



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

Secretary General Lamberto Zannier

Video message at the International Conference

Enhancing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian Region

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I am very pleased to have the opportunity to participate in this opening panel, even if only through this video. This is an important conference because it brings together a number of experts looking at ways to increase the effectiveness of our actions, in addressing key security issues of our time – how to include women into peace and security efforts. To date we have seven UN resolutions pertaining to Women, Peace and Security, the last one of these passed as recently as last month.

The Women, Peace and Security agenda is at the heart of the OSCE concept of comprehensive security. The OSCE participating States have recognized the importance of UNSCR 1325 and the six subsequent resolutions and in 2005 we passed a Ministerial Council Decision dedicated to increasing Women's Participation in Conflict Prevention, Crisis Management and Post-Conflict Rehabilitation. In addition, the participating States integrated a gender perspective and a reference to UNSCR 1325 in the 2011 Ministerial Council Decision on the Elements of the Conflict Cycle. The OSCE has taken a number of initiatives to implement these MC Decisions such as this conference here today.

These international commitments and resolutions indicate that we all agree that women should be included in all democratic processes and it has been recognized that their contribution is important for a stable and sustainable democracy. However, despite best intentions and efforts, including from so many of you present today, this commitment has

yet not been fulfilled. Thirteen years after the passing of resolution 1325 there is still a limited understanding of the gender dimensions of conflict and of the need for a gender perspective in peace and security processes. There is a gap between policy and practice and on the ground women's experience of conflict and its resolution has not been affected profoundly. While the development of gender-sensitive policies constitutes a major achievement, their implementation remains a significant challenge.

One reason for the the slow implementation of resolution 1325 and the subsequent six resolutions could be the requirement to fundamentally change the way we understand security. The resolutions request us to analyze security from a male and female perspective in order for us to gain greater understanding of the needs of the society as whole, but also to better understand, at an early stage, the underlying causes for tension or conflict from a more comprehensive perspective, leading us to be better prepared for preventive work which is required in order to stem a conflict. On the one hand, this means that not only do women need to be represented in sufficient numbers in politics and public institutions, as well as security institutions such as the police and military forces. On the other, there needs to be a gender analysis of the policies and structures as such to make sure that the legal framework as well as societal structures are atoned to the needs of the population as a whole and give them equal rights and obligations in regards to their rights.

As is the case with many international policy frameworks, UNSCR 1325 is a broad document that allows for flexible implementation, be it through National Action Plans or a gender equality strategy. In any case we should recognize that we lose a great potential to create lasting and sustainable peace when leaving women out of the equation. We must move beyond words to establish and implement an ambitious but achievable agenda for action on Women, Peace and Security. The success of our efforts will not be measured by the reports or the legislation we pass. It will be measured by the degree to which we protect the lives and well-being of women and girls and empower them to play their rightful and vital role in peace processes, conflict resolution, post-conflict reconstruction and governance.

In conclusion, I very much hope that this conference will spur action both at the national level and at the OSCE level to make the vision of UNSCR 1325 a reality in the lives of women and men throughout the OSCE region. Over the next two days, you will exchange proposals

of how to implement the Women, Peace and Security agenda, share ideas and lessons learned, and devise strategies that lead to effective implementation of UNSCR 1325 and related commitments. I wish you all great success in your work over the next two days and in the work you are doing to advance peace and security in our region and beyond.

Thank you.