



OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting 2018

**Working Session 15 – Statement by the Delegation of Canada, delivered by Counsellor Daniel Barbarie,
Wednesday, September 19, 2018**

Moderator,

I will begin with our recommendations for this session:

- 1) That OSCE participating States take meaningful action to implement the 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality and to fulfill Ministerial Council Decision 8/14 to elaborate an addendum to the Gender Action Plan.
- 2) That OSCE participating States reach an agreement in Milan on an OSCE Ministerial Council Decision on Combating Violence Against Women.
- 3) That OSCE participating States recognize the pervasive and disproportionate abuse, harassment, and violence women face online, and that this recognition is followed by the adoption of policies and programs to address this serious human rights issue.
- 4) That OSCE participating States fully recognize the relevance and benefits to our collective security of women's full participation in all decision making processes and that UN resolutions on Women, Peace, and Security are reflected in OSCE decisions and commitments.
- 5) That participating States partner with domestic and international civil society organizations to address systemic barriers that drive discrimination against women and girls.
- 6) That ODIHR and the OSCE Gender Section solicit best practices from around the OSCE region and assist participating States in the implementation of such best practices regarding women's equal participation in public and political life and eliminating violence against women.

Moderator,

Canada's views on the critical importance of gender equality, combating violence against women, and the priority we place upon the empowerment of women and girls are well known. In this short intervention we would like to reiterate some key positions:

Women's empowerment and full participation in leadership and decision-making processes are fundamental elements of democratic societies that are genuinely inclusive, representative, and sustainable. Women leaders can help break down the barriers that prevent women and girls from succeeding. In this regard, the empowerment of women and girls is essential to eliminate poverty, create lasting peace, and achieve sustainable development.

Sexual violence in fragile and conflict-affected communities is a violation of the rights of women and girls and a barrier to peace and development. The participation of women in conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and post conflict state building, is essential for sustainable peace and for building more equal and stable societies.

Women in positions of power, including parliamentarians, journalists, and human rights defenders, are disproportionately subjected to online violence and harassment. This threatens democracy and can limit the full participation and representation of women in political and civil life. Sexual and gender based violence in the digital context is a serious human rights issues that must be addressed.

Achieving gender equality does not rest with women and girls alone, however. Men and boys have a critical role to play in transforming unequal power relations, and challenging social norms and gender stereotypes. Societal change cannot, and will not, be achieved by focusing on women and girls alone.