support to further increase benefits of such co-operation;
- A bottom-up approach coupled with involvement of all relevant stakeholders to be responsive to local needs and to develop basin plans together with water and other relevant authorities is extremely relevant;

- The success of the small basin councils depends on the involvement of interested people and the willingness of leaders to promote basin councils and plans;
- OSCE field operations play a role as a catalyst for developing basin councils;
- There is the need for an integrative nexus approach allowing water, waste and energy sectors to operate jointly with each other;
- The sanitation for rural and urban areas is essential and local level-based innovation is needed;
- International agreements with due regard to the interests of riparian states have to be implemented more effectively.

Session IV: Water governance at different levels

Moderator: Mr. Marco Keiner, Director, Environment Division, UNECE

Rapporteur: Ms. Dilara Abdullayeva, Third Secretary, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the OSCE

Speakers:

Dr. Aslıhan Kerç, Project Development and Implementation Co-ordinator, Turkish Water Institute

Mr. Andre Matoso, Regional Director, Alentejo River Basin District Administration, Portuguese Environment Agency

Mr. José Anguel Rodrigues Cabellos, Head of Planning Office, Guadiana River Basin Authority, Spain

Ms. Biljana Filipović, Head, Department of International Co-operation, Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection, Republic of Serbia

The representatives of France and Spain raised a point of order on the language regime used in the meeting.

The moderator, suspended the session and called for informal consultations. Once the session was resumed, he suggested that the session would continue by following the language regime in use.

The representative of the Chairmanship informed that the language regime of the Economic and Environmental Forum would be addressed at the Economic and Environmental Committee meeting on 25 February 2015.

The moderator, Mr. Marco Keiner, Director of Environment Division at UNECE stressed the importance that UNECE attaches to water governance. Referring to the co-operation between UNECE and OSCE on water governance issues, he said that both organizations use their strengths in a complementary way and do their best to ensure that their activities do not overlap. As one of the examples of co-operation between the two organizations he mentioned the co-operation in the Dniester river basin shared by Moldova and Ukraine. He referred to a centralized approach in water governance as being not so successful and suggested that decentralization was more promising. He also referred to many challenges and opportunities in implementing water sector

reforms. He then gave the floor to the representative of Ukraine who wished to address the request of the representative of Moldova made on the first day of the Preparatory Meeting.

The representative of Ukraine noted that all internal procedures preceding ratification of the agreement between Ukraine and Moldova on Dniester river basin had been agreed and he expressed hope that draft law on ratification of Dniester river basin agreement will be properly considered by the Ukrainian parliament in due course.

Dr. Aslihan Kerç, the Project Development and Implementation Co-ordinator at the Turkish Water Institute, noted involvement of stakeholders at local level and collaborative decision-making process as elements of efficient community-based water governance which in turn leads to increasing transparency, affordability of operation and maintenance costs, and provision of better services. Participation of local actors creates a stronger sense of ownership of infrastructure. Thus, government acts more as a regulatory body and faces less financial burden. Dr. Kerç informed participants about the establishment of River Basin Commissions and their composition, as well as operation of Water Users Associations (WUAs) in Turkey. She said that establishment of WUAs across Turkey allowed for significant decrease in use of water for irrigation and consequently resulted in protection of water resources with a positive impact on soil and water quality. In conclusion, she underlined the importance of involvement of local stakeholders in water governance process for ensuring efficient water use within countries' water management policies and noted that increased interaction among stakeholders results in better and rapid decision making.

Mr. André Matoso, Regional Director at the Alentejo River Basin District Administration, Portuguese Environment Agency, spoke about centennial co-operation between Spain and Portugal in management of Iberian transboundary watercourses. He elaborated on the Albufeira Convention on Co-operation for the Protection and Sustainable Use of Waters of the Spanish-Portuguese River Basins, which was signed in 1998, and presented the structure of the River Basin Commission. He underscored that, unlike previous agreements, issues of sustainability and environmental protection were addressed in this Convention. He outlined co-operation, co-ordination, environmental protection, sustainable development, exchange of information, consultation, impact mitigation and flow guarantees as key issues envisaged in the Convention. Water demand versus water allocation, water quality versus biodiversity, and water scarcity were mentioned as key challenges. Furthermore, he outlined the elements of co-operation between Spain and Portugal such as: legal framework including bilateral frameworks and EU directives, institutions for co-operation, information exchange and monitoring, incentives for co-operation, benefit sharing and mediation, and resolution of disputes arising from use of transboundary watercourses, confidence building and good relationship. In conclusion, he defined the following lessons learned: importance of engaging diplomats and experts on International Public Law in the negotiations, involvement of skilled multidisciplinary team of experts for the preparation of technical documents, efforts to accommodate all relevant issues raised during negotiation process and avoidance of ambiguous formulations during drafting, since ambiguities will eventually create difficulties in implementation of agreements. Furthermore, Mr. Matoso mentioned the need to avoid, as much as possible, postponements in the negotiation process.

Mr. José Anguel Rodrigues Cabellos, Head of Planning Office of the Guadiana River Basin Authority in Spain, spoke on the development of co-operation between Spain and Portugal in the field of water management. He noted that the Albufeira Convention established a political, legal, and technical framework to solve common problems and that this Agreement was developed under an environmental perspective according to the EU Water Framework Directive. He further noted that the essential guiding principles of the Convention were: achieving a balance between environmental protection and exploitation of water resources for economic activities by both countries; co-ordination of efforts of both countries for water management and improving knowledge of shared basins. He outlined four main elements of co-operation according to the Albufeira Convention. Underlining the importance of establishing institutions to ensure operability of an international agreement, he referred to two organs established under the Albufeira Convention: a) Conference of the Parties, and b) the Commission for the Application and Development of the Agreement. In his concluding remarks, Mr. Cabellos elaborated on the requirements due to the EU Water Framework Directive for international co-operation and the need to define international river basin districts and elaboration of river basin management plans. He separately elaborated on the Guadiana river basin and specific issues related to its management.

Ms. Biljana Filipović, Head of the Department of International Co-operation at the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Serbia, noted that Serbia's priority is EU accession and harmonization of its legislation in line with EU directives. She mentioned that planned water management and its careful preservation is one of main priorities of Serbia. She mentioned that by ratifying the UNECE-WHO Protocol on Water and Health in 2013, Serbia raised the priority of water and sanitation at national and local level. She spoke about the current institutional set-up and competencies at national, regional and local level, key stakeholders and legislative framework in water sector in Serbia. She mentioned that the 2010 water law largely aligned the water sector in Serbia with EU legislation and noted that the new water law to be drafted in 2017, will be fully harmonized with EU directives. She referred to several public outreach campaigns aimed at promotion of newly adopted regulations on water quality issues that were conducted in Serbia with the support of the OSCE Mission in Serbia and in co-operation with Aarhus Centres. She underlined that the main strategic goal is to achieve holistic and synchronised water regime throughout Serbia so as to ensure such water management that maximizes economic and social benefits in an equitable and sustainable manner with regard to international agreements. To achieve this goal, she added, it is necessary to set-up an appropriate water management system and ensure legislative, institutional, financial and other capacities and conditions for the development of the water sector. She concluded by saying that achievement of long term objectives will only be possible with efficient organization of the water sector and appropriate institutional set-up, engaging multi-disciplinary teams of experts for the preparation of all technical documents and ensuring long-term financing from stable sources. She added that strengthening of human resources at all levels is one of the main priorities to be addressed for effective water management.

The floor was opened for discussions.

The representative of Armenia expressed the view that the OSCE provides an opportunity to address issues through engaging in dialogue in particular in circumstances due to absence of multilateral agreements or lack of formalized relations. Noting that Turkey is currently

constructing a water dam in the immediate vicinity of Armenia without prior consultations with Armenia, he requested clarifications on the project. He noted that in view of Armenia, the dam would have a negative impact on an area which is already affected by climate change and would increase disaster risks. He asked representatives of Turkey for ideas on how and in which framework this issue should be addressed.

The representative of Tajikistan informed about the water sector reforms in the country. He took the opportunity to thank the United Nations and the European Union for assistance in the elaboration of the water sector development strategy and elaboration of irrigation and melioration sector development strategies. He also thanked the World Bank, Asian Development Bank and the OSCE for their projects in this field. He also informed participants that, according to the United Nations General Assembly resolution, a High Level International Conference on the implementation of the International Decade for Action “Water for Life” is planned to be held in June 2015 in Tajikistan, and invited all interested parties to take part.

A representative of the International Fund of Ecological Safety of the Baltic Sea, “Clean Baltic”, commented that 70 years have passed since chemical weapons were first dumped in the Baltic Sea and mentioned that the dumping has adverse health effects among the population of European countries.

The representative of Moldova noted that Moldova attaches great importance to water management related issues. He referred to good co-operation between Moldova and Romania on the Prut river and expressed hope that similar co-operation will develop between Moldova and Ukraine. He also raised concerns that part of the Dniester river basin lies in the territories which are not under the control of Moldova. He expressed gratitude to OECD, OSCE, the Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation and the Austrian Development Agency for their assistance in promoting water management projects in Moldova. He also drew attention to the project implemented with financial assistance of the United States of America, which, along with rehabilitating irrigation systems in Moldova, aims at capacity-building and reforming the irrigation system in the country. He concluded by noting that Moldova was open to discuss and develop new projects in this field.

Dr. Aslıhan Kerç noted that she did not have any technical details on the project referred to by the representative of Armenia, but assured that Turkey would take all necessary precautions not to harm its neighbouring country in such a project, and informed that concerns raised by the representative of Armenia would be conveyed to the relevant departments in the Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs of Turkey.

The representative of Turkey added that one of the important principles of Turkey’s transboundary water policy is the utilization of transboundary rivers in an equitable, reasonable and optimal manner in the interest of all riparian states. She noted that the dam is constructed as an irrigation project for Igdir city in order to alleviate drought-related problems and concluded by assuring that Turkey takes all the necessary precautions into account in its projects.

The following conclusions and recommendations can be drawn from the discussion:

- Centralized approaches in water governance seem to be less successful compared to decentralized approaches;
- The involvement of stakeholders at local level and collaborative decision-making processes are an element of efficient community based water governance, which in turn leads to increasing transparency, affordability of operation and maintenance costs and provision of better services;
- Importance of engaging diplomats and experts on International Public Law in the negotiations, involvement of skilled multidisciplinary team of experts for the preparation of technical documents, efforts to accommodate all relevant issues raised during negotiation process and avoidance of ambiguous formulations during drafting, since ambiguities will eventually create difficulties in implementation of agreements;
- Importance of establishing institutions to ensure operability of an international agreement;
- It is necessary to set-up an appropriate water management system and ensure legislative, institutional, financial and other capacities and conditions for the development of the water sector;
- The OSCE provides an opportunity to address issues through engaging in dialogue in particular circumstances due to absence of multilateral agreements or lack of formalized relations.

Session V: Good water governance and transparency

Moderator: Mr. Jan van de Venis, Director of Legal Desk, Waterlex

Rapporteur: Ms. Magdalena Stankowska, Second Secretary, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Poland to the OSCE

Speakers:

Mr. Teun Bastemeijer, Chief Adviser, Water Integrity Network

Dr. Carlos Mario Gómez Gómez, University of Alcalá, Spain

Ms. Susanne Brandstetter, Chair, Public Participation Expert Group, International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River

Ms. Sabina Jukan, Manager, Aarhus Centre Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

The moderator Mr. Jan van de Venis, Director of Legal Desk at Waterlex, welcomed the participants to the fifth session and explained that it would focus on transparency in the water sector and the fight against corruption in this field and promoting integrity.

Mr. Teun Bastemeijer, Chief Adviser of the Water Integrity Network (WIN), stated that the WIN is aiming to fight corruption in the water sector worldwide in order to reduce poverty. WIN's vision is a world with equitable and sustainable access to water and clean environment, which is no longer threatened by corruption, greed, and dishonest and wilful malpractice. Mr. Bastemeijer stressed that promoting integrity for good water governance is not just about fighting corruption but also about (re)building trust. The water sector is essential for human beings and life. That is why there is a need for equitable and sustained access to water. But, he noted, any solution in

this regard requires adequate legislation. Mr. Bastemeijer emphasized that it is of utmost importance to increase the integrity level for sector's performance in all countries. Specifically, we need to: 1) increase awareness about corruption in its different forms while considering specific cultural contexts and languages; 2) build alliances and coalitions among stakeholders in public and private sectors as well civil society. There are various tools that can help address integrity issues. The core values for the good water governance should be: transparency, accountability, integrity and participation. Mr. Bastemeijer formulated some recommendations for the OSCE, namely: 1) OSCE participating States should undertake water integrity scans and studies; 2) identify knowledge and capacity building network and educational institutions that can support multi-stakeholder processes; 3) promote water integrity tools and methodologies to diagnose corruption and to improve integrity and governance in the water section; 4) promote the development of code of conduct among stakeholders.

Dr. Carlos Mario Gómez Gómez, Professor of Economics at the University of Alcalá, Spain, informed that he is currently leading the research team of EPI Water Project approved in 2010 under the 7th Framework Program of the European Union. Mr. Gómez Gómez emphasized that most of the water challenges are driven by nature and very often by economic activities. The economic incentives lead to increased consumption of water in regions where water resources are limited or scarce. The speaker also drew a link between managing conflicts and managing water. Mr. Gómez Gómez stressed as well that there are still significant opportunities to build a secure future in the water sector within our knowledge and capacity. We shall start from: bridging the efficiency gap, building green infrastructures by using natural processes, making the best use of wastewater for the circular economy, reallocate water to its more productive uses, make non-conventional sources available, take advantage of synergies between flood and drought management as well as exploit synergies in the water energy/food/climate change adaptation nexus. In this regard there is a huge implementation challenge ahead. He also named economic instruments (effective co-operation agreements, adaptation to current risk or management of conflicts) which could help to improve water governance. At the same time, Mr. Gómez Gómez stressed that there are few real economic instruments available within the EU and beyond to deal with it. Economic instruments can bring an added value to the water governance but these are not panaceas, they do not work in isolation, they cannot perform better than the institutional set-up in place.

Ms. Susanne Brandstetter, Chair of the Public Participation Expert Group at the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR), presented the unique structure of the ICPDR and its mechanisms for engagement of civil society. She referred particularly to ICPDR events such as the Danube Day that brought together over 500 partner organizations and the *Danube Art Master Competition*. Ms. Brandstetter emphasized that communication is important in the field of water. The speaker also referred to challenges associated with raising awareness about water; activating and motivating the public, creating interest, preparing public participation, and finding solutions for problems and addressing risk. The most important channels of communications in this regard are social media, internet, events and printed materials. She elaborated on the water awareness projects in Austria such as "Generation Blue" and "River Dialog". Communications and involvement of young people played a key role in both.

Ms. Sabina Jukan, Manager of the Aarhus Centre Sarajevo in Bosnia and Herzegovina, presented the role of civil society in good water governance. BiH is a unique country where environmental

issues are decentralized. In her point of view, civil society is a key component of the democratic state. At the same time, there is a need to ensure participation of civil society in the decision making process. The OSCE Mission to BiH, through establishment of the Aarhus Centres, has significantly increased the understanding of the Aarhus Convention, which provides a framework for public participation. A positive example for the engagement of civil society is the organization of a public consultation for the new Law on Environment Protection of the Federation of BiH. She presented an example where the civil society, supported by the Aarhus Centre in Sarajevo, undertook steps to stop the construction of a mini hydro-power plant on the river Ljuta. Aarhus Centre, in co-operation with municipal bodies, educates and supports the affected population, advocates for implementation of legal measures, partners with authorities and other NGOs in implementation of activities as well as maintains a database related to emergency situations. In the future, the Aarhus Centre Sarajevo will concentrate on the education of citizens in local communities and children in schools on prevention and reducing the risk of natural disasters, on public participation in the design of flood protection plans and the development of risk reduction plans. In conclusion, Ms. Jukan stressed that every citizen has the right to be informed about the state of environment. This is why it is essential to involve the civil society at the earliest stage of the decision making process.

Then the floor was opened for discussion.

A representative of the Executive Committee of International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (EC IFAS) informed about water use in Central Asia and problems deriving from the drying of the Aral Sea. The representative called for co-operation on water resources in Central Asia and sustainable development to reduce negative impacts on the Aral Sea.

The representative of Latvia on behalf of the EU stressed that good governance plays a key role in water governance and there is an interest for further engagement in this field.

The representative of Lithuania emphasized that involvement of civil society plays a key role in access to information. The speaker elaborated on the shared water resources with Belarus and the lack of co-operation, appealing to Belarus to ensure free access to information regarding shared water resources.

A representative of the International University of Development Studies stated the importance of safe deactivation of chemical weapons at the bottom of the Baltic and North Seas.

The representative of Serbia emphasized the importance of fighting corruption in water governance and stressed that raising awareness will help counter corruption. He asked about some concrete examples of how the involvement of civil society can contribute to building trust in the country. This question was answered by *Ms. Jukan* by presenting examples from coal mining activities.

The following conclusions and recommendations can be drawn from the discussion:

- There is no sustainability in water sector without integrity and transparency; water integrity tools and methodologies to diagnose corruption and to improve integrity and governance in the water section should therefore be promoted;

- There is a need to increase awareness about corruption in its different forms in the sector of water governance – a code of conduct among stakeholders should be developed;
- Participation of all stakeholders at all levels is of utmost importance;
- Economic institutions can help build water security;
- There is a need to increase awareness of young people about the water sector, especially through social media;
- There is a need to include civil society in water governance;
- OSCE participating States should undertake water integrity scans and studies;
- Knowledge and capacity building networks and educational institutions that can support multi-stakeholder processes should be identified.

Session VI: Opportunities for exchange of knowledge and experience in water governance

Moderator: Ambassador Slavica Milačić, Permanent Representative of Montenegro to the OSCE

Rapporteur: Mr. Elton Qendro, Project Assistant, Governance, Economy and Environmental Issues Department, OSCE Presence in Albania

Speakers:

Mr. Soontak Lee, Co-chair, International Steering Committee, 7th World Water Forum, Republic of Korea

Professor András Szöllösi-Nagy, Co-Chair of the Political Processes Commission 7th World Water Forum, World Water Council

Mr. Martin Krause, Practice Leader, Environment and Energy, Regional Centre for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, UNDP

Ms. Dragana Milovanović, Head, Department for Participation in Strategic Planning, Management and International Water Co-operation, Water Directorate of the Republic of Serbia

The moderator Ambassador Slavica Milačić, Permanent Representative of Montenegro to the OSCE, introduced the speakers and highlighted the importance of exchanging knowledge and experience in the field of water governance. She explained that this session would focus on the opportunities that global and regional platforms for knowledge and information sharing on water provide and that examples of sharing of technology and innovative methods of water management, including through private sector investments, will be presented in this session.

Mr. Soontak Lee, Co-chair of the International Steering Committee, 7th World Water Forum (WWF), Republic of Korea, informed about the upcoming 7th WWF on 12-17 April 2015 in Korea under the topic “Water is our Future”. The 7th WWF consists of thematic, political, regional, sciences and technology processes and a citizens’ forum, with 300 sessions in total. Mr. Lee mentioned that the organizers expect over 35,000 participants at the WWF in April 2015, bringing together heads of state, parliamentarians, ministers, regional and local authorities, CSOs, experts, academia and business community. Such diverse mix demonstrates the importance of WWF as a platform where global community could share related knowledge and solutions for implementation. The Forum will be held in two main locations Daegu and Gyengju.

Professor András Szöllösi-Nagy, Co-Chair of the Political Processes Commission 7th World Water Forum, World Water Council, listed the key changes (increase of population, increase of water use for crops, reduction of forests and increase of dams) since the 1900s which are all contributing to a looming crisis on water. He highlighted the importance of governance in addressing water problems and drew the attention to the major difference between governance and management. He underlined that while governance is about doing the right things, management focuses on doing things right. Professor Szöllösi-Nagy also spoke about increasing probability of hydrological extremes associated with the acceleration of the hydrological cycle. It is likely that the frequency of natural hazards, including devastating floods and droughts, will increase in future. There is a need to raise awareness of this change and to generate the response in order to increase resilience of our society. Rio+20 called for SMART indicators in Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in water in order to achieve a Water Sanitation and Hygiene Strategy (WASH). Professor Szöllösi-Nagy highlighted that climate change adaptation measures also necessitate proper governance. Speaker also referred to the water-food-energy nexus as an important factor to consider in designing solutions. He stressed the importance of co-operation and pointed out to the increasing number of transboundary treaties as a positive development over the last decades. Many indicators show that risks of water conflict exist, but they are not prevailing. The speaker also spoke about the importance of capacity development and the need to adopt an interdisciplinary approach. Mr. Szöllösi-Nagy highlighted that while there would be enough water for OSCE participating States in the 21st century, it was important to act now through political will, putting enough resources and the capacity to do it right. A political process was important for political order in water resource management. In the end Mr. Szöllösi-Nagy called for co-operation between OSCE and UNESCO-IHE Institute for Water Education that offers several specialized Master Programmes.

Mr. Martin Krause, Practice Leader, Environment and Energy, Regional Centre for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, UNDP, explained the four main dimensions of water governance: social dimension, economic dimension, political and sustainable dimensions. Within the UNDP Water Governance Programme, the three main water areas were:

- Water, Sanitation, Hygiene;
- Integrated Water Resource Management;
- Transboundary water.

