



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

Secretary General's Remarks

“SDG 16, comprehensive security and the OSCE”

**New England International Donors
Boston University Pardee School of Global Studies
*Boston, 2 March 2018***

- Ladies and Gentlemen,
- I am grateful to Ms. Ina Breuer for inviting me to address this distinguished audience. Thank you all for coming today.
- This is a good occasion to discuss the role of regional organizations such as the OSCE in promoting peace and development in the context of the new SDGs.
- The 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda represents a milestone in the history of international co-operation. To me this is not just a standard talking point.
- Having spent more than half of my professional career in the field of international development, I sincerely believe in the transformative potential of this particular document. Here is why.
- First of all, the Agenda translates legitimate aspirations for social justice into political commitments.
- Secondly, it promises to re-energize international action to advance peace and development around the globe.
- And most important for the OSCE – which is the world’s largest security arrangement under chapter VIII of the UN Charter, with 57 participating States spanning the Northern Hemisphere – the 2030 Agenda reinforces the nexus between peace, security and development. This relationship is at the core of the OSCE’s concept of comprehensive security.

- Consider the Helsinki Final Act, the OSCE's founding document. More than 40 years ago, in the depths of the Cold War, leaders from East and West mustered the political courage to set aside their differences and reach agreement to prevent a new war. The revolutionary outcome of their negotiations was the Helsinki Decalogue of principles underpinning the rules-based European order.
- The uniqueness of this document rests with a simple fact: it was not centered exclusively on interstate relations, but also on people. Along with rules for how states treat each other, the Decalogue established norms for how states treat their citizens. It was this approach that made respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in one country a matter of concern for the entire OSCE community.
- The Helsinki Final Act considered security in a broad context: not only hard security issues, like arms control, and military confidence- and security-building measures, but also economic and environmental issues, as well as human dimension (human rights, rule of law and democratic institutions).
- The OSCE was the first international organization to pioneer such a comprehensive security concept. And it is the only regional organization to bring together all countries of Europe and the former Soviet Union, plus the United States and Canada. All participate as equals around the same table.
- Europe today is living through times of profound mistrust and growing tensions. In the current polarized environment, the OSCE remains the only platform for inclusive East-West dialogue and co-operation around hard and soft security issues that have a direct impact on development.
- One of the OSCE's major contributions to the implementation 2030 Agenda is its enduring engagement in promoting SDG 16 on peaceful and inclusive societies. We do it by investing in early warning, conflict prevention and conflict resolution as well as post-conflict rehabilitation.
- Our rapid response to the crisis in and around Ukraine in early 2014 is a prime example of the OSCE's ability to prevent a severe conflict from escalating into full-scale war. We managed to deploy a Special Monitoring Mission - with a mandate adopted by consensus - to monitor the situation in Ukraine.

- Today that mission of more than 700 monitors is the only independent source of information about what is happening in eastern Ukraine. It has so far successfully prevented further escalation of the conflict. The humanitarian situation is deeply concerning. Civilian casualties and damage to civilian infrastructure are reported on a daily basis. The Special Monitoring Mission is doing its utmost to facilitate repairs to communication networks and energy and water supplies, and to prevent environmental and public health catastrophes.
- Working toward a sustainable resolution of this crisis remains the OSCE's top priority. We will continue to do everything we can to de-escalate tensions and facilitate political efforts to achieve a peaceful settlement.
- The OSCE is primarily a field-based organization, with an extensive network of field operations in the Western Balkans, Eastern Europe and Central Asia. These are prime instruments to help our participating States advance their national priorities, including implementing the SDGs.
- For more than two decades, the OSCE has been involved in reconciliation and post-conflict rehabilitation work in many countries hosting our field operations. Our efforts to empower civil society, build capacities of local and central governments, improve interethnic relations and promote regional co-operation offer vivid examples of the OSCE's ability to foster peace and development. [*In the WB for example we bring together young Serbians and Albanians to help them get to know each other and overcome the past.*]
- OSCE support for the 2030 Agenda goes beyond the implementation of SDG 16. Thanks to the comprehensive nature of its mandate, the OSCE can contribute to the implementation of other pillars of the 2030 Agenda, including people, planet and prosperity.
- Take “people”: the second shared priority of the Development Agenda. The OSCE strives to foster peaceful and inclusive societies. The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the Representative for Freedom of the Media and the High Commissioner on National Minorities monitor the implementation of human rights and fundamental freedoms and promote integration in diverse societies.

