



**Network of Women Parliamentarians  
of the Americas**

**REPORT OF ACTIVITIES OF THE PRESIDENT  
2010-2013**

**Mrs. Diva Hadamira Gastélum Bajo**  
Senator of the Congress of the Mexican Union





## TABLE OF CONTENT

|                                             |    |
|---------------------------------------------|----|
| PRESIDENCY – SUMMARY .....                  | 3  |
| A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT .....             | 3  |
| ACTIVITIES OF THE PRESIDENT .....           | 5  |
| - 2011 - .....                              | 5  |
| - 2012 - .....                              | 8  |
| - 2013 - .....                              | 14 |
| EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTION .....                | 17 |
| RESOLUTIONS, DECLARATIONS AND MOTIONS ..... | 18 |





# PRESIDENCY – SUMMARY

## - 2010-2013 MANDATE-

### A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

**DIVA HADAMIRA GASTÉLUM**  
**SENATOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION**  
**OF THE UNITED STATES OF MEXICO**

---



Dear colleagues,

I was elected president of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas in 2010 at Mar del Plata, and so, with this Annual Meeting, the time has come for me to step down. I am pleased therefore to submit my end-of-term report, which looks back on the Network's activities during my years in office from 2010 to 2013.

We focused the Network's efforts on two main objectives, namely, disseminating knowledge on key study themes for the advancement of women and improving the Network's strategic positioning. To achieve these objectives, the Network developed a work plan for 2010–2012. At the Executive Committee meeting held in November 2012 in Mexico City, the members unanimously adopted a new work plan extending into 2013 and centred on the same two main objectives.

The two study themes the Network members chose to examine were “Water, the Environment and the Status of Women” and “Poverty, Pay Equity and Women's Economic Empowerment”. At Network meetings, the delegates participated in various deliberations on these themes and heard from a number of experts. They also learned much from the reports presented by the theme rapporteurs, who did an exceptional job. The different issues of the Newsletter covered these topics in broad outline, featured selected bibliographies and provided an assessment of the current situation. Now that we have concluded our examination of these themes, parliamentarians are more aware of the actions needed to help improve the lives of women in those respects. The Network also addressed a number of other topics of strategic interest for women parliamentarians, including the elimination of all forms of violence against women and women's participation in politics.

In addition, we were successful in increasing the Network's influence within COPA, across the Americas and on the international stage. Women parliamentarians worked toward greater consideration of the Network's concerns within the COPA committees. And we worked to forge ties with other international organizations and in particular with the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM) within the Organization of American States (OAS) by inviting the President and the Executive Secretary of CIM to our meetings and by making them participate to our work.



To gear our actions toward the same goals and concerns, together with CIM, in July 2012 in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, we conducted a consultation among women parliamentarians to strengthen their capacity as well as their participation. The second round of this consultation will take place at this Annual Meeting. In July 2012, the Network also took part in CIM's Second Hemispheric Forum on Women's Full Citizenship for Democracy by participating to a panel on legislative reforms for gender equality in the Americas. Today, the Network will be signing a collaboration agreement with CIM, a major step toward a lasting relationship with that organization.

As President, I made sure to represent the Network at various international events. I attended the Women's World Summit in Istanbul, Turkey, in May 2011 and met in June with the UN Women Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean in New York. In February 2012, I participated in an international experts' seminar on human rights held in Belgrade, Serbia, by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The Network thus boasts a very positive track record for 2010–2013. We deepened our understanding of specific themes and established strategic ties with other international organizations. I am particularly proud of the fact that the Network is increasingly recognized as a major player voicing the positions and concerns of women parliamentarians of the Americas.

The Network's tremendous work in the last years would have been impossible without the valuable efforts of all women. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of you for your enthusiasm and support. I would especially like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to the Executive Committee members for their incredible work and ongoing involvement. It is thanks to your active participation that our organization can make inroads and build a better future for the women of the Americas. I hope we will press on in the same direction in the years to come.

I look forward to working with you all again in the future,

**Diva Hadamira Gastélum**  
Senator of the Republic of the Union of the United States of Mexico



## ACTIVITIES OF THE PRESIDENT

- 2011 -

### MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE NETWORK, TOLUCA DE LERDO, STATE OF MEXICO, MEXICO, MARCH 8, 2011

---

On March 8, 2013, the members of the Executive Committee of the Network met in Toluca de Lerdo in the State of Mexico, Mexico. They adopted the *2010—2012 Work Plan of the Network* and made preparations for the Network's 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, held in Québec City in September. Network President Diva Hadamira Gastélum presented her report on the Network's main activities since the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, held on November 16, 2010, in Mar del Plata, Argentina. Monique Richard of the National Assembly of Québec presented a report on the activities of the Québec Secretariat. The Executive Committee also adopted the *Declaration of Toluca* on violence against women that contains propositions to fight against it.

Participants had the opportunity to attend a presentation by Angelica De la Peña on the economic

empowerment of women. This presentation was organized by the Network President in connection with the examination of the 2010—2012 themes adopted at the Network's last Annual Meeting.

The *2010-2012 Work Plan of the Network* proposes that the Network focus on three priorities during this period:

- The themes adopted at the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Network and follow-up on previous themes as well as themes proposed by the President of COPA;
- Consolidation of the Network; and
- Topical themes proposed by the Network's President.

### CONTINENTAL ROUND TABLE: GENDER ALERT AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, TOLUCA DE LERDO, STATE OF MEXICO, MEXICO, MARCH 8, 2011

---

In collaboration with the members of the Executive Committee of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas, Network President Diva Gastélum Bajo organized and coordinated the first continental round table on the theme "Gender Alert and Violence against Women". The round table—held on March 8,

International Women's Day, which lent it even greater significance—was a resounding success and led to agreements of major importance for the whole continent.

The most salient conclusion to come out of the discussions was that the problem of violence against

women—resulting in both homicides and femicides—is not exclusive to any one country or any given sector of society. It affects all countries alike and exhibits similar cultural, economic and institutional traits. Women are subjected to violence in an estimated seven households out of 10 in the Americas, a figure validated by the seven countries represented on the panel.



Continental Round Table

The round table took place at the seat of the Congress of the Union of the United States of Mexico, which is in its 57<sup>th</sup> Legislature. Parliamentarians from Uruguay, Paraguay, Colombia, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Argentina, Québec (Canada), the

Federal Congress of Mexico, the states of Chiapas, Mexico, Jalisco, Nuevo León, Zacatecas, Yucatán, Sinaloa, Chihuahua and the Federal District (Mexico City) as well as grassroots associations and civil society groups numbered among the participants.

### **10TH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE NETWORK, QUEBEC, CANADA, SEPTEMBER 6, 2011**

---



10<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting

The meeting's main theme was *Women's Commitment to a Better Future: Water, Poverty and Sustainable Development*. This theme included the Network's two themes under study for 2010-2012. To introduce the debate on the issue, two experts took the floor: Almas Jiwani, President of the National Committee of UN Women Canada, and Angélica De la Peña,

Advisor on Women's and Children's Rights, Mexico.

After a debate among speakers and participants, the meeting's special guest, Rocío García Gaytán, President of the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM) of the Organization of American States presented her commission's work and proposed



initiating collaboration between the Network and the CIM.

Two draft resolutions were presented and adopted: the Draft Resolution on the Political Participation of Women and the Draft Resolution on Women's Commitment to a Better Future: Water, Poverty and Sustainable Development. Participants proposed and adopted amendments, and subsequently adopted the final versions of the two texts. Lastly, the President presented the research work we were preparing in the past year, entitled *Women and Armed Movements in the Americas*.



