



## United States Mission to the OSCE

### **Response to the Secretary General's Weekly Report**

As delivered by Ambassador Michael Carpenter  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
February 17, 2022

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The United States welcomes Secretary General Schmid's weekly report and her focus on the issue of climate change and its implications for comprehensive security in the OSCE area.

We do find ourselves today at an inflection point in the OSCE's approach to climate change. The importance of protecting the environment as an element of OSCE's comprehensive concept of security has been established since the Organization's founding and is laid out in the *Helsinki Final Act* and reaffirmed in several other key decisions and statements. The first-ever Ministerial Council decision on climate change that reached consensus in Stockholm last year also provides a new impetus to our collective desire to address the challenges caused by climate change.

As participating States in an organization with a broad geographic reach—"from Vancouver to Vladivostok"—we face a wide range of existing and potential security risks tied to climate change and have varied levels of resources and expertise to bring to bear. We further understand that for OSCE actions to be effective, the Organization must have the capacity to support participating States while not duplicating work done in any other international organizations. We believe the OSCE, as the world's largest regional security organization, has a responsibility to recognize and address the challenges posed by climate change to peace, stability, prosperity, and security in its area.

The United States has prioritized the importance of climate change in our foreign policy. We are reducing our own emissions and cooperating with our global partners to raise climate ambitions.

Here at OSCE, in December we contributed 780,000 euros to the important extra-budgetary project, referenced by the Secretary General, which seeks to map transboundary climate-security hotspots, and represents the most advanced effort in the OSCE area to assess the potential security challenges stemming from climate change. We expect the improved assessments and data from these numerous hotspots in the Western Balkans, South Caucasus, and Central Asia will form a foundation for our collective action in the future, as will the multi-stakeholder solutions required to formulate transboundary responses.

The inclusion of civil society, the private sector, and academia in this regard is particularly important and indeed essential. We note the project is already deeply engaged with these sectors

and encourage the Secretary General and OCEEA to continually consider new and effective ways to highlight the positive local impact of the project through outreach to affected populations. We believe this project provides a tangible basis for the OSCE to begin implementation of the 2021 Ministerial Council decision on climate. We encourage particular focus on the critical and relevant references of the decision to building “greater resilience through...climate-related analysis” and “through the development and utilization of early-warning mechanisms.” We strongly encourage all delegations interested and able to support the work of the Organization on climate and security to contribute to these important efforts.

Finally, it is equally important to our security and prosperity to encourage innovation, accelerate deployment of clean energy technologies, and build resilient infrastructure to fight climate change, promote sustainable economic recovery, and build back better. Mr. Chair, Madam Secretary General, you have our full support for your efforts to advance these all priorities, and we look forward to the discussions in the weeks and months ahead.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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