

## Regional Forum on Sustainable Development

Session *CONNECTING THE DOTS: Moving Ahead Towards Empowerment, Inclusion and Equality in the Region*

Friday, 22 March 2019 15:00-17:30  
Plenary Hall

Statement by Ambassador Vuk Žugić  
Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

I wish to thank the UNECE for inviting the OSCE to join this year's regional forum as well.

The 2030 Agenda recognizes that sustainable development cannot be realized without peace and security, and that peace and security will be at risk without sustainable development.

The **nexus between peace, security and development** which underlies the 2030 Agenda is also at the core of the OSCE's concept of comprehensive security.

With this in mind, let me highlight **five areas** where the OSCE contributes to the implementation of the peace pillar of the 2030 Agenda in a cross-cutting and interconnected manner, through its support to the 57 OSCE participating States:

*First, conflict prevention and confidence building:* The OSCE has a long history of preventing conflict and promoting stability through a well-equipped tool box of institutions and mechanisms for early warning, conflict prevention, crises management and post-conflict rehabilitation. Through its network of field operations in more than a dozen countries and the activities of its secretariat, institutions and Parliamentary Assembly, the OSCE is actively involved in fostering security at multiple levels. In the economic and environmental dimension, also known as the *Second Dimension*, our mandate is to monitor and counter risks to security and stability that are caused by economic and environmental factors and to promote co-operation, which in turn has significant benefits for sustainable development.

*Second, good governance:* The OSCE's support for strengthening democratic institutions, promoting the rule of law and protecting fundamental freedoms and human rights help to nurture sustainable development. Transparency, accountability, and participation are among our key guiding principles. In the *Second Dimension*, we support our participating States in implementing relevant multilateral agreements, strengthening

legal and institutional frameworks, facilitating civil society participation in decision-making and pursuing inclusive approaches in addressing economic and environmental challenges. In the environmental sphere, the Aarhus Convention provides an effective tool for us, and we support its implementation including through a wide network of Aarhus Centres.

*Third, **inclusiveness and reducing inequalities:*** the OSCE helps governments to address the root causes of intolerance and discrimination. Achieving gender equality and empowering women and youth form a cornerstone of our security approach. Enhancing income generating capacities of youth and women, particularly those in vulnerable and marginalized situations, as well as promoting gender-sensitive approaches in areas such as transboundary water governance are among our activities in the economic and environmental dimension.

*Fourth, **corruption prevention:*** We support our participating States in preventing and combating corruption, anti-money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism, particularly through strengthening the capacities of law enforcement agencies. In doing so, we encourage a participatory approach among governments, civil society, the business community, and academia that would also foster citizens' trust and social consensus on non-tolerance of corruption which contributes to the delivery of multiple SDGs.

*Fifth, **climate action:*** Climate change is a major global threat to sustainable development with a highly complex risk landscape. Related challenges are best addressed by a broad coalition of actors. In the OSCE, we continue to identify and address potential security risks stemming from climate change through participatory approaches engaging governmental agencies including the security actors, as well as civil society, the research community and others. These initiatives contribute not only to the SDG 13 but also to the SDG 16.

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Let me emphasize that peaceful, just and inclusive societies represent both an outcome and enabler of sustainable development, and require strong partnerships at all levels. In the spirit of **SDG 17**, we need to use today's positive momentum, and step up our efforts and join our forces to achieve these targets collectively, and continue to exchange good practices and lessons learned. One such opportunity will be the upcoming OSCE Security Days Event that will discuss the link between sustainable peace, security and development, and the role of the OSCE.

In concluding, I would like to thank UNECE once again for the successful organization of this Forum. I am confident that its results will contribute significantly to the discussions at the **High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development** at which the OSCE will also take an active part.

Thank you.