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Mr Chairman,

Four years ago the UN Security Council adopted its resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. The Security Council urged member states to ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention management, and resolution of conflict.

Without women no peace is sustainable. The Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ms Laila Freivalds together with her Spanish colleague, Mr Miguel Angel Moratinos made this point very clear earlier this month in an article published in the Swedish daily Aftonbladet and the Spanish El País.

The article was written with the EU take over of the peace keeping mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina in mind. But it is equally true for the OSCE. Women have an important role to play in early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post conflict rehabilitation.

We want the OSCE to be successful in implementing its Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century. Recent studies show that women's involvement in crisis management is a precondition for creating a stable and sustainable security situation.

The OSCE has a cross-dimensional perspective and a vast field experience. It could combine gender competence from the Human Dimension with the experiences from the pol mil dimension. As a regional security organisation the OSCE has a responsibility to provide guidance for other international organisations in the field.

Through the development of standards within the OSCE we could make an impact on our own field missions as well as on our respective national armed forces.

Research carried out in different crisis management theatres shows that:

- 1) Local women rather give confidences to female peace keeping staff.
- 2) Female negotiators are better than their male colleagues at explaining and articulating implications of peace processes to women.
- 3) Peace keeping operations with high female participation have been more successful than those with few or no women.
- 4) In peace keeping operations where at least 30 per cent of the staff are women local women are more inclined to participate in the peace process.
- 5) Gender mainstreaming increases the quality of peace keeping missions.

We have chosen to bring up this subject in this session “The Way Forward” as this is an area where little has been done and much to be accomplished.

The role of women in peace keeping forces has been overlooked. It is understandable since the number of women in armed forces in most countries is very low. This is the case also in Sweden, although female officers have been recruited since the early 1980s. But the drop out rate is high, the careers are slow. In fact Still today very few women choose to enter the ranks. There are reasons for this and they need to be addressed.

To increase the number of women in peace keeping forces we need to improve the overall recruitment to the armed forces. Who is in the best position to tell us what to do? We believe that we as a first step need to listen to the few women we actually have in uniform. We need to take account of their experiences, both from their daily duties and from crisis management operations. We must get their views on how they best can contribute to peace and stability.

The OSCE could provide an arena for a first female military exchange of experiences. The results of such a meeting could provide the basis for future cross dimensional action.

I thank you for your attention.

