

**CANADIAN INTERVENTION TO THE
2008 OSCE HUMAN DIMENSION IMPLEMENTATION MEETING
Warsaw, 29 September - October 10 2008**

Working Session 7: Tolerance and non-discrimination II, including equality of opportunity for women and men; implementation of the OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality; Promotion of Gender Equality and Prevention of violence against women

Violence against women and girls is one of the most pervasive, yet least recognized forms of human rights abuse. On a positive note, we have seen some important progress in increased global awareness and advocacy as well as the development of standards and norms. In addition, a number of countries have translated this international progress into national legislations and laws to address this issue. However, regrettably, despite increased attention to women's rights, there has been little progress in reducing overall levels of violence against women and girls.

The elimination of violence against women and girls is a longstanding Canadian priority, both at the national and international level. Canada pursues a multifaceted, multi-disciplinary approach that builds on a wide range of partnerships with its provinces and territories, women's organizations and non-governmental organizations, as well as other sectors of civil society. In September 2006, Canada released a key document addressing violence against women: *Measuring Violence against Women: Statistical Trends 2006*. This document sheds new light on the prevalence and manifestations of violence against women and girls in Canada. The report provides new data about criminal harassment, sentencing of perpetrators and the availability of victim services.

One of the primary challenges in tackling the problem of violence against women and girls continues to be the lack of comprehensive information on gender-based violence through the systematic collection and analysis of data. Collection of data and information disaggregated by sex, age, and other factors relevant to eliminating violence against women and girls is urgently needed.

To conclude, let us briefly mention the OSCE 2004 Action Plan on the Promotion of Gender Equality. In the Secretary General's recent presentation of the Annual Evaluation Report, it was noted that while some progress has been made to date towards achieving gender equality, several challenges remain that must be addressed. Specifically, more progress is required in the political-military and economic-environmental dimensions. Projects in these dimensions which address gender equality concerns are still too few in number. Canada would therefore like to see the OSCE continue its efforts to effectively implement gender equality into OSCE programming and projects, such as by performing gender-based analysis and formulating gender-responsive results. Ensuring that women's rights and equality are integrated into larger scale projects and sharing expertise between field missions and across the OSCE are two ways towards achieving this objective. Canada is extremely supportive of OSCE efforts to ensure that gender equality continues to be implemented effectively into OSCE programming initiatives and strongly supports the objectives of the OSCE 2004 Gender Action Plan.