



NETWORK OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE AMERICAS 8th ANNUAL MEETING

**Salta, Argentina
September 16, 2009**

DRAFT REPORT

1- Introduction

Some sixty participants came together on the occasion of the 8th Annual Meeting of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas held on September 16, 2009, in Salta, Argentina.

Flor Ríos, president of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas and Member of the National Assembly of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, welcomed the participants and delivered the opening speech.

Edda Acuña, first vice-president of COPA and Senator of the Chamber of Senators of the province of Buenos Aires, then addressed the participants.

The participants were asked to briefly introduce themselves.

2- Approval of the agenda

The meeting agenda was adopted as presented.

3- The Network's 2006-2008 Activity Report

The Network president, Flor Ríos, presented the Network's activity report, as well as the principal activities conducted during the 2008-2009 term.

4- Secretariat's report

- 1) Monique Richard, Member of the National Assembly of Québec, presented the Network Secretariat's report.

5- Presentation et adoption of the Action strategies of the Network for the 2009-2014 period

The President briefly summarized the objectives of the Network and presented the priority action areas:

- Positioning the Network as a key actor in the Americas with respect to women's issues
- Continually providing parliamentarians with tools on the work themes examined by the Network
- Promoting the individual and collective leadership of members

6- Roundtable on the main work theme: Eliminating violence against women

The following parliamentarians and experts presented the work they had carried out:

- D^r Lola Valladares, UNIFEM representative (andean region) presented the UNIFEM and the UN Secretary General campaign, « Say NO-Unite to end violence against women »;
- Maris Eizaga, representative of the National Assembly of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, presented a conference on the impact of armed conflict on women;
- D^r Alejandra Chacón, legal counsel of the Rural workers union of Argentina (UATRE), gave a conference on violence in the workplace in Argentina;
- D^r Maria Silvia Pace, human rights secretary of the government of the province of Salta discussed human trafficking;
- Edine Von Herold Duarte, representative of the Legislative Assembly of Costa Rica, presented a brief overview of the situation regarding violence against women in Costa Rica;
- Sonia Segura Varsoly, representative of the Congress of the Republic of Guatemala, talked about violence against women in her country.

A resolution proposing a series of measures to combat violence against women was adopted by the participants (Appendix I).

7- Presentation and adoption of resolutions

A statement in support of Jacinta Francisco Marcial, freed on September 16, and two other aboriginal women who were unjustly found guilty of kidnapping 6 police officers, was adopted (Appendix II).

9- Presentation of follow-up reports on previous work themes

The rapporteurs who had been appointed to follow up on previous discussion themes presented their reports.

- a) *The impact of the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas (ALBA) on women*
Rapporteur : Flor Ríos, Deputy of the National Assembly of Venezuela
- b) *Changes in Women's Participation in Politics 1999-2009 : Situation and Outlook*
Rapporteur : Monique Richard, Member of the National Assembly of Québec
- c) *Human Trafficking in the Americas*
Rapporteur : Rosa Rosario Muñoz, Deputy for the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Chubut

- d) *The implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and its Facultative Protocol in the Americas*
Rapporteur : Emilia Alfaro, Deputy of the Chamber of Deputies of the Republic of Paraguay

9- Election of the 2009-2010 Executive Committee

The candidacies received allowed all positions to be filled without an election.

Pursuant to the Rules of Procedure for electing members of the Executive Committee of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas, the composition of the Network's Executive Committee for 2009-2010 is the following:

President

Flor María Ríos, National Assembly of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

Regional representatives:

Central America

Sandra Salgado, Legislative Assembly of El Salvador

Sonia Segura Varsoly, Congress of the Republic of Guatemala

North America

Chamber of Deputies of the United Mexican States

Caribbean

Elsa Rojas Hernandez, National Assembly of People's Power of Cuba

Southern Cone

Emilia Patricia Alfaro de Franco, Deputy, Chamber of Deputies of the Republic of Paraguay

Maria Elena Torresi, Chamber of Deputies of the Province of Buenos Aires, Argentina

Andean Region

Carlina Rodríguez Rodríguez, Senator, Senate of the Republic of Colombia

Maris Eizaga, National Assembly of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

Outgoing President

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

Interparliamentary organizations and regional parliaments

Estela Rosa De Micheli, Mercosur Parliamentary Union

Nélida Beatriz Burgueño, Parliament of Patagonia

Founding Assembly of the Network and Host Institution of the Secretariat

Monique Richard, National Assembly of Québec

Next Assembly to host the Network's Annual Meeting

The appointment of the two representatives from the next Assembly to host the Network's Annual Meeting has yet to be determined.

The following positions remain vacant:

- North America (1)
- Caribbean (1)
- Interparliamentary organizations (2)

It is important to mention that the president of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas, Flor María Ríos, holds ex officio one of the eleven vice-presidencies of COPA.

