



Organization of  
American States



## INTER-AMERICAN COMMISSION OF WOMEN

CIM/DEC. 14 (XXXVI-O/12) Rev.1

### DECLARATION OF SAN JOSÉ ON THE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT OF THE WOMEN OF THE AMERICAS

(Adopted at the fourth plenary session, held on October 30, 2012)

WE, THE PRINCIPAL AND ALTERNATE DELEGATES OF THE INTER-AMERICAN COMMISSION OF WOMEN (CIM) OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES (OAS), gathered in San José, Costa Rica, on October 29 and 30, 2012, on the occasion of the Thirty-Sixth Assembly of Delegates of the CIM;

#### **BEARING IN MIND:**

The principles enshrined in international and regional treaties on women's rights, especially the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 1979), its Optional Protocol, the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women (Convention of Belém do Pará, 1994), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (Beijing, 1995) and the Program of Action of the International conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 1994);

The commitment of the Member States of the Americas, enshrined in the Inter-American Program for the Promotion of Women's Human Rights and Gender Equity and Equality (IAP), "to formulate public policies, strategies, and proposals aimed at promoting women's human rights and gender equality in all spheres of public and private life"; (IAP General Objective 2)

The commitment of the member states of the Inter-American Democratic Charter (2001) to promote "(...) the full and equal participation of women in the political structures of their countries as a fundamental element in the promotion and exercise of a democratic culture" (Article 28);

The commitments assumed under the Declaration of the Inter-American Year of Women "Women and Power: For a World of Equality" (CIM/DEC. 10 (XXXV-O/10)), adopted by the Thirty-Fifth Assembly of Delegates of the CIM (2010);

**NOTING WITH SATISFACTION:**

The adoption of resolutions AG/RES. 2709 (XLII-O/12) “Promotion of Women’s Human Rights and Gender Equity and Equality” and AG/RES. 2711 (XLII-O/12) “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) by the General Assembly of the OAS at its Forty-second Regular Session, held in Cochabamba, Bolivia from June 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> 2012;

The results and conclusions of the First Hemispheric Forum “Women’s Leadership for a Citizens’ Democracy” (held April 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> 2011 in Washington, D.C.) and of the Second Hemispheric Forum “Women’s Full Citizenship for Democracy” (held July 18<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> 2012 in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic);

The publication of the report “Our Democracy” by the OAS and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and the progress made by the CIM towards mainstreaming the women’s rights and gender equality in the conceptualization and implementation of a citizens’ democracy;

The *Second Hemispheric Report on the Implementation of the Belém do Pará Convention* by the MESECVI and the recommendations of the Committee of Experts with respect to legislation, national plans, access to justice, specialized services, budgets, and information and statistics adopted during the Fourth Conference of States Party to 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);

The Report of the President and the Executive Secretary of the CIM related to the implementation of the Commission’s Biennial Program of Work 2011-2012 (CIM/doc.5/12) and the results achieved by its Executive Committee in terms of the strengthening and visibility of its role as a hemispheric political forum for women’s rights and gender equality;

The publication of the UN Women report “Progress of the World’s Women 2011-2012: In pursuit of Justice”, which highlights the importance of legal and judicial systems as mechanisms for the observance of women’s rights, and its recommendations;

**RECOGNIZING:**

That despite the advances achieved, in practice there is still inequality between women and men in the exercise of their rights;

That all women should live a life free from violence in both the public and private spheres, and that women should be able to enjoy and exercise all the rights and fundamental freedoms enshrined in pertinent national, regional and international human rights instruments aimed at providing access to justice in order to punish violent crimes;

That states consider the diversity of women in drafting and implementing equality policies, applying the principle of equality and non-discrimination;

That equality and non-discrimination in the full enjoyment and exercise of political and citizenship rights by women and the aspiration of achieving parity in the exercise of power, in decision-making, and in the mechanisms of social, political, and economic participation and representation, are elements that both enhance and consolidate the democracies of the Hemisphere;

That significant advances have been incorporated in national legislation, such as recognition of women's political rights at the constitutional level and the adoption of specific measures to promote the integration of women in the public sphere and in decision making; however, legislative, institutional, and electoral policy reforms are still needed, as well as cultural change, to guarantee that women can participate equally in the political process;

That gender equality and equity policies in some countries in the region have begun to incorporate, among their priorities, the shared social responsibility for care services, understood as the collaborative participation of states, local governments, businesses, men, women and families in establishing the necessary conditions so that women can have equal opportunity to participate and remain in the job market and fully enjoy their rights, including quality care services, with comprehensive coverage for dependents, such as children, sick persons and persons with disabilities,

#### **HEREBY DECLARE OUR COMMITMENT:**

##### **In the area of Violence and Citizen Security**

1. To urge states to allocate the necessary budgetary and human resources to national mechanisms for the advancement of women so as to fully comply with their national plans and programs responsible for the eradication of all forms of gender-based violence and the protection of and attention to women who have been subjected to violence in the framework of citizen security policies.

2. To call on the states to promote access to justice for women who have been subjected to gender-based violence by enforcing, in a comprehensive and crosscutting manner at all procedural stages, the provisions established by applicable international human rights instruments, including, as appropriate, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women (Convention of Belém do Pará), as well as to adopt as appropriate measures to safeguard women's rights.

3. To encourage States to cooperate with the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights (IACHR) and other pertinent entities from the inter-American system in order to continue support for the full implementation of the Convention of Belem do Para, as appropriate, with special attention to the areas of access to justice for women in situation of violence and the monitoring of the incidence of gender-based violence.

