



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Secretary General's 2010 Program Outline Presentation

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Jeffrey VanDreal
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
May 28, 2009

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States warmly welcomes the release of the 2010 Program Outline, and wishes to thank all of the Fund Managers and their staffs for the hard work invested in this important document. The Program Outline exercise is indeed important, as it provides the fund managers with a roadmap of where we, the participating States, want this organization to go, and how we, the participating States, believe it should get there. As the Secretary General has correctly pointed out, the participating States need to provide the guidance to the organization. We collectively need to know ourselves what we want, or we collectively cannot hope to achieve it.

Mr. Chairman: Last year, the United States questioned the advisability of removing from the Program Outline all financial information except indicative overall totals per fund. We are, therefore, disappointed to find that this year, even the indicative totals are gone. The Program Outline is not a budget document, but it has clear budgetary implications. The removal of all budgetary information from this document makes it difficult to determine what programs are—or are not—worth pursuing, as we do not know anything about the cost implications of those programs. Participating States need to know the cost implications of programs in order to help guide this important decision making process.

This year, even more so than last year, we must identify the priorities of this organization, and focus our energies and resources on those activities. The trick, of course, is reaching consensus on what the highest priority activities are. In previous years, the review of the Program Outline has failed to achieve this goal. We must adopt a reasonable practice that will help us all better identify our highest priority programs. We expect the Fund Managers to undertake a similar exercise before presenting their budgets to participating States; we should do no less as an organization.

A month ago, the United States called on each participating State to examine the Program Outline and identify the thirty substantive programs that it considers to be top priorities for the organization. We repeat that call now. Only by identifying specifically what our top priorities are can we determine which activities are not considered top priorities by any of us. That would then lead us to the crucial question: if a program is not a top priority for any of us, why is our organization pursuing it?

We look forward to the coming debate in the Preparatory Committee.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.