

Canadian Delegation to the
Organization for Security & Cooperation
in Europe



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Délégation du Canada auprès de
l'Organisation pour la sécurité et la coopération
en Europe

**DELEGATION OF CANADA TO THE OSCE
CURRENT ISSUES: INTERNATIONAL WOMAN'S DAY
655TH MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL
8 MARCH 2007**

Mr. Chairman,

Today, March 8 is International Women's Day. This year's international theme of "Ending Impunity for Violence" and Canada's theme of "Ending Violence against Women: Action for Real Results" sit firmly within Canada's core values, namely of freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law. They remind us of the persistent and unacceptable nature of violence against women and girls, and of the work that remains to be done to achieve gender equality.

Canada takes seriously its commitments to ending all forms of violence against women and girls, and has taken steps to address questions of impunity for such crimes in the international sphere. Canada played a significant role in keeping violence against women on the agenda at the United Nations Commission on Human Rights. The United Nations' ensuing mandate most recently generated an in-depth study on violence against women by the United Nations Secretary General. The Secretary General's report emphasizes the need for political will and commitment at the highest levels to make strengthening prevention of and ending impunity for gender-based violence a priority.

International Women's Day is an occasion for us to review how far we have come in the struggle for equality, peace and development. It is also an opportunity to unite, network and mobilize for meaningful change. We need to remind ourselves of the 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality, which stipulates, inter alia, the need to integrate a gender aspect in all programmes of the Organization and calls for gender mainstreaming in policies, programmes and projects in all three dimensions, the politico-military, the economic-environment and the human dimension.

Further, in 2005, the Ministerial Council adopted a Decision on Women in Conflict Prevention, Crisis Management and Post-Conflict Rehabilitation, which, together with the 2004 Action Plan, provides a solid framework for the promotion of gender equality into the Organization's first dimension.

Today is an appropriate occasion to renew our commitments to these instruments and redouble our efforts to meet the challenges of gender mainstreaming in building effective and strong democracies across the OSCE region.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.