



Statement of H.E. Ambassador Gudni Bragason, Permanent Representative of Iceland at the Opening Session of the Annual Security Review Conference (ASRC), Vienna, 23rd June 2020.

Mr Chairman.

Thank you for providing us with an opportunity to discuss the OSCE's contribution in addressing security challenges and working toward peace and security, as well as efforts in "making difference for people on the ground".

We do so in light of the 45th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act and the 30th anniversary of the Charter of Paris for a New Europe.

These fundamental documents spell out the comprehensive security concept of the OSCE, which is an integral part of our security in the Euro-Atlantic area.

We get together in the shadow of the COVID-19 crisis that has seriously affected verification activities within the CSBMs. It will be a Herculean task to return to a new normal situation.

The COVID-19 situation has brought to light how vulnerable our societies are, and how little it takes to disrupt infrastructure, communications, travel, supply chains and food security.

We have also seen the situation being manipulated for a blatant media disinformation campaigns.

We must show vigilance in preserving our democratic and pluralistic societies, which are being threatened by forces, which do not tolerate democracy, human rights, freedom of thought, assembly and expression.

The OSCE Human Dimension and the work of the independent institutions are essential to the overall security in the region. We emphasize the work of all three independent institutions in strengthening democracy, free elections, human rights, freedom of the media and the rights of minorities.

We emphasize the importance of the OSCE missions and the organization's core activities and operations to strengthen security in the region.

The OSCE's Conflict Cycle toolbox should be strengthened in early warning, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation and peace building.

The Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine (SMM) must be able to carry out its mandate and tasks without restrictions and hindrances.

We support Ukraine's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders, extending to its territorial waters.

We call on all participating States to adhere to international obligations and commitments under the Minsk Agreements.

We reiterate our support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia (support of the Geneva International Discussions), and hope for continued progress in the Transnistrian Settlement Process and a peaceful settlement of the conflict in Ngorno Karabakh.

We should focus on humanitarian efforts to ease the plight of ordinary people, especially the elderly and other vulnerable groups, suffering because of the conflict in Ukraine and in other protracted crises, and thus "making a difference for people on the ground".

Mr Chairman.

We reaffirm our strong support for Conventional Arms Control (CAC) and Confidence and Security Building Measures (CSBMs), to which the OSCE has for decades effectively contributed.

We call on all participating states to fully implement the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty (CFE), and that states fully implement and comply with the Open Skies Treaty (OST).

Both treaties are an important part of the Euro-Atlantic security structure, and contribute to greater security in the OSCE-area.

We urge all participating States to engage constructively in the important endeavors on the modernization of the Vienna Document (VD).

The Structured Dialogue has proven to be a useful addition to the politico-military exchange regularly taking place within the organization.

The OSCE with its concept of comprehensive security is a proper forum to address hybrid threats and all attempts to create uncertainty in the society, destabilizing democracy and undermine trust in the rule of law and democracy.

Finally, Mr Chairman.

As we commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security this year, our point of departure is that there will be no peace and security without the active participation of women in creating peace and security. Women must have a seat at the table and their voices must be heard.