

**Chairmanship Conference
Security Implications of Climate Change in the OSCE Region
Bucharest 5-6 October 2009**

**Session 1: Climate change and security: challenges and
opportunities in the OSCE region**

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Let me start by warmly thanking the Greek Chairmanship for arranging, the Romanian government for hosting, and the Coordinator's Office for preparing this timely event.

It is an honor for me to address this conference on behalf of the Swedish EU Presidency. Climate change is a key challenge for the international community and the coming months will be crucial.

The UN process in the run-up to the UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen in December is the main focus of our attention this autumn. But it should at the same time be noted that many OSCE participating States also attach importance to the security implications of climate change in the OSCE context.

The security dimension of climate change is something that we are just starting to focus on. I participated in the climate change negotiations in 1990-1991 which eventually led to the Kyoto Protocol. Then we talked about migration, water scarcity, desertification etc but we actually concentrated on low lying islands and environmental aspects.

Today's conference is important in order to

- raise awareness of the problem in the OSCE region,
- look more closely at the specific security aspects,
- identify and link parallel processes that are ongoing in different regional and international fora - UN, OSCE, EU.

Sweden is actively engaged in the UN dialogue – and climate change is one of the main priorities of the Swedish EU Presidency. We also find it important to have a thorough discussion on what the OSCE contribution could be within this area.

The risks posed by climate change are not a concern for the future. They are real and their impact are already being felt worldwide. Today, instability anywhere in the world can affect our security more quickly and in more far reaching ways than ever before.

Climate change is a “threat multiplier” that exacerbates already existing trends, tensions and instability. It threatens to overburden states and regions which are already fragile and prone to conflict. It is likely to undermine achievements and efforts to reach the Millennium and other internationally agreed development goals.

Climate change will - to a varying degree and in different ways - affect us all. But those most likely to suffer in the first place are the developing countries, which therefore need our solidarity and assistance. Development cooperation has a vital role to play in order to strengthen the capacity of people and institutions to deal with this challenge.

Climate change is a shared challenge, beyond the capacity of any country to tackle on its own. A comprehensive approach is needed to

- raise awareness,
- increase understanding,
- promote concrete action at the global, regional and local levels.

We must draw on the full range of policy tools available,

- prevention in terms of mitigation and adaptation,
- crisis management,
- humanitarian and development assistance,
- trade, environment- and security policy.

It is against this backdrop that the Council of the European Union in March 2008 welcomed a joint report on Climate Change and International Security from the High Representative Javier Solana and the European Commissioner for External Affairs Benita Ferrero-Waldner.

This joint paper concludes that climate change compromises the interests and security of the EU and its partners. It outlines the main threats that climate change poses to international security and provides recommendations on how to tackle those threats.

The report has kick-started a series of EU initiatives to build capacity and increase awareness and knowledge. The EU has enhanced its conflict prevention and crisis management capacities, but it needs to do more to improve its analysis and early warning capabilities. The EU also intends to step up cooperation with other countries and international and regional organizations on these issues. The OSCE as well as countries represented here today, are obvious partners.

The EU joint paper outlines some of the forms of conflicts driven by climate change which may occur in different regions of the world. A number of these threats could be

very relevant for the OSCE region, such as environmentally-induced migration and tension over water and energy supplies

Aggressive mitigation coupled with simultaneous adaptation (through sustainable development) is the prime defence against climate change. Global warming beyond 2 degrees Celsius could trigger unparalleled security challenges. Investment in mitigation to avoid worst case scenarios - as well as in measures to adapt to the unavoidable consequences - should go hand in hand with efforts to address and respond to the international security threats and risks created by climate change; they should all be viewed as part of preventive security policy.

The newly initiated UN process dealing specifically with the security implications of climate change is interesting and promising. It is a process in which the OSCE - being a key regional security organisation with a comprehensive approach to security - has a logical, complementary, role.

The UN General Assembly resolution on “Climate Change and its Possible Security Implications”, which was unanimously adopted in early June, was a vital step towards a common approach of dealing with the links between climate change and security. In the resolution, the UN Secretary General was tasked to present a report on this topic based inter alia on input from relevant regional and international organisations. It was an important signal that the OSCE was identified by the UN as such an organisation and was asked to contribute to the Secretary General’s report.

The report is comprehensive as well as concise and will be a vital point of reference in discussions on the security implications of climate change in the years to come.

Two courses of action are proposed in the report:

- to accelerate identification of “threat minimizers” and implementation of win-win options;
- to focus on areas with high impact, large magnitudes, imminent threats, irreversible consequences and high human costs.

The report puts emphasis on prevention and resilience to diminish the risk of tensions and ultimately conflict and to maintain stability. Further consideration of the impact on peace building and recovery is also important in this regard.

It is clear that the analysis and conclusions of the report are highly relevant not least in the OSCE context. The report should be a key tool in our efforts to shape an appropriate OSCE approach to responding to the identified threats to security.

Turning to the particular role of the OSCE as regards security implications of climate change, our thinking could be summarized in three points.

- **First**, the main forum responsible for dealing with the climate change challenge is the UN, not least as regards negotiations on future global action to address the phenomenon of climate change as such.

- **Second**, however, we are convinced that the OSCE – given its comprehensive concept of security – has a role to play in addressing the specific security implications of climate change in its region. This complementary role was recognized in the OSCE Madrid Declaration of 2007.

- **Third**, as already indicated, we believe that the role of this organisation should be identified in a thorough and substantive discussion among participating States.

The OSCE is an important forum for political dialogue and has a number of tools that can be used in countering security challenges - always with a focus on providing added value and avoiding duplications: political dialogue and cooperation, awareness raising, early warning, conflict prevention, conflict management and post-conflict rehabilitation mechanisms are all there in the OSCE toolbox.

We now need to start a process of reviewing how these tools can best be used to identify “threat minimizers” and implement win-win options as the report of the UN Secretary General proposes.

The timely conference we take part in today and tomorrow constitutes an important step that can help us clarify the role the OSCE can play in addressing the security implications of climate change.

This is a global challenge and all relevant regional and international organizations should contribute – within their respective mandates – to the required multilateral response, with the UN being the key actor.

The EU is willing to do its part.

Action cannot wait.

Reaching an ambitious agreement in Copenhagen in December is in the interest – and is the responsibility – of every nation. We hope that the discussions here today will contribute to the momentum that is building up for Copenhagen.

In the end, climate change has the potential to both challenge and strengthen global governance. Let us take on the challenge and make sure that the strengthening will happen.