



NETWORK OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE AMERICAS

**9TH ANNUAL MEETING
Mar del Plata, Argentina, November 16, 2010**

RESOLUTION

WOMEN'S POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

RECALLING that equality between women and men and the recognition of and respect for women's rights are essential conditions for the consolidation of democracy in the Americas;

DRAWING on the principles of the *Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women*, which came into force on September 3, 1981 and was ratified by all the States of the Americas;

NOTING that promoting gender equality and empowering women is the third Millennium Development Goal;

GIVEN that the three indicators selected by United Nations member States to monitor progress towards the third Millennium Goal testify to a willingness to support women in their empowerment process on three priority levels, namely education, employment and political participation;

KNOWING that equal rights between women and men necessarily implies true and effective equality in everyday life and that there remain many obstacles to overcome before women are fully empowered;

BEING AWARE of the large gender wage gap for work of equal value, of the discriminatory business policies that limit women's job access, job tenure and pay, of the unequal distribution of paid and unpaid work between women and men, and of the double or even triple daily workload of many women around the world to the detriment of their quality of life;

NOTING the disproportionate economic and social vulnerability of women and in particular the precarious nature of their situation in times of crisis, when budgets for gender equality policies are generally slashed;

RECALLING the widely acknowledged positive impact of education and employment for women in helping to reduce poverty;

GIVEN the very low representation of women on the boards of directors of big companies despite women's increased participation in the economic life of the Americas in past decades;

CONCERNED about the many cultural, political and ordinary, day-to-day obstacles still limiting women's access to the job market in general and to positions of responsibility in particular;

GIVEN the detrimental correlation between the level of women's participation in economic and social life and the extent of their participation in political life;

REAFFIRMING the importance of the role women parliamentarians must play in the search for mechanisms to achieve equality between women and men;

WELCOMING the progress made by women as regards political participation in the Americas, where the average proportion of women in State parliaments is 22%, while the world average is 19%;

REGRETTING, however, that women's participation in politics on the American continent is still low, both at the executive and at the legislative level, since women must be equal participants in all decisions for political life to be fair and democratic;

GIVEN that attitudes must still change substantially before equal participation of men and women in political roles can be achieved;

We, the members of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas, gathered in Mar del Plata, Argentina, on November 16, 2010,

Pledge to make the efforts needed for women's political and economic empowerment to be considered a crosscutting, structural element of the legislative frameworks of our respective States;

Pledge to integrate the principles of equal opportunity and equal conditions for men and women into legislation that takes into account gender-specific issues and ensures among other things the harmonization of work and family responsibilities;

Recommend that the large number of women in informal work, the uncertain access to suitable employment and the disproportionate economic and social vulnerability of women in times of crisis be better reflected in national statistics and in the design and implementation of socio-economic programs and policies;

Consider that improving the economic and social conditions of women through education, suitable employment and equal pay is essential to their increased presence in politics;

Will continue to work, individually and collectively, to create a critical mass of women in positions of responsibility in the political and economic spheres;

Encourage the governments of our respective States to implement public programs aimed at helping women develop, among other things, their leadership skills, management skills and communication strategies;

Will continue to examine the issue of women's economic, social and political empowerment in the coming years, in particular by promoting the sharing of best practices and by proposing avenues of action to encourage such empowerment.