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Last updated : 2006-09-25



## **Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas**

**6<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Network of Women Parliamentarians  
of the Americas, Quito, Ecuador, May 30, 2006**

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RED DE MUJERES PARLAMENTARIAS  
DE LAS AMÉRICAS

NETWORK OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS  
OF THE AMERICAS

REDE DE MULHERES PARLAMENTARES  
DAS AMÉRICAS

RÉSEAU DES FEMMES PARLEMENTAIRES  
DES AMÉRIQUES

WOMEN



MUJERES



MULHERES



FEMMES

MUJERES

**6<sup>A</sup> REUNIÓN ANUAL**

**6<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING**

**6<sup>A</sup> REUNIÃO ANUAL**

**6<sup>E</sup> RÉUNION ANNUELLE**

*LA CEDAW Y SU APLICACIÓN EN LAS AMÉRICAS*

*CEDAW AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION IN THE AMERICAS*

*A CEDAW E A SUA APLICAÇÃO NAS AMÉRICAS*

*LA CEDEF ET SA MISE EN ŒUVRE DANS LES AMÉRIQUES*

QUITO, ECUADOR/EQUADOR/ÉQUATEUR, MAYO/MAY/MAIO/MAI 2006

[WWW.FEMINAMERICAS.ORG](http://WWW.FEMINAMERICAS.ORG)



PARLIAMENTARY CONFEDERATION OF THE AMERICAS (COPA)  
7TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

THEME: TRADE AGREEMENTS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE AMERICAS

MAY 29 TO JUNE 4, 2006  
QUITO, ECUADOR

PRELIMINARY PROGRAM

LOCATION: SWISSÔTEL QUITO

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**MONDAY, MAY 29 AND TUESDAY, MAY 30**

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All day	Arrival of parliamentarians and delegations at Quito's Mariscal Sucre International Airport Attendee registration
4 p.m. to 7 p.m.	Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas Location: Basel Meeting Room
8 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.	Network Executive Committee Dinner (Hosted by the City of Quito and Ms. Myriam Garcés, Deputy) Location: El Panecillo, Pim's Restaurant

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**TUESDAY, MAY 30**

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9 a.m. to 6 p.m.	Attendee registration <i>Location: Mezzanine</i>
9 a.m. to 2 p.m.	<b>Meeting of the Technical Secretariats of Brazil, Québec, and Mexico</b> <i>Location: Neuchâtel II Meeting Room</i>
9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.	<b><u>MEETING OF THE NETWORK OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS</u></b> Location: Appenzel Meeting Room

Theme: Implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and its Optional Protocol in the Americas

- Word of welcome by Network president Ms. Aparecida Gama, Deputy
- Word of welcome by COPA president Mr. Guillermo Landázuri
- Speaker: Ms. Lilia Rodríguez, Assistant Representative of the United Nations Population Fund
- Presentation of the report on implementation of CEDAW in the Americas
- Rapporteur: Ms. Lucero Saldaña, United Mexican States Congress Senator



- Presentation of the CEDAW document databank by Ms. France Hamel, MNA, National Assembly of Québec
- Discussion and adoption of a recommendation on the implementation of CEDAW in the Americas

*Free time for lunch*

3 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Continuation of the meeting of the Executive Committee of the Network of Women Parliamentarians  
Presentation of followup reports on previous themes

- Gender budgets  
Rapporteur: Ms. Ileana Rogel, Deputy, El Salvador Legislative Assembly
- Impact of the Free Trade Areas of the Americas (FTAA) on women  
Rapporteur: Ms. France Hamel, MNA, National Assembly of Québec
- Impact of continental migration on women  
Rapporteur: Ms. Lucero Saldaña, United Mexican States Congress Senator

Election of the new Network Executive Committee

4 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

### **COPA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

*Location: Neuchâtel / Meeting Room*

#### **AGENDA**

- Word of welcome by COPA president Guillermo Landázuri Carrillo, Deputy
- Verification of quorum, reading and adoption of agenda
- Opening of the COPA Executive Committee meeting by COPA president Guillermo Landázuri Carrillo
- Presentation of COPA financial statements by treasurer Leticia Gutiérrez Corona, Deputy
  
- Activity report by the three COPA secretariats:
  1. Executive Secretariat of Mexico/Martha Hilda González Calderón, Deputy
  2. Québec Secretariat/Pierre Moreau, MNA
  3. Secretariat of Brazil/Maria José Maninha, Deputy
- COPA Network of Women 2005–2006 activity report
- Continuation of dialog between FIPA and COPA
- Planning of the Mexican election observation mission
- Examination of draft COPA regulation



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## WEDNESDAY, MAY 31

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8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

### **CONTINUATION OF COPA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

*Location: Salon Neuchâtel / Meeting Room*

- Continuation of the examination of draft COPA regulation
- New business
- Adoption of documents and resolutions

*Executive Committee luncheon*

*Location: Prime Ribs Restaurant*

### **OPENING OF THE 7TH COPA GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

5 p.m. to 6 p.m.

### **OPENING CEREMONY**

*Location: Neuchâtel / Meeting Room*

- Address by COPA president Guillermo Landázuri Carrillo, Deputy
- Address by the Vice Chancellor of Ecuador, Ambassador Diego Ribadeneira
- Address by Wilfrido Lucero, President of the National Congress
- Inauguration by the Constitutional President of the Republic of Ecuador, Mr. Alfredo Palacios

6 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Main conference: Trade Agreements and Economic Development

- Mr. Alan Wagner, Secretary General of the Andean Community of Nations (ACN)
- Mr. Adrianus Koetsenruijter, Chief of the European Committee for Columbia and Ecuador
- Theme: Results of Europe-Latin America Summit

7:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Cocktail party hosted by COPA president Guillermo Landázuri, Deputy

*Location: Mont Blanc Meeting Room*

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## THURSDAY, JUNE 1

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9 a.m. to 9:45 a.m.

Main conference:

Mr. Jorge Bustamante, United Nations special rapporteur on human rights and migration

Theme: Migration in the Americas: From conjecture to the heart of the issue

*Location: Neuchâtel Meeting Room*



## COMMITTEE MEETINGS

10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

### **Committee I: Democracy and Peace**

Chair: Mr. Éric R. Mercier, MNA, National Assembly of Québec

Location: Appenzell Meeting Room

#### Theme: Democracy and Economic Development

- Report on political crises in the Americas, presented by deputy Maria Elena D'Andrea, San Luis Province Chamber of Deputies, Argentina
- Mr. Simon Pachano, professor at the Latin-American Faculty of Social Sciences, FLACSO: Electoral processes in the Americas
- Objectives for the millennium and democratic governance in Latin America, PNUD (to be confirmed)
- Report on the Bolivian electoral observation mission by MNA Éric R. Mercier, Chairman of the Committee on Democracy and Peace, National Assembly of Québec
- Ms. Francine Barry, Assistant to the Chief Electoral Officer of Québec

10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

### **Committee II: Economy, Trade, Labor, and Trading Blocs**

Chair: Juan José García Ochoa, Deputy, Mexican Chamber of Deputies

Location: Neuchâtel II Meeting Room

#### Theme: Trade Treaties and Economic Development

- Mr. Luis Fernando Duque, President of the Andean Parliament
- Mr. William T. Warren, Political Director of the Forum on Democracy and Trade, Georgetown University
- Mr. Paul Martin, UNICEF Representative in Ecuador: Social and economic impacts of free trade agreements
- Ms. Magdalena León, Coordinator of the Network of Latin American Women Contributing to Economic Transformation
- Mr. Alejandro Villamar, Mexican Action Network on Free Trade, Mexico (to be confirmed)

10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

### **Committee III: Human Rights, Aboriginal Peoples, and Citizen Security**

Chair: Orlando Fantazzini, Deputy, Brazilian Chamber of Deputies

Location: Neuchâtel I Meeting Room

#### Theme: Migration in the Americas in a Context of Economic Development and Integration

- Ms. Leticia Gutiérrez Corona, Mexican Chamber of Deputies: Migratory movements: the Mexican experience
- Mr. Carlos Rossi, Senate of the Republic of Argentina: Migration legislation in the Americas: the Argentinean experience
- Mr. Alberto Acosta, Consultant to the Latin American Institute of Social Research (ILDIS): Economic impact of the Ecuadorian migratory explosion



- Ms. Nina Pacari, Member of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues: Human rights and indigenous peoples
- Mr. José Thompson, Assistant Director, Inter-American Institute of Human Rights: Education for human rights, interculturality, and public security

1:30 p.m. to 2:45 p.m.

Conference: "Ecuador: The dollarization experience and the challenge posed by trade agreements," presented by Eduardo Cabezas, President of the Central Bank of Ecuador

Luncheon hosted by the Central Bank of Ecuador

3 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Committee I: Democracy and Peace (cont'd)

3 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Committee II: Economy, Trade, Labor, and Trading Blocs (cont'd)

3 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Committee III: Human Rights, Aboriginal Peoples, and Citizen Security (cont'd)

7:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Ecuadorian evening hosted by the mayor of Quito

Location: Quito Historical Center

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## FRIDAY, JUNE 2

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9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

### **Committee IV: Health and Social Protection**

Chair: Ms. Elsa Rojas Hernández, Deputy, National Assembly of People's Power of Cuba

Location: Neuchâtel II Meeting Room

Theme: Population, Poverty, Reproductive Health, and Sexual Rights in the Americas

- Presentation of the Health Committee report, Ms. Elsa Rojas, Deputy, National Assembly of People's Power of Cuba
- Reproductive health and sexual rights of women in the Americas, Dr. Gladys Zuazaga, Director of the Villa Clara General Hospital, Cuba
- Report from the 13th Latin American Congress of Sexology and Sexual Education, Ms. Aparecida Gama, National Assembly of the State of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- Role of reproductive health and sexual rights in the reduction of poverty, Ms. Ana Guezmes, technical support team consultant, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)



9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

**Committee V: The Environment and Sustainable Development**

Chair: Senator Dudley Lucia, Netherlands Antilles

*Location: Appenzell Meeting Room*

Theme: Impacts of Trade Agreements on Environmental Conservation and the Adoption of Sustainable Development Policies

- Mr. Efraín Villanueva, President of the Mexican Confederation of Federated State Congresses (COMCE)
- Mr. Miguel Ricardo Solanes, Regional Consultant, Natural Resources and Infrastructures, United Nations Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)
- Mr. Alain Lipietz, President of European Parliament Delegation for Relations with the Countries of the Andean Community, France (to be confirmed)
- Mr. Mario Molina, Winner of the Nobel Prize in Chemistry, Mexico (to be confirmed)
- Mr. Fernando Tudela, Deputy Minister of the Environment, Mexico (to be confirmed)
- Ms. Lorena Sanromán, United Nations

9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

**Committee VI: Education, Culture, Science and Technology**

Chair: Consuelo Camarena, Mexican Chamber of Deputies

*Location: Saint-Moritz D Meeting Room*

Theme: Importance of Cultural Diversity and Educational Models

- Mr. Juan Carlos Romero Hiks, Constitutional Governor of the State of Guanajuato, Mexico: Education based on our national cultures
- Mr. Claude Boucher, National Assembly of Québec, Committee rapporteur: Followup of the application of the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions in the Americas, adopted by UNESCO in October 2005
- Mr. Robert Pilon, Executive Vice President of the Secretariat of the Coalition for Cultural Diversity, Canada
- Mr. Francisco Lejarza, President of the Mexican Federation of Private Institutions of Higher Learning (FIMPES), Mexico: Institutional certification for cultural diversity
- Mr. José Luis Acosta Ramos, Acting Deputy of the 9th District, Irapuato, Guanajuato, Mexico: Comparison of educational models at the interinstitutional level
- Mr. José Asensi Sabater, Full Professor, Alicante University, Spain (to be confirmed)

1:30 p.m. to 2:45 p.m.

*Free time for lunch*

3 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Committee IV: Health and Social Protection (cont'd)

3 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Committee V: The Environment and Sustainable Development (cont'd)

3 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Committee VI: Education, Culture, Science and Technology (suite)



5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

**COPA Executive Committee Meeting**

*Location: Neuchâtel I Meeting Room*

**AGENDA OF THE 2ND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

- Discussion of the makeup of the new COPA Executive Committee
- Nomination of candidates for president, first vice president, regional vice presidents, and treasurer
- Designation of committee bureau members, upon committee recommendation
- Recommendations concerning the approval of the Final Declaration

7:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Reception hosted by the Ecuadorian Department of Foreign Relations

*Location: Ecuadorian Department of Foreign Relations*

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**SATURDAY, JUNE 3**

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**PLENARY SESSION OF THE 7TH COPA GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

*Location: Neuchâtel I Meeting Room*

9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

- Reading of the resolutions and declarations of each of COPA's permanent thematic standing committees
- Election of new COPA authorities and Executive Committee members
- Closing

1 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Press conference

*Free time for lunch*

3 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Sightseeing tour of Mitad del Mundo

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**SUNDAY, JUNE 4**

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Sightseeing opportunities

Departure of attendees

**NOTE**

- 1) The meeting of the Network of Women Parliamentarians will be held behind closed doors and is open to Network members only.
- 2) The meeting of the Executive Committee will be held behind closed doors and is open to Executive Committee members only.



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## Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas



**6<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Network  
Quito, Ecuador  
May 30, 2006**

***Theme: The implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in the Americas***

[Agenda](#)

[Report](#)

[Resolution on CEDAW](#)

[Resolution on human trafficking](#)

[Recommendation on the Bahia Declaration](#) and [Bahia Declaration](#)

[2006-2007 Executive Committee](#)

[President of the Network](#)

[2005-2006 Activity Report](#)

[2005-2006 Secretariat's Report](#)

Last updated : 2006-09-25

[Report on CEDAW](#)

[CEDAW Document Databank](#)

[\*Women's rights: CEDAW and the Millennium Development Goals\*](#) –  
workshop by Ms. Lilia Rodríguez, Representative, United Nations  
Population Fund (in Spanish)

[Followup report “Women and FTAA”](#)

[Theme for the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, May 2007 – Human Trafficking](#)



**NETWORK OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE AMERICAS  
6<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING**

**Quito, Ecuador  
May 30, 2006, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.**

**DRAFT AGENDA**

- 9 a.m. Word of welcome from the president of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas
- 9:10 a.m. Word of welcome from the president of COPA
- 9:20 a.m. Approval of the agenda
- 9:25 a.m. Network 2005-2006 Activity report  
Aparecida Gama, President of the Network
- 9:45 a.m. Secretariat's report  
France Hamel, Member of the National Assembly of Quebec
- 10 a.m. Executive Committee progress report on regional initiatives and the network action plan
- 11 a.m. Analysis of the main theme: *The implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and its Facultative Protocol*
- a) Workshop on the theme  
Guest speaker: Lily Rodríguez, Assistant Representative, United Nations Population Fund
  - b) Presentation of the report on the implementation of CEDAW in the Americas  
Rapporteur: Lucero Saldaña, Senator, Congress of the Union of the United Mexican States
  - c) Presentation of the document bank on CEDAW  
France Hamel, Member of the National Assembly of Quebec
  - d) Discussion and adoption of a recommendation on the implementation of CEDAW in the Americas
- 1:30 p.m. Lunch

- 3 p.m. Presentation of follow-up reports on previous themes
- a) *Gender Budgeting*  
Rapporteur: Ileana Rogel, Member of the Legislative Assembly of El Salvador
  - b) *The impact of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) on women*  
Rapporteur: France Hamel, Member of the National Assembly of Quebec
  - c) *The impact of migrations in the context of hemispheric integration*  
Rapporteur: Lucero Saldaña, Senator, Congress of the Union of the United Mexican States
- 3:45 p.m. Discussion on other recommendation proposals
- a) *Declaration of Bahia*  
Aparecida Gama, President of the Network
  - b) Other recommendation proposals
- 4 p.m. Election of new Executive Committee of the Network
- 4:30 p.m. Definition of the main theme and follow-up themes for the next Annual Meeting and designation of rapporteurs
- 4:45 p.m. Miscellaneous
- 5 p.m. Adjournment

*A short meeting of the new Executive Committee will follow.*



## **NETWORK OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE AMERICAS 6th ANNUAL MEETING**

**Quito, Ecuador  
May 30, 2006**

### **REPORT**

*Documents marked with an asterisk (\*) may be consulted on the Network website at <http://www.feminamericas.org/>.*

#### **Introduction**

Some twenty participants from eight countries met for the 6th Annual Meeting of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas on May 30, 2006, in Quito, Ecuador.

