



PRESS RELEASE

Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas **International Women's Day**

March 8, 2010 - For over thirty years, International Women's Day has been celebrated to pay tribute to the contribution of women to world peace and development. This special day also highlights the essential contribution of both women and men to building a free, democratic and prosperous world. As President of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas, I join hundreds of other voices on this day to stress the importance of achieving equality.

I would also like to take this opportunity to mark the fifteenth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The progress of the last 15 years gives us reason to be optimistic about the future. However, crucial issues remain to be resolved and, more than ever, the promotion of the cause of women constitutes a significant challenge for the Americas and the world as a whole. Following the most recent review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the priority issues with respect to achieving gender equality include sexist stereotypes, violence against women, the participation of women in decision-making, the unequal distribution of unpaid labour and the role of men in the achievement of equality.

For this reason, the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas reiterates its commitment to promoting women's rights, the eradication of violence against women and the increasing participation of women in politics. We enthusiastically support the UNIFEM (Unite to End Violence Against Women) and IPU (Parliaments Take Action on Violence Against Women) campaigns to end violence against women, as well as various national and international initiatives to promote the participation of women in the parliaments of the world. We undertake to maintain our efforts to improve living conditions for the women of the Americas.

Our best wishes on this International Women's Day!

President of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas,

Flor María Ríos

Member of the National Assembly of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela