

OSCE Human Dimension Implementation meeting 2011

**Canadian Statement for the Working Session 16:
Tolerance and non-discrimination II (continued):
Equality of opportunity for women and men**

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Deputy Head of Delegation**

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Thank you,

Canada, like the OSCE, recognizes that the equal rights of women and men are essential to foster peace, sustainable democracy and economic development. Canada consistently calls for continued efforts to integrate women's rights and equality in OSCE institutions and missions and emphasizes the importance of implementing existing gender equality commitments. Specifically, Canada's priorities in this area include the elimination of violence against women and girls and the full and equal participation of women in decision-making.

Madam Chairperson,

We consistently reiterate that the issue of violence against women must be on the political and operational agenda for field missions. The Canadian International Development Agency has funded many gender-related OSCE and ODIHR projects, including training for ODIHR.

Within Canada, we promote gender equality by funding post-secondary education opportunities for both women and men. The proportion of Canadian women aged 25-64 years who have completed post-secondary education has increased from 51% in 1999 to 62% in 2009. There has been an increase in women's overall participation in professional fields of work traditionally dominated by men. Employment and participation rates of Canadian women are the highest among G7 countries and are approaching those of Canadian men. These accomplishments are due, in part, to Canada's commitment to achieving equality between men and women.

Madam Chairperson,

We wish to offer the following recommendations to the OSCE, ODIHR and participating States:

- We strongly encourage the OSCE and its Member States to work toward the implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. We look forward to a better sharing of expertise and best-practices between field missions and across the OSCE region.

- We encourage the ODIHR to continue its work with participating States to achieve the full implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

We believe the issue of equality between women and men requires ongoing attention from the OSCE and all of its participating States.

Canada is committed to working with its partners in the OSCE and other forums to make positive advancements.

Merci.