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PRESS RELEASE

OSCE helps address climate change risks in Central Asia

DUSHANBE, 14 November 2011 – Experts and policy makers from Central Asia will assess risks from climate change, discuss measures to protect environmental security in Central Asia and promote regional co-operation at a three-day event supported by the OSCE that began in Dushanbe today.

The Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities and the European Environment Agency, with the support of the OSCE Office in Tajikistan, organized the event. A scenario workshop, facilitated by Adelphi Research and the Central Asia Regional Environmental Centre, will gauge the possible impacts of climate change on the water-energy-agriculture-nexus and its consequences for security in Central Asia.

A roundtable discussion on water management and land degradation issues in the region took place ahead the workshop.

Some 40 stakeholders, experts and policy makers from Central Asia, as well as representatives of leading environmental international organizations, research institutions, civil society organizations, the business community and local authorities, are taking part in the events.

“Climate change is a challenge affecting the whole Central Asian region. It is a cross-cutting issue requiring a complex of measures,” said the Head of the OSCE Office in Tajikistan, Ambassador Ivar Vikki. “Environmental aspects may indeed evolve into destabilizing factors with considerable implications for resource distribution and security in this region.”

Talbak Salimov, the Chairman of the Environment Protection Committee under the Government of Tajikistan, said: “Global climate change in Central Asia should be considered more broadly, not confined to national boundaries.”

He added: “All countries in the region have their own interests, but climate change raises issues that affect us all, so it is important that the participants of this meeting develop a common vision on the discussed topics.”

The workshop is part of an OSCE region-wide project to raise awareness, provide early warning and recommend measures for ensuring environmental security and promoting co-operation among OSCE participating States. It is funded with a contribution from Germany.

The results of the scenario workshop will provide a tool for co-operative action and policy recommendations that could potentially be implemented by the OSCE field operations or raised at the OSCE Permanent Council.

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