

**Buantoscaireacht na hÉireann**  
**don Eagraíocht um Shlándaíl agus Comhar san Eoraip**  
Permanent Mission of Ireland to the  
Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe



## **Statement by Ireland at the Concluding Meeting of the 31<sup>st</sup> Economic and Environmental Forum**

### **Opening Session**

**12 September 2024**

Thank you, Madam Chair,

Ireland fully aligns with the statement delivered by the European Union but please allow me to make a few remarks in my national capacity. Ireland would like to thank the Maltese Chairpersonship, Acting Secretary General, Catherine Fearon, and Ambassador Dzhusupov and his colleagues at the OCEEA for their work in organising this forum. We would also like to thank the Czech Republic for hosting us.

The holding of mandated events is a vital part of the OSCE's function and we regret the selective approach by some participating States to their OSCE commitments, notably the refusal to join consensus on the regular holding of HDIM.

The second dimension is an integral part of the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security. Raising awareness of the links between climate and security and taking collective action are essential and the OSCE has an important role to play, mandated by our ministers in the landmark 2021 Stockholm Ministerial Council decision.

Nowhere in our region is the link between security and the environment more stark than in Ukraine. Ireland was proud to contribute to the OSCE extra-budgetary project on assessing the environmental impact of the war against Ukraine and we encourage participating States to engage in this afternoon's side event where its findings will be presented. The preliminary 12-month assessment published earlier this year found that Russia's full-scale invasion has wrought widespread environmental devastation, including disrupting water supply, threatening marine ecosystems, and causing extensive damage to forestry by fire and unexploded ordnance.

The report also presented a series of useful steps for the international community, civil society and academia, and the private sector to take to monitor and mitigate the situation. We thank the OSCE for its proactive response to this issue, in accordance with its mandate of supporting participating States to meet their commitments.

Russia's actions will have repercussions for generations to come, not only in Ukraine, but around the world. Its blockades and strikes on agricultural export infrastructure have caused global food insecurity, and the significant additional CO2 emissions caused by the conflict will result in further challenges for at-risk communities everywhere.



Madam Chair,

Ireland is firmly focused on tackling climate change now and not in two, five or ten years-time. Our international approach to the effects of climate change is centred on helping the furthest behind first. As was articulated by speakers during June's High Level Conference on Climate Change in Malta, we may all be on the same sea but we are most certainly not in the same boat.

The disproportionate impact of climate change on women, and the erosion of gender equality as a result of the effects of climate change should be alarming to us all. Women are at the frontlines dealing with the effects of poverty, environmental degradation and natural disasters. Indeed, women represent 80% of people displaced by extreme weather. At the same time, women are agents of change in their communities, decision-makers and leaders in climate action who contribute important knowledge and skills.

We therefore recall the obligation of all participating States, as outlined in the 2021 Ministerial Council decision, to ensure a multi-stakeholder and inclusive approach to environmental matters by engaging with civil society and by enabling the effective participation of women in decision-making. Ireland's climate financing will continue to prioritise gender-sensitive and locally-led initiatives, and the mitigation of the security risks associated with climate change.

We look forward to a further focus on inclusive climate governance at future OSCE meetings as well as further sharing of best practices for adaptation. We also welcome the OCEEA's vital work assessing cross-border climate hotspots and facilitating opportunities for regional cooperation, in the pursuit of comprehensive security for people across the OSCE area.

In closing, we hope that the next few days will be a chance for productive discussions on challenges to which no participating State is immune and which require our immediate action.

Thank you.