10<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting

**PARTICIPATION OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE NETWORK AT THE MEETING  
OF THE COPA COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND SOCIAL PROTECTION  
AND PRESENTATION OF THE BOOK *WOMEN IN THE AMERICAS*,  
HAVANA, CUBA ON OCTOBER 27 AND 28, 2011**

The President of the Network participated in the Meeting of the Committee on Health and Social Protection, held in Havana, Cuba, on October 27 and 28, 2011. As Representative of the Network, the President participated in the debates on the themes being studied by the Commission, which are directly aligned with issues related to the status of women, such as maternal health and assistance for people with disabilities.

At the end of the first day of work, the President of the Network took the floor to present the research work carried out under her direction, entitled *Women in the Americas*. She subsequently led a brief discussion between the participants on the challenges for the status of women in the Americas.



Cuba, October 2011

- 2012 -

**PARTICIPATION OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE NETWORK AT THE EXPERT'S  
INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NATIONAL  
HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTIONS AND PARLIAMENTS  
BELGRADE, SERBIA, FEBRUARY 21 TO 23, 2012**

---

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Serbian Parliament invited the President of the Network to participate in the Expert's International Seminar on the Relationship between National Human Rights Institutions and Parliaments.



Belgrade, Serbia

The seminar's objective was to produce a set of principles and recommendations for the United Nations for improving the relationship between national human rights institutions and parliaments in protecting human rights and promoting accountability. Significantly, participation in this

Seminar was limited to some 50 experts from across the world, including the President of the Network and an Ecuadorian parliamentarian, both representing the American continent.



Expert's International Seminar on the Relationship between  
National Human Rights Institutions and Parliaments



## MEETING OF THE NETWORK'S EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, SAN JOSÉ, COSTA RICA, MARCH 16, 2012

---

The Network's Executive Committee met in San José, Costa Rica, on March 16, 2012.

The members approved a list of the 13 observers who would be allowed to sit in on the meeting.

The collaborative projects between the Network and the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM) of the Organization of American States (OAS) were presented and adopted, involving:

- the Network's participation in CIM's Second Hemispheric Forum "Women's Full Citizenship for Democracy" and the organization of a panel discussion as part of that event;
- and the holding of a special consultation with the chairs of the parliamentary committees on gender equality and other parliamentarians as part of a broader collaborative project designed to strengthen the capacity of these committees.

As a preliminary to the CIM consultation, the then President led a discussion on parliamentary committees on gender equality. A



Costa Rica, March 2012

number of parliamentarians provided an overview of the situation in their countries.

The Network's rapporteurs for the two work themes adopted for 2011-2012, "Poverty, pay equity and the economic empowerment of women" and "Water, the environment and the status of women", presented their initial findings and the state of affairs in their respective countries.

MNA and Network Secretariat representative Monique Richard presented a draft motion to commemorate International Women's Day. The motion was adopted as presented and sent to the Executive Committee of COPA for approval the following day.

## NETWORK PRESIDENT MEETS WITH COPA ELECTORAL OBSERVERS IN MEXICO CITY, MEXICO, JUNE 28, 2012

---

In preparation for the polling day scheduled to be held on July 1, 2012, the Network President attended a working meeting with the members of the COPA electoral observation mission at the Senate of the Republic of Mexico on June 29, 2012.

Over 25 elected representatives from Argentina, Québec, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Uruguay and Venezuela met with the COPA observers delegated to cover polling day operations and verify their compliance with the Electoral Code (Código Federal de Instituciones y Procedimientos Electorales - COFIPE).

A total of 2,127 officials were elected. The President stressed that this election marks a step toward attaining gender quota as, for the first time ever, over 120 women were running for federal deputy seats and 26 women for Senate seats, which could only

result in better representation of women in the Congress of the Union. The observers' final report will be presented at the next General Assembly of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas (COPA).

**PARTICIPATION OF NETWORK PRESIDENT AND REPRESENTATIVES  
IN THE HEMISPHERIC FORUM HOSTED BY CIM AND THE CONSULTATION  
WITH PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE AMERICAS,  
SANTO DOMINGO, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC,  
JULY 18 TO 21, 2012**

---

The Second Hemispheric Forum “Women’s Full Citizenship for Democracy” was a high-level event that brought together representatives from the executive, legislative and judicial branches of all levels of government of the Americas, from international organizations concerned with gender issues, and from academia and civil society, for the purpose of identifying and discussing the political and state reforms necessary in order to expedite the exercise of women’s full citizenship in the Americas by

promoting the creation of pluralistic dialogues, synergies and concerted actions.

