



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT BY NORWAY

As delivered by Counsellor Lars Løberg to the 2011 Human Dimension implementation meeting, Warsaw 6 October 2011 – WS16: Gender equality

Thank you, Ms. Moderator,

Today's topic is one of the most fundamental ones when it comes to both democratisation and human rights. Gender equality is not a given thing, not even in my own country; were substantial wage differences still exist between men and women doing comparable jobs.

Discrimination of women represents an important violation of fundamental human rights, expressed in several international documents, treaties and instruments, adopted and ratified by most of the member states of the United Nations. Some of these violations are easily recognizable, others are more hidden and structural, but by no means more acceptable.

It is absurd to exclude half the population of the world from access to proper health care, education and participation in the regular work force. Women represent an indispensable political, economic and social resource. Also for that reason we must ensure equal opportunities for men and women.

Ms. Moderator,

Gender-mainstreaming is not a goal by itself, but if we fail in the mainstreaming process; we also fail in our attempts of making best possible utility of our common human capital. I say we cannot afford not to do our outmost in order to maximize our resources. That is the goal, not the gender-mainstreaming. But you can't have one without the other.

This common goal is also manifested by the UN in the Millennium Development Goals. If we are to achieve or at least get closer to these Goals a much stronger focus must be on women's rights and gender equality. But in order to do so, we must be able to promote women also to the top positions. The current situation and the current statistics for this organization are not impressive. More so, the situation in most of the participating states shows beyond doubt that gender equality is still more of a slogan for festive occasions than a reality.

Gender equality promotes economic development and growth. Gender equality, therefore, is not a luxury to be implemented at a certain advanced development stage. It is rather a necessity that one cannot afford not to promote.

I am pleased to notice that there is an obvious interest in renewing the internal work plan for gender equality in the OSCE. OSCE needs a new Gender Action Plan. More so, we need to see more women in the top positions of our organization. A mono-gender administrative culture will in the long run become a restriction for all of us.

The work on such a renewed Gender Action Plan has to be a priority for the incoming Irish chairmanship. And I urge you, Ms. Moderator, as the special representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Gender Issues; not to let our Irish friends forget this priority. We will be behind you in your efforts. Keep up your good work.

Ms. Moderator, thank you for your attention