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DECISION No. 7/09 WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL AND PUBLIC LIFE

The Ministerial Council,

Recalling the OSCE commitments for the advancement of gender equality, non-discrimination and promotion of men's and women's equal right to participate in political and public life,

Mindful of the continued under-representation of women in the OSCE area in decision-making structures within the legislative, executive, including police services, and judicial branches,

Concerned that widespread discrimination against women, continues to undermine their effective participation in political and public life at all levels,

Recognizing that keeping OSCE commitments under review, including in appropriate OSCE fora, can help to develop more effective approaches and measures,

Reaffirming that the full and equal exercise by women of their human rights is essential to achieve a more peaceful, prosperous, and democratic OSCE area,

Reaffirming the participating States' commitment to proactively implement throughout the Organization the 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality and recalling Ljubljana Ministerial Council Decisions Nos. 14/05 on women in conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation and 15/05 on preventing and combating violence against women,

Recalling UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), which calls for full and equal participation of women in decision making with regard to conflict prevention as well as in post-conflict reconstruction, and stressing the importance of their full and equal participation and involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security,

Taking note of UN Security Council resolution 1889 (2009), which urges international and regional organizations to take further measures to improve women's participation during all stages of peace processes,

Noting that 18 December 2009 marks the 30th anniversary of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which aims at ending discrimination against women in political and public life, and noting that 10 December marks the 10th anniversary of the opening of the Convention's Protocol for signature,

Recognizing that women may face additional barriers, beyond those based on gender, to their participation in political and public life,

Calls on the participating States to:

1. Consider providing for specific measures to achieve the goal of gender balance in all legislative, judicial and executive bodies, including security services, such as police services;
2. Consider possible legislative measures, which would facilitate a more balanced participation of women and men in political and public life and especially in decision-making;
3. Encourage all political actors to promote equal participation of women and men in political parties, with a view to achieving better gender-balanced representation in elected public offices at all levels of decision-making;
4. Consider taking measures to create equal opportunities within the security services, including the armed forces, where relevant, to allow for balanced recruitment, retention and promotion of men and women;
5. Develop and introduce where necessary open and participatory processes that enhance participation of women and men in all phases of developing legislation, programmes and policies;
6. Allow for the equal contribution of women and men to peace-building initiatives;
7. Take necessary steps to establish, where appropriate, effective national mechanisms for measuring women's equal participation and representation;
8. Support, as appropriate, non-governmental and research bodies in producing targeted studies and awareness-raising initiatives for identifying specific challenges in women's participation in political and public life and, in promoting equality of opportunities between women and men;
9. Encourage shared work and parental responsibilities between women and men in order to facilitate women's equal opportunities to participate effectively in political and public life.