



ENGLISH only

**"Key Challenges to Ensure Environmental Security and Sustainable Development in the OSCE Area: Water Management"**  
(Second Preparatory Conference to the 15<sup>th</sup> OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum, Zaragoza, Spain, 12-13 March 2007)

**Statement of Switzerland**

**Plenary Session III-Economic governance aspects of sustainable water management**

- Water is the key to sustainable development. It is essential for life. Without water, there is no food, no industrial development and therefore no political, economic and social stability.
- The lack of water supply and sanitation affects the poorest, who also are the first to suffer as a result of climate change. In the UNECE region, which is almost identical with the OSCE region, about one person in seven has no access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation.
- The UNECE Protocol on Water and Health to the 1992 Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes must be seen as the framework for the operation of these water services, thus contributing to implementing the human right to water in the form of water supply, sanitation and small-scale irrigation for families.
- But a sustainable water supply presupposes ecosystems that capture, filter, store and distribute water, such as forests, wetlands and soils.
- Ecosystems must be seen as a long term investment and an asset for development and for ensuring livelihoods and peace.
- The maintenance of ecosystem services by the environmental stewardship of local populations should be compensated by downstream consumers paying the upstream populations for their efforts and thereby developing a hydro-solidarity for more stability and security.
- In this context, "Recommendations for Payments for ecosystem services in integrated water resources management" were adopted at the 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Parties to the UNECE Water Convention last November in Bonn, which were also mentioned by eminent participants.
- Payment for ecosystem services is a new tool which complements other approaches, such as command-and-control and structural measures. The recommendations will contribute to integrated water resource management.

- I invite you to implement these recommendations in pilot projects and to report at the 5th Meeting of the Parties to the Water Convention in 2009 that Switzerland will have the pleasure to organise.
- We hope that the excellent cooperation between the UNECE and the OSCE will continue. Both organisations provide a valuable framework to respond to the complexity of the water issue.
- Nevertheless, if international organisations join forces, the full commitment of the public sector, the private sector and society at large is critical to the success of water management.
- Thank you for your attention