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**STATEMENT BY SPAIN AT THE CLOSING SESSION OF PART I OF
THE FIFTEENTH MEETING OF THE OSCE ECONOMIC AND
ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM**

Vienna, 22 and 23 January 2007

**Key challenges to ensure environmental security and sustainable
development in the OSCE area: Land degradation,
soil contamination and water management**

Distinguished Ambassadors,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I should like to thank you all again, as I did yesterday, for attending this first part of the 15th Economic and Environmental Forum, which we are closing this afternoon. Once again, I should like to praise the work of Mr. Bernard Snoy, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, and the outstanding efforts of his staff in organizing and holding this event.

Over the past two days, we have discussed different environmental problems, placing special emphasis on the strong link between environmental problems and security. The environment has ceased to be a field in which only experts have an interest. The ordinary man on the street and citizens of the towns and villages of this globalized world are aware of the great damage being done to ecosystems, of global warming, of the shortage of water and of other consequences — harmful consequences — of human activity. What we now have is a general discussion and one of enormous importance, since we are talking about security and how that security may be seriously compromised if we do not act quickly to alleviate the growing environmental damage.

The Spanish Chairmanship believes that the Economic and Environmental Forum is one of the most important forums of the OSCE. This is why, today more than ever before it is necessary to support initiatives such as the elaboration of an Environmental Security Strategy, something that we have been championing with enthusiasm since Spain assumed the Chairmanship and that is already being prepared with the invaluable collaboration of the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA). Your contributions over these past two days will be taken into account and we should like to invite you to continue to contribute to the elaboration of this Strategy. Our view is that as far as possible this Strategy should take the form of a document agreed upon by consensus and reflecting the widest possible range of viewpoints. I strongly urge all the delegations of the participating States to lend their full support to and place their trust in this vital initiative,

which we are convinced will place the OSCE at the forefront of the international organizations working in the field of environmental security.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As stated in the Introductory Note distributed at the start of this Forum, the Spanish Chairmanship has set out its priorities in four main areas, which were reflected in the structuring of the sessions:

- Environmental security;
- Environmental governance;
- Social effects of environmental problems;
- Environmental security and sustainable economic development.

Turning now to more specific measures, apart from the aforementioned Environmental Security Strategy, we welcome the proposal put forward by Mr. Grégoire de Kalbermatten, Deputy Executive Director of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, to establish a Regional Dryland Centre in Central Asia, and we shall ask the OCEEA, the experts of the participating States and the OSCE missions to examine the possibilities of initiating the aforementioned project.

On the other hand, Spain believes that the role of the OSCE entails more than just co-operation with other international organizations, and Spain wants our Organization to promote responsible and committed management in matters of environmental protection. To that end, Spain takes a favourable view of one of the recommendations made at the Bishkek Preparatory Conference and proposes that the OSCE give thought to the possibility of helping to offset carbon dioxide emissions released during travel connected with our activities. Other international organizations (the World Bank) have already established similar programmes, and perhaps the time may now be at hand to put the “carbon neutral” policy into practice at both the meeting in Zaragoza and the meeting in Prague.

As far as environmental governance is concerned, Spain would like the OSCE to lend its support to the implementation of measures to ensure proper management of natural resources and endorses the work we are doing to implement the Aarhus Convention. Similarly, we support the measures and projects to combat the illegal transport of hazardous waste and materials.

With regard to the social effects of environmental problems, today we have had the opportunity to view a number of very illuminating presentations. Spain is in favour of co-ordinating research methods to enhance our knowledge of environmentally induced migratory movements.

With regard to environmental security and sustainable economic development, Spain would like to promote the dialogue between civil society and the private sector, through the greater involvement of the latter in the prevention, management and resolution of environmental problems as a basis for sustainable economic development. We shall also give

thought to the possibility of holding, in conjunction with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, seminars or workshops on “clean production”.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I believe that we can honestly say that this first part of the Economic and Environmental Forum has been a success. I should like to congratulate everyone on their contributions. I trust that our work will continue in this splendid manner at the Preparatory Conference in Zaragoza, where we will await you with open arms, with hope and with the conviction that it will be a very productive meeting.

Thank you.