

**OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum 2nd Preparatory Meeting
Venice, 24-25 May 2018**

Opening Statement

Armenia

Mr. Moderator,

We would like to extend our gratitude to the OSCE Italian Chairmanship and the OSCE Coordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities, as well as their able teams for organising the Second Preparatory Meeting of the 26th Economic and Environmental Forum. Our thanks go to the authorities of Venice for their hospitality.

We thank the distinguished speakers for shaping framework of our discussions.

Armenia supports the Chairmanship's focus on the topics of investment policies in digital era, human capital development in context of economic security, growth and development, education and building skills in digital era, good governance, which supplement the topics of our previous discussions at the First Preparatory Meeting and helps to complete the picture ahead of the Economic and Environmental Forum.

Armenia throughout its millennia-old history has never relied on natural resources for its development. Driving force for the economic progress in Armenia have been and will remain free, skilful and creative individuals, which form our nation. Coincidentally, venue of our event the city of Venice, for centuries has hosted one of the scientific, religious and educational centres of the Armenian people. Just few kilometres from here lies the island of San Lazzaro degli Armeni, the seat of the Mekhitarist Congregation of the Armenian Catholic Church since 1717. The first Armenian printed book was published in Venice more than 500 years ago.

Innovation, development of human capital and promotion of good governance can take place only within framework of strong and inclusive democratic institutions, rule of law and protection of human rights and freedoms.

There is clear consensus in the Armenian society on democracy, good governance and human rights, which creates favourable conditions for the Government to advance reforms, aimed at further enhancing the human capital and promoting innovative economy.

We reiterate our long-standing position on good governance as an important factor guaranteeing realization of human rights for all free of coercion and corruption. Human rights

based approach to good governance certainly encompasses inalienable economic and social rights and the right of peoples to development.

Promotion of digital economy and innovative education can create conducive ground for realization of economic freedoms, enhanced economic participation and increasing of people – to - people contacts including across dividing lines and closed borders.

We believe that the OSCE has an important role to play in transferring the new trends in digital era to increased security and confidence between participating States and peoples. It can serve as an important forum for dialogue and exchange of experience among participating States and international organizations, which pursue agenda of regional economic cooperation and confidence building, including through promotion of right to development, good governance and human capital development.

The OSCE Office in Yerevan was instrumental in promoting good governance, including e-governance. Despite the attempts to isolate Armenia from international cooperation and assistance the Government of Armenia is consistent in advancing the reforms with support of our international partners.

We look forward to interesting and fruitful discussions and stand ready to make our contribution by bringing Armenia's rich experience and good practices in innovative economy, education and development of human capital.

Thank you.