

**Statement by the delegation of Georgia
At the 25th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum
“Greening the Economy and Building Partnerships for Security”
First preparatory meeting, Vienna, 23-24 January, 2017**

Opening Session

Thank you Mr. Chairperson.

The Delegation of Georgia would also like to thank the OSCE Austrian Chairmanship and the Office of the Coordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities for organizing the 1st preparatory meeting of the 25th Economic and Environmental Forum. We also thank the distinguished speakers for the welcoming remarks and keynote speeches.

While Georgia aligns itself with the statement delivered by the EU delegation, I would like to make the following national remarks;

We welcome Austrian Chairmanship’s focus on “Greening the economy and building partnerships for security” this year. The issues outlined by His Excellency Michael Linhart are important topics for Georgia. Strengthening good governance, promoting renewable energy and transport links are priority areas for us. In the field of transport, Georgia intends to invest more than 5 billion USD during next 4 years. We aim to improve connectivity and the framework infrastructure of Georgia, and thus better connect it with the wider region both through its hard and soft infrastructure.

We also commend the Chairmanship’s readiness promote and further explore the potential of second dimension in the resolution of existing conflicts within the OSCE area.

On various occasions, we hear many specific examples and stories, underscoring the role and the added value of the OSCE and its field missions. The OSCE can and does indeed assist its participating States. Yet, here it should be stressed that sustainable development cannot be fully realized if divorced from the overriding issue of security. In Georgia, we are reminded of this every day by a harsh reality: 20 percent of my country is occupied by foreign troops and hundreds of thousands of people continue to be denied the right to return to their homes. The population in the occupied regions endure constant ethnic discrimination and gross violation of their rights.

We look forward to discussing and exploring ideas on how to further utilize OSCE’s second dimension, including in addressing existing conflicts through building confidence. Yet, one thing remains clear and we can say this from our own experience in trying to resolve the conflict with Russia. Georgia has been seeking to normalize relations with the

Russian Federation and even managed to restore some economic ties, however Georgia's steps forward have not been reciprocated on key political issues, the Geneva International Discussions being a case at point.

Therefore, we believe that while the second dimension is important and its potential should be explored further, fundamentally, what is needed is the reiteration and respect of the basic norms and principles of international law. Until the fundamental principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity within internationally recognized borders are restored and respected in good faith, the impact of the second dimension, will regrettably remain limited.

In closing, we once again thank the distinguished speakers and look forward to fruitful discussions in the course of next two days.

Thank you.