As part of the Forum, CIM invited the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas to moderate the “Status and current perspectives on legislative-level reforms for real equality” panel.

In parallel with the Forum, the Network organized the “Consultation with Parliamentarians of the Americas” in cooperation with CIM



Second Hemispheric Forum



and the Commission on Gender Equality Issues of the Chamber of Deputies of the Dominican Republic. The main objective of this Consultation was to develop a hemispheric initiative to strengthen the capacity for incidence and for fiscalization of legislative commissions and parliamentary groups on women and gender equality. The Consultation was held on July 18, in the presence of the presidents of the Commissions on Gender Equality in the legislative assemblies of the 34 member States of the OAS and parliamentarians concerned with the promotion of women's rights. Within the framework

of that event, the President moderated a debate on laws and programs for gender equality.

The Forum helped to consolidate the relationship between the Network and CIM and to identify the next possible stages of cooperation between our organizations. Moreover, this event allowed the President to heighten the awareness of political representatives from a number of American states and international organizations about the activities of the Women Parliamentarians of the Americas and to plan future collaborative efforts.



Second Hemispheric Forum

### **SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S CONGRESS AND COUNCIL CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA, AUGUST 23, 2012**

As President of the National Organization of PRI Women of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI)'s National Executive Committee, Senator Gastélum coordinated the political training of women of all backgrounds during this event, and promoted the setting up of domestic

gender quotas, which already exist in the federal legislation.

Talks held during the Congress—which focused on “Working Women”—led to a comparison of tasks assigned to women within their political parties. The new statutes governing the organization were also debated and approved.

## **COMMEMORATION OF THE PROGRESS OF POLITICAL RIGHTS OF WOMEN IN MEXICO, OCTOBER 17, 2012**

---

On October 17, 2012, day of the commemoration of the progress of women's political rights in Mexico, the President of the Network has shared with the members of the Executive Committee and on the Internet Website, a comparative table of the year women gained the right to vote in

the countries of the Americas and of gender quotas.

The President also invited the members of the Executive Committee to convey this table to their respective parliament.

## **REGIONAL MEETING OF PARLIAMENTARIANS "ADVANCING THE HUMAN RIGHTS PROGRAM: THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENTARIANS IN ACHIEVING EQUALITY"**

**PANAMA CITY, PANAMA, NOVEMBER 26, 2012**

---

Discussions were held during this meeting with respect to increasing the number of women in the legislature. It has been suggested that, in addition to improving a country's democratic system, it would safeguard the

exercise of women's citizen rights. Moreover, it has a positive impact on a country's development program because items that used to be overlooked in political agendas would now be included.

## **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE NETWORK OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE AMERICAS MEXICO CITY, MEXICO, NOVEMBER 30, 2012**

---

The last Executive Committee meeting was held on November 30, 2012, at the Senate of the Republic in Mexico City.

The President of the Network presented several documents and an extended work plan outlining that proposed activities through to the next Annual Meeting. It was unanimously approved by the members. The President also touched on the participation of Network members in two events organized by the OAS Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM) in July 2012 in



Executive Committee Meeting

Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic: a Consultation among women parliamentarians of the Americas and the Second Hemispheric Forum. CIM Executive Secretary Carmen Moren gave a presentation on CIM and



proposed ways to further enhance collaboration between the Network and CIM, including holding a second consultation.

To mark AIDS World Day, participants attended a lecture presented by Monica Rodriguez, coordinator of the United Nations' consolidated

HIV/AIDS team for Mexico. A resolution to extend the mandates of the Network's Executive Committee members was presented and adopted.

Finally, a resolution about the extension of the members of the Executive Committee's mandate was presented and adopted.

- 2013 -

**MANDATE EXTENSION**

*According to the unanimous decision made by the Executive Committee of the Network in Mexico, on November 30, 2012, the President's mandate was extended*

**TWELFTH MEETING OF THE NETWORK OF CONTACT PARLIAMENTARIANS  
OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE TO STOP SEXUAL VIOLENCE AGAINST  
CHILDREN, "NATIONAL STRATEGIES TO FIGHT SEXUAL VIOLENCE AGAINST  
CHILDREN"**

**BERLIN, GERMANY, MARCH 14-15, 2013**

Several topics were discussed during this meeting in order to promote legislative and political action to fight sexual violence against children; to encourage awareness of German decision makers on the importance of ratifying the Lanzarote Convention and other measures to be used domestically; to give visibility to good practices in Germany and in other European countries; to promote the standards and activities of the Council of Europe; and to provide a substantial

contribution to global, European, and domestic debates.



Berlin, Germany

**WORLD PARLIAMENTARY FORUM OF G8/G20  
UNITED KINGDOM, MAY 9-10, 2013**



United Kingdom, 2013

Senator Gastélum attended the World Parliamentary Forum, during which discussions focused on the future of family planning. She expressed her views on the reproductive rights of women, their reproductive health and their right to choose how many children they want, when they want them and the number of years in-between, if applicable.



## **SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S REGIONAL MEETING MEXICO CITY, JUNE 1, 2013**

---



**Socialist International Women's Regional Meeting**

In February 2013, Mrs. Gastélum was elected Vice-President of the Socialist International Women's Central American branch for the period of 2013-2015. During this meeting, she received the support of the

organization's president, Mrs. Ouafa Hajji, to set up a regional meeting on June 1, 2013 in Mexico City. The regional meeting focused on "Pay equity, working conditions and informal employment".

## **CONTACT OF THE SENATE OF THE MEXICAN REPUBLIC IN CHARGE OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN BEFORE THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE SEPTEMBER 12, 2013**

---

On June 28, 2006, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) approved Resolution 1512 (2006), which outlines specific actions to be taken in order to establish a pan-European campaign to fight domestic violence against women. The campaign operates on three levels: intergovernmental, parliamentary and local/regional.

The Network of women free from violence was established within the

context of this campaign. On October 31, 2012, Senator Gastélum submitted a motion to the Senate, respectfully urging the federal executive to sign the Council of Europe's Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. On September 12, 2013, the senator was named the official contact of the Network of women free from violence at the Senate of the Republic of Mexico.

**SPECIAL CONFERENCE ON WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND LEADERSHIP,  
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF ASIAN POLITICAL PARTIES (ICAPP)  
SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA, SEPTEMBER 12-14, 2013**

---



Seoul, South Korea, 2013

The International Conference of Asian Political Parties (ICAPP) hosted a special conference on women's empowerment and leadership from September 12 to 14, 2013. Senator Gastélum attended this event on behalf of the Permanent Conference of Political Parties of Latin America and the Caribbean (COPPPAL).

It was the first time Mexico took part in the event as an observer. As Vice-President of the Socialist International Women for Central America, Senator Gastélum pointed out that Mexico has signed almost every international agreement concerning women's human rights, and that Mexico's legislation contains laws that favour a move toward gender equality. She particularly referred to the General Gender Equality Law, which includes a section on equal political gender participation and representation.

