



United States Mission to the OSCE

Opening Plenary Intervention, OSCE Economic Forum

As delivered by Ambassador Julie Finley
to the Economic Forum, Prague
May 22, 2006

Thank you, Mr. Moderator.

The United States is expecting a productive meeting. Mr. Belka touched on the need for a tangible product, and he is absolutely right.

In order for this Forum to be useful, we should probably avoid repeating what has already been discussed at the two preparatory conferences and at the first part of the Forum that took place in Vienna in January. In other words, the Forum should serve as a time not to sit and listen to presentation after presentation, but as an opportunity for vigorous debate and discussion.

Furthermore, our dialogue should focus on what the OSCE can and cannot do in the area of transportation. Our discussion means little if it is not directed toward action. Let's try to dispel the image of the Forum as a "talk shop," and really try to examine concrete proposals that can be carried forward for action.

The United States would support the Chair's proposal to establish a yearly stocktaking meeting on transportation security. We would find this extremely useful.

Colleagues, we would also like to touch briefly on the proposal by next year's OSCE Chair, Spain, to focus on an environmental theme for next year's Forum. As we have mentioned in the Permanent Council, the environmental aspect of this Dimension is too often overlooked and slightly underserved. For that reason, the United States fully supports the theme of "land degradation, soil contamination and water management" proposed by Spain, though the topic will need some refinement and further discussion.

In that vein, the United States will propose at this year's Ministerial Council that the name of the OSCE Economic Forum be changed to the OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum. This would better reflect the nature of the OSCE's Second Dimension and would remind everyone that environmental issues are a vital and equal part of our work. We are glad to see that Plenary Session Five on Wednesday will be devoted to the links between transport and the environment.

Thank you, Mr. Moderator.