

Report by the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities: UK response, May 2022

Thank you, Ambassador Hasani, for your presentation, and for the draft work plan and report on recent activities that you have shared.

We welcome the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA)'s discussion and coordination of these efforts in the context of the OSCE's comprehensive concept of security. Economic prosperity and healthy environments are conditions that can help bolster our security. Dialogue and co-operation on these issues are prerequisites for peace, stability and good neighbourly relations. We fully agree with your assessment that resorting to military means over diplomatic ones undermines the very premise on which the founders built this organisation.

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine is showing how the impact of armed conflict extends beyond immeasurable human suffering and grief to significant damage to both the economy and environment. The Ukrainian economy is set to shrink by almost half, and the environmental consequences of the conflict will be felt for generations to come.

We agree with your assessment that the effects of the conflict extend beyond Ukraine's borders. Neighbouring countries are bearing the environmental and economic consequences of Russia's actions. For example, the Moldovan people have sheltered nearly half a million Ukrainians. Together with other neighbouring countries of Ukraine (Poland, Hungary, Slovakia and Romania), the UK is grateful for Moldova's selfless act of kindness since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, together with those other neighbouring countries. We are working with the Government of Moldova and partners to increase our support for Moldova's efforts, including direct humanitarian assistance and assistance for Moldovan customs service and border guards.

We support your decision to focus your Office's activity on the conflict in Ukraine, and your suggestions for how you may be able to support the country once the circumstances on the ground allow it; in particular in two areas.

First, the development of sustainable, climate-conscious post-conflict reconstruction plans. We join you in commending the 2021 Swedish Chair of the OSCE and the participating States for the adoption of the landmark [Ministerial Council Decision on climate change](#), which provides a solid basis for further work by the OSCE and collaboration between participating States on climate security. As well as damaging the planet, conflicts also divert attention and resources away from addressing existential climate challenges, so we look forward to participating in this work, including at the high level conference on climate change, when this again becomes possible.

Second, the proposal to build capacity to counter corruption. The UK and its

partners have actively supported Ukraine's efforts to build its resilience through crucial democratic and rule of law reforms, including the establishment of strong anti-corruption institutions. And we will continue to do so. We welcome your Office's plans to coordinate with other executive structures in order to design and implement joint activities in the areas of anti-corruption, anti-money laundering, and asset recovery.

More broadly, I would like to celebrate efforts to mainstream a gender perspective into your Office's projects and activities. Issues like women's economic empowerment and women's entrepreneurship are inextricably linked to economic development.

We welcome the full set of proposals and agree that the OSCE could assume a leadership role in international assistance in this field, convening international stakeholders and developing joint programmes. We look forward to hearing more about these plans in due course.

And finally, we welcome the work your Office is doing in response to the crisis in Afghanistan, particularly the further assessment of the consequences of the crisis for women. The Afghan people deserve to live in dignity, peace and security, reflecting the last two decades of their political, economic and social achievements. We welcome the OCEEA's partnerships with the Central Asian participating States and the field missions they support in meeting this challenge.

In closing, thank you to you and your Office. You have our full support.