



NETWORK OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE AMERICAS

10th ANNUAL MEETING Québec City, Canada, September 6, 2011

RESOLUTION ON THE POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN

CONVINCED that the political participation of women is an essential condition for the consolidation of democracy in the Americas and for equal rights for men and women;

RELYING on the principles of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 and ratified by all the States of the Americas;

NOTING that, under the Beijing Platform for Action, the States made a commitment to promote gender equality and to increase the participation of women in decision-making bodies;

SALUTING the progress observed in the political participation of women in the Americas, given that women now represent 22.5% of elected officials on the continent, whereas in 1997 they represented 18.7% of parliamentarians;

REGRETTING, however, that the pace of progress is not sufficiently sustained, and that the level of participation of women in political life on the American continent is still low, in both the executive and the legislative branches;

NOTING that a series of institutional, economic and socio-cultural obstacles still exists which discourages women's participation in the electoral process;

KEEPING IN MIND that access to education takes women outside the confines of their households and paves the way to their political representation by giving them higher self-esteem as well as the tools to launch a political career;

ALSO KEEPING IN MIND the positive effect of the entry of women into the job market on the proportion of women taking part in political life;

NOTING that the difficulty of preserving a balance between public and private responsibilities can be a significant dissuasive factor for any woman wishing to embark upon a political career;

POINTING OUT that the establishment of alternative family structures, like daycares, encourages women's access to politics;

NOTING that election campaigns are generally very expensive, and that the lack of financial means constitute an obstacle to political participation and electoral victory;

RECOGNIZING that it is essential to understand the effects of the various types of electoral systems on the political representation of women in order to devise strategies for developing their ability to participate in political life;

REAFFIRMING the scope of the role that political parties must play in finding mechanisms to achieve equality between men and women in legislative assemblies, in the areas of recruitment, funding and training;

CONSIDERING the importance of combating the stereotypes and attitudes that persist in our societies in order to increase the number of women parliamentarians;

RECOGNIZING the important role that the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas can be led to play to encourage the political participation of women;

We, the members of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas, assembled in Québec City, Canada, on September 6, 2011:

Undertake to redouble our efforts so that the political participation of women may be considered a crosscutting and priority issue in the legislative frameworks of our respective States;

Undertake to promote equality between men and women and to supervise the implementation of policies and programs, ensuring that they uphold the principles of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action regarding the political participation of women;

Recommend the implementation of public and private initiatives such as setting quotas, creating parliamentary commissions dedicated to the issue of gender inequality and setting up mentoring programs, to increase the number of women in politics;

Encourage the political parties of our respective States to set up programs aimed at women in order to develop their leadership, their management abilities and their communication strategies, among other things;

Consider that the improvement of women's economic and social conditions, in terms of both access to education and entry into the job market, must be understood to be an essential condition for increasing their numbers in politics;

Consider that the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas can take action by setting specific targets and drawing up an action plan, encouraging solidarity among women, creating mechanisms for communicating the actions taken in parliaments and working in partnership with men parliamentarians to raise their awareness of the cause of women;

Undertake to constantly monitor the political participation of women in the Americas, especially of native women, with a view to encouraging a sustained increase in the number of women elected to the continent's legislative assemblies;

Recommend to all the parliamentarians attending the 11th General Assembly of COPA in Québec City to follow up on this resolution with all of the parliamentarian assemblies of the Americas, so that they may combine their efforts to improve the political participation of women.