



**Statement of of Minister Plenipotentiary Mr. Guðni Bragason, Permanent Representative of Iceland at the 1st Preparatory Meeting of the 27th Economic and Environmental Forum, 28-29 January 2019, Hofburg Vienna**

Mr Chairman,

Allow me to congratulate you upon the vigorous beginning of the Slovak Chairmanship programme within the Economic and Environmental Dimension.

Your agenda gives a platform for a comprehensive and thought-provoking discussions throughout the year, and will hopefully culminate in a clear signal from the Ministerial Conference at the end of the year on the importance of sustainable economic development for strengthening the security in the OSCE area.

In this respect we all benefit from the successful work of the previous Italian Chairmanship, and the guidance we have from the declaration and the decision on digitalization of the Ministerial Meeting in Milano.

Iceland especially welcomes the emphasis on energy. Energy security is essential for the overall security of every nation, and every nation needs to make use of its possibilities and interests in this respect.

We also need to look to the future, to the welfare of future generations, and not only concentrate on the present situation.

We need to follow the guidance of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals, especially the one number seven “to ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all”.

In order to achieve this we need to consider aspects like access to energy, renewable energy, energy development and energy efficiency. This calls for more financing, stronger policy commitments and active involvement of the private sector.

Iceland's policy is to promote the transformation to the use of clean and renewable energy, and increased awareness about the technical feasibility and economic benefits of geothermal energy. We call for an increase in the use of renewable energy in the overall energy consumption, with especially emphasis on its use on the level of communities and districts.

We call for an increased international cooperation, both for technical know-how and for financing, such as with the Sustainable Energy for all Agency, based here in Vienna, the IRENA, the Global Geothermal Alliance and the World Bank.

Mr Chairman.

Reference has been made to a geothermal study visit by energy experts from some OSCE countries to Iceland last fall. I like to confirm our intention to organise a similar visit this year in cooperation with the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA) and relevant partners in Iceland. It is our hope that such a visit will promote the utilisation of renewable energy in the OSCE-area and thus contribute to sustainable development and Agenda 2030.