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**CANADIAN INTERVENTION TO THE
2007 OSCE HUMAN DIMENSION IMPLEMENTATION MEETING
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**Working Session 2:
Combating intolerance and discrimination and Promoting mutual respect and
understanding
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*Full version***

Canada encourages all participating States to continue to move forward with the implementation of our existing commitments to combat all forms of discrimination, including on the basis of race, religion, and gender. Human rights flourish in free, democratic societies, where the principles of fairness, respect for diversity, pluralism and justice are embedded in the values and actions of the people and in the laws of governments.

A key pillar of our government's efforts to eliminate racial discrimination remains *A Canada for All: Canada's Action Plan against Racism*, announced in 2005. New government initiatives are underway under the action plan, including in relation to hate crimes.

For example, the Justice Initiative on Victims of Hate Crimes has put in place a training package for victims' services workers, and funding is available to provide the training to individual communities across Canada.

Also, through the Nationally Standardized Data Collection Strategy on Hate-Motivated Crimes Initiative, approximately 30 municipal police services and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police

are collecting data on hate-motivated crime. We are happy to say that national data is expected to be available in 2008.

In addition to constitutional guarantees of freedom of expression, Canada has adopted provisions to prohibit hate speech and the promotion of hatred. The *Criminal Code*, the *Canadian Human Rights Act*, the *Broadcasting Act*, and provincial and territorial legislation all contain provisions which relate to the prohibition of hate speech in Canada, both in traditional media and over the internet.

At the international level, as part of our efforts to combat anti-Semitism, Canada is pleased to have obtained observer country status at the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education Remembrance and Research.

We also acknowledge the efforts of our domestic partners in contributing to the elimination of racism. For example, the Canadian Coalition of Municipalities against Racism and Discrimination, an initiative led by the Canadian Commission for UNESCO, has been established and continues to grow. Several Canadian municipalities have now joined the Coalition.

As we work to eliminate barriers to social participation and economic opportunity, we recognize that each individual and community faces unique challenges and that governments cannot combat racism alone. This is why we wish to recognize the efforts of the many Canadian non-governmental organizations who work to increase public awareness and understanding of how racism destroys communities. Their continuing efforts inform public dialogue about

multiculturalism, cultural diversity and anti-racism, which are fundamental aspects of a democratic and inclusive society.

Canadian society is built on a robust legal framework that advances the principles of respect and equality of opportunity for all. Although Canada is not immune from acts of discrimination, policies and recourses are in place to address these issues. We are continually looking for ways to enhance and complement our efforts to combat discrimination, including through the sharing of experiences and best practices with OSCE participating States.

To conclude, in the continuation of OSCE activities in combating discrimination and promoting mutual respect and understanding across the OSCE region, Canada believes that the OSCE should give priority to identifying and sharing best practices and efficient strategies and maintain an important focus on Hates Crimes data collection and response.

We support and salute the efficient work of the Tolerance and Non-discrimination program of the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights which, notably, has proven most useful in facilitating information sharing across the OSCE region.

We also recommend ongoing support for maintenance of the three personal representatives of the Chairman-in-office on Combating anti-Semitism, on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims and on Combating Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination.