



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

**Written contribution for
the 7th International Wildland Fire Conference**

**Campo Grande, Mato Grosso do Sul
Republic of Brazil
(28 October – 1 November 2019)**

We would like to congratulate the Federative Republic of Brazil for successfully hosting the **7th International Wildland Fire Conference**, a unique platform for promoting exchange of experiences and for strengthening international cooperation in wildfire management.

The **Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)** is the world's largest regional security organization under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, including 57 participating States with an overall population of over a billion of people. The Organization addresses a **wide range of security-related concerns** based on the comprehensive approach that encompasses politico-military, economic and environmental, and human dimension aspects. Within the OSCE **comprehensive security mandate**, disaster risks are addressed from different perspectives and at different levels—from the regional to the national and community levels. There is a strong need for **incorporating a security perspective into disaster risk reduction discussions** and ample room for deepening the understanding of the complex linkages between security and natural and man-made disasters, included those prompted by climate change.

The *1975 Helsinki Final Act* recognized the importance of co-operation on disaster risk reduction. This was followed by several OSCE political commitments that referred to disaster preparedness and management. The *2014 Basel Ministerial Council Decision on Enhancing Disaster Risk Reduction* is the cornerstone of OSCE activities in this field. With this decision 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*”;
- recognized “*the importance of cooperation among participating States in disaster risk management, in order to diminish tensions as part of a broader effort to prevent conflict, and where appropriate, to build mutual confidence and promote good neighbourly relations*”;
- tasked the OSCE executive structures “*to strengthen the exchange of knowledge and experience, building upon the OSCE’s good practices in disaster risk reduction gained particularly in the field of water management, flood risk management, and fire management*”

Since 2006, the OSCE and the **Global Fire Monitoring Center (GFMC)** established a close cooperation in addressing wildfire management. This multi-annual effort involved the implementation of numerous programmes and projects in the South Caucasus, Eastern Europe, Central Asia and South-Eastern Europe. Over the past decade, several activities have been conducted in the frame of the **Environment and Security (ENVSEC) initiative**¹.

The OSCE's wildfire management programme emerged from two assessment missions in the South Caucasus. Implemented in a phased approach, this programme entailed 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-sectoral and multi-stakeholder approaches; and engaging local communities in wildfire management. Building on the achievements in the South Caucasus, the programme expanded into Eastern Europe, including in Chernobyl-affected areas shared by Belarus and Ukraine, and other regions.

In 2015, OSCE and GFMC supported the opening of the **Regional Central Asian Fire Management Resource Center (RCAFMRC)** in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. Hosted by the National University of Mongolia, the Center fosters transboundary co-operation in fire management. In December 2018, the OSCE organized a South-Eastern Europe regional wildfire management workshop in Skopje, North Macedonia, in collaboration with GFMC and the South-Eastern Europe Regional Fire Management Center. The next upcoming event will involve presentation of the **best practices on wildfire management in the OSCE area**, based on collaboration between OSCE and GFMC, at the roundtable discussion with relevant authorities in South-Eastern Europe in December 2019 in Tirana, Albania.

Through its continued engagement and activities in disaster risk reduction, the OSCE endeavours to provide an effective contribution to the implementation of the **Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030** and the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**.

Thank you.

¹ Environment and Security Initiative [ENVSEC] was initiated in 2003 and involves an on-going partnership between OSCE, UNDP, UN Environment Programme and UN Economic Commission for Europe. The ENVSEC is recognized as a good example of multi-agency co-operation that provides effective integrated response to traditional and emerging environmental challenges that may impact security, stability and peace.