

22ND ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM

**“Responding to environmental challenges with a view to promoting
cooperation and security in the OSCE area”**

Prague, 10-12 September 2014

CONSOLIDATED SUMMARY

OFFICE OF THE CO-ORDINATOR OF OSCE ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVITIES
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

22nd ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM

“Responding to environmental challenges with a view to promoting cooperation and security in the OSCE area”

CONCLUDING MEETING

Prague, 10 - 12 September 2014

Introduction

The Concluding Meeting of the 22nd OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum (EEF) on “Responding to environmental challenges with a view to promoting co-operation and security in the OSCE area” took place in Prague, Czech Republic, on 10-12 September 2014. Seven thematic areas were addressed during the three-day meeting:

- Flooding disaster in South Eastern Europe - Lessons learned and the role of the OSCE;
- Slow-onset natural disasters as triggers of tensions and opportunities for co-operation;
- A co-operative response to environmental challenges: OSCE experience and lessons learnt for the future;
- Facilitating disaster preparedness and response through innovation, technology and information, and Public-Private-Partnerships in Disaster Risk Reduction;
- How to achieve resilience in the OSCE area;
- The role of the OSCE in responding to environmental challenges.

A last session devoted to the possible follow-up to the 22nd OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum concluded the event.

More than 200 participants, including official representatives of OSCE participating States, Field Operations, as well as experts from international, regional and non-governmental organizations, the business community and academia attended the meeting and engaged in the discussions.

The CiO and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland, Didier Burkhalter, opened the event with Lubomír Zaorálek, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Czech Republic, and Lamberto Zannier, Secretary General of the OSCE.

The two key note speeches as well as many other interventions during the Concluding Forum emphasized the urgency and relevance for the OSCE to step up its activities on disaster risk reduction as well as climate change adaptation.

The review report by the UNDP on the Implementation of OSCE Commitments in the Field of Disaster Risk Reduction provided a comprehensive overview and a set of recommendations for further engagement.

Several participants highlighted that the OSCE’s comprehensive and co-operative approach to security and its experience in addressing environmental challenges provides the right basis for the Organization’s further engagement in the field of disaster risk reduction (DRR).

It was underlined that the OSCE is a recognized platform for dialogue where security implications of global, regional, national and local disaster related challenges can be discussed. It was also emphasized that the OSCE should co-operate and co-ordinate with other specialized organizations active in the field of DRR

A number of concrete proposals were also put forward by speakers and participants:

- It was highlighted that natural and man-made disasters do not respect political borders. In this regard, it was acknowledged that the OSCE could play an important role in the field of disaster risk reduction, by fostering **trans-boundary co-operation**. The OSCE could also work as a platform for sharing experiences and best-practices on prevention and management of and preparedness for disasters. Furthermore, participants considered that disaster risk reduction efforts could also contribute to building confidence and trust.
- The OSCE should further advance its assistance to participating States in **managing shared natural resources**. Many participants agreed that the joint management of shared natural resources could foster co-operation among neighbouring countries and communities. Strengthening capacities for **wildfire management** and promoting co-operation for management of **transboundary water resources** were highlighted as good examples of OSCE's engagement that should be continued and further enhanced.
- Some participants encouraged the OSCE to **integrate and to mainstream DRR in its projects and programmes**, in particular within the Economic and Environmental Dimension. It was suggested that disaster risk reduction and management could be incorporated in the agenda of future OSCE Economic and Environmental Fora. Participants welcomed the fact that the topic will be part of the 23rd Economic and Environmental Forum of 2015 which will focus on "Water governance in the OSCE area – increasing security and stability through co-operation"
- The importance of **multi-stakeholder engagement**, including state institutions, local authorities, civil society organizations, academia and media, was underlined and further co-operation between the OSCE and these stakeholders was encouraged. It was also suggested that the OSCE could foster knowledge-sharing among national platforms, strengthen national capacities on integrated DRR, including for the development of **national disaster risk management** policies.
- The links between **climate change and disasters**, as also reflected through the increase of frequency and magnitude of natural disasters, as well as climate change and security were highlighted. In this regard, several participants highlighted that - as DRR should go hand in hand with climate change adaptation and mitigation- the OSCE is well placed to contribute a security perspective to the global climate change negotiations.
- It was suggested that the OSCE could bring its comprehensive approach to security into the ongoing global processes for the **post 2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the post 2015 Development Agenda**, as well as the **2015 agreement on climate change** by introducing the linkages between climate change, disaster risk reduction and security to on-going discussions.
- The importance of enhanced co-operation and co-ordination of activities on DRR between the OSCE and relevant **international and regional organizations** was emphasized and the **OSCE's engagement in the Environment and Security (ENVSEC) Initiative** was praised. ... The work of the OSCE, within the framework of ENVSEC, in addressing management of natural resources, climate change and security, hazardous waste management and public participation was recognized by many participants. A continued

active engagement of the OSCE in the ENVSEC Initiative, a robust mechanism for co-ordination and co-operation among international organizations, was encouraged.

- The importance of providing the public with accurate and timely information on DRR was underlined. **Raising public awareness** on the potential risks of disasters, including slow-onset disasters, and promoting community-based DRR were considered as a priority and the potential of the **Aarhus Centres** in this regard was widely acknowledged. The OSCE was encouraged to further expand the Aarhus Centres Network and strengthen their capacities on DRR. The **CASE NGO Small Grants Programme** also offers a mechanism for strengthening local capacities in community-based DRR. It was proposed that the OSCE, in particular its **field operations** could further assist participating States in disaster monitoring, forecasting and early warning.
- The need for **new technologies** aiming at improving resilience and public safety was underlined. Participants suggested that the OSCE could provide a platform for an exchange of technological developments on DRR among participating States.

REPORTS OF THE RAPPORTEURS

Opening Plenary Session

Moderator: Dr. Halil Yurdakul Yigitgüden, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Rapporteur: Ms. Riccarda Caprez, Scientific Officer, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Switzerland

Welcoming remarks:

- **H.E. Lubomír Zaorálek**, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Czech Republic
- **H.E. Didier Burkhalter**, OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, President of the Swiss Confederation, Head of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs
- **H.E. Lamberto Zannier**, Secretary General, OSCE

Keynote speakers:

- **H.E. Margareta Wahlström**, United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR)
- **Prof. Thomas Stocker**, University of Bern, Co-Chair of Working Group I, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

Followed by a general welcoming to the 22nd EEF by *Mr. Halil Yurdakul Yigitguden, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, H.E. Mr. Lubomir Zaoralek, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic*, reiterated the importance and urgent need to fostering co-operation and build confidence across Europe. He also referred to the situation in Ukraine, which shows how easy it is to destroy trust. The Minister briefly outlined the preparatory work of the meetings in Vienna and Montreux which showed that the OSCE can play an important role in the field of disaster risk management, in particular through fostering trans-boundary co-operation, promoting a dialogue including all relevant stakeholders but also through capacity building in countries of the OSCE region in the field of integrated risk management, and last but not least through confidence building measures. H.E. Mr. Lubomir Zaoralek concluded his remarks by thanking the Swiss Chairmanship and welcoming the incoming Serbian Chairmanship.

H.E. Mr. Didier Burkhalter, OSCE Chairman in Office (CiO) and President of the Swiss Confederation, emphasized the comprehensive security approach of the OSCE and the need of comprehensive measures in general to address the complex and often transnational security challenges in our globalized world. The OSCE would still have considerable room for improvement in enhancing its capacity to act, in all three dimensions. Referring to the economic border lines and frictions within the OSCE region that have contributed to a rapid decrease in security in the past few months, the CiO sees the OSCE as a useful platform for addressing some of these problems and finding ways of mitigating them in co-operative ways – without seeking to picking up functions of the specialized organizations like WTO or OECD, but as a security organization. The OSCE, according to the CiO, should play a bigger role at the interface of security and economics. With regard to the Ukrainian crisis, the OSCE could specifically play a role accompanying measures to rebuild confidence and assure verification of commitments through transparency, monitoring and reporting. Building up these kinds of capacities within the economic and environmental dimension could make a vital contribution to strengthening pan-European security and stability. He further assured the Chairmanship's full and continuing commitment in helping de-escalate and resolve the crisis. Another point the CiO emphasized is the second current priority of the organization, which is the expansion and strengthening of the Special Monitoring Mission (SMM). He also announced the

technical and financial support of Switzerland to the SMM. As a third priority, the CiO mentioned the OSCE's assistance with the broader processes of reconciliation and reform in the Ukraine. A successful strengthening of the organization's comprehensive security approach would also encompass a strengthening of its second dimension. The promotion of an integrated disaster risk management approach was described by the CiO as particularly suitable for fostering co-operation since it can mobilize people to work together beyond borders and despite conflicts and because it concerns all three dimensions of the OSCE and is likely to spur cross-dimensional co-operation in the spirit of comprehensive security. Based on the discussion held at the two preparatory meetings in Vienna and Montreux, the Chairmanship proposes, as a first point, to work in the following three areas: address disasters smartly, on the prevention side, to pursue an integrated disaster risk management approach and to facilitate cross-border engagement in addressing environmental challenges. As a second proposal of the Swiss Chairmanship for the OSCE the CiO mentioned the adoption of an integrated risk governance approach, as an integral component of a comprehensive security perspective. In a third point, the Swiss Chairmanship would propose to strengthen cross-border co-operation, bearing in mind the trans-border and global characteristics of disaster risks. Further, the Swiss Chairmanship would also encourage OSCE participating States to demonstrate political leadership at the regional and the global level by bringing the comprehensive security approach into the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda and promoting the notion of integrated disaster risk management. Finally, the CiO appealed for ambitiously working together on the road to Basel towards a strong commitment of the OSCE in the second dimension. This will help to build trust and reconsolidate European security as a common project across the OSCE area.

Followed by welcoming all participants to the forum, *H.E. Mr. Lamberto Zannier, OSCE Secretary General* in a first point acknowledged the importance of the rapid and effective response to the recent floods in the Balkans, enabled through a wide range of actors, including the OSCE and its participating States. The Secretary General underlined the OSCE's added value and strengths in addressing DRR issues with specific reference to the OSCE's role as a platform for multi-lateral and multi-stakeholder dialogue, its comprehensive mandate to address disaster risks from a cross-dimensional perspective, its field operations, its partnership in the Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC), and the wide network of Aarhus Centres. He further stressed the need to engage all stakeholders in finding solutions to environmental security challenges and referred to the main outcomes of the OSCE Security Days Event on Water Diplomacy which brought forward new perspectives into OSCE debate on environmental security. He further welcomed the incoming Serbian Chairmanship and the selected priority in the second dimension on water governance – a topic that can perfectly build upon the work done by the Swiss Chairmanship and will again show the importance of strategic co-operation and strong partnerships.

Keynote speakers:

The first keynote speaker, *H.E. Ms. Margareta Wahlström, United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction*, prepared the ground for all the discussions to be followed throughout the forum. Ms. Wahlström not only emphasized the importance to discuss the topic DRR also within the OSCE referring to the World Conference of Disaster Risk Reduction in March 2015 in Sendai but also to the Post-2015 Agenda on Sustainable Development to be adopted next year, saying that reducing risks of natural hazards indeed is a huge pillar for sustainable development. Ms. Wahlström pointed out the relevance of preventing measures to disaster risks also from an economic point of view, e.g. by an estimation of economic losses of 100 billion USD a year worldwide, whereas this trend is supposed to increase with growing economies. Ms. Wahlström further referred to the increasing significance of disasters for supply chains, such as e.g. the cascading effects after the Tsunami in Fukushima in 2011 have shown for the energy sector. Quoting a US governor she stated “that we are the first generation that feels the effects of climate change and the last one that can do anything about it”. Regarding the Second Dimension of the OSCE, Ms. Wahlström clearly recognized the potential to contribute its share. The global and regional level has multi-stakeholder character and the OSCE in her view is best placed to detect

important gaps and include all sectors of the society, which is needed for addressing the challenges of DRR. Ms. Wahlström also clearly stated that in a future framework, disasters and conflicts cannot longer be tackled in isolation. The management of trans-boundary resources and trans-boundary natural disasters is a lot about building trust. Six months from the Third World Conference on DRR in Sendai, Ms. Wahlström sees the discussions of the 22nd Economic and Environmental Forum as most timely and she invited all states to actively participate. Ms. Wahlström also welcomed the presence of the OSCE in this context in achieving an inclusive, ambitious and effective outcome.

Complementary to the first keynote speech, *Prof. Thomas Stocker, Co-Chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) of the Working Group I*, informed the audience of the most up-to-date findings on climate change. First Prof. Stocker called the forum's attention to summary and headlines for policymakers of the IPCC Fifth Assessment Report accepted by all governments. Prof. Stocker summarized the IPCC report pointing out the following findings: the warming of the world is a fact, the five hottest summers in Europe e.g. took place after 2001; there is no doubt that humans influence on the climate system by increasing the atmospheric concentration of CO₂; the risks of disasters are a combination of hazards, vulnerability and exposure, whereas hazards are directly influenced by climate while vulnerability and exposure are socioeconomic processes. The impacts of the changing climate though affect both, the climate itself and the socioeconomic processes; adaptation and mitigation choices in the near term will affect the risks of climate change throughout the 21st century; climate change related risks from extreme events, such as heat waves, extreme precipitation and coastal flooding are already perceptible and will increase further at higher temperature (with high confidence for heat waves); predicting trends for cyclones is more difficult, but they will be associated with economic losses; consistent with a significant lack of preparedness for current climate variability in some sectors, the impacts of such climate-related extremes include disruption of food production and water supply, damage to infrastructure and settlements and morbidity and mortality. Prof. Stocker concluded his speech by stating that a two degrees warmer world, as we experience now, is already different. But a 4.5 degrees warmer world (continuing with business as usual) will be fundamentally different, in particular the water cycle being a major concern. Today, he highlighted, we have a choice.

Then the floor was opened for interventions.

The representative of Uzbekistan referred to the domestic stable economic growth the country has experienced since its independence, pointing out that also decisions by the government to establish medium-term programs that stabilize environmental security contributed to that development. The delegate further emphasized the ongoing disaster of the shrinking Aral Sea with severe consequences such as droughts and desertification and the need of structural changes, joint forces on national, regional and international levels in order to address these effects.

The representative from the United States identified four points of major importance for the future of the second dimension of the OSCE: 1) the need of committed attendance through higher level delegations, 2) as a security organization to focus on the security implication of the economic and environment dimension, 3) the strengthening of ties between the secretariat and the field operations as a valuable opportunity and 4) good governance underpinning all discussions.

Italy on behalf of the EU (aligned the Candidate Countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the EFTA country Norway, member of the European Economic Area, as well as Armenia and Georgia), expressed its commitment to play a constructive role in the ongoing negotiations in the run-up to Sendai conference on the basis for the following five principles: improving accountability, transparency and governance; role of targets and indicators to measure progress and encourage implementation; strengthening the contribution of disaster risk management to smart, sustainable and inclusive growth; addressing

vulnerabilities and needs in a comprehensive framework; ensuring coherence with the international agenda, including the 2015 agreement on climate change. The EU further emphasized their interest in learning more about how the OSCE, as a regional security organisation under Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter, can become involved in these global discussions. They agreed with the Chairmanship that the OSCE should effectively utilize its comparative advantages and its strengths in the field of disaster risk reduction while avoiding duplicating activities in areas where other and better placed institutions are already leading efforts.

The representative from the Russian Federation emphasized the room for improvement especially for regional and sub-regional mechanisms for a better disaster risk management and the need for the OSCE to find its own niche in this work. The OSCE has already experience in providing assistance in the field of emergency situations through the OCEEA, field operations and the Environment and Security Initiative. The delegate then shared a series of examples of co-operation between the Russian Federation and countries of the Western Balkan as well as the EU.

The representative from Turkey accentuated that the OSCE is uniquely equipped to address the needed security perspective of disasters and called for concrete deliverables of the discussions. He informed the meeting about the upcoming OSCE regional fire management training that will be hosted by Turkey in October. The delegate further informed of his country's recent increase of funding for humanitarian assistance.

The representative from Belarus welcomed the timely choice of the theme of the 22nd Economic and Environmental Forum. He recalled the tragedy of Chernobyl in 1986 and added that environmental issues, including the impact of natural and man-made disasters, are an integral part of the concept of comprehensive and cooperative security of the OSCE. The delegate pointed out that part of the OSCE's expertise is related to the improvement of co-ordination and co-operation between participating States in this area and the conduction of considerable practical work through the executive structures and the field presences. The representative added that Belarus has been consistently in favor of strengthening the economic and environmental dimension of the OSCE, including by contributing to the discussions and the work carried on natural and man-made disasters, through regional and international efforts in this field.

The representative from Azerbaijan pointed out that whereas some OSCE documents include certain elements related to natural and man-made disasters, it is the first time that the OSCE is comprehensively looking at the topic of DRR. In this vein, before considering possible role by the OSCE in the field of disaster risk reduction, it is important to conduct a thorough assessment and review of the work carried out so far. The OSCE should build on the successful co-operation that the OCEEA has established with specialized institutions, and this co-operation might be further expanded. OSCE can add a security component to these organizations and can play a role as a platform for sharing national experiences among its participating States. This is also significant since many disasters, such as technological accidents, including those with a transboundary impact, might be prevented as a result of measures undertaken by States at a national level. Ensuring transparency, access to information, comprehensive and impartial Environmental Impact Assessment procedures also constitute a major component of the activities aimed at reduction risks and prevention of disasters. While considering confidence-building potential of co-operation in the field of addressing environmental challenges and disasters, the delegate emphasized that such potential might exist in cases where environmental and disaster-related challenges themselves are at the core of the existing or possible tensions. However, in the delegate's view, co-operation cannot build confidence in cases of conflicts caused by other factors, and hence can only be considered after security concerns have been addressed and impediments to regional co-operation have been eliminated.

The representative from Slovenia reported on the sleet that recently occurred in a Slovenian forest and heavily hit the electric grid. The representative highlighted the importance of good co-operation also for the long term effects and the main lesson learned from that event, namely the need for

preventive measures to reduce negative impacts of such disasters. The delegate further pointed out the importance of coherence between the HFA2, to post-2015 Development Agenda and the future agreement under UNFCCC.

The representative from Armenia stressed the need for the Second Dimension of the OSCE to capitalize on its experiences and expressed its hope that these and the forum's findings will deliberate successfully.

Speaking in a national capacity, *the representative from Germany* assured his country's commitment to reenergize the second dimension of the OSCE. The German representative emphasized the comparative advantages of the OSCE, on which the Organization's work should focus on. He indicated that it is important to take as starting point the fact that the OSCE is a security organization, and it has to avoid duplication. The German representative suggested to clarify where the OSCE can make a difference by fostering dialogue. In this regard he pointed to Central Asia and South Caucasus as potential areas where such a dialogue should be promoted. He finalized by underlining the importance to have a preventive approach to disasters.

Review of the implementation of OSCE commitments in the field of Disaster Risk Reduction

Moderator: Ambassador Thomas Greminger, Chairperson of the Permanent Council, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the OSCE, 2014 OSCE Swiss Chairmanship

Rapporteur: Ms. Nino Malashkhia, Associate Environmental Affairs Officer, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Ambassador Thomas Greminger opened with the presentation of a **video-clip** on the first and second preparatory meetings in Vienna and Montreux.

Ambassador Greminger stated that the concluding meeting in Prague provides the opportunity to benefit from the results of the review of implementation of commitments of the OSCE participating states. In 2014 the review process was carried out by UNDP, a key player in the field of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and one of the main partners of the OSCE within the Environment and Security (ENVSEC) Initiative. Ambassador Greminger stressed that the OSCE through its partnership within the ENVSEC Initiative delivered a number of concrete results. He emphasized that through the Memorandum of Understanding signed last year between the OSCE and UNDP the two organizations have a broader strategic framework for co-operation in addition to their cooperation in the framework of ENVSEC. DRR is one of the key priority areas for co-operation between these two organizations.

Main speaker: Ms. Elena Panova, Senior Programme Co-ordinator, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Ms. Elena Panova started her presentation with a brief overview of the objectives of the Review Report. The objective was to assess the commitments of the OSCE in the area of DRR and their implementation status. The assessment was carried out with the aim to support OSCE participating States in enhancing their policy objectives in DRR. The review allowed identifying the areas where OSCE can bring added value to the international DRR agenda and added value to addressing DRR challenges. The report provides recommendations to participating States for strengthening the implementation of commitments and fostering co-operation in the area of DRR.

The speaker presented information about prevailing disasters in the OSCE area based on their origin. These are: *Geologically Related Disasters, Water and Climate (Hydro-meteorological origin) Related Disasters, Biologically Related Disasters* including exposure to pathogenic microorganisms, toxins and bioactive substances, *Technological Disasters and Forest Fires*. The scale of impact of these disasters is closely interlinked with the high population density and the changing climatic conditions. Ms. Panova stressed that the most frequent disasters in the OSCE area are storms and flooding. In terms of impact on population, floods are the most severe disasters, while storms are costliest, as they account for 62 % of all damages.

