

Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
2 October 2008, Working Session 7
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Excellencies, Dear colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Exactly one week ago, the OSCE Secretary General presented to the Permanent Council his annual evaluation report on the implementation of the 2004 Gender Action Plan, a matter which we are discussing today.

The report identifies many accomplishments that should be applauded but also challenges that need to be addressed. The OSCE is advancing towards gender equality but the progress is slow and not systematic in all areas of the Action Plan.

Advances cover capacity building, a better working environment, increase in the share of women among professionals, equality frameworks and policies in various host countries and much more. However, improvements are needed in two key areas: Firstly, the mainstreaming of gender aspects must be broadened to not only cover the human dimension but also the politico-military and the economic and environmental dimensions; and secondly, the participation of women in the management and steering of OSCE executive structures and programmes must be increased.

On the first point, the annual report shows that little progress has been made in the implementation of MC.DEC/14/05 on Women in Conflict Prevention, Crisis Management and Post-Conflict Rehabilitation. It also shows that efforts are fragmented in small projects draining much energy and with little impact. The report recommends to dedicate more resources and expertise to include gender concerns in the first and second dimensions; to move away from the fragmentation of gender equality efforts in small micro-projects and instead, to concentrate on a few but powerful and visible thematic clusters across the field operations.

Clearly, our field operations should focus more on addressing women's and girls' concerns and include their contributions within the framework of politico-military and environmental and economic programmes. The Gender Section, together with the Office of the Co-ordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities, is developing a guide on how to mainstream gender in environmental projects. As explained during the side event earlier today, the Section is preparing coaching materials for OSCE politico-military managers with practical guidance for the integration of women's and men's concerns in

security related projects. Furthermore, a roster mapping female experts in police and military affairs is being put together. Once established, this databank will facilitate the access of participating States and OSCE recruitment officers to qualified female profiles.

On the second point, since the approval of the Gender Action Plan in 2004, a steady but slow improvement has been observed. In 2008, women account for 43 per cent of all OSCE professionals. However, in management positions, men outnumber women in all OSCE structures by more than four to one (81 per cent men, 19 per cent women). The Secretary General's report calls on participating States to increase their nominations of female professionals for senior positions and on all recruitment actors within the Organization and in the participating States to intensify their joint efforts to bring about improvements. The Gender Section will undertake an in-depth forward looking gender analysis of the recruitment, secondment, retention and advancement of female professionals to higher positions.

Finally, on MC.DEC/15/05 on Preventing and Combating violence against women, many participating States are devoting political will, attention and good work to prevent and eliminate gender and conflict based violence. Many of these experiences will be showcased and debated in the experts' seminar we are organizing in collaboration with the field operation and local authorities this month, from the 20 to 22, in Dushanbe, Tajikistan.

Excellencies and colleagues let me finish by stressing that the OSCE has taken strides to implement the 2004 Gender Action Plan, but much hard work remains ahead. I look forward to a close co-operation with all of you.

Thank you.