Ms. Aparecida Gama, president of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas president and member of the Legislative Assembly of the State of Rio de Janeiro, welcomed the participants and proceeded with her opening address. She then invited the participants to briefly introduce themselves.

Mr. Guillermo Landázuri Carillo, COPA president and member of the National Congress of Ecuador, addressed the meeting participants.

Ms. Gama notified the participants of the end of the parliamentary mandate of Ms. Ileana Rogel, outgoing Network president. As well, she read a letter from Mr. Michel Bissonnet, president of the National Assembly of Québec, designating Ms. Fatima Houda-Pepin as a representative of the Network's founding assembly and 2006–2007 Executive Committee Secretariat host assembly.

Ms. Gama gave an update on the Network Executive Committee's prior request to hold a conference during the present General Assembly on an issue tied to the status of women as per the COPA General Assembly theme, "Trade Agreements and Economic Development," to provide an opportunity to discuss these issues with male parliamentarians. This conference will be included in the proceedings of the Committee on Economy, Trade, Labor, and Trading Blocs on Thursday, June 1, 2006, and will be presented by Ms. Magdalena León, coordinator of the Latin American Network of Women for Economic Transformation. She will discuss gender equality in the context of economic development.

The meeting agenda was adopted as presented.

## **1- 2005–2006 Report on Network Activities**

The Network president read the 2005–2006 Network activity report\*. She covered the main accomplishments, i.e., Network Executive Committee meetings held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on October 5, 2005, and Puebla, Mexico, on March 1, 2006; visit of the Network president to the National Assembly of Québec on September 15 and 16, 2005; organization of the International Forum of Women Parliamentarians in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on October 6 and 7, 2005; Network support for the 13th Latin American Congress on Sexology and Sexual Education in Salvador, State of Bahia, Brazil, from April 19 to 22, 2006; as well as numerous activities in which the Network president took part in Brazil and in COPA's Southern Cone activities.

## **2- Secretariat's 2005–2006 Report**

Ms. France Hamel, MNA, National Assembly of Québec, presented the Network Secretariat's 2005–2006 report\* in the absence of Ms. Fatima Houada-Pepin. The Secretariat's main accomplishments include the following: followup on the Network's 5th Annual Meeting, held in Foz do Iguaçu, Brazil, on May 7, 2005; organization of the Network president's visit to the National Assembly of Québec on September 15 and 16, 2005; organization and followup of Network Executive Committee meetings in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on October 5, 2005, and Puebla, Mexico, on March 1, 2006; preparation of the Network's 6th Annual Meeting; support for the organization of activities in which the Network is a partner; development of the annual theme "Implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and its Optional Protocol in the Americas" with the creation of a document bank; and promotion of the Network website.

## **3- Report on Women's Status Initiatives**

Speaking in turn, meeting participants presented news on improvements in the status of women in their respective regions over the past year. This information on initiatives proposed and implemented by parliamentary assemblies of the Americas enabled participants to learn from the experiences and results.

## **4- Study Session on the Main Theme: Implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and its Optional Protocol in the Americas**

Meeting participants considered "Implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and its Optional Protocol in the Americas." Ms. Lilia Rodríguez, assistant representative of the United Nations Population Fund, led a workshop on CEDAW and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), as well as the significance of the Convention for countries in the Americas.

Ms. Lucero Saldaña, senator of the Congress of the United States of Mexico and rapporteur for this theme, followed up with her report on implementation of the CEDAW in the Americas\*, based on questionnaires filled out by Network Executive Committee members. Several participants mentioned the lack of data from their countries despite the fact that they had tried to submit their completed questionnaires. Ms. Saldaña collected the questionnaires in question and promised to add this information to the report.

Subsequently, Ms. France Hamel, member of the National Assembly of Québec, tabled and briefly presented the CEDAW document bank\* developed by the Network Secretariat.

The debate concluded with discussion and adoption of a resolution promoting the implementation of CEDAW and respect for its principles in the Americas\*.

## **5- Followup on Previous Network Themes**

The rapporteurs responsible for followup on previous working themes presented their reports. In the absence of Ms. Fatima Houda-Pepin, Ms. France Hamel, member of the National Assembly of Québec, presented an update on *The Impact of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) on Women\**. In the absence of Ms. Ileana Rogel, Ms. Irma Amaya, member of the El Salvador Legislative Assembly, reported on *Gender Budgets*. Ms. Lucero Saldaña presented an update on *The Effect of Migration on Women in the Context of Hemispheric Integration*. Following the presentations, participants were invited to comment.

## **6- Resolution Presentation and Adoption**

A resolution condemning human trafficking\*, which was examined during the Network Executive Committee meeting held in Puebla, Mexico, on March 1, was presented and adopted by the participants.

Ms. Aparecida Gama then presented the *Bahia Declaration\** from the 13th Latin American Congress on Sexology and Sexual Education held in Salvador, State of Bahia, Brazil, from April 19 to 22, 2006. The participants adopted a recommendation\* taking note of the *Bahia Declaration* recommendations and pledging to take the appropriate steps to implement said recommendations.

## **7- Tribute to Former Network Presidents**

To highlight the work accomplished by the first two Network presidents in forming and strengthening the Network, Ms. Gama awarded a commemorative plaque to Ms. Lyse Leduc, member of the National Assembly of Québec and Network president from 1999 to 2002, and Ms. Ileana Rogel, member of the El Salvador Legislative Assembly and Network president from 2002 to 2005. In their absence, the plaques were presented to their respective colleagues.

## **8- Election of the 2006–2007 Executive Committee**

In accordance with the Rules of Procedure Concerning the Election of the Executive Committee of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas, the following members were elected to the 2006–2007 Network Executive Committee:

### **President**

Aparecida Gama, Member of the Legislative Assembly of the State of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

### **Regional Representatives:**

#### **North America**

Lucero Saldaña, Senator of the Congress of the United States of Mexico

Kathy Hawken, Representative of the North Dakota House of Representatives, United States

#### **Central America**

Irma Segunda Amaya, Member of the El Salvador Legislative Assembly

Maria Esperanza Valle, Member of the Central American Parliament

#### **Antilles**

Elsa Rojas Hernandez, Member of the Cuba National Assembly of Popular Power

Cemephise Gilles, Senator of the National Assembly of Haiti

#### **Andean Region**

Flor Maria Ríos, Member of the National Assembly, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

Myriam Garcés Dávila, Member of the National Congress of Ecuador

#### **South Cone**

Olga Ferreira de López, Member of the Chamber of Deputies, Republic of Paraguay

Selva Judit Fortsmann, Member of the Chamber of Deputies, Santa Cruz, Argentina

#### **Inter-Parliamentary Organizations and Regional Parliaments**

Juana Maria Vallejo Klaere, Member of the Andean Parliament

Edda E. Acuña, Senator of the Chamber of Senators, Buenos Aires, Argentina and Representative of the Mercosur Parliamentary Union

Sonia Fontes, Member of the Legislative Assembly of the State of Bahia, Brazil and Representative of the National Union of State Legislatures of Brazil (UNALE)

Zulma Ramona Gómez Cáceres, Member of the Chamber of Deputies, Republic of Paraguay and Representative of the Latin American Parliament

#### **Founding Assembly of the Network and Secretariat Headquarters**

Fatima Houda-Pepin, Member of the National Assembly of Québec

### **Host Assembly for the Network's Next Annual Meeting**

Designation of two representatives from the next assembly to host the Network's next annual meeting has not yet been confirmed.

Note that the president of Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas, Ms. Aparecida Gama, is ex officio one of 11 COPA vice presidents.

### **9- Choice of 2006–2007 Theme**

Following discussions on proposed themes for 2006–2007, Annual Meeting participants decided to devote next year to studying human trafficking in order to continue the work started during an initial series of conferences in Puebla, Mexico, in March 2006. It was also agreed that special attention be paid to the issue of trafficking victims' health and sexual education.

### **10- Questions**

Ms. Aparecida Gama distributed a letter from Ms. Liza Largoza-Maza, member of the Gabriela Women's Party in the Chamber of Deputies of the Philippines, and urged Annual Meeting participants to consider her call for support and solidarity toward this women's political party in the Philippines.

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING  
NETWORK OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE AMERICAS**

**Quito, Ecuador  
May 30, 2006—4:30 p.m.**

**DRAFT REPORT**

At the meeting of the new Executive Committee, which was held immediately after the Network Annual Meeting, the following decisions were made:

- Election of Ms. Edda E. Acuña, senator of the province of Buenos Aires, Argentina, as representative of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas on the Executive Committee of COPA<sup>1</sup>.
- Designation of Ms. Zulma Gómez, member of the Chamber of Deputies of the Republic of Paraguay, as rapporteur on the main theme, “Human Trafficking.”
- Designation of Ms. Selva Judit Fortsmann, member of the Chamber of Deputies of the province of Santa Cruz, Argentina, as rapporteur for followup on the “Implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and its Optional Protocol in the Americas.”
- Designation of Ms. Irma Amaya, member of the El Salvador Legislative Assembly, as rapporteur for followup on “The Impact of Migration on Women in the Context of Hemispheric Integration.”
- Designation of Ms. Fatima Houda-Pepin, member of the National Assembly of Québec, as rapporteur for followup on “The Impact of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) on Women.”
- Inclusion of the theme “Impact of the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas (BAA) on Women” and designation of Ms. Flor Ríos, member of the National Assembly of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela as rapporteur for followup on the theme.
- In the absence of Ms. Elsa Rojas, member of the National Assembly of People’s Power of Cuba and president of the COPA Committee on Health and Social Protection, it was decided that Ms. Flor Ríos shall act as Committee president pro tempore, and Ms. Alba Allende de López, member of the Chamber of Deputies of the Province of Entre Ríos, Argentina, shall act as vice president.

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<sup>1</sup> Following the election of Ms. Edda E. Acuña as first vice president of COPA, Ms. Lucero Saldaña was designated as Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas representative to the COPA Executive Committee during the plenary session of the COPA General Assembly held on June 2, 2006, in Quito, Ecuador.



**NETWORK OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE AMERICAS  
6<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING  
QUITO, ECUADOR, MAY 30, 2006**

**Resolution on the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination  
of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)**

***WE, the representatives of the parliamentary assemblies of unitary, federal, federated, and associated states, of regional parliaments, and of interparliamentary organizations of the Americas, gathered in Quito, Ecuador, for the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas held as part of the activities celebrating the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW):***

***SPEAK OUT*** in favor of the ratification of this Convention and its Optional Protocol by all countries;

***CALL ON*** state parties to renounce their reservations regarding the articles of the Convention that are crucial to the pursuit of its goal;

***Ask*** the governments of state parties to present their reports to the Convention Committee in a timely manner;

***RECOGNIZE*** the importance of the role played by civil society organizations in enforcing the Convention and ***call upon*** the governments of state parties to lend them the support they need to continue their work to this end;

***ENCOURAGE*** State Parties to distribute the Convention within their respective populations and organize awareness campaigns as to its content;

***INVITE*** the governments of State Parties to provide training to their officials on the Convention and its content;

***URGE*** State Parties to adopt appropriate measures and public policies to follow up on the recommendations developed by the Committee;

***RECOGNIZE*** the need to ally ourselves with the judiciary of state parties to promote and ensure the principles set out in the Convention are respected;

**CALL ON** the parliaments of state parties that have not yet done so to enshrine the principles of the Convention in their constitution;

**CALL ON** parliamentarians the world over to undertake an in-depth review of the laws of their respective countries to ensure they take into account the commitments undertaken in the Convention;

**URGE** State Parties to foster international and regional cooperation in view of promoting and guaranteeing respect for the rights enshrined in the Convention.



**NETWORK OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE AMERICAS  
6<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING  
QUITO, ECUADOR, MAY 30, 2006**

**Resolution on human trafficking**

Meeting in Quito, Ecuador, we, the legislators and representatives of Member Nations of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas join our voices to express our determination and commitment to fighting human trafficking, particularly in women and children, and call on all public officials in our respective countries and in society at large to:

- ONE:** Impose mandatory sentences on anyone found guilty of participating in human trafficking, particularly the trafficking of women, adolescents, and children for economic or sexual exploitation, which includes prostitution and any other form of sexual exploitation, forced labor or service, slavery and any similar practices, servitude, and removal of organ and fluids;
- TWO:** Take effective measures to prevent and suppress human trafficking, with special attention paid to the most vulnerable—women and children;
- THREE:** Ensure that severe penalties are meted out for those trafficking in organs, human tissue, or any other body parts for commercial use;
- FOUR:** Establish government programs to strengthen protection and aid for victims of trafficking, guaranteeing them full respect for their basic human rights;
- FIVE:** Organize public awareness campaigns that expose the consequences of this type of crime and encourage society's participation in preventing this scourge;

- SIX:** Give law enforcement officers, prosecutors and the judiciary, consular officials, and social service personnel operating inside and outside our hemisphere the means necessary to come to the aid of trafficking victims;
- SEVEN:** Ensure that our governments take all necessary measures to expand regional and international cooperation in order to punish those involved in human trafficking;
- EIGHT:** Ensure that all nations ratify and implement the *United Nations Convention's Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children*; and
- NINE:** Ensure that non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the private sector, and society at large join together to promote adoption of effective preventive measures against human trafficking and develop strategies to bring perpetrators to justice. We also urge all countries to support civil society in its fight against this serious violation of human rights.



