

OSCE Human Dimension Implementation meeting 2011

**Canadian Statement for the Working Session 1:
Fundamental freedoms I:
Including Freedom of expression, free media and information
Monday, 26 September 2011**

Thank you,

First we would like to commend the ongoing efforts of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media to closely monitor, underline and denounce human rights violations in the OSCE region in the matter of media freedom.

Canada applauds the particular efforts made by the Representative on Freedom of the Media to clarify and explain the challenges related to new media, including the challenges and opportunities of the digital switchover. The accessibility of new media to both publishers and consumers should be facilitated by the new technology available, and should improve minority representation around the world.

Canada will always stand firm for the freedom of opinion and of expression: they are pillars of democracy and rule of law. For the freedom of opinion and expression to flourish, a vibrant and free media is essential. Canada will continue to applaud and stand for the security of journalists of the OSCE region whose work is essential to maintaining and strengthening democracy. Furthermore, we will continue to call regimes to account for failing to respect basic freedoms.

Unfortunately, some countries of the region continue to violate their commitments towards the OSCE and international law in the matter of freedom of the media and safety of journalists. Canada is disturbed by this trend and by this compliance gap by some of the OSCE region countries. The ongoing efforts of the Representative on Freedom of the Media will continue to remain indispensable in the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the region, but clearly all participating States must also do their part.

In this connection, we believe it is important to give civil society a voice and the opportunity to bring concerns about freedom of the media to the attention of their governments. We look forward to hearing the NGO perspectives at this session.

Canada remains concerned regarding the conduct of some participating States in the matter of the Freedom of the Media and towards journalists.

Canada will continue to actively support the OSCE Office of the Representative on Freedom of the Media and to support journalists and media workers in their efforts towards strengthening democratic institutions and processes in their countries.

Thank you. Merci.