



Human Dimension Implementation Meeting 2018

Working Session 15: Tolerance and non-discrimination II Ensuring equal opportunity for women and men in all spheres of life, including through the implementation of the OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality, and prevention of violence against women

Warsaw, 19 September 2018

Statement of the Delegation of Switzerland

Thank you Madame Moderator,

Working towards gender equality and combating violence against women and girls should remain high on the OSCE agenda. It remains also high on Switzerland's national as well as foreign policy agenda.

Violence against women and girls is a worldwide phenomenon occurring not only during war, in reconstruction and transition phases but also in time of peace. All our countries are affected. Violence against women is a threat to the security of individuals and society. It is the obligation of each participating State to fully address it in all its forms. **We call upon all participating States to fully implement our OSCE commitments in that regard and furthermore ratify and implement the Istanbul Convention.**

In Switzerland, the **Istanbul Convention** entered into force on 1st April this year. Even if our existing legislation at federal and cantonal level meets

most of the Convention's requirements, we will place increased focus on the improvement of the measures in places for the protection of victims and witnesses.

Secondly, we do not only have to *protect* and support women and girls. We have to empower them. Enable women's economic empowerment, effective participation in all spheres of life, promotion of sexual and reproductive health and rights. It is the best form of prevention. **The recognition of women as actors rather than simply as survivors has to be at the center of our efforts and actions.** It is widely recognized that gender equality and the empowerment of women go hand in hand with sustainable development and economic growth. It is also a crucial factor for building inclusive and peaceful societies.

Thirdly, the effective inclusion of men and boys in promoting gender equality and women's rights is crucial. As gender norms are constructed and reinforced by men and women it is not enough to focus on women and girls only, but **we need to pay particular attention to mobilizing men and boys in order to shift social norms and transform social roles toward greater equality.** Switzerland welcomes the OSCE's focus on the role of men and boys in promoting gender equality and ending violence against women, in particular through the OSCE MenEngage Network.

Madame Moderator,

Later this year, Switzerland will publish its **4th National Action Plan** on the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325. This resolution indeed shifted the perspective how we see women in conflict situations, not merely as victims and vulnerable groups, but as important

stakeholders when it comes to conflict prevention, resolution and creation of sustainable peace. **The OSCE as the largest regional security organization has a vital role to play in assisting participating States in the implementation of the 1325 agenda through its expertise and capacity-building efforts.**

In closing, let me underline Switzerland's full support to the OSCE's efforts in promoting gender equality and combating gender-based violence across the entire OSCE region.

Thank you.