

Vienna, 18 April 2007

The 15th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum

“Key challenges to ensure environmental security and sustainable development in the OSCE area: land degradation, soil contamination and water management”

TENTATIVE OUTCOME AND POSSIBLE FOLLOW-UP

In line with past decisions, and in particular decision No. 10/04 on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the Forum, aimed at making it as result-oriented as possible, this document highlights some topics and related questions proposed to be discussed during the 15th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum (EEF) (Part 2 – Prague, 21-23 May, 2007). It puts up a number of ideas and recommendations stemming from the preparatory Conferences and the Vienna Forum and some possible follow-up activities the OSCE could conduct. Its purpose is to stimulate the discussions, elicit reactions from speakers, participants, delegations, etc., contributing thus to identifying, during the Prague Forum, the most suitable follow-up recommendations and activities. The paper has no pretention to be either comprehensive or exhaustive.

Review Session: Review of the implementation of OSCE commitments

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) will present its report on the implementation of OSCE commitments in the environmental sector, stemming among others from the Maastricht Strategy Document. The report will be circulated to delegations two weeks before the Forum so that they can prepare to actively participate in the discussion following the presentation of the report. The discussion should focus on difficulties that participating States may face in the implementation process and on how the OSCE can best help in their efforts to fulfil their commitments.

Plenary Session I: Environmental Security and Sustainable Development in the OSCE area

This session should discuss various concepts of environmental security, including climate security, relevant for the OSCE area.

Based on the Maastricht Strategy, the Spanish Chairmanship proposes to study how the OSCE could better address environmental security concerns. A proposed text is to be circulated to delegations ahead of the EEF Session in Prague. Plenary Session I should discuss what would be the most important orientations to be included. Are the proposed orientations relevant? What issues should be selected out of the variety of issues that could be addressed? What should the OSCE focus on, given its mandate, expertise and comparative advantages?

Given its early warning mandate, how could the OSCE better monitor environmental threats to security and stability? How could it promote environmental security in areas of

tension as a tool of peace, confidence building and reconciliation between parties? How could we identify priorities, thematic and regional, in terms of threats to security and stability?

The Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC) has shown that it can provide a very effective framework to co-ordinate the activities of several international organizations in the area of environmental security. Are there additional activities addressing land degradation, soil contamination and water management issues that should be drawn to the attention of ENVSEC partners?

How could the OSCE enhance its role as platform for dialogue for the participating States and the other players active in the area of environmental security, environmental governance and sustainable development? How could it be instrumental in building and sustaining a political momentum on these issues?

Special attention should be paid to mainstreaming environment security issues into the political agendas, enhancing coordination among partners and stakeholders, fostering regional cooperation and promoting public participation. Given the potential enhanced role the OSCE could play, who should be its most important partners?

Plenary Session II: Water – trans-boundary co-operation

Sustainable water management is a complex exercise requiring a long term involvement and cooperation at various levels, between countries and also within countries, between state institutions, civil society and the business community. The OSCE, based on its existing experience, has an important role to play. OSCE water related projects, such as the Sava Initiative, the Chu and Talas and Dniester River projects offer valuable lessons on which the OSCE could build its future cooperation on current water issues.

The OSCE could reinforce its cooperation with regional and international organizations and direct its efforts toward building political will and local capacities, filling existing gaps and strengthening and enforcing existing cooperation mechanisms. The OSCE could join other international organizations in promoting intra and international water cooperation by examining what is not currently working well and complementing and coordinating its work with existing actors to fill these gaps. What are the most significant gaps? Which are the most relevant partners the OSCE should join forces with?

The OSCE participating States have already found effective ways to cooperate on water management issues on a regional basis and the Organization has a role on collecting and disseminating the best practices of these states, including the various initiatives of co-operation formed in the Danube River Basin and between Spain and Portugal.

The OSCE is well placed to help open discussions, to facilitate dialogue and to provide guidance and establish links with international organizations and mechanisms with the required technical knowledge. This concerns particularly the strengthening of cooperation among upstream and downstream countries in water projects, which could contribute to reducing environmental and societal tensions. What should be the respective roles for the Secretariat and for the OSCE field presences in this area?

The OSCE could facilitate agreements on solving water related issues and facilitate existing regional efforts and mechanisms. As priority areas for future OSCE involvement in water issues, the preparatory conferences and the first part of the Forum singled out Central Asia (encouragement to regional cooperation, streamlining and implementation of agreements, dam safety, new efforts of regional co-operation in the Amu-Darya River Basin, etc.) and the South Caucasus region (Kura-Araks project, reservoirs in the Nagorno Karabakh region, hot-spots identification, training etc.) as well as the Caspian Sea region.

