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Conference Services

**Fifteenth OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum - Part 2:
“Key challenges to ensure environmental security and sustainable development in the
OSCE area: Land degradation, soil contamination and water management”
Prague, 21 - 23 May 2007**

**Review Session
Review of the implementation of OSCE commitments**

Please find attached the presentation by Mr. Kaj Barlund, Director, Environment, Housing and Land Management Division, UNECE.




Fifteenth OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum
21–23 May 2007
Prague, Czech Republic

Review of the implementation of OSCE environmental commitments

Kaj Barlund
Director
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Review structure

- OSCE commitments
- Issues reviewed
 - Major achievements
 - Remaining weaknesses
 - The way forward
- Proposals for UNECE/OSCE projects

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Major OSCE environmental commitments

- Helsinki Final Act (1975) ⇒ High-level Meeting (1979) on Environment (Convention on Transboundary Air Pollution)
- Sofia (1989) Meeting on Protection of Environment ⇒ Conventions on Transboundary Waters and on Industrial Accidents
- Maastricht (2003) Strategy Document for Economic and Environmental Dimension ⇒ ENVISEC Initiative

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Decision by the OSCE Permanent Council (2006)

Focus the review of the implementation of OSCE environmental commitments on:

- national legislation
- international conventions
- international cooperation experiences


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Issues covered in the UNECE review (with a focus on EECCA and SEE)

- Strengthening environmental governance
 - environmental performance
 - public participation
 - compliance with multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs)
- Improving water management and transboundary waters
- Environmental information & education

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Environmental governance:
A. Environmental performance

Evaluation tool – UNECE environmental performance reviews

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Environmental governance: A. Environmental performance



Major achievements

- Framework environmental laws adopted and complemented by specific laws and regulations
- National environmental strategies, NEAPs and NSSDs adopted
- EIA laws and regulations adopted and SEA started to be introduced to promote sectoral integration
- Progress made in establishing government bodies for environmental protection
- National CSD established
- In absolute terms environmental expenditures are increasing
- Environmental funds are based on revenues from pollution charges and taxes on the use of natural resources
- Use of EMS is becoming popular

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Environmental governance: A. Environmental performance



Remaining weaknesses

- Inconsistencies between new and older laws
- Subsidiary legislation is often missing or incomplete
- Implementation and enforcement are weak
- Lack of clear prioritization, detailed timetables and specific financial requirements in NEAPs
- Little coordination between NEAPs and other programmes and sectoral strategies
- In some cases environment ministries were downgraded or even dissolved at all
- Bodies for cross-sectoral cooperation are often weak or completely non-operational
- Financing environmental protection and incentive effect of economic instruments remain weak

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Environmental governance: A. Environmental performance




The way forward

- Strengthen political support to resolving persistent environmental problems
- Strengthen the level, mandate and capacities of environmental authorities
- Increase the effectiveness of environmental financing and use of economic instruments
- Build capacity for better identification of projects and prioritization of environmental expenditures
- Institutionalize the integration of environmental policy into sectoral policies
- Ensure involvement of private sector in policy integration
- Strengthen UNECE/OSCE cooperation on EPRs

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Environmental governance: B. Public participation



Evaluation tool – implementation of Aarhus Convention and its PRTR Protocol

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Environmental governance: B. Public participation



Major achievements

- Legislative provisions introduced for providing access to environmental information
- Legislative measures providing for public participation introduced EIA and permitting procedures
- Some countries started developing legislation on public participation in strategic decisions
- Constitutional right to seek protection of its rights and freedoms in a court of law in many countries
- Broadening legal standing for NGOs
- Aarhus centres established in several countries with OCSE support

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Environmental governance: B. Public participation



Remaining weaknesses

- Important obstacles remain to implementing measures for handling information requests
- Absence of a uniform regulation on public participation in decisions that might have environmental impact
- Lack of detailed requirements & procedures for public participation and public hearings
- Weak access to justice on environmental matters (e.g. restrictions for legal standing, high cost of going to court)

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Environmental governance: B. Public participation



The way forward

- Introduce detail procedures for PP in decision-making
- Develop PRTR systems
- Build capacities of enterprises to collect and report environmental data
- Explore opportunities to imbed Aarhus principles into other MEAs
- Continue to organize joint OSCE/UNECE subregional and national events with priority to activities related to access to justice

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Environmental governance: C. Compliance with MEAs



Evaluation tool – implementation of 5 UNECE Environmental Conventions and their Protocols

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Environmental governance: C. Compliance with MEAs




Major achievements

- Substantive progress in ratification of UNECE conventions: LRTAP - 51, EIA - 41, Aarhus - 41, Industrial Accidents – 35, Water - 35
- Increasing application of conventions through introduction of legislative frameworks, designation of competent authorities & engaging in bi- or multilateral cooperation
- Formal mechanisms established by MEA governing bodies for reporting & review of compliance
- Overall targets for most pollutants covered by LRTAP protocols are being met: emissions declined & recovery from acidification is observed

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Environmental governance: C. Compliance with MEAs



Remaining weaknesses

- Lack of political commitment to accede to MEAs, especially to protocols which have more specific obligations
- Insufficient technical, administrative and financial capacity to comply with obligations
- Never-ending reform of institutions hampering the continuity and sustainability of implementation
- Weak coordination among relevant national authorities
- Problems with identification and notification of hazardous activities
- Inadequate measures to prevent accidents and prepare for emergencies
- Gaps and contradictions between water laws and regulations
- Difficulties in setting up of river basin management structures
- Weak access to justice pillar of the Aarhus Convention
- Not all parties report effectively and on time

