



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe  
The Secretariat**

**Written contribution for  
the 6th International Wildland Fire Conference**

**Pyeongchang, the Republic of Korea  
(12-16 October 2015)**

We congratulate the Republic of Korea for successfully hosting the **6<sup>th</sup> International Wildland Fire Conference**, which provides a platform for strengthening international co-operation in wildfire management.

The **Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)** is the world's largest regional security organization. It embraces 57 countries with the total population of over a billion of people and spanning from Vancouver to Vladivostok.

Within its **comprehensive security mandate**, the OSCE addresses disaster risks from different perspectives and at different levels – from the regional to the national and community levels. There is a strong need of **incorporating a security perspective into disaster risk reduction discussions** and ample room for deepening the understanding of the complex linkages between security and disasters, including disasters prompted by climate change. This will also help address such challenges more effectively, both within countries and in a transboundary context.

It was a few months ago, in June; the Republic of Korea hosted in Seoul **the 2015 OSCE Asian Conference**, which addressed *“the changing global security environment and visions of multilateral security co-operation in Asia”*. Bringing together representatives of the OSCE participating States, Asian Partners for Co-operation, international organizations, think tanks, and non-governmental organizations, the Conference had a specific focus on disaster risk reduction.

In December 2014, under the Swiss 2014 OSCE Chairmanship, the OSCE Ministerial Council in Basel unanimously adopted a **Ministerial Council Decision on Enhancing Disaster Risk Reduction**. The most significant conclusions and commitments of this Ministerial Council Decision are as follows:

- The OSCE participating States acknowledged that environmental degradation, including disasters, could be a potential additional contributor to conflict and that conflicts, poor governance, mismanagement and degradation of natural resources as well as migratory pressures can affect the vulnerability of society to disasters.

- They emphasized the importance of co-operation among participating States in disaster risk management, including in order to build mutual confidence and promote good neighbourly relations.
- The Ministerial Council Decision also notes the exacerbating effect climate change may have on the frequency and magnitude of disasters, and therefore the importance of climate change mitigation and adaptation to effectively reducing disaster risk. The decision also notes the importance of the ongoing global negotiations on climate change in the context of the UNFCCC.

The Ministerial Decision also included a specific reference to **fire management** – an area in which the OSCE has been actively engaged since 2006, in close partnership with the **Global Fire Monitoring Center**.

**OSCE's wildfire management programme** emerged from two assessment missions in the South Caucasus: the 2006 *OSCE-led Environmental Assessment Mission to the fire-affected territories in and around the Nagorno-Karabakh region* and the 2008 *Joint OSCE/UNEP Environmental Assessment Mission to Georgia*. Implemented in a phased approach, this programme entails capacity building of the **South Caucasus** countries for preparedness, prevention and response to large wildfires; support for development of national wildfire management policies and strategies through multi-sectorial and multi-stakeholder approaches; and engaging local communities in wildfire management. Building on the achievements in the South Caucasus, we are currently exploring opportunities for intensifying the capacities of the Regional Wildland Fire Networks and the Regional Fire Monitoring Centers of **Eastern Europe** and **South Eastern Europe** as well.

Furthermore, we have recently expanded our wildfire management activities to **Mongolia** and the **Central Asia** region. The opening of the Regional Central Asian Fire Management Resource Center (RCAFMRC) on 21 September 2015 in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia is a good example in this respect. Hosted by the National University of Mongolia, the Center will foster cross-boundary co-operation in fire management.

In close collaboration with the Global Fire Monitoring Center, the OSCE will continue its engagement in this field by, inter alia, making use of the **Environment and Security - ENVSEC - Initiative** where the OSCE effectively partners with the UN Environment Programme, the UN Development Programme, the UN Economic Commission for Europe, and the Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe, and by working closely with the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction.

We believe our joint endeavours in this field will be an important contribution to the implementation of the **Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction** and the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**.

Thank you.