



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

Brasilia, Brazil, March 24, 2004

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS

The meeting of the Executive Committee of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas, chaired by Ms. Ileana Rogel, Representative of El Salvador, was attended by eleven of the fifteen representatives elected¹ at the IVth Annual Meeting, and by some twenty observers from about ten different countries, and took place in Brasilia, Brazil, on March 24, 2004.

Ms. Maria José Maninha, President of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas (COPA) and host of the Executive Committee meeting, officially opened the proceedings of this V Meeting of the Network Executive Committee. She reaffirmed the importance of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas as a forum for dialogue on women's issues, and particularly emphasized the Network's deliberations focusing on the challenges of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) and its potential impacts on women. Ms. Maninha also recalled that these important deliberations contribute to the reflection process of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas (COPA) on these aspects.

Following the opening presentation, the elected representatives of the Executive Committee presented the most recent initiatives relating to women's rights and the legislative measures proposed or adopted in their respective parliaments. The representatives also made an assessment of their actions to foster the implementation of the main elements of the plan of action adopted at the previous meeting of the Executive Committee in Isla Margarita, Venezuela, in February 2003.

The representatives then examined and discussed each component of a more detailed plan of action through which to set priorities for the year 2004-2005. In addition, discussions were held to clarify the respective roles of the members of the Executive Committee and of the Secretariat. After discussion, Ms. Graciela De Leo, representative of the Southern Cone, proposed the adoption of the detailed action plan, which was unanimously approved.

¹ Absent:
the *regional representative of the Caribbean*, Ms. Velda Gonzalez de Modestti, Vice-president of the Senate of Puerto Rico;
the *regional representative of the Caribbean*, Ms. Elsa Rojas Hernández, Member of the National Assembly of Peoples' Power of Cuba;
the *regional representative of Central America*, Ms. Antonietta Botto Handal de Fernández, Member of the National Congress of Honduras;
the *regional representative of the Central American Parliament*, Ms. Nidia Díaz, member for El Salvador in the Central American Parliament.

As proposed in the detailed plan of action, rapporteurs were designated for each of the thematic areas prioritized by the Network, and which will be the subject of a progress report at the Annual Meeting. The main responsibility for a theme will be in the hands of the rapporteur, who may however benefit from the support of other members of the Executive Committee, as well as of the staff of her Assembly for the drafting of the report and in seeking supplementary information. Ms. Fatima Houda-Pepin, representative of the founding Assembly of the Network and host of the Secretariat, was designated as rapporteur for the theme "Women and the Free Trade Area of the Americas". Ms. Albertina Urbina Zelaya, representative of the Central America region, was designated rapporteur for the theme "Gender Budgets".

Following this, the Executive Committee decided to create a Financing Committee. This Committee's membership included the President of the Network, and one elected representative from each of the states where a COPA secretariat is located, namely Brazil, Mexico and Québec. Thus, Ms. Fatima Houda-Pepin, of the National Assembly of Québec, and Ms. Lucero Saldana Perez, of the Chamber of Senators of Mexico, were de facto representatives on the Financing Committee. The four representatives of Brazil will agree among themselves as to who will take on these duties. The Financing Committee must ensure coordination and strategic planning of the financing campaign in addition to representing the Network to financial backers. It was also determined that the Committee should define all the criteria governing the soliciting of funds.

The members of the Executive Committee then examined a document setting out the details concerning the participation of the Network in seminars, events and meetings of other organizations. The addition of a paragraph to the study document was proposed and the document was then unanimously approved.

The President informed the Executive Committee that the representative of the Caribbean Region, Ms. Velda Gonzalez de Modestti, had formulated a proposal, to be presented to the Committee, regarding the holding of a seminar. However, as this project could not be discussed in her absence, it was agreed that she should be sent the new rules of procedure adopted concerning the Network's participation in events, and should be asked to submit a written proposal in accordance with this new set of regulations, for later examination and decision.

The representatives then discussed the rules of procedure for the election of members of the Executive Committee of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas. A new voting system was unanimously approved. From now on, as stipulated in the text:

- The President shall be elected by all women parliamentarians present at the Annual Meeting.
- The representatives of each of the five major regions shall be elected only by the women parliamentarians from the same region who are present at the Annual Meeting, and taking into account the principle of diversity within that region.
- The representatives of the regional parliaments and interparliamentary organizations shall be elected by all the women parliamentarians representing interparliamentary organizations and regional parliaments, and who are present at the Annual Meeting.
- The representatives shall be elected by secret ballot.

The rules of procedure concerning the choice of themes, the development of documents and the passing of recommendations by the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas were unanimously approved.

The choice of the theme “The impact of migrations on women in the context of hemispheric integration” for the workshop at the next Annual Meeting was confirmed. A preparatory discussion paper was distributed to the members so that they might contribute to its enrichment through the viewpoints specific to their respective sub-regions. In addition, Ms. Alice Portugal, Member of the Legislative Assembly of the State of Bahia, Brazil, will act as rapporteur on the theme of the Annual Meeting. In collaboration with the Network Secretariat, Ms. Portugal will organize a workshop in the form of a panel, which will present the viewpoints of each sub-region of the Americas concerning the set of themes chosen.

Finally, the representatives adopted a resolution concerning the 10th Anniversary of the Beijing Conference. Through this resolution, the members of the Executive Committee undertake to monitor the commitments of their respective states concerning the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, and to promote the adoption, within their respective legislative assemblies, regional parliaments and interparliamentary organizations, of legislation taking into consideration the recommendations arising out of the deliberations at the world conferences on women. They also recommend that decisions concerning the time, place and form of a Fifth Conference on Women be examined by the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women.

The deliberations of the Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Network of Women Parliamentarians led to the consolidation of the organization, thus enabling it to better open itself toward the world, to strengthen its actions and to stand as a beacon in support of women parliamentarians of the hemisphere.