



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY  
TO THE OSCE

JOINT STATEMENT ON THE  
INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE  
ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Delivered by Ambassador Steffen Kongstad to the Permanent Council  
Vienna, 28 November 2019

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. Chair,

I am speaking on behalf of Canada, Liechtenstein, Mongolia, Switzerland and Norway.

Violence against women and girls remains one of the most widespread and persistent human rights violations in the world. To realise the rights of women and girls is to promote democracy, sustainable development, and peace. The International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women reminded us that we must do more to this end.

Violence against women stems from outdated social norms, discriminatory practices, and repressive attitudes. It takes many forms, including sexual violence, human trafficking, domestic violence, intimate partner violence, threats and harassment, both online and offline. Harmful practices, including child, early, and forced marriage, and female genital mutilation are also forms of violence against women.

Violence prevents women and girls from living full lives and from fully participating in society. We must hold perpetrators accountable, and put an end to impunity. As long as the systematic discrimination of women and girls remains embedded in the social fabric of our societies, we cannot effectively prevent and respond to violence against them. We are staunch supporters of women's and girls' rights and of those who strive to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

The human, social, and economic costs of violence against women and girls are substantial. UN Women has stated that research estimates the cost of violence against

women to be around two percent of the global gross domestic product. Our societies will gain from its elimination, also economically.

Violence against women occurs in every country, across the lines of culture and socio-economic status, in public and in private. Women and girls who experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, are particularly at risk. This year, the OSCE Survey on the Well-being and Safety of Women has given us useful data on its prevalence in several contexts. We must use these results to address the issue. Our policies must ensure that we leave no one behind.

Fully engaging men and boys, as partners and stakeholders is essential to achieving gender equality and ending violence against women and girls. Men and boys bear a particular responsibility to take a clear stand against violence directed at women and girls.

An essential part of addressing violence against women is to ensure their full participation in the labour market, putting women and men on equal footing. This requires more than increasing the number of women at work. We must adapt our values and our mind-sets, and develop inclusive processes and incentives that benefit women as much as they do men. Through equality, we can reduce and eliminate violence.

Mr Chair,

Violence against women and girls, in any form, is discriminatory, deplorable and completely unacceptable. We must prevent, combat, and eliminate it. As stakeholders and agents of change, women and girls must have their rightful place in decision-making and have a voice to influence laws and policies in this area.

Through the Sustainable Development Goals, states are committed to ending all forms of violence against women, and all harmful practices, by 2030. To reach this objective, we must use all the tools in our toolbox, including the OSCE. The support to implementation of relevant commitments offered by the field operations, ODIHR, and the Gender Section is important in this regard. In the OSCE, we can achieve comprehensive and sustainable security through sustainable development.

Thank you.