

OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting 2015
Statement by the delegation of Canada
Wednesday, September 23, 2015

Working session 5 – Gender equality and the prevention of violence against women

Madam Moderator,

Considerable progress has been made since the Beijing Platform for Action was adopted 20 years ago, but there is still a lot of work to be done in the areas of gender equality and the prevention of violence against women.

As we noted at this forum last year, discrimination against women and girls is one of the main barriers to the realization of their basic human rights. It also hinders sustainable development and is a structural driver of violence against women and girls and to their full integration in society.

We are therefore committed to promoting equality between women and men, in Canada and around the world, as well as the empowerment and full participation of women and girls in all decision-making processes, particularly those belonging to vulnerable groups. Among other measures, we are taking concrete steps to support women's entrepreneurial activities, whether they are looking to create innovative small businesses, take their place on boards of directors, create economic opportunities for immigrant women or participate in international trade missions. We have seen, time and again that the success of a country is tied to its empowerment of women.

Canada will also continue to prioritize the elimination of violence against women. This focus includes domestic and sexual violence, notably in conflict situations, and to work toward ending child, early and forced marriages. On this 15th anniversary of the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325, we are also continuing our efforts to promote the role that women play in peace and international security, particularly in peacebuilding, conflict resolution and international mediation. We welcome the growing attention the OSCE is paying to this important theme.

Madam Moderator,

The OSCE can and must do even more to promote gender equality, and to prevent and address violence against women and girls. We welcome the appointment of Ambassador Melanne Verveer as Special Representative of the OSCE Chairmanship-in-Office. We extend our full support to her, and to Ambassador Miroslava Beham, for their efforts to turn the OSCE into a model that fully incorporates women's vast range of experiences, talents and skills, which they can provide to ensure security in our region.

Canada's recommendations for this working session are as follows:

- For OSCE participating States to strongly condemn all forms of violence and discrimination against women, notably violence against women belonging to vulnerable groups.
- For participating States, the OSCE and its institutions to adopt a multi-disciplinary and multi-sectoral approach in order to address violence against women and girls, including legislative and non-legislative measures to prevent such violence and reduce its prevalence, to provide support and appropriate resources to victims and to hold perpetrators accountable for their actions.
- For OSCE participating States to fully recognize the relevance and benefits to our collective security of implementing the United Nations resolutions on women, peace and security, of reflecting this commitment in OSCE decisions, and of ensuring that women are fully involved in all decision-making processes.
- For the OSCE, its institutions and its field operations to help participating States to develop policies, programs and training to address the issues related to all forms of violence and discrimination against women.