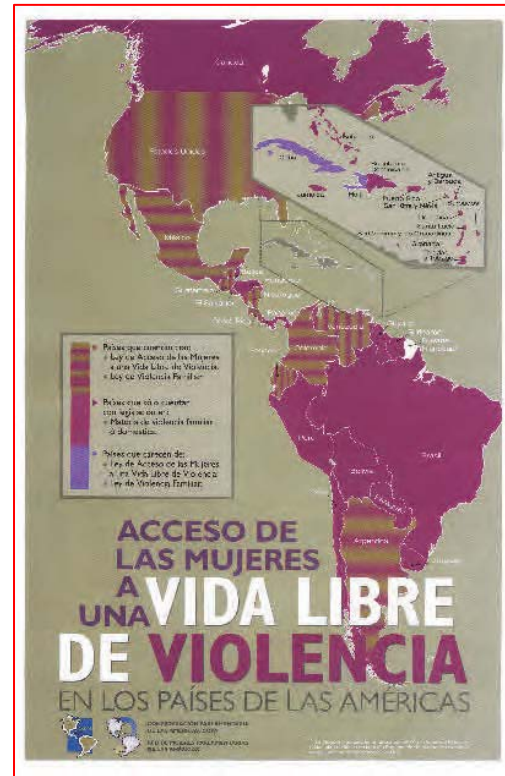


International Conference of Asian  
Political Parties, 2013

## EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTION

During the meeting of the Network's Executive Committee, held in March 2012 in San José, Costa Rica, the President presented two documents published by the Mexican Congress for the Network:

- Women of the Americas, a book on women of the Americas who have fought for women's rights and equality;



| PAÍS                         | AÑO EN QUE OTORGÓ EL VOTO ELECTORAL | EXISTE SISTEMA DE GÉNERO     | PORCENTAJE DE ELECCIÓN                    | PRINCIPIO DE PARIDAD                  |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Argentina y Australia        | 1991                                | -                            | -                                         | -                                     |
| Armenia                      | 1947                                | Constitucional Ley Electoral | 30%                                       | -                                     |
| Bahamas                      | 1962                                | -                            | -                                         | -                                     |
| Banlades                     | 1992                                | -                            | -                                         | -                                     |
| Belice                       | 1961                                | -                            | -                                         | -                                     |
| Belice                       | 1962                                | Ley Electoral                | 30% Local 33% Cámara Bajo 25% Cámara Alta | -                                     |
| Brasil                       | 1992                                | Ley Electoral                | 30%                                       | -                                     |
| Canadá                       | 1918                                | Voluntaria a Nivel Partido   | NPD 35% LPC 23%                           | -                                     |
| Chile                        | 1949                                | Voluntaria a Nivel Partido   | PPD 60-40<br>PS 60-40 PDC 30%             | -                                     |
| Colombia                     | 1957                                | Ley Electoral                | 30%                                       | -                                     |
| Costa Rica                   | 1449                                | Ley Electoral                | 48%                                       | Si                                    |
| Cuba                         | 1934                                | -                            | -                                         | -                                     |
| República Dominicana         | 1961                                | -                            | -                                         | -                                     |
| Ecuador                      | 1929                                | Ley Electoral                | 30% Local                                 | Si                                    |
| El Salvador                  | 1939*                               | Voluntaria a Nivel Partido   | FALEN 25%                                 | -                                     |
| Granada                      | 1961                                | -                            | -                                         | -                                     |
| Guatemala                    | 1945*                               | Voluntaria a Nivel Partido   | UNITE 40% URGUG 30%                       | -                                     |
| Guyana                       | 1962                                | -                            | -                                         | -                                     |
| Haití                        | 1953                                | Constitucional               | -                                         | -                                     |
| Honduras                     | 1993                                | Ley Electoral                | 30%                                       | -                                     |
| Jamaica                      | 1944                                | Ley Electoral                | 53-40%                                    | Si                                    |
| Japón                        | 1955                                | Voluntaria a Nivel Partido   | MSN 60% PLT 48% AMS 43%                   | -                                     |
| Nicaragua                    | 1960                                | -                            | -                                         | -                                     |
| Paraguay                     | 1945                                | Ley Electoral                | 30%                                       | -                                     |
| Paraguay                     | 1961                                | Ley Electoral                | No menos del 20%                          | -                                     |
| Perú                         | 1955                                | Ley Electoral                | 30%                                       | 30%                                   |
| República Dominicana         | 1942                                | Voluntaria a Nivel Partido   | 25% Federal escogido Senado 50% Local     | 25% Federal escogido Senado 50% Local |
| San Kitts y Nevis            | 1962                                | -                            | -                                         | -                                     |
| Santa Lucía                  | 1961                                | -                            | -                                         | -                                     |
| San Vicente y las Granadinas | 1961                                | -                            | -                                         | -                                     |
| Suriname                     | 1948                                | -                            | -                                         | -                                     |
| Tailandia y Togo             | 1945                                | -                            | -                                         | -                                     |
| Estados Unidos               | 1920                                | -                            | -                                         | -                                     |
| Uruguay                      | 1982                                | Ley Electoral**              | 33%                                       | Si                                    |
| Venezuela                    | 1947                                | -                            | -                                         | -                                     |

