



Concept paper

2007 OSCE-Mongolia Conference on Strengthening the Co-operative Security between the OSCE and the Asian Partners for Co-operation, to be held in Ulaanbaatar on 12 and 13 June 2007

1. General considerations

Global security environment changes rapidly, but the pace and depth of cooperation between states in addressing this challenge do not often live up to the expectations of many people in the world.

The OSCE maintains a special relationship with its five Asian Partners of Cooperation: Afghanistan, Japan, Mongolia, the Republic of Korea and Thailand. This group of states is diverse in terms of their development and security challenges. In addition, their track of history with the OSCE is varying. They have potential to contribute, individually or collectively, to a more secure environment both within the OSCE area and beyond. However, this potential can be realized if there is a strengthened cooperation between the OSCE and the Asian Partners.

Mongolia was the fifth country to become an OSCE Asian Partner for Co-operation on 2 December 2004. This reflected Mongolia's interest in taking a more active role in promoting international peace and stability, and in particular by espousing the OSCE's comprehensive and co-operative approach to security. Mongolia fully subscribes to the OSCE's acquis of norms, principles, commitments and values and has applied great efforts at improving their voluntary implementation in many areas.

As a country developing a pluralistic democracy, a market economy and the rule of law, Mongolia has many similarities with a number of OSCE participating States.

On 12-13 June 2007, Mongolia will be hosting the annual OSCE conference with the Asian Partners for Co-operation for the first time. The main theme for the 2007 OSCE-Mongolia conference will be *Strengthening the Co-operative Security between the OSCE and the Asian Partners for Co-operation* in line with the Permanent Council decision 571/Corr.1.

The conference will be divided in three substantive sessions.

The first session will be devoted to issues related to ways and means of strengthening dialogue and cooperation between the OSCE participating States and the Asian Partners for Co-operation. The main focus will be on promoting voluntary implementation of

OSCE norms, principles, commitments and values by the Asian Partners for Co-operation.

The aim is to discuss concrete forms of assistance and co-operation, to include sharing of relevant experience, between the OSCE participating States and the Asian Partners for Co-operation in this area, with the ultimate goal of facilitating their process of transition and create an enlarged space of security in the regions adjacent to the OSCE.

In recent years, the cooperation between the OSCE and its Asian Partners for Co-operation has considerably increased and deepened. With increasing frequency, calls are being made to move from a phase of introduction to the OSCE's concept of comprehensive and co-operative security to a more in-depth engagement and concrete joint activities.

In this respect, it is hoped that the conference will analyse avenues for achieving an intensified dialogue and sharing experience on the challenges associated with the consolidation of democracy and the implementation of OSCE's norms, principles, commitments and values between relevant Asian Partners for Co-operation and OSCE participating States. Such dialogue would provide a welcome contribution to spreading international peace and stability.

The second session will focus on the economic and environmental dimension, and in particular on the two main topics of the 2006/2007 OSCE Economic and Environmental Forums: transport development and the specific needs of landlocked developing countries on the one hand, and combating land degradation and desertification on the other hand. The aim will be to foster the sharing of experience and knowledge between the OSCE and the Asian Partners, and on identifying best practices in addressing these challenges. It is hoped that the discussion will lay the foundations for a strengthened co-operation by discussing how the Asian Partners can be involved in future OSCE activities addressing land degradation and desertification. It is also hoped that participants will be able to identify ways and means to further improve the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action and to strengthen the co-operation between OSCE participating States and Partners for Co-operation in transport and transit development, as a tool for enhancing regional economic co-operation and stability.

Landlocked developing countries face unique challenges related to their lack of direct access to the open sea, their dependence on transit services and difficulties related to market access. Two of the Asian Partners for co-operation (Afghanistan and Mongolia) are landlocked developing countries. The Almaty Programme of Action: Addressing the Special Needs of Landlocked Developing Countries within a New Global Framework for Transit Transport Co-operation for Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries (APA), adopted in August 2003 and endorsed by the United Nations, represents a unique framework for addressing these challenges. The OSCE recognized the importance of the APA as a tool to foster regional co-operation, security and stability, and committed to support its implementation. Regional co-operation will allow the dismantling of barriers of trade, cut transaction costs and encourage economies of scale; all contributing to mutual economic growth of both landlocked and transit developing countries.

Based on the recommendations of the 14th OSCE Economic Forum, the Brussels MC Decision on "Future Transport Dialogue in the OSCE" stipulates that the OSCE should

pay due attention to transport and transit issues, with a particular eye on the special needs of landlocked developing countries, and that dialogue and co-operation with regard to these issues with the OSCE Partners for Co-operation should be facilitated.

Land degradation and desertification are also matters of concern and high relevance due to their impact on security, co-operation, economic development and the environment. Desertification and land degradation are caused by both climatic factors and specific human activities (poor, unsustainable agricultural practices, overgrazing, deforestation, inadequate waste management etc). Due to nutrient loss, salinisation and desertification, agriculture will experience a decrease in productivity, which has a negative impact on peoples' wellbeing and could create incentives for people to migrate to other areas. Similarly, land erosion increases the number of natural disasters such as landslides or flooding, creating new economic setbacks.

