

OSCE Human Dimension Implementation meeting 2014**Statement by the Delegation of Canada****Working Session 7: Tolerance and Non-Discrimination I, including equality of opportunity for women and men and the implementation of the OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality
25 September, 2014**

Madam Moderator,

Equality between women and men, the empowerment of women and girls, including the protection and promotion of their rights, are central to Canada's policies and programs. We support efforts by the OSCE to ensure that the rights of women and girls are respected, and fully and effectively integrated into its work.

In this regard, the 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality is an important tool to advance equality both within the organization and in all OSCE participating States. Whether at the Secretariat, the Institutions or the Field Operations, OSCE policies, programmes, projects and activities should ensure the leadership, and full and meaningful participation of women in all structures and decision-making processes.

As our Foreign Minister, John Baird, stated at the London Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict in June, "It is not enough for women to be in the room, they must be at the head table".

This is why last year Canada welcomed Secretary-General Zannier's announcement that women now represented one third of OSCE Senior Management, the highest proportion ever. While this demonstrated progress, we note that structural imbalances remain among various parts of the OSCE, and that such imbalances are often a reflection of the situation in participating States themselves.

Canada leads the annual resolution at the Human Rights Council on eliminating violence against women. 2014's resolution was focused on the theme violence against women as a barrier to women's political and economic empowerment.

We will be saying more on addressing violence and discrimination against women and girls during tomorrow's dedicated discussions but needless to say, equality, empowerment, dignity, and freedom will not be achieved as long as patterns of violence and discrimination continue.

Improving the disaggregation of data and indicators can help us identify and tackle these challenges. Doing so not only helps reveal the specific barriers affecting women and girls, but also informs the development of appropriate responses.

Madam Moderator,

Some people ask why a security organization like the OSCE should dedicate time and resources to promoting equality between women and men. The answer is simple: we consistently see that

the most prosperous states are ones where women play a fulsome role in all decision-making process. The respect and promotion of the human rights of women and girls, their equality and their empowerment are essential drivers of democratic life, increased economic prosperity, sustainable development, and, ultimately, greater security for all citizens of OSCE participating States, both women and men. It is only through the empowerment of women and girls that stability and sustainable development will be achieved.

Canada's recommendations for this session are:

-For the OSCE and its Institutions to ensure that the rights of women and girls are promoted, protected, and fully and effectively integrated into their work.

-For OSCE participating States to take meaningful steps to recognize and address the barriers that women and girls continue to face and ongoing inequality between women and men.