



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Secretary General's Thematic Report: OSCE and Climate Change 2022 and Prospects for the Future

As delivered by Ambassador Michael Carpenter
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
March 2, 2023

Madam Secretary General, dear Helga, the United States welcomes and appreciates your report on climate change, its security implications, and the steps the Organization is taking to help address this challenge. Our view is that the OSCE, as the world's largest regional security organization, has a responsibility to better understand, raise awareness of, and address the challenges posed by climate change to the peace, prosperity, and - yes, to the Russian delegate - security of the OSCE region. Obviously, our near-term priority has to remain Russia's war on Ukraine, but the climate crisis is not going away and remains a medium- to long-term threat to our planet, so we have to continue our efforts to focus on this challenge as well.

Through the leadership of the Biden-Harris administration, the United States has prioritized the importance of climate change in our foreign policy, with an emphasis on cooperating with our global partners to raise our level of ambition. The United States has also taken steps here at the OSCE to reflect this prioritization, including being the largest contributor to the two extra-budgetary projects referenced in today's report that are driving much of the Organization's current work on climate change. We encourage other interested participating States to contribute to them as well. These projects are among the most advanced efforts to assess – and in the future mitigate – the potential security challenges stemming from climate change in the OSCE area. We expect the improved assessments and data derived from climate-security hotspots, as well as from the newly initiated work in critical sectors such as energy infrastructure, to form the foundation of our future collective action.

Madam Secretary General, we agree with you that the OSCE can do more to address climate-related security risks. The regional programs you describe offer a template for focused work. The tremendous environmental cost of Russia's war in Ukraine will burden this Organization for years to come. Much remains to be done – from better appreciating the war's negative impact on climate adaptation, to effectively using the convening power of this Organization to advance mitigation efforts inside Ukraine. You have our full support for this important work.

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