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**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR FREDERICKA GREGORY
AT THE 754th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

12 March 2009

Madam Chairperson,

I should like to take the floor today to call attention to International Women's Day, which was held on Sunday, 8 March.

The Government of Canada remains committed to advancing equality for women and to their full participation in all aspects of life in Canada and abroad.

As shown by Canada's theme for this year — "Strong Leadership. Strong Women. Strong World: Equality" — and as history has shown, when women are empowered, our society benefits in countless and lasting ways.

As my Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Stephen Harper, said this week:

"This begins with promoting economic security and prosperity for women, ending violence against women and increasing the number of women in leadership roles."

Madam Chairperson,

Canada's approach rests mainly on three pillars — economic security for women, ending violence against women, and greater participation for women in government — and our policy is being implemented through various measures and laws aimed at enabling women to participate fully in the economic, democratic and social life of our country.

This Permanent Council meeting today is an ideal opportunity to renew our commitments to the OSCE and redouble our efforts to mainstream the women's dimension into all our activities. These commitments are vital to our efforts to build our democracies on solid foundations throughout the OSCE.

One of our major challenges in the OSCE is to improve the integration of women into the politico-military dimension. To this end, we enthusiastically welcome the "Women in Conflict" seminar supported by the Greek Chairmanship in Vienna this week.

We are also delighted by the importance which the Greek Chairmanship attaches to the subject of the status of women in our region. We reiterate our support for this priority.

In closing, Canada would like to take this opportunity to encourage all the partners around this table to redouble our efforts to meet our goals in order to support our Gender Equality Action Plan and increase the level of information and awareness in the OSCE.

Thank you.