

2010 HUMAN DIMENSION SEMINAR

STRENGTHENING JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE
AND PUBLIC ACCESS TO JUSTICE

17-19 May 2010

Novotel, Warsaw



Closing remarks by

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(ODIHR)

Check against delivery!

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The rapporteurs have so ably summarized the discussions in this room over the last three days and I am pleased with the outcome. Before I discharge my ceremonial functions as the Seminar Chair and close the meeting, allow me a few remarks.

The discussions we witnessed in the last few days demonstrate the complexities of the issues tackled at this seminar. Our moderators and introducers put forward questions of fundamental importance, such as:

- What can we realistically expect from judicial councils?
- What kind of judges do we want in our countries and how can we recruit them?
- Can we overcome corruption without compromising judicial independence?
- What steps must be taken by a government to ensure access to justice?

We heard many good answers and sound recommendations. We gathered them, make them available in the meeting report, analyze them and continue providing assistance to the

participating States in the areas we have discussed throughout the last three days.

We know that one size doesn't fit all when it comes to legal reform: solutions that work for one country will not necessarily enjoy the same success in another. However, exchanges of this kind certainly increase the likelihood of successful reform efforts.

Many of you mentioned separation of powers and discussed how the judiciary provides important checks and balances for the other branches of power. We also had our own separation of powers in this room. While the practitioners and the scholars debated particular solutions to the challenges facing our justice systems, NGOs provided us all with a reality check and told their stories as users of these justice systems. I am grateful for the constructive input we received from NGO participants.

We were reminded over the last days that the rationale behind this seminar is to facilitate exchanges on particular human dimension issues between experts of the participating States. The more such experts are brought together by the participating States – the more successful human dimension seminars will be. Conversely, if participating States are not sending experts, the utility of such meetings will be limited.

As Seminar Chair I have noted with sadness that many participating States did not attend this HDS. Only 36 out of 56 States demonstrated their interest through participation. This is not how it should be and it calls into question the commitment by participating States to making events such as this one a success.

On a more encouraging note, let me thank each and every one participant for your contribution. Your intellectual curiosity and commitment make these events worthwhile. We had engaging and lively debates in all four working groups because the experts around this table were interested in the experience of others.

I declare this Human Dimension Seminar closed.

Have a safe travel back.