



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement to Annual Security Review Conference Working Session IV: OSCE Partners for Cooperation: *OSCE's Collaboration and Capacity-Building Efforts*

As delivered by Political Counselor Christopher Robinson
Vienna, June 27, 2012

I would like to offer my sincere gratitude to our keynote speakers, General Burhani, Ambassador Yussef, Mr. Cohen, and Dr. Mohamedou, for their interesting and thought-provoking remarks on how we can collectively strengthen and deepen our engagement with the OSCE Partners for Cooperation. Your presence here demonstrates that OSCE principles and expertise are recognized and valued outside of the OSCE region. We fully support the further development of the relationship between the OSCE and its Partners for Cooperation and we believe that discussions such as this one today can make a positive contribution to addressing the challenges we all face.

The OSCE faces a period of great opportunities and challenges. In fact, we are at a pivotal point for the future of OSCE's engagement with Partners. The OSCE participating States have an abiding interest in creating and maintaining lasting stability and security within the OSCE region and beyond. To this end, we need to preserve and further develop the strong partnerships which have been built between the OSCE and its partners in the Mediterranean and Asian regions. Our interest in forging stronger ties with partner nations is supported by the Helsinki Final Act, which observed that, "the process of improving security should not be confined to Europe but should extend to other parts of the world." In today's increasingly interconnected world, it must be emphasized that the security and stability of the OSCE area is inextricably linked to that of adjacent areas. Therefore, we call for increased engagement with our Partners for Cooperation in both the Mediterranean and Asia as called for in the Ministerial decisions that were adopted last year in Vilnius and we strongly encourage other countries to follow the examples set by Tunisia, Afghanistan, and Mongolia.

Let me turn now to address our OSCE Mediterranean Partners. Dramatic transformations have been occurring across North Africa and the Middle East. These transformations present opportunities for the states in this region to reach out to organizations like the OSCE and draw upon the experience and expertise that the OSCE has to offer. We applaud the Tunisian government for demonstrating their willingness to work regarding democratic transitions across the political spectrum and within civil society to build a representative government based on transparency and accountability. In March of this year, Tunisia requested proposals for cooperation from ODIHR relating to the review of electoral laws, dissemination of OSCE handbooks on electoral observation, and the organization of workshops and training focused on election observation, political and electoral campaigns, human rights, and the role of women in political life. We encourage our Mediterranean Partners to follow Tunisia's lead and look to the expertise within the OSCE for developing fair electoral systems and a vibrant civil society. We call on the OSCE's executive structures to develop projects that meet Tunisia's needs.

Once developed, OSCE participating and Partner States will need to collaborate closely to see the efforts through. The United States is prepared to assist.

The United States would like to reaffirm the important role that the OSCE has played on Afghanistan. Since 2007, the OSCE has supported a number of initiatives focused on border security and transnational threats with Afghanistan and its neighbors. These OSCE projects have focused on increasing technical capacities and people-to-people linkages between neighboring Central Asian States. The United States has been a key supporter of the OSCE's work to lend its expertise to Afghanistan and the region to build a more stable and democratic environment as we begin to draw down the level of international forces resident in Afghanistan. We fully support more programmatic activity within Central Asia for the benefit of Afghanistan and the broader region and welcome Secretary General Zannier's vision of more value-added regional endeavors. We urge the speedy development and implementation of activities that build capacity and meet the needs of our Central Asian and Afghan friends. Ideas such as the expanded mentoring of border security officials along key trade corridors deserve our full attention.

We encourage the OSCE to align its efforts on Afghanistan with the priorities identified by the region at the "Heart of Asia" Ministerial in Kabul in June 14, 2012. The OSCE has unique experience and expertise in the implementation of confidence building measures, that can be of great benefit to Afghanistan and its region as they move towards closer cooperation. OSCE engagement with Afghanistan demonstrates the genuine impact which can be made when OSCE participating States work together with Partners for Cooperation on projects of keen interest to all involved. The OSCE has much to offer in assisting Central Asian participating States, including improved border management, countering corruption, promoting democratic values, human rights, and reducing illicit trafficking to promote legitimate trade and economic development. We support increased and improved coordination between the OSCE and participating States in order to further progress project implementation. We call on all participating and Partner States to redouble their efforts to support the OSCE assistance requests from our Afghan partners.

We strongly endorse Mongolia's bid to become a full OSCE participating State. Mongolia's dedication to adopting all of the commitments in the Helsinki Final Act, the Charter of Paris, and other relevant OSCE governing documents, demonstrates their belief in the enduring significance of the OSCE's commitments and principles and their determination to adhere to these values. Since formal relations between Mongolia and the OSCE were initiated in 2004, Mongolia has been an active, contributing OSCE Partner. Adding Ulaan Baatar to the OSCE's Vancouver-to-Vladivostok membership will greatly enhance security and stability within the OSCE region and the rest of the world. Mongolia's request to fully participate within the OSCE should be considered seriously and urgently by all OSCE participating States.

While the OSCE partnerships with states like Tunisia, Afghanistan, and Mongolia provide a multitude of opportunities to address issues of mutual interest and increased international collaboration, the OSCE should strive to go beyond individual relationships with Partner States and extend cooperation to other organizations active in North Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. Cooperation and collaboration with organizations like the League of Arab States, an organization which has recently provided much needed support for democratic change in the Mediterranean region, should be enhanced. In addition, the OSCE must continue to collaborate closely with the EU, NATO, and the UN in order to promote security and stability within the OSCE region and beyond. We thank the Lithuanian Chairmanship for its

leadership in the adoption of the decisions in Vilnius to enhance our engagement with the Partners for Cooperation and Afghanistan. We also would like to thank the Irish Chairmanship for their important work this year. We firmly believe that the OSCE has unique experience and expertise which will be beneficial to our partners and allow us to improve security and long-term stability in the OSCE and beyond with the cooperation and collaboration of our Partner States.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.