



## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

### **Response to the Report by the Chairperson-in-Office's Special Representative on Gender Issues Wendy Patten**

As delivered by Ambassador Ian Kelly  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
December 1, 2011

The United States warmly welcomes Wendy Patten back to the Permanent Council today.

The United States greatly appreciates your comprehensive efforts over the last two years. As a dynamic and focused Special Representative, Ms. Patten exemplifies what Secretary Clinton calls smart power. Her tenure demonstrates that a high-level OSCE role on gender issues can influence the political will of participating States to address persistent barriers to equality for women.

Ms. Patten's call to action today has particular significance as the United States joins the international community in marking the "16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence," which commenced on November 25 with the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and will end on December 10 with International Human Rights Day. We commend Ms. Patten's particular focus on domestic violence and urge the OSCE to continue its fight against the most common form of gender based violence.

Forty years ago, the United States began to make headway on combating domestic violence. Today, awareness campaigns underscore that violence against women is unacceptable and send a message to women that they are not alone. Help is available at free, comprehensive resource centers which can provide emotional support and concrete assistance on how to leave dangerous situations. Women can go with their children to safe shelters. Police training includes education on domestic violence and effective responses. In the United States we gather data that empowers our vibrant civil society to advocate for improved legislation and additional resources. Visas are available for immigrants who are survivors of domestic violence and victims of trafficking. However, there is still much work to be done.

We can learn from the endeavors of our fellow participating States. For example, consider the work of the INIS Women's Legal Support Center and the League of Women Lawyers which provide women in some of the most remote regions of Tajikistan with pro bono legal assistance. This assistance has benefited many survivors of violence. Lawyers provide consultations to women through a network of existing crisis centers, shelters, health care facilities, and community centers.

We also commend Ms. Patten's work with ODIHR and the Gender Section regarding the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. As Ms. Patten has highlighted, these goals are consistent with the oft-stated aspiration of OSCE participating States to integrate gender issues into the first dimension. We are pleased to be making progress on developing our own National Action Plan for

implementing UNSCR 1325. Protecting the rights of migrant women warrants more of our attention. Integrally linked to these issues is supporting women's comprehensive political participation at all levels from post-conflict rebuilding to casting ballots to running a nation.

Ms. Patten's collaboration with the OSCE Special Representative and Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, Maria Grazia Giammarinaro, has also been fruitful. Their joint visit to Kyrgyzstan earlier this year drew attention to the importance of prevention of violence against women and human trafficking.

Looking beyond Vilnius, we should focus in 2012 on updating the 2004 Gender Action Plan. The Plan needs clear benchmarks for effective evaluation, and it also needs to clearly delineate responsibilities. The Gender Section should utilize the field experience of its focal points and work in close consultation with ODIHR to ascertain the needed updates to the plan. The United States welcomes Ambassador Miroslava Beham to the position of Senior Advisor and looks forward to her leadership.

In closing, we'd like to express our profound gratitude to Ms. Patten for her superlative work and her dedication. We commend the Kazakhstan Chairmanship for appointing Ms. Patten and the Lithuanian Chairmanship for continuing her service. We look forward to working with the participating States, the OSCE Gender Section, ODIHR, and the incoming Irish Chairmanship to capitalize and build on Ms. Patten's efforts in the coming weeks and year.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.