The presentation then focused on two prevailing disasters that pose significant security challenge in the OSCE area. These are floods and earthquakes. The speaker brought to the attention of participating States the fact that earthquakes pose high risks to five capital cities in Central Asia, where probability of the XI MSK earthquake in the next 20 years is 40% or higher. High risks are mainly associated with the lack of awareness and knowledge of modern seismic construction techniques, and weak reinforcement of construction norms.

The speaker highlighted the negative impacts of the climate change in respect to increased frequency and magnitude of disasters and their implications for food security, health, migration and conflicts. She underlined the importance of preparedness and indicated that every EUR spent on flood protection could avoid 6 EUR damage costs. Ms. Panova referred to the project implemented by the OSCE to develop climate change and security scenarios through participatory workshops. In the Western Balkans, the water and energy sectors were identified as the most vulnerable. In Eastern Europe food security was identified as the priority security concern for the region. In

Southern Caucasus water, agriculture and energy are the most pertinent challenges along with extreme weather events. In Central Asia the water-energy-agriculture nexus was identified as the biggest challenge for the region.

Ms. Panova briefly spoke about the international frameworks for DRR. It was stressed that the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide overall framework for DRR. The achievement of these goals contributes to reduced vulnerabilities for communities. The SDGs are expected to be adopted next year. Ms. Panova emphasized that mainstreaming of DRR and climate change in SDGs is considered as priority. Post 2015 Hyogo framework for action is being currently negotiated. She stressed the importance of OSCE engagement in these processes.

Ms. Panova also spoke about the international practices for DRR. In this regard she mainly focussed on 4 main trends: Mainstreaming DRR into Development, Mainstreaming DRR into Security, DRR and climate change adaptation. Speaker also highlighted the importance of involvement of communities. The latter have local knowledge and can organize themselves and be a key player when response to disaster needs to be implemented.

The speaker briefly spoke about the main stakeholders of the DRR – government, local authorities, communities, civil society, private sector, other partners. She also brought to attention the fact that 46 participating States have nominated an HFA focal point and 29 participating States have created national platforms for DRR. These National Platforms demonstrate a good example of implementing DRR commitments.

Ms. Panova presented the OSCE commitments made in the area of DRR from 1999 till present. She highlighted the major focus of commitments in relation to DRR in the key OSCE documents. Ms. Panova stressed the strong institutional commitment of participating States but also highlighted the need to strengthen the operational and financial basis of the OSCE to work on DRR.

The speaker indicated that there are many regional and sub-regional organizations and agreements that play prominent role in DRR and listed the following : **Black Sea Economic Co-operation (BSEC)** agreement on collaboration in Emergency Assistance and Emergency Response to Natural and Man-made disasters; **Council of Europe (CoE)** European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA) creating framework for collaboration on the issues like hazard and risk analysis, risk prevention, risk management post crisis analysis and rehabilitation of affected areas; **European Union (EU)** promotes disaster risk evaluation, prevention and mitigation from hazards, information to the public, preparedness and response, and analysis after the disaster; Common Emergency and Information system of EU; **Central Asia Regional Disaster Risk Reduction and Response Co-ordination Centre** established in 2013 in Almaty as a bilateral mechanism between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan for capacity building of stakeholders in the area of DRR and response. **Central Asia and Caucasus Disaster Risk Management Initiative** – established by the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery and UNISDR under the umbrella of CAREC. **Central Asia Climate Risk Management Programme (CA-CRM)** managed by UNDP. It assists Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan to adjust their national development processes to address risks posed by current climate variability and future climate change; **Central Asia Regional Risk Assessment (CARRA I)** – provides an umbrella platform for donor DRR work plans, embracing all major donors, as well as national partners in Central Asia and Afghanistan; **Central Asia Resilience Alliance (CARRA II)** that aims at enhanced regional DRR capacities and knowledge, risk management in uranium legacy sites and vulnerability reduction, targeting especially vulnerable social groups.

In assessing the implementation of DRR commitments by participating States, Ms. Panova noted that at national level efforts are made to move from a culture of reactive response and recovery to a proactive risk reduction and prevention. However, the challenge to sustain long-term commitment

and adequate financial resources for DRR still remains. There are gaps in the overall capacity of national hydro-meteorological services; the capacity-building for DRR and climate change adaptation also remains underdeveloped.

The speaker spoke highly of the ENVSEC Initiative as providing the appropriate mechanisms for engagement to the OSCE and other partners, and praised the Aarhus Centres for providing the platform for working at community level.

Finally, Ms. Panova listed the main recommendations. The report calls for:

1. Systematic institutionalized co-operation between the OSCE participating States on disaster risk reduction
2. The OSCE should co-ordinate its activities on disaster risk reduction with other international and regional organizations active in this field taking into account the added value of the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security and regional coverage and should further strengthen its engagement in ENVSEC as a robust mechanism for co-ordination and co-operation among international organizations.
3. The OSCE to engage with UNDP and other partners in reducing the risk and improving the security aspect around Uranium Tailings in Central Asia
4. The OSCE could explore possibilities of joining the CADRI inter-agency DRR capacity assessment platform
5. The OSCE could encourage participating States to establish and/or strengthen the national multi-stakeholder co-ordination mechanisms for disaster risk reduction while providing participating States with support in such endeavors, including through joint efforts with other international organizations
6. The OSCE could institutionalise its position on DRR and CCA by developing the organization's position paper to address disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation
7. The OSCE could further integrate DRR into the organization's work by mainstreaming DRR in relevant projects and activities and by recruitment of DRR practitioners
8. The OSCE should explore possibilities for practical engagement in the work on DRR capacity development for the CACDRRR, as well as other regional and sub-regional operational and information networks
9. The OSCE could advocate for inclusion of DRR considerations in the work of government agencies and the private sector
10. The OSCE should consider more substantial and regular engagement into the local-level work on DRR through, inter alia, strengthening of the respective capacities of Aarhus Centres and the CASE NGO Small Grants Programme
11. The OSCE could consider substantial and sustainable engagement with global DRR Stakeholders to contribute a security perspective to the shaping of global DRR Agenda, such as HFA 2, DRR Indicators for SDGs, DRR Political Champions Process

Ambassador Greminger concluded the session by highlighting the major recommendations: the need to reflect the security perspective into the global Disaster Risk Reduction Agenda (Hyogo Framework for Action 2) and into the Development Agenda (Sustainable Development Goals); as well as a more active engagement at community level. In this regard he stated that the potential of the Aarhus Centres network can be further utilized. He added that there is a need to enhance the partnership on DRR with other specialized international organizations, including through ENVSEC mechanism and encouraged participating States to share the best practices in the area of fire management and flood preparedness.

Session I Flooding disaster in South Eastern Europe - Lessons learned and the role of the OSCE

Moderator: Mr. Goran Svilanović, Secretary General, Regional Co-operation Council

Rapporteur: Ms. Aisling Schorderet, Attaché, Permanent Mission of Ireland to the OSCE

Speakers:

- **Mr. Predrag Maric**, Assistant Minister, Head of the Department for Emergency Management, Ministry of Interior, Serbia
- **Mr. Jan Lueneburg**, Head of Democratization Department, OSCE Mission to Serbia
- **Mr. Samir Rizvo**, Assistant Minister for International Co-operation, Ministry of Security, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- **Mr. Ahdin Orahovac**, Deputy Director of Mine Action Centre, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- **Dr. Robert Mikac**, Commander of Civil Protection, National Protection and Rescue Directorate, Croatia

The focus of Session I was to reflect on the unprecedented flooding that took place in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Croatia in May 2014 and to listen to national experts and Ministers on their respective national responses and cross-border co-operation in the aftermath. The key issues raised were the efficiency of cross-border co-operation in responding to the disaster and the panellists' vision of further potential for regional engagement.

Mr. Predrag Maric, Assistant Minister and Head of the Department for Emergency Management of the Serbian Ministry of Interior, noting the unprecedented nature of the flooding, elaborated on the impact of the disaster and the national response. Having surpassed the second flood alert level, a state of emergency was declared from 5-23 May and all government agencies were involved, with each Ministry establishing a Crisis Response Team. The Sector for Emergency Action deployed emergency evacuation units and the police, army and other services assisted with primary evacuation. The impact of the flooding on the water supply, infrastructure, agriculture, education and health sectors was highlighted in depth. Although all national resources were engaged in the effort, assistance was requested from international partners and 14 countries provided assistance to the government to assist in responding to the needs of the 180,000 affected. Mr. Maric thanked those that had provided support to Serbia, including through the EU Commission organised Donor Conference. He also underlined the need for international co-operation in the wake of disasters.

Mr. Jan Luenberg, Head of the Democratisation Department of the OSCE Mission to Serbia commended the government's efforts following the flooding as well as the broader solidarity and volunteerism demonstrated within the country. Mr. Luenberg outlined the assistance provided by the OSCE Mission, including the provision of small funds, volunteers, reprogramming to purchase aid, the purchase of equipment and awareness-raising activities. A Swedish financed guide on reacting to disasters and leaflet on animal husbandry protection were also distributed by the Mission. In terms of strategic assistance provided, it has offered to monitor the use of donor funds and analyse requests for their use and procurement policies. An analysis of procurement will be presented to the government in December. A programme to develop a sustainable training mechanism has been established along with the reprogramming of EU funds to provide mapping and upgrading of Roma settlements to 20 pilot municipalities. It has included DRR aspects in this mapping and upgrading project and underlined the importance a gender specific approach. The Mission also facilitated emergency management desktop exercises. In February 2014 an inclusive governance and flood risk management programme was discussed, with stakeholders agreeing to an action plan to be implemented in South East Serbia. However, this could not be implemented as the OSCE budget had not been adopted. Lessons learned following the flooding include the

reaffirmation of Aarhus centres as an effective and efficient tool, the importance of cross-border assessment, regional co-operation and implementation of a gender perspective into policies.

Dr. Samir Rizvo, Assistant Minister for International Relations and European Integration of the Ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina outlined how recent flooding led to the biggest exodus of population from the country since the end of the conflict in the 1990's. The security threat resulting from the floods included the shift of minefields, the international implications of which were highlighted. The economic impact of the disaster is estimated to have reached €2billion, with the hardest hit sectors including agriculture, transport and production. The impact on the education sector, urban and rural housing, health insurance and employment were also relayed. The OSCE's role at the forefront of international action was commended including financial assistance in the region of €30,000 from the Organisation's Charity Fund. The role of the Mission in alleviating the harsh consequences of the flooding was also praised. Given the limited capacity of Bosnia and Herzegovina to cope with an emergency of this magnitude, the importance of co-ordinating assistance from abroad was underlined. In this regard, Mr. Rizvo described the elaboration of procedures and institutional capacities at national and international level a priority, suggesting that the role of the OSCE could be crucial in this regard.

Mr. Ahdin Orahovac, Deputy Director of Mine Action Centre in Bosnia and Herzegovina spoke of the security implications of the shift of landmines following the flooding in Bosnia and Herzegovina. He further elaborated on the regional synergy in emergency response, the technology development and the capacity building. Following three meetings by the Heads of the Regional Mine Action Centres of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Croatia on the dangers of mines and UXOs, a team of experts was established to assess the damage and develop projects. The Mine Action Centre has developed a programme as a result entitled "Mine Action after the floods, regional synergy in emergency response, technology development and capacity building" approved and financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of the Republic of Croatia. The project will provide support to urgent demining and the assessment of the status of minefields by aerial re-survey and through the creation of a regional information network for mine action following a disaster. The three key pillars of this post-flood mine action incorporate the emergency response (lasting up to three months) and the development of technology and capacity building (each lasting 12 months). The envisaged outcomes for the project are the development of new digital orthographic photo maps and digital terrain models for minefields affected by flooding. Following this, a system will be established and an initial team trained for multi-sensor aerial training, resulting eventually in the creation of a regional mine action data repository, mixed teams of experts and recommendations and standard operating procedures for mine action after a natural disaster. It is envisaged that the lessons learned from the project will be disseminated at the Mine Action Symposium in Zadar in April 2015.

Mr. Robert Mikac, Commander of Civil Protection of Croatia's National Protection and Rescue Directorate outlined the lessons identified from the Croatian experience of the floods. Describing co-operation as excellent between the three countries, he noted that there is little need for improvement but that better forecasting, modelling and data-sharing would contribute to strengthening a joint response. He underlined that there can be no talk of lessons learned yet, but rather, lessons identified and noted the co-ordination of various actors involved in the response as particularly challenging. Lessons identified included the need for quicker reaction and response time and strategic management in the field at local regional and national levels. He also noted the importance of improving the capacity of relevant stakeholders and reinforcing regional cross-border prevention, mitigation, co-ordination and co-operation in disaster risk reduction.

An intervention from a *delegate of the Czech Republic* focused on the importance of education and training in ensuring local resilience to disasters. The representative noted that a recent survey on flood protection in the country showed the gap in the dissemination of information at local level.

A representative from the Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina outlined the assistance it provided in the wake of the flooding including the field visits, needs assessment for returnees and the Roma community, co-ordination with other agencies and adjustments to programme work.

Ambassador Baer, Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the OSCE, asked the panellists to identify any information that may have been missing or that could have improved their co-ordination and response to the disaster.

In reply to this, *all panellists* were in agreement that regional co-operation had been excellent following the flooding with Mr. Mikac describing it as being better than co-operation at political level and *Mr. Rizvo* noting again that the absence of mechanisms for co-operation beyond the region were the ones not yet well defined. He further suggested that mechanisms should be developed within the OSCE for co-operation and assistance following similar situations. *Mr. Marci* pointed out that the recent change to the law on emergency situations requires more to be done on prevention but noted that that financing and changing the perspective in Serbia to one of prevention would be slow work.

The representative from Armenia followed-up on a point raised briefly by *Mr. Luenberg* on the role of the media in disaster situations and possible OSCE assistance in this regard. *Mr. Rizvo* noted that there had been panic among the population following rumours that dams had been destroyed and that the media had assisted in mitigating the panic through the dissemination of information. He also praised them for their efforts in raising money for victims of the floods, with more money collected by these than by official institutions. *Mr. Luenberg* also made reference to the OSCE Mission's engagement with the media on how to report during a disaster situation and on the desktop exercises mentioned in his presentation. The Mission is currently also looking into how information is made available and noted that the OSCE has a role in this regard. *Mr. Maric* expressed his commitment to a free media and underlined the importance of being honest with citizens, noting that the authorities of countries need to co-ordinate and communicate in a concerted way to ensure that the messaging does not contradict or give any cause for alarm. He also added that resilience and readiness are *key* and that OSCE Missions also have a role to play in promoting trans-boundary co-operation.

A comment by the *Open Society* noted the link between conflicts and industrial accidents and suggested an OSCE role in this respect.

Session II Panel Debate – Disaster Risk Reduction on the global agenda: implications for the OSCE area

Moderator: Dr. Josef Hess, Vice-Director of Swiss Federal Office for the Environment, Head of Forest and Hazard Prevention Divisions, Switzerland

Rapporteur: Mr. Paul Hickey, Environmental Officer, OSCE Office in Tajikistan

Speakers:

- **H.E. Margareta Wahlström**, United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR)
- **H.E. Christian Friis Bach**, Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)
- **Mr. Raphael Dang**, Climate Change and Environment Division Negotiator and post-2015 Agenda Task Force Co-ordinator, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, France
- **Mr. Tom Mitchell**, Head of Programme, Climate and Environment, Overseas Development Institute (ODI)
- **Dr. Michael Staudinger**, Director General, Central Institute for Meteorology and Geodynamics, Austria

The moderator, Dr. Josef Hess, introduced the topic as being in line with OSCE recommendations in favour of substantial and sustainable engagement with DRR stakeholders to contribute a security perspective to the shaping of the global DRR agenda. Dr. Hess set the framework for the discussion as dealing with the latest developments in the field of DRR and its implications for OSCE activities and in the OSCE area in general. Dr. Hess went on to mention three important events in global DRR, namely the post 2015 process regarding the sustainable development goals, the upcoming 3rd UN conference on DRR scheduled for March 2015 and the upcoming 21st conference on the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change expected to take place in Paris next year. He further stated that the proceedings of the forum thus far have shown that most disasters are climate related and proposed that the frequency and intensity of natural disasters has increased in line with the increase in global warming. Increased vulnerability to natural disaster arising from weak understanding of risks, inappropriate land-uses and land-use planning and inadequate construction quality were highlighted in his introduction. Finally, Dr. Hess put forward the key question for the panel on what role the OSCE and its participating states could play in shaping the post-2015 DRR global framework.

In her contribution, H.E. Margareta Wahlström, set the context of increasing frequency of natural disasters occurring in the world today. She referred to the actual ramifications of these events on agriculture, water availability, human health and that many of these effects are not fully appreciated by the public. This is why it is important that next year's UN conference on natural disaster focus on engaging as broad a range of stakeholders as possible on the topic of DRR. Hence the OSCE, as a large regional organisation and with its three dimensions and broad mandates has a role to play in furthering this engagement and is encouraged to take part in the consultations leading up to the UN DRR conference and bring its particular security perspective to bear on this. Ms. Wahlström pointed out that there are other regional organisations that have DRR experience and encouraged the OSCE to profit from their experience. Regional bodies are well placed to act as a broker for the more detailed agreements at national levels that will flow from the post-2015 DRR agreement and Ms. Wahlström opined that the OSCE can certainly contribute to this aspect of global efforts in DRR.

H.E. Christian Friis Bach commenced his contribution by referring to the economic losses as well as losses of life that arise from natural disasters and mentioned by way of example the figure of 100

billion EUR lost in the EU area due to natural disaster in the last decade. Mr. Friis Bach went on to point out that development and population growth has led to increased risk due to construction of buildings in disaster prone areas and poor construction materials and methods. This is why the UNCECE are determined to promote the adoption of norms and standards in construction and development which can reduce vulnerability to disaster and are working with UNISDR on this. The adoption of such norms by states helps the job of policy-makers, advances a coherent approach to disaster risk management worldwide, reduces trans-boundary risk and establishes a matrix for measurement of progress in DRR. With regard to trans-boundary effects, Mr. Friis Bach mentioned the UNECE Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) and the pilot programmes that are being conducted by many states under this convention as being an important contribution to DRR. He rounded off his contribution by pointing out that the management of the natural resources such as water can lead to increased international co-operation and encouraged the OSCE to take part fully in setting the international agenda in this regard, which can greatly improve DRR.

Mr. Raphael Dang spoke about the importance of engaging all levels of society in addressing climate change, which he stated is a driver of the increased occurrence of natural disasters. According to him, failure to act on climate change will lead to economic degradation and civil unrest. As an example of the impact of climate change, he mentioned the effects that are being experienced in Central Asia, where, he stated, the glaciers have been melting at an increasing rate. He underlined the link between security and the effects of climate change, for which the OSCE has a key role in ensuring that the security dimension remains to the fore of the global agenda in addressing climate change and its effects, which include the increased frequency and intensity of natural disasters.

Mr. Tom Mitchell started off his contribution by adding some international agreements and initiatives to the list already mentioned as being relevant to DRR, which included the World Humanitarian Summit and the Finance for Sustainable Development Meeting. He stated that DRR is probably the most common feature to all of these meetings and initiatives (including the UN DRR World Conference, UN Framework on Climate Change, etc) and therefore can encourage participants to effectively link the work carried out under these agreements and achieve a greater degree of coherence between them. Mr. Mitchell elaborated upon his understanding of coherence among organisations, governments and institutions as including coherence of language, targets, guidelines and indicators plus a shared conceptual framework. He then outlined some trends to toward incoherence, including the treating of statistics on natural disasters in different ways to suit the perspectives of different international agreements and the increased fragmentation of funding for environmental programmes, which can lead to an unnecessary increase in the administrative burden on governments and organisations. According to Mr. Mitchell, the framework of international agreements on climate change and DRR are not sufficiently cross-referenced and are not bound together by a common understanding of the risk to security posed by the phenomena with which they deal. This, he said, is where there is room for the OSCE to ensure an understanding of conflict risk and trans-boundary impacts is properly integrated into the new post 2015 framework.

Dr. Michael Staudinger began his contribution by highlighting the latent disaster risks that are under-appreciated by many countries, including policy makers and key decision-makers. He pointed out that this is most prevalent in the case of low-probability, high-impact disaster risk and cited the tsunami in Japan which had an antecedent some centuries before that was not included in risk factoring. The impact of climate change, according to Dr. Staudinger, has emphasised the need for models to project the potential impact of natural disaster due to its causal relation with climate and weather. Furthermore, he emphasised that there is a need to bring the response to natural disasters to the local level as this is where many of the key decisions are made that can affect DRR. Finally, Dr. Staudinger stated that international co-operation is an indispensable component of DRR and cited an example from his own professional experience whereby a project aimed at standardising weather

warnings, which demonstrated the importance of harmonising methodologies and challenging assumptions based on national experiences.