- We have developed specific tools and programmes tailored to help governments address the root causes of intolerance and discrimination, and we promote the values of acceptance, integration, and tolerance for diversity.
- The OSCE is the only organization in Europe which enables civil society organizations to sit at the same table with government representatives and hold them accountable for respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms without any restriction of access.
- Achieving gender equality and empowering women form a cornerstone of our security approach, which protects and promotes the human rights and dignity of women and men. OSCE efforts to empower women and girls and to mainstream gender into policies and activities at both the State and Organization level are fully compliant with the new development agenda.
- Consider migration. International governance of large flows of refugees and migrants is a significant component of the 2030 Agenda. The OSCE offers a forum where the complex but very real connection between migration and security can be constructively discussed in all its relevant dimensions.
- The OSCE's expertise, extensive field presence, and partnerships in the Mediterranean region enable us to tackle a number of aspects, including the rights of migrants, integration policies, trafficking in human beings along migration routes and returning foreign terrorist fighters.
- We also want to contribute to the debate on how to address unregulated movements of people by opening new pathways to regular labour migration. The real challenge is not to reduce migration, but to govern it through effective, co-operative approaches that can transform the drive to move into opportunities for growth and development.
- This is why labour migration policy should be addressed in a regional and cross-regional perspective. It is also why the OSCE fully supports UN efforts to achieve a Global Compact on Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration.
- On "planet": another shared priority of the Development Agenda. Recognizing the two-way relationship between environment and security, the OSCE brings the security perspective to the international environmental discourse. The OSCE can support the achievement of SDG 6 on water and SDG 13 on climate change in our region.

- The OSCE has long been a leader in promoting environmental democracy in our region. The OSCE-supported network of Aarhus Centres, which now includes 59 Centres in 14 countries, provides tools for civil society to increase public participation, access to information and justice, and transparency and accountability in the environmental sphere. Together, these efforts strengthen security and stability within and across borders.
- The OSCE facilitates co-operation among states with shared water resources, and makes full use of the potential offered by water diplomacy to increase security and stability in our region. We strive to identify security impacts of climate change in the local, national and regional context and to develop transboundary climate change adaptation strategies.
- Our increasing engagement in promoting sustainable energy, disaster risk reduction, and prevention of trafficking in hazardous waste, chemicals and wildlife will contribute towards achieving Goals 7, 11 and 15. By bringing together major energy-producing, transit and consuming countries, the OSCE can play a key role in the development of a positive approach towards energy security.
- The fourth shared priority of the 2030 Development Agenda is “*prosperity*”. Good economic governance and the rule of law are prerequisites for fighting corruption and building peaceful and prosperous communities and nations.
- We strive to engage civil society and the business community in our efforts to promote international economic co-operation, enhance the climate for business and investment, streamline regulatory frameworks and combat corruption.
- We are not alone in our endeavours. United in our common goal to ensure peace and security, the OSCE is joining efforts, first and foremost with the UN, but also with many other partner organizations to forge effective responses to traditional and emerging challenges.
- But we also need to build new coalitions that engage civil society, academia, the business community, philanthropy, women and young people. Co-operation creates new synergies, makes our common efforts more effective and efficient, and brings the fulfillment of the Sustainable Development Agenda ever closer. So I am very pleased to have this opportunity to engage with New England International Donors and learn about your priorities.

- Thank you!