

UK Intervention on Gender and Men Engage Network

1. I am delighted today to be taking on the Chairmanship of the Men Engage Network. I would like to thank Ambassador Benedejcic for his leadership since 2016, for his strong personal commitment to promoting gender equality – including raising the visibility of the network. And for increasing the spotlight on gender equality and the role the network can play in raising awareness on preventing and combating violence against women. Thank you.
2. I would like to make three key points.
3. First, it is the responsibility of everyone to build a culture that values difference. For us – as participating states and for the OSCE – to be the best we can be, requires galvanising the skills of a truly diverse force. Making the most of talent. And valuing people at all levels. Gender equality in all jobs is not only the right thing to do. It also benefits the organisations we work for. The onus is on all of us – men, women, Ambassadors, Directors, Heads of Mission, patrol leaders, heads of team, officers – to work to achieve true, tangible, sustainable gender equality. This is not something that can be achieved tomorrow or an area where there is a silver bullet – but is a process which requires persistence.
4. Second, it is also the responsibility of all of us to develop a zero tolerance approach to sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is everyone's problem. We need to broaden the conversation, remove taboos and foster a safe space for staff in the OSCE and within our delegations to raise concerns, including through consistent messaging and action by senior leadership – Ambassadors, Heads of Institutions, and others.
5. Third, we need to recognise the benefits of full and effective participation of women in discussions about conflict, conflict resolution and reconstruction. Men and women have different experiences in times of war and different perspectives on peace and security, which broaden the set of issues discussed. The quality, success and sustainability of peace processes is improved by having the meaningful participation of women as well as men. That is a fact.
6. I look forward to working alongside the Secretary General, individuals currently in the Engage network, the OSCE Gender Section, the 12 female Ambassadors to the OSCE, and others within the OSCE.
7. A good place to start – and for the benefit of transparency – is to set out some steps we are committing to in the UK Delegation and me personally on the

above areas. First, on gender equality – looking at all job specifications to ensure they are gender-sensitive and to see where there are opportunities to expand the applicant pool (including on job sharing), ensuring gender balanced interview panels for all our positions, and stopping recruitment processes if we do not have a sufficiently diverse pool of final candidates. Second, undertaking unconscious bias training and challenging ourselves to stop, reflect and change a default in how we do things. Third, encouraging the use of mentors for all staff. Fourth, on sexual harassment, to encourage a culture of calling it out – not just internally but also where we see this behaviour externally. Fifth, on sexual harassment, ensuring for those who have concerns with calling it out that there is a way of reporting and getting support without fear of repercussions. Sixth – on women, peace and security – ensuring UK-organised events have gender-balanced speaking panels regardless of the event in the OSCE. I will not speak on a panel that is male only. And seventh, to continue to work diligently to keep the focus on these issues.

8. I look forward to working with all of you, looking for ideas, best practice and tangible steps. Thank you.