Upon the opening of the floor for contributions, *Professor Arnold Pork, The International Fund of Ecological Safety of Baltic Sea*, highlighted the serious threat posed to the Baltic Sea by chemical weapons that were disposed of there in the aftermath of the Second World War. The chemical weapons containers are increasingly liable to corrosion over time, which means that leakage into the sea is increasingly likely with catastrophic consequences for human health and marine life. He stated that information on this situation has been relayed to international bodies but too little avail in terms of remediation or substantial attempts to address the problem. Prof. Pork suggested that the OSCE might be well placed, as a regional organisation with all of the main parties to the disposal of the chemical weapons represented among its participating states, to co-ordinate efforts to effectively manage and reduce this disaster risk.

Ms. Andrea Bianchini, Ministry of Environment, Land and Sea, Italy, reported on recent initiatives of the Italian government in responding to natural disasters and managing disaster risk. She listed incidences of flooding and the extent of the area and population exposed to the risk of flooding and landslides in Italy, and stated that over the past 7 months the cost of such disasters has amounted to 3.4 billion EUR. She reiterated the economic case for spending money to reduce risk in terms of the small size of risk reduction expenditure relative to disaster recovery expenditure. Ms. Bianchini outlined the improved co-ordinating mechanisms put into effect by the Italian government, which is intended to ensure a preventative approach is adopted across all involved agencies and departments and affirmed her country's resolve to address climate change.

Mr. Andreas Stadler, Permanent Representation of Austria to the OSCE, put forward the thought that the OSCE can draw inspiration from the observation that water scarcity can lead to more co-operation rather than conflict.

Ms. Pavlina Rehor, Permanent Representation of the EU to the OSCE, posed the question to the panel of how the OSCE can contribute in concrete terms a security dimension to the global disaster risk reduction debate.

In response to Ms. Rehor's and Mr. Stadler's contributions, *Mr. Tom Mitchell* started by referring to the opportunities to add DRR to peace-building efforts, to ensure risk assessments include consideration of conflict risk in order to ensure interventions do not exacerbate that risk and to ensure disaster risk and conflict resolution are considered together in international agreements. He went on to point out that the current HFA-2 draft does not mention conflict prevention and that therefore there is an opportunity for the OSCE to help fill this gap. He furthermore ventured that the solidarity that comes from responding to disaster and disaster risk can be used to boost peace-building efforts between previous antagonists.

Sounding a warning regarding the dynamics of water scarcity, *Mr. Friis Bach* reminded the audience of examples where such scarcity has exacerbated conflict such as in Darfour. He also cited water scarcity in the Mediterranean basin and in Central Asia. He reflected that the OSCE's capacity to turn global agreements and agendas into local actions as a potentially key component in addressing such conflict risks and cited the Aarhus Centres as an example of this. The presence of the OSCE in the field and at a local level is, he said, a clear advantage in transmitting the global agenda to the local level.

Ms. Wahlström opined that the link between security and stability on the one hand and disaster risk reduction on the other should not be denied or set aside at the level of global dialogue. Further to this, she mentioned the prospect of policy-induced risk whereby policies in different areas of governance are not sufficiently cross referenced and therefore can become drivers of risk themselves. She also referred to a previous suggestion that disaster risk indicators should be integrated into environmental impact assessments. With reference to the contribution relating to *The International Fund of Ecological Safety of Baltic Sea*, she mentioned the problem of different

national bodies and agencies with competencies over specific areas, for example, chemical spills or pollution, as inhibiting a coherent, joint response from the international community in such cases.

In rounding off, *Mr. Mitchell* challenged the audience to approach the focal point of each of the international processes (e.g. HFA-2) in each of their countries and ask them to integrate DRR into those processes.

Mr. Friis Bach reiterated his recommendation that international standards and norms be disseminated throughout the OSCE areas in order to build resilience.

Ms. Wahlström followed-up on Mr. Mitchell's final statement by exhorting the participants to approach the foreign ministers of their countries to persuade them to bring DRR to the top of their agendas.

Mr. Staudinger proposed that the OSCE is an ideal framework for promoting acceptance of the facts behind disaster risk and promoting the implementation of responses at the local level.

Mr. Dang recommended that the sharing of experiences and information, and the integration of DRR into policy-making and decision-making at all levels is essential if progress is to be made on international targets and commitments.

Session III Slow-onset natural disasters as triggers of tensions and opportunities for co-operation

Moderator: Ms. Desiree Schweitzer, Deputy Co-ordinator/Head, Environmental Activities, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Rapporteur: Mr. Yaroslav Yurtsaba, National Project Manager, OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine

Speakers:

- **H.E. Monique Barbut**, Executive Secretary, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)
- **H.E. Aykhon Sharipova**, Deputy Chairperson, Environment Protection Committee, Tajikistan
- **Prof. Boris Porfiryev**, Deputy Director and Head of the Laboratory for Analysis and Forecasting of Natural and Technological Risks for Economic Development, Institute of Economic Forecasting, Russian Academy of Science, the Russian Federation
- **Mr. Iskandar Abdullaev**, Executive Director, The Regional Environmental Center for Central Asia (CAREC)

Slow-onset disasters are understood to be hazards which take significant time to generate a disaster. Economic losses and damages resulting from slow-onset processes may affect a large portion of the population, triggering or provoking conflicts. During the Session participants discussed the necessity to have concerted actions by all the stakeholders involved in slow-onset disasters in order to prevent conflicts or minimize potential risks. Speakers acknowledged that common problems linked to the use of shared natural resources can foster co-operation between neighboring communities and countries, thus preventing potential conflicts.

Ms. Barbut stressed that existing security tools are not enough to respond to the challenges posed by natural disaster risks. She added that only by preparing for disaster risks and by timely responding to natural disasters the world can mitigate the economic costs and consequences. *Ms. Barbut* pointed out that in the incoming years, slow-onset natural disasters will have a greater impact on people, triggering environmental migration. Thus, preparedness is of outmost importance. She added that resilience of communities could be improved if natural disaster response is better prepared. *Ms. Barbut* emphasized that slow-onset disasters could trigger serious socio-economic problems and pointed to Central Asia as one of the OSCE regions that could be affected the most. She added that country-specific DRR plans have to be introduced to manage natural disaster risks effectively. *Ms. Barbut* underlined that according to some estimates, land degradation might cost 40 billion US dollars per year. In this regard she emphasized that sustainable land and water management policies will achieve higher level of natural disaster preparedness and outweigh the economic investments.

Ms. Aykhon Sharipova outlined Tajikistan's climatic specificities and key environmental challenges to provide a context of her presentation. She explained that mudflows, landslides and deforestation are common in Tajikistan and cause serious economic problems. She provided rich statistical data on natural disasters in the country that jeopardize the achievement of the millennium development goals. *Ms. Sharipova* informed that in the past decade, a growing number of natural disasters has been registered in her country. In this regard, she shared with participants the Tajik government's actions to respond to the above-mentioned environmental challenges though the adoption of a national strategy of natural disaster management and by subscribing to a number of international framework conventions.

Ms. Sharipova mentioned the key governmental stakeholders tasked to improve resilience of the country vis-à-vis natural slow-onset disasters as well as principal international players that operate in this area. She stressed that there is a natural disaster risk reduction infrastructure in place but its efforts have to be strengthened. Since 2009, Tajikistan participates in the pilot program for 19 countries most vulnerable to climate change. Several national NGOs raise slow-onset natural disaster awareness among the general population. She explained that the key role is with the seven Aarhus Centers that have been supported by the local OSCE. Ms. Sharipova stressed that Aarhus Centers perform their role quite effectively, informing people on their right to environmental information and sensitizing them to environmental challenges.

Prof. Boris Porfiryev spoke of climate change as a major slow-onset hazard to economic development and public security. He explained two kinds of natural slow-onset natural disasters: droughts and land degradation. Speaking of economic costs of natural disasters, Prof. Porfiryev used the wildfires in Russia in 2010, which had a cost of about 0.4% the national GDP, as an example of the impact that such natural disasters can have on the national economy. The speaker underlined that climate change adaptation and disaster risk management have to be at the forefront of our efforts. There has to be an integrated approach to prevent natural disasters and/or minimize economic costs of slow-onset natural disasters.

Prof. Porfiryev outlined some recommendations how to effectively manage natural disaster risks. He stressed that we have to use common terminology (*lingua franca*) while addressing disaster risk reduction, impact parameters, preparedness, response and recovery. He proposed to look at this problem with a long term perspective, in order to be able to have a better picture and avoid overlooking trends. Prof. Porfiryev pointed out that rather than fighting natural disasters, it is necessary to engage in risk reduction and prevention. The speaker suggested that the OSCE could be an interface between various players to develop a culture of risk resilience. He added that awareness raising should also be used as an important tool. The need to use new technologies to improve resilience and public safety was also underlined. The speaker stated that in the foreseeable future, we have to use accumulated knowledge on natural DRR and suggested that the OSCE could play an important role in this respect, as key regional security organization with some knowledge and expertise.

Mr. Iskandar Abdullaev concentrated on the response to natural challenges in Central Asia, and in particular on the ones related to water resources. He outlined key factors of water use sustainability and underlined that effective institutions are key to properly respond to natural disasters. Mr. Abdullaev also stressed that obsolete infrastructure is a major obstacle in effectively managing environmental problems. He explained that Central Asian countries are currently concerned with water, energy and food security. From an environmental perspective, protection, rehabilitation, environmental services, bio-diversity have come into the picture and feature prominently in the public discourse.

He continued by indicating that the countries of the region are confronted with the need for effective management of shared natural resources. In this regard, Mr. Abdullaev considers that this management should match the institutional setting to buttress the effective natural slow-onset disasters. The speaker pointed out that resource degradation; reduction of environmental resilience; and the inadequate environmental protection of infrastructures, result in the deterioration of local livelihood and represent a serious security concern. Mr. Abdullaev indicated that by setting environmental policies we have to keep in mind the interconnection of these factors. According to the speaker, we expect growing demand on power production and it has to be matched with adequate supply without harming environmental sustainability.

The speaker provided his vision on where and how the OSCE could intervene to provide solutions on natural disaster risk management. In this regard he believes that the OSCE could boost regional co-operation by setting-up competence centers on natural risk management and supporting national disaster risk management policies. Capacity building and knowledge management on environmental

challenges and disaster risk management are also important to respond to the environmental challenges in an efficient manner.

The moderator opened the floor for interventions from the audience.

A representative of Uzbekistan indicated the relevance of the topic. He specifically referred to the issue of the Rogun Dam and the related expert assessment report of the World Bank. The speaker emphasized that the project of the hydroelectric power station is outdated and does not comply with the modern norms and standards. He also mentioned that the position of the Republic of Uzbekistan concerning the conclusions of the expert examination was stated at the relevant meeting of the involved countries on 18 July. The speaker said that any expert evaluation should include a complex assessment of the potential negative effects on environment and analysis of alternatives to the Rogun Dam's project. The representative of Uzbekistan turned to some fundamental issues with regard to the expert conclusion and underscored that the report did not take into consideration risks of man-made disasters, did not refer to the issue of right protection of the countries on guaranteed water volume and passage, did not reflect in full environmental risks in the region, as well as did not contain an analysis of alternative approaches to solve the issue of power shortage in the winter period in Tajikistan. The speaker highlighted the importance of elaboration of alternatives to the Rogun Dam project and pointed out that the thorough assessment of the water issues can become a force to achieve balance in the region.

In response to the previous speaker, Ms. Sharipova mentioned that the issues highlighted by the representative of Uzbekistan were addressed in Almaty and the answers to them are available on the website of the World Bank. On a different note, Ms. Sharipova noted that the Aarhus Centres in Tajikistan could play an important role in preparing local communities to possible natural disasters. The speaker emphasized that the work on the regional level could be done through the Khorog Aarhus Centre in co-operation with Afghanistan. She concluded by saying that the Aarhus Centres can be used as a platform for natural DRR.

Mr. Iskandar Abdullaev indicated that in the last twenty years, Central Asian countries have been developing policies with a short-vision perspective. He suggested a policy shift in the region, particularly in the case of river basins, where Central Asian countries should design long-perspective planning and policies.

Prof. Porfiriyev added that economy and civil protection long-term strategies should integrate a climate change perspective and therefore take into consideration the possibility of slow-onset disasters. He insisted on the need to harmonize the terminology related to climate change in order to make this matter more understandable for private investors and ensure their investment in DRR.

Dr. Josef Hess, Vice-Director of Swiss Federal Office for the Environment, Head of Forest and Hazard Prevention Divisions, Switzerland, underlined the importance of raising awareness among populations on the potential risks of slow-onset disasters. He underlined that in the short-term, the monitoring, forecasting and warning of hazards should be improved. In the long-term, the planning of *climate-proof* infrastructure will play a key role in preventing a cascade of disasters happen, because the infrastructure is not prepared for the potential risks. He finalized by underlining the necessity to avoid hazardous areas and to promote local competences to handle disasters.

The Permanent Representative of Mongolia to the OSCE explained that almost 90% of the territory of Mongolia is affected by desertification and this poses a risk to the security of the country. He requested the support of UNCCD, in co-operation with the OSCE, to Mongolia in order to fight land degradation. He praised the Food For Thought paper drafted by the Chairmanship ahead of this meeting and the very topical recommendations included in it.

Ms. Barbut replied that there is a tendency to focus on the risk related to water, energy, food or environmental security, but it is important to bear in mind that all of them have the *land* as background. Therefore there should be a clear understanding of the interconnection of all factors in order to create synergies with a wider perspective. She suggested that the OSCE could work for the development of a water management system at the level of basins, ensuring and enhancing security and co-operation among the parties.

Session IV *Panel Debate: A co-operative response to environmental challenges: OSCE experience and lessons learnt for the future.*

Moderator: **Amb. Andreas Papadakis**, Permanent Representative of Greece to the OSCE

Rapporteur: Mr. Leonid Kalashnyk, Environmental Programme Officer, OCEEA

Speakers:

- **Major-General Nikolay Grigoryan**, National Coordinator of the HFA and Deputy Director of the Rescue Service, Ministry of Emergency Situations, Armenia
- **Colonel Leonid Dedul**, Head of the Department of the State System of Prevention and Liquidation of Emergencies and Civil Protection, Ministry for Emergency Situations, Belarus
- **Prof. Johann G. Goldammer**, Head of the Fire Ecology and Biomass Burning Research Group and the Global Fire Monitoring Center (GFMC)
- **Ms. Olivera Zurovac-Kuzman**, Environmental Adviser, OSCE Mission to Serbia

Ambassador Andreas Papadakis opened the session, touching on the OSCE's role in disaster risk management. He referred to the OSCE's effective capabilities to facilitate experience on disaster risk reduction across the region, in particular, in the area of fire management. OSCE field operations, Aarhus Centers and the Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC) of which the OSCE is a member were highlighted as useful instruments in this regard. The Organization's security perspective was noted to be a valuable input into discussions on the global agenda.

Major-General Grigoryan outlined the Government of the Republic of Armenia's significant steps towards the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action, including the integration of disaster risk reduction into Armenia's development policies and programmes. He listed the main recent achievements, including an approved national strategy for disaster risk reduction, integration of DRR issues into educational programmes, more attention to disabled people and gender issues and establishment of Armenia's national platform for disaster risk reduction in 2010.

Maj-Gen Grigoryan went on to give specific examples of co-operation with the OSCE. He welcomed the collaboration between the Ministry of Emergency and the OSCE on a number of issues, including wildfire management. Citing successful co-operation between the national platform for disaster risk reduction with the OSCE and UNDP in the area of seismic risk assessment, *Maj-Gen Grigoryan* noted the following areas for continued co-operation with the OSCE: development of Aarhus Centers' capacity for disseminating knowledge and awareness raising in the area of disaster risk reduction; development of joint projects with Aarhus Centers for assessment of risks at local level and mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction in community development and implementation of joint regional projects for disaster risk reduction and climate change.

Colonel Leonid Dedul presented preventive measures undertaken by Belarus to mitigate the growing risks of forest fires on its territory. Referring to experience of responding to forest fires in the past years, he stressed that in 2014 authorities, including at local level, started to act well ahead of time with a set of measures including awareness raising targeting local population, restricted access to fire-prone areas of forest, and training exercises. Regular monitoring, including by aircraft assets such as UAV, played an important role as well. The areas contaminated in the aftermath of the Chernobyl disaster were given special attention. As a result of all these measures, a vast majority of fires (90 per cent) in Belarus were eliminated at source this year.

Colonel Leonid Dedul noted the great importance of collaboration with neighboring States to be able to prevent and localize forest fires, giving an example of the increasingly effective co-operation with Ukraine's relevant authorities. Stressing the importance of investment in prevention, he welcomed the OSCE's further work with prevention of disasters, which would help minimize

damages and loss of human life when emergencies occur. He also pointed out that there is a need for innovative solutions in the area of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation involving states, authorities, business, academia and people.

Prof. Johann G. Goldammer started by highlighting the role of vegetation fires as a major contributor to slow-onset disasters and environmental degradation, and additional challenges in areas contaminated by unexploded ordnance and landmines. He pointed out that secondary consequences of fires such as land degradation tend to be more harmful than fires themselves.

Speaking of the results and major milestones of the two-phase project on fire management in the South Caucasus implemented by the OSCE within the framework of the Environment and Security (ENVSEC) Initiative, *Prof. Johann G. Goldammer* noted benefits of the project for the entire region through, inter alia, joint regional training supporting a culture of transboundary co-operation. He went on to cite a few lessons identified in the implementation of this project, including the need for a holistic approach, development of a cross-sectoral mechanism for initiating a dialogue in society, along with the need to formulate a consensus-based national policy with the involvement of all relevant national stakeholders. He also suggested that national measures should be properly embedded in an international context (e.g. through networks, bilateral and multilateral agreements). In conclusion, *Prof. Johann G. Goldammer* shared several recommendations. It is necessary to maintain a medium- to long-term time scale for developing the ability of society to address wild land fire in a holistic approach from local to global. The OSCE should look at addressing vegetation fires from two perspectives: first, vegetation fires as drivers of land degradation, desertification and slow-onset disasters and second, vegetation fires in the context of the OSCE region. He added that fires may have an effect on the global system through the impact of black carbon in the context of climate change.

Ms. Olivera Zurovac-Kuzman started her presentation by highlighting public awareness as one of the key elements of effective DRR as local communities are on the frontline of both disasters' immediate impact and initial emergency response. Strengthening the awareness of the population was therefore the first step of community-based DRR. She noted that many of the Aarhus Centers supported by the OSCE are located in disaster-prone areas and that DRR activities have already been undertaken by about half of the Aarhus Centers. As a concrete example, *Ms. Olivera Zurovac-Kuzman* outlined the DRR activities of the Aarhus Centers in Serbia, namely the development of a flood risk reduction campaign for affected communities in the municipality of Zajecar and its further implementation by the Aarhus Centre in Nis. She also added that two Aarhus Centers in Serbia were engaged in collecting data on gender-specific impacts of the flooding and the outcomes of this analysis will be used to support Serbian authorities' mainstreaming of gender into programmes and policies in the field of flood risk reduction and management.

Ms. Olivera Zurovac-Kuzman identified a few lessons learned over more than ten years of the Aarhus Centers' existence, which include the need for co-operation through networks with a wide range of state institutions, local authorities, governmental agencies, experts, CSOs, academia, media as well as the importance of creating synergies and avoiding duplication. She concluded by thanking the donors supporting a cross-regional project within the framework of the Environment and Security Initiative which will strengthen the capacities of Aarhus Centers in DRR in order to enhance awareness of local communities.

The floor was opened for *discussion*.

A representative of the Aarhus Center in Kazakhstan identified the Aral Sea as one of the gravest environmental challenges in Central Asia and welcomed continued efforts to build confidence between states in preventing environmental risks. He welcomed further involvement of Aarhus Centers in addressing environmental challenges. He also encouraged the Russian Federation to ratify the Aarhus Convention.

A representative of a university drew attention to the problem of chemical weapons buried in the Baltic Sea. He suggested that robot-based modern technologies could be used for addressing this problem. He added that an international working group could be set up under the aegis of the OSCE to unite the efforts of experts and relevant experience for this cause.

A representative of Armenia's national platform for disaster noted the role of the national platform as a confidence-building mechanism for all national stakeholders in his country. He underlined the national platform's readiness to co-operate with national platforms of neighbouring countries for addressing disaster risks.

A representative of Lithuania inquired about the emergency preparedness of Belarus' newly constructed nuclear power plant. She also expressed concern about the potential risk of transboundary waters used for cooling its reactors.

In response, *Colonel Leonid Dedul* noted that the design of this nuclear power plant is modern and meets up-to-date safety requirements. Safety issues were also assessed to ensure the safety of cooling waters. Belarus is currently working on an external emergency plan for the nuclear power plant which also provides for notification procedures. There are already well-established contacts with relevant authorities in Lithuania on this issue.

A representative of Belarus added that Belarus is taking all necessary measures to ensure the safety of its nuclear power station under construction. He suggested organizing an expert-level meeting with Lithuania to discuss outstanding issues.

A representative of Azerbaijan expressed a view that technological accidents, including accidents triggered by natural disasters shall also be considered within the framework of the Forum's discussions on disaster risk reduction. She drew attention to the aging Metsamor nuclear power plant and to the new nuclear power plant which is planned to be built not in compliance with the existing international legal framework. In this regard, she reiterated the importance of transparency and access to information. As regards to regional co-operation, she referred to successful examples of co-operation in the region and called to look at the basis for such a co-operation. Referring to transboundary watercourses, she underlined that in some cases measures undertaken at national level might be sufficient to prevent negative transboundary effects.

