

Opening speech delivered by Ambassador Andrew Tesoriere, Head of the OSCE Centre in Bishkek, at the round table “Comprehensive approach to addressing **gender-based domestic violence: role and competence of municipal bodies**”

Bishkek, 2 December, 2010

Distinguished Minister, (Deputy Minister), Mayor, Members of Parliament, dear guests and participants,

I am pleased to participate in today’s round table, not least in my capacity as the gender focal point of the OSCE Centre in Bishkek. The issue before us today is clear. Gender-based and domestic violence is intolerable and unpalatable in any society - and illegal in a democracy such as Kyrgyzstan.

Before proceeding, let me thank our partners for realizing this round table: the Ministry of Interior of the Kyrgyz Republic, UNFPA, and the Public Association “Democratic Processes Research Centre”.

Today’s round table builds on a similar event held in December last year. Then the participants stressed the importance of a coordinated, multi-agency approach to prevent and combat domestic violence. I am pleased to learn that the commitments, announced at that round table, have been realised to some extent in practice.

For the OSCE’s part, I welcome the creation of a working group by the Bishkek Mayor’s Office consisting of representatives from all relevant stakeholders – health services, education sector, social protection services and others. The work already achieved by this Group deserves high recognition.

Today we look forward to the presentation on the results of the working group in developing more effective mechanisms to prevent gender-based and domestic violence. I understand that recommendations stemming from our discussions today will be considered in their work plan for next year.

We all recognize that more needs to be done. The development of a more systematic approach to tackling gender-based violence will have better long-term results than reliance on a string of ‘isolated’ initiatives.

A partnership approach among national and international authorities will serve as a strong foundation. The National Police are just one part of a wider collective effort. In this regard, I congratulate the Police for the increase in the issue of “Temporary Security Orders” in recent years. This is a good if sobering indication of the scale of the problem – but also progress.

We look forward to listening to participants on next steps. Today’s meeting – and the work that underlies it – should send a powerful public message that the problem of domestic violence is not treated with indifference. The OSCE is willing and ready to continue to support Kyrgyzstan in overcoming this social evil.

I wish you all success and fruitful discussions. Thank you for your attention.