

Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities: UK response

Thank you Madam Chair.

I would like to welcome you to your new role and thank you, Ambassador Hasani, for setting out so clearly your Office's programmatic work and recent performance. The UK shares your vision of a peaceful, democratic and prosperous OSCE region, based on market economies, free trade and economic co-operation.

As you note, limitations imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic forced your office to continue the implementation of activities online and in blended formats. We all hope that the situation with the pandemic will improve significantly in 2022, and the delivery of activities will switch back to in-person where it needs to. That said, your preparedness to continue making use of digital tools when necessary, and to learn lessons from the pandemic on where activity can be delivered remotely, in an effective and efficient way, is welcome.

I would like to pick out 3 areas of your Office's work for special mention.

First, it is right that your Office recognises the rapid transition to renewable sources of energy – a transition that will only hasten as emissions in the global power sector continue to rise. As we speak the transformation of the energy sector is being discussed at [COP26 in Glasgow](#); I'd also note that renewables capacity expanded by 82% in 2020; and wind and solar are now cheaper than new coal and gas in two-thirds of the world. I am pleased that your Office will offer to help participating States keep pace with this transition.

Second, I agree with your assessment that we need to explore new opportunities for engagement in those areas of shared interest which are widely perceived to have a significant impact on our common security. This is particularly true in the case of climate change. We have heard through the Economic and Environmental Committee, and your Office's work on transboundary river basins, the potential that collaboration in this area has to bring states together and improve neighbourly relations. I hope your work will be further empowered through a new decision on climate and security.

Thirdly, I commend you for your work on anti-corruption. The fight against corruption is a fight against a pernicious and persistent crime. A crime that impedes prosperity, denies justice, and threatens global security. Corrupt actors will always look for innovative ways to exploit the public purse, and the OCEEA can play an important role in helping States stay alert to where our weaknesses are.

More broadly, we welcome your Office's efforts on women's economic empowerment. As we seek to find agreement on a new commitment on this topic,

it is right that we recognise the importance to our societies. If our prosperity is to be maximised, and able to act as effectively as possible against the threat of instability and conflict, the economic potential of all members of society must be realised. Beyond the gains for economic growth, gender equality can reduce poverty and foster a more equitable distribution of income – all elements that can prevent conflict.

Finally, we welcome your appreciation of the need to avoid duplication and maximise the effectiveness of your limited resources. Your approach to coordination as well as your focus on delivering tangible outcomes, will help to ensure the Office maximises impact and efficiency.

Thank you.