

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Portugal to the OSCE,

Ambassador Jorge Lobo de Mesquita, on the occasion of the

International Women's Day

1219<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council

7 March 2019

Mr. Chairperson,

Portugal aligns itself with the statement by the European Union on the occasion of the International Women's Day and would like to add the following in its national capacity.

Last December, in Milan, the Ministerial Council adopted a Decision on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women. This Decision calls on participating States to, *inter alia*, "Take action to address violence, abuse, threats, and harassment, including through digital technologies, directed at women."

In this vein, and in addition to the existing legislation and the National Strategy for Equality and Non-Discrimination 2018-2030 – which includes the elimination of all forms of violence against women, gender-based violence and domestic violence – the Portuguese Government has decided to declare 7 March as national mourning day in order to pay tribute to the victims of domestic violence and their families.

The decision reflects large national consensus and mobilization in the fight against this social scourge. Domestic violence is an intolerable and unacceptable social reality in any country, requiring determined action and the joint efforts of the entire society to defend, in an uncompromising way, the integrity and dignity of women.

It is paramount to counteract the trivialization and the indifference, paying homage to the victims and their families and ensuring awareness.

Domestic violence is not about women and is not about men. It is about entire societies, which collectively should address it and eliminate it.

Thank you very much!