



**PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

HUMAN DIMENSION IMPLEMENTATION MEETING

2 OCTOBER 2006

**OPENING STATEMENT BY THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF NORWAY,
AMBASSADOR METTE KONGSHEM**

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me at the outset to extend our deep thanks to the Polish government for its kind hospitality and warm welcome to Warsaw. Our thanks also go to everyone at ODIHR for their dedicated work in preparing for and organizing this important meeting under the human dimension of the OSCE. We also extend our greetings to the Chairman in Office, the Foreign Minister of Belgium, Karel de Gucht. The Belgian Chairmanship has exemplified in an excellent way that leadership of the Organization requires a strong belief in the importance of this Organization and the will to put it to maximum use for the participating States.

The annual HDIM meetings have proved to be an important venue where OSCE participating States, together with civil society, review and assess progress in the implementation of the human dimension commitments we have entered into, and provide input and encouragement in order to foster such implementation. And again this year the attendance is impressive. Some 1000 representatives from participating States, NGOs and international organizations will gather in Warsaw over the next two weeks. This sends a strong signal of the importance that the OSCE community attaches to the discussions which take place here and the peer review we are conducting in a partnership-based approach.

The fact of the matter is that the human dimension of security – namely the protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the promotion of strong democratic institutions and rule of law, is as important to the maintenance of peace and stability as are the politico-military and economic dimensions. Human rights and security are inseparable. All OSCE participating States are equally committed to upholding democratic principles and to observe the full range of human rights. That is why we agreed in Helsinki in 1992 that these are matters of direct and legitimate concern to all of us. That is also why the common goal agreed in the Paris Charter states that “our States will co-operate and support each other with the aim of making democratic gains irreversible”. And that is why we gather here at the HDIM every year to take stock and move forward.

Mr. Chairman,

The human dimension commitments constitute the bedrock of this Organization and a measure of its continuing relevance and success. We, the participating States, should actually take pride in the fact that we are all bound together by our common values and that we have set up the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights with the primary task of assisting us in developing and upholding a democratic culture that will in and of itself respect and promote the ideals expressed in our commitments. ODIHR is for all of us a helping hand.

Indeed, we are here to review implementation of commitments, not in a spirit of censure or humiliation, but in a spirit of trust and confidence, encouragement, collective effort, sharing of experience and assistance. Monitoring of implementation must be unbiased and our dialogue here at the HDIM must be open, frank and forward-looking. It is through genuine dialogue in a framework in which we are all equals that we will achieve progress. We must all participate fully in the work of this Organization. We will sometimes hold different positions, but it is only collectively we can deal with the challenges and reach consensus. Possible concerns about non-compliance of commitments must be addressed by all of us, because it concerns all of us.

Mr. Chairman,

Norway holds the work by ODIHR in high esteem, be it in the area of democratization, in election observation, rule of law, civil society, tolerance and non-discrimination including gender equality, freedom of assembly and freedom of movement. A substantial body of commitments has been accumulated over the years in the human dimension. The new focus on the Tolerance and Non-discrimination Programme, as well as additional tasks with regard to the Election Programme also requires additional resources. Norway therefore fully supports the proposals for additional allocations to ODIHR in the 2007 Unified Budget Proposal.

Mr. Chairman,

One may say that the OSCE is very much a “work in progress“. And indeed it should be exactly that: an on-going process as we steadily face new challenges and gain experience which may warrant follow-up. A static Organization will not serve us well. We must therefore have an open mind as to how best to approach new challenges and steadily improve the way in which we work together. Norway has high hopes for concrete and substantial results to emanate from the reform process we are currently engaged in, of strengthening the effectiveness of the OSCE. Constructive and creative efforts are now needed. The Brussels Ministerial is only a few months away. The mandate from Ljubljana requires that we reach consensus in Brussels.

Mr. Chairman,

The HDIM is an eminent occasion for participating States and NGOs to work together. Norway welcomes the broad NGO participation and we salute their hard work in promoting human rights and democracy across the OSCE region. We shall be looking forward to their active participation in our dialogue over the next two weeks. The NGOs are our conscience – reminding us of our commitments and calling us to account if we fail to put those commitments into practice. They are essential participants in our partnership-based peer review.

I thank you.