Mr. Krause highlighted that UNDP is present in 150 countries with a total financing of \$50 million from GEF focused on these priority areas. He outlined several examples of UNDP's activities: 1) GoAI WASH in Tajikistan focused on water rights and responsibilities campaign. Only 52 per cent of population had access to safe drinking water hence the project was concentrated on: i) physical infrastructure to enable service delivery; ii) institutional strengthening with local municipalities; iii) awareness of water rights and responsibilities of households; 2) Reversing Eutrophication & Hypoxia in Danube and Black Sea Region supported 17 countries on policy, legislation and infrastructure investment. The root cause of the problem lied on lack of waste water treatment plants, livestock sectors, agriculture fertilizers etc. The co-operation between private sector and public bodies enabled the recovery of hypoxic area and ecosystem recovery in Danube; 3) Ocean Degradation caused by market and policy failures such as coastal hypoxia, eutrophication, marine invasive species, loss of coastal habitats, overfishing ocean acidification. All these causes have impacted the cycle of rain regimes and we see 45 per cent of this change is

due to human activity. The value of blue oceans to green economy is immense such as tourism, food, energy, poverty reduction and ecosystem services. Sharing the important knowledge and capacities is crucial and the role of private sector is very important if you want to achieve results.

Ms. Dragana Milovanović, Head of the Department for Participation in Strategic Planning, Management and International Water Co-operation, Water Directorate of the Republic of Serbia, gave an overview of river network in Serbia. She highlighted that 90 per cent of Serbia's territory lies within the Danube river basin. The main tributaries of Danube in Serbia are Tisa river (shared by 5 states), Sava river shared by 6 countries, Drina shared by 4 and a couple of small rivers. At the bilateral level, Serbia has an agreement with Hungary and Romania dating back to 1955, and a bilateral agreement with Bulgaria signed in 1958 but not currently active. Currently, there is no bilateral agreement with Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Macedonia. On a multilateral level, Serbia has signed the Helsinki Water Convention (1992) in 2010, and the Sofia Convention (1994) in 2003. However, the first functional development oriented multilateral agreement after the geopolitical changes in Balkans was the Framework Agreement of Sava River Basin (FASRB) of 2002. Ms. Milovanović highlighted that in the framework of the European ECRAN project regional co-operation has been explored on water co-operation and management such as the transboundary water management plans for Sava River.

Then the floor was opened for discussion.

The representative from Azerbaijan stated that his country has invested in Integrated Water Resource Management through a project which provides potable water and water efficiency by building a Water Reservoir next to Baku. Another aspect was the investment done with the support of Asia Development Bank in preparing a Water Management Strategy. Now work remains to be done on the evaluation of water management in the country.

The representative from Serbia took the floor to thank the speakers and particularly Mr. Szöllösi-Nagy for highlighting a clear link between water governance and security related issues, having in mind that the OSCE is primarily a security organization.

A representative from UNISDR took the floor to stress the importance of water related disasters and the need to continue this discussion after the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction which will be held in March 2015. He stressed the importance of following a holistic approach towards disaster risk reduction and multi-stakeholders contribution on the topic of water governance.

The speakers highlighted the importance of sharing information related to water governance and the forthcoming 7th World Water Forum was the best place to do so. *Mr. Szöllösi-Nagy* stressed the importance of “redesigning the floods models” in the face of unpredictability of floods, adding the climate change variability. *Mr. Krause* highlighted the need to address the contribution of the private sector in leveraging resources to invest in infrastructure and agriculture as it is vital for resolving water crises. Lastly, *Ms. Milovanović* appealed to keep water issues on the agenda and provide support for bilateral and multilateral co-operation as a tool for water safety in the region.

The following conclusions and recommendations can be drawn from the discussion:

- The WWF is a very important platform to share related knowledge and solutions for implementation with the global community;
- There are pressing issues such as ecosystems, climate, hydrological extremes and transboundary issues which call for a pressing need to develop advanced risk management on water hazard to secure human life and socio-economic development;
- Water-energy-food nexus is an area that requires further attention;
- Interdisciplinary approach must be applied in education and professional training of water specialists to adequately reflect the importance of all aspects including the water governance;
- OSCE could co-operate with UNESCO-IHE Institute's programme on water;
- It is vital to address the contribution of the private sector in leveraging resources to invest in infrastructure and agriculture so to resolve water crises.

Concluding Session:

Moderator: Ambassador Sanja Milinković, Deputy Permanent Representative of Serbia to the OSCE, 2015 OSCE Serbian Chairmanship

Rapporteur: Mr. Bernhard Romstorfer, Intern, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Speakers:

Dr. Halil Yurdakul Yiğitgüden, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Ambassador Thomas Greminger, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the OSCE

Ms. Christine Weil, Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Germany to the OSCE

In her introduction, the *moderator, Ambassador Sanja Milinković, Deputy Permanent Representative of Serbia to the OSCE*, summarized the discussions during the two-day Preparatory Meeting. She stated that the presentations confirmed how vital good water governance is for security and stability in the OSCE region. The common understanding of a water crisis as a governance crisis would provide us with new entry points to address water challenges. She stressed the Chairmanship's commitment to advance this topic on the OSCE agenda and to deepen engagement in this field. Amb. Milinković concluded by explaining that the next preparatory meeting in May in Belgrade will focus on water governance in the context of disaster risk reduction to build upon last year's Ministerial Decision in Basel on "Enhancing Disaster Risk Reduction".

Dr. Halil Yurdakul Yiğitgüden, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, emphasized the importance of this year's Forum topic as water resources in the OSCE area are facing increased risks from climate change. A comprehensive governance approach to protect, use and share water in a responsible and equitable way would be needed. He declared that the OSCE will strive to build on the recommendations that were generated at this First Preparatory Meeting. Dr. Yiğitgüden highlighted the main discussions and best practice examples over the last two days which underlined the important role of well governed water to protect the

environment and to strengthen security. He explained that a lack of transparency and corruption are both a cause and a result of poor water governance. This is why transparency, access to information, and integrity would build a sustainable foundation for good water governance and reduce the potential for conflict. Regarding next steps, he mentioned that all suggestions and recommendations will be thoroughly considered with a view to identifying possible follow-up activities. Finally, he expressed his hope that the discussions in the Forum process will contribute to the global processes like the 3rd UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction and the Paris Climate Change Conference.

Ambassador Thomas Greminger, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the OSCE, stressed the importance of water co-operation for stability and security and the need for states, the private sector, civil society and the OSCE to further engage in this field. Numerous positive examples during these two days showed that we can cope with water related challenges if we give them sufficient weight on the political agenda and further co-operate. He stressed that fostering water co-operation and security has been already an area of work for the OSCE since 1989. Furthermore, the Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC) is an excellent instrument for co-ordinated international action in this field.

Ambassador Greminger highlighted the following five key elements of the discussion during the First Preparatory Meeting:

- Water governance is not only a relevant issue between states, but also one between different stakeholders within a state. Cross-sectoral dialogue is therefore needed;
- In water governance, there is no one size fits all. So, different political realities have to be better reflected and addressed in each river basin;
- Implementation is the key. The OSCE could be used as a platform of dialogue to encourage full implementation of the commitments taken by participating States;
- Local environmental governance is very important and Aarhus Centres are particularly well suited to be partners in this field;
- Transparency, integrity and good governance are the key to address water-related challenges.

Ambassador Greminger added that the two priority areas that the OSCE should further discuss during the Prague Forum Cycle are the risks of water-related disasters and the adaption to climate change as well as the role the OSCE should play in water governance to strengthen transboundary water co-operation and water diplomacy as an effective tool to enhance security and stability in the OSCE area. He explained that it is necessary to discuss the concrete steps the OSCE has to undertake. He finished by expressing his personal wish that water becomes a strategic priority to the OSCE as it is for the OECD.

Ms. Christine Weil, Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Germany to the OSCE, emphasized the willingness of Germany as a future chair to build on the work of the previous chairmanships, taking into account the decisions of previous Ministerial Councils. One of Germany's priorities will be to bring implementation forward. She explained that a consultation process will be started after the spring recess to achieve consensus on priorities for next year's EEF so that it is ready for submission to the Permanent Council before the summer recess. She invited all participants to bring in their expertise to this process.

Ms. Weil stressed the importance of water governance and cross border co-operation in this regard. She referred to last year's EEF Meeting in Prague which showed that a cross-border project (the detection and safe removal of left over mines from the Balkan wars) can function as a role model. She highlighted the many facets of water governance such as food and energy security, protection of the environment, technological innovation, transparency and fighting corruption, local and national administration and transboundary co-operation, and the role of civil society.

She explained that the German government has initiated the "Water Initiative Central Asia" in 2008 which is now entering the third phase and which focuses on regional co-operation in water governance and on the regional institutions. She pointed out that European cross-border initiatives such as the Danube Commission or the International Commission for the protection of the Rhine-river are great examples for successful water governance. She stated that the key to success is political will as we could also see with the Sava River Basin Commission. Ms. Weil concluded by saying that the OSCE can certainly make meaningful contributions to the improvement of water management in its region and hence to the reduction of security risks.

The representative of the United States highlighted that the discussions showed clearly the importance of water governance for security. He added that there is a need to discuss more deeply the role of the OSCE in this context.

The representative of Uzbekistan emphasized that transboundary co-operation and the nexus between food, energy, environment and water are highly important. He stated that Uzbekistan is confident that the principles of the UNECE and UN Water Conventions are important for preventing conflicts. He noted that water is an important resource and that political solutions to ensure water security are not sufficient as it is crucial to resolve all technical issues with regards to effective management of water resources. The OSCE should draw the attention to ensuring flaws in investments into technologies that can help to develop water infrastructure and to better monitor the use of water.

The representative of Azerbaijan thanked for the organization of the Preparatory Meeting and noted that it provided a good forum for discussions. She mentioned that participants were informed about national experience of Azerbaijan in the field of water governance, as well as challenges faced by the country due to cross-boundary nature of watercourses in the region. She added that in some cases challenges are further aggravated by existing threats to security. Referring to co-operation in the field of water governance, she reiterated support for co-operation which is based on respect for the relevant norms and principles of Helsinki Final Act. With reference to confidence-building potential of co-operation among countries sharing water resources, she noted that in case of conflicts caused by other factors co-operation could only be considered after security concerns have been addressed and impediments to regional co-operation have been eliminated. She closed by stressing the importance of taking measures at national level to ensure responsible management of transboundary watercourses.

The representative of Armenia noted that water governance means security for all but it does not mean unilateral decisions. The 2nd Preparatory Meeting will identify what challenges can be addressed by the OSCE. He referred to the behaviour of participants at the meeting who were

offering water to the person sitting next to them before getting a glass of water themselves, and that this same principle may be applied among countries.

The representative of Tajikistan stated that the meeting demonstrated that water governance is one of the OSCE's priorities. He explained how Tajikistan faces many challenges regarding water issues and natural disasters, and that it is a lengthy process that requires funds and time to improve the situation.

A representative of the Regional Environment Centre (REC) said that water governance shows significant challenges but also opportunities for policy makers to prevent conflicts and enable greater regional co-operation. This would become even more important as water quality deteriorates and as demographic and socio-economic developments increase the demand for water resources. Environmental changes would be likely to intensify existing, and trigger new, social and political conflicts over water, in particular in regions that lack robust institutions for co-operation. The representative therefore welcomed the theme of the 23rd OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum and wished to acknowledge its relevance in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals for the post-2015 agenda. The REC is committed to continue co-operating with the Republic of Serbia, the OSCE, the participating States and the Partners for Co-operation in the 23rd Economic and Environmental Forum. She concluded that the REC will actively engage in the forthcoming discussions in order to build, together with the OSCE, a partnership for sustainable development that contributes to security and stability through co-operation.

Mr. Glas, Chair of OECD Water Governance Initiative, reiterated that world crises on water are governance crises. He commended the additional dimension of water governance discussed in the OSCE framework, which he will feed into the OECD WGI discussions. He repeated his offer to the OSCE participating States to comment on the OECD Water Governance Principles.

Ambassador Sanja Milinković, Deputy Permanent Representative of Serbia to the OSCE, stated that the different opinions about the number of languages that need to be interpreted during the Preparatory Meetings will be discussed and closed the meeting by inviting all participants to the next Preparatory Meeting in Belgrade.

The following conclusions and recommendations can be drawn from the discussion:

- A comprehensive governance approach to protect, use and share water in a responsible and equitable way would be needed;
- There is the need to discuss the concrete steps the OSCE has to undertake;
- European cross-border initiatives and projects are great examples for successful water governance;
- Cross-sectorial dialogue is necessary as water governance is not only a relevant issue between states, but also one between different stakeholders within a state;
- Different political realities have to be dealt individually. There is no "one size fits all";
- The OSCE could be used as a platform of dialogue to encourage the full implementation of the commitments taken by participating States;
- Local environmental governance is very important (good examples are Aarhus Centres);
- Transparency, integrity and good governance are the key to address water-related challenges.



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

Vienna, 23 January 2015

23rd OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum

"Water governance in the OSCE area – increasing security and stability through co-operation"

FIRST PREPARATORY MEETING

Vienna, 26 - 27 January 2015

OSCE Congress Centre, Hofburg, Heldenplatz, 1010 Vienna

ANNOTATED AGENDA

Monday, 26 January 2015

09:30 – 11:00 Opening Session (*open to Press*)

Welcoming Remarks

- **Ambassador Vuk Žugić**, Chairperson of the Permanent Council, Permanent Representative of Serbia to the OSCE, 2015 OSCE Serbian Chairmanship
- **Ambassador Lamberto Zannier**, OSCE Secretary General
- **Dr. Halil Yurdakul Yiğitgüden**, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Keynote speeches

- **Ms. Stana Božović**, State Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection, Republic of Serbia
- **Prof. John Anthony Allan**, Professor of Geography, King's College, London
- **Dr. Mohamed Ait Kadi**, Chair, Global Water Partnership Technical Committee, Ministry of Agriculture and Marine Fisheries, Kingdom of Morocco

Rapporteur: Mr. Andrew Peebles, EU Delegation to the International Organizations in Vienna

Statements by Delegations / Discussion

11:00 – 11:30 Coffee Break

11:30 – 13:00 Session I: Water governance – approaches, elements, actors

Selected topics:

- The concept of water governance
- Principles of Good Water Governance
- Best practices in implementing good water governance
- Water diplomacy in the OSCE context

Moderator: Ambassador Tomislav Leko, Permanent Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the International Organizations in Vienna, Chairperson of the Economic and Environmental Committee

Rapporteur: Ms. Jenniver Sehring, Environmental Affairs Adviser, Office of the Coordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Speakers:

- Mr. Håkan Tropp, Managing Director, Knowledge Services Department, Stockholm International Water Institute
- Mr. Peter Glas, President, Netherlands Association of Regional Water Authorities, Chair of OECD Water Governance Initiative
- Dr. Benjamin Pohl, Senior Project Manager, Adelphi
- Ms. Eileen Hofstetter, Water Policy Adviser, Global Programme Water Initiatives, Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation

Discussion

13:00 – 14:30 **Buffet lunch hosted by the 2015 OSCE Serbian Chairmanship**
(Neuersaal Foyer, 2nd floor)

14:30 – 16:00 **Session II: Water governance across sectors: Fostering food and energy security**

Selected topics:

- Best practices in cross-sectoral dialogue and co-ordination of water policy
- The water-energy-food nexus
- New approaches to sustainable hydropower and efficient irrigation

Moderator: Mr. David Wiberg, Acting Director of the Water Programme, International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis

Rapporteur: Mr. Manav Sachdeva, Environmental and Economic Officer, OSCE Centre in Bishkek/Osh Field Office

Speakers:

- Mr. Gheorghe Constantin, Director, Ministry of Environment, Romania, Chair of the EU Water Initiative's Working Group on Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia

- **Mr. Cameron Ironside**, Programme Director, Sustainability, International Hydropower Association
- **Mr. Nicholas Bonvoisin**, Secretary, UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes
- **Mr. Tom Mollenkopf**, Senior Vice-President, International Water Association

Discussion

16:00 – 16:30	Coffee Break
16:30 – 18:00	Session III: Water governance and the environment: Protecting ecosystems and increasing water efficiency

Selected topics:

- Security-related benefits of sustainable management of water ecosystems
- Climate change and water governance - adaptive capacity
- Partnership frameworks for environmental protection and efficient use of water at local, national and transboundary level
- Technological innovations for efficient collection, treatment and re-use of water

Moderator: **Mr. Walter Kling**, Secretary General, International Association of Waterworks in the Danube Catchment Area

Rapporteur: **Mr. Leonid Kalashnyk**, Environmental Programme Officer, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Speakers:

- **Dr. Dejan Komatina**, Secretary, International Sava River Basin Commission
- **Mr. Rolf Olsen**, Senior Technical Lead, Institute for Water Resources, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Alliance for Global Water Adaptation
- **Ms. Ekaterina Strikeleva**, Head, Water Initiatives Support Programme, the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia
- **Ms. Jovana Husemann**, Research Associate, Institute for Sanitary Engineering, University of Stuttgart

Discussion

18:15	Cocktail hosted by the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, Hofburg, Ratsaal Foyer (5th floor)
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Tuesday, 27 January 2015

09:30 – 11:00

Session IV: Water governance at different levels

Selected topics:

- Community-based water governance approaches at local level
- Basin management approaches across administrative boundaries
- Challenges and opportunities in implementing water sector reforms

Moderator: Mr. Marco Keiner, Director, Environment Division, UNECE

Rapporteur: Ms. Dilara Abdullayeva, Third Secretary, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the OSCE

Speakers:

- **Dr. Aslihan Kerç**, Project Development and Implementation Co-ordinator, Turkish Water Institute
- **Mr. Andre Matoso**, Regional Director, Alentejo River Basin District Administration, Portuguese Environment Agency
- **Mr. José Anguel Rodrigues Cabellos**, Head of Planning Office, Guadiana River Basin Authority, Spain
- **Ms. Biljana Filipović**, Head, Department of International Co-operation, Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection, Republic of Serbia

Discussion

11:00 – 11:30

Coffee Break

11:30 – 13:00

Session V: Good water governance and transparency

Selected topics:

- Transparency in the water sector at local and national level: security benefits
- Fighting corruption in the water sector and promoting integrity
- Economic instruments for increasing water efficiency
- The role of civil society and the business sector in good water governance

Moderator: Mr. Jan van de Venis, Director of Legal Desk, Waterlex

Rapporteur: Ms. Magdalena Stankowska, Second Secretary, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Poland to the OSCE

Speakers:

- **Mr. Teun Bastemeijer**, Chief Adviser, Water Integrity Network
- **Dr. Carlos Mario Gómez Gómez**, University of Alcalá, Spain

- **Ms. Susanne Brandstetter**, Chair, Public Participation Expert Group, International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River
- **Ms. Sabina Jukan**, Manager, Aarhus Centre Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Discussion

13:00 – 14:30	Lunch Break
14:30 – 16:00	Session VI: Opportunities for exchange of knowledge and experience in water governance

Selected topics:

- Global and regional platforms for knowledge and information sharing on water
- Water governance in the global context
- Examples of sharing of technology and innovative methods of water management, including through private sector investments

Moderator: Ambassador Slavica Milačić, Permanent Representative of Montenegro to the OSCE

Rapporteur: Mr. Elton Qendro, Project Assistant, Governance, Economy and Environmental Issues Department, OSCE Presence in Albania

Speakers:

- **Mr. Soontak Lee**, Co-chair, International Steering Committee, 7th World Water Forum, Republic of Korea
- **Professor András Szöllösi-Nagy**, Co-Chair of the Political Processes Commission 7th World Water Forum, World Water Council
- **Mr. Martin Krause**, Practice Leader, Environment and Energy, Regional Centre for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, UNDP
- **Ms. Dragana Milovanović**, Head, Department for Participation in Strategic Planning, Management and International Water Co-operation, Water Directorate of the Republic of Serbia

Discussion

16:00 – 16:30	Coffee Break
16:30 – 18:00	Concluding Session

- Wrap-up of the discussions, lessons learned and identifying priority areas for future discussion and increased co-operation.
- Outlook to the 2nd Preparatory Meeting in Serbia

Moderator: Ambassador Vuk Žugić, Chairperson of the Permanent Council, Permanent Representative of Serbia to the OSCE, 2015 OSCE Serbian Chairmanship

Rapporteur: Mr. Bernhard Romstorfer, Intern, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Speakers:

- **Dr. Halil Yurdakul Yiğitgüden**, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities
- **Ambassador Thomas Greminger**, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the OSCE
- **Ms. Christine Weil**, Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Germany to the OSCE

Closing Statements

ANNEXES



PC.DEC/1131

24 July 2014

Original: ENGLISH

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

962nd Plenary Meeting

PC Journal No. 962, Agenda item 2

**DECISION NO. 1131:
THEME, AGENDA AND MODALITIES FOR THE
TWENTY-THIRD ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM**

The Permanent Council,

Pursuant to Chapter VII, paragraphs 21 to 32, of the Helsinki Document 1992; Chapter IX, paragraph 20, of the Budapest Document 1994; Ministerial Council Decision No. 10/04 of 7 December 2004; Ministerial Council Decision No. 4/06 of 26 July 2006; Permanent Council Decision No. 743 of 19 October 2006; Permanent Council Decision No. 958 of 11 November 2010; and Permanent Council Decision No. 1011 of 7 December 2011,

Relying on the OSCE Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension (MC(11).JOUR/2) and Ministerial Council decisions related to the environment, energy and water management,

Building on the outcomes of past Economic and Environmental Forums, as well as on the results of relevant OSCE activities, including follow-up activities,

Decides that:

1. The theme of the Twenty-Third Economic and Environmental Forum will be: "Water governance in the OSCE area – increasing security and stability through co-operation";
2. The Twenty-Third Economic and Environmental Forum will consist of three meetings, including two preparatory meetings, one of which will take place outside of Vienna. The concluding meeting will be held from 14 to 16 September 2015 in Prague. These arrangements shall not set a precedent for future meetings of the Economic and Environmental Forum. The Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, under the guidance of the OSCE Chairmanship for 2015, will organize the above-mentioned meetings;
3. The agenda of the Forum will focus on the impact of the following topics on the comprehensive security of the OSCE area:
 - Water governance as a prerequisite for environmental sustainability and for economic and social prosperity and stability;

