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United States Mission to the OSCE



Session 3: Good Governance

Including through promoting transparency, combating corruption, money laundering, and the financing of terrorism

As delivered by Ambassador Cynthia Efir
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Mr. Chairman:

We live in interesting and challenging times. The economic crisis means that in the most difficult time for our citizens, we as governments must do more with less. This means that we must make the most of what we have, and ensure that we are doing all that we can to maximize limited resources. Corruption and money laundering are not only inefficient and waste money and opportunity, they also are a drain on the psyche of our societies, as well as pose a real danger in terms of financing terrorism.

The United States, during the financial crisis, has prioritized addressing corruption in a number of ways. As Dr. Haltzel noted in his introductory remarks, this year the United States passed legislation to reform the way Wall Street does business. Not only does the new legislation address transparency in the financial industry, it also goes straight to addressing corruption in the oil, gas and mining sectors – sectors that are important economic drivers for the world economy but are often rife with corruption that stifles broader economic benefits for citizens.

In 2003 the OSCE adopted the Maastricht Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension. Maastricht provides an unblinking approach to good governance and the fight against corruption, including corruption in the private sector through corporate governance. It also makes the direct link between transparency, accountability and combating corruption.

Fighting corruption effectively requires action by governments on many fronts, both domestic and international. But governments cannot do the job alone. An engaged civil society and an energetic media are also essential if corruption, including by authorities, is to be uncovered and eradicated. No country is immune to the problem of corruption; our own Federal Bureau of Investigation considers public corruption its top criminal investigative priority – and we currently have over 1,000 pending public corruption cases in the United States, a clear testament to the fact that combating corruption is a long-term effort and one in which we all must continually be vigilant. That is why we strongly urge the OSCE participating States to fully utilize the existing frameworks that provide a comprehensive road map for legislation and institutions, and tools for international cooperation. In addition to the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC), across the OSCE space the OECD Anti-Bribery

Convention, the Financial Action Task Force, and the work of GRECO in the Council of Europe set important standards in peer-review monitoring, mutual evaluation, and compliance.

We welcome the launch of the new UNCAC peer review. The United States will be among the first Parties reviewed. To promote the transparency, inclusiveness, and credibility of the process, we will invite the review team to visit the United States, seek civil society input, and publish our full report – and we encourage other UNCAC states parties to do the same. We encourage all OSCE participating States and Partners for Cooperation to ratify the UN Convention Against Corruption and the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

We also want to see a more comprehensive approach to combating corruption within the OSCE region by integrating the discussion of good governance within all EED topics of discussion. For example, when we have a conference on transportation, there should be a discussion on combating corruption at the border. Or when we talk about energy security, we should include a discussion on transparency and fighting corruption in energy exploration and transit.

Finally, we reiterate Dr. Haltzel's remarks on multilateral approaches to combating money laundering and the financing of terrorism. In the United States, we passed legislation after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, to not only increase the ability of our law enforcement to disrupt terrorist financing, but also to more closely align our laws with the international financial crime standard: the Financial Action Task Force's Forty Plus Nine Recommendations against Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing. We encourage all OSCE participating States and Partners for Cooperation to strive to achieve compliance with the Financial Action Task Force Recommendations.

The United States welcomes the OSCE's focus on good governance. We look forward to working with member states to advance the goals of the Charter of Paris to increase transparency, combat corruption and money laundering, and shut down terrorist support networks.