



United States Mission to the OSCE

2020 Unified Budget Proposal

As delivered by Deputy Chief of Mission Harry Kamian
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
October 3, 2019

Mr. Secretary General,

The United States welcomes the 2020 Unified Budget Proposal and expresses our appreciation to you and the fund managers for all their hard work.

The United States will work to ensure the OSCE receives the resources it needs to carry out the functions the participating States have assigned to it. We acknowledge the challenges of responding to the growing demands from the 57 participating States and meeting the OSCE's commitments to the men and women it employs in an environment where money remains scarce.

The United States continues to believe the goal toward which we should strive is zero nominal growth. Without this parameter in mind, we fear the incentive for fiscal discipline will diminish and the Organization will lose focus on its core tasks.

Only expenditures of vital importance to our common security could justify an increase in assessed contributions to the participating States. We recognize and commend the executive structures of the Organization for the efforts and hard choices made to contain costs and to find efficiencies under this condition, and we call on all elements of the OSCE to do the same.

Mr. Secretary General, we know that after a certain point, it is not possible to do more with less or even to do the same with less, and that hard choices will have to be made. We acknowledge--as you have noted several times-- that it is the responsibility of the participating States to make these decisions.

For our part, the United States places a high priority on the efforts of the OSCE's Independent Institutions – the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the High Commissioner on National Minorities, and the Representative on Freedom of the Media. They need sufficient resources. We urge participating States not to politicize their budgets.

Based on our preliminary review of the budget proposal, in presenting their proposed budgets, the independent Institutions have indeed listened carefully to participating States,

and in our view their proposed budgets reflect the priorities as expressed by a majority of participating States.

Mr. Secretary General, in your presentation today, you note your interest in arguing for additional resources to address what you consider to be some of the shortcomings in the programmatic work within the Secretariat. Similarly, we will work with the other participating States to identify ways to bolster the programmatic elements within the Secretariat. We will look closely at the budgets of each of these executive structures to ascertain whether they have made the difficult choices between administrative costs and programming.

All participating States should maintain robust support for the Organization's field operations. We note the proposal to direct further resources to OSCE activities in Central Asia. While we applaud this trend, we will look closely at the individual requests for increased funding to ensure expenditures have clear and sustainable outcomes.

Mr Secretary General, I would like to respond to a couple of specific points that you shared with us this morning. With regards to ODIHR's request for additional funding, in our view, ODIHR's request for additional funding for election observation efforts reflects what we see as an increasing demand across the entire OSCE region for ODIHR to participate with participating States to carry out this important effort. It is we the participating States that are placing this demand on ODIHR and as a result, we should respond in kind. It is our shared responsibility to ensure that ODIHR has the resources it needs to carry out this important function that we-- again--the participating States, have asked it to do and do so with increasing regularity.

Second, you talked about an important issue of governance. I welcome the honest assessment that you provided us about the need for our Organization to ensure that we have the proper governance structure in place. Based on previous conversations we have had over the last two years, you know that we take issues of ethics, sexual harassment, and duty of care strongly. We also believe that you do based on your performance, as well as what you shared with us. Whether additional resources, including the proposals that you put forward the best or only way to address this remains unclear. But I assure you that our delegation will take a long, serious and close look at the proposals you have with the goal in mind of strengthening the Organization as you outline it. At the same time, I would be remiss if I did not say that independent of your budget proposal, independent of whether additional resources that you put forward, all the leaders of this Organization--the participating States--have a responsibility to ensure that we are among the top international organizations with regard to ethics, addressing sexual harassment, and ensuring duty of care of our personnel.

Finally, The United States will work closely with the Albanian Chairmanship in the upcoming discussions to achieve a timely agreement on the 2020 Unified Budget.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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