- Promotion of dialogue in good water governance within the OSCE area through sharing best practices and lessons learned;
 - Raising awareness of the importance of water governance at all levels;
 - Water governance within the context of disaster risk reduction.
4. The agendas of the Forum meetings, including timetables and themes of the working sessions, will be proposed and determined by the OSCE Chairmanship for 2015, after being agreed upon by the participating States in the Economic and Environmental Committee;
5. Moreover, having a view to its tasks, the Economic and Environmental Forum will review the implementation of OSCE commitments in the economic and environmental dimension. The review, to be integrated into the agenda of the Forum, will address OSCE commitments relevant to the theme of the Twenty-Third Economic and Environmental Forum;
6. The discussions at the Forum should benefit from cross-dimensional input provided by other OSCE bodies and relevant meetings organized by the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, under the guidance of the OSCE Chairmanship for 2015, and from deliberations in various international organizations;
7. Moreover, having a view to its tasks, the Economic and Environmental Forum will discuss current and future activities for the economic and environmental dimension, in particular the work in implementation of the OSCE Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension;
8. The participating States are encouraged to be represented at a high level by senior officials responsible for shaping international economic and environmental policy in the OSCE area. Participation in their delegations of representatives from the business and scientific communities and of other relevant actors of civil society would be welcome;
9. As in previous years, the format of the Economic and Environmental Forum should provide for the active involvement of relevant international organizations and encourage open discussions;

10. The following international organizations, international organs, regional groupings and conferences of States are invited to participate in the Twenty-Third Economic and Environmental Forum: Asian Development Bank; Barents Euro-Arctic Council; Organization of the Black Sea Economic Co-operation; Central European Initiative; Collective Security Treaty Organization; Commonwealth of Independent States; Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia; Council of Europe; Council of the Baltic Sea States; Economic Co-operation Organization; Energy Community; Eurasian Economic Commission; Eurasian Economic Community; European Bank for Reconstruction and Development; European Environment Agency; European Investment Bank; Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; Green Cross International; European Investment Bank; International Atomic Energy Agency; International Energy Agency; International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA); International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea; International Maritime Organization; International

Monetary Fund; International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement; International Committee of the Red Cross; North Atlantic Treaty Organization; Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC); OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID); Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development; Organization for Democracy and Economic Development – GUAM; Organization of Islamic Co-operation; Regional Co-operation Council; Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification; Southeast European Cooperative Initiative; Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; Shanghai Co-operation Organization; United Nations Development Programme; United Nations Economic Commission for Europe; United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific; United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development; United Nations Environment Programme; United Nations Human Settlements Programme; United Nations Industrial Development Organization; United Nations Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs; United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction; United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees; UN Women; United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia; World Bank Group; World Health Organization; World Meteorological Organization; World Trade Organization; Advisory Group on Environmental Emergencies; Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit; International Strategy for Disaster Reduction; United Nations Children's Fund; Capacity for Disaster Reduction Initiative (CADRI); United Nations Disaster Assessment and Co-ordination; International Civil Defence Organization; World Food Programme; Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery; Inter-Parliamentary Union; Caucasus Environmental NGO Network (CENN); Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe (REC); and Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC); and other relevant organizations;

11. The OSCE Partners for Co-operation are invited to participate in the Twenty-Third Economic and Environmental Forum;
12. Upon request by a delegation of an OSCE participating State, regional groupings or expert academics and business representatives may also be invited, as appropriate, to participate in the Twenty-Third Economic and Environmental Forum;
13. Subject to the provisions contained in Chapter IV, paragraphs 15 and 16, of the Helsinki Document 1992, the representatives of non-governmental organizations with relevant experience in the area under discussion are also invited to participate in the Twenty-Third Economic and Environmental Forum;
14. In line with the practices established over past years with regard to meetings of the Economic and Environmental Forum, the outcomes of the preparatory meetings will be reviewed at the concluding meeting of the Twenty-Third Economic and Environmental Forum. The Economic and Environmental Committee will further include the conclusions and policy recommendations of the Twenty-Third Economic and Environmental Forum and the reports of the rapporteurs in its discussions so that the Permanent Council can take the decisions required for appropriate policy translation and follow-up activities.

OPENING and CLOSING REMARKS

CONCLUDING MEETING OF THE 23rd ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM

Welcoming remarks

**by Ambassador Lamberto Zannier
OSCE Secretary General**

Mr. Chairperson,
Excellencies,
Dear Colleagues,

I join our host in welcoming you to this Concluding Meeting of the 23rd OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum. It is good to see so many high-level representatives of the OSCE participating States, Partners for Co-operation, international, regional and non-governmental organizations, as well as from academia, civil society and the private sector with us today.

Since the First Preparatory Meeting of the Forum in January, there have been significant developments at the global level. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction was adopted by UN Member States in March 2015. In June consensus on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, a new framework for development financing was reached. And the United Nations also reached agreement on a new sustainable development agenda that will be adopted later this month at the Sustainable Development Summit in New York.

We are also only 10 weeks away from the Paris Climate Change Conference – COP21 – which aims to adopt a new, global agreement on climate change. Good water governance has an important role to play in achieving goals set in these processes. In this context, the year 2015 provides unparalleled opportunities for our Organization to explore synergies with our partners and take concerted action for a more sustainable and secure future.

Within the framework of this year's Economic and Environmental Forum process, we have facilitated a comprehensive discussion on water governance and its potential for increasing security and co-operation in the OSCE area. I am confident that the deliberations during the preparatory meetings in Vienna and in Belgrade have advanced a deeper understanding of water governance and its relationship with sustainable development, climate change and disaster risk reduction. Over the next three days, we will devote further attention to these linkages in dedicated sessions.

Allow me to share a few points that I consider important in the context of this meeting's discussions.

1. Water is a **strategic resource** and an essential element of national and regional security. Growing water demand, pollution, and climate change put water resources under stress and set water availability at risk. In this respect, the OSCE, as the world's largest regional security organization, should make full use of the potential offered by water diplomacy and water governance to increase security and stability in our region and beyond.

2. Water is a **common good**. Governing water resources in a transboundary context requires mechanisms, norms and agreements that are equitable, adapted to the specific context and take local traditions and conditions into account. Fostering local ownership, developing trust and the political will to move forward together are essential conditions that a regional organisation such as ours can help advance.

3. The countries in the OSCE region have the advantage of a **legally binding convention** – the so-called *UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes*, or, as it is often referred to, the Water Convention. **Legal and political co-operation** can mutually reinforce each other and contribute to achieving successful outcomes. There are a number of best practice examples in our region – some of them facilitated jointly by the OSCE and UNECE. [Following this opening session, UNECE will present their *Review Report on the implementation of OSCE commitments* in the field of water governance. This 3 comprehensive report has been prepared by the Secretariat of the Water Convention and is yet another concrete illustration of the lasting and fruitful partnership between our two organizations.]

4. The OSCE is well placed to support the participating States in various aspects of good water governance. They include:

- Establishing effective ***inter-sectoral co-ordination*** at local and national levels;
- Ensuring ***transparent and accountable decision-making***;
- Enabling ***stakeholder participation*** inclusive of civil society, youth, women and men, as well as the private sector and academia;
- Improving ***data and information sharing***; and
- Putting in place ***sound regulatory frameworks***.

5. **Local communities** should be involved in addressing water governance issues and be part of confidence-building efforts because the effects of water challenges are often most acutely felt at the local level. The OSCE, including through its Field Operations and the network of 59 Aarhus Centers in 14 countries, already engages with local communities on issues relevant to water governance and - more broadly – environmental governance in many locations.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We will continue supporting good water governance in our region, in close partnership with other international stakeholders, as demonstrated by OSCE Secretariat participation in the OECD Water Governance Initiative.

In the follow-up to the Sendai Framework, the Basel Ministerial Council Decision “Enhancing Disaster Risk Reduction” provides us with comprehensive guidance and we are taking concrete steps towards implementing our commitments.

Only a few weeks ago, together with the Serbian Chairmanship and the Government of Switzerland, we organized a seminar entitled “Co-operative water governance: catalyst for sustainable development and comprehensive security” at the 25th World Water Week in

Stockholm. The seminar discussed water co-operation in South-Eastern Europe and the lessons learnt from the floods in May 2014; and featured the Dniester River Basin as a 4 successful example of bilateral water co-operation, in this case between Ukraine and Moldova, that was developed with the support of the OSCE and UNECE.

Finally let us turn back to the global agendas I mentioned a minute ago.

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals represent a strong, ambitious, and visionary set of commitments. The OSCE can engage in areas such as water, climate change, energy, land degradation and disaster risk reduction, as well as gender equality, the promotion of inclusive societies and many others. My intervention at the upcoming UN Summit in New York will touch upon their linkages with security and the OSCE's role.

Regarding the COP21, the agreement to be reached in Paris, if it is reached, has the potential to limit global warming and avoid catastrophic and irreversible consequences that would have severe adverse implications for security. We will support the "Road to Paris" by organizing an OSCE Security Day devoted to "Climate Change and Security" on 28 October in Vienna.

As for this Forum, I expect that it will help us identify and further articulate the OSCE's role in the context of water governance, not least in view of the forthcoming Ministerial Council. But our discussions can also contribute to the larger debate on the contribution the OSCE can make to support the global process that will to an extent shape our agenda in the coming years and decades.

In conclusion, let me emphasise how much we appreciate the co-operation and partnerships we have built in the field of water governance with a number of international organizations, including in the framework of the Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC). These partnerships continue to strengthen our joint engagement to increase environmental security in the OSCE area.

I look forward to a productive discussion over the next few days. Thank you.

Keynote Address

by H.E. Ivica Dačić
Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE
First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs
Republic of Serbia

Excellencies,
Distinguished Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very pleased to speak today at the Concluding Meeting of the twenty-third Economic and Environmental Forum of the OSCE. On behalf of the Serbian Chairmanship let me express my gratitude to the Czech authorities for hosting this important event for so many years now.

Let me also warmly welcome our distinguished speaker, Swiss Foreign Minister Didier Burkhalter, and the OSCE Secretary General, Ambassador Lamberto Zannier.

I am also pleased to welcome representatives from the OSCE participating States, Partners for Co-operation, international organizations, civil society, academia and the private sector. This impressive group of participants underscores once again the role of this Forum as a unique platform for inclusive dialogue and for building strategic partnerships to address the most urgent economic and environmental challenges in the OSCE area.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Economic and Environmental dimension of the OSCE has traditionally been somewhat in the shadow of the other two dimensions. Taking into account the crisis in and around Ukraine and its economic underpinnings, as well as today's migration challenges which are happening at our very doorstep – in the OSCE region, the Economic and Environmental Dimension potential is more than obvious. We need to step-up our collective efforts, in the so called Second Dimension of the OSCE, in order to promote security, stability, prosperity and co-operation in our region. By strengthening the Second dimension we will be able to holistically tackle the Organization's comprehensive security approach and its relevance for a world going through economic hardships and social turmoil.

The possibilities for using the OSCE as a platform for dialogue within the economic-security nexus are vast. The OSCE can play a role in enabling us to return to shared perspectives and values with regard to economic co-operation and build bridges between regional and sub-regional formats. It is an important framework for the 57 participating States to identify ways for further strengthening OSCE-wide connectivity through co-operation, and this can go well beyond the economic field. Let us be honest, none of this will happen overnight. But the time has come for a thorough discussion on these issues.

This year marks the fortieth anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act. Although much has changed since 1975, the principles and commitments of this document and our collective responsibility to act in accordance with them remain as vital as ever for the OSCE and its participating States. In today's world, the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security and its commitment to dialogue,

co-operation, compromise and peaceful resolution of disputes are critical to rebuilding trust and confidence, which will help us create a positive agenda for the future.

The Economic and Environmental Forum process is an excellent example of this. By bringing together around the same table a wide array of different stakeholders – policy makers and experts, government officials, civil society and representatives of the private sector – the Forum facilitates the exchange of ideas and practical experiences on the most pressing economic and environmental issues affecting the OSCE region. Both strategic policy decisions and practical co-operation have emerged from the Forum's deliberations in past years. I hope that this year's Forum will be equally fruitful.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Serbian Chairmanship – in the framework of our joint work plan with Switzerland – has proposed to specifically focus on how good water governance can contribute to security and stability in the OSCE region, which can at times be a very challenging and politicized security issue. Although water is not a new topic for the OSCE, we believe that there is a need for greater political engagement, increased co-operation, and a better understanding of its complex connections with security and related challenges. Last year's devastating floods in the Western Balkans vividly demonstrated how important transboundary co-operation can be in addressing the negative impact of man-made and natural disasters.

The Serbian Chairmanship has focused on promoting dialogue and co-operation on good water governance within the OSCE area through the sharing of best practices and lessons learned and by raising awareness of the importance of water governance for security and stability at all levels – transboundary, national, and local. Good water governance should also include a gender and youth perspective to maximize environmental, social and economic benefits while contributing to increased security in the OSCE region.

The OSCE is the largest regional security organization under Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter. By tackling contemporary challenges like water governance, we can make a tangible contribution to global security and prosperity in a regional context. The adoption of the UN Sustainable Development Goals later this month, and the UN conference on climate change in Paris later this year, both of which are closely connected with water, make today's deliberations all the more timely and necessary.

Considering the successful outcomes of the preparatory meetings, I am confident that this Forum will provide critical inputs for Ministerial Council decisions in Belgrade later this year on how to advance security and stability in the OSCE area through good water governance. In particular, I look forward to your proposals for possible future follow-up actions that the OSCE Secretariat and the OSCE field operations could take in this area. On our part, we will gather and summarize the most important deliverables from the First and Second Preparatory Meetings in Vienna and Belgrade, as well as this Concluding meeting, and start working towards a comprehensive Ministerial Council Decision on this topic.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In promoting good water governance, as in other areas of our work, an integrated and cross-dimensional approach and international co-operation are crucial to our common success. Only by working together can we make real progress towards identifying and implementing mutually beneficial solutions to enhance water governance and security in our region. Promoting water governance across the OSCE region means promoting co-operation among participating States, as well as with other international organizations, the private sector and civil society.

I trust that at the end of this Forum we will have a clearer picture of our priorities for engagement in water governance and the most effective ways for the OSCE to achieve them, as well as to renew its commitments and ensure adequate and effective follow-up.

In this spirit, I would like to once again encourage all of you to contribute your ideas for improving water governance and co-operation, which will help strengthen security for citizens, communities and countries throughout the OSCE region and beyond.

Thank you.

Keynote Address

**by H. E. Didier Burkhalter
Head of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs**

23rd OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum

"Swiss lines of action and OSCE avenues to transform water from a source of conflict into an instrument for peace"

Prague, 14 September 2015

Minister
Secretary General
Ladies and Gentlemen, dear friends

It is a great pleasure to return to Prague and participate again at the Economic and Environmental Forum of the OSCE. I appreciate the opportunity to address you today for two reasons:

First, Switzerland attaches great importance to the second dimension of the OSCE. We are committed to strengthening the economic and environmental field of co-operation, and this forum plays a major role in this.

Second, this year's conference issue of water & security figures highly on the Swiss foreign policy agenda. We consider water a strategic component of our efforts to advance peace and security. Establishing water as an OSCE issue is therefore an objective that we very much support.

During the OSCE Security Day on Water last year, His Royal Highness Prince El Hassan bin Talal of Jordan argued that – and I quote – “an absence of water is the biggest and most effective weapon of mass destruction” – end of quote. In a similar vein, this year’s Global Risk Report of the World Economic Forum ranks water crises as the top global risk in terms of impact. The 900 decision-makers from the private and the public sector that were consulted for this report considered water crises to have a bigger potential impact than weapons of mass destruction and regional conflicts.

There is no doubt that water is an indispensable resource. Often, it is also related to major security risks. But water can also be – and this is my main message today – a powerful source of co-operation.

It is this notion of water as a driver for co-operation and development that is very much at the heart of Swiss water diplomacy. And it is this notion that should guide us when discussing the role of the OSCE in the field of water & security.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Water is essential for public health, food security, energy, and ecosystems. Today, this vital resource is facing unprecedented challenges.

Population growth, urbanization, a growing global middle class and changes in production and consumption patterns are directly impacting our water resources.

While the world population grew fourfold in the 20th century, freshwater withdrawals grew nine times. According to this year's World Water Development Report by the UN, global water demand is projected to increase by another 55% by 2030. The world is projected to face a 40% global water deficit if current trends continue.

Climate change adds to the water supply challenge by increasing the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events. Moreover, water resources are threatened by pollution. Millions of tons of sewage and sensitive waste are discharged every day directly into the world's aquatic ecosystems. This is impacting not only people's health. It is also causing immeasurable environmental degradation as well as economic loss.

Water is at the core of sustainable development. But water is not just a development issue. It is also a security issue. Competition over water can cause or fuel conflicts. Here, too, climate change exacerbates the risks of water-related conflicts, as it impacts on the variations in the distribution and availability of water resources.

Conflicts over water have already occurred in the Middle East, South Asia and other parts of the world. Water has even been used as a weapon of war, most notably in the Syrian conflict. In Syria, half of the production capacity of the country's water infrastructure has been lost as a result of war damage. On top of that, credible sources like the ICRC have documented numerous cases where water supplies for major cities such as Damascus or Aleppo have been cut deliberately by warring parties. Cutting water supplies has become a tactic of war to exert pressure on the other side. Such methods of warfare are a blatant violation of international humanitarian law.

Ladies and gentlemen

The challenges and risks associated with water are indisputable. Water security is one of the major issues to address – for us and the generations that follow. This is why it is so important that we engage to transform water from a source of crisis into an instrument for peace.

The potential for co-operation is evident. Let me illustrate this again with an example from the Syrian war – a context where we see much of the worst of what humans can do. In a watershed a few hundred km from Damascus, a huge irrigation scheme is occupied by opposing factions. There is fighting along various unstable front lines all over the irrigation fields. Remarkably, what we are observing in this particular case is that opponents who are fighting during daylight, sit together and negotiate a fair quota of water in the evening – with priority given to human consumption, domestic use and subsistence agriculture in the entire irrigation fields.

This is of course not a role model of how we envisage water co-operation. But the Syria example indicates that cooperative water solutions can be found even in the most difficult of circumstances.

It is this belief in the power of water co-operation that has guided Switzerland throughout the four decades of our engagement in the field of water. It is the same belief that has prompted us recently to develop lines of action on “water & security”.

These lines of action provide a compass to the work of the Swiss foreign ministry in the field of water & security. But these lines of action are also meant to inspire others to work on water & security, which is why we will publish them today.

Our lines of action make the case for a comprehensive approach when addressing the nexus of water & security. Rendering water an effective source of co-operation and security requires a broad toolbox, ranging from instruments of development co-operation and humanitarian aid to peace promotion and international law. The lines of action also sketch the bilateral and regional avenues in our work on water & security, and they outline how we work in multilateral processes and with the private sector to achieve the best possible results.

Since 2009, Switzerland has been engaged in so-called “Blue Diplomacy”. Our engagement in water diplomacy relies on the long-standing experience and expertise Switzerland has in transboundary water co-operation, for instance in the Rhine basin, one of the most important cultural and economic axes in Europe.

We have become particularly active in the development of new mechanisms for water-policy negotiation and coordination in order to promote diplomacy over surface water and groundwater in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. For instance, we are supporting efforts to strengthen good governance and management mechanisms in seventeen transboundary river basins worldwide, including in the wider Middle East.

In Central Asia, the integrated and sustainable management of water resources is key for development, peace and security. Switzerland is supporting several countries in the introduction of an Integrated Water Management approach, implementing pilot basin management examples and a comprehensive policy dialogue with the partners in the concerned ministries.

Following the request of five countries in the Central Asian region, Switzerland has also launched a hydro-diplomatic initiative. We appointed a special envoy for water in order to facilitate interstate dialogue and to contribute to the building of a regional vision and management mechanism of water-related challenges. After consultations by the Special Envoy and a visit I made to the region last year, the five Central Asian countries met in Basel to exchange views on regional water co-operation. A next meeting will take place early next year.

As for our most recent initiative, Switzerland will launch, together with partner States, a Global High Level Panel on Water and Peace in Geneva this November. The task of this panel will be to develop a set of proposals aimed at strengthening the global architecture to prevent and resolve water-related conflicts and to facilitate the use of water for building peace.

While independent, the Panel will work closely with the United Nations. UN-Water has accepted to become an observer. The Panel will build on Switzerland’s experience as well as on the wealth

of actors in International Geneva who work on water-related issues. The Panel will be able to make full use of Geneva as an international hub for water diplomacy.

This finally brings me to the question of OSCE engagement in the field of water & security. Strengthening the OSCE's portfolio in water diplomacy and sustainable water management, in particular in relation to conflict prevention and confidence building, has been a joint priority of the consecutive Swiss and Serbian chairs.

The OSCE area features more than 150 river and lake basins that are shared by two or more States. The OSCE has built a strong track record on supporting participating States in fostering good and joint water governance. More can and should be done.

Why does Switzerland consider the OSCE a vital actor and multiplier in water governance? Three reasons:

First, OSCE know-how in cooperative security and its comprehensive approach linking the environment and security are of great value when it comes to water governance. The OSCE can act as a facilitator and political platform, as was the case when legal frameworks for water governance between Ukraine and Moldova and between Kirgizstan and Kazakhstan were worked out.

The OSCE can also bring in its own expertise. For example, two months ago, there was an OSCE regional training workshop in Almaty on gender mainstreaming and conflict resolution in Central Asia's water governance, financed by Switzerland, Finland, and Norway.

Second, the OSCE has partnerships with other institutions that have in-depth knowledge in water governance, such as the UN Economic Commission for Europe. Many water-related projects of the OSCE take place within the Geneva-based Environment and Security Initiative. Through this initiative, the OSCE and five partner organisations seek to transform shared environmental risks into opportunities for co-operation.