**NETWORK OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE AMERICAS  
6<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING  
QUITO, ECUADOR, MAY 30, 2006**

**Recommendation on the Bahia Declaration**

***WE, the women parliamentarians of the congresses and parliamentary assemblies of unitary, federal, federated, and associated states, regional parliaments, and interparliamentary organizations assembled together in Quito, Ecuador for the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas:***

***RECOGNIZE and APPLAUD*** the recommendations set out in the *Bahia Declaration* arising from the 13th Latin American Congress on Sexology and Sexual Education held in Salvador, Bahia, Brazil from April 19 to 22, 2006;

***AGREE*** to take any appropriate steps to support the implementation of *Bahia Declaration* recommendations in our respective states;

***AGREE*** to monitor developments in sexual rights and women's reproductive health as part of the work of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas.



**NETWORK OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE AMERICAS**  
(COPA: PARLIAMENTARY CONFEDERATION OF THE AMERICAS)  
PRESIDENT: APARECIDA GAMA, DEPUTY  
(RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL)

**SECRETARIAT OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS OF UNALE**  
(NATIONAL UNION OF STATE LEGISLATURES OF BRAZIL)  
SECRETARY: SÔNIA FONTES, DEPUTY (BAHIA, BRAZIL)

## **Bahia Declaration**

**“THE RIGHTS OF ALL WOMEN,  
A MISSION FOR ALL”**

**April 2006**

**Salvador, State of Bahia, Brazil**

## Presentation

The universal recognition of human rights requires that efforts be expended to ensure these rights are fully and concretely recognized and exercised in all societies.

The purpose of this document is to urge political leaders to make a commitment to respecting and defending rights related to sexual and reproductive health by making them priorities for the improved quality of life and well-being of women.

This document constitutes a step toward empowerment for the states and nations of Latin America, a further step toward dignity and life for the people, and a call for greater action. The Bahia Declaration is a joint initiative by women parliamentarians of the Americas to urge that we join our efforts together to ensure the rights of all women become everyone's responsibility.

Salvador de Bahia, April 22, 2006

Aparecida Gama, Deputy  
Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas

Sônia Fontes, Deputy  
Secretariat of Women  
National Union of State Legislatures of Brazil

Dr. Balbina Lemos da Silva  
COSAM<sup>1</sup>/SESAB<sup>2</sup>, Government of Bahia  
Discussion Forum Coordinator

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<sup>1</sup> The acronym COSAM stands for *Coordenação da Saúde da Mulher*, meaning "Women's Health Coordination Office."

<sup>2</sup> The acronym SESAB stands for *Secretaria da Saúde do Estado da Bahia*, meaning "State of Bahia Secretariat of Health."

We, the women parliamentarians of the Americas, gathered together at the Parliamentary Forum held during the 13th Latin American Congress on Sexology and Sexual Education in Salvador, State of Bahia, from April 19 to 22, 2006, have agreed on the release of the following declaration:

### **Recognizing**

- That the violation of women's human rights is closely associated with gender discrimination, which is widespread in society and perpetuated by state institutions, among others;

### **Considering**

- That "all human rights are universal, indivisible, and interdependent"<sup>3</sup>;
- That sexual and reproductive rights include the right to a life of dignity, freedom, and safety and to equality, privacy, freedom of thought (which implies the right to live life free from any restrictive interpretation of religious texts, beliefs, philosophies, or customs), information and education, protection and health services (including the right to information, access, freedom of choice, safety, privacy, confidentiality, comfort, treatment with dignity, and the power to decide) as well as the benefits of scientific progress, freedom of assembly and political participation, the right to marry or not, the right decide whether or not to have children, and the right not be subject to torture or mistreatment;
- That the right to sexual freedom encompasses the possibility for individuals to express their full sexual potential, which includes the right to establish any type of sexual orientation or association but excludes all forms of sexual coercion, exploitation, and abuse at any time or situations in life, and that sexuality is an integral part of the personality of every human being, whose development depends on the satisfaction of basic human needs such as the desire for contact, intimacy, emotional expression, pleasure, tenderness, and love<sup>4</sup>;
- That the international conferences and meetings organized by the United Nations over the past 20 years have made possible the creation and signature by various countries of agreements that have represented advances in understanding and recognizing human rights in general and the sexual and reproductive rights of women and girls in particular;
- That under democratic governments, parliamentarians share responsibility for institutional projects and the political, legal, and administrative institutions of society; and
- That in order for sexual and reproductive rights to be exercised, parliaments must be totally committed to promoting state democracy and secularity;

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<sup>3</sup> World Conference on Human Rights, Vienna, 1993

<sup>4</sup> World Association for Sexology, 15th World Congress of Sexology, 2004

## **Recognizing, however**

- That progress on legal and organizational measures in our countries has not been sufficient to ensure the respect of obligations assumed under international agreements; and
- That economic globalization and technological progress have not led to better allocation of material and cultural goods in the world, but rather increased inequalities;

## **We undertake to**

- Strive to have laws passed, policies introduced, and programs and projects developed that promote the full exercise of sexual and reproductive rights, by expressing the progress and historic successes of human rights;
- Devote all our efforts to guaranteeing that these policies, programs, and projects become a permanent part of the budget legislation of the various government bodies of our countries;
- Reject the fragmentation of administrative practices that has traditionally characterized the fight against gender inequality in our hemisphere by promoting dialogue and cooperation among same-level organizations and the various levels of government and by broadening coordination of societal initiatives;
- Help create mechanisms that can transform status-of-women policies into coherent, long-lasting government policies that are more than just plans;
- Include and propose the inclusion of participatory and social control bodies and methods in policies, programs, and projects pertaining to problems experienced by women and girls in our countries;
- In the parliamentary work, recognize and respect the diversity of family models in the development and negotiations of legislative measures;
- Seek to completely remove any legislation in our countries that is contrary to the concepts of integral health and sexual and reproductive rights, as expressed in international documents and agreements;
- Defend and promote, through implementation of international human rights and national human rights systems, the respect of rights set forth in international conventions and treaties that have resulted from world conferences and summits in the United Nations system<sup>5</sup>;

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<sup>5</sup> United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), 1981  
International Pact on Civil and Political Rights, 1992; International Pact on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (IPESCR), 1992  
Program of Action, World Conference on Human Rights, Vienna, 1993  
Program of Action, International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 1994  
Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence Against Women, Belém do Pará, 1995  
Action Plan, 4th World Conference on Women, Beijing, 1995  
World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, Durban, 2002  
Brasília Declaration on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights. Forum of eight Latin American countries:  
Millennium Development Goals, Proposals for the Summit

**And we recommend the following measures:**

1. The convocation of a high level meeting of representatives from the fields of health and education and women's organizations in the hemisphere to discuss development and implementation strategies for programs to integrate discussion of sexual and reproductive rights in primary and secondary education programs in our hemisphere;
2. The creation by local governments of institutions devoted to implementing public policies for women (with a racial and generational perspective) and the protection of sexual and reproductive rights, with sufficient budget resources to guarantee the implementation of these policies;
3. The creation of institutions and participatory and social control mechanisms at all organizational levels for the purpose of implementing projects and actions intended for the general public and more specifically, the promotion of the sexual and reproductive rights of women and girls;
4. Ensure that in the event of anencephalic pregnancy, women receive medical and legal advice with respect to termination or non-termination of pregnancy;
5. The harmonization throughout Latin America of legislative measures regarding migratory policies to stop criminal practices such as human trafficking and facilitate cross-border mobility for the purpose of scientific, cultural, and economic exchanges;
6. Recommend that all countries adopt specific measures to fight sexual, domestic, and family violence against women;
7. Recommend the integration of care and medication for sexual dysfunctions in the public health network, as well as medical care for climateric women<sup>6</sup>;
8. Recommend that Latin American governments begin studying the possibility of refusing exclusive rights on antiretroviral medications that are on the list of basic care medications in the STD<sup>7</sup>/AIDS<sup>8</sup> program, of which the Brazilian program is an example that includes the essential elements to ensure the effectiveness and continuity of these programs in our countries.

Salvador, April 22, 2006

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<sup>6</sup> "Climateric" refers to all stages of life where the woman's body can have a radical transformation (pregnancy, menopause, etc.)

<sup>7</sup> The acronym DST stands for *Doenças sexuais transmissíveis*, meaning "sexually transmitted diseases" (STDs).

<sup>8</sup> The acronym AIDS stands for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome.

**NETWORK OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE AMERICAS**  
(COPA: PARLIAMENTARY CONFEDERATION OF THE AMERICAS)  
PRESIDENT: APARECIDA GAMA, DEPUTY  
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**SECRETARIAT OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS OF UNALE**  
(NATIONAL UNION OF STATE LEGISLATURES OF BRAZIL)  
SECRETARY: SÔNIA FONTES, DEPUTY (BAHIA, BRAZIL)

**PARLIAMENTARIANS PRESENT:**

Serys Marly Shessarenko, Senator, Brazil  
Edda Acuña, Senator, Argentina  
Iara Bernardi, Federal Deputy, Brazil  
Ileana Rogel, National Deputy, El Salvador  
State deputies (Brazil):  
Aparecida Gama, Rio de Janeiro  
Sônia Fontes, Bahia  
Edna Rodrigues, Rio de Janeiro  
Heloneida Studart, Rio de Janeiro  
Lídice da Mata, Bahia  
Jusmari Oliveira, Bahia  
Ana Cavalcanti, Pernambuco  
Ana Cunha, Pará  
Maria José Leão, Piauí  
Naluh Gouveia, Acre  
Ana Martins, São Paulo

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Dr. Maria Helena Souza (Supervisor, Policies for Women in the Municipality of Salvador, Bahia, Brazil)  
Dr. Maria Eunice Kalil (Women's Forum, Bahia, Brazil)

Parliamentary assistants:

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Dr. Nereida Mazza Espírito Santo  
Dr. Rosângela Bahia

Chair of the 13th Latin American Congress on Sexology and Sexual Education:

Dr. Ricardo Cavalcanti, Brazil

Chair of the Scientific Committee:

Dr. Gerson Pereira Lopes, Brazil

Latin American Federation of Sexology and Sexual Education (FLASSES):

Dr. Rubén Hernandez Serrano, Venezuela



**COMITÉ EJECUTIVO DE LA RED DE MUJERES PARLAMENTARIAS DE LAS AMÉRICAS**  
**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE NETWORK OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE AMERICAS**  
**COMITÊ EXECUTIVO DA REDE DE MULHERES PARLAMENTARES DAS AMÉRICAS**  
**COMITÉ EXÉCUTIF DU RÉSEAU DES FEMMES PARLEMENTAIRES DES AMÉRIQUES**

**Presidenta / President / Presidente / Présidente**

Assembléia Legislativa do Estado do Rio de Janeiro, Brasil  
Sra. Aparecida Gama, Deputada

**Representantes regionales / Regional Representatives /  
Representantes regionais / Représentantes régionales**

América Central / Central America / América Central / Amérique  
centrale

Asamblea Legislativa de El Salvador  
Sra. Irma Segunda Amaya Echeverría, Diputada

Parlamento Centroamericano  
Sra. Maria Esperanza Valle B., Diputada

América del Norte / North America / América do Norte /  
Amérique du Nord

North Dakota Legislative Assembly, United States of America  
Ms. Kathy Hawken, Representative

(vacante)

El Caribe / Caribbean / O Caribe / Antilles

Asamblea Nacional del Poder Popular de Cuba  
Sra. Elsa Rojas Hernandez, Diputada

Assemblée nationale de la République de Haïti  
M<sup>me</sup> Cemephise Gilles, Sénateur

Cono Sur / Southern Cone / Cone Sul / Cône Sud

Cámara de Diputados de la República del Paraguay  
Sra. Olga Ferreira de López, Diputada

Cámara de Diputados de la Provincia de Santa Cruz, Argentina  
Sra. Selva Judit Forstmann

Región Andina / Andean Region / Região Andina / Région andine

Asamblea Nacional de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela  
Sra. Flor Maria Ríos, Diputada

(vacante)

**Presidenta saliente/ Outgoing President/  
Presidente sainda/ Présidente sortante**

**Parlamentos regionales y organizaciones interparlamentarias /  
Regional Parliaments and Interparliamentary Organizations /  
Parlamentos regionais e organizações interparlamentares /  
Parlements régionaux et organisations interparlementaires**

Parlamento Andino  
Sra. Juana Maria Vallejo Klaere, Diputada

União Nacional dos Legislativos Estaduais (UNALE), Brasil  
Sra. Sonia Fontes, Deputada

Unión de parlamentarios del Mercosur  
Sra. Edda E Acuña, Senadora

Parlamento Latinoamericano  
Sra. Zulma Ramona Gómez Cáceres, Diputada

**Asamblea fundadora de la Red y sede de la Secretaría /  
Founding Assembly of the Network and host institution of the Secretariat /  
Assembléia fundadora da Rede e sede da Secretaria /  
Assemblée fondatrice du Réseau et hôte du Secrétariat**

Assemblée nationale du Québec  
M<sup>me</sup> Fatima Houada-Pepin, Députée

**Próxima Asamblea anfitriona / Next Host Assembly /  
Próxima Assembléia anfitriã / Prochaine assemblée hôte**

(Representantes - por confirmar)



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Last updated : 31/07/2006

## Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas

### President



### LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF RIO DE JANEIRO

**APARECIDA GAMA, Representative** – Brazilian Democratic Movement Party (PMDB)

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**4<sup>th</sup> Secretary** of the Legislative Assembly of the State of Rio de Janeiro (ALERJ)

**2<sup>nd</sup> Treasurer** of the National Union of State Legislatures of Brazil (UNALE)

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Regional administrator of Xá, an administrative region of the municipality of Rio de Janeiro (80/93). Degree in education (counseling and educational administration). First elected as a member of the Democratic Labor Party (PDT),

she held the following positions in the 1991-1995 legislature: chair of the Education, Culture and Sports Committee; vice chair of the Committee on Women, Children and Youth; vice chair of the Parliamentary Investigative Committee (CPI) struck to “apportion accountability for the mass sterilization of women in the state of Rio de Janeiro.” In 1994, she became a member of the caucus of the Brazilian Social Democratic Party (PSDB). She subsequently joined the Brazilian Socialist Party (PSB) on the invitation of state governor Anthony Garotinho. She was attorney general of the Legislative Assembly of the State of Rio de Janeiro from 1998 to 2002. She was President of the Secretariat of Women of the UNALE before being elected president of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas in May 2005.

**Reelected.**



**VI Annual Meeting  
of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas**

**2005–2006 ACTIVITY REPORT  
FOR THE PERIOD OF MAY 7, 2005, TO MAY 30, 2006**

**Presented by Ms. Aparecida Gama  
President of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas  
Member of the Legislative Assembly of the State of Rio de Janeiro**

**Quito, Ecuador  
May 30, 2006**

## 1. Presentation

As president of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas, it is my pleasure to submit this report, which presents the Network's main achievements during my term from May 7, 2005, to May 30, 2006.

This seventh year of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas was marked by consolidation. After giving the Network a flexible and efficient operating structure, we continued to successfully implement regular Network activities this year: Executive Committee meetings, the Annual Meeting, development of the annual theme, and followup on past themes. These activities have helped us strengthen our reputation as a pivotal discussion forum for women parliamentarians of the Americas.

