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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **OSCE Office in Tajikistan holds roundtable discussion on protecting women and children**

DUSHANBE, 20 August 2009 - A roundtable discussion on setting up a comprehensive legal and social structure to protect women victims of violence and establishing co-operation mechanisms, organized by the OSCE Office in Tajikistan in co-operation with the Government Committee on Women and Family Affairs, was held in Dushanbe today.

The event was a follow-up activity to a study visit to Austria for Tajik participants in late July that was organized by the OSCE Office in co-operation with the Municipality of Vienna. Study visit participants presented their findings from the trip to high-level government representatives, including the Deputy Ministers of Interior, Health, Labour and Social Protection and Education, as well as representatives from the Economics Ministry and the State Committee of Statistics and from national and international organizations.

"It is fundamental to work with young people, both boys and girls, although this does not mean to exclude adult men, but simply working with teenagers is crucial to help prevent violence against women," said Sumangul Taghoeva, First Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Protection. "It is also of utmost importance to examine the existing legal framework and improve it to ensure that a suitable law to protect victims of domestic violence can be adopted without delay."

A specialized unit for victims of domestic violence is expected to be created within the Interior Ministry as a follow up to this project.

"It is important to work with victims, but it is also critical to develop a comprehensive prevention programme that includes work with perpetrators in accordance with best practices to ensure that violence is not repeated," said Graziella Piga, Gender and Anti-trafficking Officer at the OSCE Office in Tajikistan. "We are confident that with the support of international organizations such as the OSCE, the relevant bodies and structures of the Tajik Government can start implementing such programmes."