A recent example is the trans-boundary climate change adaptation strategy that Ukraine and Moldova endorsed this year in the context of their bilateral co-operation treaty regarding the Dniester basin. This strategy is the work of experts that was facilitated by the OSCE and UNECE. Switzerland encourages more such joint initiatives to follow.

The third and final reason why we see an important role for OSCE in water & security is that this organisation is close to the people and has a strong presence on the ground. The OSCE works with civil society. And many of its field missions have played important roles in promoting water co-operation.

Let me recall the efforts by the OSCE Office in Tajikistan to facilitate transboundary water co-operation between Tajikistan and Afghanistan. Another example are the roundtable discussions, organized by the OSCE presence in Albania and OSCE headquarters, on how Aarhus Centres could foster public participation in trans-boundary water management in the South Eastern Europe region. Switzerland regards the almost 60 OSCE-supported Aarhus Centres in 14 participating States as useful platforms to engage citizens, governments and the private sector in a dialogue on environmental challenges.

I also wish to commend the OSCE for its efforts to mitigate the serious water supply crisis in the conflict-affected regions in Ukraine. By facilitating dialogue and local ceasefires, the SMM has been essential in enabling the repairs of damaged water supply infrastructure. The humanitarian and economic Working Groups of the Trilateral Contact Group have played an important role too in helping restore water infrastructure across the conflict region.

Switzerland has complemented these OSCE efforts with bilateral assistance to improving access to drinking water in Ukraine by delivering chemicals for water treatment. My country has been the first (and the only one so far) to send humanitarian convoys across the Contact Line. Another convoy is in the making. All these measures to improve access to water across the Contact Line, whether by the OSCE or Switzerland, are to the benefit of the people and help rebuild confidence between the parties to the conflict.

Ladies and gentlemen

The OSCE can address water holistically – from disaster risk reduction to water diplomacy. This is very much in line with Switzerland's approach to water and security. We encourage participating States to support the OSCE efforts to foster security through cooperative water governance. And we look forward to working with the Serbian Chairmanship and all of you in promoting water as an OSCE issue on the concrete road to the Belgrade Ministerial Council and on our common road to peace and security.

Closing Statement

by Ambassador Vuk Žugić

**Chairperson of the OSCE Permanent Council and Permanent Representative of Serbia
to the OSCE and other International Organizations**

Excellencies,
Distinguished Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour to speak on behalf of the Serbian Chairmanship at the closing of the twenty third OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum. First of all, I would like to thank all participants for the fruitful and lively discussions.

Over the last three days, the Forum has once more proved its added value in developing relevant political recommendations addressing common concerns and interests in the economic and environmental dimension of the OSCE comprehensive concept of security.

This year's Forum in particular has strengthened and enhanced focus on water governance in the OSCE region.

We had an ambitious agenda covering an extensive range of issues. The two thought provoking keynote speeches by CiO Dacic and Minister Burkhalter as well as the many other interventions underscored the urgency of increased co-operation on water governance within the OSCE region and the importance of a well-defined approach.

At the beginning of this year, as you all know, the Serbian Chairmanship identified water governance as its priority in the economic and environmental dimension. The discussions over the last three days have demonstrated that this was the right approach since it clearly showed that water is not only about development, health and food, but that there is also a clear connection to security related challenges in the OSCE region.

The catastrophic floods in the Western Balkans last year provided a powerful example of how vulnerable we are to natural disasters, and that they are not contained by national borders.

The floods have also demonstrated that water governance is critical to security and stability and can only be implemented successfully through co-operation across national borders.

Ensuring a framework for multi-sectorial and multi-stakeholder coordination in water governance is a necessity, and not only States, but also civil society, the private sector and local communities must all play an active role.

At this Forum, we heard numerous positive examples of how we can cope with water-related challenges. These successes had three things in common: they received the necessary attention at the political level, adequate resources were invested to address them, and they were the result of genuine co-operation and partnership at all levels.

This approach is very much in line with the relevant provisions in the Helsinki Final Act's Chapter on Co-operation in the Field of Economics, Science and Technology and of the Environment,

which gives a wide range of opportunities for participating States to develop mutual co-operation in the area of water governance. Building on this co-operation, we put water-related issues high on the OSCE agenda by including water scarcity and sustainable water management in our joint Serbian-Swiss work plan last year, and I have been very pleased to see how effectively this year's Forum has fostered dialogue and joint action on water governance.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Please allow me to share some observations with you which resulted from the deliberations we had during the course of the Forum.

First: The presentations and debates in the First and Second Preparatory Meetings, as well as the Concluding meeting, have clearly shown the close link between water governance and security. Water is a scarce resource that is critical to the well-being of people, the security of whole communities and regions without regard to national borders and at the same time it has the potential to deeply affect the stability of affected countries.

Second: Water governance is not only a relevant issue in relations between States, but it also concerns many different stakeholders within a State. Cross-sectorial dialogue, as mentioned by several speakers, is needed to ensure appropriate use of water resources. Integrating all stakeholders, particularly women and youth, in decision-making processes is critical to good water governance. The OSCE should use its unique expertise to increase efforts to strengthen national processes for stakeholders' engagement.

Third: Political will is critical to successful water governance when dealing with issues of security and stability. Although technologies for more efficient water use are increasingly available, technology alone is sometimes not enough. This is why we devoted the Forum to water governance rather than water management. By discussing and addressing governance related aspects like decision-making processes, transparency, and division of competencies we can strengthen security and stability through water issues.

Fourth: The discussions during the preparatory and concluding parts of the Forum indicate a strong interest among participating States for the area of water governance. As we move towards the Belgrade Ministerial Council Meeting in December, we must maintain the momentum and translate this political will into a sound and well-focused document, reaffirming and underpinning the OSCE mandate in the area of water governance.

Within such a document, several following points could be included, among others:

- Implementation of the principles of good water governance, in particular to broaden public participation and transparency in water governance;
- Increased use of environmental co-operation, including in the area of water, as a tool in diminishing tensions as part of a broader effort to prevent conflict, build mutual confidence and promote good neighbourly relations;
- Implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction;
- Increased investments in educating young generations on water governance, and strengthening of its collaboration with youth organisations;

- Promotion of a gender perspective in its activities related to water governance and water diplomacy;
- Coordination of water-related activities with other international and regional organizations active in this area;
- A mandate for the Office of the Co-ordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA) to expand the role of the OSCE in water diplomacy and continue its support for transboundary water co-operation;
- A mandate for the OCEEA to make increased use of co-operation in the area of water as a tool for de-escalating tensions, preventing conflict, building mutual confidence and promoting good neighbourly relations.

The Serbian Chairmanship will also advocate for a political declaration in the area of sustainable development at the Ministerial Council in Belgrade. The Forum's discussions repeatedly referred to the importance of the new UN Sustainable Development Goals and the crucial role that water plays in achieving them. The OSCE as a regional security organization under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter should also contribute to this global process.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Serbian Chairmanship I would like to thank again all participants for their significant contributions and active involvement. Let me thank in particular the OSCE Coordinator for Economic and Environmental Activities, Dr. Halil Yurdakul Yiğitgüden, and his team, as well as the OSCE Prague Office for their excellent co-operation in preparing and coordinating this year's Forum. I would also like to warmly thank the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic for once again hosting the concluding part of the Forum in this beautiful and always fascinating city.

Let me also express my gratitude to the speakers, panellists, moderators and rapporteurs for their valuable inputs, the economic and environmental officers from OSCE field operations for their outstanding efforts, and our interpreters for their exceptional services.

I wish you all a safe trip home.

Thank you.

Closing Remarks

**by Ambassador Antje Leendertse
Head of the Task Force for the 2016 German OSCE Chairmanship
Federal Foreign Office, Germany**

Excellencies,
Dear Colleagues,

Let me start by thanking our Czech hosts for having us here in this beautiful setting!

I would also like to thank SG Lamberto Zannier, the Coordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities Dr. Yiğitgüden and his team as well as the Serbian Chairmanship for convening and organizing this meeting.

I want to thank all of you for doing the important work in the EEF 2015. Your work highlighted not only a very important topic but also the work of the OSCE as a mediator and the project work of the field missions which deserve visibility.

The Topic of the EEF cycle 2015, “water governance”, was well-chosen and very timely indeed.

The sustainable development goals that are to be adopted in the U.N. in September highlight the importance of the water issue in its many facets for international co-operation, and rightly so.

Water is the basis of life, of human development. Good water governance and international co-operation are becoming ever more important in times of climate change, population growth, and global trends in economic growth of emerging markets, in pollution and in changing patterns of consumption and production.

Even in times long before we spoke of “globalization”, a rules-based and cooperative approach to using common resources - for example rivers in border regions - was crucial for avoiding conflict.

Today, this becomes ever more important and we have to work hard towards good governance, transparency and Cross-border co-operation.

They form the basis for confidence between participating states and therefor for stability and security.

All of this makes “water governance” a highly relevant policy area for the OSCE and for our common goals and commitments.

Germany has been very active in water diplomacy for a number of years.
In 2008, we started the so-called Berlin Process on water issues in Central Asia. Just last week ago, we hosted another ministerial conference on this issue in the Foreign Office in Berlin.

Representatives of all five Central Asian states agreed to enter into the third phase of this Process (2015-2017). We linked this initiative to OSCE work and had Dr. Yiğitgüden participate and speak in Berlin.

As incoming chair, we encourage the institutions and field missions to continue their work on water governance issues, and encourage participating states to strengthen co-operation in this field.

Dear Colleagues,

Good Governance issues will more generally be a focus of our plans for the Chairmanship 2016.

Generally, we want to strengthen the economic and environmental dimension in the OSCE because we feel that we could draw on its potential to a higher degree: for concrete work to the benefit of our societies and for deepening and restoring confidence among participating states.

Our work will, of course, be based on existing commitments that make up the framework of the 2nd dimension (Helsinki Final Act, the document of the Bonn conference of 1990, Maastricht strategy of 2003, work of the Group of Friends of the Second Dimension (2009).

Within this framework, Germany will seek to highlight particularly the economic aspects of the 2nd dimension.

For the EEF cycle we have chosen the topic “Strengthening Stability and Security through co-operation on good governance” and the EEF decision mandates us to address three issues:

- Good governance as a basis for business interaction and good investment climate as well as for the fight against corruption, money-laundering and the financing of terrorism;
- Good migration governance to support stable economic development in countries of origin, transit and destination;
- Good environmental governance to enable sustainable economic development.

Good Governance and an economic angle on these issues will be the overarching theme to all the three.

What is true for water governance is true for other policy fields as well:

Good governance has implications for trust and confidence and thus for security and stability within and among participating states. It is also the basis of sustainable economic growth.

The dates for the two EEF preparatory meeting and next year's Forum in Prague have been decided upon:

- the 1st Preparatory meeting will be in Vienna: 25.-26. January 2016.
- the 2nd Preparatory meeting will take place in Berlin: 19.-20. May 2016.
- the Concluding Meeting in Prague will take place from 14.-16. September 2016.

The precise agenda of the first preparatory meeting in Vienna will be presented to the Economic and Environmental Committee in Vienna this autumn in close co-operation with the Office of the Coordinator for OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities.

Finally, I would like to frame the more general thinking in Berlin on the second dimension with a few outlines: We would like to involve the business community more in the in the 2nd dimension work in order to make it more relevant.

We believe the business community has important views to share that can help participating States in conceptualizing economic policy and in tapping the potential of economic co-operation for their respective societies.

Their views can also help to take stock of existing barriers to sustainable connectivity and economic co-operation in the OSCE area.

“Connectivity” is a term which is used in many other multilateral contexts that deal with regional co-operation and cross-border infrastructure, for example in ASEM, ASEAN or in the context of the Western Balkans as part of the so called “Berlin Process” which we launched in 2014 and which just saw the second summit, in Vienna this August.

The way we understand it, “Connectivity” is a key-word for the connection between economic exchange, economic policy, trust, stability and security. And we believe, it can be a key term for better economic exchange between participating States.

We start from the assumption that participating States continue to share an interest to stay engaged in dialogue on economic matters in order to strive for better living conditions for their societies and for better co-operation and security vis-à-vis their neighbors.

Perhaps in this context it would also be helpful to look beyond the borders of the OSCE eastwards. Trade and economic exchanges are of course already taking place across the OSCE area, predominantly so in rules-based ways. But we would give an impetus to deeper discussion on how to further practically improve them, and involve the business community for that.

We are therefore thinking of organizing a Chairmanship Event that involves the business community and could address issues of “Connectivity”:

For example: issues of transport infrastructure, issues in border and customs administration, and other practical and policy issues which are all relevant to foreign investment, trade, economic growth as well as for combatting corruption and other aspects of good governance in the OSCE space. We want to highlight these issues from a practical and results-oriented point of view.

This would go hand in hand with projects that are already being carried out by OSCE field missions, for instance on trade facilitation or anti-corruption.

We should use the OSCE’s trade mark of being a forum for exchange of experiences with a broad membership better than in the past to advance dialogue on how economic governance can be improved.

Dear Colleagues,

Everyone knows these are challenging times and there is only so much that the Chairmanship country can do.

Having said that:

We will do our very best to help renewing and rebuilding dialogue, trust and security. And we want to have this dialogue also in the second dimension, and to use the second dimension for that dialogue.

The incoming chairmanship is looking forward to working with you, on the second dimension as well as the other dimensions and on the crucial regional issues in the OSCE.

Thank you.

SECOND PREPARATORY MEETING OF THE 23rd ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM

Welcoming remarks

by Mr. Aleksandar Nikolić
State Secretary, Ministry of Interior, Republic of Serbia

Dear guests, dear colleagues,

First of all on behalf of the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Serbia I would like to take this opportunity to wish you a warm welcome and fruitful work during the 23rd OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum and your stay in Serbia.

The leading topic chosen for this Seminar is the water governance, and it is not just one more environmental issue but one of the most important challenges we are currently dealing with, especially concerning last year flooding that occurred in Western Balkans region. Therefore, we would like to see discussion not only about improvement of the entire water governance, as the set of rules, practices, and processes related to the management of water resources and water courses, but to hear your expert opinions on good practices and developing practical tools to assist state agencies and other stakeholders in the OSCE countries in engaging effective and sustainable water governance policies.

You are all probably aware that during the May 2014 floods Serbia faced not only unprecedented emergency situation in its history but also experienced unprecedented engagement of foreign civil protection and rescue units. Therefore, we learned from our own experience how co-operation can increase security and stability and this was one of main reasons for organizing this kind of Seminar during the Serbian Chairmanship in the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

A natural disaster caused by extreme floods that last year struck Serbia had certainly disrupted most, if not all the aspects of daily life, including the lives of citizens, their basic social and related needs, the local economic activities, functioning of public services, transportation, the production of energy, just to name a few. Therefore, we would like also to see a discussion on organizational issues regarding the worst scenarios for related emergencies and planning of coping capacities for large scale disasters. In our case, and what I think it is the situation with the majority of the OSCE countries, the engagement of all available national resources in protection and rescue activities is possible, but at one moment it will be clear that these resources will not be sufficient and eventually you will have to ask for a humanitarian assistance in terms of the international flood rescue teams, the teams for high capacity pumping, etc. both on bilateral basis, as well as multilaterally through the European Union Civil Protection Mechanism. Therefore, during the Emergency Situation, we accepted assistance from 14 countries (22 teams with 563 members in total). Another kind of international humanitarian assistance was related to delivery of food and water, equipment, etc. Beside many countries, organizations and other

private donors, it is important to emphasize that the OSCE reacted promptly during floods and donated one high capacity pump and three others that were useful in that very moment.

As it was said at the beginning, in dealing with a large scale disasters there must be co-operation with other countries but as it was said during the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, in Sendai, Japan, there is a general agreement that we must move from managing disasters to managing disaster risk. Therefore, regarding severe weather conditions and apparent climate changes disaster risk reduction and specifically water governance is something we surely will be dealing in future years and thus it is important to emphasize its importance on every occasion. With the completion of the assessment for the entire state territory, the Republic of Serbia will be covered with prospected potential risks that may threaten the territory of cities and municipalities, and at the same the establishment of civil protection structures at the local level (the level of cities and municipalities) will be completed.

The main limiting factor in planning and undertaking preventive operational measures is unfortunately, the continual deficiency of financial resources on the territories of local authorities (cities and municipalities), which has impact on reducing the effects of the consequences of disasters. But something needs to be done and, as disaster risk reduction is becoming national and local priority with strong institutional basis for implementation, disaster risk reduction policy is generally accepted by all stakeholders.

Regarding identification, assessment and monitoring of risks and enhancement of early warning system, Serbia is adopting standards and assessment methodology and identifying risks from natural and other disasters are in accordance with the recommendations of the European Union. Guidelines on the methodology for the development of risk assessment and plans for protection and rescue in emergency situations have been adjusted to EU regulations.

Beside this there is a constant work on improvement of functioning of protection and rescue system stakeholders at national and local level by connecting with scientific and research organizations, and good co-operation with the media with goal to promote a policy of disaster risk reduction with the availability of information to citizens in order to strengthen the public awareness and culture of safety in the field of protection, rescue and disaster risk reduction. This is also a good place to mention one more aspect of co-operation between Sector for Emergency Management of the Ministry of Interior and the OSCE Mission to Serbia which was presented in the form of a joint work on a Family Guide for Emergency Preparedness and Response.

Accurate, comparable and appropriately scaled information on disaster losses, hazards, vulnerabilities and risks is fundamental for designing and implementing effective policies and programmes that reduces disaster risk. In partnership with the OSCE and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), UNDP and CIMA Foundation, the SEM/MoI recently organized the Workshop “Learning from past disasters: from recording loss data to fostering prevention policies” regarding development of a database on disaster losses based on DesInventar. Beside this the OSCE Mission to Serbia provided necessary donation for organizing several Emergency Management table top exercises for county level across Serbia.

Also in order to improve regional co-ordination and operational co-operation through joint monitoring information exchange and joint trainings, a number of protocols with neighbouring and other countries were signed.

Once again enjoy your stay in Serbia. Thank you for your attention.

Opening Address

**Dr. Halil Yurdakul Yiğitgüden
Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities**

Thank you very much Mr. Nikolić,

Allow me to express my gratitude for the warm hospitality of the Serbian OSCE Chairmanship and for its commitment to promote good water governance as a fundamental tool to contribute to sustainable development, build confidence and help prevent conflict between countries sharing water resources.

Excellencies,

Distinguished participants,

It is an honour to address this opening session of the Second Preparatory Meeting of the 23rd OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum and continue our deliberations on water governance. During the first preparatory meeting in Vienna, at the end of January, we discussed the basic elements of water governance, its importance with regard to cross-sectoral co-ordination and environmental protection, as well as the need for multi-level approaches and transparency.

During the discussions, it was reiterated that the multiple water challenges related to global growth and climate change can threaten social and political stability and that good water governance is key in meeting water demands and preventing conflict. Among the recommendations derived from the speakers was that the OSCE should mainly focus on multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary approaches to water security and should foster transboundary co-operation and exchange of knowledge.

Moreover, the importance of involving stakeholders and the public at large was stressed by several speakers. This is in particular relevant at local level, where the involvement of stakeholders and collaborative decision-making processes can ensure responsiveness to local needs and contribute to increasing transparency, affordability of operation and maintenance costs, and provision of better and equitable services.

We are very pleased the OSCE Serbian Chairmanship decided to have this meeting in Belgrade. Gathering here, in a region that experienced in 2014 an unprecedented flooding which affected Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Croatia, is the right place to focus on the importance of water governance for disaster risk reduction and to build upon last year's EEF and the Basel Ministerial Decision on Disaster Risk Reduction.

Last year, our Second Preparatory Meeting under the Swiss OSCE Chairmanship was held in Montreux. We were discussing disaster risk reduction, at a time, when the peak of the floods hit the Western Balkans. It brought the urgency of this topic immediately to the mind of all participants. At the Concluding Meeting of the 22nd EEF in Prague in September last year, one

session was devoted to the flooding disaster in South Eastern Europe and on the national responses and cross-border co-operation in the aftermath. Among the key issues raised was the efficiency of cross-border co-operation in responding to disasters. All panellists back than agreed that regional co-operation had been excellent. Not only I was deeply impressed by the spirit of solidarity and co-operation among the concerned countries, it also became obvious that the civilian population, NGOs and volunteers were of tremendous support in effective disaster response. The inclusion and participation of the public in water governance is therefore another topic on which we would like to focus during this meeting.

Excellencies,

Allow me a few words on the **specific sessions** of this meeting:

The **first session** is dedicated to the experiences and lessons learned in the context of water governance during the 2014 flooding disaster in South Eastern Europe. It will look at the regional and international co-operation in flood response, the security challenges associated with flooding, and the role of the OSCE field operations in flood response and recovery. This session will also discuss if and how environmental risks and challenges can be opportunities for co-operation.

While the first session is focussed on South Eastern Europe, we will broaden the scope in the **second session**, which will look at water, security and disaster risk reduction in a more global perspective. It will address water governance in the context of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, which was adopted in March this year. When discussing security risks of water-related disasters, it is important to look not only at extreme weather events like floods and droughts, but also at slow onset disasters as climate change and their challenges for water governance. We will also hear from several participating States about the security benefits of transboundary water co-operation related to disaster risk reduction.

The **third session** is devoted to the sharing of experiences on water governance in the context of disaster risk reduction. Speakers from several OSCE participating States will share their best practices on flood and drought response and effective governance approaches for addressing water-related disasters and climate change. This will also include OSCE activities to support DRR in its participating States and the implementation of the Basel Ministerial Decision on DRR.

After this session, I would like to invite you to an informal **side event** with an exhibition of posters and other visibility material that present the practical activities on water governance and disaster risk reduction of our field operations and the Aarhus Centres in South Eastern Europe. As you know, my Office, together with several OSCE field operations, has been supporting the establishment and activities of Aarhus Centres, that are providing a forum for dialogue and partnership among stakeholders and support the implementation of the UNECE Aarhus Convention. I am happy to welcome several representatives of Aarhus Centres, who joined us for this meeting and are ready to tell you more about their work and its impacts during this side event.

Tomorrow, our focus will be mainly on awareness raising und participation in water governance. **Session IV** is dedicated to awareness-raising on the benefits of good water governance and will

look at this topic from various angles: from the view of foreign and security policies, from the perspective of investments and development assistance, in relation to sustainable development and with the concept of Water Stewardship.

Finally, the **fifth session** looks at water governance from different stakeholders' perspectives. It will address the subjects of public participation, gender and water governance, and of awareness raising among different stakeholders such as civil society, local communities, and youth.

Before we conclude the second day and depart for the field visit, we will have another interesting **side event** organized by the Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit. It will focus on technological risk reduction in the framework of disaster risk reduction, and share the experience of identifying industrial hazards during the 2014 South Eastern Europe flood and their possible impacts on human and environmental health.

Excellencies,

With your permission, I would like to welcome our key-note speakers and thank them, as all other experts who join us today, for sharing their in-depth knowledge on different aspects of water governance.

Without further I due, let me introduce you Mr. **Dražen Kurečić**.

Mr. Dražen Kurečić of the Ministry of Agriculture of Croatia, who is the President of the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River Basin – ICPDR. The ICPDR is for sure one of the strongest international river commissions – involving 15 contracting parties and covering a range of issues - from water quality monitoring to flood protection to prevention of accidents. The ICPDR has also developed strong tools for the active involvement of stakeholders and civil society on all levels of its work.

Mr. Kurečić, please you have the floor.

[...]

Thank you very much Mr. Kurečić.

I would like now to pass the floor to our second key-note speaker **Mr. Marco Keiner**.

Mr. Marco Keiner is Director of the Environment Division of UNECE, a long-term and close partner of the OSCE in the Environment and Security (ENVSEC) Initiative. As a host of several environmental conventions, including the Water Convention and the Aarhus Convention, the UNECE is a forerunner in developing tools for good water governance, in particular in transboundary contexts, and in fostering participation of different stakeholders and the public on all environmental matters.

Marco, please you have the floor.

[...]

Thank you Marco.

I would like now to open the floor to delegations wishing to contribute to the discussion.

I would like to strongly encourage you to actively participate and contribute to our Forum's deliberations. I am looking forward to fruitful discussions

[...]

I see no further requests for the floor. This session is closed and we will resume at 11:00.

Thank you.

Keynote Address

by Mr. Dražen Kurečić

President of the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River

Assistant Minister, Ministry of Agriculture, Republic of Croatia

For a long time floods were not open threat to security but in last ten years this has radically changed, among other, due to climate changes. The fact that this issue is on the agenda of meeting under umbrella of Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, clearly shows that we all recognize flood risk as one of our main threat. By mutual help, through learning from experiences of the countries which were severe hit by floods and with joint efforts when it comes to development of forecasting systems we can prevail this threat and give our citizens security they need.

Both European and regional security from the adverse effects of water and protection mechanisms we have today has primarily been maintained through the building up of bilateral security agreements on water management co-operation. In addition to that, bilateral and multilateral frameworks of dialog are established with multilayered arrangements, and the best example of such international body dealing with all water management issues, and in particularly flood issues is ICPDR.

The necessity and benefits of promoting dialogue and co-operation among stakeholders is inevitable. Meeting like this is opportunity to bring together awareness and knowledge from professionals, actually, from practitioners. European basins are inseparable, sharing knowledge and experience in these fields is of vital importance in planning for the future.

Since July the 1st 2013 Croatia is the youngest, 28th member of European Union. By adopting the EU acquis, the Republic of Croatia has also adopted legislation, among other, Directive on the assessment and management of flood risks (Flood Directive).

At this moment, most of EU countries, including Croatia, go through the public consultation process for Draft of the 2nd River Basin Management Plan and 1st Flood Risk Management Plan, as part of 2nd RBMP. The Plan will be adopted by the Government of the Republic of Croatia by December 1st 2015.

Countries of Danube basin in the same time are also finalizing the 2nd Danube Basin Management Plan and 1st Danube Flood Risk Management Plan. In this regard, stakeholder workshop for the Plan will take place in Zagreb, on 2nd and 3rd July 2015.

Experience and help of other countries in water management, as it is well known, is especially valuable when it comes to flood prevention and flood management. In this respect, going back to catastrophic floods in May 2014, which took the most important- human lives- and caused severe material damage in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, shows that nature has its own scenario and sometimes it cannot be foreseen.

There are many opportunities for joined projects which can improve existing or develop new models for hydrological forecasting e.g. improvement of data exchange and early warning system and this is what we specially support and emphasize in ICPDR but also in bilateral meetings.

According to agenda, meeting will end up with clear and practical conclusions; water related issues have always been on OSCE agenda and international community needs such facilitators who bring experts, organizations, politicians and other community members together towards a common goal.

Keynote Address

by Mr. Marco Keiner
Director of the Environment Division
United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to address you at this second preparatory meeting of the OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum, having already contributed to the first meeting. As you may recall from that meeting, water governance, the focus of this year's Forum, is an issue of importance to the member States of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe – UNECE – and is a topic on which UNECE has a long and successful history of co-operation with OSCE.

Today I will address a particular aspect of water governance – awareness-raising and public participation – because participatory and accountable water governance is necessary for well-informed choices and can help prevent or reduce negative effects of investments on development and on water resources. Ignoring a wide participatory approach can be costly and lead to uncertainty for government, civil society and business alike. And without awareness there cannot be participatory governance.

For the past 20 years, UNECE has worked to strengthen water governance and water co-operation through environmental treaties and policy instruments and by working with countries in strengthening institutions and capacities.

The UNECE member States have negotiated treaties that provide crucial frameworks for water governance and environmental democracy in the pan-European region and beyond:

The Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes – or Water Convention – and its Protocol on Water and Health;

The Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context – or Espoo Convention – and its Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment; and

The Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters – or Aarhus Convention – and its Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers.

The Water Convention and the Espoo Convention both operate in a transboundary context. This is of tremendous importance in the pan-European region where more than half of all freshwater resources cross-national boundaries. We need to cooperate in the management of natural resources, in tackling environmental threats and in increasing security and stability. And

that means the involvement of numerous stakeholders and good water governance at many levels, from local to regional.

The Water Convention is an important legal framework for improving water governance and integrated water resources management, in particular at the basin level. It strengthens transboundary water co-operation and measures for the ecologically-sound management and protection of transboundary surface waters and groundwaters. The Convention requires intersectorial co-operation, public participation, transparency through data exchange for example and much more. In addition, and very importantly, the Convention requires riparian Parties to enter into agreements for their shared waters and establish joint institutions for their management.

The Water Convention provides an intergovernmental forum for discussing transboundary water co-operation and sharing good practices, but also supports countries through assessment, capacity-development, guidance and projects on the ground.

Many of these projects on the ground are carried out in co-operation with OSCE. I will pick out one particular example, of the Dniester River Basin shared by Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, where UNECE and OSCE have supported the riparian countries in the framework of the Environment and Security Initiative for several years to improve their water co-operation.

This led to, among other successes, the development and signature in November 2012 of the bilateral Dniester Treaty. That agreement was developed in a process that included civil society, first through the participation of NGO representatives in the expert consultations on the draft text then in public hearings organized in the two countries. The public's comments were then taken into account in the revision of the draft text. The resulting Treaty provides for public access to information and public participation in decision-making.

Indeed many of the basin-level and bilateral agreements that countries have established within the framework of the Water Convention provide strong opportunities for the public. That is not by chance as the Convention requires that its Parties ensure that information is made available to the public on the conditions of transboundary waters, on measures taken or planned to be taken to prevent, control and reduce transboundary impact, and on the effectiveness of those measures.

The co-operation between UNECE and OSCE on the Dniester continues. At the end of April, a strategy for adaptation to climate change for the Dniester, facilitated by UNECE and OSCE was launched at a high-level event in Kyiv. The strategy aims to increase the effectiveness of adaptation by locating measures where they have the optimum effect and it promotes a common understanding on climate change impacts and necessary adaptation measures from the transboundary perspective. With this, the Dniester is now one of the very few basins worldwide with a transboundary adaptation strategy.

Let me thank OSCE again for the good co-operation and for supporting countries to implement the UNECE Water Convention.

UNECE does not only play a role in transboundary water governance. Indeed, transboundary water co-operation can hardly be sustainable without well-functioning co-ordination between different ministries and stakeholders within countries. Water policies must not be shaped just by respective national water agencies, there must be broad discussions, taking into account interests of different water users. UNECE has therefore supported the development of platforms for such regular water policy discussions in nine countries through the process of National Policy Dialogues in the framework of the EU Water Initiative. Over the past eight years, these national platforms have helped to modernize water policies in many countries. NGO representatives participate in the intersectorial dialogues and, in some countries, the main meetings are supplemented by stakeholder events. Again, OSCE has been involved, as these national dialogues always feature a co-ordination role between donors active in the field of water to make sure there is no duplication of activities.

The UNECE Water Convention is supplemented by a Protocol on Water and Health that aims to protect human health and well-being by better water management, including the protection of water ecosystems, and by preventing, controlling and reducing water-related diseases. It is the first international agreement of its kind adopted specifically to attain an adequate supply of safe drinking water and adequate sanitation for everyone. Parties to the Protocol commit to set national or local targets in relation to the entire water cycle.

Therefore, the Protocol on Water and Health also has an important role to play in water governance in our region. It recognizes that access to information and public participation are essential. It builds public awareness of issues related to water and health. The Protocol specifically commits its Parties to make appropriate provisions for public participation, within a transparent and fair framework, and ensure that due account is taken of the outcome of the public participation while setting targets to ensure a high level of protection against water-related disease, when developing water-management plans and when reviewing and assessing progress.

Numerous countries have followed this path with the assistance of the Protocol's joint secretariat, provided by UNECE and the WHO Regional Office for Europe. For example, in December we assisted Serbia with the setting of its targets in a participatory process. In the Republic of Moldova we are working with many national stakeholders to implement measures to achieve the country's targets for water and sanitation.

The experience under that Protocol is that public participation can be hard to achieve due to a lack of awareness among the public of its rights and among the public authorities of their obligations, as well as the lack of national legal frameworks and cross-sectoral co-operation. There may also be political reluctance to engage the public, lack of access to information and budgetary constraints to running public-participation processes.

However, public participation gives the public the opportunity to express its concerns. It also enables public authorities to take due account of such concerns, which is vital to enhance the quality and the implementation of the decisions adopted to improve access to drinking water and sanitation and to protect human health.

In this regard, I would like to mention another key instrument: the Aarhus Convention and its Protocol on PRTRs which go to the heart of the relationship between people and their government thereby promoting environmental democracy. Their aims include not only environmental protection and sustainable development, but also such overarching themes as government accountability, transparency and responsiveness what make their provisions relevant for implementation of other instruments. Water management therefore should be applied in the light of concepts and principles of the Aarhus Convention and its Protocol.

Furthermore, the Aarhus Convention requires its Parties to promote the application of the Convention's principles in international environmental decision-making, which also include the work of joint bodies for transboundary water co-operation.

The Aarhus Convention has proved to have an unprecedented value for transboundary water co-operation as it grants the rights to be exercised by the public "without discrimination as to citizenship, nationality or domicile".

The Protocol sets forth a specific regime for wastewaters, for example an off-site transfer of pollutants in wastewater beyond the boundaries of a facility via a sewer or any other means, such as containers or tank trucks. Many provisions of the Protocol are most important for transboundary water management, when it comes to the use of relevant data from various economic sectors for the purposes of water management and transboundary water co-operation. The Protocol too promotes informed public participation

And again, I would like to thank OSCE for the valuable co-operation. Aarhus Centres and the OSCE are key partners of the UNECE for implementing the Aarhus Convention and its Protocol on the ground through building capacities and raising awareness. Aarhus Centres serve as an essential resource base for spreading environmental democracy and a valuable multiplier of the Aarhus principles.

That conclusion can be drawn under much of UNECE's work on environmental governance: yes, there are gaps in implementation and capacity needs. But the good governance practices and legal frameworks that the UNECE policy instruments introduce and define have enormous benefits in terms of well-informed decision-making. Good decisions lead to actions that can be implemented effectively and efficiently, have public support and foster sustainable development. Good environmental governance is in everyone's interest.

Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen, UNECE is pleased to work with you in preparation for the twenty-third OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum. I look forward to our continuing co-operation in the coming months on this important topic

Closing Remarks

by Dr. Halil Yurdakul Yiğitgüden
Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Dear Ambassadors,

Dear Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In concluding the Second Preparatory Meeting of the 23rd OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum, please allow me to express my gratitude for the constructive discussions, the insightful presentations, the competent moderation and the ideas put forward.

Let me shortly outline the main discussions we have had over the last two days. The keynote speeches by President of ICPDR, Assistant Minister Kurečić and Mr. Keiner of UNECE have underlined the importance of participatory and accountable water governance, in particular, in the context of disaster risk reduction. The keynote contributions highlighted a number of legal and institutional multilateral frameworks that offer the potential and tools for more effective decision-making in governing waters and addressing associated disaster risks.

We have been able to learn extensively about the management of the 2014 flooding disaster in South Eastern Europe, including valuable insights about individual countries' approaches, regional and international co-operative responses and the role of the OSCE. As noted by many of the speakers, challenges associated with the disasters can also provide opportunities for building further co-operation and solidarity, including across borders. I would like to commend those who have presented a range of useful lessons and reflections from South-Eastern Europe - which are also relevant across the OSCE region.

An extensive discussion was dedicated to addressing water, security and disaster risk reduction in a more global context. These deliberations benefited from a presentation on the recently adopted Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015 – 2030). A number of important linkages between water governance, disaster risk reduction, climate change and security were identified, including security benefits of transboundary water co-operation for disaster risk reduction.

The year 2015 has on several occasions been highlighted as an important year for acting on synergies between these areas, also in the OSCE context, given this year's conclusion of several global processes, including the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai, expected adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals in New York and negotiations for the Paris Climate Change Conference.

A number of best practices on flood and drought response and examples of effective governance approaches for addressing water-related disasters and climate change from several participating States were presented. The OSCE's on-going endeavours to translate

political commitments on disaster risk reduction into practical outcomes on the ground were also referred to as having an important role in the context of water governance.

Discussions referred to water as an issue of foreign and security policies due to its complex interlinkages with many aspects of development and stability, as exemplified in the nexus-concept. Transboundary water co-operation along with good water governance holds many benefits ranging from security to environmental and economic benefits. The OSCE has shown that it can holistically address water – from DRR to water diplomacy. With its longstanding tradition of dealing with all aspects of security and its presence on the ground, it is in an ideal position to act as a facilitator to find solution to water challenges in the OSCE area.

Our deliberations underlined the indispensable role of different stakeholders in the process of formulation and implementation of effective strategies and plans to address water governance issues. The OSCE network of Aarhus Centres was highlighted as an effective instrument in catalysing public participation. The role of youth as the agents of change and future decision-makers makes youth particularly well placed to be active players in water governance. Non-governmental organizations active in the field of environment and water were noted as important contributors to endeavours aimed at building confidence and trust.

We will thoroughly review the recommendations that have been generated over the last two days and look at possible follow-up activities. My Office has significant experience in the area of water governance and will continue to build on this experience also within the framework of the Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC) to support OSCE participating States.

I believe the exchange of experience will continue during a field visit to the municipalities in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia that have been affected by the 2014 flood. Those of you who join the field trip will have an excellent opportunity to be exposed to first-hand accounts and experience of these municipalities in facing up to the disaster.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would also like to say a few words about the Concluding Meeting in Prague in September. An important component of every concluding meeting is a review of the OSCE commitments related to the theme of the Forum on that specific year. Allow me to note that this year's review is being prepared by UNECE, a long-term key partner of the OSCE, also within the ENVSEC Initiative. We are looking forward to the outcomes of this year's review.

The Concluding Meeting will consolidate the outcomes of the Forum discussions throughout the year. It will help crystalize conclusions and recommendations for OSCE's continued action in the area of water governance.

Thanks to the rapporteurs, a Consolidated Summary including the main key suggestions and recommendations made by the participants during the deliberations will be prepared by my Office and shared with all of you in the coming weeks.

I would like to thank the Serbian Chairmanship, the moderators, speakers and rapporteurs, the interpreters, the conference service staff, as well as the colleagues from my Office for their joint contribution to the success of this event.

I also want to thank all of you for your active contribution and wish an informative field visit and a safe trip back home.

**Information Note
Field Visit
to the Flood-affected Municipalities in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina**

Introduction

Between 13 and 18 May 2014, a low-pressure cyclone designated Tamara and Yvette, affected a large area of Southeastern and Central Europe, causing floods and landslides in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and Croatia.

Three months' worth of rain fell in only three days, making this the heaviest rainfall in the region since records began in 1894. The floods came at a high cost of human lives: in Serbia there were 60 casualties, of which twenty six were as a result of drowning (including one fire-fighter), while 23 people lost their lives in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

The United Nations, World Bank and European Union supported the assessment of post-disaster recovery needs in BiH, working with governments at all levels. The floods were estimated to have caused the equivalent of nearly 15 percent of GDP in damages (9.3 percent of GDP) and losses (5.6 percent). In sum, the total economic impact of the disaster (destruction or severe damage to property, infrastructure and goods as well the effects of destruction on livelihoods, incomes and production, among other factors) is estimated to have reached 2.04 Billion EUR.

Most of it impacted the private sector; families, small, medium and large businesses, and agricultural producers, including an undefined number of vulnerable sectors of the population. The hardest hit economic sectors were agriculture, transport and productive activities. 74 municipalities were identified 'as affected' based on secondary reports, municipal documentation and field visits. In total floods caused the displacement of 89,981 persons, while a total of 43,249 housing units were partially damaged or completely destroyed. In the case of BiH, an additional security hazard is linked to the fact that landmines contaminated over 70% of the flood affected zone.

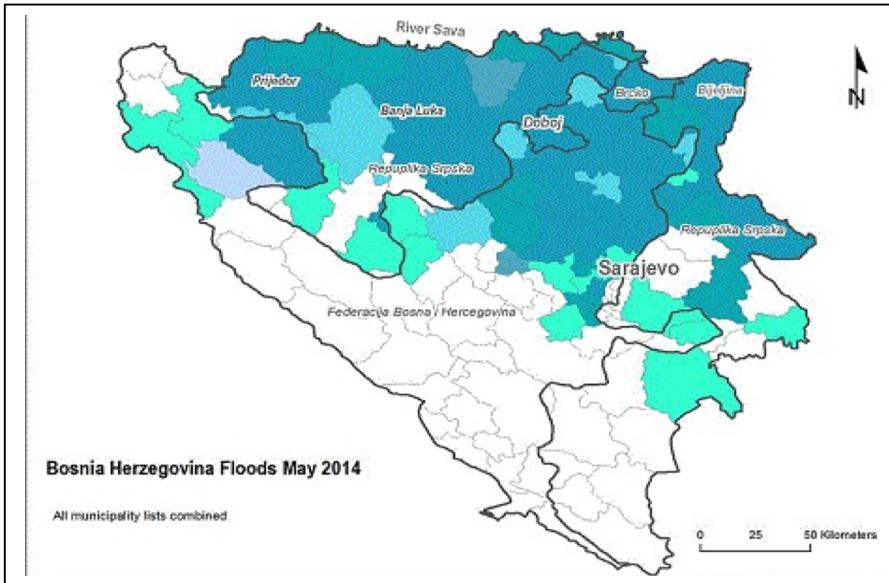


Figure 1
Map of
affected
areas in BiH

Bijeljina. The city of Bijeljina was among the nine most affected areas during May 2014 floods. Some 35,000 – 40,000 inhabitants were directly under threat, of whom approximately 10,000 inhabitants were evacuated (some 1,500 people were housed in collective centres). The floods did not result in any fatalities, injuries or epidemics. Approximately 7,300 households, with approximately 6,700 housing units were inundated. 102 houses were totally destroyed. Also, 539 companies were under water, as well as two-thirds of arable land. Approximately 190 tons of carcasses of dead farm animals were removed during the clean-up operation. Overall, damages in Bijeljina were estimated to close to 10 million EUR.



Figure 2
Bijeljina under
water

Serbia

The Government of the Republic of Serbia conducted a post-disaster needs assessment after the floods and landslides that occurred at the end of May 2014. The European Union, the United Nations and the World Bank, provided financial and expert support to conduct the assessment. The assessment revealed that the total effects of the disaster in the 24 affected municipalities amounts to EUR 1,525 billion, of which EUR 885 million (57% of the total effects) represent the value of destroyed physical assets, and EUR 640 million (43% of the total) refer to losses in production. When considering the additional affected municipalities, the total value of disaster effects would rise to EUR 1.7 billion. Because of the flooding, some 32,000 people were evacuated from their homes, out of which 25,000 were from Obrenovac. The majority of evacuees found accommodation with relatives, but some 5,000 required temporary shelters in camps established by the Government and the Serbian Red Cross.

Obrenovac. The city of Obrenovac was hit hardest by the floods, with an estimated 90% of the town flooded. During the night between 15 and 16 May, nearby Kolubara river, collecting waters from southerly mountains, suddenly rose several meters above its banks and flooded the city,

catching the residents by surprise. The entire city was evacuated. During 18 May, the water level dropped, which enabled the evacuation of the citizens of Obrenovac to be carried out by trucks instead of boats. As of 20 May, the total number of evacuated persons exceeded 30,000. During the flooding period, an estimated 300,000 households were left without power. The largest thermoelectric power plant in Serbia, TPP Nikola Tesla, which supplies close to 50% of electricity in Serbia, lies in the vicinity of Obrenovac, but was saved from danger.



