



ԵԱՀԿ-ՈՒՄ ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆԻ ՀԱՆՐԱՊԵՏՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՄՇՏԱԿԱՆ ՆԵՐԿԱՅԱՑՈՒՑՉՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ
PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA TO THE OSCE

28th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum

"Promoting security, stability and economic growth in the OSCE area by preventing and combating corruption through innovation, increased transparency and digitalization",

Prague, 10-11 September 2020.

Opening statement
Armenia

Mr Moderator,

Let me start by thanking the Albanian Chairmanship, the office of Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities and the Czech authorities for organizing the Economic and Environmental Forum in these exceptional and challenging circumstances caused by COVID-19 pandemic. We also thank the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Czech Republic Mr. Tomáš Petříček and Mr. Gent Cakaj, Acting Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of Albania for their thought-provoking opening remarks. Our thanks go also to the keynote speakers for their contribution to our discussions.

It goes without saying that the OSCE's economic and environmental dimension have a specific role in complementing security and human rights issues as an inalienable pillar of comprehensive and indivisible security. However, the confidence building potential of this dimension still remains untapped. The commitments on solidarity, transparency, equal and non-discriminatory partnership, mutual accountability and full respect for the interests of all participating States should be implemented in good faith and without preconditions. We firmly believe that such an approach will foster dialogue and ease tensions, thus preparing a solid ground for the resolution of more complicated issues in the OSCE area.

Mr Moderator,

The theme of this year's Economic and Environmental Forum is more than timely and pertinent. We would like to thank the Albanian Chairmanship for prioritizing the topic of combating corruption since we are convinced that corruption erodes our values and undermines the very basics of our societies thus threatening the OSCE concept of comprehensive and indivisible security. It creates a fertile ground for an authoritarian regime to suppress the aspirations of the people and fundamental human rights, including the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights. Fighting against corruption is fundamental for a fair, transparent and democratic governance of our economies. It is an absolute priority for the Armenian Government, and we welcome the determination and efforts of the Albanian Chairmanship aimed at delivering on this extremely important OSCE commitment.

Armenia is effectively cooperating with the OSCE in this area, and throughout the year, we were actively engaged in the discussions related to combating corruption, shared our national experience and presented the measures taken by the Government of Armenia in this regard.

Armenia pays great importance to innovation and digitalization as tools to combat corruption, raise accountability and transparency of public officials and state bodies. We have introduced the system of e-governance, which covers a broad range of public services and significantly reduces the corruption related risks. Another example, the Armenian government in its determination to effectively combat corruption, further expanded the scope of public officials and their affiliated persons who should declare their assets on a yearly basis, and these declarations are available online and open for public scrutiny. At the same time all these measures and steps can only be effective when governments' accountability is ensured, which means first and foremost, freedom of media is ensured, and investigative journalism is encouraged. We are convinced that effectiveness of combating corruption is directly interlinked with the level of democracy and human rights protection, when civil society organisations can operate freely and without undue hindrance.

Mr. Moderator,

During the third session of our meeting Ms. Lilia Shushanyan, the Deputy Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure of Armenia, will present Armenia's specific experience in ensuring the sustainable and corruption-free use of natural resources through transparency and accountability. To this end the cooperation of Armenia with its international partners and in particular its membership to the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative was extremely instrumental.

On a final note, we look forward to constructive and fruitful discussions and stand ready to contribute to the Forum by sharing our experience.

Thank you.