

ZACATECAS DECLARATION

We, members of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas, an organ of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas, which brings together the congresses and parliamentary assemblies of the unitary, federal, federated, and associated states, the regional parliaments, and the interparliamentary organizations of the Americas, at the close of our meeting held in Zacatecas, Mexico, on September 27 and 28, 2007, wherein we examined the themes of violence against women, migration, human trafficking, and the participation of women in political life, have, pursuant to the conclusions reached at the said meeting, adopted the following declaration:

PREAMBLE

Recognizing that the progress achieved these past years on the front of equity between the women and men in relation to the adoption of international and regional instruments has focused on government policies, but that much remains to be done in this regard;

Concerned by the persistence in society of stereotyped and biased attitudes with regard to questions relating to the equality of men and women as well as by the tendency in public opinion to consider the chief problems facing women to have been resolved;

Emphasizing that during the past decade the conditions and functions of women in the world have on the whole considerably evolved, albeit at an unequal pace from one country to another;

Noting the role played by the continent's women legislators, who, in an ongoing quest to improve the status of women, children, and adolescents as well as that of vulnerable sectors of the population in our countries, have demanded the repeal of discriminatory legislation;

Mindful of the deficiencies in the compilation of statistics and indicators, which continue to serve as important instruments of reference for planning, verifying, and evaluating the consideration given to matters pertaining to the equality of men and women in the action programs of our countries;

Observing the positive and negative influences that the current major trends at the planetary level, such as globalization, the easing of trade restrictions, privatization, the growing influence of the means of communication, and the rapid expansion of communications technologies exert on the situation of women, young people, and adolescents;

Recognizing that migration is an historical phenomenon that can in no way be regarded as a criminal act and that migrants ought not to be treated as criminals, and having noted that the massive population displacements resulting from globalization are often accompanied by violations of the fundamental rights of migrants and their families;

Mindful that, by their very situation, the undocumented are subject to becoming victims of human trafficking, of trafficking and extortion networks, as well as of abuses of power by the authorities, of measures leading to the separation of families, and of violations of the fundamental rights of children;

Convinced that peace is a fundamental and universal value and that its propagation and promotion constitute one of the foremost responsibilities of the parliaments of our continent;

WE HAVE RESOLVED:

- To commit ourselves to continue to work within our national, regional, state, and provincial congresses and parliaments to promote the process of drafting and amending the statutes concerning migration in order to remove therefrom, or to amend, any and all provisions whose effect is to criminalize migrants, as well as to pursue our struggle in favour of abolishing all penal sanctions against migrants and against any person who, for humanitarian purposes, assists them so as to ensure that their human rights are respected;
- To support the cause of Ms. Elvira Arellano, a Mexican migrant who is fighting on behalf of millions of migrants to the United States of America and around the world;
- To confer upon her the honorary title of *ambassador for peace and family reunification* on behalf of the millions of undocumented workers who travel to earn their living across the American continent, with a view to encouraging and continuing the struggle for full respect for the rights of all persons in migration situations, as the countries of the continent have committed themselves to do in the applicable international conventions, treaties, and agreements;
- To promote the passage of legislation and the carrying out of reforms designed to favor the elimination in our statutes of every kind of pejorative or discriminatory label as well as that of every concept likely to denigrate the human person or undermine human dignity;
- To recognize the agreements of the Stockholm and Yokohama world conferences on the sexual exploitation of children, agreements which affirm that children and adolescents who have been victims of the activities of human trafficking networks are not prostitutes but rather victims of organized crime that promotes child sex tourism and child pornography;
- To legislate to combat the harvesting of and the trade in organs and to fight to eliminate all forms of human servitude and slavery;
- To pass or, as the case may be, to amend statutes so as to guarantee to children and adolescents the free development of their personality, respect for their human dignity, and the full exercise of their fundamental rights;
- To incite our respective parliaments to pass various measures likely: to foster the application, by states, governments, and the mass-communication media, of communications policies that demand the recognition of the value of the contribution women make as actors who, on the social, cultural, economic, and political fronts, play a fundamental role in the development of society and in the cultural life of peoples; and to promote respect for the dignity of women in the media;
- To promote the adoption of an all-encompassing policy in the field of education that aims, by means of formal education, to combat sexist discrimination and violence against women and young girls. The implementation of this policy should be accompanied by a vast awareness campaign conducted jointly by our parliaments and our countries; it should center on communication, education, and social development and be financed with the assistance of cross-sector budgets in order to tackle, in particular, the problems relating to the inequalities between men and women with the firm objective of eradicating patriarchal culture and making people aware of the need for equality between men and women;

Finally

- To forward to the National Congress of the Republic of Colombia as well as to all the continent's congresses and parliaments a resolution of solidarity with Senator Piedad Córdoba of the Republic of Colombia;
- Recalling the importance of the *Convention of Belem do Para*, which has been ratified by thirty-two countries of the Americas, and mindful that it is its duty to follow up on the policies relating to sexist violence, the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas has resolved to accept the invitation from the Vice-President of the Andean Region, Deputy Flor Ríos, and from the Ex-President of COPA, Deputy Jhannett Madriz, to take part next November 24 and 25 in Caracas, Venezuela, in the working meeting with the representatives of the Convention of Belem do Para in parallel with the assembly that is to be held in the same city on November 25 on the occasion of the first anniversary of the passage of the *Organic Law on the Right of Women to a Life Free of Violence*, in strict conformity with the wish expressed during the deliberations of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas during the proceedings of the XVth Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas, which was held in Los Angeles, California, United States of America, in June 2007.

Adopted in the City of Zacatecas, Zacatecas, Mexico, September 28, 2007

President of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas

APARECIDA GAMA, Deputy

Vice-President of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas

Alliet Bautista Ramos, Deputy

President of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas

Carlos Jiménez Macías, Senator

Honorary Witnesses

Amalia García Medina

Constitutional Governor of the Free and Sovereign State of Zacatecas

Jhannett Madriz Tobilla, Deputy

Ex-President of COPA and Member of the Executive Committee

Edda Evangelista Acuña, Senator
First Vice-President of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas

Flor Ríos, Deputy in the General Assembly of Venezuela

Marta Sanchez Soler, Coordinator of the Movimiento Migrante Mesoamericano, No nos Vamos

Deputies, magistrates, public servants, mayors, municipal councilors