

3 October 2012

OSCE Human Dimension Implementation meeting 2012**Canadian Statement for Working Session 15: Democratic institutions****Wednesday, 3 October, 2012**

Madam Moderator,

For Canada, advancing freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law are core values that underpin our foreign policy and international development assistance. Canada understands that limited government is good governance, and that the most effective system to limit the reach of government is a democratic government limited by the will of the people. Democracy offers the best chance for long-term stability and prosperity, through the enshrinement of civil liberties and human rights, affording citizens the sovereignty to shape their institutions and the decisions that affect their lives.

In 2010-2011, Canada spent over CDN\$225 million to help advance democracy around the globe, including within the OSCE. Our support includes assistance for locally-grown initiatives that seek to ensure that democratic systems and processes are responsive to the needs of citizens.

Electoral support and observation are important components for Canada's democracy assistance. Election observations enhance the integrity of election processes by documenting, deterring and exposing irregularities and fraud, and bearing witness to those who aspire for freedom. The presence of international observers can also help to mitigate electoral fraud and conflict, and build public confidence in electoral results.

This is why Canada continues to give priority to the OSCE's comprehensive security work, and to the role of the ODIHR in advancing regional democracy-building, human rights, and free and fair elections. The ODIHR's election monitoring work, recommendations and reports are to be commended, as is its effective partnership with the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in deploying election monitors to countries throughout our region.

Canada is disappointed by the flawed results of the recent elections in Belarus. We have repeatedly called on the Belarusian authorities to uphold democratic principles, respect for human rights and the rule of law, and we will continue to work with other like-minded countries and international organizations to ensure that the people of Belarus can exercise these fundamental rights. We take note of ODIHR's statement of preliminary findings and conclusions and look forward to seeing the final report.

On the elections in Georgia, we take note of ODIHR's statement of preliminary findings that they marked an important step in consolidating the conduct of democratic elections, while also identifying key issues that remain to be addressed. We encourage Georgian authorities to continue their cooperation with ODIHR in that regard.

As a community of countries committed to democracy, the OSCE-56 and its Partners for Cooperation have clearly benefited from the advice and support of the ODIHR through its

elections work and from the high calibre of its election observation missions. In this connection, we encourage OSCE participating States to make good use of a new on-line training tool that ODIHR has developed: the “E-Course for Short-Term Election Observers”. My delegation, as well as CANADEM and CIDA, are using this useful e-tool to prepare our election observers to implement ODIHR’s high standards and methodology on elections.

Since 2009, Canada has funded the deployment of 157 Canadians to 11 OSCE-ODIHR missions in six countries. We are also planning to send a large number of election monitors to help observe Ukraine’s October elections, including a number to be deployed through the OSCE-ODIHR Long-term and Short-term election observation missions, and through the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly missions.

Canada looks forward to continuing our cooperation on democracy support and election observation with the OSCE-ODIHR, and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

Thank you.