

United States Mission to the OSCE



Session 7: The Way Forward

And recommendations for future action

As delivered by Ambassador Cynthia Efirid
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Moderator,

One thing the last few days have shown us is that the spirit of Helsinki, Bonn, and Maastricht is alive and well today. We may not agree on every single point, but the fact that we can sit here and discuss complex issues of a cross-dimensional nature gives us an opportunity to ensure that the future work of the Economic and Environmental Dimension, or EED, contributes to security across the OSCE space. And, as we look ahead to the Astana Summit, it is time to put words into action, or, to borrow a phrase we heard last week, to “operationalize” our commitments.

During this review, we have discussed a number of critical areas, and explored new possibilities for the OSCE. The United States believes substantive work could be achieved in several areas as we prepare to discuss the draft Action Plan distributed Friday, and we should focus our attention on those areas.

First, transparency and good governance are principles that apply widely to the activities of the OSCE, the participating States, and the Partners for Cooperation. Combating corruption and disrupting the flow of money for international criminals and terrorists are priority areas with which no one disagrees, but these are issues needing continuous attention. As one example of a way to make progress, we can and should endorse transparency and good governance principles in the extractive industries, perhaps by noting that 18 participating States are implementers or supporters of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, or EITI. But, transparency is not limited to this field. Transparency means clearly communicating intentions, capacities, and capabilities, to allow more confidence- and security-building among OSCE countries and partners. It means facing down instances of corruption squarely and effectively prosecuting them, to bring public trust in government institutions and a climate of

accountability. In this regard, it is particularly important that we be prepared to look at ourselves with a critical, objective eye, to have the courage and the political will to admit our shortcomings and devise workable solutions to difficult and complex problems. We should install these concepts into all aspects of our work, in the Summit documents and beyond, not just in the 2nd dimension, but across all dimensions of the OSCE.

Second, events and activities in the economic and environmental sphere have a direct impact on all security dimensions. In the discussion on migration management, we reaffirmed the fundamental human rights of migrants, often especially threatened during periods of economic downturn. Migration, when poorly managed, brings instability. On the other hand, when well managed, migration can be a source of significant economic growth and cultural enrichment.

In discussing transportation security, we touched upon several subjects that are often taken up in the 1st dimension, such as the critical energy infrastructure program. This aspect of energy ties into other ideas this organization has put forth in the area of energy security, and we welcome the incoming chair's proposed focus for the OSCE on energy issues, from supply and transit to infrastructure and efficiency. Our proposed endorsement of energy transparency supports these areas and would be complemented by developing an ad hoc working group to address issues in the energy sector as soon as they emerge. We look forward to exploring more deeply the proposals made in the Corfu process in these areas, with an eye toward their possible inclusion in a Summit Action Plan. We should of course ensure that all of our economic and environmental activities are contributing to security in the OSCE space in a complementary, non-duplicative way.

Third, we must not forget the unique strengths this organization brings to discussions of economic and environmental factors of security. We have repeatedly stressed the organization's geographic scope and its concept of comprehensive and indivisible security. We have also reaffirmed the central role the OSCE's field presences play as this organization's best value-added structure for coordinating action and implementing projects for the fulfillment of OSCE commitments. As we have heard from the OSCE Office in Tajikistan, far from duplicating efforts, the OSCE Office has played a central role in ensuring that the efforts of bilateral and multilateral partners work towards common objectives, not at cross purposes, and in a way that is complementary. Other field missions have had similar good news to bring to us. All this is one reason why we believe an academy in Central Asia, dedicated to the EED, would be of real benefit to the people, governments, and civil society of the region. At the other end of the

spectrum, however, we also heard what happens when a field presence is abruptly closed down, as in the case of Georgia, coordination evaporates, there is a loss of local expertise and institutional memory. The field presences need greater attention from us to ensure that they have our support, and so that we may be sure we are getting the maximum value for money out of their work. Enhancing and formalizing the involvement of economic and environmental officers from field presences in Forum meetings and review processes would help considerably.

Finally, we need to think about concrete actions that will make the EED, and thus the organization, truly more effective in its endeavors. We are nearing agreement on reforming the Economic and Environmental Forum (EEF) process, including the possibility of establishing an annual meeting, which would include a more extensive review of all commitments in the 2nd dimension, and we look forward to reaching agreement on these modest steps, both to move toward better fulfillment of our commitments in the Economic and Environmental Dimension, and to demonstrate that this organization can act with unity of purpose to make its work more relevant to the needs of all of those who dwell within our borders.

We are all looking ahead to the Astana Summit, and we have much to do to ensure a substantive outcome worthy of the first summit in eleven years. But, as the Coordinator has reminded us, the work of this organization will not stop on December 3rd. We need to be prepared to take a longer-term look at how the Summit's outcomes will influence our work in the EED. We look forward to the adoption of the proposed reforms to the EEF, and moreover seek their timely implementation. An increased focus on the economic and environmental factors of security should emerge from the preparations for these meetings. This increased focus, of course, will not be at the expense of important work in the other dimensions; rather, we hope to complement efforts in the human, the third dimension, and political-military dimensions. We need to show how closely related economic and environmental concerns are to basic questions of peace, stability, human rights, and fundamental freedoms. Concrete, measurable, and indeed as Amb. Silanovic has told us, dynamic steps leading to the implementation of commitments in the Economic and Environmental Dimension are essential to make the Astana Summit successful. And, such efforts can only serve to make all of us stronger, more prosperous, and freer.

Thank you, moderator.