At our Annual Meeting in May 2005, we determined our main theme and designated our rapporteur. Throughout 2005–2006, we worked continuously on the theme of implementation in the Americas of the *United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* (CEDAW) and its Optional Protocol. This included production of an article presenting CEDAW, a document databank, and a status report; distribution of a questionnaire on implementation in the Americas; creation of a workshop; and presentation of the main report.

We also took advantage of opportunities at Executive Committee meetings to hold activities on themes of interest to members of our Network (interparliamentary forum and conferences). These activities helped promote the Network with women parliamentarians and other civil society groups.

The representatives of the Network's Executive Committee make an excellent team of ambassadors. Through their work within their respective interparliamentary assemblies or organizations, the Network has continued its regional development and proposed a number of initiatives. The commitment and availability of the Executive Committee members give us great hope for the improvement of the status of women in the Americas, and I would like to sincerely thank them for their dedication.

The Network also enjoys the support of the Secretariat staff in carrying out its activities. The Secretariat is hosted by the Québec National Assembly, the Network's founding assembly. I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the Québec National Assembly for its remarkable support, which also contributes to progress for the women of the Americas.

## **2. Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas 2005–2006 Activity Report**

### 2.1 Followup to the Network's 5th Annual Meeting

The minutes of the 5th Annual Meeting held on May 7, 2005, in Foz do Iguaçu, Brazil, the recommendation adopted on the impact of migration on women in the Americas, and other documents related to this meeting have been made available on our website. These documents have also been sent to all members of the Network Executive Committee and the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas (COPA).

### 2.2 Network president's visit to the Québec National Assembly

September 15–16, 2005 – Quebec, Canada

I had the opportunity to visit the Québec National Assembly on September 15 and 16. On this occasion, the president of the National Assembly reiterated his institution's support for the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas as host of the Network Secretariat.

During my visit, I was able to meet with a number of people, including the Executive Committee representative of the founding assembly, Secretariat host Ms. Fatima Houda-Pepin, and representatives of the Québec Section of COPA. These meetings were an opportunity to discuss the Network's orientations and priorities for 2005–2006.

My meetings with the Québec minister of families, seniors, and the status of women and the president of Conseil du Statut de la Femme du Québec were an opportunity to discuss our common challenges connected to the status of women, to learn about Québec's initiatives in the field, and to spread the word about our Network.

Lastly, this visit was an opportunity to discuss how the Secretariat carries out its assigned duties.

### 2.3 Network Executive Committee meeting

October 5, 2005 – Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

The first Network Executive Committee meeting for the 2005–2006 term was held in my own legislative assembly on October 5, 2005. This meeting gave us an opportunity to discuss activities for the coming year and adopt the *2005–2006 Network Activity Plan*.

We also adopted a resolution in support of the people of the Republic of El Salvador, which had suffered two natural disasters, asking for particular attention to Salvadoran women, who are often hit harder by these events.

Following this meeting, I ensured that minutes were drawn up and the adopted resolution was sent in due form to the president of the Legislative Assembly of El Salvador.

In addition, in accordance with the motions passed at this meeting, I ensured that the Secretariat sent all presidents of legislative assemblies of the Americas a letter asking that their

websites be linked to the Network website. Network Executive Committee members were notified that this request had been sent to their president. This letter also helped promote Network initiatives and the next Annual Meeting. The results of this effort are as yet highly mixed, but we remain confident that a growing number of women parliamentarians will learn about the Network and take part in its activities.

## 2.4 International Forum of Women Parliamentarians

October 6–7, 2005 – Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

As president of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas, I have worked with our colleague Sonia Fontes, head of the Secretariat of Women of the National Union of State Legislatures of Brazil (UNALE) and member of the Network Executive Committee, to organize an International Forum of Women Parliamentarians within the Legislative Assembly of the State of Rio de Janeiro.

This meeting attended by a number of Network Executive Committee members was held on October 6 and 7. It gave rise to productive discussion on many aspects of the status of women, including the role of women in politics; women as agents of political, economic, and social development; violence and discrimination against women; and problems tied to migration. Our discussions helped attendees raise many questions regarding the role and place of women, and seek solutions to the problems facing women of the Americas.

## 2.5 Network Executive Committee meeting

March 1, 2006 – Puebla, Mexico

The second Executive Committee meeting for 2005–2006 was held in the city of Puebla at *Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla*. Ms. Lucero Saldaña, senator of the Congress of Mexico and North American representative on the Network Executive Committee, took the initiative to organize a series of talks on “Human Trafficking: An International Issue.” Leading parliamentarians and specialists spoke on a key issue for members of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas. This event helped initiate a dialog between parliamentarians, specialists from nongovernmental and international organizations, and the student community.

At the Executive Committee meeting following these talks, we adopted a recommendation indicating our full opposition to human trafficking in all forms and asking that legislative, preventive, punitive, and victim rehabilitation measures be set up in the Americas.

At this meeting, we also adopted a series of amendments to our detailed Action Plan in order to identify the actions linked to certain Network objectives. We also discussed the organization of and draft agenda for our 6th Annual Meeting.

In addition, we agreed to ask the COPA president to add a talk to the program of this general meeting on gender perspectives in economic development, further to a repeated request by Network members to discuss women’s status issues not only within the Network, but also with our male parliamentarian colleagues.

2.6 13th Latin American Congress on Sexology and Sexual Education  
April 19 to 22, 2006 – Salvador de Bahia, Brazil

The 13th Latin American Congress on Sexology and Sexual Education was held from April 19 to 22 in the city of Salvador, Bahia, Brazil. It was organized by the Latin American Federation of Sexology and Sexual Education (FLASSES) and the Brasília Sexology Center (CESEX) with the participation of organizations including Brazil's department of health, the Pan American Health Organization, and the United Nations Population Fund. The themes addressed included clinical sexology, new trends in sexual education, and the sociocultural aspects of sexuality.

As president of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas, I joined my colleague Sonia Fontes, member of the Legislative Assembly of the State of Bahia, Brazil and head of the Secretariat of Women of UNALE, in inviting parliamentarians from our respective organizations to take part in this event. The participation of parliamentarians from Brazil and the Americas made this year's congress unique and spurred engaging discussions on the state of public policy regarding health issues and sexual rights.

The results of this work have been grouped together in the "Bahia Declaration" and will be presented during this Network Annual Meeting.

### **3. Other activities of the president of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas**

#### **3.1 Meeting of the Group of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas – Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas (FIPA)**

May 20, 2005 – Brasília, Brazil

The purpose of this meeting of the Group of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas of FIPA was to examine the everyday realities of women in North, Central, and South America and, through lively discussions, to address these challenges in relation to the main priorities of women in today's world. Since the intercultural process occurs at every level of society, the objective of this meeting was to foster debate in order to promote the sharing of ideas and action plans by proposing case-specific solutions based on a broader overall vision. This collective vision led us to a better understanding of individual cases.

#### **3.2 Meeting of Brazilian parliamentarians with university professors**

July 6, 2005 – Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

During this meeting, we looked at the issue of the citizenship of women in South America, specifically the theme of freedom. Attendees discussed the definition of freedom as a means of better identifying the work that lies ahead to ensure women are treated fairly, notably with regard to their rights. We also discussed today's cultural model, which excludes women from the decision-making process beyond the domains they control, treating them in a reductive and disrespectful manner. A number of analyses were presented, notably by the professors, who offered a more factual and realistic picture of the shortcomings of today's society.

#### **3.3 3rd International Conference on Preventing and Combating Human Trafficking**

August 11 and 12, 2005 – Pernambuco, Brazil

In addition to addressing the structure and direction of the efforts being made to fight human trafficking, the main purpose of this meeting was to present prevention models based on monitoring and understanding the crime, and to discuss efforts to integrate the various defense staff training systems.<sup>1</sup> Following presentations by experts from the social, legal, and judiciary fields, discussions were held and new ideas proposed together with stakeholders from civil society. A number of attendees shared their own experiences, which helped generate an exchange of ideas, notably among representatives of countries that are grappling with this type of migration. Other themes were also discussed, among them identity theft and the degradation of respect for life. This meeting generally led to heightened awareness of the issue and gave institutions the responsibility to produce information and divulge it to citizens.

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<sup>1</sup> Translator's note: In Brazil, the police force is made up of a number of independent police units. Defense staff refers to all of these forces.

The meeting also led to a new approach to the problem, as attendees concluded that simply drafting laws cannot rectify the situation or eliminate the relationships that lead to this illegal trade, which is so often tied to drug and gun trafficking. The main objective is to find solutions to these social problems that, yet again, often victimize women.

### 3.4 2nd Meeting of Women Deputies of the Federated States of Brazil

September 28 and 29, 2005 – Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

This meeting was held as part of the ongoing initiative to discuss the status of women and find solutions. Parliamentarians from the federated states gathered to discuss problems affecting the lives and status of women, including health, disability, quota policies, and social security.

Deliberations at the first meeting held in the state of Espírito Santo resulted in the drafting of a declaration appended to the summary of the meeting of the state of Rio de Janeiro and submitted to the federal government. Discussions on the “National Plan for Public Policies for Women” led to proposals regarding the administration of measures designed to give women an active, participatory role in the economic development in their countries.

### 3.5 COPA meetings – Southern Cone

November 5, 2005 – Mar del Plata, Argentina

November 29 and 30, 2005 – Asunción, Paraguay

In November, I also took part in two meetings of the Southern Cone section of COPA, first concurrent to the 4th Summit of the Americas in Mar del Plata, Argentina, then in Paraguay. The second meeting gave us an opportunity to speak about the various issues facing people in Paraguay and Uruguay, mainly women. The attendance of representatives from secretariats on the status of women from Southern Cone countries helped make this meeting a success.

### 3.6 Meeting on violence against women

November 10, 2005 – Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

In November 2005, I took part in a seminar on violence against women at the initiative of the Development Secretariat of the State of Rio de Janeiro.<sup>2</sup> The objective of this seminar was to disclose the results of a study on attacker and victim profiles in the State of Rio de Janeiro. We also celebrated the opening of eleven women’s assistance agencies<sup>3</sup> and one shelter for women victims of conjugal violence.

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<sup>2</sup> Secretaria de Estado de Desenvolvimento da Baixada Fluminense e da região Metropolitana

<sup>3</sup> Delegacias Especializadas de Atendimento à Mulher

### 3.7 Activity report from March to May 2006

- Opening of CIAM<sup>4</sup>, a social, psychological, and legal services organization for women in the state of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, who face social exclusion, violence, or discrimination
- Participation in conferences held at various religious institutions on family violence
- Participation in school conferences on the safety of women
- Seminar on the geographic distribution of violence against women
- Debate on services offered to women compared to those offered to men
- Participation in various telecasts on women in politics
- Participation in telecasts on women on TV-ALERJ, the official channel of the Legislative Assembly of the state of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- Visit to 12 NIAMs<sup>5</sup> in the state of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- Involvement in legal services provided to low-income women (up to five minimum-wage salaries<sup>6</sup>) as well as free legal aid (these women are **not** victims of family violence)
- Initiative for generating income for women seniors
- Development of courses and workshops on preserving and restoring books and documents for young girls in vulnerable situations
- Participation in a training seminar on the fight against international human trafficking, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- Participation in arts workshops for women
- Participation in the meeting of the Committee for the Prevention and Fight Against the Mortality of Pregnant Women
- Participation in a citizenship fair
- Lecture on gender and work to women studying mechanics
- Lecture at the “Gender and Race” seminar as part of the public budget
- Lecture on women, gender, and education

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<sup>4</sup> The acronym CIAM stands for *Centro de Investigación y Atención a la Mujer* (Women’s Assistance Center).

<sup>5</sup> The acronym NIAM stands for *Núcleo Integrado de Atendimento à Mulher* (Integrated Women’s Services Unit) (victims of violence).

<sup>6</sup> For illustration purposes, five minimum-wage salaries in Brazil are the equivalent of approximately \$750 USD per month, based on the exchange rate in effect on May 23, 2006.

- Visit to *Instituto Gama Ação Social*<sup>7</sup>, which offers dance and gymnastics services, medical and dental care, and training in hairdressing, manicures, fashion modeling, crafts, IT, and more
- Lecture on the fight against the commodification of women in magazines
- Participation in a seminar on psychological harassment, the dark side of the workplace
- Participation in the seminar “Women Working Together”

#### **4. Other activities**

##### **4.1 Production of a document databank: CEDAW and its implementation in the Americas**

The Network Secretariat worked on preparing a new document databank tied to the annual theme—implementation in the Americas of the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* (CEDAW) and its Optional Protocol. As with previous databanks, it will index theoretical and methodological texts on the topic.

I would like to take this opportunity to mention that document databanks on each theme the Network studies are available on our website. I urge you to consult these directories and continue adding to them by sending the Network Secretariat your suggestions for documents and references and telling us of any concrete measures taken by your parliaments and governments. This is an excellent tool to better circulate information on the progress made on the status of women in the Americas. In addition, these high quality documents help promote the Network, as indicated by the growing number of websites that cite them.<sup>8</sup>

#### **5. Conclusion**

These activities are part of ongoing efforts to consolidate the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas by placing special emphasis on promotion in order to reach more women parliamentarians, legislative assemblies, and organizations specializing in the status of women and women in the Americas. Each of us is responsible for doing our part.

The expertise we develop by delving into topics tied to women’s status and hosting forums and conferences helps strategically position the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas as a source of discussion and debate, as well as concrete measures to improve the status of women locally, regionally, and throughout the Americas.

Our current main challenges are 1) Encouraging more parliamentarians to join the Network; 2) Consolidating our organization, particularly as regards institutional objectives and the issue of funding; 3) Following up on recommendations adopted by the Network by seeing to their implementation by legislative assemblies of the Americas; and 4) Carrying out the initiatives and measures proposed within the Network.

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<sup>7</sup> Gama Social Action Institute

<sup>8</sup> A list of these websites appears in the 2005–2006 Report of the Secretariat of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas.



**VI Annual Meeting  
of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas**

**REPORT BY THE SECRETARIAT  
FOR MAY 7, 2005, TO MAY 30, 2006**

**Presented by Ms. France Hamel  
Member of the National Assembly of Quebec**

**Quito, Ecuador  
May 30, 2006**

## Role of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas Secretariat

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The Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas Secretariat has been located at the Québec National Assembly since its inception in 1999.

The Québec National Assembly assumes the salary of a full time advisor to the Network and provides webmaster services to develop and update the Network's website.

It also makes available to the Network the research services of its Library, as well as the technical and administrative support of its Interparliamentary and International Relations and Communications branches.

The Network advisor's duties consist of carrying out the regular tasks of the Secretariat; circulating information and coordinating communications within the Network, notably with regard to the organization of annual and Executive Committee meetings; having official Network documents translated into English, Spanish, Portuguese, and French; and overseeing the development and updating of the website and document databases.

The Secretariat is responsible for the president's general correspondence relating to Network activities. It must draft letters, respond to requests for information on the Network, and send information to Network Executive Committee members.

The Secretariat is responsible for updating and developing the Network website by...

