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**CIM WORK PROGRAM FOR THE 2006-2008 BIENNIUM
PROGRAM GUIDELINES**

(Approved by the CIM Executive Committee)

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CIM WORK PROGRAM FOR THE 2006-2008 BIENNIUM PROGRAM GUIDELINES

I. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. The Inter-American Commission of Women and the Summits of the Americas Process

Since 1994, there has been a gradual evolution in the relationship between the CIM and the Summits Process. As a result, there has been an enhancement of, and an increase in, the mandates given to CIM throughout this process, gradually refining and strengthening its role within the Inter-American system.

The Plan of Action of the 1994 Miami Summit mandated that the governments “further strengthen the Inter-American Commission of Women”, followed by the Plan of Action of the 1998 Santiago Summit which reiterated that governments “implement and follow-up on the commitments regarding the status of women as agreed to at the Summit of the Americas, with the support of the Inter-American Commission of Women...”

It was in the Plan of Action of the 2001 Quebec Summit that CIM’s role was recognized, reinforced and strengthened, and that the integration of a gender perspective became more visible. The Quebec Plan of Action specifically requests that governments “recognize and reinforce the role as of the CIM, not only as technical advisor to the SIRG on all aspects of gender equity and equality, but also as the “principal hemispheric policy-generating forum for the advancement of the human rights of women and particularly of gender equality”. The Quebec Summit also endorsed “*the Inter-American Program on the Promotion of Women’s Human Rights and Gender Equity and Equality*” approved at the First Meeting of Ministers or of the Highest Ranking Authorities Responsible for the Advancement of Women as an effective tool for gender mainstreaming.

The Special Summit of the Americas, held in Monterrey, Mexico, in 2004, reiterated that the empowerment of women, their full and equal participation in the development of our societies, and their equal opportunities to exercise leadership, is fundamental for the reduction of poverty, the promotion of economic and social prosperity, and for people-centered sustainable development. The Heads of State and Government affirmed their commitment to continue promoting gender equality and equity and the mandates of the Summits of the Americas on this matter.

Following up, in the 2005 Plan of Action of the Mar de Plata Summit, the commitments were made to “eliminate discrimination against women through, among other measures, the implementation of a range of policies that will increase women’s access to decent, dignified and productive work” and further stated that Member States “ensure equal access for men and women to the benefits of social protection and ensure attention to gender issues in labor and social policies”.

2. *The Inter-American Program on the Promotion of Women's Human Rights and Gender Equity and Equality – the IAP*

In April 2000, in fulfillment of the mandate issued in resolution AG/RES. 1625 (XXIX-O/99), “Status of Women in the Americas and Strengthening and Modernization of the Inter-American Commission of Women,” the OAS convened the first *Meeting of Ministers and Highest-Ranking Authorities Responsible for the Advancement of Women in the Member States*, where the Inter-American Program on the Promotion of Women's Human Rights and Gender Equity and Equality” (IAP or “the Program”) was adopted.

This instrument provides an unprecedented and comprehensive approach to gender mainstreaming, both within the inter-American system and in the Member States, and has quickly become *the* strategic plan defining the policies and program of the CIM. As such, it is a clear manifestation of the Hemisphere's consensus on the need to undertake initiatives in both the Member States and at the OAS in which the integration of a gender perspective is included as a key element for promoting development.

The IAP, approved by the OAS General Assembly in 2000 and endorsed by the 2001 Quebec Summit of the Americas, has greatly enhanced CIM's visibility in integrating a gender perspective into hemispheric policy. It assigns the CIM the task of following up on implementation of its mandates, which contribute to fulfilling the mandates of the Biennial Work Program of the CIM Assembly of Delegates, the General Assemblies of the OAS and the Plans of Action of the Summits of the Americas. The implementation of the IAP has opened the door to the creation of policies with a gender perspective throughout the Western Hemisphere.

3. *The Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women,*

One of the crowning achievements in CIM's seventy-eight year history is the development of the *Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women, Convention of Belem do Para*, the only international instrument of its kind which focuses specifically on violence against women. Since the approval of the Convention, CIM has labored tirelessly to encourage its ratification by the Member States and to assiduously track its progress in impacting the lives of the women in the Americas. As of January, 2006, the treaty has been ratified by 32 of the 34 OAS member states.

The CIM was instrumental in developing the *Statute of the Mechanism to Follow Up on Implementation of the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women, “Convention of Belém do Pará.”*, (MESECVI), which was adopted in 2004 by the Conference of States Parties to the Convention and approved by both the XXXII CIM Assembly of Delegates, and the XXXIV OAS General Assembly. The CIM Permanent Secretariat serves as Technical Secretariat and headquarters of the MESECVI.

II. PRIORITIES FOR THE BIENNIUM

1. The Human Rights of Women

Violence against Women

Violence against women continues to be the number one priority for the CIM, who will continue to address the issue in all of its manifestations and to promote the ratification of the Convention of Belém do Pará by the two remaining states.

Femicide-Feminicide

It is essential that the CIM continue to take initiatives to strengthen the efforts under way in Member States to fight gender-based violence, especially in those countries where such violence has taken form in the murders of women in ever-increasing numbers.

ACTION: Financial resources permitting, the CIM will consult with governments, and civil society to compile background information on the efforts of governments and nongovernmental organizations to define the concept variously named femicide, feminicide, or femicidal violence;

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- Consensus on the appropriate terminology to be employed, and on the corresponding definition of femicide, feminicide, or femicidal violence, as a result of the joint effort of interested governments and international, regional, and nongovernmental organizations.
- A recommendation to the Committee of Experts of the MESECVI, that they include an indicator on femicidal violence or femicide in the questionnaire for assessing implementation of the provisions of the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women, "Convention of Belém do Pará" in future multilateral evaluation rounds, if deemed advisable, and
- Recommendations by the CIM to the Member States on the inclusion of this concept into their domestic criminal law and national policies.

Technical Secretariat of the Follow-Up Mechanism to the Convention of Belem do Para, MESECVI:

In 2004, after the adoption of the Statute of the Follow-Up Mechanism to the Convention by the Conference of States Party, the Permanent Secretariat of the CIM received the mandate to act as the Technical Secretariat to this mechanism. Since then, the Permanent Secretariat has dedicated a great deal of effort to the implementation of the Mechanism. The Secretariat requested the appointment of Experts and National Competent Authorities by the States Parties and afterwards, organized the first meeting of the Committee of Experts (CEVI), where the CEVI's Rules of Procedure, Work Plan and Calendar of Activities were adopted, as well as the questionnaire to be sent to the States Parties. The second meeting of the CEVI was held in 2006, to evaluate the answers to the questionnaires provided by the States Parties and to make the appropriate recommendations

ACTION: Working with independent experts and competent national authorities appointed by the States Party to the Convention, the Secretariat will continue implementing the process established by the statute of the MESECVI and the Regulations of the CEVI

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- A hemispheric report with specific recommendations for the states party on the effective implementation of the Convention.
- A website specific to the Mechanism to facilitate the exchange of information and the consultation process with the experts.

The Gender Aspects of HIV/AIDS

The 2004-06 Executive Committee identified the issue of the Gender Aspects of HIV/AIDS as a priority issue for the 2006-2008 biennium, focusing initially on the English-speaking Caribbean, where the prevalence is highest and second only to Sub-Saharan Africa. The Executive Committee has also identified this issue as the primary topic for the Dialogue of Heads of Delegation at the 2006 CIM Assembly of Delegates.

Like Trafficking in Persons, this is a multi-faceted issue requiring a multi-dimensional approach. Indeed, the Quebec Summit of the Americas acknowledges “that another major threat to the security of our people is HIV/AIDS and that “we are united in our resolve to adopt multi-sectoral strategies and to develop our cooperation to combat this disease...”.

ACTION: In addressing HIV/AIDS, and in partnership with PAHO, the CIM will use its comparative advantage as the “principal hemispheric policy-generating forum for the advancement of the human rights of women and particularly of gender equality” to contribute to the achievement of gender equality in policies and programs on HIV/AIDS. CIM will identify, compile and share best practices, and establish the linkages between gender-based violence and the incidences of HIV/AIDS. CIM will also review existing research to analyze the relationship between migration and HIV/AIDS and identify sources of funding, including the private sector that can contribute to support programs in the region.

CIM Delegates will work in coordination with the Ministries of Health to address the issues of HIV/AIDS and gender based violence and HIV/AIDS and migration.

CIM Delegates will work on the creation of Inter-Agency Task Forces to address the multi-dimensional aspects of HIV/AIDS;

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- Policies and programs with a gender perspective implemented in the Region to address the problem of HIV-AIDS, with special emphasis on HIV-AIDS and gender-based violence and its impact on migrant women.
- A compilation of best practices that will be disseminated throughout the region
- Increased collaboration among governments, agencies and civil society on the issue of HIV/AIDS.

Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children

Tremendous strides have been made at the OAS on the issue of Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children (TIP). As a result of CIM's work over the past five years, the issue is now directly on the agenda of the OAS. In March of 2006, for the first time ever, a meeting of National Authorities responsible for the issue of Trafficking in Persons, was convened by the OAS to begin the process of developing a hemispheric plan to address this scourge. It was well noted at this meeting that CIM's role in the entire process was pivotal in bringing the issue to the forefront.