Figure 1 Map of Affected Areas in Serbia



Figure 2 Map of Obrenovac under water

Šabac. Peak flood waters from Sava River hit Šabac on 18 May, but the embankments survived, strengthened by efforts of the army and several thousand volunteers. Flood waters reached 6.3 metres (above the usual level of the river), the highest on record, endangering Šabac and Sremska Mitrovica on the left bank. In anticipation of the floods, a 7.3-metre (24 ft) dam was erected.

FIRST PREPARATORY MEETING OF THE 23rd ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM

Opening Address

by Ambassador Vuk Žugić
Chairperson of the Permanent Council
Permanent Representative of Serbia to the OSCE
2015 OSCE Serbian Chairmanship

Excellences,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Chairmanship in Office of Serbia, it is my sincere pleasure to welcome all of you to the First Preparatory Meeting of the 23rd OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum.

I would like to thank the Office of the Coordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities for their efforts in organizing the first major OSCE event in 2015, dedicated to the topic "Water governance in the OSCE area – increasing of security and stability through co-operation".

I warmly welcome Ms. Stana Božović, State Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Serbia, Prof. John Anthony Allan, Professor of Geography from the King's College in London and Dr. Mohamed Ait Kadi, from the Ministry of Agriculture and Marine Fisheries of the Kingdom of Morocco and thank them for addressing us here today, as key-note speakers.

I would also like to welcome all representatives of the OSCE participating States and Partners for Co-operation, high-level officials from ministries and agencies, representatives of international, regional and non-governmental organizations as well as experts from the business sector and academia and last, but not least, the officers from the OSCE field Missions in charge of economic and environmental activities.

We are pleased to have you all here and we hope that we will have fruitful discussions on this important matter at hand. With regard to this, and in light of the motto of the Forum – "water is fundamental, water unites, and water connects", I encourage all participants to actively and freely engage in the deliberations and to provide their views and ideas on the security aspects of Water Governance in the OSCE area.

During this year, we will strive to determine and specify how better water governance can contribute to the increase of security and stability in the OSCE. As we have seen last year, the devastating floods in the Western Balkans proved to be a good example on how transboundary co-operation can be of importance in addressing negative impacts of disasters. Our vision is to promote dialogue on good water governance within the OSCE area, through the sharing of best practices and lessons learned, and raise awareness of the importance of water governance at all levels – transboundary, national, and local. With this regard, we would like to point out that,

within the OSCE area, there is a number of transboundary water agreements which can serve as excellent examples on how to deal with contemporary and future challenges.

We have envisaged that the First Preparatory Meeting will also have an introductory purpose, where we will have the opportunity to learn about the very principles and basics of Water Governance. During the course of our discussions, we will deliberate on improving integrated and cross-sectorial approaches to water resource management, fostering food and energy security, protecting ecosystems and increasing water productivity, reducing pollution and increasing collection, treatment and re-use of water. We will also consider the opportunities for providing mutual assistance and exchange of information, particularly in the area of sharing of technology and know-how.

We believe that one of the tasks of the country chairing the OSCE is to promote the broader capacity of economic and environmental dimension in strengthening the synergy between OSCE's dimensions and its potential in contributing to the general OSCE's agenda. Even though there has certainly been some positive progress in this Dimension, we consider that the second dimension of the OSCE has remained underutilized, despite its essential role in the comprehensive approach to security. Having in mind that the OSCE is, first and foremost, a security oriented organization, there needs to be a clear link to security in our discussions, and I hope that in the next two days we will hear concrete examples on how the OSCE can contribute in this ever more important matter. Therefore, we once again reiterate our position that the ongoing "Helsinki +40" process is a good opportunity to tackle this issue.

The OSCE Chairmanship of Serbia will continue to support the strengthening of this dimension in order to provide the participating States with assistance and expertise needed for responding to the new economic and environmental challenges.

I thank you all for your attention and wish you a successful and productive Meeting.

Opening Address

**by Ambassador Lamberto Zannier
OSCE Secretary General**

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I warmly welcome all of you to Vienna to the First Preparatory Meeting of the 23rd OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum devoted to water governance in the OSCE area.

Water is not a new topic for the OSCE, but one that calls for more political attention, more co-operation, and more understanding of its complex inter-linkages with security and the related future challenges.

I just came back from the World Economic Forum in Davos, where I participated in a panel discussion on climate change and extreme weather events. The economic community is well aware that climate change, natural disasters and water crises are major threats to sustainable development and prosperity. In its yearly Global Risk Reports, the World Economic Forum lists water crises constantly as one of the highest global risks. In this year's report - released very recently - water crisis is identified as the top 1 global risk in terms of possible impacts. Also the security and defense communities of many states are increasingly aware of the challenges posed by the nexus of food, water, energy and climate change.

Being such an essential element of national and regional security, water has been on the OSCE's agenda since the 1975 adoption of the Helsinki Final Act. Let me mention some of the key documents in this respect.

The 2003 Maastricht Strategy Document for the OSCE Economic and Environmental Dimension refers to the need for co-operation for sustainable management of shared natural resources, including water.

In the 2007 Madrid Declaration on Environment and Security, participating States reaffirmed their commitment to improve environmental governance by, *inter alia*, strengthening the sustainable management of water. They also adopted a Ministerial Decision on Water Management that emphasized closer collaboration with the UNECE and other international organizations in the sphere of water management, and called upon participating States to enhance co-operation on water management.

Also the OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum process has focused on water issues already several times, including in 2002, 2007 and 2008.

These decisions and discussions have been translated into many concrete project activities to support participating States in their efforts for sustainable water management. Nevertheless, in light of the increasing pressures on water, the OSCE, as the world's largest regional security

organization, has to give even more attention to water and increase its co-ordination and co-operation with its partners on that matter.

It is meanwhile a widely acknowledged fact that the water crisis is mainly a crisis of governance. The water challenges demand a broad understanding of water resources as a common good that we have to protect, use and share responsibly. We need a comprehensive approach; we need to talk not only about water management, but about its governance and all its different aspects.

Effective water governance requires involvement of all concerned stakeholders, including civil society, the private sector and academia. Transparency and access to information are the primary prerequisites for this.

Good water governance also requires horizontal co-ordination between different sectors and in case of transboundary basins – between different states. It also necessitates mainstreaming of the gender perspective. Only then, we are able to maximize environmental, social and economic benefits and contribute to increased security in the OSCE region.

The two-way relationship between water and security - water as a source of conflict and water co-operation as a tool for conflict prevention - makes “water” an important topic for the OSCE. This security perspective is what the OSCE can add to the international water discourse.

We are grateful to the Swiss and Serbian Chairmanships who identified sustainable water management as one of the priorities of their joint work plan for 2014-2015. During last year's Economic and Environmental Forum, water-related disasters were high on the agenda. It was just before the Second Preparatory Meeting, that Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia were hit by the most devastating floods since 120 years. This tragedy reminded us on the urgency of the topic. On the other hand, the impressive joint response by the affected states and people revealed the benefits of co-operation and solidarity in case of such a large-scale disaster.

Last year in Basel, the 57 OSCE participating States agreed on a Ministerial Decision on Enhancing Disaster Risk Reduction. They recognized that sustainable use and management of water, along with other natural resources, is essential for the prevention of disasters. The participating States also committed to further expand the OSCE's good practices gained particularly in the field of water management and flood risk management. This year's Forum will build upon these results.

In July last year, we organized a Security Day devoted to Water Diplomacy. We had the privilege to have His Royal Highness Prince El Hassan bin Talal of Jordan with us as a key note speaker along with many other distinguished speakers and experts. One of the key messages from the Security Day discussions was that in the area of water, we have to focus on policy instead of politics and we need to have a multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary approach. During this Forum, we will hear examples for such approaches in the OSCE participating States. At the same time, there is a need to put water high on the political agenda, particularly within security and foreign policies. The OSCE is well placed to follow both these tracks: support practical efforts for good water governance through project activities in our participating States, and at the same time raise water on the political agenda.

I am also delighted to note that the interest in good practices related to water governance in the OSCE area goes beyond our region. To give you an example, a Workshop on Environment and Security Issues in the Southern Mediterranean Region held in Vienna in December provided the opportunities for experts from both the OSCE region and Mediterranean Partners for Co-

operation to actively discuss a range of pressing environment and security issues, including transboundary water co-operation.

This year is very timely to concentrate on water. In March, the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction will be held in Sendai, Japan. In April, the 7th World Water Forum will take place in South Korea. In August, the World Water Week in Stockholm will celebrate its 25th anniversary. In September, the Sustainable Development Goals are expected to be adopted by the UN General Assembly – including a dedicated goal on availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

Finally, in December, the 21st session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in Paris will hopefully bring the world a step forward towards mitigating and adapting to climate change. I am sure that climate change will accompany us steadily during our deliberations throughout the Forum this year. Water is one of the resources most affected by climate change, and dealing with these effects poses additional challenges to water governance.

Water crises manifest themselves in different ways: floods in one place, scarcity and droughts in another, severe pollution problems in yet other locations. Everywhere, however, changed or reduced availability of clean freshwater has far-reaching effects on society, economy and security. Let me reiterate once again: If we want to be serious about conflict prevention, we have to address water-related challenges to security.

This year's Forum process will give us ample opportunity to discuss ways to further develop the OSCE's role in this important area. We will do this in close concert with other international actors, foremost our partners in the Environment and Security – ENVSEC -Initiative with whom we have a long-standing co-operation on water projects. I wish to express my gratitude to the speakers and to all participants for joining us here in Vienna to take an active part in our deliberations.

Thank you.

Opening Address

**by Dr. Halil Yurdakul Yiğitgüden
Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities**

Excellencies,
Distinguished participants,

It is an honour to address this opening session of the First Preparatory Meeting of the 23rd OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum. The focus of this year's Forum is linked to security in a profound way: in the absence of good water governance, water might become a source of conflict. At the same time, well governed water provides opportunities to build confidence and help prevent conflict between those sharing water resources.

I am very pleased to welcome so many reputed experts who joined us to share their in-depth knowledge on different aspects of water governance. Today, we have with us many government officials from the OSCE participating States and Partners for Co-operation, representatives of international and bilateral organizations, of international NGOs, academia and the private sector.

Within the Economic and Environmental Dimension, water has always been high on our agenda. Over the years, we have built a strong record of projects supporting participating States in strengthening water governance at national level as well as in a transboundary context. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe – also as the holder of the UNECE Water Convention- has always been one of our main partners in this endeavour.

I would like to use this opportunity to give you a few examples of what my Office and our colleagues in the Field Operations have been doing in the field of water governance:

In South-Eastern Europe, we have been involved in the International Framework Agreement on the Sava River Basin since its early stages and also contributed to the work of the International Sava River Basin Commission. Currently, our engagement in the region is more targeting community-based disaster risk reduction, particularly through the network of Aarhus Centres. At this point, I would also like to refer to the OSCE Mission to Serbia which has a long track record in supporting participative flood risk management. They have done so already long before the May 2014 floods. The Mission has invested significant efforts towards capacity building and community engagement in flood risk reduction, often together with the Aarhus Centres network. Similarly, the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina continues to support policy makers in addressing disaster risk reduction plans from a regional perspective, as well as the Aarhus Centres network in their work with local communities to increase their engagement in shaping local flood response plans.

Let me now turn to Eastern Europe, where eight years of our joint work with Moldova and Ukraine has led to the signing of the Treaty on the Dniester River Basin in 2012. This is a crucial step towards establishing a sound legal framework for good water governance at transboundary level. The Treaty broadens the existing co-operation to cover the entire river basin and all sectors that are important for the management and protection of shared waters. We continue our support to the Dniester Basin through several projects within the framework of the Environment

and Security (ENVSEC) Initiative. One of the most recent results is a draft basin-wide strategic framework for climate change adaptation developed within the framework of an OSCE-led ENVSEC project on climate change and security. The project is financed mainly by the European Union's Instrument for Stability and the Austrian Development Agency and implemented together with UNECE, UNEP, UNDP and REC.

In the South Caucasus, together with UNECE, we have facilitated negotiations between Azerbaijan and Georgia on a co-operation agreement on the management of the Kura River Basin. We organized six rounds of bilateral consultations to develop a legal framework for co-operation on water pollution, biodiversity, emergency situations, information sharing and public participation. The draft Agreement also envisages the establishment of a joint commission for protection and rational use of water resources of the Kura River Basin. The Agreement is currently under consideration by Azerbaijani and Georgian Ministries of Foreign Affairs. The OSCE stands ready to continue its support and facilitate the finalization of the agreement.

In Central Asia, thanks to our Office in Tajikistan, the OSCE has long been engaged in facilitating transboundary water co-operation along the Upper Amu Darja River - also known as the Panj River - between Tajikistan and Afghanistan. I would also like to mention our support, together with UNECE, to the establishment and operation of a bilateral water Commission between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in the basins of the Chu and Talas Rivers. A new follow-up project on the Chu and Talas Rivers is currently under preparation. At this point, let me underline the support and commitment of particularly the Centre in Astana. Their support to basin councils and to capacity building for Integrated Water Resources Management requires special recognition. Efficient irrigation is another area where several OSCE Field Operations in Central Asia are actively engaged.

Let me underline that most of our activities related to water governance are taking place in the framework of the Environment and Security Initiative. For over a decade now, ENVSEC has been a unique mechanism to create synergies and jointly address environmental challenges, inter alia, related to water.

Excellencies,

Good water governance based on the principles of co-operation has an essential role to play for building trust and strengthening security. The fundamental importance of good and co-operative water governance for security and stability within and across borders calls for continuous dialogue and involvement of a broad spectrum of stakeholders at different levels.

Our agenda for the next two days will provide an opportunity for this. Allow me a few words on the specific sessions of this meeting:

Water is a medium that links air and land through the hydrological cycle. Water is also a vital link between people, communities and countries that are sharing it. Well governed water is essential to maintain public health and sound environment as well as to foster stability. In the first session, we will discuss the water governance concept, principles underlying good water governance, as well as best practices in implementing it.

Energy and food production heavily depend on freshwater supply. Pressure on water and land resources in the OSCE area is increasing due to population growth, changing consumption patterns and climate change. Responding to these challenges requires more effective accommodation of future energy and food demands as well as environmental considerations.

The second session today will be dedicated to water governance across sectors with a focus on fostering food and energy security. The session's deliberations will in particular touch on the water-energy-food nexus and new approaches to sustainable hydropower and efficient irrigation.

Freshwater ecosystems are among the most extensively altered systems on Earth. Rivers, streams, and lakes have experienced various changes as a result of large-scale water diversions, introduction of invasive species, overharvesting, pollution, and climate change. The third session will discuss protection of ecosystems and increasing of water efficiency. The session will also look at climate change in the context of water governance.

Governing water resources involves a range of stakeholders at local, national, regional, and international levels. While water often appears to be a local issue, even local water challenges may have implications transcending boundaries and national borders. In the fourth session, we will take a closer look at water governance at different levels with a focus on community-based water governance and basin management.

Lack of transparency and corruption are both a cause and a result of poor water governance. Transparency, access to information, and integrity build a sustainable foundation for good water governance and reduce the potential for conflict. The fifth session will focus on transparency as the vital prerequisite of good water governance including the roles of economic instruments, civil society and the business sector.

Exchange of knowledge and experience is crucial to develop evidence-based policy, make informed decisions, raise awareness and build trust and confidence between different stakeholders, including at transboundary and regional level. Sharing of technology and innovation on water management has a valuable role to play in this process. The sixth session will enable us to have a lively discussion on these aspects.

In concluding, I would like to welcome you all once again and I strongly encourage you to actively participate and contribute to our Forum's deliberations. I am looking forward to fruitful discussions.

Thank you for your attention.

Keynote Address

**by Ms. Stana Božović
State Secretary**

Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection, Republic of Serbia

Ladies and gentlemen,

Distinguished members of the Forum,

Please allow me to greet you on behalf of the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection as well as on my own behalf, and to thank you for giving Serbia the honor to chair the OSCE in 2015.

This is an extremely important year both for the Republic of Serbia and the whole region.

Through joint work, we will realize the importance of regional co-operation, especially in activities concerning the protection of the environment, especially water protection.

We have been entrusted with a great responsibility and obligation, but this is also an opportunity for Serbia to contribute greatly to the progress of the whole region.

We particularly point out water governance in the member countries of the OSCE – increasing security and stability through co-operation.

My commitment as a person responsible for environmental protection in the Republic of Serbia in 2015 will be focused primarily on the protection of River Danube and its tributaries, sustainable use of natural resources, as well as increasing security and stability of the countries in the region.

I also wish to point out that I will advocate for a quick and efficient exchange of information between all countries in the region, concerning environmental protection with particular emphasis on water protection.

A timely exchange of information is of great importance since it is the main instrument for the prevention of damage and accidents caused by significant water pollution and pollution of the environment.

Pollution represents a serious problem, especially pollution by organic matter and nutrients.

It is also necessary to work on the education and raising public awareness regarding the protection and management of waters in the region.

From the aspect of human safety and security we have to put special emphasis on climate change, which have greatly affected huge floods in the region and represent main threat to Danube River Basin and all its tributaries.

I would particularly stress the importance of good regional co-operation during catastrophic floods in May 2014.

On this occasion I also wish to express our strong support and commitment to regional co-operation, the intention to continue maximum engagement on further improvement of co-operation as well as my gratitude for the financial support that has so far been provided to the Republic of Serbia by the European Union and other donors.

The political will of the Danube River basin countries and the EU was necessary for the signing and ratification of the Danube River Protection Convention.

In this way the necessary framework or mechanism for sustainable environmental management of the Danube River basin was created.

This agreement legally binds countries to cooperate on the issues and fundamental problems related to the water management of the Danube River and of the waters in its catchment area, with the inclusion of all available legal, administrative and technical measures with respect to conservation and environmental protection.

All Danube River Basin countries that have already become members of the EU, as well as those that have started their accession process, are required to comply with the EU directives related to water management and the environment, in particular the EU Water Framework Directive, the EU Nitrates Directive and the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive.

In joint efforts for the protection of river Danube a significant role belongs to the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River.

It is important to note that the Republic of Serbia shares the interest with other countries in the region and actively participates in the work of the International Sava River Basin Commission.

Since one of the priorities of the Government of the Republic of Serbia is the EU accession, we must be aware that the realization of this priority requires hard work on the implementation of the requirements stipulated by EU directives in the field of water management, protection from adverse effects of water and navigation issues.

The tasks that are before us call for serious work and investment of large financial resources, especially at the local level.

I put special emphasis on the following priorities and goals that throughout 2015 will be significant for addressing issues concerning the protection and water governance in OSCE participating states:

- Implementing the principles of good water governance through the application of best

practices in implementation, which includes the reduction of the impact of pollution caused by urban wastewater in the whole region, then the development of local projects that will address the issue of wastewater treatment;

- Giving priority to security of sustainable management of aquatic ecosystems, as well as consider the impact of climate change on this resource;
- Providing an opportunity for establishing partnership framework for environmental protection and efficient use of water at local, national and transboundary levels;
- Maximizing the use of economic instruments for greater efficiency in the field of water protection;
- Focusing on the transparency in the water sector at regional, national and local levels, etc.

I sincerely hope that our joint efforts and the involvement of professional institutions of all countries in the region, as well as other international bodies and organizations will continue towards completion of all planned activities for improvement of the legal framework, as well as our friendly relations and co-operation of mutual interest, related to the conservation and sustainable use of water resources in OSCE participating states.

I wish you successful work and thank you for your attention.

