

**G8/Afghanistan
(French Presidency)
Initiative for the Prosperity of Border Regions (IPBR)**

Seminar “Regional/transboundary cooperation in energy”

OSCE Academy on Bishkek, 19 December 2011

**Opening remarks by Ambassador Andrew Tesoriere, the Head of the OSCE Centre in
Bishkek**

Distinguished Deputy Ministers and Ambassadors, dear participants,

It is the OSCE's honour and pleasure to provide the venue for today's roundtable on regional energy cooperation. The OSCE warmly welcomes this initiative of the G8, the world's leading industrialised economies. The OSCE also wishes to thank the host country Kyrgyzstan, which generously provides the premises for the OSCE Academy, as well as all the eminent participants who have come to contribute to today's brain-storming seminar.

Our agenda falls into two halves. Firstly, current and potential energy power projects in the region. Secondly, how such infrastructural development is best managed socially and environmentally, for the benefit of people and the planet. I am delighted that the topic is being considered in this wider manner. Indeed, the OSCE Academy is commencing a second Masters programme in 2012 in economic governance and development, in which it will focus on linkages between governance and security. Afghan students will join counterparts from the Central Asian Republics on this 15-month post-graduate course.

I would open my brief remarks with two phrases : political stability and mutual confidence. These are the vital prerequisites for successful infrastructural development. From my own 35 year association with Afghanistan, I might recall the false dawns for ambitious energy projects, connecting Central and South Asia – for example projects such as TAPI which were not pursued because of instability and uncertainty.

Now, on the eve of 2012, there are exciting new pan-regional project possibilities under active consideration, which with the right enabling conditions should attract the necessary finance to develop and bring these regional arteries of power transmission on-stream. The strategic, economic and social impact of such new regional energy links promise to be significant. Not only should they support improved living standards, consistent with the achievement across the region of the UN Millennium Development Goals but also drive local business and employment opportunities. As importantly, the delivery and operational management of such large projects should incentivise regional nations in their cooperation on enhanced collective peace and security.

We shall be hearing a great deal more on these specific projects from a diversity of speakers this morning. But allow me to prefigure two major regional energy projects : CASA 1000 and TAPI. Both projects have been developed, based on analysis of the comparative advantages of the Central Asian countries and the needs of energy recipients notably India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. For Kyrgyzstan, CASA 1000 stands to increase national income, attract new

foreign direct investments, stimulate the reconstruction of its existing infrastructure, and build new electricity lines. The Government of Kyrgyzstan has declared its commitment to construct high voltage lines. We look forward to hearing today from speakers from Kyrgyzstan on the prospects and impediments still to be resolved in realizing CASA 1000.

The OSCE, for its part, is already engaged in a wider platform of cooperation in addressing energy security. My colleague Gabriel Leonte from the OSCE's Office of the Coordinator for Economic and Environmental Activities will speak about this in detail in the second session of the workshop. In brief, most of the OSCE's energy-related activities in Central Asia and the Caspian region have sought to strengthen human capital, facilitate the exchange of best practice and encourage the improvement of national legislation to provide for more conducive investment conditions for the implementation of renewable energy projects. Given the OSCE's mandate in energy security and its recognised status as a platform for dialogue, the Organization stands ready to expand its energy-related activities at the request of host governments in the region. On this note, let me close, thank you for your attention and wish you fruitful discussions.