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United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Secretary General on the 2018 Program Outline

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires, a.i. Kate Byrnes
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
June 8, 2017

The United States welcomes the 2018 Program Outline and thanks the Secretary General, the fund managers, and their staffs for the hard work that went into preparing this important document. We look forward to productive discussions as we work to best leverage the Organization's expertise and available resources to respond to ongoing security challenges across the entire OSCE space in all three dimensions.

The Program Outline is the first concrete step in the OSCE's planning and budget process for the following year and must be carefully considered. The delay in adopting the 2017 Unified Budget impeded planning, delayed necessary organizational changes, prevented implementation of scheduled program activities, and increased costs across the Organization. We hope that the discussions on the 2018 Program Outline will lead to constructive discussions on the 2018 Unified Budget and timely agreement.

As consideration of the 2018 Program Outline moves forward over the coming weeks and months, the United States will continue to champion 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 – and will seek to ensure that these institutions have sufficient resources. We will also continue to support the role of the Organization's field operations – the face of the OSCE on the ground where the institutions contribute to regional integration, democratic reforms, good governance, and promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Mr. Secretary General, as we look ahead to 2018 from the vantage point of this extraordinary year, we ask that you consider ways to reduce the administrative burden – both on our delegations and the Secretariat staff – through further reforms to the budget process. A biennial or multi-year budget process has been proposed in previous years. Now may be the time to resurrect those discussions. We also encourage the Horizontal Issues Working Group to continue to address cross-cutting financial and managerial issues of mutual concern.

Mr. Secretary General, it is the responsibility of all OSCE participating States to provide the Organization with the guidance and resources necessary to effectively address the areas of greatest need, and to support its highest priorities while maintaining fiscal discipline. We are committed to working with you, the fund managers, other participating States, and the incoming Italian Chairmanship on constructive budget discussions with the aim of reaching timely consensus on the Organization's 2018 priorities.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.