



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

**NETWORK PROGRESS REPORT
FOR THE PERIOD FROM SEPTEMBER 10, 2008 TO SEPTEMBER 16, 2009**

**Presented by Flor María Ríos
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Member of the National Assembly of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela**

**Salta (Salta), Argentina
September 16, 2009**

As president of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas, it is my pleasure to submit this progress report, which presents the Network's main achievements since the 7th Annual Meeting, on September 10, 2008.

1. Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas Activity Report

1.1 Network's 7th Annual Meeting – Mexico City, Mexico – September 10, 2008

The Network's 7th Annual Meeting, held in Mexico City, Mexico, on September 10, 2008, took place under the theme "Human Trafficking in the Americas." A workshop on this theme was led by the following parliamentarians: Edda Acuña, Senator of the Chamber of Senators of the Province of Buenos Aires, Céméphise Gilles, Senator at the National Assembly of Haiti, and Alliet Bautista Bravo, deputy of the Chamber of Deputies of the United Mexican States. Colette Lespinasse, representing the Haiti returnee and refugee support group (*Groupe d'appui aux rapatriés et aux réfugiés d'Haïti*), discussed that group's work to combat human trafficking and migrant smuggling. A presentation on the document databank TRAFICAS was followed by a resolution, adopted by the participants, to combat human trafficking through a series of measures requiring multi-sector State participation.

A statement in support of the people of Cuba, Haiti and Jamaica following the passage of hurricanes Faye, Gustav, Hannah and Ike was also adopted.

A theme proposal, "**Changes in Women's Participation in Politics 1999-2009: Situation and Outlook**" was approved by the participants; the National Assembly of Québec was designated as rapporteur.

The election of the new Executive Committee concluded the meeting, and I had the honour of winning the members' confidence and being elected President of the Network.

After the Annual Meeting, I ensured that the minutes, the recommendations passed and all other documents relating to this meeting were made available via our website and forwarded to all members of the Network's Executive Committee.

1.2 Network Executive Committee meeting

El Calafate (Santa Cruz), Argentina – January 24, 2009

The Executive Committee held its first meeting of the 2008-2009 term of office in El Calafate, Santa Cruz Province, Argentina, on January 24, 2009, at the invitation of Senator Selva Judit Forstmann, whose death on April 10, 2009, has saddened us all. My action plan for 2008-2009, which makes the eradication of violence against women the main focus of my term as

President, was adopted. A presentation on this theme was given by Maria Perceval, Federal Senator of Argentina. Gabriel Lerner, Argentina's Undersecretary for Children's Issues, gave a presentation on migration, children and human rights, the subject of one of the two resolutions adopted by the Network's Executive Committee. The other resolution dealt with violence against women in situations of armed combat.

2. Activities of the president of the Network

- Speaker at a forum held as part of International Women's Day (March 8).
- Member of the COPA electoral observation mission during the presidential election in El Salvador (March 11 to 16).
- Report on the COPA electoral observation mission in El Salvador presented during a meeting of the Network of Venezuelan Members of COPA on Gender Issues (March 20).
- Speaker at the 3rd General Assembly of the Venezuelan parliamentarians' union (UNALEV). My presentation dealt with COPA's active pan-continental presence (April 2 to 4).
- Speaker for regional meetings of the Network of Venezuelan Members of COPA on Gender Issues (April).
- Rapporteur for a forum dealing with human rights in Venezuelan legislation held for law students at the Central University of Venezuela (May 7).
- Mentoring undergraduate students in the School of Social Communication at the Central University of Venezuela in their work on gender-based violence (May).
- Working visit to the National Assembly of Québec (June 2 to 5).
- Rapporteur for a meeting of women parliamentarians on "The adoption of a political agenda aimed at gender equality in Latin America and the Caribbean", an event organized by the UNDP and UNIFEM as part of a conference in Madrid on gender-based violence (June 15 and 16).
- Author of a weekly column in *Vea*, a newspaper distributed throughout Venezuela.
- Interviews on fundamental women's rights and gender equality and equity conducted with various media representatives in my capacity as coordinator for the consideration of a framework bill on gender equality and equity.
- Member of a round table discussion on gender issues at the inauguration of the Argelia Laya Chair on Women's Issues at Caracas University College (June 19).
- Rapporteur for the *Forum on Gender-Based Violence and the Respect of Human Rights*, an event organized for students in the community service program at the Central University of Venezuela School of Law (June 23).
- Member of the National Observatory on Gender Equity of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

3. Other activities

3.1 Distribution of press releases to promote the Network in other parliaments of the Americas

Promoting the Network is one of my highest priorities; the Network's Secretariat has supported me in this by writing and distributing, via e-mail and the Internet site, press releases to underline such events as International Women's Day and to condemn the coup perpetrated in Honduras on June 28, 2009.

3.2 Submission of an article in the electronic bulletin of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas (COPA)

Last February I submitted an article that was published in the electronic bulletin of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas (COPA). The aim of this promotional article was to make COPA's Executive Committee more aware of our organization and to encourage the participation of other parliamentarians of the Americas.

3.3 Preparation of the 8th Annual Meeting

Over the course of the 2008-2009 term, I have worked closely with the Secretariat of the Network in preparing and organizing the 8th Annual Meeting to be held in Salta, Argentina on September 16, 2009.

Much of this preparation was done during my visit to the National Assembly of Québec from June 2 to 4, when I met with Monique Richard, representative of the founding Assembly of the Network and host of the Secretariat of the Executive Committee, to plan the different aspects of the Annual Meeting, including the round table on the eradication of violence against women. It was at this time that I finalized the details of the round table, which is to be a discussion with representatives from civil society organizations. I also suggested that UNIFEM representative, Dr. Lola Valladares, could make a presentation to the round-table participants.

4. Conclusion

These activities are part of my action plan for 2008-2009, the blueprint for my term as President. Each is closely aligned with one or the other of the defined priorities, namely, the education and public awareness campaign on violence against women; promotion of the Network throughout the Americas; and development and follow-up on the work themes identified at the 7th annual meeting.

Our main concern in the medium term is our ongoing work on the eradication of violence against women, which began last year. The participation of each of you is of the highest importance in order to give this theme all the attention it warrants.

In the long term, it is essential to continue distributing our organization's work to women parliamentarians and legislative institutions throughout the continent, so that they may feel personally concerned by our actions and want to participate in the quest for concrete solutions to the problems faced by women in the Americas. This is a considerable challenge, and one that is the responsibility of each one of us.