- Coordinating and grouping information and documentation from members or organizations with which the Network works
- Announcing Network activities
- Preparing documents in followup to meetings
- Developing document databases

To this end, with the support of a number of Québec National Assembly service branches, the Secretariat developed specialized electronic document databases on...

- *Gender budget analysis*
- *The impact of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) on women*
- *Women and migrations in the Americas*
- *The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and its implementation in the Americas*

## **A – Organizing and supporting Network activities**

The Secretariat played an important role in preparing, organizing, and following up on Network meetings.

### **1. Follow-up to the 6th Annual Meeting held in Foz do Iguaçu, Brazil, on May 7, 2005**

The Secretariat provided follow-up for the annual meeting, including...

- Compiling the minutes
- Translating the minutes and the recommendation *The Impacts of Migration on Women in the Americas*
- Posting the information on the website and sending it to Executive Committee members of the Network and COPA

### **2. Network Executive Committee Meeting in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on October 5, 2005**

In preparation for the Executive Committee meeting, the Secretariat...

- Prepared, translated, and sent the meeting agenda and invitation letter
- Worked together with the meeting's host organization
- Prepared required meeting documents

The Secretariat provided follow-up for the Executive Committee meeting, including:

- Compiling and translating the minutes
- Translating and distributing the recommendation to support the Republic of El Salvador
- Forwarding said recommendation to legislative assembly authorities in the Republic of El Salvador
- Preparing and sending a letter from the president to all assembly presidents of the Americas to promote the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas website and ask that a link to the Network website be added to the website of each assembly (replies to this request for Network visibility are included in Appendix I)

### **3. Network Executive Committee Meeting in Puebla, Mexico, on March 1, 2006**

In preparation for the Executive Committee meeting, the Secretariat...

- Prepared, translated, and sent the meeting agenda and invitation letter
- Translated the program and registration form into English and French
- Posted information on this meeting on the Network website
- Worked together with the meeting's host organization, mainly on logistics
- Prepared required meeting documents

Following this meeting of the Network Executive Committee, the Network Secretariat...

- Prepared, translated, and forwarded the minutes of the meeting
- Translated the resolution on human trafficking adopted by the Network Executive Committee
- Followed up on the proposals and decisions made in the meeting

### **4. Preparation for the 6th Annual Meeting of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas, in Quito, Ecuador, on May 30, 2006**

In preparation for the Annual Meeting, the Network Secretariat...

- Prepared and translated the meeting agenda, invitation letters, and other documents needed for the meeting
- Sent invitations to all parliaments and interparliamentary organizations in the Americas
- Designed the event promotional materials
- Identified and invited speakers
- Helped reporters prepare and translate their respective reports
- Prepared and presented the "CEDAW" document databank

## **B – Other activities**

### **1. Visit of the president of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas to the Québec National Assembly on September 15 and 16, 2005**

The Network Secretariat made preparations for the visit of the president of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas to the Québec National Assembly by...

- Setting the agenda for the visit
- Organizing work meetings and discussions, notably with the president of the Québec National Assembly, the representative of the Network's founding assembly and Secretariat host, representatives of the Québec Section of COPA, Québec's Minister of Families, Seniors, and the Status of Women, and the president of Conseil du statut de la femme
- Preparing required documents

### **2. Organizational assistance for the International Forum of Women Parliamentarians in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on October 6 and 7, 2005**

The Network Secretariat provided organizational assistance for the International Forum of Women Parliamentarians, co-organized by the Legislative Assembly of the State of Rio de Janeiro and the National Union of State Legislatures of Brazil (UNALE), notably by...

- Preparing, translating, and sending the invitation and supporting materials to all members of the Network Executive Committee
- Preparing, translating, and sending the invitation and supporting materials to all presidents of assemblies of unitary, federal, federated, and associated states, regional parliaments, and interparliamentary organizations of the Americas, except for Brazil, as well as all presidents of parliamentary committees dealing with the status of women in the Americas

### **3. Further work on the annual topic “Analysis of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and its Optional Protocol”**

To support the work of the designated reporter for the annual topic, the Secretariat...

- Set up a website section for this topic to make this information available to parliamentarians and site users
- Translated and distributed the questionnaire and progress report on the Network website
- Drafted, translated, and posted an article presenting CEDAW on the Network website

- Produced and translated the CEDAW document databank and posted it on the Network website

**4. Organizational support for the 13th Latin American Congress on Sexology and Sexual Education, in Salvador, Bahia, Brazil, from April 19 to 22, 2006**

As part of the *13th Latin American Congress on Sexology and Sexual Education*, the Network Secretariat...

- Translated and sent out invitations to all members of the Network Executive Committee

**5. Network website**

The Network website ([www.feminamericas.org](http://www.feminamericas.org)) has been online since September 2004. It is now referenced on certain sites, mainly those on the status of women and gender issues. Its thematic document databanks are also cited.

A list of websites that point to [feminamericas.org](http://feminamericas.org) is included in Appendix II, together with a report on Network website traffic since its online launch.

**C – Conclusion**

The Secretariat plays a vital role in strengthening the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas. By coordinating and providing support for the various activities and initiatives that proceed from the Network Executive Committee and annual meeting attendees, the Secretariat contributes to the development of solidarity among women parliamentarians of the Americas and the circulation of information on major issues affecting the women of our hemisphere.

## Appendix I

### **Promotion of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas Website to Legislative Assemblies of the Americas**

To promote the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas to women parliamentarians in all countries of the Americas, a letter from the Network president was sent to legislative assembly presidents to ask that a link to the Network website be added to the website of each assembly.

This letter was sent in stages, since the directory of parliaments of the Americas first had to be updated.

#### **Parliamentary assemblies of unitary and federal states**

Number of parliamentary assemblies contacted	43
Number of replies received	4
Number of positive replies	2 (4.6%)

Positive replies<sup>1</sup>:

Mexico – Lower House of the Mexican Congress

Paraguay – Chamber of Deputies

#### **Parliamentary assemblies of federated and associated states**

Number of parliamentary assemblies contacted	201
Number of replies received	3
Number of positive replies	1 (0.5%)

Positive reply:

Québec, Canada – National Assembly of Québec

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<sup>1</sup> Positive replies include legislative assemblies that already had a link to the Network website.

### **Regional parliaments and interparliamentary organizations**

Number of parliamentary assemblies contacted	4
Number of replies received	1
Number of positive replies	1 (25%)

Positive reply:  
Andean Parliament

### **Total of parliamentary assemblies of unitary, federal, federated, and associated states and regional parliaments and interparliamentary organizations**

<b>Number of parliamentary assemblies contacted</b>	<b>248</b>
<b>Number of replies received</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Number of positive replies</b>	<b>4 (1.6%)</b>

## Appendix II

### **NETWORK OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE AMERICAS WEBSITE**

[www.feminamericas.org](http://www.feminamericas.org)

#### **List of websites that have added a link to [www.feminamericas.org](http://www.feminamericas.org)**<sup>2</sup>

##### *International organizations*

###### **World Bank**

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTABOUTUS/PARTNERS/EXTPARLIAMENTARIANS/0,,contentMDK:20227786~menuPK:478534~pagePK:64165880~piPK:64165858~theSitePK:464534,00.html>

Language: English

A link to the Network website is included on the World Bank site for parliamentarians.

###### **INSTRAW – United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women**

<http://www.un-instraw.org/en/index.php?option=content&task=blogcategory&id=176&Itemid=237>

Languages: Spanish, English, French

INSTRAW is a United Nations institute that seeks to promote research and training programs to contribute to the advancement of women and gender equality. It includes a link to the Network document databank on the political representation of women in the Americas.

##### *National or regional portals*

###### **Mujer Analítica**

<http://www.analitica.com/>

Language: Spanish

This site features an online publication, Analítica.com, on general interest topics. This publication is mainly aimed at Venezuelans and the Spanish speaking community. A link to the “Women and FTAA” document databank was incorporated in March 2006.

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<sup>2</sup> This list is not exhaustive. Some links were added following promotional initiatives by the Network Secretariat, while others were added at the initiative of the organizations listed. In 2006, the Secretariat plans to continue efforts to promote the site to organizations throughout the Americas to improve geographic and linguistic representation.

### **Siyanda – mainstreaming gender equality**

[www.siyanda.org](http://www.siyanda.org)

Language: English

This British site was developed by Briefings on Development and Gender (BRIDGE) of the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex, England. A link to the three Network thematic document databanks (Women and Migrations, Women and FTAA, Gender Budgets) was added on June 29, 2005.

### **Cybersolidaire – Femmes de la Francophonie**

[http://cybersolidaire.typepad.com/francophonie/continent\\_amriques/index.html](http://cybersolidaire.typepad.com/francophonie/continent_amriques/index.html)

Language: French

This Cybersolidaire partner website posts news on women from around the world, particularly francophone women. It promoted the Network website and its document databanks in September 2005 in an article now included in its archives.

### **Réseau canadien pour la santé des femmes/Canadian Women's Health Network**

<http://www.rcsf.ca/>

Languages: English and French

This Canada-wide volunteer network is aimed at improving the health and lives of girls and women in Canada. A link to the "Women and Migrations" document databank was added.

### **ORÉGAND**

<http://www.oregand.ca/sites.html#>

Language: French

ORÉGAND (Observatoire sur le développement régional et l'analyse différenciée selon les sexes) is affiliated with Université du Québec en Outaouais (Québec, Canada). The Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas website was featured as the "site of the month" for May 2005. This page is still available in the site archives.

### **Comité Femmes et développement régional**

<http://www.femmesdemontreal.org/fr/1036/index.php>

Language: French

Comité Femmes et développement régional is linked to the Conférence régionale des élus de Montréal (Québec, Canada). It seeks to improve the living conditions of women in this area. A link to the Network website is included in the "International" section.

### **NetFemmes**

[http://netfemmes.cdeacf.ca/les\\_ressources/sites/voir\\_cat.php?categorie=33](http://netfemmes.cdeacf.ca/les_ressources/sites/voir_cat.php?categorie=33)

Language: French

NetFemmes was set up by Centre de documentation sur l'éducation des adultes et la condition féminine, whose mission is to make information, particularly on the status of women, available to women in Québec and francophone communities in Canada. The Network website is listed in the directory of links.

**Genre en action**

[http://www.genreenaction.net/article.php3?id\\_article=3633](http://www.genreenaction.net/article.php3?id_article=3633)

Language: French

Genre en action is an information and resource portal on gender and development launched in 2003 by France's foreign affairs ministry. It includes a link to the GAIA Network document databank on budgets analyzed according to gender.

**Rinoceros – réseau international d'échanges d'informations pour un développement responsable et solidaire**

[http://www.rinoceros.org/mot2\\_sites.php3?id\\_mot=1106&lang=fr](http://www.rinoceros.org/mot2_sites.php3?id_mot=1106&lang=fr)

Language: French

The Rinoceros project was launched in March 2002 by Réseau des centres de documentation pour le développement durable et la solidarité internationale (France). The Network website is listed as a recommended site, and a special pitch is made for the "Women and FTAA" and "Women and Migrations" document databanks.

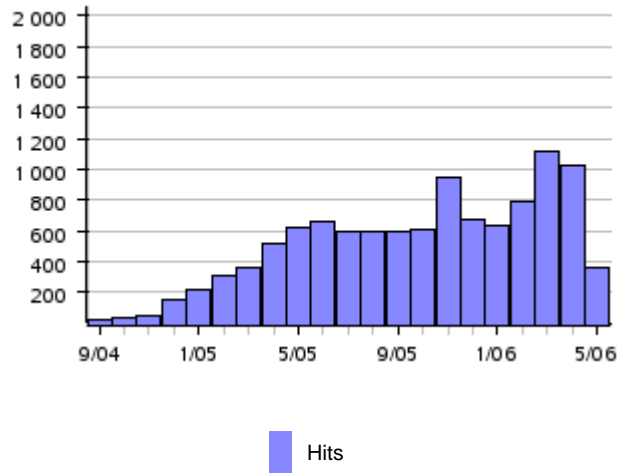
**Conseil du statut de la femme du Québec**

<http://www.csf.gouv.qc.ca/fr/autres/?ma=67>

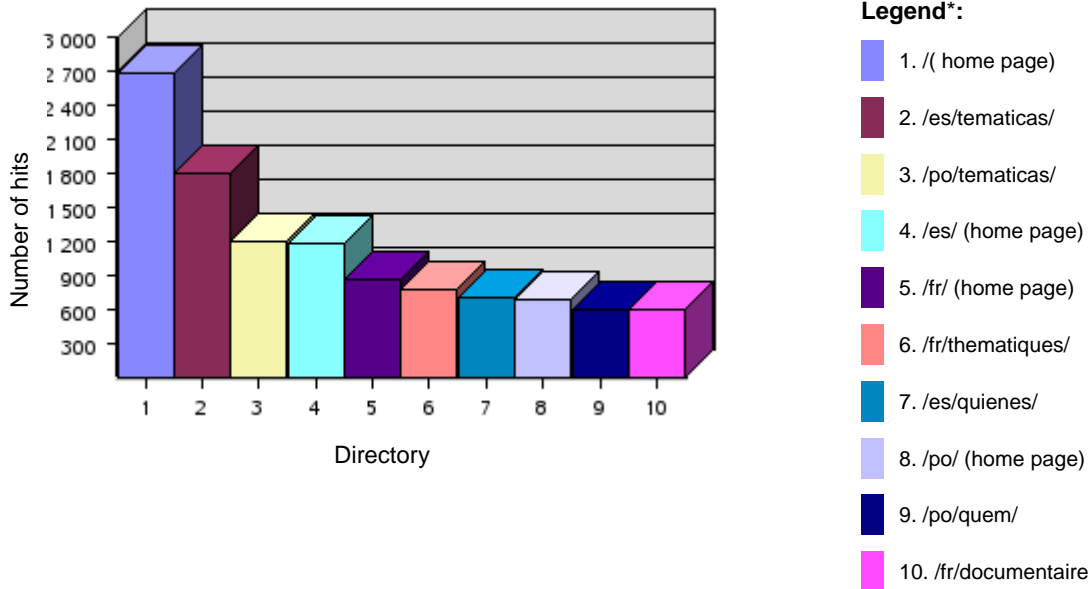
Language: French

Conseil du statut de la femme is a government consultation and study council that has promoted and defended the rights and interests of women in Québec since 1973 (Québec, Canada). A link to the Network website was added recently.

### Hit Trends by Month



### Directories with the Most Hits



\* The first two letters refer to the language in which pages were viewed. Note that no page from the English version of the website is among the top ten directories.



**Vith Annual Meeting  
of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas**

**REPORT ON APPLICATION OF THE CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS  
OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN (CEDAW)**

**Presented by Ms. Lucero Saldaña Pérez  
Senator of the Chamber of Senators of the Congress  
of the United States of Mexico and  
Representative for North America on the Executive Committee  
of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas**

**Quito, Ecuador  
May 30, 2006**

## **INTRODUCTION**

I am pleased to submit this **Report on Application of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)**. The Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas agreed at its last annual meeting to conduct this analysis and have me report on it, being keenly aware of the importance of this international instrument and the need to analyze its application in the Americas. This report is part of the activities marking the 25th anniversary of the coming into effect of CEDAW in 1981.

