

**Statement by Norwegian Ambassador Mette Kongsheim  
at the 4<sup>th</sup> Session of  
the Annual Security Review Conference  
“The Way Forward”**

24 June 2004

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Mr. Coordinator,

In addressing old and newly emerging threats, the OSCE will have to adapt to the constantly changing security environment. In so doing and as we discuss the way forward for this important organization, we must keep in mind the indisputable strengths of the OSCE and see to it that we retain its clarity of purpose.

The OSCE has never been – and should not strive to become a “hard security” body. In our work ahead to strengthen the organization and to make it even more effective, we must build on its strength as a “soft security” organization. The OSCE’s comprehensive approach to security, covering the politico-military, the economic and environmental and human dimensions, retains its full validity, and we must take this broad basis as a point of departure in meeting the new threats and challenges.

We must of course set priorities for our work. Some of these priorities have been thoroughly discussed over the last two days: preventing and combating terrorism while addressing the conditions that may foster and sustain it, border security and strengthening the political and security dialogue. But if we are to reinforce the effectiveness of the security activities across all three dimensions of the OSCE, we have to address – as stated by Ambassador Stoudman in his key note address this afternoon – the “other challenges which, though less visible, are nonetheless very important and relevant for the stability and predictability of the international environment”.

One such challenge, which has been absent from the discussion these two days – is that of gender equality, of equal rights of women and men.

The overriding organizational purpose and mission of the OSCE is to be a key instrument for early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation in its region. The link

between security, democracy and prosperity has become increasingly evident. We realize today, that equitable and sustainable development depends on the creativity, talents and experiences of both women and men and their equal access to resources, employment, services, education and training. We talk about investing in our human capital as a necessity to fight conditions which create breeding grounds for risks and threats. But we still treat gender issues as a separate issue.

There is however a clear correlation between human security and gender equality. But as long as this is not fully recognized, the OSCE will not be able to cope effectively with security threats and challenges, be they old with new roots or newly emerging. An important element is missing.

The OSCE should therefore incorporate a gender aspect in all its activities, make it a priority within our priorities. We must seek to mainstream gender through all three dimensions. Gender aspects should be a strategic element throughout all activities conducted under the auspices of the OSCE. A particular effort is called for in the political-military dimension, where gender issues and considerations have so far been basically invisible.

The link between gender equality and security has already been fully recognized by the UN Security Council in its res. 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security. This resolution drew the attention to the role and experience of women in matters of peace and security. This is a resolution which ought to be followed up in the OSCE, and my Delegation proposes that the issue of such a follow-up be put on the agenda of the Permanent Council as well as in the FSC, and we would welcome concrete ideas for such follow-up. We would also propose that a gender aspect is integrated in the agenda of next year's Annual Security Review Conference.

Mr. Coordinator,

The OSCE is currently working on an Action Plan for the promotion of gender equality. Norway looks forward to have the OSCE reaching consensus on an ambitious plan which will make it possible for this organization in terms of its human resources and its activities, to reach its full potential and thus reinforce the relevance and effectiveness of our security activities.

Thank you.