Maj.-Gen. Grigoryan commended the OSCE's experience in the area of fire management, in particular in the case of the South Caucasus.

A representative of Spain underlined the importance and cost-effectiveness of preventive efforts as compared to mere response in addressing disaster risks. She also noted that forest fires are a virulent problem in her country and Spain's co-operative efforts involving EU and neighbouring countries have proved essential in this regard.

A representative of Armenia stated that discussions of nuclear energy-related issues should take place within fora slated for and equipped for such issues.

In his final comments, *the Moderator* referred to the major points of discussion regarding the OSCE role: the OSCE's acting as a platform for knowledge sharing between national platforms for DRR; the OSCE is well placed to facilitate exchange of experience, good practices and lessons learnt in the field of disaster risk reduction; strengthening of the capacity of participating States in disaster risk management through the Environment and Security Initiative and field operations; the OSCE can further engage in raising awareness of DRR on accountability, good governance and transparency through the Aarhus Network and promote close cooperation with relevant international organizations.

Session V Facilitating disaster preparedness and response through innovation, technology and information, and Public-Private-Partnerships in Disaster Risk Reduction.

Moderator: Ambassador Ol'ga Algayerová, Permanent Representative of Slovakia to the OSCE, Chairperson of the Economic and Environmental Committee

Rapporteur: Mr. Emre Gençtuğ, Second Secretary, Permanent Mission of Turkey to the OSCE

Speakers:

- **Ambassador Thani Thongphakdi**, Permanent Representative of Thailand to the UN Office in Geneva and Co-Chair of the Bureau of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee for the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, Thailand
- **Mr. Juan Carlos Villagran de León**, Programme Officer, Head of UN-SPIDER, Bonn Office
- **Mr. Miloslav Ivica**, Director, Department for Civil Protection and Crisis Planning, Ministry of Interior, Slovakia
- **Mr. Dougals Bausch**, Senior Physical Scientist, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Region VIII, Denver Federal Center, the United States of America

The moderator, *Ambassador Algayerová*, opened the session by elaborating on the theme “facilitating disaster preparedness and response through innovation, technology and information, and public-private partnerships in disaster risk reduction”. She said that public-private partnership is an essential pillar of disaster risk reduction and that the private sector can make disaster management policies safer, as well as provide expertise in risk assessment. She also mentioned that ICT solutions like risk monitoring and analysis of scenarios can be useful in preventing disasters. Then she introduced the speakers and explained the topics of their presentations.

After the introductory remarks, *Ambassador Thani Thongphakdi* commenced his presentation by saying that as a Partner for Co-operation, Thailand is willing to engage with the OSCE, particularly in the topic of disaster preparedness and response, since it is a very important issue for his country. He then mentioned the human and economic losses caused by natural disasters giving recent UN data. He underlined the importance of disaster risk reduction and preventive measures, as well as, effective response plans to minimize impact and losses. He continued by saying that to be most effective and inclusive, disaster risk management should be based on a risk-informed culture, which requires freely available, publicly accessible, science-based and easy-to-understand information.

Ambassador Thongphakdi put forward the 2011 floods in Thailand, which led to huge economic damages and losses particularly in the private sector, reducing 1.1 per cent Thailand’s potential GDP growth for that year, as an effective public-private partnership example. He stated that the large companies were hit hard with economic damages affecting the international supply chain, especially in the IT and automotive industries. This made clear that the private sector has a vital interest and crucial role to play in disaster risk reduction, since business infrastructure and personnel are vulnerable to disasters. He emphasized that disaster risk reduction should be seen as an investment and not as a cost and therefore it should become part of the core financial strategies of business corporations, because it is much less expensive to prevent or prepare for disasters than it is to respond to and recover from them. Ambassador Thongphakdi continued by saying that risk-transfer mechanisms such as insurance have become essential for both the public and the private sectors, to reduce economic losses due to disasters. He also explained that SMEs have a strong role in promoting disaster risk reduction since they tend to operate more locally than multinational corporations and their awareness of local issues is accordingly more detailed. They also have a strong interest in sustainability. Ambassador Thongphakdi emphasized the importance of using science and technology in disaster prevention. There is a continuing need to assess the impact of

geological, weather, water and climate-related hazards, as well as to strengthen regional monitoring capacities and assessments.

Mr. Juan Carlos Villagrán de León started his presentation on early warning systems, saying that such systems reduce the impacts of hazards in the world. He explained how ICTs and Space-based applications contribute to early warning and response efforts. He also said that the use of tablets and smartphones, as well as social media and crowd-source efforts facilitate the co-ordination of response efforts on site and off site, help disseminate warnings and contribute to a rapid collection of data on damages. Mr. Villagrán de León stated that satellite imagery can contribute to forecast potentially catastrophic events, offer the most up-to-date view on the exposure of vulnerable elements, define evacuation routes and delineate the geographic area affected. He informed about the COPERNICUS Emergency Mapping Service (EMS) that provides maps of the affected areas at the request of civil protection authorities at Europe level and International Charter-Space and Major Disasters at the global level. At the end of his presentation

Mr. Villagrán de León made some recommendations, saying that civil protection agencies should take advantage of the opportunities that the Space community is providing in terms of access to satellite imagery and software to process it. Emergency Operation Centers should assess how best to make use of mechanisms such as COPERNICUS-EMS and the Charter. The use of geoviewers and geographic information systems should be enhanced in early warning, response and recovery. Devices such as smartphones and tablets should be used routinely in damage and needs assessments, also in co-ordinating response efforts in case of disasters.

In his presentation, *Mr. Ladislav Szakállos* talked about the recent flood disaster and subsequent landslide that happened in Slovakia last July due to heavy rainfall. He used these floods as an example of effective public-private partnership in disaster risk reduction. He said that it is very hard to predict such disasters in advance, because weather conditions are becoming less predictable due to the climate change. He explained how the energy and telecommunication companies' sources were effectively used in recovery efforts after the disaster. He stated that his institution took necessary lessons from the disaster and has been currently reviewing the risk analysis of the disaster-prone territories of Slovakia to prevent such disasters in the future. As a lesson learned he said that mitigating disaster risks by comprehensive pre-assessments are crucial for disaster preparedness. He also added that full involvement of the private sector in the reconstruction efforts is important and without the help of the private energy companies they could not be successful in the relief and recovery efforts of the last disaster.

Mr. Douglas Bausch, made a presentation about U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) use of technology and analytics in disasters. He explained the risk models, integration of field observations, data analytics applications, FEMA's transparent approach in providing information to the public with easy and open access, also the use of crowd-sourced information in disasters. He said that the risk models help everybody to understand the information. He used FEMA's works during the Hurricane Sandy that happened in 2012 in the Eastern part of the United States as an example of effective use of technology and analytics in disasters, including crowd-sourced information as part of imagery assessment. He stated that there are serious vulnerable areas for disasters in the USA and they work to make them more resilient for future disasters. Mr. Douglas Bausch said that there is also a National Hurricane Center in the United States that uses imagery damage assessments in hurricanes and organize model disaster exercises. He stated that FEMA focuses on "what if" scenarios in its works. He explained that demographic assessment is necessary since the vulnerability of the people depends on their socio-economic levels. He informed that all geoviewers information are publicized outside by FEMA through their website, free smartphone applications and SMS-text-out system, and its imagery and assessment data are very transparent and open to public access. He added that they use these information systems to define the exact location of disasters, also to inform the people about the risk assessment by checking their locations online. As a conclusion he said that applying data analytics by using models and

observation is crucial. Assessing impacts before, during and after disasters are important. Emergency management agencies should support risk-informed decision-making.

After the presentations *the Moderator* opened the floor for discussion by asking what do these ICTs mean for the OSCE, how important is to implement new technologies in disaster risk reduction, how can OSCE make better use of them and whether OSCE can facilitate public-private partnership in disaster risk reduction.

Prof. Arnold Pork, a representative of the International Fund of Ecological Safety of Baltic Sea, expressed his comments on the chemical weapons under the Baltic Sea and demilitarizing it.

Representative of the US said that although his country has all these technologies for disaster risk reduction, it is important for the OSCE to help bridging the gap with other participating States that do not have them and asked how OSCE can facilitate other countries' access to these technologies.

Representative of Canada asked Ambassador Thongphakdi, being the Co-Chair of the Bureau of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee for the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, how OSCE can contribute to the works of this Committee.

Representative of Romania asked about the details of the COPERNICUS Emergency Mapping Service, what it exactly shares and whether it shows only the affected areas.

Then *the Moderator* gave the floor to the speakers once again for their answers to the questions above and for their last comments.

Mr. Juan Carlos Villagrán de León replied to the question on COPERNICUS saying that the system shows only the affected areas, however additional products can be developed with different features. He added that cost-benefit analysis should be made for early warning systems. On the question of the gap between the countries' technological capacities in disaster risk reduction he said that through sharing of information and experience it can be closed. He added that OSCE should engage more in other regional and international mechanisms such as European Space Agency.

Mr. Douglas Bausch replied to the question on the use of new technologies. He mentioned that when doing risk modeling and interpreting the data not only scientists such as hydrologists, physicists, geologists and social scientists but also policy makers and emergency managers should be involved from the ground. So this is a multidisciplinary approach.

Ambassador Thongphakdi replied to the question on how he sees OSCE's role in disaster risk reduction as the Co-Chair of the Bureau of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee for the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction. He said that the main responsibility lies in participating States, but since regional information is necessary for effective response to natural disasters, co-operation between the relevant national agencies in regional and sub-regional level is crucial to raise awareness and create a common strategy. The OSCE can play a regional co-ordinator role in this.

After the answers of the speakers, *the Moderator* rapped-up the session. She highlighted the main points of the session on using the new technologies and public-private partnership in disaster risk reduction. She said that co-operation is crucial within the OSCE in this field and specific commitments can be taken by the Organization. She added that the OSCE can work as a sharing platform for disaster risk management authorities to facilitate cross-border preparedness and that would be beneficial for the regional security in the end. She stated that working more closely with other international organizations such as the UN in this field is necessary.

Before closing the session, *the Moderator* mentioned the Ministerial Council Decision on the Protection of Energy Networks from Natural and Man-Made Disasters adopted last year in Kyiv and the subsequent workshop on that topic which was organized by the OSCE Secretariat last July. She reminded that a follow-up Bratislava Energy Charter Forum will be held on 10 October 2014 jointly by the OSCE and the Energy Charter Secretariat with the theme of "Securing Energy Supply

- How to better protect energy networks from disruptions”. She invited all participants to the said event, saying that the Forum will elaborate more the connection between disasters and their impact on energy networks.

Session VI Panel Debate – How to achieve resilience in the OSCE area?

Moderator: **Dr. Timothy Prior**, Head, Risk and Resilience Research Team, Center for Security Studies, Swiss Federal Institute of Technology

Rapporteur: **Ms. Nana Baramidze**, Economic and Environmental Officer, OSCE Centre in Ashgabat

Speakers:

- **Mr. Mario Aymerich**, Director, Environment and Regional Development Department, European Investment Bank
- **Ms. Rachel Scott**, Senior Humanitarian Advisor, Resilience Group, OECD
- **Ms. Caterine Ebah-Moussa**, Policy Officer, Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection, Policy and Implementation Frameworks, European Commission
- **Mr. Daniel Kull**, Senior Disaster Risk Management Specialist, The World Bank

The moderator, *Dr. Timothy Prior*, opened the session by introducing the speakers and by outlining *Resilience* as the topic of the debate. More precisely, during the opening, the moderator prepared the basement for speakers and the audience to discuss the following topics related to *resilience*:

- Goals of resilience: who and what should become “resilient”: engineering, psychological, economic, ecological and community resiliencies;
- Contribution of civil society; and
- Investment in resilience and disaster risk reduction – incentives and opportunities for risk-sensitive investment

The Moderator also introduced the *United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction* (UNISDR) definition of *resilience* as “the ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate to and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions”. He stressed, that *resilience* is a result of factors which deeply rely on culture and society. Therefore, there can only be tailor-made strategies that individuals, communities and states have to develop to influence the factors for resilience. *Resilience* cannot be seen as a task for a community or a state only: it implies the interaction of all relevant stakeholders, at local, regional, national and international level. Climate Change adds another risk that needs to be considered when working on the resilience factors and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR).

After the introductory remarks, the Moderator encouraged the panel and the audience to a structured debate in a way that it would contribute to a common understanding of *resilience* and to a better definition of the role of different stakeholders, including the OSCE in this process. Before giving the floor to the speakers, the Moderator noted that the OSCE has a mandate for comprehensive and co-operative approach, which makes it a good body for co-operation. He added that the OSCE through its mandate could play an auxiliary role in overcoming barriers connected to the joint activities for *resilience*.

During the panel debate the speakers and the Moderator touched such questions as a role of different stakeholders (governments, local authorities, civil society, and private sector) in enhancing resilience. They also outlined the possible efforts which could be undertaken by the OSCE in order to make Participating States more resilient, as well as the types of incentives could be put in place to increase investment in resilience DRR.

Moreover, according to the panel debate, the concept of *resilience* is closely linked to the concept of vulnerability: the more vulnerable the entity is, the more its resilience is likely to be reduced. Civil society alongside emergency authorities has therefore an important role to play: non-governmental organisations, religious bodies, volunteers, neighbours or businesses are often first responders and therefore have an essential role. It is therefore important that governments develop policies and tools to support the civil society to increase its ability to support the strengthening of resilience, for example through education and information, training or exchange of good practices. Here the OSCE can be used as an appropriate mechanism to support host countries in capacity building processes, as well as the OSCE supported Aarhus Centres, would be used as a good tool for education, awareness raising and prevention.

In this regard, the OSCE field operations could support states in their resilience risk assessment process and further monitor the risks too. Also, the Aarhus Centres could be a good instrument to promote awareness on resilience and risks associated with disasters. They (the centres) could facilitate the exchange of different practices in DRR as well as promote relevant actions on environmental governance, sustainable use of resources and climate change related matters.

In more details, on the debate:

First, the floor was given to *Mr. Mario Aymerch*, who emphasized that he is used to the word *resilience* from the perspective of Brazilian “smart/innovative cities”, but had never discussed *resilience* in the context of DRR. According to Mr. Aymerch over the past 15 years the European Investment Bank (EIB) has invested some EUR 16.5 bn in the area of natural and industrial Disasters through 74 operations, of which 88% in Europe. Flood related projects are the most frequent (32 operations), followed by earthquakes (12 operations). In relative terms, flood related projects absorb 42% of loan volumes, while earthquakes represent 14%. However, in recent years, snow avalanches, landslides, wind or hail storms and the rise of sea level are becoming more frequent and dangerous than ever. Due to the high number and relative dispersion of damages, in most cases the EIB loan takes the form of a multi-sector programme. According to Mr. Aymerch, *resilience* cannot be only achieved solely with private actions. The system is composed by stakeholders (some construction companies for instance), as well as private companies and there is a need to develop partnership with private stakeholders.

Next speaker, *Ms. Rachel Scott* also noted that *resilience* became quite active subject of discussions everywhere. The idea that communities, institutions and States need the right tools, assets and skills to deal with an increasingly complex, interconnected and evolving risk landscape, while retaining the ability to seize opportunities to increase overall well-being, is widely accepted. In reality, however, it has not been easy to translate this sound idea into good practice, mostly because the right tools to systematically analyse resilience, and then integrate resilience aspects into our policies and programmes does not exist yet. Ms. Scott also stated that number of questions is being asked, all of which are interesting and very relevant to making resilience “real”, however she would intervene with the role of different stakeholders (governments, local authorities, civil society, and private sector) in enhancing resilience.

According to Ms. Scott, one must think about the incentives being provided by new policies and projects, to ensure they encourage optimal behaviour. Different actors have different pre-determined mind-sets about this (national policy makers will believe that risk should be managed at national level, community groups will believe the same risk is better managed at local level) and the better tools are needed to analyse where it is best to build resilience – at which layer of society.

Ms. Catherine Ebah-Moussa also agreed that *resilience* is becoming more and more important. She added that society needs to move from response to action to prevent disasters to happen and that OSCE Chairmanship was very timely in choosing the topic for discussions. Since DRR is a global risk and the crisis very close, we all have to connect, she said. Enhancing the European Union's

resilience to crises, as well as its capacity to anticipate, prepare and respond to risks, especially cross-border risks, is amongst the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy. According to the speaker, resilience is not a stand-alone objective. It needs to be embedded in various national policies to be sustainable, because it is very much a long-term task. It is also an objective that cannot be achieved solely through public action. Various stakeholders have today important impacts on the degree of resilience that can be achieved.

The last speaker of the panel, *Mr. Daniel Kull* began his speech by highlighting the importance of internalization of risks into the different company activities. He stated that undertaking the risk needs to be integrated into the socio-economic policy by integrating the cost-benefits. Mr. Kull added that this should be open for public discussion, as the social side needs to be considered on poverty side too. Cost-benefits of disaster risk management takes long time, therefore the importance of investing in *resilience* recognizes the need for improvement and helps target the funding. In order to really invest in resilience, companies need to internalize the costs of resilience into their actual financial scheme. In general, the understanding of risk needs to be integrated into the socio-economic policies, including the interpreting of cost-benefit. This topic should be also open for public discussion, in order to assure that the social side is covered. Cost-benefit analysis of disaster risk management requires long term investment too.

Before closure of the panel debate the floor was opened for questions, statements and discussion, where the topic of resilience, as well as its definition and the barriers for risk assessment were discussed.

The representative from joint UNEP/OCHA Environmental Unit asked about the added value of resilience in the design of policies and in the implementation of the programs. Her second question was about the views of the panelists on the OSCE role in forwarding the resilience agenda. She added that risks can be a challenge, but also create a new environment where you can adapt and transform one's environment to make it better in the future, therefore transforming the risk in an opportunity.

Ms. Scott considered that the added value of resilience is that it has a system-based approach, that makes it able to cope with shocks with a holistic view on the whole risks landscape.

Ms. Ebah-Moussa completed by suggesting that the OSCE, together with its field missions, could help to monitor the risks in the participating States and contribute to good risk assessments. She added that the role of Aarhus Centres is important as well as the exchange of good practices in the different regions. OSCE could also contribute to the mainstreaming of DRR in policies aiming at enhancing resilience.

Mr. Aymerich indicated that the added value of the EIB in investing in a project is based in three pillars: eligibility, viability and the financial capacity of the EIB to mobilize the investment by other investors.

The Moderator asked panelists on their views on how a coercive society could be generated through the action of the OSCE to better promote resilience.

Mr. Kull answered that OSCE can promote the concept of solidarity, which implies that by promoting disaster risk reduction and management in others, we protect ourselves.

The representative of Overseas Development Institute asked the panel to comment on how resilience is used in the pre-zero draft of the post-2015 Agreement and whether or not it is in line with what the organizations they represent understand as resilience.

Mr. Kull explained that the World Bank does not have a definition of *resilience* but a number of strategies aiming at promoting resilience.

Ms. Scott expressed her view that a narrow definition of *resilience* could harm vulnerable communities and leave important aspects out. Therefore, rather than a definition, the key is to work in a same direction, in an overarching way.

The representative of the United States asked to *Ms. Ebah-Moussa* what are the barriers that the European Commission has seen in the conduction of risk assessments and how the OSCE could overcome these challenges.

Ms. Ebah-Moussa indicated that risks assessments are mandatory of EU member states, which have found indeed difficulties at the level of governments, because they are undertaken at regional level but then not consolidated at a national one. She added that tools are missing, in particular those related to technologies, the mappings of the risks and the consultation of the stakeholders involved in the assessment.

Ms. Scott added that the political will of governments is *key* in the conduction of timely and efficient risks assessments. From a structural point of view, countries lack ministries of disaster risk management, therefore often it is not clear who is in charge of these challenges. From an economic point of view, *Ms. Scott* highlighted that there is not enough money or interest in funding the studies for the necessary scientific inputs.

Mr. Mario Aymerich underlined the importance of fostering trans-boundary cooperation in this area.

The representative Albania asked the views of panelists on the role of OSCE in good governance for resilience.

Mr. Kull replied that the World Bank, as a development bank, focuses on low income and medium income countries. On dealing with the fiscal balance of countries with limited resources, the financial risk is established after the conduction of a good risk assessment.

Mr. Aymerich clarified that the European Investment Bank is not a development bank.

The Moderator then asked to the representative of the OECD who, according to her organization, is responsible for achieving resilience.

Ms. Scott explained different organizations have different added values, depending of historical experience, mandates and resources.

Mr. Kull added that everybody has a share of responsibility, from the individual to the institutional perspective.

Mr. Aymerich proposed that banks reach an agreement on what should be the common characteristics that have to be agreed in order to fund the management of a disaster.

Ms. Scott added that it is important to have a clear understanding of the current risks faced by the world.

Ms. Ebah-Moussa proposed that the OSCE could integrate DRR and management in next year's Economic and Environmental Fora, including the 23rd EEF on water management and governance.