This report is based on the responses of women parliamentarians in Argentina, Brazil, Canada, and Mexico to a questionnaire regarding information contained in the most recent reports submitted to the CEDAW Committee by the countries of the Americas, as well as relevant provisions in the constitutions and other legal texts of these same countries.

Each section of this report presents eloquent examples of legislative measures adopted by countries of the Americas in pursuit of Convention objectives. This does not mean that the countries not mentioned took no steps in this regard, but simply that we chose to touch on several representative cases that may be considered successes.

The objective of this document is to analyze how the CEDAW is being applied in the Americas, discuss what remains to be done legislatively in our respective countries, identify areas where legislation could be enacted to give effect to the provisions contained in this instrument, and pinpoint opportunities for regional cooperation in this matter.

I hope this report will help guide us, as women parliamentarians, in gauging progress to date and determining what remains to be done to give effect to the commitments undertaken by our respective countries as regards gender equality and respect for women's basic rights.

### **1) CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN (CEDAW)**

The CEDAW, also known as the "Charter of Women's Rights," is a unique legal instrument containing international legislative provisions aimed at achieving equality between men and women, as well as full recognition of the basic rights of women through the adoption of legal and political measures and programs that states parties must implement.

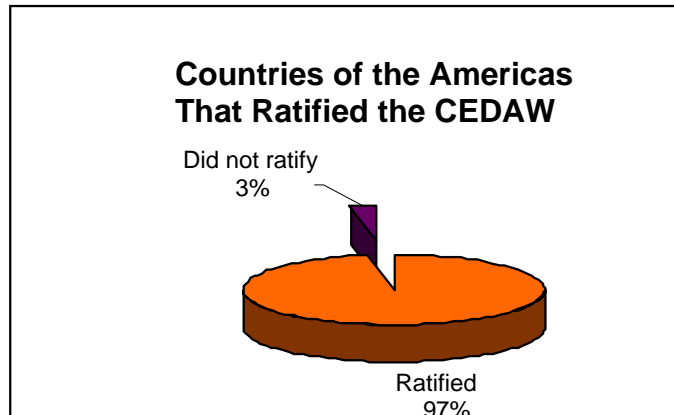
Thanks to observation of the provisions contained in said Convention as well as analysis by the Committee created in accordance with the Convention and its recommendations, the CEDAW has become an important guide to the adoption of specific gender issue measures.

The CEDAW should be considered by parliamentarians of both genders as a powerful and valuable tool that can spur significant legislative progress in favor of women, serving as a true benchmark for our efforts, which are crucial to ensuring that the rights mentioned in this international instrument are recognized and protected in the national legislation of each of our countries.

One of the purposes of this report, it should also be noted, is to discuss conditions that promoted or prevented the adoption by our respective parliaments of measures to ensure application of the content of said Convention.

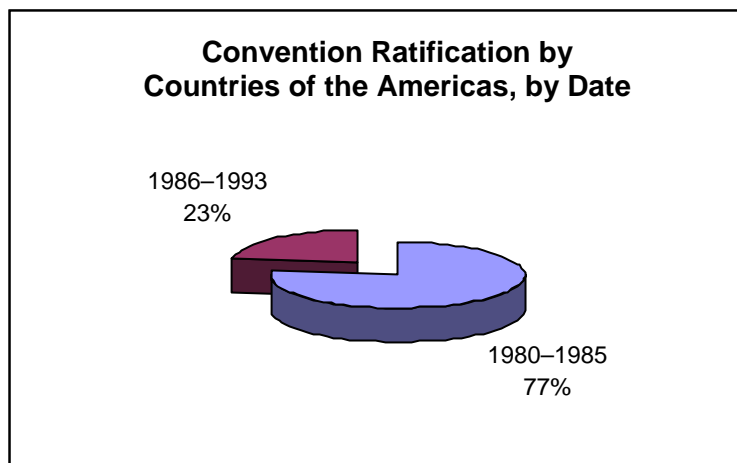
## 2) SIGNATURE, APPROVAL, AND RATIFICATION OF THE CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

All 35 countries of the Americas ratified the Convention, except the United States—a total of 97%.



Source: Author's adaptation of data on the Convention website at <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/>

Approximately three-fourths of the Americas—27 countries—ratified the Convention in the first five years of the 1980s, while the other fourth (8 countries) followed suit between 1986 and 1993, with the Bahamas being the last to ratify it.



Source: Author's adaptation of data on the Convention website at <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/>

### 3) RESERVATIONS

Eight countries of the Americas have reservations regarding the first paragraph of Article 29 on the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice in the settlement of disputes arising from the interpretation or application of the Convention, despite the fact that the second paragraph of this article provides that any state party may, on signing or ratifying the Convention or acceding thereto, declare that it does not consider itself bound by the provisions of the first paragraph.

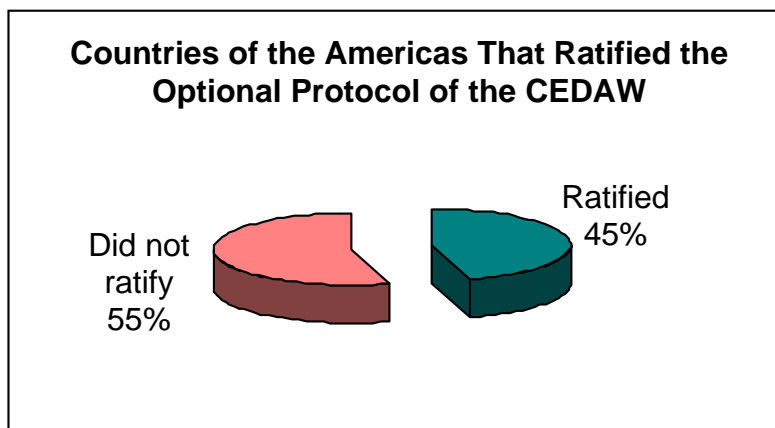
However, the CEDAW Committee is especially concerned by reservations regarding Article 2, which it deems essential to the pursuit of the Convention's objectives. Article 2 expressly mentions that states parties condemn discrimination against women and agree to pursue a policy to eliminate it.

A single country of the Americas—the Bahamas—has expressed reservation regarding this article, as well as hesitation regarding Article 9 on nationality and Article 16 on marriage and family relations.

### 4) ADOPTION OF THE OPTIONAL PROTOCOL OF THE CEDAW BY THE COUNTRIES OF THE AMERICAS

The preamble of the Optional Protocol is crucial to the application and implementation of the CEDAW. It states that the Protocol reaffirms the determination of states parties to “ensure the full and equal enjoyment by women of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and to take effective action to prevent violations of these rights and freedoms.”

Clearly, adoption of this Protocol in the Americas is only partial: Of the 35 countries of the Americas that ratified the Convention, only 15 ratified its Protocol—less than half. The last to do so was Belize in December 2002.



Source: Author's adaptation of data on the Convention website at <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/>

## **5) APPLICATION OF THE CEDAW IN THE LEGISLATION OF THE COUNTRIES OF THE AMERICAS**

The Convention has proved to be a valuable tool worldwide, particularly for identifying constitutional guarantees regarding women's rights, drafting and interpreting legislation in light of gender issues, and promoting the development and implementation of policies aimed at improving the status of women. This is because the Convention inherently asserts that achieving gender equality implies equality not only in the legislation, but in everyday life, which forces governments to adopt affirmative action measures.

Parliaments play a key role in ensuring the creation of a legal framework that is not only nondiscriminatory, but also conducive to the adoption of measures to offset existing discrimination, particularly affirmative action measures.

As regards application of the CEDAW, the legislative measures we analyzed in light of their adoption fall under the following categories:

### ***1.- MEASURE AIMED AT THE INCLUSION OF CONVENTION PRINCIPLES IN EACH COUNTRY'S CONSTITUTION OR BASIC LEGISLATION***

This measure is important because the inclusion of Convention principles in a country's constitution is the foundation for protecting women's rights and recognizing the obligations government authorities must assume in this regard.

While all constitutions in the Americas mention the principle of ensuring equality or prohibiting discrimination for various reasons, less than one-third refer explicitly to the principle of gender equality. Among those that do are the constitutions of Canada, Chile, Cuba, Ecuador, Guatemala, Guyana, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Venezuela, Brazil, and Colombia. For Brazil and Colombia, the incorporation of this principle was a direct result of the CEDAW and the opportunity it provided women's groups to demand its inclusion.

In Colombia, women's organizations submitted proposals to include CEDAW principles in the country's new constitution. The legislative assembly recognized these principles and expressly inserted them in Section 13 of Colombia's Constitution.

Brazil's new Constitution drafted in 1988 contains provisions inspired by the CEDAW. For example, adoption of one of the 200 amendments proposed by the National Council for Women's Rights prompted the clear restatement of the gender equality principle in Article 5, Paragraph I.

Section 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms expressly prohibits all forms of discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, gender, age, or mental or physical disability. However, this section allows the adoption of laws, programs, and activities aimed at improving the conditions of individuals or groups who are disadvantaged, particularly due to gender. Section 28 also guarantees people of both genders the rights and freedoms mentioned in the Charter.

In Mexico, the principle of gender equality under the law was enshrined in 1975 in Article 4 of the country's Constitution.

In Argentina, discrimination has been prohibited since the 1994 constitutional reform and is enshrined in Article 75, Paragraph 22 of the Constitution, which expressly states that the CEDAW is an integral part of the Constitution and, as such, takes precedence over any other legislation in the country.

The constitutions of other countries of the Americas also recognize the principle of equality, but limit it to particular sectors of activity. For example, in Ecuador the principle of gender equality is mentioned in Article 34 of the Constitution on production and the economy.

**Article 34.-** The state shall guarantee women and men equal rights and opportunities in the access to resources used for production, as well as in economic decisions regarding the administration of marriage relations and property.

Similarly, Nicaragua's Constitution enshrines the principle of gender equality—but only in terms of political rights—in a chapter on these rights that reads as follows:

**Article 48.-** All Nicaraguans are unconditionally equal in the enjoyment of their political rights; there is absolute equality between men and women in the exercise of their political rights and the performance of their political duties and responsibilities.

It should also be noted that in other countries like Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Uruguay, while the principle of equality is enshrined in the Constitution in general terms, there are no provisions recognizing gender equality or prohibiting gender-based discrimination.

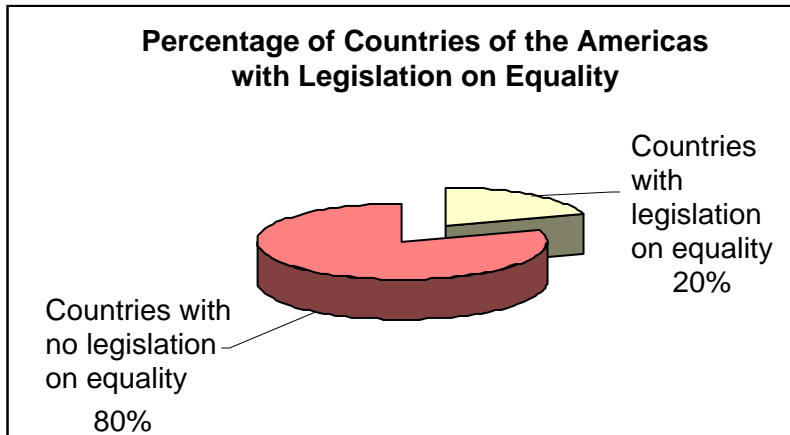
Similarly, the Constitution of Surinam recognizes gender equality but only between husband and wife, i.e., expressly within the framework of marriage.

## **2.- MEASURES AIMED AT THE ADOPTION OF OTHER LEGAL PROVISIONS THAT PROMOTE EQUALITY OR PROHIBIT DISCRIMINATION**

Among the Convention effects in the Americas are various laws promoting equality or decrees prohibiting gender-based discrimination adopted in some of our countries after the CEDAW came into effect and inspired by its guiding principles. These include the following:

- Costa Rica – Legislation promoting social equality for women (1990)
- Venezuela – Equal opportunity legislation (1993)
- Guatemala – Legislation aimed at protecting dignity and promoting the full development of women (1999)
- Panama – Act No. 4 on the right to equal opportunity for women (1999)
- Honduras – Legislation on the right to equal opportunity for women (2000)
- Colombia – Legislation instituting an action plan to guarantee equal opportunity for women (2003)
- Mexico – General legislation on gender equality adopted recently (2005)

This means only one-fifth of CEDAW states parties in the Americas have adopted comprehensive and specific legislative provisions on gender equality.



Source: Author's adaptation of data drawn from reports submitted to the CEDAW Committee and legislation in effect in various countries of the Americas

### **3.- AFFIRMATIVE ACTION MEASURES**

Article 4 of the CEDAW has had a significant impact on legislation and government policies in our countries with its provision promoting the adoption of “temporary special measures aimed at accelerating de facto equality between men and women.”

The most obvious impact of this provision is that a number of countries of the Americas have amended their constitution accordingly. For example, Paraguay asserts in Article 48 of its Constitution that “the state shall foster the conditions and create the desired mechanisms to ensure that equality is real and effective,” and Venezuela stipulates in Article 21 of its Constitution that “the law shall put in place the legal and administrative conditions needed to guarantee real and effective equality for all under the law; ensure the adoption of affirmative action measures in favor of individuals and groups at risk of discrimination or marginalization; provide special protection to persons who, for any of the reasons mentioned above, find themselves in a position of obvious weakness; and punish anyone who abuses or mistreats these persons.”

Such measures and justification for their adoption also appear in Article 23 of Argentina’s Constitution, Article 13 of Colombia’s Constitution, and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which stipulates that programs promoting equal access may be implemented, as well as measures to improve the conditions of disadvantaged groups.

However, although the constitutions of certain countries do not specify that the state can implement affirmative action measures, this is sometimes provided for in legislation as in Mexico, which adopted a federal act for this purpose aimed at preventing and eradicating discrimination. In still other cases, this right is stipulated in certain legislation but may not be identified as such, e.g., positive discrimination measures for participation in the political process.

#### **4.- APPLICATION OF MEASURES REGARDING VARIOUS SECTIONS OF THE CEDAW**

##### **A) COMMITMENT TO ELIMINATING ALL FORMS OF TRAFFICKING OF WOMEN AND EXPLOITATION OF THE PROSTITUTION OF WOMEN**

Progress in the application of Convention provisions regarding this commitment has not been consistent. In 1999, Argentina amended its penal code to distinguish between crimes of corruption and prostitution. In Chile, prostitution is not illegal, but it is regulated for public health reasons. Other countries have amended their penal codes to remove dated references to “attacks on decency” and replace them with the expression “attacks on sexual integrity.” Other countries like the Dominican Republic have acknowledged the lack of a proper legal framework for dealing with this issue, or—like Guyana—noted that a preliminary study of the legislation in force indicates that provisions on prostitution are in need of radical change. Surinam’s position in this regard is of concern, as this country’s reports to the Committee indicate that the issue was not considered in its legislation.

