



Second Consultation with Women Parliamentarians of the Americas

October 14, 2013

Brasilia, Brazil

A wide range of international legal instruments associated with women's rights are in place today, including the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 1979) and the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women, or Convention of Belém do Pará (1994). Following the establishment of this international legal framework, several constitutional amendments and national laws were adopted to recognize and protect the rights of women and legal equality between men and women in various spheres of society. These advances were instrumental in speeding up full citizenship for women in most countries.

However, constraints in the region still inhibit efforts to bring national legislation into line with the international legal framework. In some countries, for instance, discriminatory laws seriously hinder women's full exercise of their rights. This highlights the fundamental role parliamentarians play as lawmakers, in recognizing and protecting women's rights and gender equality, and as overseers of the executive branch, in ensuring the actual exercise of those rights.

As regards compliance with international agreements, the CEDAW Committee reports and the national and hemispheric reports of the Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará (MESECVI) are proving to be powerful instruments of change. These reports regularly reveal gaps in national legal frameworks and their implementation, and are thus driving factors in the development of a legislative agenda for women's rights and gender equality. In short, they bring to light the legislative deficiencies that still exist in certain countries with respect to the recognition and protection of women's rights.

In light of this reality and as part of its ongoing work to strengthen the response of parliamentarians in the region to the situation of women, the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM) within the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas (Network/COPA), in collaboration with UN Women, held a first Consultation with Women Parliamentarians of the Americas on July 18, 2012 in Santo Domingo. This first Consultation provided an assessment of the current situation in parliaments in the region as to the legislative agenda for women's rights and gender equality. It highlighted the main achievements and obstacles related to that theme and identified the parliamentarians who defend it within those parliaments.

To follow up on the first Consultation and move forward in identifying priorities for a legislative agenda promoting women's rights, CIM and the Network/COPA, in collaboration with UN Women, are organizing a second Consultation with Women Parliamentarians of the Americas, to be held on October 14, 2013 in Brasilia, Brazil.

The goals of the second Consultation are

- to debate and reach a consensus on the priorities of a regional legislative agenda promoting women's rights and gender equality;
- to strengthen the capacity of women parliamentarians in the region to promote that agenda within their national parliaments;
- to foster dialogue, the sharing of knowledge and enhanced capacity among parliamentarians of the Americas in connection with the legislative agenda for women's rights and gender equality.

Following this initiative, a diagnosis will be made based on the assessment of the situation that came out of the first Consultation and on the main discussions and findings of the second Consultation.

PRELIMINARY PROGRAM

8:30 – 9:00 a.m. Opening

- Diva Gastéllum, President of COPA'S Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas of COPA
- Nadine Gasman, Responsable for UN Women in Brazil
- Carmen Moreno, CIM/OAS Executive Secretary
- (to be confirmed)

9:00 – 10:30 a.m. Panel I: Priorities for the legislative agenda for women's rights and gender equality in the Americas

Moderator: Diva Gastéllum, President of COPA'S Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas

- *Women's situation in Latin America and the Caribbean. Presentation of the Report of Observatory for gender equality in Latin America and the Caribbean for 2012*
(to be confirmed)
- Legislative recommendations of the CEDAW committee: Priority Themes
(to be confirmed)
- *MESECVI legislative recommendations regarding violence against women: priority themes*
Marta Martínez, CIM specialist

Plenary debate

10:30 – 12:30 p.m. Panel II: Initiatives to guarantee human rights for women and gender equality in the parliaments of the Americas

Moderator: Carmen Moreno, CIM/OAS Executive Secretary

- *Plan of action of the IPU for parliaments sensitive to gender (to be confirmed)*
- *Initiatives of the Brazilian civil society for a legislative agenda during the 2014 electoral process: Women's Parliament and the campaign "Political participation of women" (to be confirmed)*
- *Initiatives for the advancement of the legislative agenda regarding human rights of women and gender equality
Nadine Gasman, Responsible for UN Women in Brazil*
- *Gender equality and violence against women in the agenda of the Parliamentary Assembly of the European Council (to be confirmed)*
- *Surveillance of the agenda of the human rights of women at the National Congress of Brazil (to be confirmed)*

Plenary debate

12:30 – 2 p.m.

Lunch on your own

2 – 4 p.m.

Discussion groups: Priorities of a legislative agenda promoting women's rights and gender equality in the Americas

Objective: To debate and reach a consensus on five legislative priorities for each theme, taking into account the need to bring national laws into line with international commitments and thus ensure they are implemented.

1. Discussion group on legislative priorities for

- *eradicating violence against women and girls*
- *combatting the trafficking of women and girls*

Rapporteur: Marta Martínez, CIM specialist

2. Discussion group on legislative priorities for

- *guaranteeing women's sexual and reproductive rights*

Rapporteur: (to be confirmed)

3. Discussion group on legislative priorities for

- *guaranteeing women's economic rights and their rights in the workplace and with regard to labour relations*
- *moving forward in the creation of public social security systems, including care services for dependants*

Rapporteur: (to be confirmed)

4 – 5 p.m.

Report on discussion group outcomes and plenary debate

5 p.m.

End of consultation