Fuente: IDEA Internacional, Universidad de Edimburgo y la Unión Interparlamentaria. \*Respecto del Criterio base de la lista global para mujeres. \*\*Parcial.

<http://www.idea-international.org/>

- a comparative analysis chart of the federal statutes of countries of the Americas that promote women's access to justice and the right to a violence-free life.



# **RESOLUTIONS, DECLARATIONS AND MOTIONS**

## **NINTH ANNUAL MEETING**

**MAR DEL PLATA, ARGENTINA, NOVEMBER 16, 2010**

### **RESOLUTION**

#### **WOMEN'S POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT**

---

RECALLING that equality between women and men and the recognition of and respect for women's rights are essential conditions for the consolidation of democracy in the Americas;

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 was ratified by all the States of the Americas;

NOTING that promoting gender equality and empowering women is the third Millennium Development Goal;

GIVEN that the three indicators selected by United Nations member States to monitor progress towards the third Millennium Goal testify to a willingness to support women in their empowerment process on three priority levels, namely education, employment and political participation;

KNOWING that equal rights between women and men necessarily implies true and effective equality in everyday life and that there remain many obstacles to overcome before women are fully empowered;

BEING AWARE of the large gender wage gap for work of equal value, of the discriminatory business policies that limit women's job access, job tenure and pay, of the unequal distribution of paid and unpaid work between women and men, and of the double or even triple daily workload of many women around the world to the detriment of their quality of life;

NOTING the disproportionate economic and social vulnerability of women and in particular the precarious nature of their situation in times of crisis, when budgets for gender equality policies are generally slashed;

RECALLING the widely acknowledged positive impact of education and employment for women in helping to reduce poverty;

GIVEN the very low representation of women on the boards of directors of big companies despite women's increased participation in the economic life of the Americas in past decades;



CONCERNED about the many cultural, political and ordinary, day-to-day obstacles still limiting women's access to the job market in general and to positions of responsibility in particular;

GIVEN the detrimental correlation between the level of women's participation in economic and social life and the extent of their participation in political life;

REAFFIRMING the importance of the role women parliamentarians must play in the search for mechanisms to achieve equality between women and men;

WELCOMING the progress made by women as regards political participation in the Americas, where the average proportion of women in State parliaments is 22%, while the world average is 19%;

REGRETTING, however, that women's participation in politics on the American continent is still low, both at the executive and at the legislative level, since women must be equal participants in all decisions for political life to be fair and democratic;

GIVEN that attitudes must still change substantially before equal participation of men and women in political roles can be achieved;

We, the members of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas, gathered in Mar del Plata, Argentina, on November 16, 2010,

Pledge to make the efforts needed for women's political and economic empowerment to be considered a crosscutting, structural element of the legislative frameworks of our respective States;

Pledge to integrate the principles of equal opportunity and equal conditions for men and women into legislation that takes into account gender-specific issues and ensures among other things the harmonization of work and family responsibilities;

Recommend that the large number of women in informal work, the uncertain access to suitable employment and the disproportionate economic and social vulnerability of women in times of crisis be better reflected in national statistics and in the design and implementation of socio-economic programs and policies;

Consider that improving the economic and social conditions of women through education, suitable employment and equal pay is essential to their increased presence in politics;

Will continue to work, individually and collectively, to create a critical mass of women in positions of responsibility in the political and economic spheres;

Encourage the governments of our respective States to implement public programs aimed at helping women develop, among other things, their leadership skills, management skills and communication strategies;



Will continue to examine the issue of women's economic, social and political empowerment in the coming years, in particular by promoting the sharing of best practices and by proposing avenues of action to encourage such empowerment.



**MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE NETWORK OF WOMEN  
PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE AMERICAS  
DECLARATION OF TOLUCA**

---

We, the members of the Executive Committee of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas, a body of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas, which brings together the congresses and parliamentary assemblies of the unitary, federal, federated and associated States, the regional parliaments and the interparliamentary organizations of the Americas, at the meeting held in Toluca, Mexico, on March 8, 2011, having discussed the theme of violence against women, adopt, in accordance with the conclusions reached at this meeting, the following declaration:

CONCERNED by the alarming numbers and indicators that show that the level of violence against women and girls remains unchanged all over the world, regardless of country, culture, social status, religion or other factors;

CONSCIOUS of the different forms of violence against women, that is, physical, psychological, sexual and patrimonial;

AWARE that violence against women is a form of discrimination that reflects the unequal power relationships between men and women;

CONSIDERING that many women are victims not only of gender-based violence, but also of discriminatory practices based on their race, religion, political opinions, country of origin, migrant status, sexual orientation, age, health, physical condition, personal assets or patrimonial situation;

NOTING the persistent forms of violence condoned by customs, traditions or religious practice;

ACKNOWLEDGING that in many places on our continent, violence and discrimination against women is often ignored, hidden or underestimated, and therefore goes unpunished;

REAFFIRMING that gender-based violence and discrimination constitutes not only a violation of women's fundamental rights, but also an obstacle to achieving the democracy, peace and development objectives of the Americas;

AWARE that violence against women is linked directly to the way people think of women and the relationship between men and women, and that this reality has a profound cultural basis;

RECOGNIZING that initiatives by women and civil society organizations in a number of countries of the Americas have led to the passing of laws to fight, eradicate and prevent violence against women;



We declare:

That it is imperative that action plans setting out clear objectives, deadlines and means be developed and implemented, in order to diminish in the short term—and eliminate in the medium term—violence and discrimination against women;

That we recognize that it is our responsibility to propose and carry out legislative reforms in order to protect women against all forms of violence, and assume that responsibility;

That our parliamentary action must be reinforced by the passing of laws that specifically target certain forms of violence, for instance, domestic violence or sexual violence;

That it is urgent that there be a review of the existing legislation in our respective States, with a view to abolishing the laws that have discriminatory impacts and worsen women's vulnerability to violence;

That we must ensure that the legislative frameworks in the States of the Americas protect all women equally, without distinction of race, religion, marital status, age, physical condition, health, political opinion, sexual orientation, migrant status, fortune, etc., in accordance with obligations relating to human rights established under international law;

That the attitude of the States that tolerate forms of violence against women condoned by customs, traditions, culture or religion is deplorable and that we exhort those States to embrace international standards as regards human rights;

That the concealing of violence against women must be fought through awareness initiatives directed toward the public, the media, schools, government authorities, health institutions, etc.;

That all the measures adopted to fight violence and discrimination against women must be part of a comprehensive approach that favours prevention puts an end to impunity and guarantees support for victims;

That it is crucial to fight violence against women through education, by promoting equal, non-sexist and non-heterosexist relations between men and women, beginning in childhood.

That the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas must continue to work for the protection of the human dignity and personal integrity of all women in the Americas.

**Toluca, Mexico, March 8, 2011**



**TENTH 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.



**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.



**24<sup>TH</sup> 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.



**Produced by the  
SECRETARIAT OF QUÉBEC OF THE COPA**

1020, rue des Parlementaires  
Édifice Jean-Antoine-Panet, 6<sup>e</sup> étage  
Québec (Québec) G1A 1A3  
CANADA

Telephone: 1 418 644-2888

Fax: 1 418 643-1865

**feminamericas@assnat.qc.ca  
feminamericas.net**

