

**OSCE HUMAN DIMENSION IMPLEMENTATION MEETING 2006**

**CANADIAN STATEMENT FOR THE WORKING SESSION 10:  
DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS  
9 OCTOBER 2006  
WARSAW**

Thank you, Mr. Moderator.

My delegation associates itself with the statements of other participating States concerning the tragic death of the well-known Russian journalist, Anna Politkovskaya. We, too, expect a thorough investigation of the crime and swift bringing to justice of its perpetrators. We express our deepest condolences to her family and friends.

Mr. Moderator,

Democratic elections are an essential condition for the development of a stable democracy, the rule of law and the protection of human rights. Building vibrant democratic institutions is the best guarantor of peace and stability in the OSCE region. These standards and principles are enshrined in the 1990 Copenhagen Document, which covers specific commitments relating to democratic elections.

Elections activities hold a unique importance in ODIHR programs. Their foundations are objective assessments based on factual observation, the use of a sound methodology and rigorous protocols and the freedom from political interests. These are at the heart of the world recognized expertise and credibility of the OSCE and are core essential to be defended by all participating states.

In that context, Canada strongly supports the idea of election activities training as a way to strengthen existing capacities in participating States and to professionalize observers. This training should be offered to all participating States and be open to officials and representatives of the civil society alike. This would also represent a way for ODIHR to

increase technical cooperation with and assistance to participating States, in the lead-up to and following elections, with the objective of supporting democratization and institutional reform programs.

Finally, in the context of discussions on strengthening the effectiveness of the OSCE, Canada believes that it is imperative to maintain the autonomy of ODIHR. This is crucial to ensure effective implementation, monitoring and strengthening of our Human Dimension commitments to the benefit of the entire OSCE region.

Thank you, Mr Moderator.