

OSCE HUMAN DIMENSION IMPLEMENTATION MEETING
2-13 OCTOBER 2006
Warsaw, Poland

INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS BY MS. ANJA H. EBNÖTHER, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR,
GENEVA CENTRE FOR THE DEMOCRATIC CONTROL OF ARMED FORCES (DCAF)

Wednesday, 4 October

10 a.m.–1 p.m. Working session 4:

Tolerance and non-discrimination, including:

- Equality of opportunity for women and men;
- Implementation of the OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality;
- Role of women in conflict prevention and crisis management;
- Prevention of violence against women.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

It is my great pleasure to be invited to address this session on tolerance and non-discrimination. I express my thanks to the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights for their invitation to participate in OSCE's Human Dimension Implementation Meeting.

My organisation, the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, or DCAF, and the OSCE cooperate on many levels. For example:

- DCAF supports the implementation of the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security;
- DCAF works closely with all of the OSCE field missions in the Western Balkans, in such areas as parliamentary assistance, border security, and in improving democratic oversight of the security sector;
- ODIHR and DCAF are working together to develop a Handbook on *Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of Armed Forces Personnel*.

DCAF might be also familiar to many of you, as the large proportion of OSCE participating States are also members of DCAF, being an international foundation

with 46 member states.¹ We work with governments, parliaments, civil society and security sector institutions in many OSCE participating States to promote good governance and reform of the security sector. Thus, it may be that some of you wonder why DCAF is here, not in the political-military dimension, but introducing this working session titled "tolerance and non-discrimination".

In endorsing the OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality, OSCE Decision 14/04 recognised, and I quote: "... that equal rights of women and men and the protection of their human rights are essential to peace, sustainable democracy, economic development and therefore *to security and stability* in the OSCE region..."² (unquote). The subjects of this working session - gender equality, violence against women and women's participation in peace and security - are security issues in their own right, and DCAF subscribes to that, too. The OSCE's goal is to promote "comprehensive security" and democratisation. What does this mean for women?

In recent years, the traditional meaning of security, as primarily the protection of states, had been revised, recognising security as a need and value that all individuals have the right to enjoy. The security sector should create conditions that enable all people to live "free from fear". Such a concept goes beyond state-centred military security, and focuses on the ability or inability of state institutions to ensure the protection of all citizens.

There are, however, impediments to achieving comprehensive security. Violence against women is one of them, and one of the most widespread human rights abuses and public health problems in the world today. Violence against women is an extreme manifestation of gender inequity, targeting women and girls because of their subordinate social status in society. The consequences are often devastating and long-term, affecting the whole family and community, and society as a whole.

¹ Of the OSCE's 56 participating States, Albania, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, the Russian Federation, Serbia, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and the United States of America are also members of DCAF.

² Emphasis added.

Violence against women is **epidemic**, in non-conflict as well as in conflict situations. We must confront its real scope and magnitude, and we must be shaken **from acceptance into urgent and concrete activities**:

- The World Health Organisation estimates that *one woman in five* will be a victim of rape or attempted rape during her lifetime; *one woman in three* the victim of violence. Studies estimate that between one fourth and one third of women and girls currently living in the European Union are subjected to male violence.
- It is estimated that 20'000 to 50'000 women were raped during the war in Bosnia in 1992. In comparison, in Liberia and Sierra Leone, every second or third women has been raped – often gang-raped. In Rwanda, between 250'000 and 500'000 women were raped during the genocide.
- Domestic violence is so pervasive that the acceptance of it is frightening, even amongst women. Studies in Austria and by WHO in some African countries, on attitudes towards domestic violence and rape found many women to agree, "*There are certain circumstances in which I believe it is acceptable for a man to hit or physically mistreat me*", and that "*Some women think it is normal to be beaten and that violence is justified.*" A shocking number of people do not consider marital rape as a crime, or do not think that beating is domestic violence or that psychological or physical threats are a form of violence. Up to 30% of women think that it is their own fault if they are treated violently by their partners.
- The number of women forced or sold into prostitution is estimated at anywhere between 700'000 and 4 million per year. Between 120'000 and 500'000 of them are sold to pimps and brothels in Europe alone. Each year 2 million girls between the ages 5 and 15 are introduced into the commercial sex market. We must acknowledge that these numbers are shockingly inaccurate and most probably even conservative.
- Violence and gender inequality make women and girls vulnerable to HIV/AIDS: when they cannot protect themselves, and when they lack the economic power

to remove themselves from relationships that carry major risks of HIV infection. Over the past two years, the number of women and girls infected with HIV has increased in every region of the world, particularly rapidly in Eastern Europe, Africa and Asia.