Plenary Session III: Good governance in managing natural resources

The preparatory process highlighted that there is an urgent need to link environment and good governance. This need was emphasized if we are to address key challenges such as deforestation, inadequate land use practices, and environmental dangers of rocket fuel, also known as *mélange*, among others. It was stated that the OSCE and especially its field presences are well positioned to support the OSCE participating States in implementing good governance practices.

The OSCE and the UNECE could intensify their co-operation in promoting the existing international environmental conventions. In particular the importance of the principles of the Aarhus Convention was stressed. The OSCE and the Secretariat of the Aarhus Convention (UNECE) are considering organizing regional and national events focused on access to information, public participation and access to justice. Discussions on holding a regional high level judiciary workshop are underway with partners. Which other activities related to the Aarhus Convention should be prioritized?

The OSCE could also increase its cooperation with organizations involved in promoting sustainable forest management (e.g. UNECE, FAO, Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE)) and in this context focus on combating illegal logging and other phenomena associated with it, such as corruption, organized crime, money laundering. In this context partnerships could be sought, including with organizations such as UNODC and the World Bank. Raising awareness and capacity building workshops could be organized at national or regional level. Concerning sustainable forest management and combating illegal logging, national capacity building could be the first step, followed by a regional activity. Do delegates agree that given its comprehensive approach to security, the OSCE should play a crucial role on these issues?

The OSCE could continue its efforts in promoting good governance, with a renewed focus on environment. How could the OSCE best strengthen governance through education, training and capacity building at national and local levels? How to increase the involvement of local communities and thus strengthening local capacities to address environmental governance issues?

With appropriate partners, the OSCE could promote agricultural policies that ensure the sustainable use of land. It could also provide advice and capacity building both to the extractive industries sector itself and to the governments in addressing the environmental implications of these industries as well as the use of revenues from that sector for environmental remediation measures. How could we explore new possible avenues of cooperation in this regard with other organizations?

One of the main conclusions of the preparatory Conferences was that water management is very much linked with good governance. It appears therefore that the OSCE should continue to promote the principles of good governance in the water sector. The OSCE has a clear role in local capacity building, enabling better civil society contributions to water management and providing political impetus to intra and interstate cooperation and policy integration.

The OSCE could further cooperate with the UNECE Water Convention Secretariat in further adoption and implementation of the Convention principles. It could also play a bigger role in preventing corruption in water related projects. How could the OSCE best step up its efforts in education and training with regard to water issues (and also on related issues such as *inter alia* agriculture and energy), disseminate water technologies, and facilitate services and consultations? How could we promote research and training on water issues in Central Asia? Various options should be assessed: introducing an academic program on water in the curriculum of the OSCE Bishkek Academy, co-operating with the Interstate Commission for Water Co-ordination (ICWC), possibility of using the Partnership for Economic Education and Research Support (PEERS) network, environmental diplomacy course, establishing a separate 'water academy', etc.

Plenary Session IV: Challenges to the management of water resources and to countering desertification in the Mediterranean region

Under the moderation of the incoming Finnish Chairmanship, participating States should discuss with Mediterranean partners on how to best pool their efforts in addressing future challenges of water management and desertification in the Mediterranean region. Countries on both the North and South shores of the Mediterranean face similar problems and, through enhanced exchanges of lessons learned, experiences and technology, might be able to tackle those challenges together in more efficient ways.

Plenary Session V: Land degradation and soil contamination

Both in Bishkek and in Vienna, it was highlighted that land degradation and soil contamination strongly relate to the loss and shortages and/or mismanagement of vital resources such as water, soil and food. In the medium run, it is likely that if this situation persists, it may lead to local and/or regional conflicts. Since these problems transcend borders and can not be solved by one country or one organization acting alone, the OSCE should foster increased co-operation and coordination among participating States and assure that civil society is closely linked to all these efforts.

The social affects of land degradation and soil contamination, such as environmentally induced migration, are a concern for the OSCE. The OSCE could therefore examine if it could play a role in raising awareness of this problem and in promoting cooperation to tackle it as soon as possible. Could the OSCE play an active role in contributing in the set-up of regional cooperation mechanisms to combat land degradation and soil contamination?

Military legacies, in particular rocket fuel components, also known as *Mélange*, pose a threat to environmental security and exemplify the added value of the OSCE as a cross

dimensional organization that can tackle problems affecting the environment and livelihoods. Should it continue or even enhance its work on 'melange' projects?

Mining operations are short term activities with long term consequences. The existence of adequate legal frameworks within which the mining industry is obliged to operate is of utmost importance. How could the OSCE assist in setting up these frameworks?

