



REPORT OF

DR. HEDY FRY

SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE ON GENDER ISSUES

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President Migliori, colleagues, it is a pleasure to have the opportunity, once again, to speak to you about the subject of gender equality. First, we would like to update you on some of the activities that are going on within the OSCE.

A recent declaration by the Ministerial Council in Dublin echoes several of the resolutions that we passed at our Assembly in Monaco last summer. The Council's Declaration on "Strengthening Good Governance and Combating Corruption, Money-Laundering and the Financing of Terrorism" recognizes that achieving good governance and combatting corruption will not succeed unless women and men participate fully and equally in political and economic institutions. The Declaration also stressed the need to empower women to participate actively in policy development and activities in these areas.

Last year, we participated in an on-going project being conducted by the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) on parliamentary structures for women MPs across the OSCE region. As part of this project, questionnaires were distributed to all OSCE PA delegations. Thirty-seven parliaments responded – a response rate of about 66%. We would like to thank you for your cooperation on this initiative. Women parliamentarians from different OSCE participating states and civil society also gathered for a workshop in Vienna this past December. There was a lively discussion about best practices for promoting women's involvement in political life and an exchange of lessons learned. It was clear from these discussions, however, that women still face significant challenges to substantive participation in public life and in parliamentary institutions. We would like to thank ODIHR for taking up this project and for all of their efforts in bringing it to completion. We look forward to continued collaboration on this and other projects with OSCE PA Deputy Secretary General Tina Schøn, the OSCE's Senior Gender Advisor, and ODIHR in the coming year.

In my own country, Canada, we have seen remarkable successes by women leaders from across the political spectrum over the last year. In our federation of 13 provinces and territories, six (6) provincial or territorial governments are currently led by women,¹ meaning that approximately 87% of Canada's population now lives in a province run by a woman. Yet, we still face challenges in ensuring greater representation of women in our national parliament, where only a quarter of seats are held by women MPs.

As I have stressed in my previous addresses before this Assembly, we, as parliamentarians, need to ensure that the promotion of gender equality and women's participation in parliamentary decision-making remain a priority at our Assembly, in OSCE institutions, and within the OSCE participating states.

¹ From West to East: British Columbia (Christie Clark), Alberta (Allison Redford), Nunavut (Eva Aariak), Ontario (Kathleen Wynne), Quebec (Pauline Marois), Newfoundland and Labrador (Kathy Dunderdale).

So as a result, last year I challenged all of us to set an example within our own institution, the OSCE PA. I am pleased to say that we have made significant progress in terms of the participation of women in our Bureau. Of 21 positions, nine (43%) are now held by women. Let's ensure that we sustain that progress in 2013. Of particular note is that all three officers on the First Committee, dealing with the politico-military dimension, are women. This is a particularly important achievement when we consider that women are under-represented in positions related to political and military affairs in the OSCE more generally. We need to sustain and capitalize on this success – a success that was achieved because in this PA, we have begun, male and female parliamentarians, to work together actively to ensure that we utilise to our fullest the strengths of both genders. I think we all now agree that our effectiveness cannot be guaranteed if we continue to ignore 51% of our human resources. But I also want to thank the female Parliamentarians who stepped up and put their names forward for positions on committees and the OSCE PA in general and who were elected based not on gender, but on experience and merit. As the OSCE PA, we have now begun to set an example and generate momentum to improve the pace of change at the OSCE Secretariat and in its field missions. I think we should all give ourselves a round of applause for this.

In Monaco last summer, we passed a resolution urging the OSCE to increase representation of women as heads and deputy heads of OSCE field missions and in the leadership of OSCE institutions. Along these lines, the Secretary General's 2012 *Annual Evaluation Report on the Implementation of the 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality* indicates that women are still dramatically under-represented. During 2012, no women were appointed as chairs of the three OSCE Committees, and the only woman appointed as a Special Representative of the Chair-in-Office was the Special Representative on Gender issues. Only three of the 15 heads of OSCE field missions were women (20%). Moreover, the number of women declines with the increasing seniority of management positions, and fewer women are even being nominated in the first place.² So there is need for the OSCE PA itself to look at the gains made by the PA and see that it is possible, with political will, to appoint more women. It is difficult to ask nation states to fulfil some of their commitments to gender parity if the OSCE itself does not set the example.