Through action or inaction, the state plays a role in legitimising abuse of girls and women. State structures fail women, for example when there is a lack of justice for rape victims, or when marital rape and domestic violence are not recognized as crimes. Violence against women reflects a malfunctioning security sector: one that fails to protect women and their families. In many countries, security forces are themselves part of the problem, subjecting women to violence, or being complicit in their exploitation.

In turn, violence against women perpetrates other forms of insecurity. The relationship between domestic violence and trafficking is becoming better understood: that if a girl or woman experiences violence at home, she is vulnerable to the lures of traffickers. Trafficking, as well as a violent form of exploitation and abuse of women and children, is often linked to other forms of organised crime, and in some regions of the world linked to the funding streams of terrorism.³

Violence against women is, as I have said, the most extreme manifestation of gender inequality. Women's under-representation in politics, women's poverty, women's exclusion from public life – fundamentally deny women security, and undermine democracy and development. These are, of course, related: OSCE's *"Action Plan for the promotion of Gender Equality"* testifies to the conviction of participating States that we cannot achieve comprehensive security without gender equality, and security is - after all - the primary goal of OSCE.

There is no **security** for women, or for communities, when violence against women continues with impunity. There is no **democracy** if one half of the population is excluded from decision and policy-making, if their voices are not heard.

Women also play key roles in building security, in conflict prevention and in crisis management. A strong civil society and democracy is crucial for sustainable peace,

³ Louise Shelley: June 2003 Statement to the US House Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on International Terrorism, Nonproliferation and Human Rights.

and in many post-conflict contexts, women's groups are the backbone of civil society. Ten days ago I was in Bosnia and Herzegovina, participating in an OSCE-supported workshop on women, peace and security. I would like to share with you an example of the ways in which the women there are building security. After the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, women had a strong desire to participate in rebuilding their country – matched by a frustration at being excluded from decision-making forums. **Women, regardless of nationality or religion, faced the same type of problems:** exclusion from power structures of society, violence, discrimination, poverty, and trauma. So, the women organised themselves to address concrete problems affecting their communities. Through contacts with women in other parts of the country, they created networks. They provided legal aid, health care and psychosocial support. Today in Bosnia and Herzegovina, most initiatives around peace and reconciliation are led by women's organisations. These women inform other women of their rights - their human rights, their economic, social and healthcare rights, their right to live free from violence and discrimination, their right to participate in all decision-making. They reach out to empower women in rural areas, who are often cut off from basic information. They are promoting, using and testing new laws, and through this are holding politicians and decision-makers accountable⁴. Bosnia has just recently approved a law, in which rape victims are recognized as war victims and therefore receive a pension- implementation to be followed.

The OSCE and participating states play a key role in supporting women's civil society, thus helping women help themselves to build a functioning, democratic society, and to increase security for all. In developing strategies in this regard, UN Security Council Resolution 1325, adopted in 2000, is a key point of reference for states, and multilateral organisations – the UN, EU, and NATO, as well as the OSCE; The OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality specifically refers to the Resolution. 1325 recognises both the vulnerability of women and girls in conflict (calling for measures to improve protection) and the important roles that women play in peace and security, in conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction processes. 1325 is a roadmap for more effective security operations that respond to the security needs of men, women, boys and girls.

⁴ "Kvinna till Kvinna", to make room for changes, 2006

A number of OSCE participating States have developed strategies to implement 1325 (among which are – to name a few - Sweden, Norway, United Kingdom, with Switzerland in the process of doing so – or within the framework of broader gender equality plans – Bosnia & Herzegovina). It is important to underline that 1325 does not only set priorities and responsibilities in times of armed conflict, but is an agenda for inclusive security in **peacetime, in everyday life**, as well.

