



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Presentation of the 2012 UBP by the Secretary General

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires, a. i. Gary Robbins
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
October 13, 2011

The United States welcomes the presentation of the 2012 Unified Budget and thanks the Secretary General and all of the fund managers for their hard work in putting the proposal together. The development of a budget proposal that satisfies the needs of all participating States is a complex task, and although I am sure there will be some adjustments before the final budget is adopted, this document provides a strong basis for discussion.

Please allow me to emphasize that the United States places strategic importance on the OSCE. It is our view that the Organization is a major contributor to regional security and stability. To ensure the OSCE continues to use its resources in the most efficient manner through its work in all three dimensions on activities that are relevant to achieving peace, prosperity, and security for the people of Europe and North America, we will continue to advocate for the prioritization of certain activities throughout the budget process this fall.

The United States recognizes that fund managers have taken a strategic look at their mandates and have sought to economize wherever possible given the difficult global economic and budgetary outlook during the upcoming year for most participating States. We are, however, uneasy about the growth in the share of the budget going to the Secretariat, as opposed to the field missions. Secretariat growth has been a trend over the past several years, and although we understand that these increases are primarily due to increases in staff salaries and benefits, we want to make sure that as many resources as possible make it to the field. The OSCE's strength lies in its field missions, and we have an obligation to ensure that they are adequately resourced.

We have noted the structural changes to the Secretariat detailed in this budget proposal. We understand the aim of these changes is to respond to calls from participating States to place a greater emphasis on combating trans-national threats. We would expect this reorganization to support the programmatic activities of the borders, anti-terrorism, and police units that comprise the new TNT unit, with minimal overhead costs within the newly proposed coordination cell.

We hope that the OSCE can find economies of scale with this reorganization that will allow us to achieve more with less money. This is particularly important as we expand our engagement with OSCE partner states, such as Afghanistan and the Mediterranean partners. Our programmatic engagement with OSCE's partner states is invaluable in helping us to combat common threats, and we hope that this proposed reorganization will enable the OSCE to deepen its activities with the Partners.

Mr. Chairman, we see that much of the savings in the 2012 budget proposal comes from the closure of the Minsk office. We regret that Minsk has not welcomed back a full OSCE presence, and we call upon the Chairman to continue efforts to find a *modus vivendi* for effective engagement in Belarus.

While we welcome those budget submissions which indicate a proposed reduction in funding levels, we are disappointed that other significant savings are not being proposed. This is particularly noteworthy in the region of southeastern Europe, where we should be seeing the results of long-term, OSCE capacity-building engagement. Other actors should by now be ready to step in where there remains a need for assistance, allowing the OSCE to reduce its footprint. We must evaluate where the OSCE can make its most valuable contributions in the region, and then consolidate and concentrate our limited available resources where they can have the greatest impact.

Finally, the United States looks forward to the coming budget negotiations under the capable leadership of Ireland. We commit ourselves to the goal of achieving consensus on the budget before the end of the year, and we call on all participating States to approach these discussions in a constructive manner, keeping firmly in mind the core values and strengths of this organization.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.