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REPORT

FOR THE GENERAL COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AFFAIRS, SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT

Helsinki +40: Towards Human Security For All

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REPORT FOR THE GENERAL COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AFFAIRS, SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT

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The 40th anniversary of the pioneering Helsinki Final Act is approaching rapidly, which provides the opportunity to reflect on and fulfil further progress towards the commitments undertaken in the Act. The agreement, signed in 1975, was unique in broadening the definition of security by including the economic-environmental and the human dimensions to the existing external security of states. These three dimensions are fundamental to the maintenance of overall stability and security in Europe. This year leading up to the milestone gives us time to reaffirm commitments and to develop further action lines for the OSCE.

The Helsinki Final Act is characterised and guided primarily by the notion of co-operation, which continues to resonate in the 21st century. Over the years it has become apparent how important the economic-environmental dimension is to the promise of European co-operation and security. The importance of this dimension has increased and become more relevant as we face the challenges of financial crises, energy issues, pollution, food security, water security and climate change.

Ensuring Food and Water Security

Despite States realising that these challenges facing the world today can only be properly addressed through co-operation and accepting that some important strides have been made towards closer co-operation to protect the natural environment, the international community has too often failed to address various environmental crises sufficiently. The “Helsinki +40” theme stresses the need for the OSCE to readjust its overall Security Strategy to the new security environment. Beyond anything else, Helsinki +40 stresses the need for greater transparency, accountability and consensus to prevail in the work that the OSCE must seek to promote. Individual countries’ efforts benefit from the synergy of working together; stability and security depend upon the identification of common causes and pursuing them. The Helsinki +40 process would benefit largely from a renewed emphasis on the environmental commitments of participating States. As pointed out by my predecessor last year, today’s environmental challenges should be viewed as the existential security threats that they are, and should be addressed with the same diligence as conflict resolution and prevention.

Water, energy, and food issues – which are closely inter-related – have significant implications for security and stability within States as well as across borders. At the same time, these issues can be further explored as opportunities for conflict prevention and confidence-building. In preparation for the 40th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act, we should consider what role the OSCE has to play in addressing the water-energy-food nexus from a stability and security perspective.

The availability and affordability of life’s necessities are the keys to prosperous and cohesive communities. States are facing increasing challenges to ensure that food and water are available and affordable for their citizens. These challenges have arisen due to the increased price volatility of foodstuffs, caused by severe weather events and climate change, and the increase of the global population. It is estimated that by 2050 the global population will have reached a total of 9.6 billion. According to a report produced by the World Resources Institute (WRI), the UN agencies and the

World Bank, the world will need 70 per cent more food, as measured by calories, to feed the enlarged global population.¹

Possible Solutions

A planned response to these problems will necessitate that States work together across a wide range of policies. This will result in greater resilience, compared to States investing on their own. There is an obvious role for the OSCE and our committee to facilitate that co-operation.

The broad aim will be to promote “sustainable intensification” as outlined in the Foresight report “The Future of Food and Farming” produced by Professor Sir John Beddington. The term “sustainable intensification” implies producing more food with fewer inputs, while protecting natural capital, such as water, biodiversity and ecosystem services. There are multiple approaches to addressing food security, and much can be done today with existing knowledge. It is vital that food security initiatives include all areas of science and technology that can make a valuable impact.

Food security must be achieved through improvements in the way people produce and consume, while taking into account the environment. A significant increase in agricultural and fisheries production could be achieved by the adoption of existing best practice. The OSCE can facilitate that technology and knowledge transfer, particularly by using mobile phone and web-based technologies. Also, new research on crop and animal production needs to be undertaken to produce new varieties, improve husbandry techniques, and to optimise water usage in agriculture. OSCE countries can co-operate to ensure that no duplication takes place of research effort and that synergy is maximised.

There is a need for more young people to engage in agriculture, and we need to take steps to encourage young people to study agricultural science. OSCE countries could achieve this through facilitating transnational courses in agricultural science. Furthermore, the role of women in agriculture is often relegated to menial and unprofitable activities. They often suffer from lack of education and lack of funds to invest in new technologies and inputs, such as fertilizers. Small holdings often lack modern farming methods and lead to poverty and deprivation. Extension services must be set up to bring more productive systems to small holdings and particularly women. Small holdings often suffer from a lack of secure land tenure. If investment is to be made, it is important to establish secure land tenure.

