



United States Mission to the OSCE

On the Annual Evaluation Report on Gender Equality and Report by the OSCE Special Representative on Gender Issues, Ambassador Melanne Vermeer

As delivered by Acting Deputy Chief of Mission Michele Siders
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
September 28, 2017

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We welcome Ambassador Vermeer here today, and we thank Secretary General Greminger for his annual evaluation report on gender issues.

Equal opportunity for women and men in all spheres of life is critical to building democratic societies, to supporting open and accountable governance, to ending extreme poverty, to furthering international peace and security, and to growing vibrant market economies.

Equal opportunity also means freedom for women and girls to attain their full potential in political leadership, civil society, and in private sector business. In too many countries, women are marginalized by sexual harassment and discrimination in educational institutions or in the workplace. We commend those participating States that have enacted legislation to level the playing field for men and women.

As Secretary Tillerson has said, women's empowerment is not just a moral imperative; it is a strategic investment in our collective security. Women's security is a matter of international security. Without it, we all lose.

The United States is deeply committed to empowering women, both at home and abroad. Our policies work to advance the economic empowerment of women by promoting entrepreneurship and equal access to education, employment opportunities, and training adapted to a new economic landscape.

Let me highlight just a few examples: On February 13, President Trump and Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau launched the United States-Canada Council for Advancement of Women Entrepreneurs and Business Leaders. On February 28, President Trump signed two bills into law: first, the "Inspiring the Next Space Pioneers and Innovators and Explorers (INSPIRE) Women Act;" and second, the "Promoting Women in Entrepreneurship Act." These are examples of the United States' commitment—from the halls of Congress to senior leadership in our defense, diplomatic, and development institutions—to gender equality as a cornerstone of security.

The United States shares the view that we need a systematic and strategic approach to advance gender equality within the OSCE's policies and operations, as well as to monitor and evaluate our progress in this regard. We appreciate the concrete, results-based reporting on activities and recommendations, and look forward to seeing the Secretariat's new roadmap for its objectives, indicators, and activities over the next few years. The United States strongly supports the training programs conducted by various OSCE structures, including at the senior level.

Moving forward, it is imperative that all OSCE structures coordinate their activities and work together to ensure the best use of our resources. Strengthening any one OSCE structure should not come at the expense of the work of other structures.

Thank you again, Mr. Secretary General, for your report and for highlighting the important work that remains ahead for the OSCE and its participating States. Together, we can improve gender equality at the Organization and throughout the OSCE region, and thereby create more peaceful, stable, and secure societies.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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