

Dear Colleagues,

I am Nana Baramidze, the Environmental Officer of the OSCE Office in Tajikistan. On behalf of the environmental team of the OSCE Office in Tajikistan, the CASE Screening Board and the National Focal point of the Aarhus Convention in Tajikistan let me thank you all for the participation in this event. The National Focal Representative of Aarhus Convention in Tajikistan was planning to be here with us but could not arrive due to the unexpected emergency.

Before moving to the subject matter, let me say few words about OSCE added value in the area of environmental security in Tajikistan. The OSCE Office in Tajikistan assists the country in the development and implementation of sustainable environmental policies and legislation and helps the host government to implement international environmental conventions to enhance its capacity to address environmental threats to security.

In more details, the OSCE continuously provides its support in the area of environmental legislation and policy challenges. It strives to enhance the capacity of government officials to draft, amend and enforce environmental legislation. It advises government officials and corporate representatives on available policy tools that connect business development and environmental protection awareness. Also, the OSCE Office in Tajikistan provides support to the participation of youth in environmental activities that impacts the enhancement of environmental education in schools. We also strive that the relevant public and civil society groups and institutions strengthen their knowledge on environmental challenges and options to contribute to the protection of the environment.

The Environment and Security (ENVSEC) Initiative work at the country level and through the OSCE supported two functional NGO run Aarhus Centres to promote the principles of the Aarhus Convention, facilitate its implementation process in Tajikistan and constantly conduct different awareness campaigns related to the environmental security issues in the region.

With the generous support of Luxemburg, Small Environmental Grants Program – Civic Action for Security and Environment had recently been merged in Tajikistan (CASE). In Tajikistan, CASE works to create an enabling environment for Civil Society Organizations for a strong partnership primarily to the governments as well as to other stakeholders in collaboratively addressing environment and security challenges.

In order to operate in Tajikistan, the OSCE Office in Tajikistan had established a special CASE team. It consists with the OSCE mission members and the CASE National Screening Board. The CASE National Screening Board includes representatives from different international organizations as UNDP and GTZ, government representatives from the Committee for Environment Protection under the Government of Tajikistan and civil society representatives. The CASE National Screening Board is responsible for project's policy guidance, screening and program promotion and evaluates and selects project proposals on the basis of the selection criteria developed under approved CASE Guidelines.

We are grateful that representatives of UNDP and GTZ serve on the CASE National Screening Board thus demonstrating close collaboration with OSCE to jointly promote environmental security aspects and serve to the common goal for better environment and developed civil society in the country and avoid duplication in project work. .

The Aarhus Centres and CASE Tajikistan project staff worked together during the proposal selection process by having the Aarhus Centres as a platform for information, consultations and assistance to potential CASE applicants. Moreover, the Aarhus Centers will stand ready to suggest future cooperation mechanisms with the CASE project winners during the implementation process.

CASE in Tajikistan would serve regions of Tajikistan thus deviating from the capital since the latter already has a handful of environmental organizations and numerous projects. This strategy, elaborated by the CASE Screening Board was strongly supported by the government of Tajikistan and would contribute to the capacity building of rural NGOs, as well as increase the environmental awareness in the communities.

If proved to be successful for Tajikistan, CASE bears the tremendous potential to develop capacities of local civil society organizations that would strengthen their link to local authorities and to better address the environmental threats to security in the given regions of CASE operations.

As a result of screening and selection, 8 projects out of 27 screened projects (30 selected in total but only completed projects were screened) were identified winners of CASE funding. Selected proposals covered almost all CASE subjective priorities and cross-cutting themes, among which are:

- Environmental awareness-raising for local population and promoting community participation in environmental decision making processes;
- Radioactive, hazardous wastes and chemicals;
- Climate change and environmental migration;
- Combating land degradation;
- Natural and man-made disasters;
- Role and Participation of Women as a cross cutting theme;
- Role and Participation of the Youth as a cross cutting theme;
- Social Aspects of Environmental Security as a cross cutting theme;

Projects that won CASE in Tajikistan grants will assume operations in December 2010 and we look forward to report to you on CASE implementation, as well as the enhancement of this important project in Tajikistan.