23rd OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum

FIRST PREPARATORY MEETING

« Increasing water security through effective water governance »

**Dr Mohamed AIT KADI
Chair of GWP Technical Committee**

Vienna, January 26, 2015

Plan of this talk

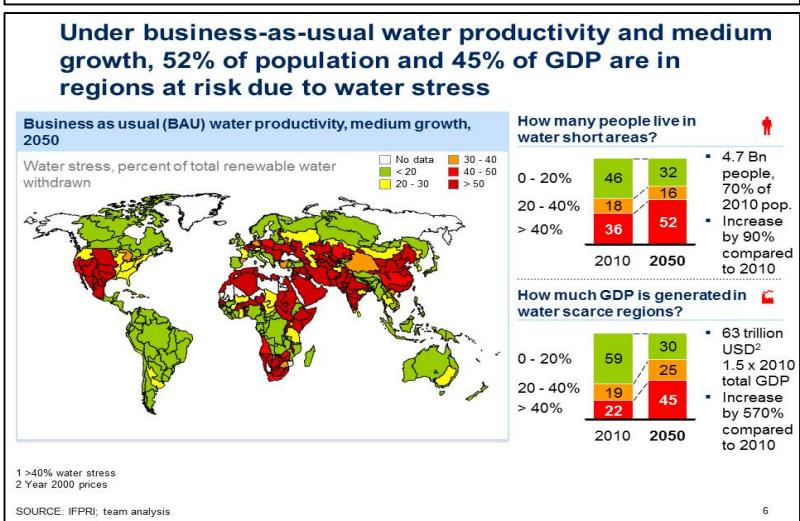
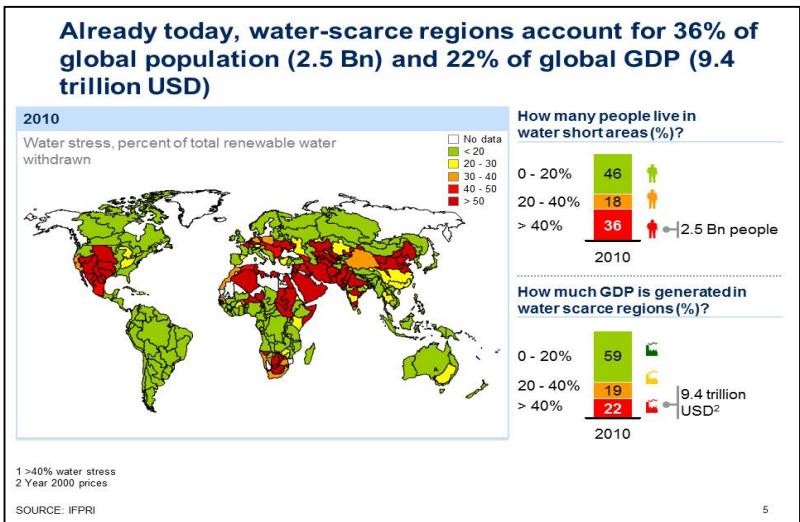
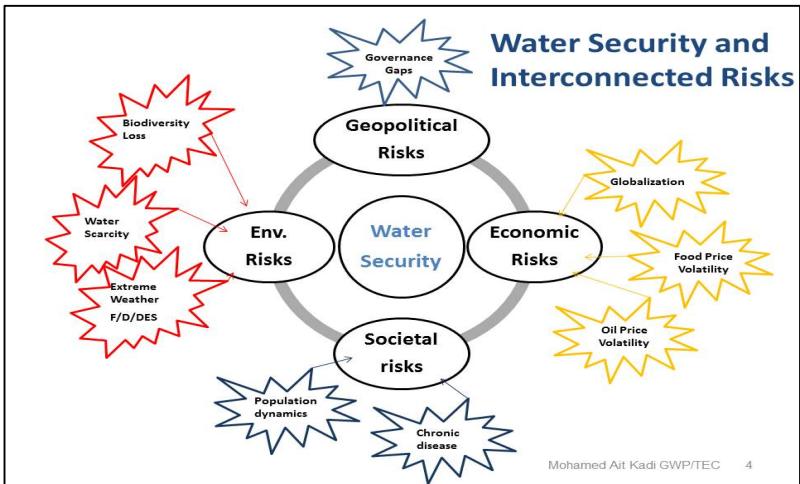
- 1. Why water security is a global concern?**
- 2. What actions do we need to enable effective governance and sustainable use of water resources?**

Water Security = A Global Concern

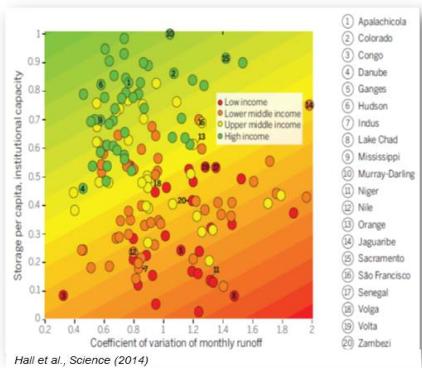


Ban Ki-Moon
Secretary-General
UN, New York

« As the global economy grows, so will its thirst. This is not an issue of rich or poor, north or south. All regions are experiencing the problem of water stress. There is still enough water for all of us – but only so long as we keep it clean, use it more wisely and share it fairly. Governments must engage and lead, and the private sector also has a role to play in this effort.. »

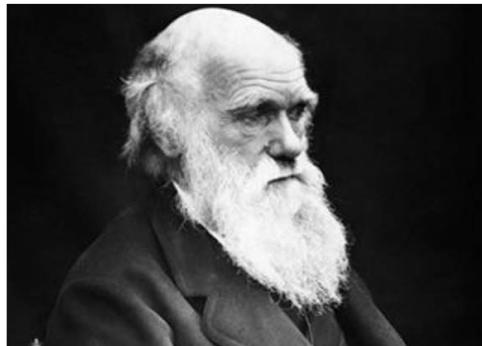


Water Endowments Matter



Countries with simple hydrologies & high investments in water security have high incomes

Basins with population > 2 million
Colors reflect GDP per capita
Horizontal axis = hydrological complexity
Vertical axis = investment in water security (storage, institutions, information)



It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change.

Mohamed Ait Kadi GWP/TEC

8

Water governance in the OSCE – increasing security and stability through cooperation

OSCE Preparatory Meeting – Vienna – 26-27 January 2015

OSCE Security & Stability
depend on Sustainable Ecosystems

The environment does not need people

People need the environment

after Conservation International

**osce Security & Stability
depend on Sustainable Ecosystems**

The environment does not need people

People need the environment

after Conservation International

A secure OSCE needs sustainable water ecosystems

OSCE- 2015 Economic and Environmental Forum
First Preparatory Meeting

**OSCE Security & Stability
depend on Sustainable Ecosystems**

The environment does not need people

People need the environment

after Conservation International

A secure OSCE needs sustainable water ecosystems

Sustainable water ecosystems need OSCE water consumers to introduce sound water stewardship

OSCE- 2015 Economic and Environmental Forum
First Preparatory Meeting

OSCE members share water resources with each other and with other nations

- 1 They share surface water and groundwater – via blue water flows – in river and groundwater basins

REQUIRES COOPERATION WHICH CAN BE VERY POLITICALLY DIFFICULT

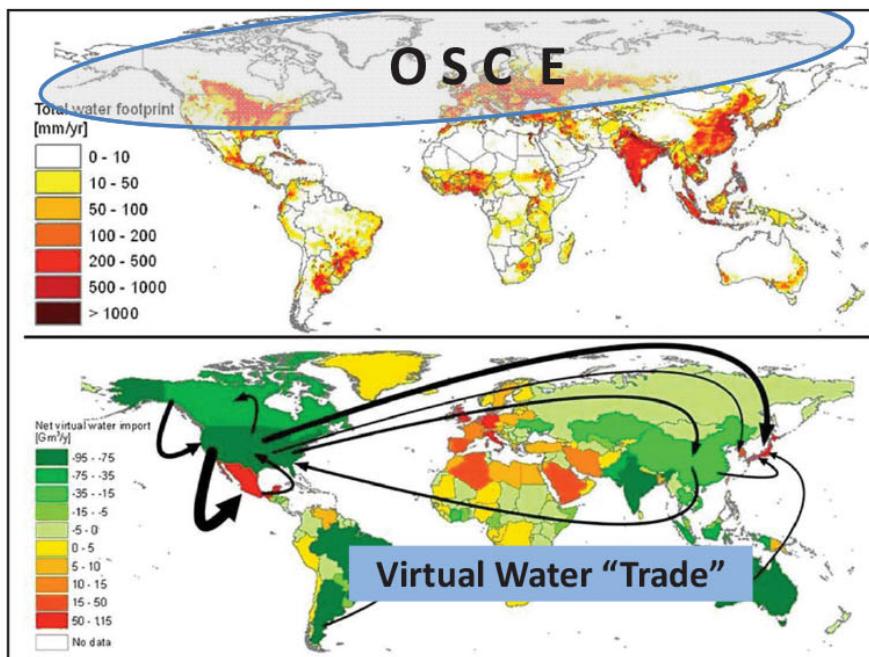
OSCE- 2015 Environmental Forum
First Preparatory Meeting

OSCE members share water resources with each other and with other nations

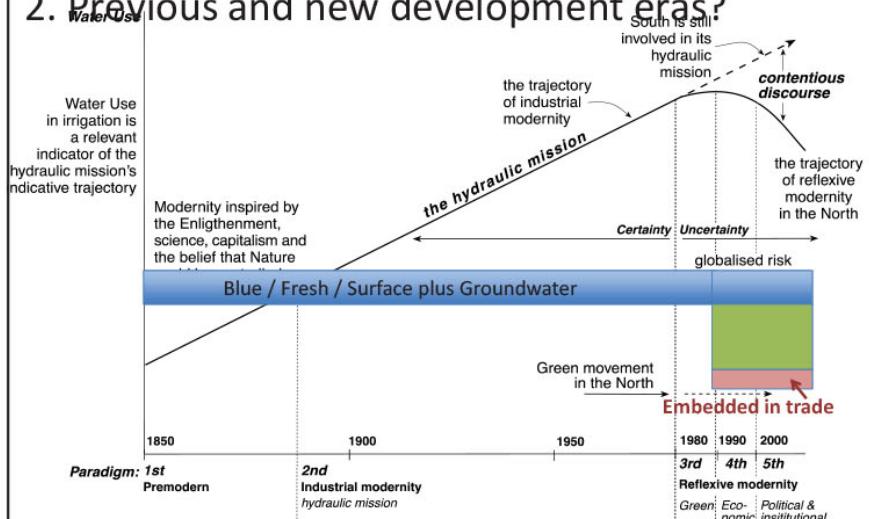
- 1 They share surface water and groundwater – via blue water flows – in river and groundwater basins
- 2 They share rainfall - green water – via internationally traded commodities especially food commodities

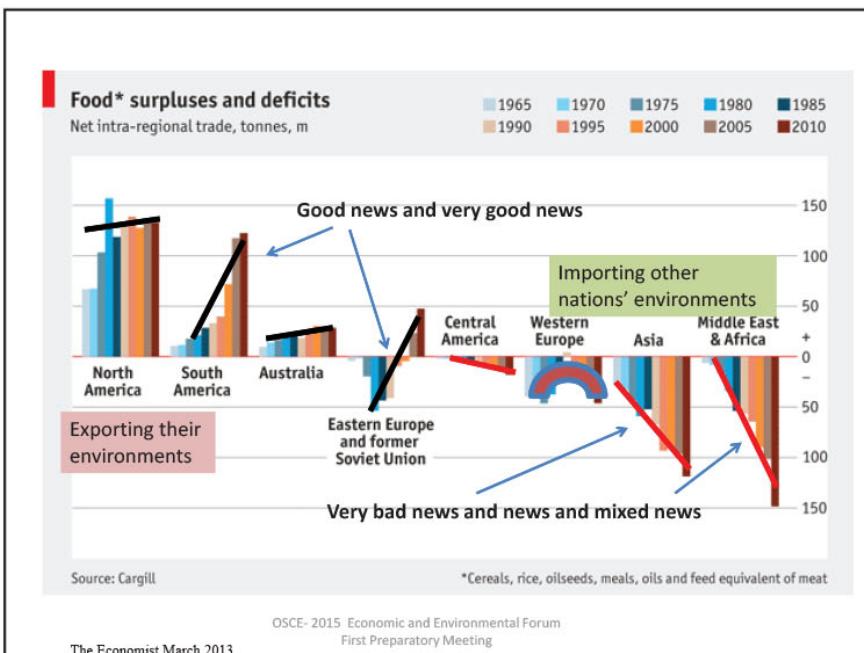
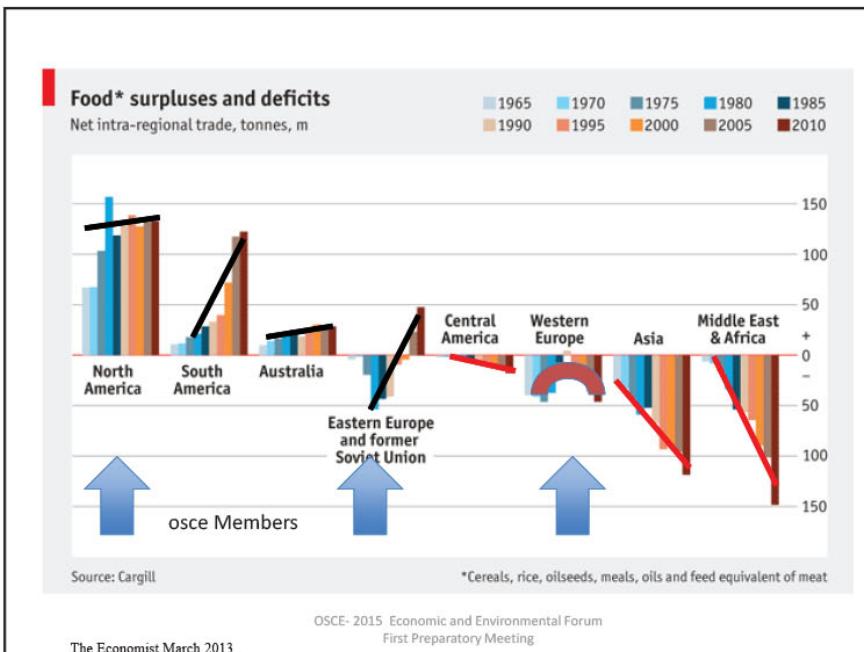
FACILITATED BY INTERNATIONAL TRADE WHICH REDUCES THE NEED FOR COOPERATION

OSCE - 2015 Economic and Environmental Forum
First Preparatory Meeting



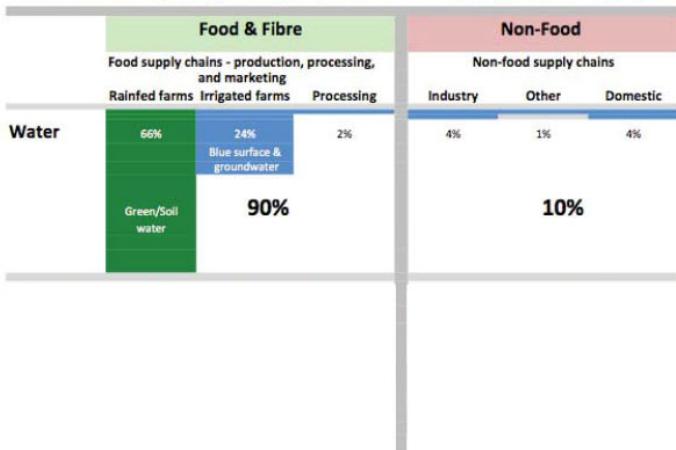
2. Previous and new development eras?





How do we allocate, use, consume and deplete water and energy - in private sector supply value chains?

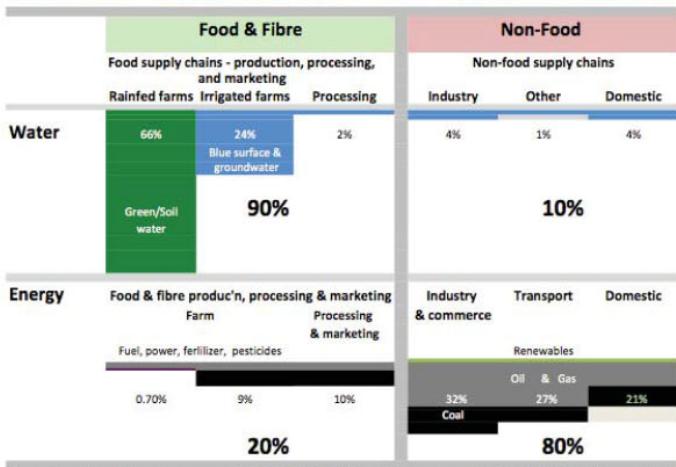
Global water & energy CONSUMPTION providing goods & services in private sector supply chains



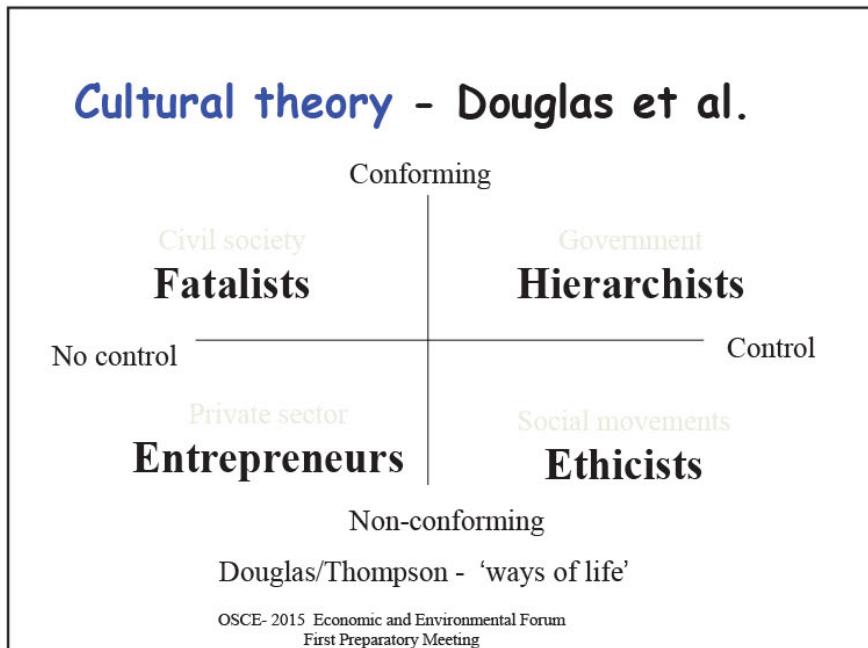
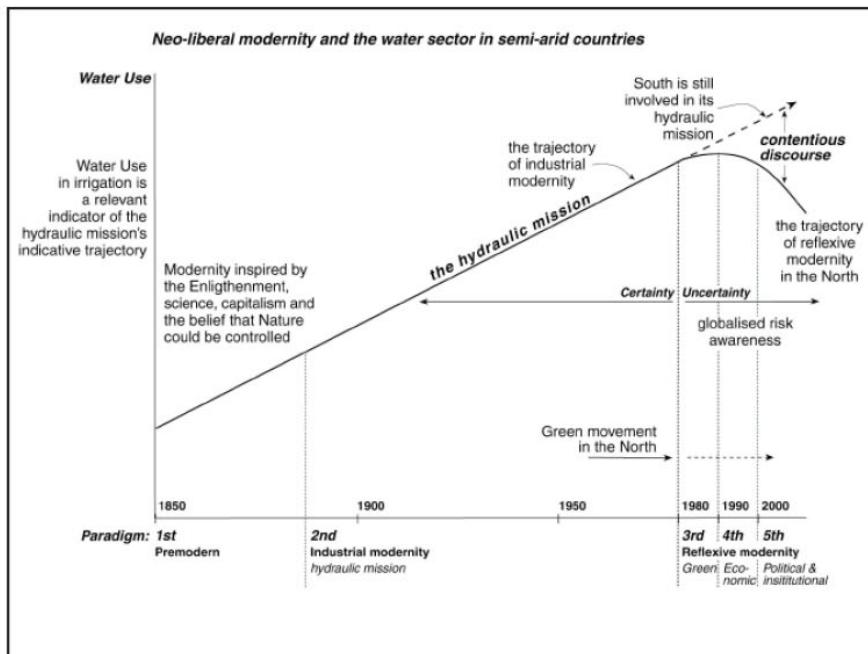
Source: Allan, J. A, 2014, based on own research & Water Footprint Network. Energy use based on BP, 2013, Water in the energy industry
OSCE- 2013 Economic and Environmental Forum
First Preparatory Meeting

How do we allocate, use, consume and deplete water and energy - in private sector supply value chains?

Global water & energy CONSUMPTION providing goods & services in private sector supply chains



Source: Allan, J. A, 2014, based on own research & Water Footprint Network. Energy use based on BP, 2013, Water in the energy industry
OSCE- 2013 Economic and Environmental Forum
First Preparatory Meeting

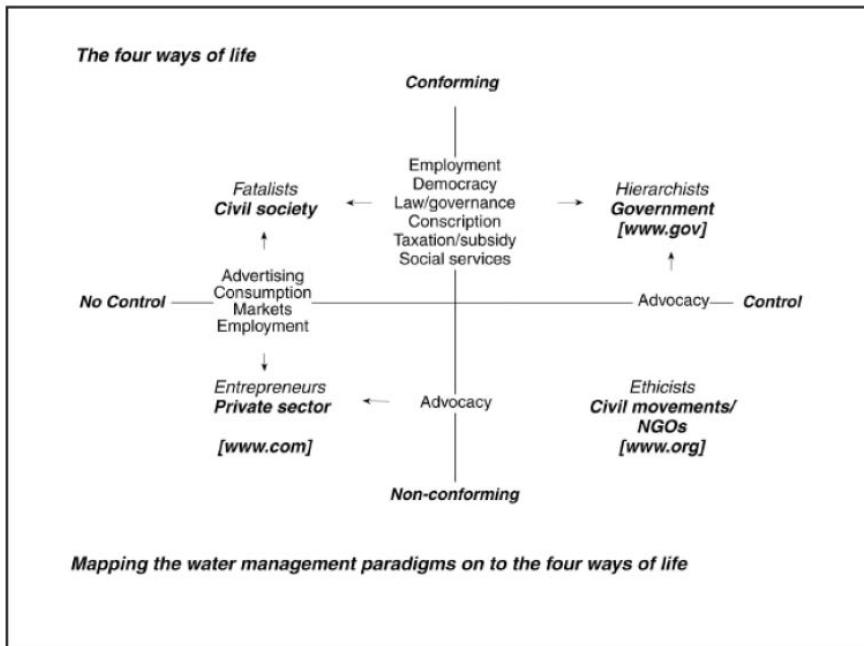
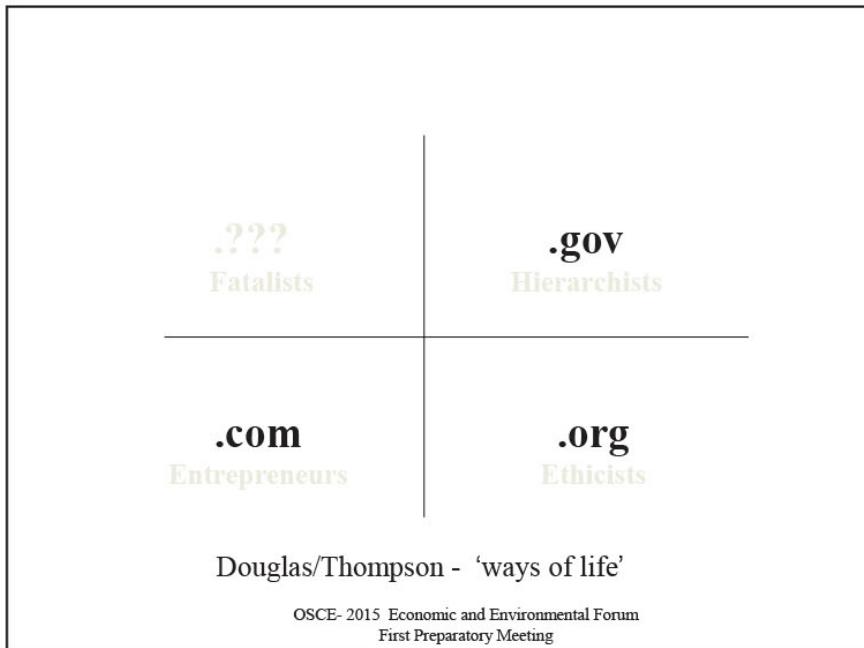


