



## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

### **On International Women's Day**

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires a.i. Harry Kamian  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
March 8, 2018

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We welcome Ambassador Verveer here today as we commemorate International Women's Day.

Madam Ambassador, let me second the Chair in expressing our profound appreciation and gratitude for your willingness to continue this important leadership role. Your presence is felt. The contributions that you made so far are real, and we're all better off as a result of it. You can continue to count on our unconditional, unwavering support for your efforts. So, thank you very, very much.

Mr. Chair, thank you very much for mentioning the exhibition that our Swedish colleague and her government are putting forward. I look forward to participating in it. As one of the very first male Foreign Service Officers in the United States who had an opportunity to take advantage of the Family Medical Leave Act, I know first hand the profound impact that government legislation creating opportunities for all parents to participate in the upbringing of the children can have on families. And, I feel very proud of the role that I've been able to play in encouraging men and women with whom I've worked to take advantage of similar legislation to participate in their family lives. So Ulrike, thank you very much for that.

Mr. Chair, equal opportunity for women and men in all spheres of life is critical to building democratic societies and ensuring respect for universal human rights, to supporting open and accountable governance, to ending extreme poverty, to furthering international peace and security, and to growing vibrant market economies. On this day, the United States renews our steadfast commitment to addressing inequalities between women and men at home and abroad, and reaffirms the importance of advancing the status of women and girls globally.

Equal opportunity also means freedom for women and girls to attain their full potential in all sectors of national and international life – from political leadership to civil society and private sector business. In too many countries, women are marginalized by sexual harassment and discrimination in educational institutions or in the workplace. We commend those participating States that have enacted and enforced legislation to level the playing field for men and women. As the United States National Security Strategy has asserted, governments that fail to treat women equally do not allow their societies to reach their full potential.

As Secretary of State Tillerson has said, women's empowerment is not just a moral imperative; it's a strategic investment in our collective security. Women's security is a matter of international security. Without it, we all lose. And Madam Ambassador, I could not agree with you more. It's not a zero sum game.

The United States is deeply committed to empowering women both at home and abroad. Our policies will work to advance the economic empowerment of women by promoting entrepreneurship and equal access to education, employment opportunities, and training adapted to a new economic landscape. I share your view that we as participating states together with the executive structures of the OSCE and the field missions can and should do more to effectively implement the existing mandates. In this vein, we look forward to working with you, the CiO, and other participating states to identify and more importantly implement concrete projects on the ground to advance these policies.

We recognize the unique contributions and courage of women, and their essential role in making the world more safe, prosperous, free, and peaceful.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.