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**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF CANADA TO THE OSCE  
AT THE 707th PLENARY MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

3 April 2008

**In response to the statement by Ambassador Douglas Davidson,  
Head of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina**

Canada is pleased to welcome Ambassador Douglas Davidson, Head of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, once again to the Permanent Council. We thank him for his report, which gives us a clear picture of the challenges that that country continues to face.

We have taken note of the Ambassador's remarks regarding the progress made towards the consolidation of a State with democratic and representative structures, where the rights and equality of all citizens regardless of their origin or religion are recognized and protected.

However, as the Ambassador pointed out major obstacles continue to delay the achievement of this goal. In that connection, we are in agreement with the Ambassador's conclusions that Bosnia and Herzegovina should turn its back on the political and cultural nationalism that has dominated the public and political arena over the last 15 years.

Canada continues to encourage the country's leaders and its people to put their disagreements behind them and to build a society based on a culture of tolerance and respect among its various components. The positive examples reported by the Ambassador, such as the establishment of integrated armed forces, show that this is possible.

We welcome the OSCE Mission's efforts to foster the development of institutions capable of reflecting and protecting the interests of everyone. Its activities at the municipal level, in the area of education and in supporting legislative assemblies, have yielded handsome dividends. The support that the Mission provides for the judicial process, particularly as regards war crimes and the monitoring of trials, also constitutes an essential aspect of its work. The process of investigation and prosecution should be pursued diligently, comprehensively and in keeping with sensible time limits and the norms of international law.

Canada is working together with the other donor countries and the OSCE Mission to support the reform of the justice system in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We truly believe that access to competent and responsible judicial institutions helps to strengthen security and assists in the creation of an environment conducive to development.

Mr. Chairman,

Of course, the reduction of staff at the Mission cannot fail to cause some upsets, but it is also testimony to the progress made in recent years. The recent political tensions and the calling into question of some elements and principles of the Dayton Accords are, however, cause for concern. We urge the responsible politicians in Bosnia and Herzegovina to build on the experience already gained, to put aside divisive reflexes and to take the necessary risks to achieve genuine and lasting peace and stability and greater integration for Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Euro-Atlantic institutions.

We should like to thank Ambassador Davidson and all his team for the essential work they are performing and wish them every success as they carry out their mandate.