

OSCE HUMAN DIMENSION IMPLEMENTATION MEETING 2006

**CANADIAN STATEMENT FOR THE WORKING SESSION 4:
TOLERANCE AND NON-DISCRIMINATION I
4 OCTOBER 2006
WARSAW**

**Equality of Opportunity for Women and Men; Implementation of OSCE Action
Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality; Role of Women in Conflict Prevention
and Crisis Management; Prevention of Violence against Women**

Thank you, Madame Moderator.

Canada is pleased that issues related to gender equality and women's human rights are being discussed today as much work remains to be done. In this light, Canada reaffirms its support for the 2004 OSCE Action Plan on the Promotion of Gender Equality.

We are pleased by the progress made in its implementation. This progress includes an increase in staff who are dealing with gender mainstreaming and unprecedented awareness of gender mainstreaming within the system. It is critical that senior management in all OSCE structures demonstrate firm commitment to the implementation of the Action Plan. In addition, the development of area-specific implementation plans and support materials and tools demonstrates the dedication to achieving the goals we have set for ourselves in this area. Therefore, we look forward to seeing more women in management positions throughout the OSCE structures.

In Canada, at the political level, the approach has been to encourage political parties to set targets for the participation of women, rather than to take legal or constitutional measures. Many of Canada's major political parties at the federal level have established programs to encourage and support women candidates. Measures include earmarking campaign funds for women, including grants for child care, household help, lost wages and campaign costs, and mechanisms to achieve greater gender parity on executives, governing bodies and committees.

Also, Status of Women Canada, currently funds a non-governmental initiative called "Getting to the Gate," an online bilingual campaign school which aims to increase the number of elected women at all levels of public office by providing practical tools and guidance.

However, Canada notes that the women, peace and security priority area has seen the least amount of attention from OSCE missions and therefore we call for additional efforts to ensure that gender mainstreaming is better incorporated into all three OSCE dimensions, particularly in the political-military dimension, as is called for in UNSC Resolution 1325.

Canada is currently developing its own National Action Plan to implement our commitments under UNSC Resolution 1325, in response to both a call from the United Nations Secretary General for such actions and a call from Canadian non-governmental organizations for a coordinated whole-of-government approach. We have recently

finalized a review of the gender training provided in Canada for military and civilian personnel involved in peace support operations which will form a part of our National Action Plan. We look forward to sharing this with participating States in the near future.

In the last 10 years, there has been significant increase in global awareness and advocacy, as well as development of standards and norms geared towards the elimination of gender-based violence. In addition, a number of countries have translated this international progress into national legislations and laws to address this issue.

However, there remains a need for the implementation of concrete actions and effective strategies to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls.

As a way of upholding our obligation to exercise due diligence to prevent all forms of gender-based violence, Canada is developing a national strategy on violence prevention, a process which began in September 2005. Following the World Health Organization's call for public health to take a lead role in violence prevention, the Canadian Public Health Association and the Ontario Public Health Association gathered together public health, justice, research and other interested organizations to form a multi-sectoral steering group to spearhead efforts to develop and implement a national violence prevention plan. The national strategy will address interpersonal violence, including intimate partner violence, sexual violence and elder abuse. Several provincial and territorial governments also have domestic or family violence action plans or strategies.

Finally, several jurisdictions have also created Domestic Violence Courts, which provide a range of specialized services, such as advocacy and support for women and children, expedited court processing, enhanced victim cooperation and support, translation services, greater conviction rates and appropriate sentencing, including treatment for abusers.

Thank you, Madame Moderator.