

**OSCE Human Dimension Implementation meeting 2013
Delegation of Canada - Recommendations for Working Session 6
Freedom of Religion or Belief
Thursday, 26 September 2013**

Thank you Madam Moderator,

As Ambassador Bennett has already spoken on Canada's priorities with regards to freedom of religion, I would like to bring to your attention our recommendations for this session. Our recommendations are as follows:

- That participating States ensure that legislation pertaining to registration of religious organizations embrace the principles of Article 18 and not be used to obstruct and curtail activities of religious communities;
- that participating States repel the provisions of blasphemy laws that consider criticism of religious beliefs, religious organizations and religious practices or religious debate as a crime;
- that participating States respect the right of those citizens who wish to change their religion;
- that participating States ensure that religious communities are able to peacefully practice their religion without the threat of violence and persecution.
- that participating States cooperate and work closely with ODIHR and its Tolerance and Non-Discrimination Department to benefit from their expertise and experience, so as to better meet OSCE commitments.