Finally, *Mr. Kull* shared his view that the OSCE can push to restructure the system to better integrate DRR and management in the conflict concept.

Session VII Panel Debate – The Role of the OSCE in responding to environmental Challenges.

Moderator: Ambassador Manuel Bessler, Delegate for Humanitarian Aid and Head of the Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit, Switzerland

Rapporteur: Ms. Jenniver Sehring, Environmental Affairs Adviser, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Speakers:

- **H.E. Dorin Dusciac**, Deputy Minister of Environment, Republic of Moldova
- **H.E. Diana Bejko**, Deputy Minister of Environment, Albania
- **H.E. Teimuraz Murgulia**, First Deputy Minister of Environment and Natural Resources Protection, Georgia
- **H.E. Nurbek Sydygaliev**, Deputy Minister of Emergency Situations, Kyrgyzstan
- **Ms. Desiree Schweitzer**, Deputy Co-ordinator/Head, Environmental Activities, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities
- **Prof. Johann Goldammer**, Head of the Fire Ecology and Biomass Burning Research Group and the Global Fire Monitoring Center (GFMC)

Introducing the panel debate, *Ambassador Bessler* noted that an organization that has at its core security and co-operation should provide a platform to address the global, regional, transboundary, national and local challenges of disasters. As these can lead to conflict, the panel wants to look at the role the OSCE can have in tackling these challenges.

H.E. Dorin Dusciac, Deputy Minister of Environment, Republic of Moldova, pointed to the fragile state of environment in Moldova, which is linked to climate change and natural disasters. Therefore, the government adopted several political documents that directly or indirectly include environmental challenges, such as the National Security Strategy 2011 or the National Environment Strategy 2014. He stressed that the region is affected by climate change, but mostly by climate variability which leads to increased weather-related natural hazards, as well as earthquakes and biological hazards. It is the obligation of the ministry not to allow these hazards to turn into disasters, but the achievements so far have been modest. Mr. Dusciac underlined that the role of the OSCE in promoting co-operation to meet environmental challenges cannot be underestimated and is highly valued. OSCE-supported environmental confidence-building measures in Transnistria are ensured in a joint action plan on environmental protection. There were several successful environmental projects of the OSCE Mission to Moldova as well as more than 20 ENVSEC projects with neighbouring countries. The ENVSEC support was timely, efficient and with concrete results. He referred to the bilateral agreement on the Dniester River, which had been possible due to ENVSEC support, and urged Ukraine to follow Moldova in its ratification. The 2014 Association Agreement with the EU also has had an impact on regulations regarding DRR. Mr. Dusciac stressed that Moldova strives to reduce risk of flooding at its borders and that the OSCE should play a significant role in promoting co-operation for meeting environmental challenges in the region.

H.E. Diana Bejko, Deputy Minister of Environment, Albania, outlined that Albania is vulnerable to a number of natural and manmade hazards, such earthquakes, industrial accidents, floods, and forest fires. Albania is among the countries with the highest economic risks of multi-hazards and the vulnerability is grounded in a lack of infrastructure and safe building, as well as land use practices linked to rapid urbanization. In Albania's National Strategy for Security, climate change and cross-border security are mentioned as priority for investments. Lessons learnt from past events had shown that improvement of coordination between emergency groups at different levels is needed; evacuation proved to be difficult due to limited infrastructure; understanding of digital maps and simulation methods is lacking. Ms. Bejko stressed the importance of access to data on climate

change, flooding, and precipitation. As a good example of a joint approach for DRR on shared water resources, she mentioned the MoU signed in 2011 between five riparian countries of the Drin River (Albania, Greece, Montenegro, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo¹). She also stressed the need for broad education of the most affected population; education for environmental behaviour is the best DRR investment. Responding to environmental challenges provided a meaningful role for the OSCE, she referred to the current project on strengthening the capacities of Aarhus Centres in DRR awareness- raising and underlined that awareness raising and public participation on DRR are important to reach rural communities and raise local ownership and sustainability. The speaker considered the network of Aarhus Centres in Albania is a proper regional structure for awareness-raising and public participation. The ENVSEC Initiative has been proven to be a good mechanism to address climate change, hazardous waste, and transboundary water management. The OSCE could support research to identify security and DRR implications, mainstreaming DRR in infrastructure projects, capacity building, and transboundary co-operation for shared resources. Preparedness for transboundary disasters remains a challenge. Finally, she mentioned that the Ministry of Environment is currently preparing a risk assessment on corruption in environment with OSCE support.

H.E. Teimuraz Murgulia, First Deputy Minister of Environment and Natural Resources Protection, Georgia, referred to Georgia's exposure to many natural hazards and the increasing complexity of disasters. He stated that Georgia benefitted from OSCE activities in DRR, including identification, early warning systems, and response. The recent mudflow caused by a glacier that blocked a key road showed the importance of early warning and prevention. Mr. Murgulia also informed that the OSCE supported the establishment of Aarhus Centres in Georgia and considered that early warning and awareness are most important for avoiding human losses. Mr. Murgulia expressed his appreciation to OSCE's support in terms of liquidation and prevention of wildfires, also with regard to transboundary communication. This OSCE's support would allow smaller nations to be better prepared and respond. The HFA-2 process will require Georgia further develop DRR activities and co-operate with international organisations. Mr. Murgulia concluded his statement by stating that the OSCE is one of the most well established organisations to work in the security field and his government is highly committed to be a part of OSCE's cross-border security efforts.

H.E. Nurbek Sydygaliev, Deputy Minister of Emergency Situations, Kyrgyzstan, opened his statement by informing that Kyrgyzstan faces a lot of population pressure, high levels of poverty, dwindling resources, and disintegrated infrastructure, which is also partly caused by wrong management of natural resources and environmental degradation. He informed that poverty is rising, also due to natural disasters that destroyed infrastructure and affected the environment. Therefore, DRR was a priority for the Kyrgyz government. He stated that mining in Kyrgyzstan was done in a wrong way, producing a lot of waste. Natural and man-made processes may lead to large scale catastrophes. Kyrgyzstan suffers each year 35 mln USD losses due to natural disasters. Kyrgyzstan has adopted the National Strategy for Sustainable Development for 2013-17 and the Integrated Strategy for Emergencies to 2020. Mr. Sydygaliev underlined the requirement to place environment at the centre of economic thinking. The Government of Kyrgyzstan strived to gradual change at economic aims to make them targeted at sustainable development. Environmental information needs to be transparent and accessible. Since natural disasters are one of greatest challenges around the world, international co-operation is necessary. Mr. Sydygaliev referred to the HFA-2 preparatory meetings for Central Asia and the South Caucasus held in April 2014 in Almaty, where the Ministry of Emergency Situations of Kyrgyzstan stated its commitment to regional co-operation and effective mechanisms for DRR. He also pointed to the important roles of volunteers in DRR. Central government and local authorities in Kyrgyzstan are implementing DRR measures, for example monitoring, early warning, capacity building, and increasing public

¹ All references to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, in this text should be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244.

awareness. Finally, he stressed the importance to mainstream mechanisms for risk mitigation in all policies and programmes and pointed to the co-operation between the national platforms for DRR between Kyrgyzstan and Armenia.

Prof. Johann Goldammer, Head of the Fire, Ecology and Biomass Burning Research Group and the Global Fire Monitoring Center (GFMC), stated that natural ecosystems and cultural landscape often stretch over large areas and may cross national boundaries. Risks and consequences of disasters in these landscapes are therefore often shared by neighbouring countries. Long-term stability of natural and cultural landscapes is essential for sustainable delivery of valuable services to the environment and humans. A well-managed or protected and stable vegetation cover is essential for the protection and stability of the soil cover, which reduces the vulnerability of the soil to become affected by weather extremes and potentially resulting in excessive water runoff and floods. In well-managed forests and other fire-prone lands, which are stretching along national borders, the likelihood of wildfires and fire smoke to cross borders can be reduced. Landscape management aimed at reducing the occurrence and transboundary consequences of natural disasters and industrial accidents requires dialogue and co-operation, including building of technical and human resources capacities between neighbouring nations. The sharing of knowledge and expertise in the management of those natural resources that either could be causative agent of a disaster, or could become affected by a disaster, becomes increasingly important in the portfolio of OSCE activities, notably between participating states. The OSCE, through the ENVSEC Initiative and hand in hand with the UNECE, has demonstrated that in case of wildfire disaster risk reduction the development of national policies and management capacities benefited from regional co-operation. In this regard the OSCE with its comprehensive security approach can contribute to co-operation. Enhancing environmental emergency preparedness by sharing knowledge and initiating or strengthening the cross-boundary exchange provides an added value to the portfolio of international organizations and actors in the field of disaster risk reduction. Finally, Prof. Goldammer underscored that not only resources but also culture and relationships between people stretch across borders and OSCE could strengthen these cross-border relations.

Ms. Desiree Schweitzer, Deputy Co-ordinator/Head, Environmental Activities, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities welcomed the appreciation to OSCE work expressed by the panellists, e.g. for the Aarhus Centres network and the ENVSEC Initiative. She stated that disasters can be drivers of conflict, but DRR can build confidence and trust; this would be the opportunity for OSCE engagement. The OSCE can bring in its cross-dimensional approach to security. In doing so, the OSCE should make use of the expertise accumulated in all three dimensions, for example the self-assessment tool developed in the politico-military dimension, or the role of media in the human dimension. Ms. Schweitzer pointed to the need to focus particularly on the transboundary context, where the OSCE has experience e.g. in Dniester. Transfer and exchange of knowledge – one theme in HFA-2 consultations – can also be facilitated by the OSCE. The discussions throughout the Forum process reminded about the need for active engagement of local level, which the OSCE can support through the network of Aarhus Centres in 14 countries. Ms. Schweitzer also pointed to the suggestions raised how the OSCE could contribute a security perspective to the development of a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction. She concluded that the OSCE could further enhance capacity building and strengthen its position and image in the global context.

Ambassador Bessler asked the panellists about their main triggers and motivations for calling the OSCE for support.

H.E. Dorin Dusciac, Deputy Minister of Environment, Republic of Moldova, said that the OSCE involvement in confidence-building measures in Transdnestrria has been very helpful. First priority for him would be close co-operation in the environmental dimension of these CBMs, e.g. on bottom sand extraction, which takes place illegally on both sides of Dniester river and could result in disasters like landslides and pollution, which would also have security implications.

H.E. Diana Bejko, Deputy Minister of Environment, Albania stated that Albania's priority was border security and impacts in border regions. She said that most disaster effects occur due to poor management of water resources shared between the countries. Therefore, water management and measures to prevent pollution would be most important. The OSCE could play a role in ensuring reduction of effects on other countries. In this respect, capacity building, adequate assessments and investments, confidence building and public participation in DRR was still needed. She reiterated her appreciation of the role of OSCE and that an upgrading of the role of the OSCE in Albania might be expected.

H.E. Teimuraz Murgulia, First Deputy Minister of Environment and Natural Resources Protection, Georgia, listed as priority issues for his country risk assessment and early warning systems, as well as the strengthening the capacities of Aarhus Centres/Public Environmental Information Centres.

H.E. Nurbek Sydygaliev, Deputy Minister of Emergency Situations, Kyrgyzstan, stated that Kyrgyzstan undertakes many measures in DRR.

Ms. Schweitzer stressed that OSCE engagement also depends on funding. She underlined the close work with the UNECE environmental conventions, which could be further deepened and expanded to other conventions, e.g. on industrial accidents. She also noted that regional activities implemented by the OCEEA are complemented by activities of the Field Operations.

Prof. Goldammer mentioned that the role of the OSCE could manifest itself in looking at the heritage of conflicts (e.g. areas with UXOs and landmines). Fires and other environmental damages often occur as collateral damages of conflict, which could also be an area of OSCE work. Referring to the GFMC's experience in working with the OSCE, he noted that the OSCE managed to maintain a consistent and long-term approach despite different donors with different motivations. It is important to achieve sustainable investments. He also suggested the sharing of project results like early warning systems with other countries instead of investing in new development, which can contribute to more efficient use of donor money.

A representative of the OSCE Office in Tajikistan reminded that while Aarhus Centres are the primary tool for OSCE support to civil society involvement in environmental issues, and are increasingly engaged in regional co-operation, the financial support is under constraint.

A representative of the OSCE Mission to Moldova noted the success of environmental activities as confidence-building measures, which are one core activities of the OSCE mission to Moldova although it has no mandate in the Second Dimension. He reminded that identification of ways of co-operation is often easier than implementing them.

A representative of Belarus noted that the task of the OSCE was to provide a platform through which participating States could get information on effective measures, technologies, and future projects in order to learn from each other. He pointed to the considerable experience of countries like Belarus or Japan in dealing with disasters.

A representative of Azerbaijan stressed, with reference to multi-stakeholder participation, that such formats should include only legitimate representatives of local and other authorities. She expressed hope that OSCE initiatives and structures would strictly follow their mandates approved by consensus and refrain from establishing any form of contacts with illegitimate entities that might claim to represent a segment in a multi-stakeholder co-operation.

A representative of Italy/EU asked for examples of how environmental co-operation has helped to foster confidence building and had a positive impact on overall political processes or regional relations.

H.E. Teimuraz Murgulia, First Deputy Minister of Environment and Natural Resources Protection, Georgia, stated that the OSCE's work, for example in the transboundary Kura River Basin, enabled more confidence-based communication and a common approach among concerned authorities in the region.

H.E. Diana Bejko, Deputy Minister of Environment, Albania, referred to shared water resources with Montenegro, where Aarhus Centres were involved in awareness-raising and stakeholder involvement. This was a long-term process where also other donors are active and the OSCE role could be even strengthened.

Ms. Schweitzer noted that many ENVSEC projects yielded concrete results, e.g. in the Kura and Dniester Basins, or the assessments conducted in the framework of the EU-funded project on climate change and security.

Amb. Bessler concluded that there is a role for the OSCE in addressing environmental challenges through the activities of the Field Operations as well as with contribution to global processes.

Concluding Plenary Session – Follow-up to the 22nd OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum.

Moderator: Dr. Halil Yurdakul Yigitgüden, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Rapporteur: Mr. Uros Milanovic, Attaché, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Serbia to the OSCE

Speakers:

- **Ambassador Thomas Greminger**, Chairperson of the Permanent Council, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the OSCE, 2014 OSCE Swiss Chairmanship
- **Ambassador Vuk Žugić**, Permanent Representative of Serbia to the OSCE, incoming 2015 OSCE Serbian Chairmanship

At the beginning of the Concluding Session, *Dr. H. Yigitguden* summarized the intensive discussions which were held during the previous two days. He emphasized that the goal of the meeting was to find links between disasters and security and to search for a way the OSCE can contribute to the global processes regarding DRR. During the Forum, several concrete suggestions were made on how the OSCE should approach this matter. Dr. Yigitguden reminded participants that the keynote speakers, the Czech Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lubomir Zaoralek, and the President and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland, Didier Burkhalter, pointed out the necessity of defining an approach within the OSCE on how to tackle issues regarding DRR and Climate change adaptation. As President Burkhalter also highlighted, DRR should represent the basis upon which Nations and States formulate their co-operation, since disasters have a direct impact on everyone. In the last two days of the Forum, it was demonstrated that joint action between countries is of crucial importance during disasters, while strong support was also expressed for the Aarhus Centers, specifically their disaster awareness-raising role, and also for the OSCE Field Missions in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia who momentarily response helped alleviate the consequences of the Floods. It was stressed that the OSCE can contribute to the security aspects of the ongoing deliberations regarding DRR, particularly in the post 2015 Hyogo Framework for Action. With regard to this, the participants of the Forum underlined the significance of co-operation and partnership between International Organizations.

In his concluding speech, *Ambassador Greminger* said that the Forum's agenda for this year has been an ambitious one and has covered an extensive range of issues during the three meetings. With regard to the theme of the Forum, Greminger pointed out that the intentions of the Swiss Chairmanship were twofold - comprehensive management of natural disasters and proposition of viable ways to strengthen the capabilities of the OSCE, thus encouraging co-operation and generating political will for further engagement of participating States. He concluded that there was a high amount of interest and dedication shown by the participants, which led to quality debates and a large number of bilateral meetings on the margins of the Forum. The OSCE can definitely contribute its comparative advantage to the ongoing international efforts regarding DRR and it should incorporate itself into the existing initiatives. Also, at the same time, the OSCE should cooperate with and support major institutions, including the global processes regarding DRR taking place this year and next year. Ambassador Greminger noted several points made from the remarks of the participants:

1. The OSCE Community was called to contribute a security perspective to the Hyogo Framework for Action 2 (global Disaster Risk Reduction Agenda) and to the Development Agenda.
2. DRR has the potential to connect the current main global processes
3. Organizations like the OSCE have to translate the global commitments into concrete actions at the regional level

4. The climate change issue is becoming an ever increasing security concern, acknowledging the increasing frequency of extreme weather
5. Several expert panelists have stressed that “we are the first generation that can feel the effects of climate change and the last that can do anything about it”

It was repeatedly noted that the OSCE has experience in environmental good governance which is a key element in the effective management of natural disasters. The review report by the UNDP has given an overview and recommendations for further action in the field of combating and preventing disasters. The OSCE, as a platform for dialogue regarding DRR coordination, represents an effective confidence building measure. The Chairman of the Permanent Council also emphasized the importance of the Aarhus centers and the Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC) and reminded of the value of co-operation and sharing of knowledge and experiences, when it comes to combating and preventing natural disasters. This was particularly highlighted during the historic floods in the Western Balkans in May this year. There is an immediate need to work on a wording about the linkages between climate change, disaster risks and security that the OSCE could contribute to the drafting of the new Hyogo Framework of Action. In this context, the Swiss Chairmanship announced that it will task the Secretariat to formulate concrete wording that could be presented and discussed within the Economic and Environmental Committee in the upcoming weeks. Another concrete follow-up emerging from the Forum is a Ministerial decision regarding DRR. The Chairmanship has issued several suggestions for the Draft of the Ministerial Decision in its Food-for-Thought paper. The draft of the Decision is expected to be presented in a few weeks and it will probably focus on disaster prevention and preparedness, the nexus between disasters, climate change and security, comprehensive risk management, cross-border co-operation etc. In conclusion, Ambassador Greminger stated that Serbia can count on the support of Switzerland during its Chairmanship of the OSCE in 2015.

Ambassador Zugic presented the incoming Chair’s priorities in the second dimension during next year. He recalled that on various occasions, heads of state and government reconfirmed their will to strengthen the Economic and Environmental Dimension and expressed their desire to pursue and intensify co-operation. He stated that Serbia, as the incoming Chair, will continue to strengthen the effectiveness of the Second Dimension. Ambassador Zugic also underlined the importance of this year’s topic, especially in light of the recent catastrophic floods that occurred in the Western Balkans region. He stated that there is a positive side to such unfortunate events, as they remind us that no country can meet these challenges alone and that we need trans-boundary co-operation. Ambassador Zugic noted that the Concluding Meeting certainly generated interesting thoughts and ideas and deepened our knowledge on how to promptly and effectively respond to environmental challenges. It is obvious that water-related natural disasters are even less “natural” than others: floods are often aggravated by previous river management decisions and droughts can be a result of human-driven climate change. He pointed out that management and governance of natural resources is of vital importance when it comes to Disaster Risk Reduction. Like his Swiss colleague, he suggested that the recommendations for future activities in this area, put forward in the preceding three days, should be followed-up in a result-oriented manner in preparation for the Basel Ministerial meeting.

For next year’s Forum, Serbia has chosen the topic “Water Governance in the OSCE area – increasing security and stability through co-operation”. Some of the topics that will be included in the deliberations will be: water governance as a prerequisite for environmental sustainability and for economic and social prosperity and stability, promotion of dialogue in good water governance within the OSCE area through sharing of best practices and lessons learned, raising awareness of the importance of water governance at all levels, water governance within the context of disaster risk reduction etc. During the 2014 Forum, there was a strong call for strengthening the OSCE’s input into global processes. Ambassador Zugic stated that Serbia will embrace the task of increasing the visibility of the OSCE and contributing the Organization’s expertise and approach to these global deliberations. He also reminded participants that the 7th World Water Forum and the 3rd

World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction will take place in 2015, providing the OSCE with another opportunity to contribute its experiences. In concluding, Ambassador Zugic emphasized the fact that even though there has been some positive progress in the second dimension, it has remained underutilized, despite its essential role in the comprehensive approach to security. He believes that the ongoing “Helsinki +40” process is a good opportunity to tackle this issue.

During the discussions, the *representative from the European Union* thanked the participants who put forward concrete proposals in the area of disaster risk management. The representative stated that the EU also considers the Food-for-Thought paper, put forward by the Chairmanship, as a solid base for active discussions regarding the suggestions within it. The delegate highlighted certain issues which the EU believes are worth considering – disaster risks do not only pose a threat to security but a chance for co-operation; the OSCE should use its network in order to promote awareness raising on disaster risk reduction, the access to information on climate change and disaster risks, etc; implementation of specialized conventions dealing with cross-border issues should be fostered; the OSCE should not duplicate efforts at global level but should support them (with regard HFA-2); and the importance of mainstreaming DRM into some OSCE activities within the Second Dimension. The delegate also stated that the EU appreciates Serbia’s choice for the next year’s Forum theme focusing on the topic of water governance in the OSCE area. The EU reminded the delegations that the importance of this theme was also highlighted during the last Security Days event of 8 July. In the end, the EU expressed hope that the next year’s EEF will not only take stock of OSCE’s work and achievements in the field of water and security but also identify further areas for its future engagement in responsible trans-boundary water management.

