



### **III ANNUAL MEETING OF THE NETWORK OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE AMERICAS**

**Ixtapan de la Sal, Mexico, November 24, 2002**

#### ***RECOMMENDATION ON THE RIGHTS OF NIGERIAN WOMEN***

To condemn the death sentences by stoning issued against Nigerian women and to demand that the Government and the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria revise the legal structures and the public policies of that country that undermine human rights and deprive Nigerian women of their civil and political rights, and that they abide by the international agreements on human rights and for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women;

*WHEREAS* all men and women are born free and equal in dignity and rights and, therefore, all governments shall ensure for their constituent members the free enjoyment of human rights and fundamental rights, on the basis of equality of man and woman, and regardless of their civil status or condition;

*WHEREAS* even though Nigeria is one of the signatory countries of the "Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women", in the State of Katsina, Nigeria, the *Sharia Law*, a traditional statute accepted by the Islamic sector called "Wahabi", that permits the imposing of cruel, oppressive and discriminatory sentences against women, is still being applied;

*WHEREAS* in accordance with the *Sharia Law*, on Friday, the 22<sup>nd</sup> of March 2002, a tribunal of the State of Katsina, Nigeria, issued a death sentence by stoning against citizen Amina Lawal, after her having confessed that she had given birth to a baby girl while she was divorced. She was then imposed that sentence, meaning that she would be buried to the neck, for the people to stone her head until she is dies;

*WHEREAS* citizens Ahmadu Ibrahim and Fatima Usman have also been victims of this horrendous and repulsive sentence, that is now pending appeal; and Sofiya Hussein, also sentenced to death by stoning, was amazingly spared this year from such a sentence;

*WHEREAS* the *Sharia Law* constitutes a burden that for centuries has violated Nigerian women's human rights and fundamental rights, and although Amina Lawal's sentence was recently suspended, following the strong protests and criticism by the international community, the Government of Nigeria has made no commitment to pressure for a change in the predominantly Muslim States;

*WHEREAS* the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria should take urgent positive actions towards the definitive eradication of the punishment by stoning in all the States of that country, as well as the abolition and elimination of all laws, practices, policies, and restrictive measures that deprive Nigerian women of their human, civil and political rights.

IN CONSEQUENCE THEREOF:

*The Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas agrees:*

*FIRST* To categorically condemn death sentences by stoning issued against Nigerian women, as well as all forms of torture, mistreatment, oppression, deprivation or discrimination against women, regardless of where it occurs;

*SECOND* To demand that the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria see to it that the legal structures of that country, responsible for limiting Nigerian women's human, civil and political rights are revised, and that all public policies and exclusion or restriction policies based on sex, that annul or obstruct human development and women participation in the political, social and economic activities, be abolished and eradicated;

*THIRD* That a copy of this Resolution, translated into English, will be sent to the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Hon. Olusegun Obasanjo to each House of the National Assembly; to the Delegate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to the United Nations; to the leaders of the political parties, Alliance for Democracy (AD), Aljajii Adamu Abdulkadir and People's Democratic Party (PDP), Audu Ogbah; to the Secretariat of Amnesty International; and to the international press for its general release.

*At the Annual Meeting of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas, that took place in Ixtapan de la Sal, Mexico, 24<sup>th</sup> of November 2002.*

*Velda González de Modestti*

*Vice-president of Senate of the Free Associated State of Puerto Rico*