United States Mission to the OSCE

Opening Remarks

As prepared for delivery by Ambassador Ian Kelly
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Thank you, Moderator.

We would like to thank the Lithuanian Chairman-in-Office, Secretary General Zannier, Coordinator for Economic and Environmental Activities Svilanovic, and our Czech hosts for bringing us together to discuss important and timely issues. This year's Economic and Environmental Forum has been special for many reasons. We have explored multiple topics and themes related to energy and transport security. Our meetings have served their purposes well, allowing the sharing of best practices and providing ideas for future cooperation. Finally, we have converted one of our EEF meetings into the inaugural Economic and Environmental Dimension Implementation Meeting, an event to which we look forward with great interest. These achievements show that the OSCE, far from being a static institution, can adapt itself to changing circumstances and serve the needs and strategic objectives of the participating States and their Partners.

Over the next few days, we look forward to taking stock of where we have been, this year and past years, and use that perspective to delineate an effective way forward on implementing our economic and environmental commitments. One of the key lessons that we learned from the first preparatory meeting is that "energy security" means different things to different audiences, but we all understand the nexus of energy availability, efficiency, and sustainability. The United States welcomes the initiative of the Lithuanian Chair to chart a course for formulating energy security principles and will participate fully in efforts to articulate those principles. At the same time, we note with interest the various proposals on how the OSCE could add value through dialogue and awareness raising, including in such areas as renewable energy projects and technology sharing, the application of international standards and regulations, and alleviating energy poverty.

Let us now turn to the second preparatory meeting. When we look at a map of the OSCE region, covering a third of the earth, we see vividly how vital transportation is to our comprehensive concept of security. We also understand that *how* we move people and goods can have a dramatic impact on our world, through resource depletion, urban pollution, and climate change. At the same time, we have seen that efficiency in transport embodies more than minimizing energy consumption; excessive fees and wait times at border crossings affect sustainability as much as the choice and quantity of fuel used. The United States is committed to assisting in developing more efficient transportation across the OSCE space. We note in particular proposals for an OSCE role involving strengthening the implementation of current regulations, dialogue on developing new standards, encouraging investment in new technologies and infrastructure, and working at the field level to reduce corruption, waste, and opportunities for criminal activities at border crossings.

Colleagues,

We have a critical opportunity to turn words into action. We see this meeting as a chance to sum up the best ideas we have discussed this year and achieve something tangible in time for the Vilnius Ministerial. It is the view of the United States that this Forum will contribute concrete proposals for further elaboration at the EEDIM, which in turn will be an effective platform for tackling the remaining challenges for getting consensus on these proposals at Vilnius.

Among these proposals, the United States has long advocated an OSCE endorsement of transparency principles. We would like to note language from the Deauville G8 Summit Declaration in May, which stated, "We will continue to support transparency in other areas including through the full implementation of the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative, or EITI, which we all support. We call on all countries, notably resource-rich countries, and extractive companies to join or support this initiative." In recognition of the fact that of the G8 countries, seven are OSCE participating States and one is a Partner for Cooperation, we would like to highlight the role that multilateral institutions can play in broadening the adoption of norms and principles. The OSCE can demonstrate its traditional leadership role in norm setting by endorsing the EITI at the Vilnius Ministerial, and we will continue to work toward that goal with all of our colleagues in the OSCE.

We look forward to the proceedings of the next few days. Let us seize this opportunity to enhance our mutual security through cooperative approaches to shared problems and concerns.

Thank you, Moderator.