



**Meeting of the Executive Committee
Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas**

**ACTIVITY REPORT
NOVEMBER 16, 2010 TO MARCH 7, 2011**

**Presented by Diva Hadamira Gastelum
President of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas
Deputy of the Chamber of Deputies of the Congress of the Union**

TOLUCA, MEXICO, MARCH 8, 2011

As President of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas, I am pleased to present this report on the main activities of the Network since the 9th Annual Meeting held on November 16, 2010, in Mar del Plata, Argentina.

1. Regular activities

1.1 Ninth Annual Meeting – Mar del Plata, Argentina – November 16, 2010

The theme for the Network's 9th Annual Meeting, held on November 16, 2010, in Mar del Plata, Argentina, was the economic and political empowerment of women. The following parliamentarians and experts took part in a round table on the subject: Dr. Lorena Barba (UNIFEM), Dr. Rosana Andía (iKNOW Politics), Estela Mendez de De Micheli (Chamber of Deputies of the Province of Santa Fe), Monique Richard (National Assembly of Québec), Maria Elena Torresi (Chamber of Deputies of the Province of Buenos Aires) and Diva Hadamira Gastelum (Chamber of Deputies of the Congress of the Union). After the discussion, the participants adopted a resolution proposing a series of measures to reinforce the empowerment of women.

They also adopted a declaration of support in connection with the legal dispute for custody of the Paraguayan child Matías, a case which rallied public support in Paraguay.

Study theme reports were presented by Monique Richard from the National Assembly of Québec (Changes in Women's Participation in Politics 1999–2009: Situation and Outlook) and Flor Ríos from the National Assembly of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (The Impact of the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas (ALBA) on Women in the Region).

Two study themes were chosen for 2010–2012. The Executive Committee decided to examine issues surrounding **poverty and**

the economic empowerment of women, and those relating to water and the environment.

The meeting ended with the election of the new Executive Committee. I had the honour of winning the members' confidence and being elected President of the Network for 2010–2012.

1.2 Executive Committee meeting

Today's meeting will give us the opportunity to adopt the Network's work plan for 2010–2012 and to prepare the 10th Annual Meeting of the Network, to be held on September 6, 2011, in conjunction with COPA's 11th General Assembly in Québec.

2. Other activities

2.1 Presidential campaign

During my campaign to become President of the Network, after being unanimously chosen by the COPA's Mexican delegation during the Extraordinary General Assembly held from July 20 to 25, 2010, I sent out a letter soliciting support and prepared documentation to present to the congresses I would be visiting.

To consolidate my campaign, I drew up a work plan outlining what I planned to accomplish if elected. I also prepared a program for a seminar outlining my views on violence against women, to be presented before the Mexican congress. However, the seminar was postponed because the end of the year was fast approaching and it would have been premature to hold it at that time.

Thanks to the perseverance and support of the Mexican delegation and the work accomplished, my campaign was successful and I was elected President of the Network of Women Parliamentarians at COPA's 10th General Assembly in 2010, held in Mar del Plata, Argentina.

2.2 Recognition of the President-elect

After I was elected, COPA's Mexican Secretariat decided to send a communiqué to the COPA Executive Committee to inform them of my appointment as President of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas, seek official recognition for my election and thank them for their support. A newsletter was also prepared to present my experience, report on the election and outline the projects I hope to carry out as President.

In order to publicize my election and gain support from the honourable Chamber of Deputies of Mexico, a draft resolution was prepared and presented before a plenary assembly of the Permanent Committee to seek approval and support from the Congress of the Union for my appointment as President of the Network. The proposal was approved by Carlos Flores Rico, representative of the Congress of the Union at COPA meetings, and by the delegation of deputies representing the honourable Chamber of Deputies within COPA. Consequently, on December 6, 2010, the Political Coordination Committee of the Chamber of Deputies issued a press release recognizing and supporting my appointment as President.

2.3 Consolidation of the Network's internal structure

In order to fill vacant positions on the Network's Executive Committee, I carried out the necessary formalities to enable the Network secretariat to send a letter on my behalf to the presidents and speakers of the congresses and parliamentary assemblies of the unitary, federal, federated and associated States, the regional parliaments and the interparliamentary organizations of the Americas to invite them to designate a representative to sit on the Network's Executive Committee. The letter was sent out with a letter from the President of COPA at the beginning of this year.

2.4 Promoting the Network among the parliamentarians of the Americas

Promoting the Network is one of my top priorities. To that end, and in line with my mandate as President, the first step I took in the work plan process was to schedule a program of activities, beginning with a tour of Central America and an event on January 27, 2011, before the Chamber of Deputies of the Congress of the Union.

The event was held to pay homage to the victims of the Holocaust. During the meeting of the Chamber, I took part in a solemn commemoration ceremony and gave a speech in memory of the women victims of the Holocaust, highlighting their strength and their importance for Jewish society. After the ceremony, and in my capacity as representative of the Mexican Congress, I inaugurated a gallery of Holocaust photos in the presence of the Chief Rabbi of Israel.

In order to promote my mandate across the continent, the necessary formalities have been carried out to gain an opportunity to be heard before the PARLACEN, in order to create ties and give a detailed presentation of the lines of action being pursued by the Network.

2.5 Communication and information tools

I felt it would be constructive to create a blog, open to the whole international community, to present issues of interest to the Network as well as my views in relation to the Network. In addition, in order to benefit from the advantages offered by the social networks, a Facebook page has been created to allow users to become more familiar with the activities and work of the President of the Network.

The Network's website is managed and updated in Québec. A new site managed by the Mexican Congress has also been launched to present the Network and its accomplishments, objectives, action plans, data banks and upcoming projects.

I have also given an interview on the Congress of the Union channel to promote the Network and provide greater visibility for our activities.

2.6 Draft work plan for the Network for 2010–2012

In collaboration with the Network Secretariat, and to honour the commitment made in Mar del Plata, we have drawn up a draft work plan for the Network for 2010–2012. The draft will be presented during the meeting today and submitted to the Executive Committee for approval.

2.7 Continental Round Table: Gender Alert and Violence Against Women

Prior to today's Executive Committee meeting, and in collaboration with my technical support team, I organized the *Continental Round Table: Gender Alert and Violence Against Women*, which took place this morning at the Congress of the State of Mexico and was open to all parliamentarians of the Americas.

3. Conclusion

These first activities of my mandate highlight the priorities I believe should be our focus over the next two years. The goal of these proposed lines of action, which reflect the preferences you expressed at our last Annual Meeting, is to strengthen the Network and broaden its scope in order to enable it to have a positive and lasting impact in the lives of the women of the Americas.

The road ahead will bring challenges and demand effort and commitment from us all. But I am convinced that, at the end of the journey, we will take pride in our accomplishments and realize that our unity and work have generated greater respect for women's rights throughout the continent.