There is little doubt that the scale of global food waste is substantial. It has been estimated that as much as 30 per cent of all food grown worldwide may be lost or wasted before and after it reaches the consumer.² The OSCE can lead in the reduction of waste in food chains. Improvement in post-harvest management can make a great difference in preventing damage from rain, insect pests and high ambient temperatures. Often cheap, but effective, on-farm storage can make a real difference together with good transport to markets. Improved processing and manufacture can add value as well as prolong shelf life. In some prosperous countries much waste takes place at the retail and consumer level. Further work needs to be done to educate the consumer to reduce waste through smarter purchasing.

¹ Report by World Resources Institute, “Creating a Sustainable Food Future: Interim Findings”, by Tim Searchinger, Craig Hanson, and others, December 2013, <http://www.wri.org/publication/creating-sustainable-food-future-interim-findings>.

² Foresight report “Future of Food and Farming, Challenges and choices for global sustainability”, Government office of Science, London, 2011.

With the increased competition for, and scarcity of, inputs into food production, water is the most pressing, with significant effects on regional productivity likely to occur by 2030. Demand for water is increasing for personal use, agricultural irrigation and manufacturing. The days of cheap water that can be used without limit are over. Crop varieties must be found that can thrive and produce high yields with lower water inputs. Water must be treated and reused and recycled. Sewage that has in the past been thought of as waste must be recycled to produce energy, clean water and important nutrients. In addition, excessive water abstraction can have very negative effects on ecosystems, but also on communities and States that depend on the same water catchment areas. The OSCE has already intervened to settle disputes between States, and this work continues.

Additionally, it is essential that there is a better understanding of the greenhouse gas emissions in different food production systems to find ways to reduce them. The emissions of greenhouse gasses are higher in meat and dairy production and as global prosperity increases, so does the demand for these foods. The need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to adapt to a changing climate will become imperative. Climate knows no boundaries or frontiers. What we do in our own country affects every other country on earth. Every State has to take responsibility, but that determination is made much more powerful through co-operation. Energy security is essential to allow communities and nations to achieve economic growth and stability. Building confidence will enable trade in fuels, involving both governments and the private sector. Green or sustainable energy generation will also grow as a proportion of the energy mix and will create jobs while reducing carbon emissions. The OSCE has a role to play in sharing these developing technologies, which will help tackle this problem.

Supporting sustainable development in mountainous regions is also of concern to this Committee. Mountain areas occupy 24 per cent of the total land area of the earth, with a 12 per cent population living in this area. It is important to remember that mountains provide the lion's share of resources to livelihood and mankind, such as fresh water, vital biodiversity resources, food resources, forests and minerals. The growing industrial development of mountainous areas and the impact of global warming increases the pressure on the fragile ecology of the area. This leads to a sharp increase in natural and man-made disasters, diseases and impoverishment of the population and also its migration to the more densely populated areas. It is therefore important that governments, international and financial institutions are encouraged to support the sustainable development in mountainous regions.

Tackling Climate Change

Typhoon Haiyan, which brought massive devastation to the Philippines, and other natural disasters are reminders of how critical the climate change situation is.³ In his message to the OSCE's 20th Ministerial Council in Kyiv, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon praised the vital partnership between the UN and the OSCE, especially in long-term issues, such as combating climate change.⁴ Climate change affects agricultural conditions and the life of people in general. A study on the Dniester basin vulnerability to climate change predicts a temperature rise by 2050, and drier summers with less flow, but also more frequent and heavier rains in the basin due to the changes in precipitation. World leaders have convened every year since 1995 to assess progress in dealing with climate change, but with the exception of agreeing to the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, which is now virtually defunct, they have consistently failed to agree to meaningful standards to limit their greenhouse gas emissions.

³ <http://www.cop19.gov.pl/latest-news/items/the-opening-of-cop19-in-warsaw-in-the-shade-of-philippines-super-typhoon-haiyan>.

⁴ <http://www.un.org/news/dh/pdf/english/2013/05122013.pdf>.

These changing climatic conditions will affect crop growth and livestock performance, the availability of water, fisheries and aquaculture yields, and the functioning of ecosystem services in all regions.⁵ Extreme weather events are also likely to become more severe and more frequent, increasing volatility in production and prices. Significant climate change is inevitable, and investment in food system adaptation to climate change is a priority.

