



United States Mission to the OSCE

U.S. Opening Statement at the First Preparatory Meeting of the 31st OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum

As delivered by Political Officer Kent Mullen
Vienna, April 29, 2024

I'd like to express my gratitude to Malta and the Office of the Coordinator of Economic and Environmental Affairs for their hard work in organizing this week's meeting. I look forward to hearing the valuable contributions from our guest speakers.

Enhancing security and stability through digital innovation is crucial for sustainable development across the OSCE region. Malta's emphasis on digital innovation this year is an important part of our shared objective of bolstering economic resilience and addressing environmental challenges.

The United States supports the Economic and Environmental Dimension and the important unifying role cooperation in these areas can play in the OSCE. Not all participating States, however, are acting to strengthen economic and environmental security in the OSCE region. Indeed, Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine continues to weaken regional security across all three dimensions. We must address the immense economic and environmental damage caused by Russia's illegal war and ensure Ukraine has the resources to meet the daunting challenges of recovery across all OSCE dimensions, not least this one. Russia's latest attack on Ukraine's civilian power plants on April 26 drives home this point. Failure to support Ukraine would undermine the very premise of the OSCE's broad and comprehensive approach to security, which views the three dimensions as interconnected and interdependent.

Madam Chair,

This week's discussions on the importance of innovation in economic development and climate adaptation are timely. The United States has launched a series of initiatives comprising the largest climate investment in history and leading to a clean-energy manufacturing boom. These initiatives have generated over 270,000 new clean energy jobs and substantial private sector investments. Cooperation with global partners is key to expanding access to clean energy, strengthening energy security, and reducing the impacts of the climate crisis across the OSCE region.

Our discussion on combating corruption will underscore the indispensable role of asset recovery and transparency in global anti-corruption efforts. Since its inception, the U.S. Justice Department's Kleptocracy Asset Recovery Initiative has successfully reclaimed and

returned over \$1.8 billion to victims of corruption, including many foreign partners. The United States also co-led the Summit for Democracy's Financial Transparency and Integrity cohort alongside our civil society partners at the Brookings Institution and the Open Government Partnership. This cohort sought to promote significant reforms such as implementing beneficial ownership requirements, ensuring transparent public procurement processes, and rigorously addressing the professional enablers of corruption. These measures are crucial for enhancing global procurement reform, ensuring transparency, and effectively confronting facilitators of corruption.

The United States is firmly committed to fostering an inclusive, innovation-driven global development agenda, particularly for those most in need. Harnessing digitalization is vital to advancing global development, and the United States has supported several notable initiatives, including the International Telecommunication Union's Partner2Connect initiative. This program aims to enhance Digital Public Goods to promote sustainable development, offer capacity building and technical assistance to developing nations, bridge the gender digital divide, and empower youth-led innovation.

The United States is also at the forefront of utilizing new technologies with our partners to drive sustainable economic growth. Our collaboration with the United Arab Emirates through the Agriculture Innovation Mission for Climate exemplifies this, with more than \$17 billion mobilized to accelerate global innovation in climate-friendly farming practices. This initiative will expand agricultural research, implement sustainable farming practices, and reduce methane emissions.

Madam Chair, the United States thanks Malta for its leadership as the OSCE Chair in Office and supports its priorities in the Economic and Environmental Dimension for 2024. We are committed to contributing U.S. expertise to upcoming meetings focused on addressing climate change and its impact on regional security, enhancing food security, and advancing anti-corruption measures in partnership with governments, the private sector, and civil society.

These and other discussions in this dimension reflect our shared dedication to tackling global economic and environmental challenges and underscore our commitment to enhancing resilience across all participating States.

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