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Environmental governance: C. Compliance with MEAs




The way forward

- Better cooperation and coordination between various national authorities and local authorities as well as with industry and the public
- Further capacity-building to create or strengthen institutional frameworks and train personnel
- Improved reporting
- More efficient use of mechanisms developed under MEAs to improve national implementation
- Strengthened UNECE/OSCE cooperation to promote MEAs' implementation building on ongoing cooperation under the Aarhus and Water Conventions

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Water



Evaluation tool – implementation of Transboundary Water Convention and Protocol on Water & Health Conventions and their Protocols

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Water




Major achievements

- Water abstraction in the region has decreased by more than 20% during the last 15 years
- Substantive capital investments made in wastewater treatment
- Integrated water resources management (IWRM) has been progressively introduced
- Many initiatives developed to support IWRM in SEE and EECCA
- Several bilateral or multilateral agreements concluded on the basis of Water Convention' principles and provisions
- Protocol on Water and Health to the Water Convention into force
- Guidelines for Sustainable Flood Prevention of Water Convention are being widely implemented

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Water



Remaining weaknesses

- Overuse of groundwater remains a region-wide problem
- Some water bodies show signs of increasing pollution caused mainly by insufficiently treated wastewaters
- Eutrophication affects all types of water
- More than 100 million people in Europe still do not have access to safe drinking water or adequate sanitation
- Quality of water supply and sanitation services in EECCA and SEE has deteriorated over the past 15 years
- Lack of clear (and when possible, quantified) water-quality targets and deadlines for implementation
- During the last five years Europe suffered over 100 major damaging floods

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Water



The way forward

- Establish national and local targets for quality of drinking water & of discharges
- Improve water supply & sanitation
- Link water resources management with protection of natural ecosystems
- Specify responsibilities of national authorities & strengthen cross-sectoral integration
- Develop and implement guidance on water & climate adaptation
- Complete or revise existing framework for transboundary water cooperation to cover environmental limits & water quality
- Draw up/enhance agreements on several river basins
- Build capacity of managers of transboundary waters
- Intensify UNECE/OSCE cooperation on transboundary waters

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Environmental information



Evaluation tool – preparation of Pan-European Assessment Reports on Environment

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Environmental information




Major achievements

- Increased use of environmental indicators in SoE reporting & statistics
- Improved production of data on internationally agreed lists of indicators
- Many countries transformed their national SoE reports into indicator-based assessments
- Pan-European assessment reports prepared for "Environment for Europe" Ministerial Conferences
- Environmental monitoring and reporting by enterprises is improving

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Environmental information



Remaining weaknesses

- Gaps & inconsistencies in raw data collection in several areas of importance for environmental policymaking
- A number of countries do not submit data, or their submissions are incomplete or do not cover time intervals agreed by relevant MEAs
- Some national systems for monitoring and data collection are inefficient & wasteful
- Several countries still follow obsolete monitoring approaches, standards & methodologies, which are not harmonized with evolving international practices

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Environmental information

The way forward

- Invest in environmental monitoring especially in networks, processing capacities & equipment
- Revise and upgrade national monitoring programmes to make monitoring a practical tool for target setting, abatement strategies & measuring progress
- Implement Guidelines for the Application of Environmental Indicators and Indicator-based Assessments in EECCA and SEE
- Strengthen the legislative basis, financing and inter-ministerial coordination for better SoE reporting
- Cooperate with business and industry to implement Guidelines for Strengthening Environmental Monitoring and Reporting by Enterprises

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Education for SD

Evaluation tool – implementation of UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable

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Education for SD

Major achievements

- Most countries took steps to introduce ESD into legislation & policy documents
- Some countries started drafting national implementation plans & introducing ESD into curriculum & learning programmes
- Most countries translated ESD strategy into national languages, established consultative mechanisms for strategy's implementation
- Themes relating to sustainable development began to be incorporated into formal education systems, non-formal & informal education
- A number of subregional intergovernmental processes launched on ESD

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Education for SD

Remaining weaknesses

- Lack of understanding of ESD concept in administrations
- Social and economic components of ESD are rarely addressed
- Inadequate involvement of civil society
- Inertia in education systems
- Lack of economic incentives to support ESD
- Current quality assessment & accreditation schemes do not meet ESD-related criteria
- Development of competence in ESD is not a part of initial training & re-training of educators
- Post-graduate programmes on ESD are scarce

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Education for SD

The way forward

- Promote cross-sectoral, interdepartmental & multi-stakeholder cooperation
- Mobilize adequate legislative, policy, institutional & material provisions
- Build competences in ESD at all levels of formal, informal & non-formal education
- Intensify work on effective learning methods, ways of incorporating SD aspects into different subjects, incentives for ESD & on evaluation tools
- Undertake capacity-building projects & development of new instruments & materials
- Launch a joint OSCE/UNECE undertaking to promote ESD

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Proposals for OSCE/UNECE cooperation

- Improving water and health in SEE & EECCA
- Building capacity for environmental monitoring and reporting by enterprises and public authorities in Central Asia
- Promoting environmental indicator-based assessments in EECCA
- Implementing education for sustainable development in SEE

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Thank you



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