



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT ON GENDER EQUALITY

As delivered by Counsellor Hilde Austad
at the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting (HDIM),
Working Session 7 on Gender Equality,
Warsaw, 25 September 2014

Madam Moderator,

Norway has aligned with the statement made by Finland on behalf of the EU. However, in my national capacity I would briefly like to add the following three points:

Firstly, Norway has over time strived to achieve gender equality in the sense of equal rights, equal opportunities – and, equal obligations. Last year the Norwegian Parliament decided to make our compulsory military service gender neutral from 2015. Women will have an equal right and obligation to do one year of military service.

Secondly, the Government is currently preparing a new White Paper on gender equality that will be submitted to Parliament next year. The White Paper will focus on increasing the percentage of female top leaders, women and the economy, women's health, gender based violence, balance between family life and work, and inclusion of migrants. The White Paper will underline the importance of *freedom of choice and flexibility*. No new quotas will be introduced to achieve these aims. However, the quotas that have been applied in certain circumstances have certainly been a useful tool in a period of transition to improve gender equality.

Thirdly, Norway welcomes the Swiss chairmanship's proposal for a decision on an addendum to the 2004 Gender Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality. We believe issues addressed in the proposal are important, as for example:

- The establishment of a gender equality network consisting of national experts

- Gender focal points in each OSCE structure
- Increased coordination and cooperation with other regional and international organisations on gender equality
- Restructuring the current Gender Advisor position to a Gender Representative who will be an integral part of the OSCE secretariat, report directly to the Secretary General and be a member of all senior OSCE Secretariat decision-making bodies
- Enhancing gender mainstreaming throughout the conflict cycle

Thank you, Madam Moderator.