The representative of the US thanked the organizers of the Forum and stated that all participants benefited from the expertise of the panelists. The responsibility now falls on the participating States to distill what was said during the previous days and formulate it into concrete actions within the OSCE. The delegate stressed the importance of trans-boundary co-operation regarding combating and preventing disasters, since natural catastrophes know no borders. The OSCE should use its Field Missions to help countries to strengthen their defenses against natural disasters. The US is looking forward to the potential contribution of the OSCE to the HFA-2. The delegate also expressed US’ satisfaction on the progress Albania has made in the fight against corruption, and praised the comments made by Assistant Minister Predrag Maric (Serbia), especially the part about the significance of speaking the truth to the public in the event of a natural hazard.

A representative of The International Fund of Ecological Safety of Baltic Sea used the opportunity to point out to an alleged problem of contamination of the Baltic Sea, with chemical weapons used during the World War II. This has allegedly led to an increased number of cases of cancer in the Baltic States. He called on the USA to investigate these claims.

The representative of the US reiterated his country support for the civil society, and thanked the previous speaker for his contribution to the Forum, even though he expressed doubts of the Forum being an appropriate place for such discussion.

The Ambassador of Slovakia expressed her support for the conclusions of the Forum and also stated that her government would like to see a formulation of a Basel Ministerial Decision regarding this topic. Slovakia also gave its backing to the incoming Serbian Chairmanship

The representative of Azerbaijan referring to the mission to the fire-affected territories in and around the Nagorno-Karabakh region, the delegate stressed that the mission was conducted under the United Nations General Assembly resolution “Situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan” in the context of OSCE’s involvement in the activities aimed at prevention and elimination of fires in occupied territories, and that Armenia itself has supported conduct of the mission under this framework. She stated that it is obvious that any initiatives and recommendations deriving from missions’ results must be implemented in strict compliance with

respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty of OSCE participating States and other relevant norms and principles of international law and Helsinki Final Act. She also noted that Armenian side should raise their complaints and suggestions on confidence-building measures in the area of fire management within appropriate format related to the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, which is the Minsk Group.

The representative of Armenia welcomed the strong emphasis of the discussions on cross-border co-operation in the context of response to natural disasters. He noted that sometimes conflicts might impede cross-border co-operation. In this regard, the delegate indicated that the OSCE, within its mandate of addressing conflict cycle, can play a crucial role in promoting co-operation in affected areas through its expertise in confidence building measures (CBMs). He pointed out that all participating States have agreed to this in Vilnius Ministerial Council Decision on conflict cycle. According to the representative, efforts in assessing, reducing and mitigating natural disasters risks can create a depoliticized and positive agenda for co-operation in conflict areas among all stakeholders in the status neutral manner. In his view, the assessment of OSCE environmental fact finding missions set a good example of the Organization's involvement in the conflict areas. The subsequent implementation of the recommendation of these missions can contribute to the generation of CBMs. The OSCE continuous engagement in and with the ENVSEC Initiative and the Aarhus centers seems key in working in DRR issues. The co-ordination among national platforms could also become a new way to foster international and regional co-operation among all stakeholders. Finally the delegate expressed readiness to be constructively engaged in addressing the main findings of this forum into the outcomes of the Basel Ministerial Council.

962nd Plenary Meeting

PC Journal No. 962, Agenda item 2

DECISION NO. 1088

THEME, AGENDA AND MODALITIES OF THE TWENTY-SECOND ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM

The Permanent Council,

Pursuant to Chapter VII, paragraphs 21 to 32, of the Helsinki Document 1992; Chapter IX, paragraph 20, of the Budapest Document 1994; Ministerial Council Decision No. 10/04 of 7 December 2004; Ministerial Council Decision No. 4/06 of 26 July 2006; Permanent Council Decision No. 743 of 19 October 2006; Permanent Council Decision No. 958 of 11 November 2010; and Permanent Council Decision No. 1011 of 7 December 2011,

Relying on the OSCE Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension (MC(11).JOUR/2) and Ministerial Council decisions related to the environment, energy and water management,

Building on the outcomes of past Economic and Environmental Forums, as well as on the results of relevant OSCE activities, including follow-up activities,

Decides that:

1. The theme of the Twenty-Second Economic and Environmental Forum will be: “Responding to environmental challenges with a view to promoting cooperation and security in the OSCE area”;
2. The Twenty-Second Economic and Environmental Forum will consist of three meetings, including two preparatory meetings, one of which will take place outside of Vienna. The concluding meeting will be held from 10 to 12 September 2014 in Prague. These arrangements shall not set a precedent for future meetings of the Economic and Environmental Forums. The Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, under the guidance of the OSCE Chairmanship for 2014, will organize the above-mentioned meetings;
3. The agenda of the Forum will focus on the impact of the following topics on the comprehensive security of the OSCE area
 - Addressing preparedness, emergency response and recovery related to environmental challenges;
 - Promoting partnerships and initiatives covering environment and security issues for greater preparedness for, resilience and adaptation to environmental challenges;
 - Exchanging best practices relating to preparedness, emergency response and recovery regarding environmental challenges;

– Promoting environmental good governance;

4. The agendas of the Forum meetings, including timetables and themes of the working sessions, will be proposed and determined by the OSCE Chairmanship for 2014, after being agreed upon by the participating States in the Economic and Environmental Committee;

5. Moreover, having a view to its tasks, the Economic and Environmental Forum will review the implementation of OSCE commitments in the economic and environmental dimension. The review, to be integrated into the agenda of the Forum, will address OSCE commitments relevant to the theme of the Twenty-Second Economic and Environmental Forum;

6. The discussions at the Forum should benefit from cross-dimensional input provided by other OSCE bodies and relevant meetings organized by the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, under the guidance of the OSCE Chairmanship for 2014, and from deliberations in various international organizations;

7. Moreover, having a view to its tasks, the Economic and Environmental Forum will discuss current and future activities for the economic and environmental dimension, in particular the work in implementation of the OSCE Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension;

8. The participating States are encouraged to be represented at a high level by senior officials responsible for shaping international economic and environmental policy in the OSCE area. Participation in their delegations of representatives from the business and scientific communities and of other relevant actors of civil society would be welcome;

9. As in previous years, the format of the Economic and Environmental Forum should provide for the active involvement of relevant international organizations and encourage open discussions;

10. The following international organizations, international organs, regional groupings and conferences of States are invited to participate in the Twenty-Second Economic and Environmental Forum: Asian Development Bank; Barents Euro-Arctic Council; Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation; Central European Initiative; Collective Security Treaty Organization; Commonwealth of Independent States; Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia; Council of Europe; Council of the Baltic Sea States; Economic Cooperation Organization; Energy Community; Eurasian Economic Commission; Eurasian Economic Community; European Bank for Reconstruction and Development; European Environment Agency; European Investment Bank; Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; Green Cross International; Global Fire Monitoring Center; European Investment Bank; International Atomic Energy Agency; International Energy Agency; International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA); International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea; International Maritime Organisation; International Monetary Fund; International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement; International Committee of the Red Cross; North Atlantic Treaty Organization; Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC); OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID); Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development; Organization for Democracy and Economic Development – GUAM; Organisation of Islamic Cooperation; Regional Cooperation Council; Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification; Southeast European Cooperative Initiative; Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; Shanghai Cooperation Organisation; United Nations Development Programme; United Nations Economic Commission for Europe; United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific; United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development; United Nations Environment Programme; United Nations Human Settlements Programme; United Nations Industrial Development Organization; United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs; United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction; United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees; UN Women; United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia; World Bank Group; World Health Organization; World Meteorological Organization; World Trade Organization; Advisory Group on Environmental

Emergencies; Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit; International Strategy for Disaster Reduction; United Nations Children's Fund; Capacity for Disaster Reduction Initiative (CADRI); United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination; International Civil Defense Organization; World Food Programme; Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery; Inter-Parliamentary Union, and other relevant organizations;

11. The OSCE Partners for Co-operation are invited to participate in the Twenty-Second Economic and Environmental Forum;

12. Upon request by a delegation of an OSCE participating State, regional groupings or expert academics and business representatives may also be invited, as appropriate, to participate in the Twenty-Second Economic and Environmental Forum;

13. Subject to the provisions contained in Chapter IV, paragraphs 15 and 16, of the Helsinki Document 1992, the representatives of non-governmental organizations with relevant experience in the area under discussion are also invited to participate in the Twenty-Second Economic and Environmental Forum;

14. In line with the practices established over past years with regard to meetings of the Economic and Environmental Forum and their preparatory process, the Chairperson of the Twenty-Second Economic and Environmental Forum will present summary conclusions and policy recommendations drawn from the preparatory discussions. The Economic and Environmental Committee will further include the conclusions of the Chairperson and the reports of the rapporteurs in its discussions so that the Permanent Council can take the decisions required for appropriate policy translation and follow-up activities.

ANNEX II: WELCOMING REMARKS

22ND OSCE ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM

**“Responding to environmental challenges with a view to promoting
co-operation and security in the OSCE area”**

CONCLUDING MEETING

Prague, 10 – 12 September 2014

WELCOMING REMARKS

**by H.E. Lubomír Zaorálek
Minister of Foreign Affairs, Czech Republic**

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, distinguished Guests,

It is a great pleasure to welcome you in Prague on the occasion of the 22nd OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum. I would most sincerely like to welcome the President of the Swiss Confederation and the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Didier Burkhalter, the Secretary-General Lamberto Zannier, the representatives of the fifty-seven participating States in the OSCE, members of the OSCE Secretariat, as well as the representatives of Partners for Cooperation and of international organizations and other participants in this meeting.

At the outset, let me take this opportunity to thank the Swiss Chairmanship and the OSCE for all the efforts in assisting to solve the crisis in and around Ukraine. The recent developments are of deep concern to us. The security situation within the OSCE area has drastically deteriorated since we gathered in this forum last year. What is at stake are the established fundamental principles that have provided a solid cornerstone for our area in the last almost 40 years. As we know from our own history, it is very easy to destroy trust and it takes years to rebuild it again. Therefore I reiterate the urgent need for a sustainable political solution based on respect for Ukraine’s sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and independence. In this regard, I welcome Friday’s agreement in Minsk on a ceasefire and on launching a political process to resolve the crisis, with the assistance of the OSCE. Let me also express my wish that, also in view of the upcoming 40th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act, the fundamental OSCE principles will be yet again reconfirmed and built upon by the participating States.

Let me now turn to the theme of our today’s gathering and thank the Swiss Chairmanship for all the efforts that made the First and the Second Preparatory Meetings of the 22nd Economic and Environmental Forum successful. The present concluding meeting will enable us to consider again environmental challenges as a means to greater cooperation and security in the OSCE area. The previous discussions held in Vienna and in Montreux revealed the paramount importance of an efficient Disaster Risk Management at the international level. Nowadays the disaster risk is growing simultaneously with the ongoing climate changes, global warming and increasing human interaction with nature. Therefore, we hope that the open discussion we are going to hold during the next three days will lead to concrete outcomes.

Environmental challenges often overpass national borders. It is important that the OSCE promote trans-boundary cooperation since a lot is to be improved in the area of harmonization and

simplification. In general, a closer cooperation between the OSCE countries in Disaster Risk Management is desirable. Networking, promoting the dialogue with different stakeholders including the civil society and exchange of information, experience and knowledge can only increase the OSCE countries' resilience to natural and human-made disasters.

However, the OSCE's role is not only to promote cooperation between countries. The OSCE could also make an effort to enhance the participating States' capacity for prevention, response and recovery from environmental disasters. The Economic and Environmental Forum could have an impact on capacity building of the OSCE countries if it called for specific measures. The EEF could require an increase in the awareness of disaster risks among populations, promote the role of local authorities in prevention mechanisms or try to involve the private sector.

I would like to stress again the importance of Disaster Risk Management for security and stability in the OSCE region. If we succeed in reducing disaster risk and in enhancing our capacity to respond effectively to environmental challenges, it will contribute to greater security of populations. Furthermore, close cooperation in the field of Disaster Risk Management can act as an influential Confidence-Building Measure.

In conclusion, let me once again express again my thanks to the Swiss Chairmanship and also wish much success to the upcoming Serbian Chairmanship.

Hoping that the 22nd Economic and Environmental Forum will give rise to a productive and enriching debate, I would like to wish you a pleasant stay in Prague.

Thank you for your attention.

22ND OSCE ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM

**“Responding to environmental challenges with a view to promoting
co-operation and security in the OSCE area”**

CONCLUDING MEETING

Prague, 10 – 12 September 2014

OPENING ADDRESS

**by H.E. Didier Burkhalter
Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE
Head of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs**

“More Economic and Environmental Cooperation for More Security in Europe”

*Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Good morning.

It is a pleasure and an honour for me to open the 22nd edition of the Economic and Environmental Forum.

On behalf of the OSCE, I would like to thank the Czech authorities – in particular Foreign Minister Lubomír Zaorálek – for the warm welcome and for hosting the OSCE in this magnificent palace, year after year.

A hallmark of the OSCE is its comprehensive security approach. The notion that cooperation in a broad range of issues is essential for enhancing security in Europe and rendering it indivisible goes back to the Helsinki Final Act.

Today, this notion is more relevant than ever. We need comprehensive measures to address the complex and often transnational security challenges in our globalized world. With its broad set of tools for preventing and resolving conflicts, the OSCE is well positioned to make relevant contributions in this regard.

There is of course still considerable room for improvement in order to enhance the organization’s capacity to act. This holds true for all three dimensions of the OSCE’s work – the politico-military dimension, the economic and environmental dimension, and the human dimension. Switzerland is committed to strengthening the role and clout of the OSCE, and we will pursue this goal beyond our Chairmanship year.

The economic and environmental dimension of the OSCE has traditionally been somewhat in the shadow of the other two dimensions. The Ukraine crisis with its economic underpinnings is a stark reminder of how important the economic aspects of security are – not just for the stability of Europe but also for the well-being of the people.

My main message to you today is that there is a strong case for making more use of the OSCE to strengthen cooperative security in the economic and environmental fields.

We, the participating States, should further engage in order to develop and reinforce the activities undertaken both by the Secretariat – in particular the Office of the Coordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities – and by the OSCE field operations in this area.

One specific field where the Swiss Chairmanship is promoting the logic of cooperation concerns the effective prevention and response to natural disasters. We are gathered here to discuss how we can best move forward in this field, and I will outline the Chairmanship's position on this in a minute.

But let me first elaborate on why we think there is a need for more economic and environmental cooperation in general.

The Helsinki Final Act made the case for developing cooperation in the fields of trade, industry, science and technology, the environment and other areas of economic activity as a means to reinforcing peace and security in Europe. Participating States also undertook to work towards the widest possible harmonization of international standards and technical regulations to that end.

Implementation work on these issues within the OSCE framework has remained limited to this day – more so in the economic field than in the environmental field, but much more could be done in both.

During the Cold War, the division of Europe was an obvious reason for the limited progress. A second reason is that economic and environmental issues have traditionally been predominantly addressed elsewhere.

This holds particularly true for the economic realm. The landscape of relevant international institutions speaks for itself: There are specialized organizations like the WTO and the OECD for questions concerning international trade and the international economic order. And there is the EU, which has been at the forefront of efforts to structure economic relations in Europe beyond its borders.

I am not suggesting that the OSCE should seek to pick up any of the functions of these organizations. The OSCE is a security organization – the world's largest regional security organization –, and it should stay that way.

But the fact is that there are economic border lines and frictions within the OSCE area that have contributed to the rapid decrease in security we have witnessed in Europe in the past few months. The OSCE as a pan-European organization could and should be a platform for addressing some of these problems and finding ways of mitigating them in cooperative ways.

Since the early 1990s, the EU and Russia have attempted to create a joint economic framework. There was a "Partnership and Co-operation Agreement". There was also the project of the "Common European Economic Space" that was jointly launched by Brussels and Moscow. There were ideas such as a free-trade zone from Vancouver to Vladivostok, an energy partnership and a pan-European transport infrastructure.

All these initiatives have failed to materialize. Today, we have two different integration schemes, the European Union and the Eurasian Union. These two schemes are difficult to reconcile in terms of standards and regulations. They have also come to stand in political competition to each other.

The lack of a stable pan-European economic order and the broader estrangement between Russia and the West over the past decade have contributed to the Ukrainian crisis and to the related crisis of European security. Conversely, the deteriorating security environment and the application of the political instrument of sanctions have had major negative *economic* effects – on everyone involved. The link between security and economics is manifold.

It is precisely at the interface of security and economics that the OSCE should play a bigger role. How to render Ukraine a trade bridge rather than a trade frontier must be worked out in the ongoing trilateral talks between Ukraine, Russia, and the EU. But implementing any solution will likely require accompanying measures to rebuild confidence and assure verification of commitments through transparency and impartial monitoring and reporting. This is one area where the OSCE could play a role.

Applying traditional OSCE instruments such as confidence-building measures and monitoring to economic challenges may reflect out-of-the-box thinking at this stage. But such ideas are worth exploring. We may well conclude that building up such kinds of capacities within the economic and environmental dimension of the OSCE could make a vital contribution to strengthening pan-European security and stability.

Irrespective of whether and when such OSCE measures come into play, there is much scope for using the OSCE as a platform for dialogue on the economy-security nexus. The OSCE can contribute to efforts to return to shared perspectives on economic cooperation and build bridges between integration schemes. It can serve as a reference frame for the 57 participating States to identify ways of strengthening pan-European connectivity through cooperation, and this well beyond the economic field.

None of this will happen overnight. But it is time for a thorough discussion on these issues. The Ukraine crisis has demonstrated how important they are.

Concerning Ukraine, let me add here that I strongly welcome the ceasefire agreed by the parties in Minsk last Friday. The agreement marks a real opportunity to finally reverse the logic of escalation. The OSCE remains fully committed to helping de-escalate and resolve the crisis.

The Swiss Chairmanship has been involved in the efforts that led to this agreement from the outset through Ambassador Heidi Tagliavini who represents the CiO in the Trilateral Contact Group. It remains a priority for us to actively support dialogue aimed at sustaining the ceasefire and launching a political process in accordance with the Minsk protocol. In this context, we are also ready to facilitate and host any meeting between Ukraine and Russia at the presidential level.

A second current priority of the OSCE is to expand the Special Monitoring Mission and rapidly adapt it to the new monitoring needs arising from the ceasefire. More than 70 specialists are now in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions to monitor the ceasefire. Further monitors are being recruited and deployed as we speak.

The SMM has also established a clearing house mechanism among the parties to deal with reported violations of the ceasefire and other incidences. Moreover, discussions are underway on possibilities of integrating as soon as possible national drones as in-kind contributions by participating States into the SMM monitoring scheme. OSCE-owned drones will also be deployed soon.

Finally, a third priority concerns the OSCE's assistance with the broader processes of reconciliation and reform in Ukraine. One major contribution the OSCE can make is to support inclusive political dialogue within Ukraine. Public debates on all issues relevant to bringing back peace and stability to Ukraine, including decentralization and reconstruction, will be an important way of rebuilding trust and fostering a sense of common purpose.

The Chairmanship has made all necessary preparations to nominate a Special Representative and provide mediation expertise in support of any such dialogue formats in Ukraine.

Ladies and gentlemen

The Ukraine crisis is a prime example of how important comprehensive security approaches are today. The OSCE has come to play an important role in this crisis not just as a platform for dialogue but also because of its broad set of tools for preventing and resolving conflicts.

By strengthening the economic and environmental dimension of the OSCE we will further strengthen the organization's comprehensive security approach. Progress is most likely to be made if we proceed on an incremental basis, topic by topic.

The Swiss Chairmanship – in the framework of our joint work plan with Serbia – has proposed that the focus this year be on cooperation in the context of natural disasters. The objective of this 22nd Economic and Environmental Forum is to promote an integrated disaster risk management approach in order to improve the resilience of population groups at risk in the OSCE region.

We have chosen this topic for three reasons.

First, we think the topic is relevant. Natural and man-made disasters impact everything: our planet, our health, our livelihoods. And they can happen anytime and anywhere. Changes in the earth's climate can have an impact in the form of extreme weather events, including worsening heat waves and droughts, increased flooding, and more severe storms. Such extreme events have a serious impact on development efforts, particularly in fragile states. But they also affect industrialized countries, where they can result in the loss of human life and material damages.

The OSCE region has seen a number of natural hazard triggered disasters lately. Russia and Greece had to fight large scale wild fires in 2010. In the USA, “Superstorm Sandy” was the deadliest and most destructive hurricane of the 2012 Atlantic hurricane season, as well as the second most costly hurricane in United States history. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Serbia, the heaviest rainfalls in the past 120 years caused the worst flooding disaster in over a century in May this year.

