



## **NETWORK OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE AMERICAS**

### **MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE San José, Costa Rica, March 6, 2012**

#### ***Minutes***

#### **1. Opening remarks**

To begin the meeting, President Gastélum recognized Mireya Zamora, Member of the Legislative Assembly of Costa Rica, host institution of the meeting and member of the Network Executive Committee. Then, the President of COPA and President of the National Assembly of Québec, Jacques Chagnon, took the floor to make the opening remarks.

#### **2. Opening of the meeting**

President Gastélum then gave a welcome speech of her own. She underscored, in a positive way, the participation of a few men in the Committee's work.

#### **3. Verification of quorum and approval of the list of observers**

The President checked for quorum. She determined that under Network statutes, the number of people present allowed a Committee meeting to be held, because quorum was reached. The members in attendance were:

- Diva Gastélum, Member and Network President
- Norma Esparza Herrera, Senator and Representative for North America
- Mireya Zamora Alvarado, Member and Representative for Central America
- Alicia Guitiérrez, Member and Representative for an interparliamentary organization
- Monique Richard, Member and Representative for the founding assembly of the Network and host institution of the Secretariat

Afterwards, in accordance with section 13 of the Network statutes, which specify that the Executive Committee must approve the list of observers who attend its meetings, the President made sure that Committee members approved the attendance of the following parliamentarians as observers:

- Marta Angón Paz, Mexico
- Gloria Bidegaín, Argentina
- Ileana Brenes Jiménez, Costa Rica
- Ana María Corradi, Argentina
- Miriam G. Gallardo, Argentina
- Zulma Gómez, Paraguay
- Clarissa Marín De Lopez, Paraguay

- María Lydia Mejía, Nicaragua
- Cristina Ruiz Sandoval, Mexico
- José Luis Schäfer, Brazil
- Jennifer Simons, Suriname
- Leticia Van de Putte, United States
- Ana Georgina Zapata L., Mexico

#### **4. Reading and adoption of the agenda**

President Gastélum read the draft agenda, which was adopted with the following inclusion:

- Addition under Other of the draft motion on International Women's Day.

#### **5. Reading and adoption of the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting and 10th Annual Meeting, held in Québec City on September 5 and 6, 2011**

President Gastélum checked whether there were comments on the draft minutes. The two drafts were adopted without any changes.

#### **6. Presentation of the President's activity report, Member Diva H. Gastélum Bajo, Network President**

President Gastélum summarized the activities that took place since the last Annual Meeting held in Québec City in September 2011. The President mentioned that the Québec City meeting was a success, notably because of the presence of parliamentarians from different regions, the wealth and variety of the debates, and the launch of the book titled *Mujeres y movimientos armados en América*. The President thanked the people who helped prepare this meeting, including her advisor, the advisor of the Executive Secretariat of Mexico and the Network advisor of the Québec Secretariat.

The President mentioned that she had participated, as a Network representative, in the International Seminar on the Relationship Between National Human Rights Institutions and Parliaments held in Serbia in February 2012. She also contributed to the drafting of the Belgrade Principles to improve the relationship between the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights of the United Nations and parliaments as regards the protection of human rights and accountability.

#### **7. Presentation of the Network Secretariat's report, Member Monique Richard, representative of the Secretariat's host Assembly**

Member Monique Richard presented the main aspects on which the Secretariat collaborated with the President and other Executive Committee members in order to organize this meeting, assist the President in developing a collaboration with the OAS's Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM), put together the Network newsletter, support the rapporteurs and implement the Network's work plan, etc.

## **8. Collaboration with the OAS's Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM)**

The President talked about the collaboration projects between the Network and the CIM:

- Participation of the Network in the second Pan-American Forum titled Full Citizenship of Women for Democracy and organization of a panel as part of this event.
- Participation in a day of consultation with the presidents of the parliamentary committees on women of the Americas and with other parliamentarians as part of a project to strengthen the capacities of these committees.

The President obtained the approval of Executive Committee members to go ahead with these two projects.

The President then led a discussion between the participants on the questions sent by the CIM for a preliminary consultation on parliamentary committees (questions available in Appendix 1). Many parliamentarians took the floor to present the situation in their countries. The President invited the people who had spoken to send their comments in writing to the Network advisor for compilation.

## **9. Information on themes under study**

The President invited each of the rapporteurs to take the floor to inform participants about Network study themes.

For the theme Poverty, Pay Equity and Economic Empowerment of Women, Member Ileana Brenes from Costa Rica said that she had started to study the theme for the next Network Annual Meeting and presented a document on the situation in her country. Member Alicia Gutiérrez of Santa Fe, Argentina, also presented data on the situation in her country, specifically the inequalities that persist for women in the workplace, the burden of domestic work, etc. Finally, Member Monique Richard of Québec invited participants to submit ideas and comments on the theme to the Québec Secretariat to be taken into account in the final report.

For the theme Water, Environment and the Status of Women, Member Mireya Zamora from Costa Rica talked about the importance for the Network of studying this theme, since water affects many aspects of peoples' lives. More specifically, she talked about the role women can play in protecting water resources. Finally, she suggested creating a women's water network. Member Zamora invited participants to submit their ideas for this project to her.

## **10. Preparations for the 11th Annual Meeting of the Network**

### **a. Draft agenda**

### **b. Information on the elections for the 2012–2014 mandate**

The President presented the draft agenda for the next Annual Meeting, which was approved. The President then led a discussion to decide on the general theme of the next Annual Meeting, which participants decided would be Women Parliamentarians of the Americas in the Defence of Human Rights.