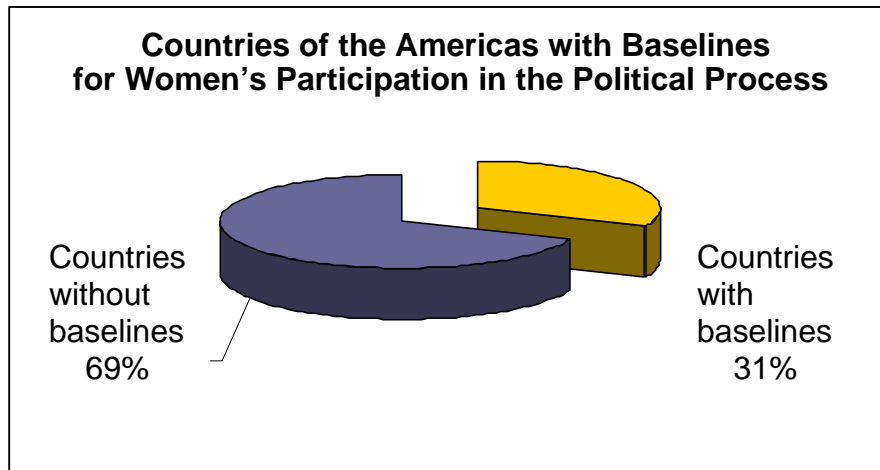
One of the main factors reported to us as being an obstacle to eliminating the exploitation of women for prostitution is that it generates significant economic activity and considerable revenues in certain Caribbean countries. Jamaica’s report indicates that the country has no appropriate legislation to counter sexual tourism.

Legislation on human trafficking is virtually absent in the Americas. Canada amended its criminal code in November 2005 in this regard, although the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, in force since 2002, already referred specifically to a violation involving human trafficking. Colombia has also amended its penal code in this regard. Mexico recently approved a bill aimed at preventing and penalizing human trafficking, although it cannot be adopted until it is approved by the Chamber of Deputies.

In Mexico prostitution is not regulated, although the penal and civil codes recognize the illegality of the third party sale of sexual services, especially in the case of services provided by children (penal code) or women (civil code). On November 7, 1996, the Federal Act Against Organized Crime was published in the Official Gazette. Its objective is *“to establish rules for investigation, legal action, indictment, punishment, and execution of sentences in cases of offenses committed by a member of an organized crime group.”* This act also specifies that its *“provisions are public and apply everywhere within national borders,”* particularly to the trafficking of undocumented persons or minors.

##### **B) COMMITMENTS TO WOMEN’S RIGHTS AS REGARDS NATIONALITY AND PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC AND POLITICAL LIFE**

The Convention stipulates that states parties should take all appropriate steps to eliminate discrimination against women **in public life and the political process**. With a view to applying this provision and translating it into legislative measures in the Americas, eleven CEDAW signatories adopted rules establishing a minimum level for the representation of women in politics (between 20 and 40%). This helped increase the presence of women in legislative proceedings in these countries to an average of 9% between 1990 and 2003.



Source: Author's adaptation of data provided by the World Bank Gender and Development Board, February 2006

As regards **nationality**, the constitutions of most countries of the Americas grant equal rights to men and women. For example, Article 38 of the Bolivian Constitution expressly mentions that women married to foreign men do not lose their Bolivian nationality. Similarly, Article 26 of the Act Respecting Mexican Nationality explicitly stipulates that neither women nor men who marry a foreigner lose their Mexican nationality.

However, discriminatory legislative provisions remain in certain countries, e.g., Barbados, Belize, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Surinam. The Constitution of the Dominican Republic specifies that a foreign woman who marries a Dominican man takes the nationality of her husband, contrary to the first paragraph of CEDAW Article 9, which stipulates that states parties must guarantee that neither marriage to a foreigner nor the husband's change in nationality during marriage will automatically change the wife's nationality, render her stateless, or force her husband's nationality upon her.

### **C) COMMITMENTS TO ELIMINATING DISCRIMINATION IN EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, AND MEDICAL CARE, AS WELL AS ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, AND CULTURAL LIFE**

In the countries of the Americas, a variety of measures have been adopted to fight discrimination in the area of **education**.

Argentina's Act 24.1993, known as the Federal Education Act, was the first piece of legislation to include certain provisions against sexism. In the same country, the 2005 Act respecting technical and vocational education includes a chapter entitled "Equal Opportunity."

In Paraguay, the 1998 publication of the General Education Act marked an important step forward in the area of formal education. For the first time, a section (Section 10) was included that enshrines the principles governing equal access and residence in educational institutions, effective gender equality, and the rejection of all forms of discrimination.

On December 10, 2004, Mexico announced a revision to the Education Act *in order to establish that its guiding principle should be to fight stereotypes and discrimination, particularly against women.*

UNIFEM has qualified other efforts to apply this article in the Americas as successful. For example, in Colombia a committee was created and hands-on training sessions were organized for certain specific groups such as educators, publication editors, and communication professionals on gender issues and ways to fight sexism. Professional school guidance counselors were hired in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, which has helped increase the number of girls enrolled in non-traditional occupation training programs. Cuba has created national university training programs for women to provide professional development opportunities and help them acquire specialized knowledge.

A similarity was noted between certain reports submitted by countries of the Americas regarding the main obstacles to achieving gender equality in education. These obstacles generally arise from cultural factors that lead girls to drop out of school, as well as a gender divide in career selection and vocational curriculum design. Countries also reported the difficulty of applying a gender perspective to program content and training male and female educators in this regard. In addition, the increase in teen pregnancies in countries of the Americas seems to be a common issue affecting girls and their pursuit of an education.

As regards **employment**, the labor code of most countries contains provisions against gender discrimination. This is notably true of Antigua.

In Panama, the principle of equal pay for equal work regardless of gender, nationality, age, race, social class, political views, or religion is enshrined in the Constitution. Legislation in Panama also contains provisions to protect public sector employees against sexual harassment.

Canada has adopted significant legislative measures to guarantee equal rights. These include the Employment Equity Act of 1986, which was revised and strengthened in 1996. It is aimed at achieving equality in the workplace and eliminating the discriminatory treatment of four groups in particular—women, aboriginals, disabled persons, and visible minorities. In the same spirit Canada adopted the Pay Equity Act in 1996 to close the pay gap caused by systematic gender discrimination.

Reports by other countries like Brazil indicate legislative measures tied to maternity and parental leave, as well as the adoption of legislation on women's right to work containing provisions on sexual harassment.

Argentina passed legislation prohibiting gender discrimination in the workplace as well as guaranteeing women's full authority to sign contracts without their husband's permission. Female workers in Argentina also have the right to pay equal to a man's for equal work. Similarly, Act 24.013—the Employment Act—repealed the section prohibiting the hiring of women for night jobs except for nonindustrial positions. In addition, following the revision of employment contract provisions, Argentina's Employment Act now encourages employers to hire women.

In Central America, new legislation has come into effect in the past 15 years and reforms have been achieved as part of a process to ensure gender equality.

The addition of articles 35, 36, and 40 to Ecuador's Constitution has led to considerable changes in women's employment conditions. This new protection has helped women acquire legal equality and equal opportunity on the labor market, and women in Ecuador are now guaranteed equal pay for equal work, as well as protection against all forms of gender discrimination in the workplace.

Despite this progress in applying the CEDAW, much remains to be done. As proof that the main obstacles remain, over half of women still make a living from informal work, the problem of sexual harassment in the workplace has yet to receive due legislative and judicial attention, the lack of pay equity is still a reality, and many countries of the Americas have not been able to add certain essential provisions to their legislation, e.g., to prohibit employers from requiring a woman to present a certificate stating she is not pregnant.

As regards the elimination of discrimination against women in **medical care**, even in countries of the Americas where all citizens—men and women—have equal rights to health care under the law, the reality is that women still receive inferior medical treatment.

In most countries the issue is a matter of public policy. Among the legislative steps that have been taken, we note provisions to this effect in Ecuador's Act Respecting Free Health Care for Pregnant Women and Newborns, as well as Brazil's Act Establishing the Charter of Women's Health and Act 9.263 to Apply Article 226 of the Constitution on Family Planning.

However, the legislation in force in the Americas still does not address the issue of sexual and reproductive health and the need to take effective action to stop violence by treating it as a public health problem, nor does it seek ways to reduce high maternal mortality rates.

In most countries of the Americas, the obstacles to ensuring equal access for all to medical and healthcare services are tied to poverty and the lack of appropriate infrastructures.

An important part of applying CEDAW principles regarding **equal economic and social rights**—in addition to new legislative measures aimed at encouraging women's participation in socioeconomic life—was repealing measures that prevented women from fully participating in this area.

We have observed in particular that when women are able to secure loans, they are generally more responsible when the time comes to repay them, as evidenced by a variety of studies and experiences. This reliability has played no small part in the successful management of programs for women.

Noteworthy legislative measures in this regard include Colombia's Act 823 (2003), which contains special provisions on extending credit to women and supporting disadvantaged single mothers who undertake productive projects.

On December 15, 1999, the Mexican Senate adopted an amendment to Subsection I of Section 24 of the Act Respecting the Institute for Government Worker Safety and Social Services and repealed Subsection V of the same section, an initiative that was approved by the Chamber of Deputies. Specifically, Section 24 limited the right of a female worker or retiree over age 55 to receive cash benefits for the payment of diagnostic, dental, surgical, hospital, pharmaceutical, or rehabilitation care provided to her spouse or common-law spouse who suffered a physical or psychological disability or was financially dependent on her—restrictions that did not apply to the spouse of a male worker. In addition, on February 27, 1992, in the interest of consistency

with the amendment to Article 27 of the Constitution, the New Land Act was proclaimed, paving the way for new approaches to landholdings historically identified in the Constitution: the *éjido*<sup>1</sup>, the community, and the smallholding. The *éjido* and the community were given constitutional status and three landholding categories received legal security. The New Land Act also recognizes the equality of men and women in all respects.

Access to land ownership is a key issue that remains unresolved in many countries of the Americas because it is governed by very old laws. In many cases, women are the last in line to inherit property, or the husband has control over the couple's joint assets, even though countries like Bolivia have adopted legislation that specifies a woman's right to own land.

Mexico's New Land Act entered into effect on February 27, 1992, following an amendment to Section 27 of the Constitution. It paves the way for new approaches to landholdings historically identified in the Constitution, acknowledges gender equality in all respects, and contains provisions guaranteeing women equal treatment to men in the inheritance system.

In parts of the Americas, rural women generally still receive insufficient support for making specific improvements to their living conditions. A noteworthy initiative tied to application of the CEDAW for rural women was Colombia's adoption of Act 731 in 2002, which imposes rules aimed at further improving their situation.

#### **D) RECOGNITION OF LEGAL EQUALITY AND THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION IN MATTERS RELATING TO MARRIAGE AND FAMILY RELATIONS**

This section deals with one of the articles of the Convention that has generated the most reservations due to the fact that some countries cannot fully apply it without making major changes to their Civil Code or to existing legislative provisions.

Some countries in the Americas have adopted legislative measures to this effect. This is the case in Brazil, which removed from its Constitution the principle that conferred to the husband (head of the family) the right to exercise authority within the family unit, and replaced it with another that states that the rights and obligations relating to the conjugal unit are exercised equally by the man and woman (CEDAW, Article 16).

The Constitution of Colombia states in Article 42 that family relations are based on the equal rights and obligations of the spouses and mutual respect among all family members. A decree adopted in 1990 prohibits discrimination against women in matters of family relations, and recognizes that mothers have the same rights and obligations as fathers. It also confers on both members of the couple joint responsibility for raising their children.

In Belize, a law adopted in 2000 marked the first steps toward the possibility of property sharing in the event of the dissolution of marriage, and penalized rape within marriage. In Chile, an amendment to the Civil Marriage Act granted women the same recourse as men in the event of divorce.

In Mexico, with the overhaul of the Civil Code for the Federal District in local matters and for the entire republic in federal matters (published under a decree in the Official Gazette of the Federal

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<sup>1</sup> Communal land

District on May 25, 2000), major changes were made to the provisions dealing with marriage and family relations, giving full legal equality to women.

In Argentina, Act 23.515, known as the Divorce Act, was adopted. The 1987 act granted men and women the same rights with regard to choosing a spouse and the full freedom to enter into marriage. In Venezuela, the Constitution grants full equality to both spouses or common-law partners, and Article 77 enshrines the democratization of relations within the family and the equality of rights and obligations among family members.

Despite progress in these countries, others in the Americas are lagging far behind. For example, Guyana, which, in its most recent report to the CEDAW Committee, noted that it had taken no concrete measures to prevent forced or arranged marriages—a traditional practice among rural families of Indian origin. In another instance, Nicaragua's latest report mentions that its country's Civil Code still contains provisions that designate the man as the head of the household and representative of the family. These provisions opened Nicaragua's eyes to the need to amend its Civil Code to bring it in line with constitutional provisions that recognize absolute equality between men and women in all areas of life.

## CONCLUSIONS

While it is difficult to draw a direct link between the CEDAW and the reworking of the legal framework of countries in the Americas, and given the regional differences between North, Central, and South America, the results observed are clearly a reflection of a worldwide process in which the CEDAW has played a vital role as an international legal instrument to defend women's rights and provide women's organizations with a valuable tool for having them recognized.

Thanks to this instrument, we have made progress in the Americas in such areas as education, although many challenges still lie ahead, including reversing school dropout trends among girls and eliminating gender-based educational segmentation. Moreover, while women are gradually entering the labor market in greater numbers, it must be noted that they generally occupy mid to low-level jobs, often in the informal labor market. And we must not forget the huge challenge of continuing to exert pressure to have work/family balance measures adopted and to have unpaid household work recognized and appreciated for its true value.

With regard to the participation of women in the political life of countries in our hemisphere, despite considerable progress, we are still far from balanced representation within our key decision-making bodies, and we must continue to work to ensure the appropriate measures are adopted to reach this goal.

We must therefore admit that, despite these successes, discriminatory laws are still in place, and we have yet to exhaust all the legal options to have women's rights measures implemented across the board. We still have a lot of catching up to do in terms of medical care for women, notably to tackle the foreseeable causes of maternal mortality. With regard to violence against women, while this challenge is not an explicit part of the commitments laid out in the CEDAW, it still requires immediate and effective action on the part of our countries, with the *Belém do Pará Convention* being the international instrument applicable in this matter throughout the Americas.

It is also worth noting that, while virtually all the countries in the Americas have ratified the Convention, many have yet to ratify the Optional Protocol. This is all the more worrying given

that the recommendations outlined in the CEDAW have not been fully implemented, and that concrete measures must be taken with regard to some of these aspects, as they also appear in other international commitments.

It is imperative that we recognize the important role civil society has played in carrying out the Convention's commitments. We must maintain this contact by continuing our discussions and working together with civil society by supporting the initiatives it undertakes in these areas.

As we prepare to mark the 25th anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention, it is worth pointing out that it is an underused tool and that its effects are clearly not being felt everywhere, hence the need for a thorough review of our respective national legislative instruments to ensure they take into account our commitments under the Convention—a benchmark for the respect of basic women's rights in our hemisphere and around the world.