We, as parliamentarians, have now shown what can be done and must put pressure on our governments to reverse this disturbing trend. At home, we can use our positions to raise the profile of the OSCE and to encourage more qualified women to apply – and, in particular, to encourage and support qualified indigenous, Roma and Sinti women, and those from national minorities. Because we all know that women in society, like their male counterparts, face not only gender discrimination but the greater challenges of ethnicity, race, religion, and minority status. We also need to increase the number of women at the OSCE in areas such as military affairs and civilian police.

² [The Secretary General's Annual Evaluation Report on the Implementation of the 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality](#), 25 October 2012, p. 13.

But improving gender representation at institutional levels and Parliamentary Assemblies is not enough. We still need to engage women in the economic development of our regions, once again, using some of the best practices from certain nation states that have successfully harnessed the potential of women in small and medium enterprises and in the board rooms of larger corporations and in trade. Strong legislation in employment equity, education, and extending opportunities for women to access venture capital are key to achieving these goals. Once again, we parliamentarians can move for these changes in our own national policies. These are difficult times with high unemployment and low growth rates but stable solutions can be found in improving productivity and creating opportunity for both men and women, that 51% of workers who are currently underutilised and who live in poverty and remain vulnerable.

This leads to my next point and the preliminary introduction of the topic of my Annual Report: The effective implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (“Resolution 1325”) within the OSCE and in participating states. In considering this topic, I wanted to draw on the lessons from my previous reports, which examined barriers to economic equality for women generally and the specific barriers to economic, social and political equality experienced by women from national, religious and ethnic minorities.

In Monaco, this Assembly also passed resolutions on the intersection of gender and minority status and on racism and xenophobia. We called for broad engagement, across OSCE participating states, in post-conflict reconstruction and in achieving durable solutions to unresolved conflicts in the OSCE region, and adopted resolutions on cooperation with Afghanistan. Many of our resolutions emphasized the importance to the work of the OSCE of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, on women, peace and security and the important role that women play in all phases of the conflict cycle.

To remind all of you, Resolution 1325:

- calls on all UN Member states to give special attention to the unique needs of women and girls in conflict situations, including the need for special protections from sexual violence;
- requires states to include a gender perspective in peace-keeping and post-conflict processes;
- calls on states to ensure the full and equal participation and representation of women at all levels of decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution; and
- stresses the important role that women can play in conflict prevention and peace building.

The resolution stresses that women are often systematically targeted during conflict and that their needs, concerns and efforts are vital to the development of a sustainable peace. However, it also recognizes that women are often excluded from decision-making processes in peace negotiations and in post-conflict peace-building efforts. Finally, Resolution 1325 establishes the importance of women's perspectives and contributions to the maintenance of international peace and security.

In the OSCE region, sexual violence on a massive scale was one of the defining features of the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia. Incidents of conflict-related sexual violence have also been reported in Azerbaijan, Georgia and Russia, but have received much less attention.³ More recently, significant levels of sexual violence against women and girls has been documented in conflict-affected regions of Mali, Libya and in Syria,⁴ situations we will debate in our session today. For survivors, the physical, psychological, social and economic effects of conflict-related sexual violence can last a lifetime. Justice, however, remains elusive for many victims – in response to an estimated 50,000 rapes during the Balkan conflicts, only a tiny fraction of perpetrators have been convicted of any crime.⁵

During times of conflict, women often make up the majority of those displaced by fighting. Forced to flee to displaced persons or refugee camps, women and girls become vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. Sadly, we see this trend continuing today amongst Syrian refugees in Egypt, where a UN assessment recently documented allegations of attempts to pressure single women and women in female headed households to engage in prostitution in order to survive, or to be party to early or forced marriages.⁶

I am very pleased, to find that these issues related to women, peace and security are priorities for the Ukrainian Chair-in-Office for the coming year. Ukraine also has an opportunity during its chairmanship to ensure that women play an equal role in its efforts to resolve the conflict in Transdnestria in Moldova, and to revitalize the peace processes in other frozen conflicts in the OSCE region.

³ Megan Bastick, Karin Grimm and Rahel Kunz, [Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict: Global Overview and Implications for the Security Sector](#), Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2007, p. 114.

⁴ Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, [Report of the High Commissioner under Human Rights Council resolution S-15/1](#), 7 June 2011, UN Doc. A/HRC/17/45 (on Libya); Secretary General of the United Nations, [Situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic: implementation of Human Rights Council resolution 19/22](#), 25 September 2012, UN Doc. A/HRC/21/32; Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, [Rapport de la Haut-Commissaire des Nations Unies aux droits de l'homme sur la situation des droits de l'homme au Mali](#), 7 January 2012, UN Doc. A/HRC/22/33 [available in French only]; Flavia Krause-Jackson and Pauline Bas, "Sexual Violence in Mali Casts Shadow Over Peace Efforts," *Bloomberg*, 30 January 2013; International Rescue Committee, [Syria: A Regional Crisis – The IRC Commission on Syrian Refugees](#), January 2013, p. 6.

