



PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT BY NORWAY IN RESPONSE TO
THE PRESENTATION BY THE SECRETARY
GENERAL OF THE 2010 UNIFIED BUDGET PROPOSAL

As delivered by Ambassador Guttorm Vik
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
15 October 2009

Madam Chairperson,

Let me first join previous speakers in thanking the Secretary-General and all the others who have worked very hard to provide us with a good, coherent and reasonable budget proposal, and even ahead of time. And let me also thank the S-G for his very informative and persuasive presentation of the proposal.

In order to save some time, I would like to affiliate my delegation with the general thrust of the comments made by the Ambassador of Sweden on behalf of the EU, in particular the need for programmatic priorities based on current political and regional developments.

After several years of zero nominal growth, this budget proposal represents a reduction compared to last year. This is partly due to a reduced level of activities in the Balkans, which again is a welcome development, since it reflects the fact that some of the OSCE's tasks in the region have now been successfully completed. Let me add, though, that our missions in the Balkans are still providing very important and useful contributions to the development in the region, and their activities should not be discontinued or drastically reduced before their jobs are done.

In other regions, we see scope for increased activities, perhaps particularly in Central Asia, and not least in the area of border controls, including cooperation with Afghanistan.

The biggest reduction in the budget proposal is due to our very unfortunate failure to agree on a continued, much needed presence in Georgia. We hope that a meaningful OSCE presence can gradually be re-established, and that our budgetary procedures will be flexible enough to allow for that.

We appreciate the continuous efforts by the Secretary-General to streamline activities and promote cost efficiency in all parts of the organization. At the same time, there is a need for intensified activities in a several important areas, not least with regard to meeting new threats and challenges, such as combating international terrorism, organized crime, including illicit transfers of arms and drugs and trafficking of human beings, which we heard a lot about during the informal meeting of the Corfu process on Tuesday. I sincerely hope that the long list of proposals and wishes for a number of very worthwhile strengthened or additional activities will be accompanied by the necessary resources to implement them.

We welcome the review that is being undertaken concerning maximum periods of service with the purpose of increasing the efficiency of the organisation, as referred to by the S-G in his introduction. We hope this exercise will be brought to a speedy and successful conclusion.

Finally, I would like to warn against a repetition of the competitions of previous years to see who could propose the most draconian cuts and reductions in spending, through an endless budgetary process. The guiding principle must be that we equip the organisation with the necessary resources to discharge the tasks we have entrusted to it, leaving the detailed management of the organisation to the Secretary-General and the other fund managers, supported by their competent and dedicated staffs.

And let us also agree to complete the budgetary process, under the able Kazakh chairmanship, on schedule, kicking the most unfortunate habit of previous years, when we have adopted the budget several months into the budgetary year, without knowing very much more than we already knew in December.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.