

OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting 2009

**Canadian Statement (As delivered) by
Ambassador Fredericka Gregory**

**Reinforced Plenary – Closing Session
(Warsaw, Friday, 09 October 2009)**

Thank you Ambassador Lenarcic.

Over thirty years ago, the Helsinki Final Act set the foundation for security and stability in our vast OSCE region – it is a great milestone for us all. The Final Act embodies the fundamental connection between human rights and peace - the core principles and values of democracy, respect and promotion for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law.

As the OSCE embarks on a new strategic dialogue on Euro-Atlantic Security (the so-called "Corfu Process" under the effective leadership of our Greek OSCE Chairman) Canada will be vigilant in preserving and strengthening the Human Dimension of our work. We do so because some of our hard-fought gains during the past 20 years - since the Fall of the Berlin Wall - are seeing setbacks in parts of the OSCE region; a rollback that poses a significant threat to human rights and fundamental freedoms.

A right achieved is a right in need of protection. We cannot back down and become complacent on fundamental rights and freedoms, and on tolerance issues. We must remain attentive and aware of the importance of these rights and the struggle to gain them and keep them. OSCE commitments must be implemented fully by all participating States, not in an "*à la carte*" fashion as some are doing. For this reason, we all must remain vigilant and renew our efforts to consolidate and implement our OSCE commitments, and to strengthen them, as well as relevant OSCE Institutions in this field. The annual Human Dimension Implementation Meetings (HDIM) help serve this purpose.

We must not lose sight of the fact that, last year, we witnessed the outbreak of a conflict between two OSCE participating States. The war in Georgia has caused tragic human suffering and human security challenges that remain unresolved, notably with respect to IDPs, refugees, and other vulnerable groups. We still await the review and follow-up to the recommendations from the Director of ODHIR and from High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM), in the wake of their visits to the war effected regions last year.

Turning to this year's HDIM, we have enjoyed lively, frank and thought provoking discussions both in the plenary sessions and in the numerous side events.

We attach great importance to ODHIR's work on democracy-building, especially through elections support and monitoring. For example, I'm thinking of ODIHR's effective work this past year on the elections in Albania, in Kyrgyzstan, and in supporting the Afghan elections (where 2 Canadians were proud to serve on ODHIR's election support team).

Canada is pleased to see here in Warsaw the presence and active engagement - on an equal footing as participating States - so many representatives of Civil Society whose perspectives and advice enrich our dialogue and OSCE work. In this connection, Canada salutes the bravery of Human Rights Defenders and NGO representatives who took part in this meeting and who came forward to draw attention to serious human rights violations.

Every year, Delegations to the HDIM are encouraged to submit ideas or themes to be discussed in next year's human dimension events. Canada would like to suggest that we continue to address the issue of Combating Hate Crime - particularly on the Internet - in more depth. This is a subject of growing concern for our region, and where the OSCE can play a role in helping participating States address this emerging challenge.

We want Kazakhstan to know that they can count on Canada's support when they take up the OSCE Chairmanship in 2010. Similarly, we also count on Kazakhstan's support and full engagement next year as Chair in strengthening the OSCE's Human Dimension agenda, and by leading by example in fulfilling its own OSCE commitments through implementing domestic reforms.

Before leaving the beautiful city of Warsaw, my Delegation would like to thank the Greek OSCE Chairmanship, our Polish hosts, as well as the ODIHR Director, Ambassador Lenarcic, and his great team, for their excellent work and collaboration which again has guaranteed the HDIM's success and charts the way ahead for our work at the OSCE Ministerial and beyond.

Thank you.