

Session 2

Remarks at the Second Preparatory Meeting of the OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum
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Good afternoon, Mr. Chair, and thank you for your introduction. I am pleased to join this discussion today and share my thoughts from the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation on how the OSCE can foster a cleaner and more resilient energy future and help green the economy through cooperation in the energy sector.

As you heard from my colleagues in the U.S. delegation earlier, we welcome the focus by the Polish Chair-in-Office on promoting security and stability in the OSCE area through sustainable economic recovery. We also agree that promoting the sustainable use of natural resources, energy efficiency and diversity, and technological innovation are all essential building blocks of combating climate change while ensuring our societies have access to reliable and secure sources of energy.

Nuclear energy is a key part of the U.S. approach to clean energy. Nuclear power provides the world's only source of emissions-free, dispatchable, baseload electricity.

In 2019, a report by the International Energy Agency estimated that use of nuclear power prevented the release of over 60 gigatonnes of CO₂ over the last 50 years. The most advanced currently operating nuclear reactor designs have set new benchmarks in safety and efficiency, while new nuclear power technologies are poised to bring us further advancements. Additionally, these new designs will include innovative advantages such as faster modular construction techniques, potential use of a single nuclear power plant for multiple applications, scalable size to meet current and future energy demands, with reliable power to complement intermittent renewables.

In addition to electricity generation, we expect to see nuclear energy used to decarbonize energy-dense processes such as desalination and hydrogen production and to provide clean energy to a range of applications from industrial heating to district heating for cities or remote communities.

My office is responsible for overseeing civil nuclear cooperation between the United States and its partners. We do this through a variety of means. I will highlight three of these.

First, the United States concludes nuclear cooperation agreements - what we call "123 agreements" - to provide a legal basis for significant transfers of nuclear material and equipment, such as nuclear reactors and fuel. Our 123 agreements cover 35 OSCE

Participating States and ensure that the highest standards of nuclear security and nonproliferation apply to our peaceful nuclear exports.

Second, the United States signs Nuclear Cooperation Memoranda of Understanding with partners to strengthen our bilateral nuclear cooperation relationships so that our partners are better prepared to build their infrastructure for the responsible use of nuclear energy and technology and to adopt the highest standards of nuclear safety, security, and nonproliferation, including independent regulatory oversight. We have signed five Nuclear Cooperation Memoranda of Understanding with OSCE Participating States.

And third, in April 2021, the United States launched a new program called “FIRST” - the Foundational Infrastructure for the Responsible Use of SMR Technology - with an investment of \$7.3 million announced to date. FIRST provides capacity-building support to partner countries as they develop nuclear energy programs to support clean energy goals under the highest standards of nuclear safety, security, and nonproliferation. Active projects are underway under the FIRST program with six OSCE participating States, and additional projects with OSCE partners under development.

We seek to expand international cooperation in the civil nuclear sector, including with other participating States of the OSCE. However, nuclear safety, security, and nonproliferation must always remain at the center of these efforts, including promoting adherence to the IAEA Additional Protocol as a standard for safeguards and for new supply arrangements. Unfortunately, not all suppliers share out high standards.

More dangerously, today we are all witnessing shockingly reckless behavior by Russia in the course of its brutal war of aggression against Ukraine.

Russia’s invasion and seizure of nuclear facilities in Ukraine prevents Ukraine from fully carrying out its obligations under its nuclear cooperation agreements and other commitments made to its suppliers consistent with the Nuclear Suppliers Group Guidelines. For example, according to those Guidelines, the implementation of measures of physical protection in the recipient country is the responsibility of the government of that country. Russia has no role in the implementation of measures of physical protection in Ukraine, and yet Russian forces have actively prevented Ukrainian security personnel from fully implementing these measures.

Fortunately, IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi has made it a high priority to highlight the need to maintain what he has called the “Seven Pillars” of safety and security at Ukraine’s nuclear facilities. The IAEA is actively coordinating international assistance to Ukraine.

The best step for nuclear safety would be for Russia to immediately withdraw its forces around Ukraine’s nuclear facilities and not impede efforts to restore power and normal safe working conditions. If Russia wants to be a responsible nuclear power, it should act like one.

The United States remains focused on meeting our own obligations and setting the highest standards regarding nuclear safety, security, and nonproliferation, as well as pursuing our goals of combating climate change, encouraging a green energy transition, and promoting sustainable economic recovery at home and in the OSCE region. These are all key elements of the U.S. approach to building back better given the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's unprovoked aggression against Ukraine.

This crisis is a stark reminder of the importance of reducing dependence on fossil fuels and accelerating the deployment of clean energy, supporting energy efficiency measures, and increasing our cooperation on clean energy projects and technologies.

We value the essential partnerships we have with other countries and the private sector in this regard and look forward to the continued discussions in the OSCE's Second Dimension. We also remain ready to contribute our experience or otherwise assist participating States.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.