



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Secretary General on the 2015 Program Outline

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
May 8, 2014

The United States welcomes the release of the 2015 Program Outline. We wish to thank the Secretary General, fund managers and their staff for the preparation of this important document, a first step in the OSCE's planning and budget process for 2015. We look forward to productive discussions with fund managers to focus on programs and activities that best leverage OSCE's expertise and resources to meet the priorities of the organization and the host government.

Normally, at this time of the year, the prior year's Unified Budget would have already been adopted, before the Program Outline discussions begin. Mr. Chair, I appreciated your comment at the outset on how urgent this work is and I have sympathy for your frustrations. We are also disappointed that a few participating States remain unwilling to engage in constructive efforts to conclude the overdue budget process. We are now in the fifth month of 2014, and the Organization needs a budget to allow it to move forward, and to focus on pressing priorities.

Let me be clear: we, the United States, have a long list of major outstanding issues. In the spirit of compromise and cooperation, the United States urges participating States to find consensus quickly on the budget so the Organization may move forward to focus on other pressing issues. We all know we'll have another chance to negotiate this sooner than we might wish.

As the Secretary General noted in his Foreword to the Program Outline, 2015 marks 40 years since the inception of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. Since then, the OSCE has evolved, and is more relevant now than ever, as demonstrated in OSCE's response to the recent events in Ukraine. This year, we also welcome the streamlining of OSCE's annual planning and budgetary process, to include the 2013 Program Budget Performance Report presentation with the Program Outline discussions.

Institutions are a pillar of the OSCE, and yet for the past four years, ODIHR's funding has been at zero nominal growth, a dramatic reduction in real terms. This is unacceptable and unsustainable, and it restricts ODIHR's ability to fulfill the tasks requested of them by participating States. ODIHR, HCNM, and RFoM need adequate funding to ensure that they have the necessary resources to carry out their mandates, which grow each year while their funding does not.

Security challenges in Central Asia remain a major concern, yet it is the region that is underfunded. The Border Management Staff College (BMSC) has grown to become an effective tool to helping participating States and the wider OSCE region to secure borders,

fight terrorism, prevent drug smuggling, combat corruption, and stop human trafficking. Like any institution, it needs predictability and stability to be able to maximize effectiveness. We will continue to work with participating States to ensure that BMSC is included in the 2015 Unified Budget. We would also like to see resources for UNSCR 1540 implementation included in the 2015 Unified Budget.

We commend the field missions in the Western Balkans for successes made with the host governments, resulting in the streamlining of operations and activities. We encourage them to look to the Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina as a model to right-size their funding and resource usage. As some of the countries in the Balkans make progress towards Euro-Atlantic integration and consolidate democratic reforms, the logical evolution of OSCE operations there would be to work toward the handover of successful reform programs to other international and local actors.

Finally, we encourage the OSCE to seek creative and practical approaches to a more efficient executive structure. The budget for the Secretariat represents 27% of the total budget, up from 19% six years ago, while the overall budget continues to decline. This is unsustainable and cannot continue. We encourage the Secretariat to address the current imbalance among the headquarters, institutions and field operations, with a renewed focus on supporting programmatic activities and personnel in the field, while maintaining its ability to respond to crises like it is currently doing in Ukraine.

Ambassador Kobieracki, fund managers, participating States, and the incoming Serbian Chairmanship – we look forward to working with you as we prepare for 2015. The United States recognizes that finding consensus on priorities of all 57 participating States is never an easy task, and that compromises will need to be made. That said, we remain confident that through positive and constructive collaboration we will be able to identify shared priorities to advance the goals of the OSCE across all three dimensions.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.