Appendix I



NETWORK OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE AMERICAS 8TH ANNUAL MEETING SALTA, ARGENTINA SEPTEMBER 16, 2009

Resolution on the elimination of violence against women

RECOGNIZING the authority of international legal instruments on the elimination of violence against women, particularly the *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women* adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 20, 1993 and the *Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Elimination of Violence Against Women* (Convention of Belém do Pará) adopted on June 9, 1994 by the member States of the Organization of American States;

CONSIDERING that the Convention of Belém do Pará defines violence against women as “any act or conduct, based on gender, which causes death or physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, whether in the public or the private sphere. Violence against women shall be understood to include physical, sexual and psychological violence: (a) that occurs within the family or domestic unit or within any other interpersonal relationship, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the woman, including, among others, rape, battery and sexual abuse; (b) that occurs in the community and is perpetrated by any person, including, among others, rape, sexual abuse, torture, trafficking in persons, forced prostitution, kidnapping and sexual harassment in the workplace, as well as in educational institutions, health facilities or any other place; and (c) that is perpetrated or condoned by the State or its agents regardless of where it occurs”;

CONSIDERING that the violation of the rights of women is a violation of fundamental human rights;

NOTING that the male partner is the aggressor in 95% of cases of conjugal violence worldwide;

EMPHASIZING that violence against women is a manifestation of the inequality that persists between women and men and involves, in most cases, men controlling women;

RECOGNIZING that violence is still all too often ignored in our society and that it represents a major obstacle to achieving real equality between women and men;

RECOGNIZING that the most effective legislation on violence against women ensures full victim safety, condemns and punishes all forms of violence, allows victims of violence to seek monetary remedies and guarantees their access to assistance programs run by physical and mental health specialists to help them regain control of their lives;

RECOGNIZING that parliamentarians play a key role in adopting the budgets needed to implement laws and create programs to protect victims and raise public awareness;

SALUTING the campaigns to eliminate violence against women organized by UNIFEM, the Secretary General of the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union that aim to raise awareness among as many social actors as possible, especially governments, parliaments, municipalities, society as a whole, educational institutions, communities, women and men, by encouraging them to participate in preventing violent behaviour and helping victims;

CELEBRATING the Inter-Parliamentary Union's initiative of highlighting the 10th anniversary of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women on November 25, 2009 by suggesting that parliaments pledge to hold events to support efforts to eliminate violence against women;

WE, the legislators and representatives of the parliamentary assemblies belonging to the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas, gathered in Salta, Argentina on September 16, 2009 for the 8th Annual Meeting of the Network,

FIRMLY CONDEMN any show of violence against women, in particular violence in the workplace, and most especially any violation of women's fundamental rights perpetrated in the course of armed conflicts;

SALUTE the States that have ratified the *Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Elimination of Violence Against Women* (Convention of Belém do Pará) and **URGE** those who have not yet done so to ratify or accede to it as quickly as possible;

EXHORT States to do all in their power to ensure that their laws conform to the *Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Elimination of Violence Against Women* (Convention of Belém do Pará);

DEMAND that existing laws on violence against women be enforced by all those involved, namely police forces, prosecutors and judges, and **ASK** that all be provided with appropriate training enabling them to better help victims;

INCITE our parliaments, if they have not done so already, to pass laws protecting victims of violence, **INSIST** that these laws be strengthened by national action plans aimed at preventing violence and providing victims with psychological, physical and financial assistance and **PLEDGE** to ensure that the necessary budgets are adopted in our parliaments to allow these action plans to be carried out with due consideration for gender issues;

SUPPORT UNIFEM's "Say NO to Violence Against Women" campaign and **COMMISSION** the President of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas to take the steps required to have the Network recognized as an official UNIFEM partner organization;

PLEDGE to join forces with the Inter-Parliamentary Union's "Parliaments Take Action on Violence Against Women" campaign in commemorating the 10th anniversary of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women on November 25, 2009, by approaching parliamentary authorities to organize events highlighting the importance of eliminating violence against women;

RECOMMEND that the parliamentarians present at the 9th General Assembly of COPA in Argentina ensure that all the parliaments of the Americas follow up on this resolution, thus combining their efforts to eliminate gender-based violence.

Appendix II



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The Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas

Expresses its satisfaction following the announcement, on September 16, 2009, of the release of Jacinta Francisco Marcial, who had been held since August 2006 in the prison of the Mexican state of Querétaro for allegedly kidnapping six federal agents;

Urges the competent authorities to order the rapid release of Teresa González and Alberta Alcántara, two other indigenous women accused of the same crime, to review their cases and to repair the harm they have suffered as a result of procedural irregularities and wrongful imprisonment.