



Statement by the Kingdom of the Netherlands

Human Dimension Implementation Meeting

WS 14: Tolerance and Non Discrimination II, including ensuring equal opportunity for women and men in all spheres in life, including through implementation of the OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality

Thank you MR/Madam Moderator,

The Netherlands aligns itself with the statement of the European Union and would like to make some remarks in its national capacity.

Promoting gender equality and empowering women is a priority in the foreign policy of the Netherlands. Investing in women's rights is a requirement for sustainable development. Adopting an inclusive approach makes it possible to develop fairer and more durable peace, recovery and reconstruction processes. Therefore the Netherlands continues to underline the importance of gender mainstreaming in the context of the OSCE's comprehensive concept of security.

The Netherlands has traditionally been very active in the field of combatting violence against women, which is reflected in the tabling of a resolution on

the prevention of violence against women in the UN General Assembly every two years. This year, we put a special focus on domestic violence. One of the issues highlighted in this resolution is that the engagement and participation of men and boys in the prevention and elimination of all forms of violence against women should be enhanced. Since progress in this field is impossible without the participation of numerous civil society organizations, we have developed an international fund for women organizations: Funding Leadership and Opportunities for Women: FLOW. FLOW is currently the biggest women's rights fund in the world.

Mr/Madam Moderator,

Furthermore the Netherlands aims for greater respect for sexual and reproductive rights in society at large, as well as in legislation, policy and implementation. To realize this, we, the OSCE participating States, must enhance efforts to combat violence against and sexual exploitation of women throughout the OSCE area, including in armed conflicts.

Moreover, the Netherlands works actively towards changing the narrative regarding women by portraying women not as victims but powerful and courageous members of society, who can change their own destiny as well as that of others.

In this light we believe it is time to update the OSCE commitments through an Addendum to the Gender Action Plan, or through other relevant new commitments in the field of gender equality. However, we want to stress that any new commitment to enhance gender equality should bring added value to the existing OSCE framework and not weaken the mandates of respective OSCE actors. In this light we want to emphasize that the language used should be consistent with other international obligations.

We commend the OSCE executive structures and field missions for their activities in the field of enhancing gender equality and will continue to provide support to this important objective.

Thank you.