However, as a result of exhaustive negotiations by the member states, it was decided that TIP would be better coordinated within the context of Hemispheric Security and through the Ministries of Justice (REMJA). The Secretary General has therefore decided to move Anti-Trafficking Unit and the coordination of the issue to the section on Public Safety within the Department of Multi-Dimensional Security. However, in discussions between the Secretary General and the CIM Executive Committee, the commitment to maintain a gender perspective was agreed upon.

ACTION: During this biennium, the Permanent Secretariat will implement the policy proposals agreed upon by the CIM Assembly of Delegates and the Executive Committee and will coordinate on an ongoing basis with the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Unit. A staff person will be assigned to be the point of contact and liaison to ensure that the gender perspective is an integral part of the work on this office. The Permanent Secretariat will be the liaison between the Permanent Delegates of the CIM and the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Unit in implementing the recommendations of the Meeting of National Authorities in the member states. The Secretariat will also work with the CIM Delegates in identifying potential partnerships and program and policy initiatives in the region. A concerted effort will be made to raise the funds necessary to assist in this process.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- All programs and policies on the issue of Trafficking in Persons will have a gender perspective.
- The CIM Delegates will also have an ongoing point of entry into the work of the OAS on addressing trafficking in persons.

2. Gender Equity and Equality: Implementation of the IAP

Integration of a Gender Perspective in Ministerial Agendas (SEPIA)

In compliance with the IAP mandate of ensuring "that a gender perspective is consistently mainstreamed into the preparation and application of international instruments, mechanisms and procedures within the framework of the OAS, and particularly on the agendas of ministerial-level meetings," the CIM launched a process for incorporating a gender perspective onto ministerial agendas. This process, called SEPIA,^{1/} has enabled the CIM to work in conjunction with experts from civil society, governments, and other regional and international organizations to submit to ministerial meetings, recommendations for integrating a gender perspective in their agendas and, subsequently, to establish specific lines of action for monitoring implementation of those recommendations. The SEPIA process has been applied in the following areas: Labor (SEPIA I), Justice (SEPIA II), Education (SEPIA III), and Science and Technology (SEPIA IV). As a result of these efforts:

1. From the Spanish *Seguimiento del Programa Interamericano*, "Follow-up of the Inter-American

- Specific issues such as violence against women, trafficking in persons and gender and justice have been integrated into the Plan of Action of the Fifth Meeting of Ministers of Justice or of Ministers or Attorneys General of the Americas (REMJA V) (2004);
- Gender equity issues have been included in the Plans of Action of the IV Inter-American Meeting of Ministers of Education and the XII, XIII and XIV Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor;
- The recommendations presented by the CIM to the First Meeting of Ministers and High Authorities on Science and Technology under the aegis of CIDI (2004) were adopted as one of eight Hemispheric Initiatives included in the Plan of Action.

Given these encouraging results, it is important to work towards establishing a systematic follow up process for SEPIA, to ensure that the recommendations and lines of action on gender mainstreaming are put into effect.

ACTION: The CIM will continue promoting implementation of the IAP within the OAS General Secretariat by providing gender specific technical assistance on the integration of a gender perspective in the different areas. These efforts will be coordinated with the newly-created Department of Planning, Control and Evaluation, the point of entry for all projects. In addition, the Secretariat will continue providing technical support on the internal gender training of OAS staff. The CIM will also promote the IAP through the political bodies of the OAS, i.e. the Permanent Council, the various Commissions and Committees, to ensure that a gender perspective is in place.

The CIM will continue working with the OAS units in charge of the Ministerial-level meetings and with civil society to systematize implementation of the SEPIA recommendations, to establish the best way to do so. The Secretariat will also provide technical support to the Principal Delegates in the dissemination of the IAP in the Member States.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- Gender-sensitive programs and policies implemented at the highest levels of the OAS.
- Systematic follow up of the four areas of the SEPIA initiative;² in partnership with the OAS units responsible for the Ministerial Meetings and civil society.
- Increased collaboration among Inter-American agencies, civil society and other organizations working on gender issues.

Women, Peace and Security

The CIM is also working on integrating a gender perspective in the area of hemispheric security. In the 2004-2006 biennium, the CIM, working together with the Department of Crisis Prevention and Special Missions of the OAS and the Program Initiative for Inclusive Security received funding from Hunt Alternatives and the People's Republic of China, to carry out training seminars on gender, conflict and peace building in the Andean Region (October 2005) and Central

2. Labor, Justice, Education and Science and Technology.

American (September 2006). The objective of the training was to give men and women representing of government, civil society, academia, juridical and law enforcement of 10 Member States the tools to integrate a gender perspective in their work in conflict prevention and resolution and peace building. To date, 60 people have been trained. The participants have duplicated the course in Colombia and Ecuador and an Internet-based network was established for both regions to share information and best practices on the issue.