Many countries are severely affected by drought and desertification. For example, following the definition of the International Convention to Combat Desertification, 90% of Mongolian territory can be regarded as vulnerable to desertification. Half of all cultivated land in Mongolia is considered to be degraded to some degree of erosion.

The 15th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum focuses on "Key challenges to ensure environmental security and sustainable development in the OSCE area: Land degradation, soil contamination and water management". The OSCE Partners for Co-operation are invited to participate in the Forum, which should be seen as a platform for dialogue and should lead, *inter alia*, to identifying common challenges and possible solution, as well as to fostering co-operation between OSCE participating States and Partners for Co-operation.

The third session will focus on cross-dimensional threats to security. The aim will be to promote target-oriented co-operation with the OSCE, paying particular attention to the OSCE's acquis, expertise and assistance programmes in areas such as police, border management and security, democratic-institution-building and human rights, judicial reform and strengthening the rule of law.

Many of today's challenges to security and stability are of a multi-dimensional nature and pose a threat that goes beyond the state or regional boundaries. These are linked with organized crime and trans-national terrorism, and take advantage of weaknesses in, *inter alia*, border management and security and in the law enforcement bodies. In particular, with the adoption of the OSCE Border Security and Management Concept (BSMC) Participating States agreed to promote co-operation between their various border services. Effective cross-border co-operation was also highlighted, as was the role of the OSCE in facilitating such co-operation. According to the BSMC "the provisions of the Concept will be shared by the Partners for Co-operation, on a voluntary basis". Both Mongolia and Afghanistan have indicated interest in fostering co-operation with the OSCE based on the Concept. Given concern over a variety of threats related to borders in Central Asia, this interest in the BSMC is important for the region and wider OSCE area as a whole.

Furthermore, the Asian Partners for Co-operation stand for promoting the rule of law and consolidating democracy and strive to make their contribution in this direction. At the international level, in 2003 Mongolia hosted the Fifth International Conference of New or

Restored Democracies and chaired it successfully until November 2006. In this capacity, it has endeavoured to promote democratic values and engage itself in a pioneering exercise to develop national Democratic Governance Indicators and draw up country-specific National Plan of Action to Consolidate Democracy, the results of which were shared with international democracy experts at the Follow-up International Conference to ICNRD-5 in June 2006 in Ulaanbaatar¹ and later at the 6th Conference in Doha, Qatar. Mongolia also serves as a member of the Convening Group of the Community of Democracies since 2005.

2. Conference Objectives

The Conference aims:

- Discuss current issues related to the OSCE Asian partnership, focussing on the need to move from recommendation to implementation and to promote voluntary implementation of OSCE norms, principles and commitments, including as a means to further interaction with the OSCE.
- Identify ways and means to further improve the APA implementation and to strengthen the co-operation between OSCE participating States and Partners for Co-operation in transport and transit development, as a tool for enhancing regional economic co-operation and stability.
- Identify best practices in addressing the challenges of land degradation and desertification and strengthen co-operation and further involvement by the Asian Partners for Co-operation in future OSCE activities in these fields.
- Examine target-oriented co-operation between the OSCE participating States and the Asian Partners for Co-operation, with special focus on judicial reform, police assistance and border security and management as contributions to the fight against organized crime and to strengthened common security. Also, discuss ways and means of promoting democratization, human rights and fundamental freedoms as components for security and stability

3. Agenda

- Theme: *Strengthening the Co-operative Security between the OSCE and the Asian Partners for Co-operation*
- Sub-Themes
 - Session 1: Ways and means to strengthen the dialogue and cooperation between the Asian Partners for Co-operation and OSCE participating States
 - Session 2: Co-operative security in the economic and environmental dimension
 - Session 3: Cross-dimensional threats to security: achieving new potential of co-operation

4. Work programme

¹ <http://www.icnrd5-mongolia.mn/>

The Conference will begin at 9.30 a.m. (opening session) on 12 June 2007 and end at 5 p.m. on 13 June 2007. It will take place in the premises of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia. Each session will have a moderator, a rapporteur, two presenters and possibly two discussants. The presenters will be given ten minutes to make their presentations. The discussants will be given five minutes.

The consolidated summary will be forwarded to the Permanent Council. The opening and closing sessions will be open to the media.

An optional field trip for participants will be organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia on 11 June 2007. The details of the excursion, together with registration forms, will be provided separately.

Participants of the conference will be Senior Officials and experts from OSCE participating States, the Asian Partners for Co-operation and the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation and from the OSCE institutions and the Parliamentary Assembly. Member States of the ASEAN Regional Forum and relevant international organizations, as well as representatives of civil society (academia, international non-governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, the media, etc.) will also be invited to the Conference.