Second, improving effectiveness in dealing with natural disasters will have a direct positive impact on our citizens. This is in line with the leitmotiv of our Chairmanship, which is to contribute to the creation of a security community for the benefit of everyone – rather than just for the benefit of states.

Third, managing disasters is a suitable topic for fostering cooperation. The challenges of natural hazard-triggered disasters can mobilize *people* to work together, and thus help build confidence beyond borders and despite conflicts.

The topic is also suitable for fostering cooperation between OSCE participating States east and west of Vienna. I am very pleased that the 2015 Serbian Chairmanship will continue our work in the field of disaster risk reduction, and more precisely in the field of water governance.

Moreover, the topic of disaster management concerns all three dimensions of the OSCE and is likely to spur cross-dimensional cooperation in the spirit of comprehensive security.

Within the OSCE, discussion on disaster risk reduction has been sporadic so far. Some work has been done on cooperating on disaster preparedness and response.

Based on the discussions held in two preparatory meetings in Vienna and Montreux, the Chairmanship proposes building on this work and taking it further in three areas:

- disaster *prevention*,
- integrated disaster risk management, and
- cross-border co-operation.

Let me make a few observations on each of these areas in turn.

First, prevention is better than cure.

Major natural and man-made disasters often act as wake-up calls for decision makers. They generate a set of lessons learned that sometimes dramatically change public perceptions and national policies. Much suffering could be avoided if we did more on the *prevention* side. While natural hazards are inevitable, high mortality and large-scale destruction are not.

The benefit of shifting the paradigm from emergency response to a more proactive, integral, and systematic approach is broadly acknowledged. Yet moving from a culture of reaction towards one of prevention of natural hazard triggered disasters is a major political challenge involving different policy sectors and stakeholders at multiple governmental levels.

Particularly through its field operations, the OSCE is well placed to raise awareness of the importance of disaster prevention, to engage communities in preventive action, and to incorporate local knowledge into national contingency plans.

The second proposal of the Swiss Chairmanship is for the OSCE to adopt an integrated risk governance approach. As such, disaster risk governance will only be “integrated” and “comprehensive”:

- if there is political will from the respective governments;
- if it takes into account multiple hazards and their numerous interactions;
- if it encompasses all main stakeholders, including the private sector and civil society; and
- if it involves all levels of authorities: from national down to local governments.

Integrated disaster risk management should be an integral component of a comprehensive security perspective. Reducing risks means increasing security and safety.

The OSCE has to offer added value in this regard as it brings in a security perspective in ways that other organizations do not. The OSCE should focus on this comparative strength while at the same time avoiding duplicating activities in areas where other institutions like the EU are better placed to lead efforts.

As a third point, the Swiss Chairmanship proposes strengthening cross-border cooperation. Natural hazard-triggered disasters, like other cross-cutting global risks such as cybercrime, often transcend national boundaries. Collective prevention, preparedness, and response are indispensable.

The transboundary and global characteristics of disaster risks require cooperative efforts across borders both in their assessment and in their management. In particular we must be looking at the systemic linkages between the politico-military, socio-economic, financial, environmental, and transnational components of disasters.

One of the points often raised during the two preparatory meetings was that cooperation based on expertise and experience in the field of disaster risk reduction can have a positive impact on relations between states. Such cooperation can build trust. Technical cross-border co-operation in disaster risk management is a win-win situation for all parties involved and can be a powerful apolitical way to bolster trust among stakeholders.

Switzerland supports a number of projects to this end. One of these projects aims at “Restoring Ecosystems to Mitigate Floods and Improve Co-operation between Countries in Transboundary River Basins in Eastern Europe”. It includes practical work to mitigate floods through the restoration of ecosystems in the transboundary Dniester river basin shared by Moldova and Ukraine. It also promotes partnership and the sharing of expertise among Belarus, Moldova, and Ukraine.

Ladies and Gentlemen

The 22nd Economic and Environmental Forum comes at a crucial time as we engage in global efforts to define an ambitious post-2015 agenda on sustainable development. Reducing the risk for natural disasters increases our prospects for building the sustainable future we want.

To advance these efforts, we are also preparing for the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai (Japan) next March to agree on a post-Hyogo Framework for Action agenda for disaster risk reduction. The new international agreement on climate change post-2020 will also become an important future instrument for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction.

The Swiss Chairmanship encourages OSCE participating States to demonstrate political leadership at the regional and the global level by bringing the comprehensive security approach into this global agenda and promoting the notion of integrated disaster risk management.

I welcome this morning’s respective keynote speeches by UN Special Representative Margareta Wahlström and Professor Thomas Stocker. You are both most influential in shaping this global agenda, and the OSCE will greatly benefit from your insights.

Ladies and Gentlemen

For many years, the Prague Forum has served as an important platform to discuss current economic and environmental issues and to formulate recommendations to be considered at the Ministerial Council of the OSCE.

Let us be ambitious and work together on the road to Basel towards a strong commitment of the OSCE in the second dimension.

- Let us address disasters smartly, on the prevention side. Doing better in preventing natural and man-made disasters today will help us prevent tragedies tomorrow. Let us pursue an integrated disaster risk management approach. This will improve the resilience of our societies and thereby promote the peaceful co-existence of our states and communities. And let us facilitate cross-border engagement in addressing environmental challenges. This will contribute to building trust among the OSCE participating States – trust that is much needed today to reconsolidate European security as a common project across the OSCE area.

22ND OSCE ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM

“Responding to environmental challenges with a view to promoting co-operation and security in the OSCE area”

CONCLUDING MEETING

Prague, 10 – 12 September 2014

OPENING ADDRESS

by Secretary General Lamberto Zannier

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to join our host and the Swiss Chairmanship in welcoming you to this Concluding Meeting of the 22nd OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum. I am very pleased to see so many high-level representatives of the OSCE participating States, Partners for Co-operation, and of various international, regional and non-governmental organizations, as well as experts from academia and the private sector.

This year, within the framework of this Forum, we have focused our discussion on addressing environmental challenges with a strong focus on managing natural disasters in the OSCE area and how the OSCE can best support international efforts in reducing disaster risks. In May, the devastating floods in South-Eastern Europe underscored that this topic warrants our shared attention. Confronted with this catastrophic event, the OSCE field operations in Serbia and in Bosnia and Herzegovina took immediate action in assisting the flood victims. Even though this support was modest given the scale of the problem, it was heartening to see that the Organisation could respond quickly to unexpected challenges of this sort.

As an organization, which deals with security in a comprehensive and inclusive manner, the OSCE is well placed to contribute to international processes that aim to address global challenges, including the post-2015 development agenda and the climate change negotiations. *[We look forward to hearing more about the current and future developments in these areas from this morning’s keynote speakers, Her Excellency Margareta Wahlström, UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction; and Professor Thomas Stocker, Co-Chair of Working Group I of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.]* Our Organization can have a contributing role and should focus on areas where it can bring added value and offer relevant expertise. I would like to mention just some of the areas where I believe the OSCE has proven its strength:

- We are a well-established platform for multi-level and multi-stakeholder dialogue that is well placed to foster co-operation, exchange of information and sharing good practices on issue affecting our common security, including disaster risk reduction.

- Because of our comprehensive security mandate, we can address disaster risks from a cross-dimensional perspective, making best use of available expertise and well-established partnership relations within each security dimension.
- Thanks to our field operations we can work closely with national stakeholders while our network of Aarhus Centres enables us to promote community-based activities.
- Finally, our partnership in the Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC) fosters cross-border co-operation while ensuring effective co-ordination and co-operation with other international actors.

Finding successful solutions to environmental security challenges requires engaging all relevant stakeholders, including civil society, practitioners, academic experts and the private sector. In July, together with the Swiss Chairmanship, we organized an OSCE Security Days conference on Water in an effort to bring new perspectives into OSCE debates on environmental security. The discussions highlighted the link between climate change and water-related disasters such as floods and droughts and confirmed the need for strengthening water diplomacy. They also brought forward a number of practical recommendations, for instance raising the profile of water on the political agenda, development of a toolkit for water diplomacy to categorize different types of water conflicts and identify appropriate solutions, strategies and tools, establishing regular regional trainings at the OSCE Academy in Bishkek or enhancing public participation through sub-regional and cross-regional projects.

I believe that in view of the forthcoming Ministerial Council, this Forum will offer useful platform for discussion that will help us identify concrete roles for the OSCE in disaster risk reduction efforts. It could also contribute to a larger debate on the strategic orientation of the economic and environmental dimension, which is an important element in the Organisation-wide discussion leading up to the 40th Anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act next year.

Before closing, let me once again stress how much we appreciate the co-operation and partnerships we have built in disaster risk reduction with a number of international organizations, including in the framework of the Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC). These partnerships help us to ensure synergy of efforts and reinforce our action based on respective mandates and capabilities. Today's Review Session, where our colleagues from UNDP will present their report on the OSCE's implementation of commitments in disaster risk reduction, is an example of such close co-operation.

Thank you, and I look forward to productive discussion over the next days.

ANNEX III: CLOSING REMARKS

22ND OSCE ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM

**“Responding to environmental challenges with a view to promoting
co-operation and security in the OSCE area”**

CONCLUDING MEETING

Prague, 10 – 12 September 2014

CLOSING REMARKS

**by Ambassador Thomas Greminger
Chairperson of the OSCE Permanent Council
and Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the OSCE
2014 Swiss OSCE Chairmanship**

Check against delivery

Excellencies,
Distinguished participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have reached the concluding session not only of our meeting here in Prague but of this twenty-second Economic and Environmental Forum process. We have had an ambitious agenda and covered an extensive range of issues during the three meetings we have held. Our discussions have benefited from the insights of a vast range of experts and stakeholders. On behalf of the Swiss Chairmanship, I would like to express our thanks to all panellists, speakers and moderators who have participated in the meetings and shaped our dialogue.

When Switzerland proposed the theme of the Forum, our intentions were two-fold: On the one hand we wanted to put the comprehensive management of natural disasters on the agenda of the OSCE, as we are convinced that the challenges of natural hazards can mobilize people to work together, and thus can help build confidence and trust, beyond borders and despite conflicts. On the other hand, our objective has been to not only raise awareness of this important issue, but also to propose viable ways to strengthen our capabilities, encourage co-operation and generate political will for further engagement of participating States.

When it comes to drawing conclusions at the end of this Forum process - and that is what I was asked to do here – I would start by saying the following. The (high interest and) attendance during the whole Forum of high-ranking officials from our capitals and partner organizations, as well as from Vienna delegations, the fruitful debates we witnessed during this year’s Forum meetings and the numerous bilateral meetings that took place in the margins of our discussions, do confirm the relevance of Disaster Risk Reduction in the OSCE area. There is no doubt that the OSCE can bring real value added to the ongoing international efforts and that the Organization has a role to play when it comes to disaster risk reduction. Just listening to the panel debate this morning, I felt compelling evidence of this was offered.

It has also come clearly out of the discussions that the OSCE should fit into existing initiatives and cooperate and support major institutions, including global processes taking place this year and next year.

In this regard, we had a very interesting panel on Wednesday on such global processes and discussed how the OSCE could bring added value to them. From the remarks and suggestions made, I have noted the following 5 points:

1. The OSCE community has been invited several times to contribute a security perspective to the global Disaster Risk Reduction Agenda (Hyogo Framework for Action 2) and Development Agenda (Sustainable Development Goals).
2. DRR as a common theme has a potential to link the main current global processes (HFA2, Post 2015 Development Agenda, International Climate negotiations)
3. Organisations like the OSCE are needed to translate the global commitments into concrete actions at the regional level fully in line with Chapter 8 of the UN Charter.
4. Coming to the climate change issue, I liked very much one of the headline presented by Prof. Stocker. He said: “A 1-in-20 year hottest day is likely to become a 1-in-2 year event by the end of the 21st century”. That illustrates quite well the increasing probability of extreme weather situations and the knock-on effect that will have on the frequency of disasters.
5. That reinforces another quote we heard: “we are the first generation that can feel the effects of climate change and the last who can do anything about it”.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have also seen in the course of the 3 meetings that the OSCE does have expertise in dealing with environmental challenges and disasters– both in the secretariat and the field presences. It was repeatedly noted that the OSCE has experience in environmental good governance which is a key element in the effective management of natural disasters. This is obviously not to say that we should not aim at further expanding and strengthening the capabilities of the OSCE, including field missions and secretariat.

The review report by UNDP on the implementation of OSCE Commitments related to natural and man-made disasters also gives us an excellent overview and a set of recommendations for further engagement. During Session IV yesterday, the examples of Forest fires and floods were presented as concrete areas where the OSCE has been very active in the past. We should build upon this expertise, further develop it, exchange best practices and reinforce our commitments where it is needed.

We have heard in the panel debate this morning some concrete messages on where the role of our Organization lies in promoting cooperation between States in disaster risk reduction. Let me just recall the following three aspects:

1. The OSCE as a platform for dialogue in coordinating Disaster Risk Reduction across borders in areas where this needs to be facilitated. We also heard this can be effective as a confidence-building measure in the security context.
2. The key role that Aarhus Centers play when it comes to information and awareness raising at the local level. Switzerland is currently reinforcing the capacities of Aarhus Centers in different countries in DRR through an ENVSEC project. As we heard from an OSCE Field office, continued support in this vein is needed.
3. The OSCE should reinforce its role in facilitating the sharing of knowledge and the exchange of best practices across borders and regions.

We had an insightful and engaging session on the management of the horrendous floods in South Eastern Europe on the first day of our meeting and identified some points that could be further deepened and reflected on, such as:

Regional/cross-boundary cooperation was crucial and effective in the response to the situation. As was demonstrated by the presentations of representatives from the three Balkan countries, this emergency assistance does not have to be politicized.

The floods in South East Europe have shown the crucial role of the media in information-sharing with affected populations. By quickly and accurately informing population, panic situations can be averted. The media can also advise on effective responses to a disaster and inform of measures taken by governments to address concerns of immediately affected populations. The OSCE can further assist in providing training to media officials to ensure responsible reporting of disasters and in the dissemination of information following these incidents. I was also struck by the fact that presentations almost exclusively focused on disaster management. Processes on identifying lessons learnt in view of Disaster Risk Reduction, in view of Disaster Risk mitigation and prevention have hardly started. This is certainly also a field where the OSCE could play a supporting role.

I will not linger on this topic as the incoming Serbian chairmanship will be best placed to continue working in this area, especially with the theme they have chosen for the 23rd EEF, Water governance. Ambassador Vuk Zugić will give us some initial indications of their plans in a minute. Be assured that Switzerland will remain committed to the topic beyond our current Chairmanship and will closely work with Serbia on this.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like now to turn to the follow-up of this Forum.

I see an immediate need to work on a wording about the linkages between climate change, disaster risks and security, that the OSCE could contribute to the drafting of the new Hyogo Framework of Action that it currently ongoing. As it was suggested, the Swiss Chairmanship will task the Secretariat to come up with a wording that could be presented and discussed within the Economic and Environmental Committee quite soon.

Another concrete follow-up emerging from the Forum is a Ministerial decision to be discussed in the coming weeks. The Swiss Chairmanship has indicated that it plans to bring forward elements on supplementing OSCE commitments related to DRR to be adopted at the Basel Ministerial Council. We have developed some proposals in our food-for-thought paper. Listening to discussions here in Prague, the Swiss Chairmanship has been encouraged as our own thinking appears to be in line with the views being expressed by the delegations. We will be reflecting on the recommendations from this meeting in the coming days and, in close collaboration with the Secretariat, we will be issuing a text in the next few weeks.

Allow me to mention some of the key elements the Swiss Chairmanship would see as part of this draft:

- focus on disaster prevention and preparedness,
- concentrate on the nexus between disasters, climate change and security
- adopt a comprehensive risk management
- foster cross-border cooperation, especially in light of its potential as a confidence-building measure
- act as platform for knowledge sharing
- foster local resilience through its OSCE field presences
- mainstream DRR into the OSCE comprehensive security approach
- engage in the global processes currently going on.

This is not an exhaustive list, but I believe these are some of the pillars of renewed commitments which could be adopted by the Ministers in Basel.

Let's join our efforts, so that by the end of the year, many of this Forum's conclusions and recommendations are successfully translated into political decisions!

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before concluding this Forum Meeting, I would like to thank all participants for their active involvement in the discussions and debates, all the speakers and panellists for the high quality and pertinent interventions. In addition, I would like to congratulate the moderators for their professionalism and the rapporteurs for making sure that all the voices are well reflected in the summaries.

I would like also to express my gratitude to Dr. Yigitgüden and his team for the excellent cooperation and in particular for their work in preparing this year's Forum, as well as to the Prague Office and technical staff of the meeting who work behind the scenes to ensure the smooth running of this event here each year. Another vital contribution has been the work done by interpreters. Thanks as well to the Economic and Environmental Officers from the OSCE field presences for their recommendations for speakers and input.

Last but not least, I would like to warmly thank our host, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, for providing us with all the facilities to organize the concluding part of the Forum in this beautiful city.

Finally, I would like to wish every success to the incoming Serbian Chairmanship, in organizing and conducting the next Economic and Environmental Forum cycle on water governance. You can count on our support.

I wish you all safe trip home. Thank you.

22ND OSCE ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM

“Responding to environmental challenges with a view to promoting co-operation and security in the OSCE area”

CONCLUDING MEETING

Prague, 10 – 12 September 2014

CLOSING REMARKS

by Ambassador Vuk Žugić

Permanent Representative of Serbia to the OSCE
incoming 2015 OSCE Chairmanship

Mr. Moderator,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentleman,

I am delighted to have this opportunity to address the concluding session of the 2nd Economic and Environmental Forum and to outline a way forward to the next year's Forum.

On various occasions and meetings, our heads of states and governments reconfirmed their will to strengthen this dimension and expressed their will to pursue and intensify co-operation, thus reaffirming conviction that co-operation in this area contributes to the reinforcement of peace and security in Europe and in the world as a whole. And as a result, we have witnessed some positive changes in the Economic and Environmental dimension during previous years.

The OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum remains the most important annual meeting within the dimension and it pleases me to witness such a level of involvement and interest from the participating states. As incoming Chairmanship of the OSCE, Serbia will strive towards strengthening the effectiveness of the Economic and Environmental Dimension of the OSCE. With this in mind, we believe that the theme proposed by the Swiss Chairmanship for this Forum is of utmost importance, especially in the light of recent catastrophic floods that occurred in the Western Balkans region and other environmental and man-made disasters happening around the world. Once again, it was shown that no country can meet these challenges alone but that we need transboundary co-operation. By tackling relevant and contemporary issues such as these, we are able to make a tangible contribution to the enhancement of security and prosperity of the OSCE as a regional organization, in line with Chapter VIII of the UN Charter.

This year's Forum discussions have certainly generated interesting thoughts and ideas and have deepened our knowledge on how to promptly and effectively respond to environmental challenges as well within our region. Water-related natural disasters are even less “natural” than others: floods are often aggravated by previous river management decisions and droughts can be a result of human-driven climate change. Here, more than ever we see that improving management and governance of natural resources is the best disaster risk reduction strategy we can pursue. It was clearly visible that the extension our cooperation regarding disaster prevention and the process of disaster impact alleviation within the OSCE is of vital importance. Recommendations for future activities in this area that were put forward in the

previous three days should be followed-up in a result-oriented manner in preparation for the Basel Ministerial meeting.

Given the amount of interest shown among the participating States during the discussions on this subject and in the spirit of continuity embedded in the consecutive Swiss and Serbian Chairmanships, we will further pursue deliberations regarding economic and environmental challenges, particularly in the area of water governance. Even before our Joint Work Plan was presented at the PC in July last year, it was stated that our two Chairmanships will dedicate special attention to the issue of water management. Also, a substantial part of the 1975 Helsinki Final Act Chapter on Co-operation in the Field of Economics, Science and Technology and of the Environment is, actually, dedicated to different aspects of water governance. Whether it refers to topics such as environmental protection, energy sustainability and transport, or provisions on agriculture and hydrology, or those on industrial, science and technology co-operation, the Helsinki Final Act gives a wide range of opportunities for participating States to develop mutual co-operation in the area of water governance. We believe that it serves as a postulate on which we are supposed to build our co-operation and is also the basis upon which we defined the title of the next Prague Forum – “Water governance in the OSCE area – increasing security and stability through co-operation”.

The motto that we envisaged for the next Prague Forum is– water is fundamental, water unites, and water connects. With it we want to show that the approach we propose to take in addressing these topics is a positive one, based on best practices and oriented towards further strengthening of co-operation. Water is a fundamental resource and key to our common future development and water governance is indeed a prerequisite for environmental sustainability and for economic and social prosperity and stability.

During next year, we will look for ways how better water governance can contribute to increasing security and stability in the OSCE. As we have seen in the course of this Forum, the floods in the Balkan region proved to be a good example on how transboundary co-operation can be of importance in addressing negative impacts of disasters. Our plan is to promote dialogue on good water governance within the OSCE area through sharing of best practices and lessons learned and raise awareness of the importance of water governance at all levels

– transboundary, national, and local.

In that regard, we intend to put forward for consideration several topics, like:

- Water governance as a prerequisite for environmental sustainability and for economic and social prosperity and stability;
- Promotion of dialogue in good water governance within the OSCE area through sharing of best practices and lessons learned;
- Raising awareness of the importance of water governance at all levels;
- Water governance within the context of disaster risk reduction, to name a few.

It is envisaged that the First preparatory meeting focuses on the sharing of best practices and lessons learned in the following areas relating to water governance: improving integrated and cross-sectorial approaches to water resource management in an efficient and sustainable way, fostering food and energy security, protecting ecosystems and increasing water productivity, reducing pollution and increasing collection, treatment and re-use of water. We could also consider the opportunities for providing mutual assistance and exchange of information, particularly in the area of sharing of technology and know-how.

Second preparatory meeting, which is planned to take place in Serbia, will be dedicated to other two main topics - Raising awareness of the importance of water governance and Water governance within the context of disaster risk reduction. The First one will give the participants an opportunity to get acquainted first hand, not only with the activities of both

OCEEA and the OSCE Mission in Serbia, but also with other executive structures related to awareness raising and training projects with regard to water management. It will pose an opportunity for other OSCE field presences to present and share their experiences together with delegations and to produce recommendations for better streamlining of activities of the OSCE structures in the future. Second segment of this meeting will represent the follow-up of this year's Prague Forum deliberations, placed into the context of the impacts and lessons learned from the recent devastating floods in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia.

Disaster risk reduction will continue to be in our focus as disaster management and water governance are linked in various different ways. It is not only floods, but also water scarcity, droughts, pollution and climate change that are among the top issues countries have to deal with. Furthermore, we would like to emphasize that disasters always have the potential to pose a serious challenge to security and stability, as the results of this Forum have clearly shown.

During the Forum, we noticed a strong call for strengthening the OSCE's input into global processes. We will embrace this task of increasing the visibility of our Organization and contribute our expertise and approach to these global deliberations. I would also like to remind you that, apart from the global processes on Disaster Risk Reduction, climate change and the post-development agenda, both the 7th World Water Forum (South Korea) and the 3rd World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (Japan) will take place in 2015, thus providing us with yet another opportunity to contribute with our experiences.

One of the tasks of the country chairing the OSCE is to promote the broader capacity of economic and environmental dimension in strengthening the synergy between OSCE's dimensions and its potential in contributing to the general OSCE's agenda. Even though there has certainly been some positive progress in this Dimension, we consider that the second dimension of the OSCE has remained underutilized, despite its essential role in the comprehensive approach to security. Therefore, the ongoing "Helsinki +40" process is a good opportunity to tackle this issue. The incoming Serbian Chairmanship will continue to support the strengthening of this dimension in order to provide the participating States with assistance and expertise needed for responding to the new economic and environmental challenges.

Let me thank the panelists and participants for their thoughtful contributions. We would also like to thank the Office of the coordinator of the OSCE economic and environmental activities for their support and the Czech Government for hosting such an important event.

Let me take this opportunity to congratulate the Swiss Chairmanship for organizing a successful Forum and thank them for excellent co-operation in the framework of our consecutive Chairmanships.

I thank you, Mr. Moderator



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
The Secretariat

22ND OSCE ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM

**“Responding to environmental challenges with a view to promoting
co-operation and security in the OSCE area”**

CONCLUDING MEETING

Prague, 10 – 12 September 2014

Venue: Czernin Palace, Loretánské nám. 5, 118 00 Prague

DRAFT ANNOTATED AGENDA

Wednesday, 10 September 2014

09:30 – 11:30 **Opening Plenary Session** (*open to the press*)

Moderator: Dr. Halil Yurdakul Yigitgüden, Co-ordinator of the OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Rapporteur: Ms. Riccarda Caprez, Scientific Officer, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Switzerland

Welcoming remarks:

- **H.E. Lubomír Zaorálek**, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Czech Republic
- **H.E. Didier Burkhalter**, OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, President of the Swiss Confederation, Head of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs
- **H.E. Lamberto Zannier**, Secretary General, OSCE

Selected topics:

- Actual and future trends in disaster risk management
- Influence of climate change on extreme weather & climate hazards, and synergies between disaster risk management and climate change adaptation

Keynote speakers:

- **H.E. Margareta Wahlström**, United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR)
- **Prof. Thomas Stocker**, University of Bern, Co-Chair of Working Group I, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

Statements by Delegations / Discussion

11:30 – 12:00 Coffee/Tea break

12:00 – 13:00 **Review of the implementation of the OSCE commitments in the field of disaster risk reduction**

Selected topics:

- Presentation of the UNDP review report
- Forward looking discussion on the Review Report's main findings and recommendations

Moderator: Ambassador Thomas Greminger, Chairperson of the Permanent Council, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the OSCE, 2014 OSCE Swiss Chairmanship

Rapporteur: Ms. Nino Malashkhia, Associate Environmental Affairs Officer, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

10' video-clip on First and Second Preparatory Meetings in Vienna and Montreux

Main speaker: Ms. Elena Panova, Senior Programme Coordinator, Regional Centre for Europe and the CIS, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

There are a number of OSCE commitments already in place pertaining to different aspects of disaster risk reduction. This year, the review of the implementation of the OSCE commitments has been carried out and will be presented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The presentation of the report will be followed up by a forward-looking discussion on the review report's main findings and recommendations.

Questions that could be addressed:

- To what extent have the OSCE commitments in the area of disaster risk reduction been implemented?
- How could the existing commitments be complemented by additional ones?
- What are the identified gaps in implementing the commitments in disaster risk reduction?
- How can the OSCE further support its participating States in implementing their commitments?

13:00 – 14:30 Lunch break

14:30 – 16:00

Session I: Flooding disaster in South Eastern Europe - Lessons learned and the role of the OSCE

Selected topics:

- Early analysis of the flooding disaster in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Croatia in May 2014 triggered by cyclone Tamara and of associated heavy rainfalls. Lessons learned for prevention, preparedness and response
- Assessment of the regional cross-border response and opportunities for confidence-building measures
- Cascading effects and security challenges associated with flooding
- Role of OSCE Field Operations in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina

Moderator: Mr. Goran Svilanović, Secretary General, Regional Cooperation Council

Rapporteur: Ms. Aisling Schorderet, Attaché, Permanent Mission of Ireland to the OSCE

Speakers:

- **Mr. Predrag Maric**, Assistant Minister, Head of the Department for Emergency Management, Ministry of Interior, Serbia
- **Mr. Jan Lueneburg**, Head of Democratization Department, OSCE Mission to Serbia
- **Mr. Samir Rizvo**, Assistant Minister for International Cooperation, Ministry of Security, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- **Mr. Ahdin Orahovac**, Deputy Director of Mine Action Centre, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- **Dr. Robert Mikac**, Commander of Civil Protection, National Protection and Rescue Directorate, Croatia

This session will reflect on the devastating floods that swept through Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Croatia between 14 and 18 May 2014 and on cross-border co-operation in disaster risk management. The floods were followed by rapid humanitarian aid to meet the immediate needs of the most vulnerable populations. Many states offered assistance and many relief workers were deployed to the affected countries during the emergency operations. The OSCE field operations in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina were also involved in the relief operations. These floods were the worst in the region since records began 120 years ago.

Questions that could be addressed:

- What are the lessons learned so far regarding prevention, preparedness and response after the heavy floods in the Balkans, including from the cross-border cooperation perspective?
- What were the major environmental, technological, industrial and security consequences of the floods?
- What support was provided by the OSCE field operations in the region to the governments concerned?
- How could the OSCE support further flood prevention, preparedness and response (including through the OSCE Self-Assessment Tool)

Discussion

16:00 – 16:30

Coffee/Tea break

16:30 – 18:00 **Session II – Panel Debate – Disaster Risk Reduction on the global agenda: implications for the OSCE area**

Selected topics:

- Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction and post-2015 Framework for disaster risk reduction
- Post-2015 Development Agenda Sustainable Development Goals process and the role of disaster risk reduction
- Links between climate change, disaster risk reduction and security
- The role and contribution of the OSCE

Moderator: Dr. Josef Hess, Vice-Director of Swiss Federal Office for the Environment, Head of Forest and Hazard Prevention Divisions, Switzerland

Rapporteur: Mr. Paul Hickey, Environmental Officer, OSCE Office in Tajikistan

Speakers:

- **H.E. Margareta Wahlström**, United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR)
- **H.E. Christian Friis Bach**, Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)
- **Mr. Raphael Dang**, Climate Change and Environment Division Negotiator and post-2015 Agenda Task Force Coordinator, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, France
- **Mr. Tom Mitchell**, Head of Programme, Climate and Environment, Overseas Development Institute (ODI)
- **Dr. Michael Staudinger**, Director General, Central Institute for Meteorology and Geodynamics, Austria

This panel debate will explore the role of and implications of the ongoing global processes on disaster risk reduction, sustainable development goals and climate change for the OSCE. It is commonly agreed that there is a strong connection between disaster risk reduction, sustainable development and climate change adaptation and that they are all linked to security and stability at all levels and require co-operation among States. The OSCE as a regional security organization, under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, and its participating States have an important role to play in bringing a security dimension to these global discussions and in sharing experiences and best practices from the OSCE area.

Questions that could be addressed:

- What voluntary commitments could the OSCE and its participating States make in order to support the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction?
- What could be the specific contribution of the OSCE and its participating States in shaping the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction, to be adopted at the Third World Conference on DRR in Sendai, Japan (March 2015)?
- How could the OSCE and its participating States contribute to the ongoing post-2015 Development Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals process?
- How could the OSCE and its participating States contribute to the global discussions on climate change?

Discussion

18:30 **Reception hosted by the Swiss 2014 OSCE Chairmanship**

Thursday, 11 September 2014

09:30 – 11:00 Session III – Slow-onset natural disasters as triggers of tensions and opportunities for co-operation

Selected topics:

- The impact of slow-onset natural disasters (drought, climate change, environmental degradation and desertification) on security
- How to best prepare for and deal with multiple events and compound hazards
- Opportunities for co-operation among the OSCE participating States

Moderator: Ms. Desiree Schweitzer, Deputy Co-ordinator/Head, Environmental Activities, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Rapporteur: Mr. Yaroslav Yurtsaba, National Project Manager, OSCE Project Coordinator in Ukraine

Speakers:

- **H.E. Monique Barbut**, Executive Secretary, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)
- **H.E. Aykhon Sharipova**, Deputy Chairperson, Environment Protection Committee, Tajikistan
- **Prof. Boris Porfiryev**, Deputy Director and Head of the Laboratory for Analysis and Forecasting of Natural and Technological Risks for Economic Development, Institute of Economic Forecasting, Russian Academy of Science, the Russian Federation
- **Mr. Iskandar Abdullaev**, Executive Director, The Regional Environmental Center for Central Asia (CAREC)

This session will focus on slow-onset disasters and how those may trigger tensions, but – on the other hand – also offer opportunities for co-operation. Slow-onset disasters result from hazards which can take months or years to generate a disaster. Losses and damages that result from slow-onset processes may affect – over a longer period of time – a large portion of the population. Drought, climate change and environmental degradation (soil, water, ecosystems, including forests) are among the major slow-onset events which frequently lead to inadequate and inequitable access to natural resources which in turn have implications on security at local, national and transboundary levels. On the other hand, common problems linked to the use of shared natural resources can also foster co-operation between neighbouring communities and countries, and can improve resource management and disaster risk management across borders, thus preventing conflict through the promotion of mutual understanding and peace. National and regional efforts to improve natural resource management and environmental governance as well as informed decision making are crucial to successfully addressing such issues.

Questions that could be addressed

- What are the security implications of slow-onset natural events leading to disasters in the OSCE area?
- How can disasters resulting from slow-onset events be prevented?
- What could be the role of the OSCE in prevention, preparing for and responding to the slow-onset disasters, including as part of the confidence-building measures?
- How can the co-operation among the OSCE participating States be further enhanced in this field?

Discussion

11:00 – 11:30 Coffee/Tea break

11:30 – 13:00 **Session IV – A co-operative response to environmental challenges: OSCE experience and lessons learnt for the future**

Selected topics:

- OSCE experiences in enhancing national capacities in fire management and wildfire disaster risk reduction
- Raising public awareness on environmental challenges through Aarhus Centres
- Role of the OSCE in strengthening exchanges between National Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction

Moderator: Ambassador Andreas Papadakis, Permanent Representative of Greece to the OSCE

Rapporteur: Mr. Leonid Kalashnyk, Environmental Programme Officer, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Speakers:

- **Major-General Nikolay Grigoryan**, National Coordinator of the HFA and Deputy Director of the Rescue Service, Ministry of Emergency Situations, Armenia
- **Colonel Leonid Dedul**, Head of the Department of the State System of Prevention and Liquidation of Emergencies and Civil Protection, Ministry for Emergency Situations, Belarus
- **Prof. Johann G. Goldammer**, Head of the Fire Ecology and Biomass Burning Research Group and the Global Fire Monitoring Center (GFMC)
- **Ms. Olivera Zurovac-Kuzman**, Environmental Adviser, OSCE Mission to Serbia

This session will focus on the experiences of the OSCE and its participating States in implementing projects and activities in the field of disaster risk management and in responding to environmental challenges. It will also provide an overview of the OSCE's co-operation with other organizations in addressing these challenges. The OSCE's role in enhancing wildfire management capacities in the South Caucasus region and in promoting community-based disaster risk reduction through the Aarhus Centres Network are among the activities that will be discussed in this session. These discussions will also demonstrate the importance of the OSCE's partnership with other international actors, particularly within the

framework of the Environment and Security (ENVSEC) Initiative. This session will also provide an opportunity to hear from participating States on their experiences with the National Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction and their co-operation with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR).

Questions that could be addressed:

- What are the major achievements and lessons learnt in the field of fire management capacity building activities and what are the future prospects?
- How can the Aarhus Centres be further empowered to strengthen community-based disaster risk reduction?
- What are the examples of co-operation among national DRR platforms and how could the OSCE support and facilitate such co-operation and exchange of experiences?
- Could the OSCE play a role in promoting the establishment of stronger national laws that protect at-risk communities from the threats posed by disasters?

Discussion

13:00 – 14:30 Lunch break

14:30 – 16:00 **Session V – Facilitating disaster preparedness and response through innovation, technology and information, and Public-Private-Partnerships in Disaster Risk Reduction**

Selected topics:

- Crisis-mapping software and crowd-sourcing technologies for disaster risk management
- ICT solutions for early-warning and response. The role of space based monitoring and warning systems
- Technology and innovation: data and information management
- Examples of public-private partnerships for disaster risk reduction

Moderator: Ambassador Ol’ga Algayerová, Permanent Representative of Slovakia to the OSCE, Chairperson of the Economic and Environmental Committee

Rapporteur: Mr. Emre Gençtuğ, Second Secretary, Permanent Mission of Turkey to the OSCE

Speakers:

- **Ambassador Thani Thongphakdi**, Permanent Representative of Thailand to the UN Office in Geneva and Co-Chair of the Bureau of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee for the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, Thailand
- **Mr. Juan Carlos Villagrán de León**, Programme Officer, Head of UN-SPIDER, Bonn Office
- **Mr. Ladislav Szakallos**, Senior Advisor, Department for Civil Protection and Crisis Planning, Ministry of Interior, Slovakia

- **Mr. Douglas Bausch**, Senior Physical Scientist, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Region VIII, Denver Federal Center, the United States of America

Technology can play a crucial role in the prevention of and preparedness for natural hazard triggered disasters. This session will address the technologies, in particular software solutions and public private partnerships which are becoming a central pillar of disaster risk reduction. Crowd-sourced mapping and SMS broadcasting helped save lives in the devastating earthquake which struck Haiti in 2010. ICT technology systems can compile massive amounts of crowd sourced data which can inform decision makers and disaster response teams resulting in a more effective search and rescue process. The information can also be used after the fact to aid preparedness and prevention efforts against future events. This session will provide examples of such technologies available as well as the public private partnerships established for this purpose.

Questions that could be addressed:

- How can participating States make better use of available ICT technologies for DRR?
- How can national DRR platforms take advantage of crowd sourcing in disaster risk management?
- Can the OSCE have a role in facilitating public-private partnerships in DRR?
- What is the responsibility of the private sector in reducing disaster risks?

Discussion

16:00 – 16:30 Coffee/Tea break

16:30 - 18:00 **Session VI – *Panel Debate* – How to achieve resilience in the OSCE area?**

Selected topics:

- Goals of resilience: who and what should become “resilient”: engineering, psychological, economic, ecological and community resiliencies
- Contribution of civil society
- Investment in resilience and disaster risk reduction – incentives and opportunities for risk-sensitive investment

Moderator: Dr. Timothy Prior, Head, Risk and Resilience Research Team, Center for Security Studies, Swiss Federal Institute of Technology

Rapporteur: Ms. Nana Baramidze, Economic and Environmental Officer, OSCE Centre in Ashgabat

Speakers:

- **Mr. Mario Aymerich**, Director, Environment and Regional Development Department, European Investment Bank
- **Ms. Rachel Scott**, Senior Humanitarian Advisor, Resilience Group, OECD
- **Mr. Daniel Kull**, Senior Disaster Risk Management Specialist, The World Bank

- **Ms. Caterine Ebah-Moussa**, Policy Officer, Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection, Policy and Implementation Frameworks, European Commission

UNISDR defines resilience as “the ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate to and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions”. Resilience is a result of factors that deeply rely on culture and society. Therefore, there can only be tailor-made strategies that individuals, communities and states have to develop to influence the factors for resilience. Resilience cannot be seen as a task for a community or a state only: it implies the interaction of all relevant stakeholders, at local, regional, national and international level. Climate change adds another risk that needs to be considered when working on the resilience factors and disaster risk reduction. This panel debate will contribute to a common understanding of resilience, highlight the importance of resilience and better define the role of different stakeholders as well as the role of the OSCE.

Questions that could be addressed:

- What is the role of different stakeholders (governments, local authorities, civil society, private sector) in enhancing resilience?
- How can climate change be factored into resilience enhancing efforts?
- What efforts can be undertaken by the OSCE in order to make participating States more resilient?
- Which kind of incentives could be put in place to increase investment in resilience and disaster risk reduction?

Discussion

18:30 Reception hosted by the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Friday, 12 September 2014

09:00 – 10:30 **Session VII – *Panel Debate* – The Role of the OSCE in responding to environmental challenges**

Selected topics:

- The role of the OSCE in disaster risk prevention and preparedness, including awareness raising on disaster risk reduction
- The OSCE as a platform for knowledge-sharing and implementation
- Mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction within the OSCE agenda
- Cross-border environmental emergency preparedness in the OSCE area

Moderator: Ambassador Manuel Bessler, Delegate for Humanitarian Aid and Head of the Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit, Switzerland

Rapporteur: Ms. Jenniver Sehring, Environmental Affairs Adviser, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Speakers:

- **H.E. Dorin Dusciac**, Deputy Minister of Environment, Republic of Moldova
- **H.E. Diana Bejko**, Deputy Minister of Environment, Albania
- **H.E. Teimuraz Murgulia**, First Deputy Minister of Environment and Natural Resources Protection, Georgia
- **H.E. Nurbek Sydygaliev**, Deputy Minister of Emergency Situations, Kyrgyzstan
- **Ms. Desiree Schweitzer**, Deputy Co-ordinator/Head, Environmental Activities, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities
- **Prof. Johann Goldammer**, Head of the Fire Ecology and Biomass Burning Research Group and the Global Fire Monitoring Center (GFMC)

This panel discussion will focus on how the role of the OSCE could be strengthened in responding to environmental challenges, taking also into consideration the relevant outcomes of the first and second Economic and Environmental Forum Preparatory Meetings

Questions that could be addressed:

- How can the OSCE's role be further strengthened in addressing environment and security challenges, including those related to DRR and climate change, and in promoting co-operation among stakeholders within and across boundaries?
- How can the OSCE's partnership with other major actors active in the environmental and DRR field be further strengthened including within the framework of the Environment and Security (ENVSEC) Initiative?
- How can disaster risk reduction and its implications for security be mainstreamed into the work of the OSCE?
- How can the security aspects of environmental and natural disaster challenges be demonstrated and promoted within the framework of the ongoing global processes related to DRR, sustainable development and climate change?

Discussion

10:30 – 11:00 Coffee/Tea break

11:00 – 12:30 **Concluding Plenary Session – Follow-up to the 22nd OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum**

Moderator: Dr. Halil Yurdakul Yigitgüden, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Rapporteur: Mr. Uros Milanovic, Attaché, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Serbia to the OSCE

Speakers:

- **Ambassador Thomas Greninger**, Chairperson of the Permanent Council, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the OSCE, 2014 OSCE Swiss Chairmanship
- **Ambassador Vuk Žugić**, Permanent Representative of Serbia to the OSCE, incoming 2015 OSCE Serbian Chairmanship

Representatives of the 2014 OSCE Swiss Chairmanship and the incoming 2015 OSCE Serbian Chairmanship will make their closing statements. They will wrap-up the discussions of the 22nd Environmental and Economic Forum and provide a short preview of the next Economic and Environmental Forum.

- General discussion
- Closing statements