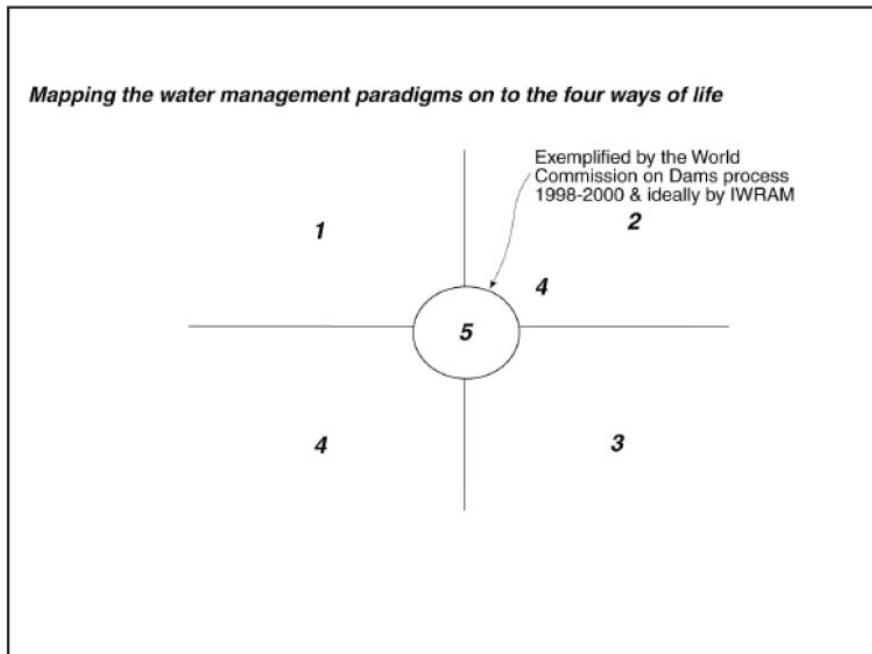
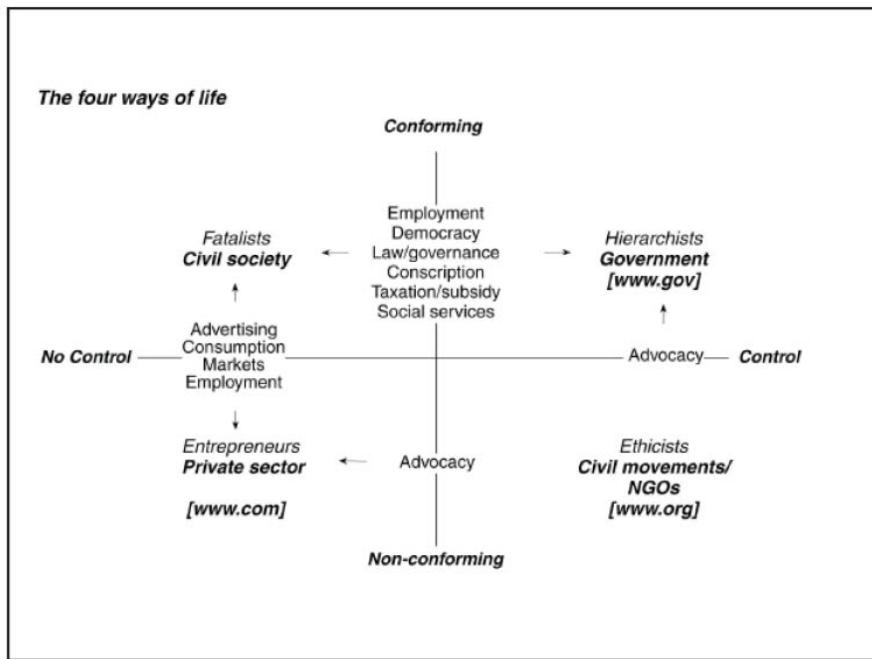
Cultural theory - Douglas et al.



Cultural theory - Douglas et al.







Mapping the water management paradigms on to the four ways of life

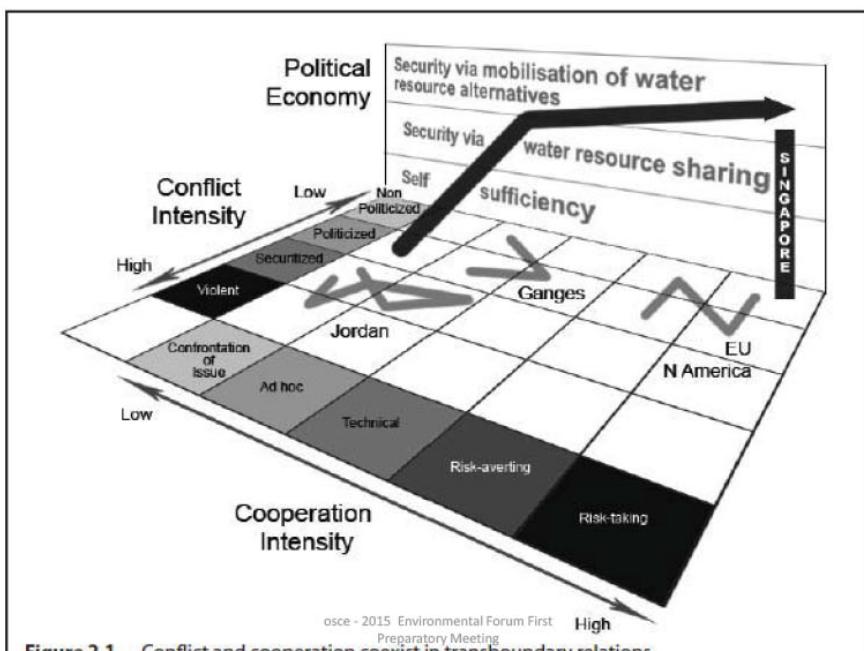
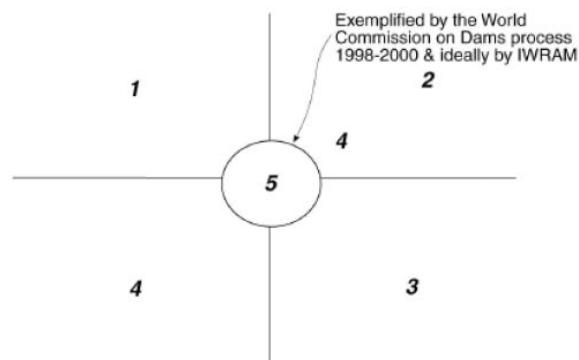


Figure 2.1 Conflict and cooperation coexist in transboundary relations

Help us to know the things that should be changed,
As well as the ^{???}
~~Fatalists~~ things that can be changed,
And give us the wisdom to know the difference

Entrepreneurs

Ethicists

After Reinhold Niebuhr c 1940

OSCE- 2015 Economic and Environmental Forum
First Preparatory Meeting

Fini

Tony Allan ta1@soas.ac.uk

OSCE- 2015 Economic and Environmental Forum
First Preparatory Meeting

Closing Statement

**by Dr. Halil Yurdakul Yiğitgüden
Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities**

Dear Ambassadors,

Dear Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we conclude the First Preparatory Meeting of the 23rd OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum on “Water governance in the OSCE area – increasing security and stability through co-operation”, I would like to express my gratitude for the constructive discussions, the insightful and thought-provoking presentations, the competent moderation as well as a range of ideas generated over the last two days.

The theme of this year’s Forum is highly relevant for all 57 participating States of the Organization and Partners for Co-operation as water is increasingly becoming an essential element of national and regional security, especially at a time when water resources in the OSCE area are facing increased risks from climate change. Discussions over the last two days suggest that addressing the water challenges across the OSCE area requires a comprehensive governance approach to protect, use and share water in a responsible and equitable way. Implementing good water governance has an important role to play in strengthening security and stability in the OSCE area and beyond.

We in the OSCE will strive to build on the recommendations generated at this First Preparatory Meeting, also by bringing our extensive experience and by further advancing partnerships with relevant national agencies, UN organizations, the private sector and non-governmental organizations in the area of water governance. ENVSEC will continue to provide us with a framework for translating such recommendations into practice, including the implementation of the Basel Ministerial Council Decision on Enhancing Disaster Risk Reduction.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me briefly highlight the main discussions over the last two days. The opening session, including three outstanding keynote speeches by State Secretary Božović, Professor Allan and Dr. Ait Kadi, has underlined the important role of well governed water in helping create opportunities for strengthening security and protecting the environment.

We have learned about the conceptual elements of water governance, including governance models. It was emphasized that water governance is about politics, the quality of institutions and

interaction between organizations. The results of the on-going work in the framework of the OECD Water Governance Initiative were presented along with a number of valuable insights from a foreign policy perspective, including the need for more extensive interaction between water and foreign policy agendas. We also had an opportunity to hear of several examples of implementing good water governance at regional level.

An extensive and in-depth discussion was dedicated to the issues related to water governance across sectors along with food and energy security and water efficiency. These deliberations showcased National Policy Dialogues and water-energy-food nexus assessments undertaken by UNECE in the framework of the Water Convention as effective tools to help assess and address water-related issues across different sectors.

Water efficiency was also one of the issues that several interventions placed a focus on. In particular, technological innovations for re-use of waste water and Australia's experience in ensuring allocative water efficiency provided interesting examples that are worth further consideration in the OSCE area.

Furthermore, over the last two days we have looked at the two important dimensions of water governance: different levels of governance, and the role of transparency in promoting good water governance. In particular, it was emphasized that promoting integrity for good water governance goes beyond anti-corruption measures, and also includes building trust. Transparency can only be achieved in the context of public participation and access to information. The outreach capacity through the OSCE-supported network of Aarhus Centres was highlighted as an effective tool in this regard.

Dynamic discussions in all of the sessions led to a number of suggestions and recommendations about the possible areas where the OSCE as the regional security organization could provide its support in the field of water governance. These recommendations will be thoroughly considered with a view to identifying possible follow-up activities.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

There are still a range of important aspects of water governance that merit discussion. The Second Preparatory Meeting, which will take place in Belgrade in May, will provide a forum for such an exchange.

I also hope that our discussions in the Forum process will contribute to the global processes, including the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai, discussions on the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Climate Change Conference. And we are also thankful to the Co-Chair of the International Steering Committee of the 7th World Water Forum for today's comprehensive presentation on the preparations.

Thanks to the rapporteurs, a Consolidated Summary including the main key suggestions and recommendations made by the participants during the deliberations will be compiled by my Office and shared with all of you in the coming weeks.

I would like to thank the Serbian Chairmanship, the moderators, speakers and rapporteurs, the interpreters, the conference service staff, as well as the colleagues from my Office for their joint contribution to the success of this event.

I also want to thank all of you, dear participants, for your active contribution, and wish you a safe trip back home.

Closing Statement

**by Ambassador Thomas Greminger
Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the OSCE**

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me first thank Ambassador Vuk Žugić and Sanja Milinković of the Serbian Chairmanship, Secretary General Lamberto Zannier and the Coordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities, Yurdakul Yiğitgüden, and his team for having organized this first Preparatory Meeting of the 23rd Economic and Environmental Forum and for having brought together so many experts here.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me start with a quote: "Any two countries engaged in active water co-operation do not go to war for any reason whatsoever". This sentence is from the Strategic Foresight Group, an Indian Think tank that Switzerland actively supported. It is taken from a study on water diplomacy based on 148 countries and called "Water co-operation for a secure World".

I very much like this sentence, because it is not only a strong call for water co-operation but also a call for stability and security. One could even say a clear call for the OSCE to become more active in the field of water governance! Water is not only about development, health and food. Water is also about the security of people and nations. The lively discussions that we have had during the last two days are clearly a proof of it.

By choosing water governance as its main topic in the second dimension, the Serbian Chairmanship is shedding light on what we can do to address the multitude of water challenges and the diverse nature of their effects. The good news is that everyone has a role to play in ensuring water governance: not only States, but private sector, civil society and communities, as it was repeatedly mentioned yesterday and today. We heard numerous positive examples of how we can cope with water related challenges if we give them sufficient weight on the political agenda, if we invest in means to address them and if we go forward in a spirit of co-operation and partnership at all levels. That is the positive message I would retain from this 1st Preparatory meeting.

What does this mean for the OSCE?

The OSCE, as the largest regional security organization, can and must address the challenges of water which are now firmly established on the global security agenda. Water is not a new issue for the OSCE, but one that calls for renewed attention. Let us remind that the 1989 Sofia Meeting on the Protection of the Environment organized by the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) paved the way for the major

international legal instrument on water - the “UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes”, also known as the Water Convention. Since then, fostering water co-operation and security has been an area of work of the OSCE. The Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC) for instance, has been an excellent instrument for co-ordinated international action in this field.

By putting sustainable water management and water scarcity on our Joint Work plan, Serbia and Switzerland intended to place water issues high on the OSCE agenda again and increase the sense of urgency for a comprehensive approach.

From our discussions during the past 2 days, I would like to highlight the following five key elements:

- 1) First, water governance is not only a relevant issue between states, but also one between different stakeholders within a State. Cross-sectorial dialogue is needed to ensure an appropriate use of water resources. Therefore, integrating all stakeholders – of which women are an important group – in water-related decision-making processes is a key issue in water governance. I believe the OSCE can play a meaningful role in strengthening national processes based on its vast expertise.
- 2) Second, in water governance, there is no one size fits all. We have heard, among others, from Dr. Pohl, the Adelphi representative, that we should better reflect and address the different political realities in each river basin. Examples of good functioning transboundary water co-operation were presented: the work done under the Albufeira Convention between Portugal and Spain, for instance. But we have also heard - and felt here in the room - existing tensions where there is a lack of dialogue between OSCE participating States. We must strive to apply the OSCE tools and assets also in the field of water governance, in order to rebuild trust and confidence.
- 3) Third, as in many fields, implementation is key. Several speakers pointed out the challenges posed by weak implementation of national or international agreements and illustrated them with some concrete cases. There also, the OSCE has a role to play: our Organization can be used as platform of dialogue and should encourage full implementation of the commitments taken by participating States.
- 4) Fourth, the importance of local environmental governance was highlighted several times during our discussions. When we look at most of the cases of water disputes, we can see that these situations usually arise when local stakeholders and communities are insufficiently included in decision making. The Aarhus Centres, as it was illustrated with the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina, are particularly well suited to be partners in inclusive approaches to water management and could also link water policies to general environmental policies.
- 5) Finally, transparency, integrity and good governance are keys if we are to address the water-related challenges in a comprehensive manner. The “Water Integrity Network” put forward some concrete ideas this morning. There again, I am convinced that the OSCE,

with its comprehensive approach of security and its solid experience in good governance, can support country efforts to become more transparent in water related issues.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Turning now to the priority areas that we should further discuss in the course of the next stages of the Prague Forum cycle, I would like to mention the following two:

1. We touched upon the risks of water-related disasters and the adaptation to climate change during the last two days. We are convinced that we should further discuss this important issue. As you know, flood and drought are the most frequent natural hazards affecting the OSCE participating States. You will all remember the horrendous floods that Western Balkans experienced last year in May. There were also many signs of solidarity across borders and dividing lines. Ambassador Žugić already mentioned that the second Preparatory meeting will give us a chance to better understand the role Disaster Risk Reduction can play in building confidence. This event will ensure continuity to last year's main topic in the 2nd dimension and to the Ministerial Council Decision on Enhancing Disaster Risk Reduction adopted in Basel last December. Switzerland will closely work with Serbia in preparing for the second Preparatory meeting.

2. Second, we should build upon the Security Day on Water Diplomacy held in Vienna last year in July and look closer at the specific role of the OSCE. We heard a lot about the concept of water governance yesterday and today. Now, we should concentrate on the role the OSCE should play in water governance and further discuss the importance of strengthening transboundary water co-operation and water diplomacy as an effective tool to enhance security and stability in the OSCE area.

The OSCE could for instance engage more in the international discourse on water diplomacy, by being present at major events and by contributing its own approach to frame "water diplomacy" from a security perspective.

We should also discuss how to use the tools and capacities of our organization in the field of water governance. I would like to mention the following: our mediation capacities, the use of environmental fact finding missions in regions where the dialogue is lacking, the OSCE capacities of connecting key actors, the exchange of best practices, the creation of a code of conduct in the field of water governance. We need to discuss the concrete steps our Organization should undertake. We need also to look at how we could develop and promote the valuable experience gained so far by the OSCE in water diplomacy.

Those are in my view the most important topics our Organization still needs to tackle in the next stages of this year's Forum.

Water is a common good, and we have to find equitable ways and mechanisms to share benefits as well as responsibilities in managing this unique resource. We have started the discussion during these two days. Let us all take the chance to continue it in the course of the year in order to find a common understanding around this topic within the OSCE.

Let me finish by expressing a personal wish. We have heard yesterday from the Chair of the OECD Water Governance Initiative that water has become a strategic priority of his organization. It is my strong wish that at the end of this Forum cycle, we can say that water is not only a strategic priority for the OECD, but also for the OSCE!

Thank you for your attention.

Closing Statement

by Ms. Christine Weil
Deputy Permanent Representative
Permanent Mission of Germany to the OSCE

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me thank all those who have contributed to the success of this meeting. Let me also thank in this first month of the year Switzerland for its work in the previous year in organizing the two preparatory meetings and the EEF in Prague. Switzerland has set high standards for any chairmanship to come.

As a future chair, we shall build on the work previous chairmanships have done, taking into account the decisions of previous ministerial councils, especially the most recent in Basel, which has given us a number of tasks in the second dimension, especially in the area of good governance. One of our priorities will be to forward implementation.

As our work is based on consensus, we shall, like previous chairmanships, start a consultation process after the spring recess, with a view to achieving consensus on priorities for next year's EEF ready for submission to the PC before the summer recess. I invite you all to bring your expertise into this process.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me turn to this meeting: I commend SRB for having chosen the guiding theme „water governance“.

The catastrophic floods in the Balkans last year have again shown how vulnerable to natural disasters we are and how easily they can cross national borders.

They have demonstrated that water governance is of utmost importance and can only be implemented successfully when we look and cooperate beyond national competences. They have also shown that cross border co-operation can work in regions where co-operation may seem difficult because of a difficult historical and political background.

For all of you who attended last year's EEF in Prague, it was certainly a heartening experience to see how a cross border project on the detection and safe removal of left over mines from the Balkan wars that were unhinged and washed away by the floods, came successfully into being.

This example has certainly the quality of a role model and should be studied and followed further by us. This preparatory meeting has shown how many facets water governance has. It is about energy and food security, protection of the environment, technological innovation, local and

national administration and trans-border co-operation, good governance, transparency and fighting corruption, the role of civil society, and it has also a global context.

Specifically, water and energy are closely interlinked. In both cases, the issue is the exploitation and distribution of a scarce resource. As the UN-World Water Report of 2014 states, global and regional crises that originate from poverty, insufficient food-supply and health problems are often linked together through water and energy. In the case of water, the problems are often more pressing, since it seems that energy has a greater lobby and can mobilize more capital than water.

Regions which have scarce water resources are especially vulnerable. My government has, in 2008, initiated the "Water Initiative Central Asia". This initiative is now entering its third phase. The focus will be on regional co-operation in water governance and on the strengthening of regional institutions, exactly the theme of this meeting.

As the EU has pointed out in its opening statement, Europe has a long history of cross-border water governance, e.g. through the Danube Commission and the International Commission for the protection of the Rhine-river. The latter is a striking example: Only five years after the end of World War II in Europe, France and Germany, together with Switzerland, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands sat at the table to agree on measures to protect the water resource Rhine. At the beginning, many obstacles, which had their roots way back in Western Europe's history, had to be overcome. But the political will was there on all sides. Today, the ICPR serves as a model for cross-border water governance all over the world.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the closing of this meeting, I would like to share some observations with you.

First: The presentations of the past two days have clearly shown the close link between water governance and security: water is a scarce resource and at the same time cause and consequence of natural disasters. Hence, shortcomings in water governance can easily lead to national and international tensions and insecurity. It has been rightly pointed out by several speakers that water is listed no. 1 in the most recent World Economic Forum World Risk Report.

Second: It was obvious, that the most often heard word these two days was "co-operation". In fact, when shortcomings in water governance were exemplified, the underlying reason for those shortcomings was usually a lack of co-operation among the stakeholders.

Third: Presentations in the last two days have made it clear: good governance is a condition for successful water governance. The many facets water governance has can only be integrated, if water governance is based on transparent, inclusive approaches that take all stakeholders on board.

Forth: Key to success is political will. Unlike in other areas of global concern, like energy or food, it seems the technology we need to cope with our task, is basically in place. We know how to catch water and to build dams. For using these instruments, we need the political will to bring the stakeholders together, as the example of the ICPR shows.

It is a very positive step, that this example was followed in more recent times by the four countries which set up the Sava-River Commission. Presentations in our meeting referred to it on several occasions. For these four countries, it had certainly not been an easy decision, but the political will was there and the success proves, they were right.

The OSCE, which has “security” and “co-operation” in its name, can certainly make meaningful contributions to the improvement of water management in its region and hence reduce security risks. It has the mandate to do so and is the most experienced organization in Europe when it comes to mediation, facilitation of dialogue and bringing together stakeholders, nationally and across borders. It is up to us, the participating states, to use this asset we have at our disposal. It is also about making full use of the 2nd dimension.

In conclusion, let me thank the former Swiss Chairmanship for bringing disaster risk reduction to the attention of the OSCE, the Serbian Chairmanship for having taken up water governance for the topic of this year's EEF and the Co-ordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities and his staff for the support.

We stand ready to support the Chairmanship as a Troika member and look forward to the next Preparatory Meeting in Belgrade in May.

I thank you for your attention.