



OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting 2018

Working Session 17 – Statement by the Delegation of Canada, delivered by Second Secretary Jonathan Tan, Thursday, September 20, 2018

Moderator,

For this session, Canada offers the following recommendations:

- 1) That OSCE participating States, notably future Chairs, be ambitious and go beyond reactively responding to hate and discrimination, and to consciously and proactively foster inclusive approaches from the start.
- 2) To support this, participating States should use the OSCE and its institutions to share and develop best practices on effecting and promoting inclusion, so that all members of society can fully and meaningfully participate in economic, social, cultural, civil and political life.
- 3) For ODIHR to continue their steady work to uproot racism, discrimination and exclusion of all kinds while also seeking and developing innovative and holistic approaches to prevent and tackle these issues.
- 4) Recalling our Madrid 2007 commitment to combat all forms of discrimination, that all states eliminate laws and policies that discriminate against persons based on their sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or sex characteristics, and to combat all acts of violence targeted towards LGBTI persons.

Moderator,

In recent years, we have witnessed troubling incidents of racism, discrimination, and xenophobia across the OSCE region. In the face of this reality, Canada believes that as OSCE participating States we must redouble our efforts to build more inclusive societies that foster respect for diversity.

Diversity is a fact. While inclusion may not always be easy, it is both the right thing to do and the smart thing to do. Canada is not without fault, but we have come to learn that it is an error to try to impose uniformity on Canadian society. We recognize that an inclusive society is a stronger society, drawing on the talents of its entire population. We continue to strive towards this objective, but challenges remain, with our greatest one being national reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, based on renewed nation to nation relationships.

For Canada, the promotion and protection of the human rights of LGBTI persons is a foreign policy priority. Canada affirms that states must respect the human rights of everyone, including LGBTI persons, and that no one should be subjected to discrimination or violence because of their sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or sex characteristics. We encourage all states to support the work of local LGBTI organizations in order to further promote the welfare of LGBTI communities.

An inclusive society is stronger for many reasons. Inclusive economic growth reduces income inequality. Economies that capitalize on their diversity are more innovative, adaptive and competitive. Inclusive

workplaces are more productive, and have higher employee and client satisfaction. Companies with diversity in their senior management perform better.

Inclusive social policies and services provide more equitable access to resources and reduce social exclusion and marginalization. Inclusive communities have better education and health outcomes and they foster a sense of belonging and resilience, which lead to lower rates of crime and increased resistance to extremist messaging. There are widespread civil and political benefits when governments design inclusive policies which support human rights for all without discrimination. This leads to greater public participation and legitimacy for public institutions, making our democracies stronger.

But inclusion is more than this. A rich cultural life flourishes when creative expression and the free exchange of ideas are nurtured. Intercultural and interfaith dialogue enriches communities and increases social harmony.

Both individuals and societies have a responsibility to build a more inclusive world where “no one is left” behind, as stated in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. We commend OSCE field operations and institutions for their work to that end.