

EF.DEL/7/07
22 January 2007

ENGLISH only

Canadian Delegation to the
Organization for Security & Cooperation
in Europe



Délégation du Canada auprès de
l'Organisation pour la sécurité et la coopération
en Europe

**Delegation of Canada to the OSCE
Statement in response to Global Efforts to Combat Land Degradation and
Soil Contamination and the OSCE Role
15th Economic and Environmental Forum (Part 1)
22 January 2007**

Canada joins others in welcoming our distinguished guests to Part one of the OSCE's Economic and Environmental Forum. We have listened with great interest to their presentations on global efforts against land and soil degradation and the OSCE's role.

We would also like to thank the Secretariat for its organisation of this event and the Spanish Chairmanship for selecting an important theme, one on which the OSCE already has significant experience and expertise.

The Spanish Chairmanship has underlined the importance of prioritising activities where the Organisation is strong, and has followed-up accordingly, an initiative Canada supports.

It is Canada's view that there is a strong connection between transparent, democratic governance and the ability of states to achieve sustainable development and economies. Further, it is widely recognised that sustainable development and security issues are irrevocably linked.

For these reasons Canada believes that the OSCE is well placed to deal with issues of environmental security due to its foundation on comprehensive security, democratic values and the rule of law.

We have noted and been encouraged by the number of international organisations and experts contributing to this forum. In addition to national efforts, Canada participates actively in many of these institutions, which cooperate to further environmental security in the OSCE area, but not only through the OSCE.

One example is the work we are doing under the Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction, in Russia and other countries of the CIS. We have been involved in the safe dismantlement of Russian decommissioned nuclear submarines from the northern fleet, in the construction of chemical weapons destruction facilities, in the disposition and

replacement of radioisotopic thermoelectric generators from lighthouses and in supporting nuclear and radiological security projects. One billion dollars has been committed to this program (2002-1012) to reduce the threat of weapons of mass destruction. At the same time, this program provides considerable environmental benefit to our shared fragile Arctic and to countries of the CIS.

Further, Canada continues to work closely with organisations such as the Aga Khan Foundation to assist sustainable practices in agriculture and land management in Tajikistan.

These programmes are only effective because they are within the context of cooperation and coordination with other actors, both private and public, and they seek to fulfill specific functions and roles. In short, Canada seeks to fill a niche.

Although there is a clear niche for the OSCE in global efforts to combat land and soil degradation, due to its unique regional presence, commitments and values, efforts seeking to achieve environmental security must remain global.

The OSCE cannot do it alone. The magnitude of environmental challenges - from energy security to migration to health to conflict over water access - is staggering. Our Organisation has limited resources and is not primarily project management body.

Canada believes that the Office of the Coordinator for Economic and Environmental Activities understands this. We note the focussed efforts taken in the area of environmental security.

The OSCE's work in this area has centred on the Environmental Security Initiative, or ENVSEC. Canada notes with satisfaction its limited but prioritised activities and its coordination with UNEP, UNDP and NATO.

We believe that this model of addressing environmental concerns is unique and effective, and provides a real contribution to political and economic stability, both key components of environmental security.

To date, Canada has provided and pledged 2.8 million Canadian Dollars to this initiative. A clean environment, political stability and sustainable development are Canadian priorities and we believe that ENVSEC contributes to these concepts.

The impact of the OSCE's work on environmental security has been clear. We urge the Office of the Coordinator for Economic and Environmental Activities to continue its focussed activities based on the OSCE's values and commitments and its cooperation with other organisations and private entities.