As the Istanbul Declaration sets out, recognizing that these environmental challenges, such as climate change, require world leaders to make compromises at an international level, and that in this regard the Helsinki +40 process can serve as a powerful reminder of the spirit of co-operation that brought together East and West in the context of the Cold War.

The Importance of Science and Technology

Investment in science and technology reaps great dividends in promoting economic growth for nations and improved employment and living standards for individuals. During the recent periods of austerity, many nations have been able to maintain or increase public investment in science, which shortened and lightened the recession. It is important for States to adopt fiscal systems that encourage private companies to invest in research and development.

Great added value can be achieved when Universities, public sector research facilities and private enterprises co-ordinate and co-operate in research. Good examples of increased co-ordination are the Fraunhofer Institutes in Germany, and other States are following suit. International co-operation is also very productive. Research into life sciences can deliver advances and improvements in medicine and food production across the globe and increasing research into technology lies at the heart of making manufacturing, transport and energy more efficient and emit less carbon.

A determination to enhance green technology must be at the core of research, which will not only reduce climate change, but also enhance employment and reduce dependence on fossil fuels.

The use of scientific research to deliver practical improvements in manufacturing, communications, medicine, agriculture, and service industries is vital for sustainable economic progress. Technology transfer lies at the heart of this process and must receive sufficient investment to maximise the return on scientific advances.

Continued Co-operation in the Economic Sphere

In the economic sphere we can see that there is a continued need for co-operation. Moderate improvement in the global economy has been patchy and even where the recovery has been greatest, it remains fragile. As we see throughout all our 57 participating States, many citizens still suffer from the global recession. Austerity has had a detrimental effect on people's lives through unemployment, falling living standards and a reduction in public services. Austerity must not be seen as an end in itself, but as a way to achieve a more sustainable growing economy benefiting all its citizens. The main cause of the recession was the failure of large national and international financial institutions through poor governance. States must be encouraged to adopt regulations that limit risk based speculation, yet enables financial bodies to provide capital for investment to restart national economies through improvements in infrastructure and long term projects. The OSCE has a

⁵ Foresight report "Future of Food and Farming, Challenges and choices for global sustainability", Government office of Science, London, 2011.

role to play in co-ordinating national governments to move away from retrenchment into solid investments, which will provide the foundations for a sound improvement in the global economy.

Economic migration and migration due to environmental change are growing factors in maintaining stability and security. Migration can provide opportunities for people to improve their lives while building the economies of countries that receive them. Unplanned and excessive movements can cause tension and adversely affect the provision of public services.

The OSCE needs to work on migration management to increase the benefits and reduce the potential negative implications. The OSCE must work with Member States on a strategy to ensure that all citizens regardless of gender, race or family background have access to a full range of education, training and health support. It is only through social mobility that the full potential of individuals and states can be achieved.

Economic migration, particularly from North Africa, has put a great burden on Southern European States. It has also resulted in the loss of a large number of lives, as vessels used for this activity are often unseaworthy. The OSCE should work with Southern European countries and our partners in North Africa to protect migrants and provide facilities for them if they arrive in Europe.

Trade is often disrupted by man-made and natural disasters. Borders need to be secure, but also robust and resilient to enable trade to continue during periods of heightened threat levels and alerts. This would enable the national economies to maintain cross-border activity. Natural disasters also have the effect of disrupting economic growth, which hinders trade and has harmful consequence not only in the State involved, but also its trading partners. Resources to deal with such emergencies could be coordinated between States, because their successful resolution would benefit all trading partners.

Furthermore, work must be done to encourage participating States to translate the 2012 Dublin Ministerial Declaration on Strengthening Good Governance and Combating Corruption, Money Laundering and the Financing of Terrorism into better and more effective policies, legal frameworks and regulations at state and regional level.

Finally, trade unions play an essential role of representation, negotiation and resolution. They are a contemporary achievement of advanced societies that has allowed collective bargaining of working conditions and a peaceful channelling of eventual conflicts in this field. The balance between workers' interests and those of companies has given Europe half a century of social peace, prosperity, and economic growth. For these reasons, the generalisation of trade unions, their legal protection and the legal acknowledgement of their privileged position as stakeholders, should have a legal basis in OSCE countries as part of their external and internal security systems.

Conclusion

The second dimension covers so much ground and includes every citizen. It is through trade, industry, science, and technology that co-operation in the OSCE area most tangibly manifests itself every day. During this year we must work together to find concrete actions that will enable the OSCE to promote our shared objectives.