



**FIFTH ANNUAL MEETING OF
THE NETWORK OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE AMERICAS**

**Foz do Iguaçu, Brazil
May 7, 2005**

**THE IMPACT OF MIGRATION ON WOMEN
IN THE AMERICAS**

DRAFT RECOMMENDATION

WHEREAS the globalization and liberalization of trade have created a movement to increase the South-to-North mobility of a large percentage of workers, attracted by possibilities of employment and the salaries in industrialized countries;

WHEREAS 72% of the world's migrant workers are women, and the Special Rapporteurship on Migrant Workers and Their Families of the Organization of American States asserted in April 2001 that women represented 47.5% of migrants in the Americas;

WHEREAS migration generally constitutes a survival strategy for women who are trying to escape violence or are looking for better living and working conditions;

WHEREAS women migrants as well as young and teenage girl migrants are often sexually abused or exploited at work and subjected to intimidation and violence by their employers as well as public authorities;

WHEREAS a rising number of women are migrating to the United States or Canada to marry men without having been informed of their past, including their criminal background or marital status and their involvement in acts of domestic violence or child abuse; that sometimes women are subjected to abuse and exploitation by their husbands and threatened with deportation if they inform the authorities of these acts of abuse or threats; and that some women have even been murdered by their husbands;

WHEREAS the remittances by migrant workers constitute an important source of revenue for their countries of origin and family members, and the Organization of American States estimates these remittances amount to some 40 billion U.S. dollars annually;

WHEREAS the *International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families*, which went into effect July 1, 2003, is now the most complete international treaty on the rights of migrant workers and their families, but of the 22 countries that have ratified it, including 8 of 35 in the Americas, none rank among the main host countries of immigrants;

WHEREAS at the Santiago Summit in 1998, the heads of state and government of the Americas undertook to raise their citizens' awareness of the abuse and discrimination that migrant workers often suffer, they further agreed to grant migrant workers the same working conditions enjoyed by their own citizens, and they agreed to combat the abuse inflicted upon migrant workers by employers and immigration and border officials;

WHEREAS at the Québec Summit in 2001, the heads of state and government of the Americas expressed the desire to increase their cooperation, particularly regarding illegal human trafficking;

WHEREAS at the Special Summit in Monterrey in 2004, the heads of state and government of the Americas committed to taking the necessary measures to reduce by half the cost of emigrant remittances by 2008;

WE, the representatives of parliamentary assemblies of unitary, federal, federated, and associated states, regional parliaments, and interparliamentary organizations of the Americas, gathered in Foz do Iguaçu, Brazil, for the Fifth Annual Meeting of the Network of Women Parliamentarians;

REQUEST the establishment of an overall agreement on migration policies among the countries of the Americas to ensure that migrants' rights are fully respected, particularly those of women migrants;

URGE all governments, legislative assemblies, and congresses to approve the international conventions aimed at fighting against violence against women and girls and ensure they are enforced, particularly to guarantee respect for the rights of migrant women and girls regardless of their migrant status;

URGE the heads of state and government of the Americas to facilitate access to necessary services for women requesting asylum, including presenting their cases to people aware of the situation for women in their countries of origin;

SUPPORT nongovernmental and other organizations working to assist, educate, and raise awareness among women of all backgrounds on migration issues;

CALL ON all the assemblies and congresses of the traditional host countries of immigrants to ratify the *International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families*, which sets out international standards regarding the treatment of workers and their living conditions and rights, regardless of their status;

URGE the heads of state and government of the Americas to fulfill the commitments they made during the Summits of the Americas regarding the fate of migrant workers and illegal human trafficking;

URGE the heads of state and government of the Americas to demand and ensure the full application of the international conventions and treaties aimed at the physical and moral protection of young girls, teenage girls, and women who migrate as a necessity;

CALL ON the heads of state and government of the Americas to create entities and establish prevention mechanisms for women who, because of a climate of social violence, may commit or have already committed offences, in order to reintegrate them as contributors to the economic and social development of our countries;

For all these reasons and considering the impact of migrations on women, it is important not to minimize the effects of such movements on the communities of origin, where in most cases women (spouses, mothers or daughters of migrants) are the ones who must assume the social, emotional, and affective costs of migration or pay the price through work;

It is therefore necessary that we recognize the transformations brought about by migratory movements, which have a direct impact on the living conditions of women, and to make proposals from a government and community perspective for constructive solutions to this problem;

We support the resolutions from the international discussions on the violent deaths of women that a network of women parliamentarians be created to combat this scourge;

We urge the adoption of a different approach to indigenous women and women of African descent who are forced to migrate because of domestic armed conflicts.