# LOS DERECHOS DE LAS MUJERES: CEDAW Y LOS OBJETIVOS DE DESARROLLO DEL MILENIO



por:

ez

# CEDAW - ODM

- Adoptada por la Asamblea General  
18 de diciembre 1979
- Entró en vigor el 3 de septiembre  
1981

# IMPORTANCIA DE LA CEDAW

- Amplia responsabilidad del Estado
- Obliga a los Estados a adoptar medidas
- Medidas Afirmativas
- Papel en la cultura
- Define discriminación
- Fortalece concepto de indivisibilidad de derechos humanos

# CUALES DERECHOS?

- Derechos humanos y libertades fundamentales
- Derecho a relaciones de igualdad
- Derecho a una vida sin violencia
- Derechos sexuales y reproductivos
- Derecho a la participación política
- Derechos económicos, sociales y culturales

# DERECHO O LA IGUALDAD

- Igualdad oportunidades
- Igualdad y diferencia
- Igualdad de resultados
- Diferencia no implique desigualdad



# OBJETIVOS DEL MILENIO

- Año 2000 jefes de estado de 189 naciones adoptaron la declaración de los objetivos de desarrollo del milenio
- 18 metas a ser alcanzadas en 2015

# ERRADICAR LA POBREZA Y EL HAMBRE

## ***CEDAW:***

- “Eliminar la discriminación contra las mujeres para asegurar que hombres y mujeres tengan los mismos derechos en el trabajo” (Art. 1)
- Igualdad en la remuneración
- Seguridad social
- Protección de la salud
- Prohibir despido por motivo de embarazo
- Licencia por maternidad
- Protección especial durante el embarazo



# LOGRAR LA EDUCACION PRIMARIA UNIVERSAL

## *CEDAW:*

- Eliminación de estereotipos
- Acceso a carreras y capacitación profesional
- Reducción de tasas de abandono de la escuela
- Reducción de índices de deserción de niñas



# PROMOVER LA IGUALDAD DE GENERO

## ***CEDAW:***

- Concretar el principio de igualdad entre hombres y mujeres en las constituciones nacionales.
- Abolir leyes, normas, costumbres y prácticas que discriminan a las mujeres
- Participación política
- Participar en formulación de políticas públicas
- Ocupar cargos públicos
- Participar en asociaciones



# REDUCIR LA MORTALIDAD INFANTIL

## *CEDAW*

- Asegurar que las mujeres tengan servicios apropiados en relación al embarazo, otorgando servicios gratuitos cuando sea necesario.



# MEJORAR LA SALUD MATERNA

## *CEDAW:*

- Derecho a decidir libre y responsablemente el número de hijos y el intervalo entre nacimientos
- Derecho a servicios apropiados embarazo, parto, post parto
- Derechos y responsabilidades sobre cuidado y crianza de hijos



# COMBATIR EL VIH SIDA, MALARIA Y OTRAS ENFERMEDADES

## ***CEDAW:***

- Evitar la discriminación contra las mujeres en estrategias nacionales para la prevención y control del VIH/SIDA

# ASEGURAR LA SOSTENIBILIDAD AMBIENTAL

## *Cedaw:*

- Tomar en cuenta los problemas que enfrentan las mujeres de zonas rurales y los roles que desempeñan en la supervivencia económica de sus familias.



# ASOCIACION PARA EL DESARROLLO

## *CEDAW:*

- Asegurar que las mujeres tengan la oportunidad de representar a sus gobiernos a nivel internacional y en organizaciones internacionales.



# OBJETIVOS DEL MILENIO

- Oportunidad para acción legislativa que facilite alcanzar los ODM.
- Presupuesto para inversión social
- Priorización del gasto
- Políticas públicas
- Monitoreo de cumplimiento
- Indicadores pertinentes

# ACCION LEGISLATIVA

- Promover principios de derechos humanos en legislación
- Proteger derechos de usuarios/as sin discriminación por género, edad, etnia.
- Promover el acceso a información y servicios integrales de SSR.
- Eliminar barreras legales, médicas
- Apoyar programas educativos sobre SSR y equidad de género.
- Proteger derechos de adolescentes



**6th Annual Meeting  
Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas**

**WOMEN AND THE FREE TRADE AREA OF THE AMERICAS (FTAA)**

**Followup Report presented by Ms. France Hamel  
Member of the National Assembly of Quebec**

**Quito, Ecuador  
May 30, 2006**

# **WOMEN AND THE FREE TRADE AREA OF THE AMERICAS (FTAA)**

## **1. Introduction**

Since 2003, the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas has closely monitored negotiations on the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) in order to evaluate the possible impact, positive or negative, of this free trade agreement on the hemisphere's women. A first report presented at our 5th Annual Meeting in Foz do Iguacu, Brazil, (May 2005) laid out the various positions taken by governments in the Americas with regard to the FTAA and its impact on women.

This followup report aims to present the developments in FTAA negotiations and government positions that have occurred over the course of the last year as well as recent initiatives to be more inclusive of women in trade.

## **2. FTAA Negotiations**

### ***2.1 4th Summit of the Americas***

Until the 4th Summit of the Americas, in Mar del Plata, Argentina, November 4 and 5, 2005, the FTAA negotiations were practically at a standstill. The Ministerial Conference of Miami (November 2003) brought to light major disaccord among project partners. At this point, the idea of creating an "FTAA lite" materialized, i.e., negotiate a series of flexible hemispheric regulations and allow member states to negotiate bilateral and multilateral agreements as they saw fit.

Although the issues of poverty, job creation, and strengthened democratic governance were on the Summit's agenda at Mar del Plata in November 2005, ultimately talks on resuming the FTAA negotiations took center stage.

Two positions on the resumption of the FTAA negotiations were expressed at the time:

- Of 34 countries represented, 29 were in favor of reopening negotiations in 2006.
- In contrast, five countries were against. The four Mercosur members (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay) deemed that the necessary preconditions to equitable free trade were not contained in the proposal. As well, they expressed a desire to wait for the results of the World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations the following month before pronouncing on whether to relaunch FTAA talks.

- Venezuela, a new permanent member of Mercosur since December 2005, was the fifth opponent of the FTAA. It preferred replacing the FTAA with the ALBA, or the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas<sup>1</sup>, a joint project begun by Cuba and Venezuela in 2001.
- The Final Declaration clearly expressed both points of view and it was decided that these would be studied in light of the outcome of the WTO Ministerial Conference in December 2005.

We note that the favorable predisposition apparent at the 1994 Summit of the Americas and even in Québec City in 2001 toward an FTAA “from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego” is no longer present. In general, the enthusiasm of the summits seems to be dissipating. Among other charges, the FTAA is now criticized for being anti-democratic, non-transparent, and out of step with people’s concerns.

## ***2.2 Developments since November 2005***

Some progress was made at the WTO’s 6th Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong in December 2005, particularly the decision to abolish agricultural export subsidies as of 2013. This is a significant step forward seeing how developing nations had made numerous representations in this respect before, primarily to the two main providers of such subsidies, the United States and the European Union. This accord is therefore a first step in the right direction to ensure that subsistence-oriented agriculture—often practiced by women and a way for many communities to feed themselves adequately—is not on the losing end of a sharp increase in free trade.

At the same time, the Hong Kong agreement is a small achievement at best, and crucial negotiations on many other issues have put off until another day (including tariff reduction, internal agricultural subsidies, and liberalization of services). This development did, however, give a brief moment of hope that the Doha round of negotiations could be concluded by the 2006 target date. To do so, the basic outline of an accord would have to have been approved by April 30, 2006, which was not the case.

The positions of the countries of the Americas with regards to the WTO negotiations and conclusion of the Doha Round will be pivotal in determining whether FTAA negotiations are to proceed, as will future elections in many of the same countries over the course of 2006.

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<sup>1</sup> The Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas (ALBA) is a political, social, and economic organization that promotes cooperation in these fields among Latin American countries.

### 3. The positions of parliaments and governments regarding the FTAA

The positions of the various countries of the Americas concerning the FTAA have changed little since last November. The Final Declaration indicating that 29 countries were in favor of reopening negotiations has yet to see any concrete action.

Moreover, the following positions have been expressed, particularly as a consequence of recent elections:

- In taking up her position as **Chile's** new president, Ms. Michelle Bachelet, reiterated her country's support for proceeding with the FTAA negotiations.
- In April 2006, **Bolivia** joined the ALBA and signed, along with **Venezuela** and **Cuba**, a People's Trade Agreement, seen as an alternative to conventional free trade.
- Venezuela's community of indigenous women recently expressed opposition to the FTAA, considering it prejudicial to minorities.

Even if the hemispheric free trade project is waning, many of the states of the Americas have initiated, pursued, or concluded regional or subregional bilateral trade negotiations over the last year. Several examples are as follows:

- The **United States** has continued negotiating on several fronts, i.e., pending ratification of a free trade agreement with the **countries of Central America** and the **Dominican Republic**, new agreements with **Peru** and **Colombia**, and pursuance of negotiations with **Ecuador**.
- **Mexico** and **Chile** have signed a strategic association agreement, not only to promote trade in Latin America, but to encourage political, social, and cultural integration as well.
- **Chile** and **Panama** have set the stage for entering into free trade negotiations, as have **Uruguay** and **Columbia**.
- Six Caribbean states—**Barbados**, **Belize**, **Guyana**, **Jamaica**, **Surinam** and **Trinidad and Tobago**—have reached an accord establishing a common market.

### 4. Recent initiatives to make trade more inclusive of women and their needs

The above findings on the state of FTAA negotiations cause us to doubt that the project will be a reality anytime soon. However, the growth in free trade that is happening across the globe through bilateral, regional, and multilateral agreements impels us to continue our reflection and study on the consequences of trade liberalization on women.

To this end, human rights control mechanisms for treaty implementation may prove to be vital tools in evaluating the impact of policies and trade agreements on women. For example, in the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), all member states must periodically submit a report. These reports make it possible to evaluate if non-discrimination is considered when setting policy and negotiating trade agreements.

The development and implementation of trade initiatives that consider gender equality have developed progressively in recent years. The following illustrate this trend:

- The International Labor Organization (ILO) has developed gender integration policies in order to strengthen workers' rights, and has also taken initiatives to support women business executives.
- Contributing organizations like the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) have designed initiatives that enhance trade opportunities by including gender.
- Organizations such as the International Gender and Trade Network and Women in Development Europe have developed tools for impact analysis. These include gendered value chain analysis and the analysis of the stages of production of a particular good or service, in order to pinpoint gender inequality at any stage. The necessary changes can then be made, i.e., removing intermediaries from the chain to increase the gains of those not sharing fairly in the profits.

*Women's Edge Coalition* based in Washington, D.C. has developed a very interesting tool. The Trade Impact Review (TIR) reviews key findings of economic, legal, and trade policy literature of various countries regarding the potential and observed impact of trade and investment agreements on women. TIR is a simple, fair tool used to identify the sectors where the poorest in society are employed and thus increase the potential for possible rectification of policies affecting them.

TIR may be used to evaluate existing trade agreements or even before negotiations on a trade agreement begin, thereby enabling countries to identify and avoid potential negative impacts on the most vulnerable citizens. A study of this kind takes about 6 months to complete and costs some \$150,000 US.

TIR was instrumental in evaluating the impact of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) on the poor in Mexico and was used to analyze the possible consequences of the FTAA on Jamaican poor. It was also the tool of choice for the US Agency for International Development (USAID) for promoting the participation of women in international trade ventures.

It is believed that TIR, if used on a greater scale by political decision makers and development agencies, could increase opportunities in trade for women.

## 5. Conclusions and recommendations

A majority of these organizations' current initiatives are dedicated to strengthening women's ability to participate in trade. However, they do not necessarily alter conventional trade policies that ignore gender-differentiated impact. To help remedy the situation, the British Institute of Developmental Studies—Gender and Education (BRIDGE) has made recommendations that the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas should adopt. These recommendations aim to support the hemisphere's women parliamentarians in the exercise of their legislative functions, particularly when examining from a gender perspective the development, evaluation, and implementation of policies and trade agreements on the local, regional, national, and hemispheric levels. The most relevant of these recommendations are as follows:

- That parliamentarians take an active role in evaluating whether proposed trade agreements meet their respective states' commitments under international agreements, particularly commitments regarding women's rights and gender equality, and are in keeping with the Millennium Development Goals.
- That parliamentarians promote the systematic use of gender-analysis tools in trade policymaking and negotiations with a particular view to prevention of gender bias.
- Recognizing that trade policies affect society in numerous ways, that participation of the various government departments be encouraged to ensure input is given from all available resources—particularly those concerned with women's rights—when establishing trade policies or negotiating agreements, with the goal of identifying and correcting any pernicious effects the policies or agreements may have.
- That the role of civil society organizations be enhanced when setting trade and employment policy priorities and that women in particular participate from all commercial sectors.
- That parliamentarians work to ensure governments are forthright when making policies or negotiating agreements, providing information so all groups in society feel concerned and are active participants in the process.
- That each state collect much more data by gender in order to analyze in detail the effects of trade policies on women and develop more effective tools of evaluation.

Efforts to include gender in the development of domestic trade policies must spill over into the international arena of trade negotiations. Regional, hemispheric, and international strategic alliances are therefore essential in promoting gender equality. In this regard, the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas is a key discussion forum for women parliamentarians across the hemisphere. Our respective efforts to promote systematic integration of a gender perspective at every stage of trade liberalization will produce positive results for the hemisphere as a whole.



## **NETWORK OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE AMERICAS**

**Theme for the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, May 2007**

### **HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

#### *Issue*

Human trafficking, often considered the third leading illegal trade after drugs and arms, has many facets: pornography, sexual exploitation, prostitution, organ trafficking, forced labor, etc. This phenomenon, which primarily affects women, teens, and children, constitutes a gross violation of the security, wellbeing, and most fundamental rights of its victims.

Frequently tied to migration, human trafficking exists in every country at various levels. Some countries provide victims, some serve as transit countries, and others are host countries where the victims are exploited. Internal networks are also in operation within countries.

A number of international treaties address human trafficking or one of its aspects. The main instrument is the *United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime*, which entered into effect in November 2000 and has been ratified by 118 states to date, and its *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children*, which entered into effect in December 2003 and has been ratified by 97 states. In the Americas, *Inter-American Convention on International Traffic in Minors* entered into effect in March 1994 and has garnered 13 ratifications.

#### *Rationale*

Network members have expressed their interest in studying this theme on multiple occasions. A first series of conferences on the subject was held as part of the Network's Executive Committee meeting in Puebla in March 2006, thereby launching the debate. The unequivocally international character of the theme makes it an ideal choice, as the Network could continue and further develop the work it has begun. The Network could stimulate discussion of human trafficking in a number of areas, including the role of parliamentarians in the ratification and implementation of international instruments; experience on the issue at the legislative, governmental, and social levels that has led to conclusive results; and mechanisms of international cooperation aimed at eradicating this scourge.



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