⁵ UN News Centre, [UN envoy welcomes conviction for rape and murder during Bosnian conflict](#)," 9 November 2011, citing a figure of 30 convictions as of that date.

⁶ Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, [World Food Programme, UNICEF: Joint Assessment for Syrian Refugees in Egypt](#), November 2012, p. 5.

I sense that there is a real opportunity in 2013 for the PA, the Ministerial Council, and the Secretariat to work together on these issues and to build on past initiatives.

Women's important role in preventing and resolving conflicts and in building peace was reaffirmed by the OSCE Ministerial Council in its December 2011 Decision on Elements of the Conflict Cycle, which called on all participating states to effectively implement Resolution 1325.⁷ As a result, in 2012, the Secretary General reported to the Permanent Council on efforts to strengthen women's role in creating early warning systems for conflict.⁸ The OSCE Secretariat has also worked to improve the effective implementation of Resolution 1325 in participating states; work that will continue in 2013. As of late October 2012, 23 participating states, including Canada, had adopted a national action plan for implementation, and several others are in the process of developing their plans.⁹

Political will is vital to marshalling the resources necessary to properly design, implement and monitor such action plans. I call upon you, my fellow parliamentarians, to engage in a discussion on national action plans when you return home from Vienna. Perhaps some of you will be able to engage in a dialogue on these issues at the OSCE-Australia conference on Improving the Security of Women and Girls to be held this March in Adelaide.

I would like to thank the U.K. delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly for sharing with me their efforts on the Prevention of Sexual Violence Initiative launched by Foreign Secretary William Hague. Canada has long advocated the need to ensure that the rights and well-being of women and girls are integrated into peace processes and other responses to armed conflict. The U.K. initiative can be an important contribution to our broader efforts to address gender and security issues. I will certainly discuss this initiative with my fellow parliamentarians when I return home to Ottawa and I urge you to do the same.

This brings me to my final point: the connection between armed conflict and the trafficking of women and girls. There are many who think that the issue of sexual and other violence against women is only a national issue and therefore has little to do with trafficking. But, women in post-conflict areas, especially if they are in minority groups, are among the most vulnerable to trafficking. They lack documents of nationality, they often still face discrimination against minority groups, they have no protection, no housing, no right to work or to access social programs or assistance, and may be forced to be exploited by organized crime in order to survive.

⁷ OSCE Ministerial Council, [*Decision No. 3/11: Elements of the Conflict Cycle, Related to Enhancing the OSCE's Capabilities in Early Warning, Early Action, Dialogue Facilitation and Mediation Support, and Post-conflict Rehabilitation*](#), MC.DEC/3/11, 7 December 2011.

⁸ *Secretary General's Annual Evaluation Report on the Implementation of the 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality*, 25 October 2012, p. 34.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

Weak rule of law and economic disruption make women and girls particularly vulnerable to human trafficking in conflict and post-conflict environments. In 2012, a significant percentage of European trafficking victims came from post-conflict countries in the Western Balkans. In Europe and Central Asia, most trafficking victims are women and most are trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation. On a more positive note, however, it appears that the overall proportion of global trafficking victims originating in Eastern Europe and Central Asia is declining.¹⁰ Human trafficking is a problem that our Assembly regularly scrutinizes, and is a priority for the Ukrainian Chairmanship this year. I think trafficking is a consensus issue – modern-day slavery must end.

I would like to stress that women make up half of the OSCE community and so must be fully and equally involved in transformations of their societies. To do so, women must be able to participate, and to wield real power, in conflict prevention and peace processes. This, in turn, requires that women and girls are able to fully enjoy their human rights on an equal basis with men.

To close, I ask you all, when you return home from Vienna, to consider the successes and challenges that your countries face on issues of women, peace and security. I invite you all to come to the Gender Lunch in Istanbul in July to share best practices, lessons learned and any barriers to change that you have identified. Together, let's contribute to developing an integrated approach to implementing Resolution 1325 across the OSCE.

Thank you for your attention.

¹⁰ UN Office on Drugs and Crime, "Europe and Central Asia," in [Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2012](#).