



United States Mission to the OSCE

Commemorating the International Day of the Girl Child

As delivered by Deputy Political Counselor Lane Darnell Bahl
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
October 15, 2020

On October 11, the United States, together with the international community, commemorated the *International Day of the Girl Child*. Empowering and educating girls so they can thrive and succeed can make a long-lasting positive impact not just on their futures, but that of their families, communities, economies, and countries. Gender equality is a fundamental component of our *National Security Strategy*.

Girls around the globe continue to encounter many barriers that limit their ability to gain access to education and health care, avoid early marriage, live a life free from violence, and exercise their own voice.

We must ask ourselves how do we ensure all girls are educated, healthy, and safe so they can participate fully in the social, economic, political, and cultural life of their communities. Research shows us when girls are educated and empowered, countries become more prosperous. The evidence is unequivocal, when women work, economies become more prosperous because women's economic empowerment increases productivity, economic diversification, and income equality.

The United States is proud to be working in partnership with governments, the private sector, and civil society to ensure that girls have opportunities to live fully and freely, and to contribute to their communities. We invite all OSCE participating States to join us in unleashing the potential power—economic, political, and social—of girls, for a more peaceful, prosperous, just, and stable world.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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