



Government Offices
Ministry for Foreign Affairs
Sweden

**Statement by Sweden: session 7 at the OSCE High Level
Conference on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination in Astana 29-
30 June, 2010**

Madam Chair,

Governments bear the primary responsibility to oppose and to combat all forms of discrimination and intolerance. The Swedish Government regards this task as extremely important and our long-term objective is to achieve a society free from discrimination, be it on the grounds of gender, ethnicity, religion or other belief, disability, sexual orientation, transgender identity or expression and age.

To be true to the topics of this Conference and really build tolerant societies based on respect for human rights we cannot allow for any hierarchy between these types of discrimination. Nor can any individual or group be excluded from protection. We therefore find it extremely worrying that some participating States continue to differentiate between individuals by not awarding lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people equal treatment and enjoyment of human rights.

Madam Chair,

The attainment of full respect for human rights is a continuous process that requires constant work and devotion. Sweden is doing her utmost to achieve this. In our assessment, adopting national action plans for human rights has proven very valuable and the Government has recently decided that Sweden's second action plan will be evaluated in 2010. This evaluation will provide important input for our continued work for human rights.

Furthermore, an important element is for governments to ensure that all individuals, including those belonging to national minorities, are awarded their human rights. In Sweden, we have developed policies on the protection of and support for national minorities and their long-established minority languages. Sweden's recognized national minorities include Jews, Roma, Sami, Swedish Finns and Tornedalers, whose languages are Yiddish, Romany Chib, Sami, Finnish and Meänkieli.

An indispensable element in the fight against discrimination is working together with civil society. In Sweden, several agencies, authorities and NGO's have joined forces against discrimination during many years and have thereby managed to create important structures and frameworks for cooperation.

Madam Chair,

Sweden is also committed to learning from history and how the past, the present and the future are intimately related. For this purpose, we have set up an authority – the Living History Forum – aiming to make sure that younger generations do not forget about the past, using lessons from the Holocaust and other crimes against humanity as a starting point.

Let me conclude by underlining the great value Sweden attaches to the OSCE institutions' and field operations' expertise and assistance to States in combating all forms of discrimination and intolerance.