



NETWORK OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE AMERICAS

10th ANNUAL MEETING
Québec, Québec, Canada
September 6, 2011, 9:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Project of Report **(11-11-2011)**

The meeting began at 9:20 a.m., with approximately 50 persons present.

Network Vice-President Emilia Alfaro opened the meeting and welcomed the women parliamentarians and two outside experts present.

1. Approval of the agenda

The agenda was read in the following amended version:

1. Approval of the agenda
2. Conference on the main theme: *Women's commitment to a better future: water, poverty and sustainable development*
 - (a) Almas Jiwani, President of the National Committee of UN Women Canada
 - (b) Angelica de la Peña, Advisor on Women's and Children's Rights
3. Welcoming remarks
Diva Hadamira Gastélum, President of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas
4. Presentation of the special guest
a) Ms. María del Rocío García Gaytán, President, Inter-American Commission of Women
5. Welcoming remarks
Mr. Jacques Chagnon, President of the COPA and President of the National Assembly of Quebec
6. President's Activity Report for 2010–2011
Diva Hadamira Gastélum, President of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas
7. Secretariat's report
Monique Richard, Member of the National Assembly of Québec
8. Presentation of reports on work themes
 - (a) *Changes in Women's Participation in Politics: Situation and Outlook*
Rapporteur: Monique Richard, Member of the National Assembly of Québec

- | |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">9. Statements by those present on regional initiatives relating to the status of women10. Presentation and adoption of draft resolutions11. Designation of a rapporteur for the 2010–2012 themes12. Miscellaneous<ol style="list-style-type: none">(a) Presentation of the book “<i>Mujeres y Movimientos Armados en América</i>”13. Adjournment |
|--|

The amended agenda was adopted without further changes.

2. Conference on the main theme: *Women’s commitment to a better future: water, poverty and sustainable development*

The Vice-President explained that the theme of the debate, which combines two broad issues included in the Network’s 2010–2012 work plan, had been determined during the Executive Committee meeting held in Toluca de Lerdo, Mexico, on March 8, 2011.

The first presenter was Almas Jiwani, president of the National Committee for UN Women Canada. She was followed by Angélica de la Peña, a women and children’s rights consultant in Mexico.

During the ensuing discussion period, the presenters fielded questions chiefly concerning the feminization of poverty, the problem of water privatization, women’s participation in politics, and the role that women, and particularly women parliamentarians, might play to improve the status of women.

The Network’s president, deputy Diva Gastélum, took the floor. She thanked Vice-President Alfaro for opening the meeting, made a welcoming address, and remarked that she was extremely pleased to finally be in Québec in order to preside over the annual meeting, as there were several fundamental subjects on the agenda.

Having concluded her welcoming remarks (point 3 of the agenda), she presided over the rest of the debate. The representative of the Chamber of Deputies of the State of Santa Fe, Argentina, Veronica Gutiérrez, proposed that the Network support the UN resolution, adopted in July 2010, which recognizes access to safe drinking water and sanitation as fundamental human rights. Ms. Gastélum said that the proposal would receive due attention.

3. Welcoming remarks

As noted above, Diva Gastélum’s welcoming remarks were made under point 2 of the agenda.

4. Welcoming remarks by Jacques Chagnon, President of COPA and President of the National Assembly of Québec (this point was finally made after the President's of COPA speech at point 5)

In his welcoming remarks, Mr. Chagnon stressed the Network's importance, within COPA itself, as an advocate of gender equality and an agent of change in mobilizing parliamentarians around women's issues. He thanked those present, and in particular Network President Gastéllum, for their committed efforts to ensure that women throughout the Americas are heard.

5. Presentation by a special guest, María del Rocío García Gaytán, President of the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM)

CIM President García Gaytán gave an account of the work carried out by the Organization of American States (OAS) commission. She stressed that real economic empowerment is vital for concrete improvements to be made in women's lives. Finally, she proposed that the Network enter into agreements with her commission and with the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. Ms. Gastéllum welcomed this suggestion and said that it would receive due attention.

6. Activity Report for 2010–2011 by the Network President, Diva Hadamira Gastéllum

Network President Gastéllum briefly summarized her Activity Report. She drew particular attention to the concrete actions taken by herself and the Executive Committee in the past year to consolidate the Network. She also touched on the various international conferences she attended as the Network's representative, and mentioned that she hoped to continue this work, which is aimed at obtaining concrete results.

7. Secretariat's report by Monique Richard, Member of the National Assembly of Québec

Ms. Richard set forth the main points of the Network Secretariat's report. She described how the Secretariat had collaborated with the president and the other members of the Executive Committee in organizing meetings, following up on study themes, implementing the Network's work plan, etc.

8. Presentation of reports on work themes

(a) *Changes in Women's Participation in Politics: Situation and Outlook*

Rapporteur: Monique Richard, Member of the National Assembly of Québec

Ms. Richard outlined the main conclusions of the two-year study she headed on the theme of women's participation in politics. She noted that feedback from the Network's questionnaire as well as various studies on the subject show that, despite the progress made in recent decades, much work remains to be done if women are to achieve fair representation in parliamentary bodies. With this in mind she urged the Network to consider concrete ways in which it might help increase women's participation in politics. Her report was well received and stimulated discussion among the members.

