

13TH WINTER MEETING OF THE OSCE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY
PRESENTATION BY MR. ROGER WILLIAMS, MP. (UNITED KINGDOM), RAPPOREUR
OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AFFAIRS, SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY
AND ENVIRONMENT – OUT LINE OF HIS REPORT ON THE ANNUAL SESSION IN
BAKU THEME
‘HELSINKI + 40: TOWARDS SECURITY FOR ALL’
Vienna, 13 February 2014

Talking Points

The importance of The Economic and Environment Dimension of the work of the OSCE has increased and become more relevant as we face the challenges of financial crises, energy issues, pollution, food security, water security and climate change. The nations realise that these challenges can only be properly addressed through cooperation. Individual nation’s efforts benefit from the synergy of working together. Stability and security depend upon the identification of common causes and pursuing them.

The “Helsinki +40” stresses the need for the OSCE to readjust its overall Security Strategy to the new security environment. Beyond anything else, the “Helsinki +40” stresses the need for greater transparency, accountability and consensus to prevail in the work that the OSCE must seek to promote.

Moderate improvement in the Global Economy has been patchy and even where the recovery has been greatest, it remains fragile. 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 be seen not 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. Nations must be encouraged to adopt regulation that limits risk based speculation, but enables financial bodies to provide capital for investment to restart national economies through improvements in infrastructure and long term projects.

The OSCE has a role in coordinating national governments to move from retrenchment into solid investments which will provide the foundations for a sound improvement in the global economy.

Water, energy and food issues, which are closely inter-related, have significant implications for security and stability within States as well as and across borders. At the same time, these issues can be further explored as opportunities for conflict

prevention and confidence building. What role should the OSCE 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. Nation states are facing increasing challenges to ensure food and water are available and affordable for their citizens. These challenges arise because of the increase of the global population to an estimated 9.2 billion by 2050, increased price volatility of foodstuffs caused by severe weather events and climate change.

A planned response to these problems will necessitate Nation States working together across a wide range of policies. This will result in greater resilience than nations investing on their own. There is an obvious role for the OSCE and our committee to facilitate that co-operation. I will put forward a number of areas of work for discussion. The broad aim will be to promote "sustainable intensification" as outlined in the Foresight report on "The Future of Food and Farming" produced by Professor Sir John Beddington with comprehensive international contributions. The term "Sustainable Intensification" implies producing more food with less inputs while protecting natural capital, such as soil, water, biodiversity and ecosystem services.

Climate change brings with it more uncertainty. More extreme weather events coupled with an increase in temperature and changes in rainfall make it difficult to predict agricultural productivity and availability of water.

I will bring forward a number of matters where I believe the OSCE can make real progress in the aspiration expressed in the 1975 Helsinki Final Act that "efforts to develop cooperation in the fields of trade, industry, science and technology, the environment and other areas of economic activity contribute to the reinforcement of peace and security in Europe and in the world as a whole."

The following three main developments:

1. Establishment in 1992 of the Economic Forum (Renamed Economic and Environmental Forum in 2006)
2. Creation in 1997 of the post of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities.
3. Establish in 2001 of the Economic and Environment Committee of the Permanent Council.

These structures can be used to bring real improvements in water and food security for the benefit of citizens.

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.

New research on crop and animal production needs to be done to produce new varieties, improve husbandry techniques, and to optimise water usage in agriculture. OSCE countries can cooperate to ensure that no duplication takes place of research effort and synergy is maximised.

OSCE countries should encourage young people to study Agriculture science by facilitating transnational courses.

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 prolonging shelf life. In some prosperous countries much waste takes place at the retail and consumer level. Work needs to be done to educate the consumer to reduce waste through smarter purchasing.

It is essential that there is better understanding of the Green House Gas emissions in different food production systems to find ways to reduce them. The emissions of GHG's are higher in meat and dairy production. As global prosperity increases, so demand for these foods increase.

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 the 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 lack of secure land tenure. This is important to establish if investment is to be made.

Excessive water abstraction can have very negative effects on ecosystems but also communities and nations that depend on the same water catchment areas. The OSCE has already intervened to settle disputes between nations, and this work continues.

Demand for water increases 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 treated to produce energy, clean water and important nutrients.

Climate knows no boundaries or frontiers. What we do in our own country affects every other nation on earth. Every nation 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 of confidence will enable trade in fuels involving both governments and the private sector.

Green or sustainable energy generation will 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 the developing technologies.

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 in to better and more effective policies, legal framework and regulations at national and regional level.

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 participants 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.

The second dimension covers so much ground and includes every citizen. During this year we must work together to find concrete actions that will enable OSCE to promote our shared objectives.