The President gave the floor to the Network advisor, who explained the main rules for holding the next elections of the Network Executive Committee and said that the nomination papers would be included with the invitations to the Annual Meeting.

## **11.Interventions concerning regional initiatives relating to the status of women**

This item was not examined due to lack of time and because participants were able to express themselves at item 8.

## **12.Presentation of the Network newsletter**

The President shared the latest edition of the Network newsletter and thanked the parliamentarians who submitted contributions. She invited the participants in attendance to continue sending texts and enrich the content of the newsletter with the varied experiences of parliamentarians in different regions of the Americas. She also specified that the next newsletter would be distributed at the next Network Annual Meeting.

## **13.Presentation of the book *Women of the Americas***

The President presented the book *Women of the Americas*, which was edited by the Mexican Congress's Centre for Studies on the Advancement of Women and Gender Equality. The book discusses the background of women all over the Americas who fought to have women's rights be respected and equal to men's.

## **14.Miscellaneous**

### **a. Map of comparative rights on the Continent, as regards women's access to justice for a life free of violence**

The President showed a map of comparative rights produced by the Mexican Congress, which analyzed the content of federal laws of countries in the Americas that promote access to justice and a life free of violence for women. The purpose of the work was to present a progress report, but especially to underscore the challenges facing parliamentarians of the Americas in standardizing laws so that women of all countries are at least minimally protected in this regard.

Among the other topics that were discussed during the meeting:

Québec National Assembly Member Monique Richard presented a draft motion to participants for the commemoration of International Women's Day. The text of the motion was approved without modification and sent to the COPA Executive Committee for adoption the next day. (Text available in Appendix 2)

The President of UNALE, Member José Luis Schäfer, invited the parliamentarians present to attend the UNALE annual conference, at which there would be a meeting of the Secretariat of Women of UNALE, to be held on May 30, 2012 in Natal, Brazil.

Argentinian Member Gloria Bidegaín congratulated President Gastélum for her excellent work since being elected. She suggested changing the statutes to enable the re-election of Member Gastélum as Network President, since they do not currently allow the President to serve two successive terms.

## Appendix 1



### **RED DE MUJERES PARLAMENTARIAS DE LAS AMÉRICAS**

#### **Reunión del Comité Ejecutivo**

*San José, Costa Rica*

*6 de marzo de 2012*

#### ***Consulta preliminar***

#### ***Comisión interamericana de Mujeres de la OEA***

#### **Español**

- a) Cuáles problemas enfrentan las Comisiones de las Mujeres de los parlamentos para asegurar la consideración de los derechos de las mujeres en la labor legislativa (proyectos de ley; trabajo de las demás comisiones, asignación presupuestaria para el tema, etc.);
- b) Cuáles son las prioridades y posibles estrategias que podrían desarrollarse para fortalecer las capacidades de las Comisiones de las Mujeres para lograr que los derechos de las mujeres se consideren centralmente en la labor de los parlamentos y en los procesos más estratégicos;
- c) ¿Cómo y con cuáles herramientas realizan ellas la función de monitoreo y de fiscalización de las políticas para la igualdad entre mujeres y hombres?

#### **English**

What are the problems facing parliamentary committees on women to ensure the consideration of women's rights in legislative work (drafting of bills; work of other committees; budget allowances for this theme)?

What priorities and strategies could be developed to strengthen the capabilities of parliamentary committees on women in order for women's rights to be considered a priority in the work of parliaments and in strategic processes?

- c) How and with which tools do the committees monitor and control gender equality policies?

## Appendix 2



**24TH MEETING OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
OF THE PARLIAMENTARY CONFEDERATION OF THE AMERICAS  
A MEETING OF THE NETWORK OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE AMERICAS  
SAN JOSÉ, COSTA RICA, MARCH 6–8, 2012**

**MOTION TO DRAW ATTENTION TO  
INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY**

1. NOTING that equality between men and women and the recognition of and respect for women’s rights are indispensable conditions if the rule of law and democracy are to prevail in the Americas;
2. 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 on the principles of the Bélem do Pará Convention (Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women);
3. NOTING that the third Millennium Development Goal promotes gender equality and the empowerment of women in three spheres of activity—education, employment and political participation—as an effective means of combating poverty, hunger and disease and of promoting sustainable development;
4. CONSIDERING that much work remains to be done to change attitudes, and that there are still many obstacles preventing women’s full empowerment and true equality;
5. **We, members of COPA’s Executive Committee, gathered for our meeting held in San José, Costa Rica, on March 7, 2012, the day before International Women’s Day, and acting on a proposal from the Executive Committee of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas, do hereby:**
6. EMPHASIZE the importance of celebrating International Women’s Day annually on March 8, as officially proclaimed by the United Nations in 1977, in order to honour women who struggle each day to improve their condition;
7. REITERATE the necessity of remembering the many struggles that have advanced the condition of women, and the need for continued efforts in order to guarantee that equality between women and men is achieved and maintained in every sphere of life;
8. REAFFIRM the importance of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas, which, since its creation in 1999, has given women parliamentarians a voice through the crucial debates it has initiated, and has ensured that COPA’s agenda includes themes that are essential for the improvement of women’s lives;
9. PLEDGE to work individually and collectively to ensure that women’s needs and realities are taken into account, particularly in the laws and national budgets adopted by our parliaments.