ACTION: The Permanent Secretariat will follow up on the work of the network, determine how to best strengthen and institutionalize it.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- Multiplier effect of the training in the countries and integration of a gender perspective in programs and projects on conflict prevention and resolution and peace building.
- A network of peace builders trained in gender;
- A data base on best practices used in the countries
- Greater participation of women in peace and democracy processes and in social, political, economic and environmental development.

Women and Natural Disasters

Some Delegations have identified the “*Impact of Natural Disasters on Women*” as an issue of profound concern, especially to the Member States of the Caribbean. The Permanent Secretariat has been asked to ensure that the gender perspective is included in any and all work done on this issue at the political levels.

ACTION: In this biennium, the Permanent Secretariat will work with the Committee on Natural Disasters to integrate a gender perspective into all declarations, resolutions and plans of action. The CIM will also provide technical assistance to the Department of Sustainable Development. If possible, joint initiatives will be undertaken.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- Policies and programs of the Committee on Natural Disasters and of the Department of Natural Disasters of the OAS with a gender perspective;
- Information on gender and natural disasters will be available to the CIM Delegates to facilitate their collaboration with the organs responsible for implementing programs and plans of action on natural disasters.

Women and Migration

The Inter-American Program on the Human Rights of Migrants and their Families, adopted in 2005, assigns specific tasks to the CIM. The program has, as a specific goal, to provide “Attention to the specific needs of vulnerable groups of migrants, including women, indigenous persons, afro-descendants and handicapped, among others.” It asks that CIM, among others, “develop policies and programs designed to protect migrant women, in particular, women heads of household, and to combat violence against women”.

ACTION: The Permanent Secretariat, in consultation with the Principal Delegates, will continue to provide technical assistance on gender to the Committee on Migration regarding the Inter-American Program on the Human Rights of Migrants and their Families. It will also continue to comply with the tasks assigned to it by the Program.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- Programs and policies to protect women migrants and their families, especially women heads of household, and to combat violence against women ;
- Information on the human rights of migrants will be available to the CIM Delegates to facilitate their collaboration with the organs responsible for implementing programs and plans of action on the issue.

3. *Strengthening of the National Machineries*

Responsibility for gender mainstreaming should not and cannot be left entirely to the CIM. Success will only be achieved with the active engagement of other partners, the Member States and commitment from the OAS as an institution.

ACTION: To ensure a more effective integration of gender as a cross-cutting issue, the CIM will continue efforts to strengthen the national machineries by urging their more active and increased participation within the context of their national governments and encouraging the allocation of adequate human and financial resources that will enable them to do their work effectively. With the purpose of strengthening both the national machineries and the CIM, some delegations have proposed an amendment to the juridical instruments of the CIM so that the governments appoint, where relevant, the heads of the national machineries as CIM Principal Delegates.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- National Machineries strengthened, with more active participation within the member states and adequate financial and human resources;
- Public policies, strategies and proposals with a gender perspective in all areas of national interest.
- Greater access of women to decision-making

III. OTHER ISSUES

1. *NGO Participation*

ACTION: In an effort to increase the participation of women in the OAS and Summit processes, the CIM will encourage NGOs that work on gender issues to register for accreditation with the OAS Summit Office as civil society observers. This will ensure that they will have a voice and an opportunity to participate in the meetings organized by the OAS.

In addition, different ways of collaborating with civil society organizations will be identified and new partnerships will be established to carry out joint initiatives on issues of interest to the CIM.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- Increased number of gender-related civil society organizations registered before the OAS and participating in OAS activities.
- More joint initiatives carried out by the CIM and NGOs on issues of interest to the CIM.

2. Collaboration with other International Organizations

No one entity can do it all alone. The CIM has a long history of collaboration and partnerships with other International Organizations, especially with the IDB, PAHO, UNIFEM, the World Bank and UNDP. This has especially been the case in the work of the Commission on Violence against Women and Leadership Development. The CIM has also been an active member of the PROLID Advisory Council, participating in strategy meetings and project selection meetings.

ACTION: The CIM will continue developing new strategic alliances, and strengthening existing partnerships. The primary partners in our efforts will be: the IDB (PROLID program), the World Bank, the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO), UNIFEM, UNDP and ECLAC. In addition, special efforts will be made to reach out to CARICOM as well.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- Existing partnerships will be strengthened and new partners will be identified.

IV. FINANCIAL SITUATION OF THE OAS

Since the 2004 Assembly of Delegates, the OAS has elected a new Secretary General. As such, there has been a restructuring of the organization and realignment of priorities. In this period, the financial situation has been tenuous; however there appears to be a slight easing of the budgetary situation.

The Permanent Secretariat will continue to provide, to the extent of its technical and financial possibilities, the support for the Principal Delegates to promote activities in the Member States. In addition, it will substantially increase efforts to secure funding from outside sources and encourage the allocation of additional voluntary funds to implement mandates given to the CIM, especially in priority areas.