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United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the 2010 Unified Budget Proposal

As delivered by Chargé d’Affaires Carol Fuller
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
October 15, 2009

Madam Chair.

The United States welcomes the presentation of the 2010 Unified Budget Proposal and thanks Secretary General de Brichambaut and all of the fund managers for their hard work in putting together this comprehensive and informative document. Performance-Based Program Budgeting has clearly had a positive influence on this budget document, although more clarity needs to be achieved on how objectives, outcomes and outputs are defined in practice. We continue to look forward to the full implementation of Performance-Based Program Budgeting in the near future.

The United States welcomes the fact that the 2010 budget proposal reflects zero nominal growth over the approved budget for 2009. We note, however, that the closure of the Mission to Georgia removed over €5.7 million in costs from this budget —bringing the adjusted decrease down to only about 1.8 percent.

We are pleased that, overall, the budget proposal calls for increases in areas of very high priority, not only to the United States, but also to the organization as a whole. This budget reflects not only the tremendous advances that have been made in the Balkans in recent years, but also a deepening and strengthening of cooperation with the states of Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Caucasus.

The closure of the OSCE Mission to Georgia is, of course, an anomaly in this generally positive trend. We remain convinced that the absence of a mission is not conducive to a peaceful settlement of the conflicts in that country. In the absence of an OSCE field presence there, we again call on all OSCE executive structures to include Georgian authorities and civil society representatives in their programming activities whenever possible, and to consider carrying out programs and activities in Georgia.

Madam Chair, the United States has asked this organization not only to focus on priority activities, but also to “sunset” those that were of a lesser priority, or had outlived their useful life cycle. We will continue to advocate a prioritization of activities throughout the budget process this fall, because we firmly believe this exercise will increase the relevance of the OSCE’s work while identifying savings and efficiencies.

Finally, Madam Chair, we would like to thank the Secretary General and his staff for their restraint in the Secretariat’s own budget proposal. We are inclined to accept the Secretary General’s proposal for the establishment of a common costs section in the Department of Human Resources in order to centralize budgeting and management of these costs, so long as

it is personnel- and budget-neutral. We understand the Secretariat's argument for maintaining Board and Lodging Allowances at the 2009 rates, but also believe that attempting to protect staff from all effects of current monetary instability is an impossible task.

We look forward to the coming budget negotiations under the capable leadership of Kazakhstan, and commit ourselves to the goal of achieving consensus on the budget before the end of the year. We hope all participating States will approach these discussions in a constructive manner, keeping firmly in mind the core values and strengths of this organization.

Thank you, Madam Chair.