

Canadian Delegation to the
Organization for Security & Cooperation
in Europe



Délégation du Canada auprès de
l'Organisation pour la sécurité et la coopération
en Europe

**DELEGATION OF CANADA TO THE OSCE
STATEMENT BY JEAN-FRANÇOIS LACASSE, CHARGÉ D’AFFAIRES
ON THE OCCASION OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY
943RD MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL
7 MARCH 2013**

Mr. Chairperson,

I have the honour today to speak on behalf of Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland and Canada.

Tomorrow will mark International Women’s Day, a worldwide celebration of women, peace and human rights. While this is a day of recognition and appreciation for women and their exceptional roles in all spheres of life, March 8th also reminds us of the need to address persistent disparities and barriers preventing women from enjoying their full rights and achieving their true potential.

Although we have witnessed substantial transformation and progress in women's legal rights, health, economic independence and civic participation, women around the world continue to disproportionately suffer from violence, from poverty, from economic crisis, and from lack of opportunity.

In particular, violence remains a grave problem, as women continue to face daily physical and psychological threats and attacks. Violence against women affects not only women themselves, but all of us – and everyone, men and women, boys and girls, must be part of the solution. In this regard, we welcome the Gender Section’s launch of the MenEngage network to recognize and further integrate men in promoting equality and combating violence against women.

We remain firmly committed to our work in advancing women's human rights and economic security and prosperity, improving women’s health, ending violence against women and girls, and encouraging women's leadership and democratic participation in our countries, in the OSCE region and beyond.

We therefore applaud the OSCE’s recognition of the importance of equal rights of women and men as an essential aspect of peace, sustainable democracy, and economic development. The OSCE’s work to promote empowerment, inclusion and participation of women across all three dimensions is vital for the comprehensive security of our region.

Our work here however is not done. In particular, we strongly encourage the OSCE and all its participating States to promote increased participation of women in decision-making processes related to conflict prevention and resolution, to intensify efforts towards the enhancement of women’s security by fighting stereotypes and

sexual violence, and to include a gender-sensitive perspective in all peace-building projects. For this reason, we fully support the Women, Peace and Security agenda and will continue to advocate for an OSCE role in furthering the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325. We would also welcome an update of the OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality of 2004, in order to adapt it to today's challenges.

Mr. Chairperson,

The promotion and advancement of equality between men and women is an investment in our common prosperity. While we still have ways to go, this should not deter us from continuing our efforts and our countries remain fully committed to achieving this goal. We know that when women succeed, families, communities and countries will thrive, and only then will our societies realize their full potential.

Thank you.