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29 June 2004

ENGLISH only

To: All Delegations  
Secretariat

Please find attached the summary of the meeting of the **Informal Working Group on Gender Equality and Anti-Trafficking** held on 21 June 2004.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Amb. Kongshem, Dr. Gracheva', followed by a smaller, more stylized signature.

Amb. Kongshem, Dr. Gracheva  
Co-Chairs of the Group

**Summary  
of the meeting of the Informal Working Group  
on Gender Equality and Anti-Trafficking**

**21 June 2004**

*Co-chairs: Ambassador Mette Kongshem (NORWAY)  
Dr. Vera Gracheva (RUSSIAN FEDERATION)*

**1. Introductory remarks on the continuation of the work on a Gender Action Plan:**

The *Co-Chair (Norway)* recalled that 5-6 months ago, the need for a revision of the 2000 Gender Action Plan (AP) had been addressed. The underlying argument was to ensure sustainability of the work carried out by the OSCE in the field of gender equality and gender mainstreaming. It had been concluded in the working group that the 2000 AP needed to be strengthened, and more ambitious goals needed to be included. She noted that despite the commitments made in Istanbul in 1999, despite the 2000 Action Plan and despite the very good work done by the Senior Gender Adviser in the Secretariat and the activities of the Gender Unit in ODIHR, there has been a lack of explicit and articulate focus on gender issues in the OSCE in all three dimensions. Her reading of the situation was that the work had proceeded well and that a draft which could eventually meet with consensus was in sight. She mentioned that the important goal of a new gender AP would be to increase awareness on the importance of gender equality for the overall work of the OSCE. She noted that one reason why there had not been sufficient progress in this field since 2000 could be attributed to a lack of resources. Furthermore criteria had to be introduced so that it would be possible to measure and monitor progress. Only one person in the Secretariat is dealing with gender and she has steadily been given more tasks. She underlined that a more ambitious AP would clearly require more resources to deal with the additional tasks on training, management, recruitment, mainstreaming and reporting in the new draft Action Plan. Therefore the *Co-Chair (Norway)* inquired whether the political will for such an AP existed. She recalled the recent debate regarding gender issues in the Programme Outline 2005 and noted that several delegations were not very favourable concerning an increase in budgetary resources for the new Action Plan. She added that one reason why the implementation of the 2000 Action Plan had not progressed more was, in addition to lack of resources the fact that this Action Plan had no criteria or benchmarks on which to measure progress, and implementation had never been discussed in the Permanent Council. But the Secretariat had regularly issued reports on implementation, the last dated 23 March this year – again giving a bleak picture in particular concerning recruitment.

The *Senior Gender Adviser* noted that indeed more resources were needed to implement the increased number of tasks related to gender issues. She noted that over the last five years, her responsibilities had multiplied. She had initially started by developing statistics and monitoring the working environment regarding gender equality. Her responsibilities then expanded to providing training in the induction courses; developing a Code of Conduct for missions; monitoring the implementation of the 2000 AP; developing a network of focal points in the missions and working with the missions on gender mainstreaming. The *Director for Human Resources (D/HR)*, underlined that such an ambitious new AP would have concrete financial implications, and added that this point should be taken into consideration when drafting the new AP. The *representative of ODIHR* noted that if the new AP were

implemented, ODIHR would rely on the resources of the Secretariat. *The Co-Chair (Russian Federation)* underlined that indeed the ambitious AP would require a budgetary increase.

Several *delegations* underlined the importance of political will for the implementation of the new AP. *One delegation* noted that it would have favoured an even more ambitious AP and noted that it was only natural that it would have to be matched by an increase in resources. *Another delegation* noted that apart from an increase in budgetary resources, there would also be a need for an increase in human resources. *A delegation* noted that focus would have to be placed on the priorities which ought to be implemented through the new AP. *Another delegation* noted that indeed it had expressed some doubts during the Programme Outline 2005 (PO) discussions. It hoped that some points in the PO concerning gender issues would be clarified. It furthermore believed that work fulfilled through the focal points was more effective than through a Gender Unit. It mentioned other priorities currently facing the OSCE, such as the fight against terrorism. It also noted that budgetary discussions should be held in another forum. *The Co-Chair (Norway)* agreed that it was not the forum for budgetary discussions but that time had now come to decide whether there was political will to continue and finalize the new Action Plan as it would imply an increase in both financial and human resources and she added that as of today only 0,08% of the OSCE budget was allocated to gender. *Another delegation* noted that discussions should not only centre around the percentage increase in the budget, but rather about the substance behind the percentage increases. *One delegation* wondered why there had not been any previous discussions concerning the lack of the full implementation of the AP 2000. *The Co-Chair (Norway)* replied that there had simply been a lack of interest for such a discussion. *The Senior Gender Adviser* noted that the focal points would remain and added that with the establishment of the Gender Unit, there was no intention of creating a large bureaucracy. She also agreed with the fact that there were other priorities for the OSCE, however underlined the importance of gender issues as an important element across all priorities. Gender is not a separate issue; it is cross-dimensional and must be integrated in all OSCE activities. *The Co-Chair (Norway)* noted that the comments shared by delegations were very useful. She announced that the drafting of the AP, which was initially planned for this meeting, would be postponed and added that the Co-Chairs would conduct bilateral consultations in the coming weeks. In conclusion, she asked delegations to further consult with capitals and mentioned that another meeting would be scheduled in a few weeks (13 July at 11.00 a.m.).

## **2. Any other business:**

***Briefing by the Co-Chairs to the Mediterranean Partner for Co-operation:*** *The Co-Chair (Norway)* informed delegations that the Co-Chairs had briefed the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation about the current work of the Informal Working Group on Gender Equality and Anti-Trafficking. She suggested they could be invited to some of the future meetings of the informal group. *Several delegations* expressed their support for attendance by the Mediterranean partners and the Co-Chair (Norway) suggested that a first meeting could take place in the fall.