



## ACTIVITIES REPORT 2005-2008

NETWORK OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE AMERICAS

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## Activities Report 2005-2008

In the past three years, members of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas put considerable energy and enthusiasm into the organization of meetings and events aimed at facilitating exchanges between women parliamentarians on the American continent. With every such activity, the Network has grown stronger, becoming an essential forum for the discussion of issues closely affecting women parliamentarians and the people they represent.

During my term as Network president, I had the opportunity to take part in numerous events that contributed to increasing the influence of the Network and the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas (COPA) in both parliamentary circles and civil society.

### *1. Annual Meeting*

#### **Network's 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting – Quito, Ecuador – May 30, 2006**

The Network's 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, held in Quito, Ecuador, took place under the 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." A workshop on the CEDAW, examined in relation to the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and the importance of the Convention for the countries of the Americas, was led by Ms. Lily Rodríguez, Auxiliary Representative of the United Nations Population Fund. It was followed by presentations of the report on the implementation of CEDAW in the Americas and of the CEDAW document databank. Participants then discussed and passed a resolution advocating the effective implementation of CEDAW in the states of the Americas and the upholding of its principles.

Two other recommendations were also passed: the first on human trafficking and the second on the Bahia Declaration concerning the defence of rights linked to sexual and reproductive health, issued at the *13<sup>th</sup> Latin-American Congress on Sexology and Sexual Education*, held in Salvador, Bahia State, Brazil, in April 2006.

### *2. Executive Committee Meetings*

#### **a) Rio de Janeiro (Rio de Janeiro), Brazil – October 5, 2005**

The first Network Executive Committee meeting for the 2005–2006 term was held in my own legislative assembly. 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.

#### **b)Puebla (Puebla), Mexico – March 1, 2006**

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.” 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.

#### **c) La Plata (Buenos Aires), Argentina – November 23, 2006**

The Executive Committee held its meeting in La Plata, at the invitation of our colleague, Senator and COPA First Vice-President Ms. Edda Evangelina Acuña. Presentations on human trafficking by Ms. Maria del Carmen Feijoo Docampo, Liaison Officer for the United Nations Population Fund in Argentina, and by the rapporteur designated for this theme, Ms. Zulma Gómez, Member of the Congress of Paraguay, stimulated discussions by the participants and enabled us to examine our annual theme in depth.

#### **d)Los Angeles (California), United States – June 22, 2007**

The meeting of the Executive Committee was held in Los Angeles. By organizing a meeting in the United States allowed us to publicize the Network in order to encourage increased participation in its activities and, second, to acquire a better understanding of the challenges that women parliamentarians are facing in the United States.

Moreover, we are pursuing our work on human trafficking in ever greater depth by organizing a round table that brings together parliamentarians and specialists from the region who have developed expertise in this field.

#### **e) Cancun (Quintana Roo), Mexico – March 14, 2008**

The last of our Network Executive Committee meetings was chaired in my absence by my colleague Cidinha Campos, Deputy of the Legislative Assembly of the State of Rio de Janeiro. Besides continuing to prepare the Network’s 7th Annual Meeting, the executive committee members discussed the next thematic orientation of the Network. The proposal presented by Nicole Ménard, the representative of the National Assembly of Québec, “**The evolution of women’s participation in political decision-making 1999-2009: the progress so far and future outlook**”, was received with enthusiasm by the Executive Committee and will be submitted to the members at the Annual Meeting. As well, Patricia Sánchez Carrillo and Inés López Chan, Deputies of the Congress of the State of Quintana Roo, each in turn made a presentation on the main challenges they face in the exercise of their functions.

### ***3. Other activities***

#### **a) International Forum of Women Parliamentarians**

**Rio de Janeiro (Rio de Janeiro), Brazil – October 6-7, 2005**

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.

#### **b) 13th Latin American Congress on Sexology and Sexual Education**

**Salvador (Bahia), Brazil – April 19-22, 2006**

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.

#### **c) Seminar on Human Trafficking**

**Los Angeles (California), United States – June 22, 2007**

We continued our work on human trafficking at a high-level seminar held in Los Angeles that brought together parliamentarians and experts on the subject from the U.S.-Mexico border region. Participating in the seminar were Texas State Senator Leticia Van de Putte, California State Senator Sheila Kuehl, Kay Buck, Executive Director of CAST (Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking), Angelica Salas, Executive Director of CHIRLA (Coalition for Humane Immigration Rights of Los Angeles) and Patricia Lucila González Rodríguez, Attorney General of the State of Chihuahua in Mexico. By inviting all COPA parliamentarians to take part in the seminar, the Network succeeded in giving greater visibility to its proceedings. Some forty participants took part in the seminar to examine and debate concrete legislative and socioeconomic measures to combat this criminal activity.

#### d) Forum of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas

Zacatecas (Zacatecas), Mexico – September 27-29, 2007

A Forum of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas took place in Zacatecas, on the invitation of Mexican Senator and COPA President Carlos Jiménez Macías and of Alliet Bautista Bravo, Deputy of the Congress of Mexico and North America's representative on the Network Executive Committee. On that occasion, I had the honor of making a presentation on the participation of women in political life. Violence against women, the rights of migrant women and human trafficking were also the themes of presentations and debate during the Forum. Some fifty parliamentarians attended this high-level conference, including several members of the Network Executive Committee and representatives of the legislative assemblies of the States of Mexico. At the close of the Forum, the participants adopted two resolutions: the *Zacatecas Declaration* and the *Resolution of Support for Senator Piedad Córdoba of Columbia*.