1325 promotes women's full and equal participation in decision making and security processes. Women cannot be protected from violence during conflict, if security institutions are not staffed and educated in peacetime to recognise and respond to women's needs. For peace operations to include uniformed female personnel, the security services of the troop-contributing states must include women in sufficient numbers at every level. But in order to increase the number of women in international peacekeeping forces, first the numbers of women in **national forces** have to be increased!

On equality, 1325 speaks to the need to include women in the development of security policy and strategy, and to include violence against women, women's empowerment and gender equality more broadly within thinking about security. This is sorely lacking. Women's voices are still only on the margins of security discourse and security governance. Women are largely excluded from policy domains such as the military and foreign affairs.⁵ As of January 2005, worldwide, only 12 women held Defence Minister positions in parliaments, and 25 women held Foreign Affairs Minister positions.⁶

The **human dimension and the politico-military dimension of security must come together.** Gender equality and violence against women must become key priorities on any security agenda. Security institutions and programmes must also implement strategies for gender mainstreaming and promote women's participation.

⁵ United Nation Division for the Advancement of Woman " Equal Participation of Women and Men in Decision-Making processes, with Particular Emphasis on Political Participation and Leadership" EGM/EPDM/2005/REPORT

⁶ IPU " The Participation of Women and Men in Decision making: the parliamentary dimension" Adis Ababa Oct. 2005

Security sector reform aims for the efficient and effective provision of state and human security within a framework of democratic governance. In promoting good governance of the security sector, one must appreciate that the security sector encompasses not only state institutions with a mandate to ensure the safety of the state and its citizens (such as the armed forces, the police, border guards and customs and intelligence services) but moreover, those institutions that formulate, implement and oversee internal and external security policy. Parliaments, ministries of foreign affairs, interior and defence, and civil society organisations – to list just examples - play key roles in management and oversight of security institutions. Courts, prisons and other justice and law enforcement institutions are also a part of the security sector.⁷ In promoting accountability, transparency and participation, security sector reform extends beyond traditional politico-military considerations. It is a key dimension of fostering human rights, stability and democracy.

Security sector reform processes could better include women and therefore respond to women's security needs: to prevent and respond to violence against women, to redress the under-representation of women in decision-making positions within the security sector; and to create a participatory and democratic security sector. Unfortunately, security sector reform processes to date either ignore the security needs of women, or else treat women as helpless victims, rather than actors in building security. There is a need to share, build upon and develop our respective experience in this regard. How can peace operations better protect and empower women? How can better cooperation between police services break the back of human trafficking? How can women's voices be included in processes of police and defence reform?

DCAF, with United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), has commenced a collaboration with OSCE ODIHR to develop practical tools in integrating a gender perspective in security sector reform. We hope that this work will eventually answer some of these questions and will assist the international community, including the OCSE and participating States, in taking firm steps toward achieving security that is security for all, and in making gender equality a reality.

⁷ See, Heiner Hänggi 'Making Sense of Security Sector Governance' in DCAF's *Challenges of Security Sector Governance*, Hänggi, Heiner and Theodor H. Winkler (eds.).

Gender equality and women's political participation cannot be divorced from women's security. Only when the basic requirements of personal and family security are met, a woman starts to consider playing an active role in participatory processes in public life⁸. In general, security sector reform prepares the ground for a stable economic development. A functioning rule of law is a prerequisite to community trust in security actors – often absent where there has been conflict or tyranny.

Human rights are universal, but the experiences of humans vastly differ. Men and women and boys and girls have different needs and vulnerabilities, and different perceptions and capabilities. We must ensure that the needs of **all** are met, and the voices of **all** are heard. With UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and the Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality, the OSCE and its participating States have good instruments at hand. The challenge, as always, is concrete implementation of policies in programming and strategy. We need better strategies for bridging the political-military and human dimensions to attain security for women: including through education, training, monitoring and reporting; and through improved collaboration with women's civil society. Women must be given places at decision-making tables, and given the opportunity to take their place in making this world together a better place – to strengthen human rights, democracy, the rule of law and, with that, security.

I thank you for having given *me* the platform to talk to you.

⁸ But there are also courageous prominent women already at the cutting edge that suffer domestic violence because of their being prominent.