



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement at the Economic and Environmental Committee Meeting on Environmental Sustainability

As delivered by Political Officer Urfa Qadri
to the Economic and Environmental Committee
March 14, 2011

Response to Item 1: “Environmental governance and sustainable development”

We would like to thank the panelists for taking the time to present to the EEC today. The United States fully supports the work of the OSCE’s Office of the Coordinator for Economic and Environmental Affairs in the area of environmental governance and sustainable development, both priorities for our country. Although the U.S. is not a member of the Aarhus convention, we subscribe whole heartedly to the increase in transparency and democratic governance that the centers provide for local populations.

In looking ahead we hope to increase the cooperation between the OSCE and international organizations in the environmental sector. ENVSEC is the vanguard of that cooperation, and the U.S. will continue to support the collective’s excellent work. We hope that through both the work of the Missions and the Forum process here in Vienna, we can find a way to continue to be a platform for dialog and political progress in the OSCE space on these important issues.

With regard to the Rio + 20 Summit and Principle 10, the US firmly believes that all levels of society need to be involved in sustainable development. Governance should be transparent and inclusive and lay the foundation for society to make sustainable choices. Governments should strive to create an enabling environment for private sector and civil society innovation, investment, and entrepreneurship in sustainable economic and social systems and technologies.

The most valuable element of that mechanism is civil society. A robust NGO community is crucial for ensuring accountability in environmental governance. We encourage the OSCE pS to continue to foster civil society in all its forms.

More than fifteen U.S. federal agencies are preparing for Rio+20. The U.S. Government is also reaching out to a broad range of representatives from civil society, the private sector and state and local governments to encourage their participation and secure their commitment to promoting sustainable development. Rio+20 will provide a significant opportunity to engage and empower women and involve young people in sustainable development issues. The United States will work with the OSCE to ensure that Rio+20 focuses on improving the lives of people in a sustainable, transparent and effective manner.

Response to Item 2: Gender Mainstreaming in Aarhus Activities – M. Beham – Gender Unit

The United States welcomes you, Ms. Beham, to this meeting of the EEC. We are very encouraged at the close cooperation between your office and the Office of the Coordinator so early in the working year. We look forward to the fruits of that cooperation.

The United States believes that women are an often-overlooked, invaluable resource for developing and sustaining economic and environmental security. We will fully support any efforts to increase the visibility of and tools available to women in the OSCE space allowing equal representation in decision making positions in the area of environmental security and transparency and beyond.

Thank you.