



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to Barbara Prammer President of Austria's National Council

As prepared for delivery by Ambassador Ian Kelly
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
March 8, 2012

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States warmly welcomes Magister Prammer, the President of Austria's National Council, and appreciates her presentation on the 101st anniversary of International Women's Day.

Today we commemorate International Women's Day, reminding us of women's centuries-old struggle to participate equally in society. Fifty-one years ago, Former first Lady Eleanor Roosevelt confronted President John F. Kennedy about the lack of women in government, noting that less than four percent of appointees to office were women. Today, women hold thirty-two percent of cabinet-level appointments in President Obama's administration, and this diversity has strengthened our governance and our country.

We advocate for the same diversity with our friends, and the United States remains a strong supporter of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on "Women, Peace and Security." We recognize the disproportionate impact of conflict on women and girls and the critical role that women can and should play in making and keeping peace. And women's meaningful participation in decision-making institutions can make post-conflict rebuilding efforts more sustainable, as well.

Last December, President Obama issued an Executive Order launching the U.S. National Action Plan (NAP) on Women, Peace and Security. The Action Plan's focus is four-fold: institutionalizing a gender-approach to our diplomatic, defense, and development work; strengthening women's leadership in peace processes and decision-making bodies; preventing and protecting women from discrimination and gender-based violence; and providing equitable access to humanitarian assistance.

The OSCE, with Ministerial Council Decision 14/05, has also committed to the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and to engaging women in conflict prevention, crisis management, and post-conflict rehabilitation. Last October at the Sarajevo Conference, the OSCE had the opportunity to take stock of its current efforts and to consider ways to strengthen implementation. In Vilnius, the Ministerial Council adopted two Ministerial Decisions with UNSCR 1325 commitments. This year, we welcome Ambassador Miroslava Beham's leadership in the Gender Section and fully support the section's cross-dimensional focus on UNSCR 1325.

To further promote the implementation of UNSCR 1325, the U.S. has committed a substantial financial contribution to ODIHR's programming on women, peace and security.

We urge others to follow our lead and support ODIHR's training for law enforcement, armed forces, border management, and parliamentarians based on ODIHR's Gender and Security Sector Reform Toolkit, as well as its assistance in developing UNSCR 1325 National Action Plans.

We commend all participating States who have taken advantage of the resources that the OSCE has to share on this issue and urge those participating States that have not yet developed National Action Plans on UNSCR 1325 to work with ODIHR and the Gender Section to do so. We welcome opportunities to exchange experiences and best practices on how to implement UNSCR 1325 and related OSCE commitments.

The United States looks forward to working with other participating States to ensure the meaningful incorporation of women and a gender perspective in the full range of conflict resolution, protection, peacekeeping, and decision-making institutions in conflict-affected areas.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.