Selected follow-up proposals and other issues

Corporate responsibility

Sustainable business practices have a key role to play in promoting environmental security. Through demonstrating corporate responsibility, including in those activities affecting the environment, enterprises will become more competitive, not less. There exist win-win scenarios, whereby enterprises improve their environmental performance while also increasing their profits. A conference on environmental regulations and standards and the role of business in promoting sustainable development and environmental security was proposed to be held in the Russian Federation; it could be undertaken with the participation of the UNIDO, the EBRD and other relevant actors.

There was also a proposal to examine, together with the Caspian Sea riparian States, how regional co-operation could be enhanced to avoid pollution stemming from extractive and chemical industrial activities in the Caspian Sea region.

Co-operation in the South-Caucasus

In a region witnessing continuing political conflict, the ongoing OSCE/NATO South Caucasus River Monitoring Project is one of the few regional projects to develop co-operation between the South Caucasus countries in the area of environmental protection. Since the beginning of the project in 2003, the OSCE and NATO have provided laboratory equipment, training, and salaries to scientific institutions in Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia to develop joint water sampling, analysis and data management procedures for the Kura-Araks river basin, the main source of water in the South Caucasus region. Provided additional funding is available, the project would be extended in 2007/2008 and continue to build technical capacity and regional co-operation on issues related to water quality monitoring.

The OSCE could examine with Armenia and Azerbaijan its possible role, together with UNEP and other partners, in addressing issues of regional water management, linked in particular with the maintenance and operation of reservoirs in the Nagorno Karabakh region and rehabilitation of downstream irrigation networks.

Environmentally induced migration

Social affects of land degradation and soil contamination such as environmentally induced migration are a concern to the OSCE. The OSCE should examine the exact role it could play in raising awareness of this problem and in promoting cooperation to tackle it as soon

as possible. The OSCE could assist in raising political awareness on the issue of environmental migration (including internal displacement caused by environmental considerations) and facilitate scientific research on the link between environmental degradation and migration, not only confined to the OSCE region but also in collaboration with Partners for Cooperation.

Environmental security in Central Asia

A number of concrete activities are foreseen in Central Asia. During his participation in the regional Heads-of-Mission meeting in Tashkent in the week on 30 April, the Co-ordinator will also discuss these proposals with national authorities to explore the feasibility and the timing of such activities.

The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), together with the OSCE could launch a capacity and institution building initiative in Central Asia. Such an initiative would, among others, aim at raising awareness on and strengthening the implementation of the 'Convention'. The two organizations could work together with the countries in the region towards the creation of an International Centre for Monitoring Land Degradation and Desertification in Central Asia (also involving Afghanistan, Mongolia). A regional workshop could be envisaged as a first step in this direction. The OCEEA and the UNCCD Secretariat are currently consulting with Delegations concerned to determine the way ahead. Field presences would also be involved in this process; a tentative date could be the end of September 2007.

A regional workshop in Central Asia on water co-operation could also be foreseen as a first step in a longer term initiative leading to a regional agreement on dam safety and co-operation, in co-operation with the UNECE and possibly other partners. Tajikistan has expressed high interest in water co-operation in the region; this will be further discussed with the OSCE Centre in Dushanbe.

Furthermore, co-operation with the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination in Central Asia (ICWC) and the Global Water Partnership (GWP) will be discussed in the margins of the 15th ICWC Anniversary in Bishkek, 23-28 April 2007 and on the occasion of the Co-ordinator's visit to Tashkent.

OCEEA is also exploring how it could support the co-operation between Tajikistan and Afghanistan on the Amu-Darya river; further details are to be provided by the OSCE Centre in Dushanbe.

Kazakhstan expressed interest in a project linked to water management in the Syr-Darya river basin; further details are to be provided by the OSCE Centre in Almaty. It is also foreseen to continue supporting the inter-state cooperation in the management of the Chu and Talas rivers.

OCEEA is also ready to support the OSCE Centre in Ashgabad in organizing, in co-operation with the Turkmen authorities and upon their request, a National Workshop on Improvement of Land Quality, Land and Water Management, at the beginning of May 2007.

Technology transfer

As mentioned by the Spanish Chairmanship at the Zaragoza Conference, the OSCE could serve as a platform for exchange of information, best practices and lessons learnt. In this context tackling and remediation of military and industrial legacies, in particular in the mining sector, were mentioned, as well as study visits.

The OSCE could be instrumental in assisting participating States by developing cooperation with other international organizations in promoting environmentally sound technologies, environmental management systems and corporate social responsibility. It could organize training workshops and expert group meetings. The UNIDO cleaner production centre could also be involved. Furthermore it could promote the introduction of new water saving technologies and the establishment of payments for ecosystem services by fostering transfer of technology and experience.

Technology transfer could also be one of the key themes of the Central Asia regional workshop that the OCEEA could organize with partners in September 2007.