9. Statements by those present on regional initiatives relating to the status of women

These statements were delivered at the end of the meeting (point 13). A number of parliamentarians summarized the situation with regard to the status of women in their home states or countries. A presentation by Mireya Zamora Alvarado, deputy of the Legislative Assembly of Costa Rica, about a draft bill concerning harassment in the workplace and about the proposed creation of a permanent parliamentary gender-equity unit generated much discussion. Scheznarda Fernandez, deputy of the National Assembly of Ecuador, referred to the two young girls murdered in the Americas in September and urged the Network to take a formal stand against such crimes against women. Diva Gastélum welcomed this proposal. Several participants suggested that the statements made today by the meeting attendees, and other points that might prove useful to colleagues, could be posted on the Network's website. The Network Secretariat's e-mail address was given to everyone, so they could share their ideas and points of view.

10. Presentation and adoption of draft resolutions

The draft resolutions on "women's participation in politics" and "women's commitment to a better future: water, poverty and sustainable development" were presented. The President explained the Network's mechanism for adopting the resolutions prior to their being presented in a plenary session at COPA's General Assembly. Participants wishing to propose amendments to the text of a resolution did so. When a consensus was reached, the amendments were adopted. Thus, the political representation of aboriginal women was the subject of an amendment to the resolution on the political participation of women. The other resolution was amended to include the idea that women's economic empowerment would not only help fight, but also help prevent, poverty.

11. Designation of a rapporteur for the 2010–2012 theme

Network President Gastélum assigned tasks to the members for 2011–2012, as approved by the Executive Committee the day before. These assignments included the following:

On the theme of poverty, pay equity and women's economic empowerment:

- Ileana Brenes Jimenez, deputy of the Legislative Assembly of Costa Rica
- Alicia Verónica Gutierrez, deputy of the Province of Santa Fe, Argentina
- Monique Richard, member of the National Assembly of Québec

On the theme of water, the environment and the status of women:

- Doralisa Mercedes Aravena, deputy of the Parliament of Patagonia (as observer only, beginning in December 2011)
- Mireya Zamora Alvarado, deputy of the Legislative Assembly of Costa Rica

12. Miscellaneous

(a) Presentation of the book *Mujeres y Movimientos Armados en América*

Diva Gastélum presented the book she completed this past year, entitled *Mujeres y Movimientos Armados en América* (Women and armed movements in the Americas). She gave a special word of thanks to the Centre for Studies on the Advancement of Women and Gender Equality of Mexico, and to the Mexican Congress without whose support the research

could not have been brought to term. She emphasized the importance, for both the Network and COPA, of having its own bibliography on this subject. Finally, she announced that another book, *Mujeres de las Américas*, was forthcoming and would be unveiled at a future COPA meeting.

A summary of *Mujeres y Movimientos Armados en América* was read to the members.

13. Adjournment

Following the presentation under point 12 of the Agenda, the members studied point 9 as described above.

The meeting was adjourned at 5 p.m.

APPENDIX I



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 parliamentary assemblies of the Americas, so that they may combine their efforts to improve the political participation of women.

APPENDIX II



NETWORK OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE AMERICAS

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

DRAFT RESOLUTION

WOMEN'S COMMITMENT TO A BETTER FUTURE: WATER, POVERTY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

CONCERNED that women constitute 70% of the 1.2 billion people living on less than a dollar a day;

NOTING that in spite of the increased number of women in the workforce, women still face a certain level of discrimination, are generally paid less than their male counterparts and occupy less secure jobs;

NOTING that the responsibility for uncompensated work stills weighs disproportionately on women, furthering the economic inequality between men and women;

KEEPING IN MIND that this feminization of poverty and insecurity in terms of living conditions makes women more vulnerable to environmental changes, to a lack of resources, and to economic and social crises;

KEEPING IN MIND that clean water is essential to surviving, health and human dignity and that in the coming years, it will become a rare resource especially for very poor families;

CONSIDERING that a society's development must be sustainable, i.e. must respond to current needs without compromising the well-being of individuals and future generations while taking into account the associated environmental, economic, social and cultural aspects supported by the International Pact on economic, social and cultural rights and by others treaties and agreements on the matter;

RECONFIRMING the importance that the sustainable human development debate include women's perspective as indicated in the Rio Declaration of 1992, which stipulates that women's full participation is essential to achieving sustainable development;

KEEPING IN MIND that the third Millennium Development Goal promises gender equality and women's empowerment at three key levels: education, employment and political involvement, as an efficient means of combating poverty, hunger, and illness, and of promoting sustainable development;

KEEPING IN MIND that we must increase the number of women in political and economic decision-making roles to ensure better consideration of their realities;

KEEPING IN MIND the widely recognized and positive impact of women's education and work in lowering and eradicating against poverty;

KNOWING that governments and parliaments are able to use laws, policies and gender-responsive programs to achieve true and actual equality among men and women.

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

UNDERTAKE to make the necessary efforts so that women's political and economic empowerment is considered a priority issue and an effective means of fighting and preventing poverty, hunger, and illness, and of promoting sustainable development in our respective States;

WILL WORK to ensure that the improvement of women's economic and social conditions, in terms of access to education, suitable work and pay equity, is considered a condition inherent to women's empowerment;

WILL CONTINUE to work, individually and collectively, so that a critical mass of women hold positions of responsibility, politically and economically, and so that women are present in debates on key social issues such as sustainable development and water supply;

ENCOURAGE our governments to continue implementing effective measures to eradicate poverty and satisfy potable water supply needs with a view to ensuring sustainable development and taking into account the feminization of poverty;

UNDERTAKE to promote the adoption of gender-responsive budgets and laws, and to analyze and publicize legislative progress regarding the status of women, access to water and sustainable development;

UNDERTAKE to pursue a study of, first, the connection between poverty, pay equity and women's economic empowerment, and second, the connection between water, the environment and the status of women with regard to our work, paying specific attention to the directions taken by international organizations such as UN Women.