

OSCE Human Dimension Implementation meeting 2013
Canadian Statement for Working Session 3:
Tolerance and non-discrimination II (continued):
Tuesday, 24 September 2013

Mme Moderator,

Although we have taken strong steps forward, we all must strive to do better –both participating States and the OSCE executive structures– in reducing the persistent barriers to women’s empowerment and equality between men and women, in all facets of our regional security and stability work. We applaud the sharper focus on women and girls in the OSCE’s conflict cycle work, mandated by Ministers at the OSCE Ministerial Council in Vilnius in 2011. We also encourage all participating States to attach priority attention towards advancing the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, including in the OSCE context.

Canada has had the honour of chairing the annual UN Human Rights Council resolution to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls and we recently concluded a three-year cycle focusing on prevention, protection and remedies.

We are committed to enhancing the role of women in international peace and security. The active participation of women in all decision making processes that affect their communities and countries, including all economic, political and security structures and processes, is a necessary precondition for development and sustained peace.

Practices that harm women and girls including child, early and forced marriage are barriers to development and peace, as are rape and other forms of sexual violence. The human rights of women and girls must be respected in conflict situations, peace processes and democratic transitions and all parties to armed conflict must comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law. Canada is working to end these practices and crimes where they occur. The Government of Canada also condemns barbaric cultural practices, including honour killings, female genital mutilation, forced marriage or other sexually-based violence. Those guilty of such crimes are severely punished under Canada’s criminal laws.

Canada has demonstrated longstanding support for the human rights and well-being of women and girls in conflict and transition situations, including through the prevention and response to conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV). Building on a strong statement by G8 Leaders at the 2012 Camp David Summit on enhancing the role of women in international peace and security, G8 Foreign ministers this year launched the *G8 Declaration on the Prevention of Sexual Violence in Conflict* which was endorsed by Leaders at Lough Erne.

In that context, we join our voice to the delegation of the United Kingdom in expressing support for the *Declaration of Commitment to End Sexual Violence in Conflict*. It constitutes an

important addition to on-going international efforts to end sexual violence against women and girls.

Our recommendations for Session 3 are:

- For States to enact, reinforce or amend domestic legislation to enhance the protection of women and girls subjected to sexual violence.

- That States publicly condemn violence against women and girls and provide visible and sustained leadership to prevent acts of violence, including sexually-based violence.