



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT BY NORWAY

As delivered by Ambassador Robert Kvile

to the 2013 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, Warsaw 24 September, 2013.

Working Session 3: Tolerance and non-discrimination II

Thank you, Madame Moderator,

I would like to concentrate on one important aspect of this working session, namely prevention of violence against women and children.

Ending violence against women and children is literally a matter of life and death.

It is the leading cause of deaths and disabilities among women of all ages. Violence against women causes more deaths among young women than cancer, malaria, armed conflicts and traffic accidents combined. Needless to say, it causes huge economic burdens on countries all over the world.

In discussions on women's rights it is sometimes said that violence against women is an unavoidable part of long traditions, religious freedom and cultural diversity. We will never accept those arguments. Violence against women is about discrimination, inequality, power and lack of political will and courage.

Madame Moderator,

The Norwegian government's view is clear. Domestic violence is unacceptable. It must be prevented, combated and alleviated through measures to help and protect the victims and through treatment and prosecution of the perpetrators. We must involve boys and men in fighting violence against women. Let me mention a few of the measures we are taking.

We have had national action plans against different forms of violence against women since 2000. This year the first White Paper on domestic violence was presented. An important aim is to raise awareness and improve coordination between the police, medical professions, social workers and others who meet victims of domestic violence.

Within the legal system punishment for domestic violence has been increased and the rights of victims strengthened. A criminal case may be brought before the court, even if the woman withdraws her complaint. A full-time family violence coordinator has now been appointed in all police districts.

Madame Moderator,

We regard it as a public responsibility to make sure that victims of domestic violence receive protection and assistance. All local municipalities have a legal obligation to provide shelter services and coordinated assistance for victims of violence.

A nationwide network of Children's Houses has been created. Here, children who have been subject to sexual abuse or violence are offered help, care and treatment. This includes new methods of interviewing and medical examination.

The need for treatment of perpetrators has been recognised and treatment facilities for them are being established around the country.

In order to reinforce our response to domestic violence the government has established a national resource centre on violence and traumatic stress. The objective is to integrate and strengthen expertise in violence, domestic violence and sexual abuse.

Madame Moderator,

Mobile violence alarms give women under threat greater freedom of movement and help prevent violence. However, it is the abuser – and not the victim – who must bear the consequences, in that his freedom of movement is restricted. This year we introduced a legal amendment that authorizes the use of electronic monitoring of a ban on contact as part of a criminal sentence.

Madame Moderator,

Norway will continue to work for the promotion of women's rights and gender equality in our own country and internationally. Eliminating violence against women must be a common goal for all OSCE countries.

Thank you, Madame Moderator.