4. To urge the collaboration of all state agencies responsible for ensuring citizen and human security in enacting policies, directives and protocols aimed at preventing, investigating, criminalizing, punishing, and eradicating violence against women and gender-based intentional killing of women, understood as one of the most extreme forms of violence against women.

5. To urge the States to promote and encourage policies that address harassment and violence at work and provide mechanisms for redress for women who have experienced such harassment or violence.

6. To promote the development and strengthening of national and regional information, observance and surveillance systems to ensure data used to determine the incidence of violence against women is collected, compiled, and analyzed, including specialized surveys that can be used as a basis in formulating the most efficient policies to eradicate violence against women.

7. To urge states to take steps to combat trafficking in women by enacting or strengthening legislation and effective interagency, regional and international coordination mechanisms, as appropriate, that foster prevention, punishment of perpetrators and protection, integrated care and rehabilitation of rights for women who survive such crime.

8. To encourage the establishment of appropriate mechanisms to coordinate with the United Nations Secretary General Campaign “UNITE to End Violence Against Women” on the fulfillment of the recommendations of the Hemispheric Report corresponding to the Second Round of Multilateral Evaluation of the MESECVI, as appropriate.

9. To promote the protection of women in migrant situations and those who live in border areas.

10. To promote the eradication of all forms of discrimination and violence against women, including, as appropriate, through programs, services and campaigns, in order to change cultural practices that might allow or legitimize such discrimination and violence.

### **In the area of Political Participation**

11. To promote, as appropriate, the adoption of enabling mechanisms – including legislative, and political reforms, electoral policies, political education and sharing of experiences, programs, and budgetary allocations – built on a human rights-based multicultural approach so as to promote full representation and full participation of women in political, social and economic decision-making processes at the national and local levels.

12. To promote legislation and specific measures that ensure the elimination of obstacles faced by women in the activities of political parties and electoral campaigns for egalitarian access to public financing as well as electoral publicity during peak audience hours.

13. To foster and strengthen, at the national and regional levels, the generation of harmonized statistical data disaggregated by sex and other relevant variables that can be used to facilitate comparative analyses of data aimed at shedding light on women’s political participation with respect to their male counterparts, women serving in elected office at the federal and local government levels, as well as in public institutions and all branches of government.

### **In the area of Care Infrastructure and Women's Economic Autonomy**

14. To promote policies and measures of co-responsibility for family and work-life between women and men in order to achieve equity and equality for both in the public and private spheres and in the labor force, as well as to strengthen dialogue and coordination between all stakeholders.

15. To foster improvement in the quality and coverage of care infrastructure, seeking to diversify existing alternatives for population groups requiring care (e.g., children, youth, older persons, persons with disabilities and others) together with the active involvement of men and women in the public and private sectors.

16. To promote the recognition of the economic value of unremunerated work and its contribution to family welfare and to the economic development of countries as a fundamental tool in designing and implementing public policies.

17. To promote social protection for women who work in the informal sector, perform unremunerated domestic work and provide care services.

18. To promote policies and other measures to improve the working conditions for paid employees in the care sector who work with families and in institutions of care.

19. To reaffirm that eradication of poverty is an indispensable condition for sustainable development in its three dimensions (economic, social and environmental, and their interrelationships) and taking into account that women are most affected by poverty, to urge the member states to improve sustainable development policies using a gender approach.

20. To reaffirm the importance of the effective application of the actions in the Cairo International Conference on Population and Development's Program of Action, intended to reach gender equality, women's autonomies, their active participation in the labor market and universal access to sexual and reproductive health care during a woman's life-cycle, in accordance with current legislation in each country, with an emphasis on the prevention of teenage pregnancy, the prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS and the delivery of integral services for maternal health, urging greater efforts to decrease the disparity in the fulfillment of these objectives.

### **NOW THEREFORE, WE CALL ON THE 2013-2015 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT OF THE CIM:**

21. To strengthen their coordination and working relationships with the institutions and bodies of the inter-American system, the United Nations system, women's social organizations, and other international and intergovernmental cooperation agencies as a cornerstone of existing initiatives, programs, and projects and those generated within the framework of issues advanced by the CIM through its Strategic Plan 2011-2016 and the Triennial Program of Work 2013-2015 of the CIM, with a view to promoting joint synergies and initiatives.

22. To renew their efforts to mobilize resources for specific CIM projects in the thematic areas of its Strategic Plan 2011-2016 and in compliance with the Triennial Program of Work 2013-2015 of the CIM, with special emphasis on the following programmatic areas: (i) Women's substantive political citizenship for democracy and governability; and (ii) Women's human rights and gender-based violence; with this objective in mind, hold the meeting, as agreed, among the Executive Committee of the CIM and possible donors.

23. To strengthen relations with civil society organizations working on women's human rights and gender-equality initiatives in follow up to what was agreed upon within the framework of the Executive Committee 2011-2012 and Agreement 12 of the Declaration of the Inter-American Year of Women "Women and Power: for a world of equality", and to identify other civil society actors to participate in the work of the CIM.

24. To promote close collaboration between the CIM and UN Women in the preparation and development of the 57<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), to be held March 4 to 15, 2013, under the theme "Elimination and Prevention of All Forms of Violence against Women and Girls," to increase the visibility of the results and applicability of the Convention of Belém do Pará and its follow-up mechanism (MESECVI) at the high-level panels and in the conclusions adopted.

25. To advance the gender equality and women's rights agenda during the preparatory process of the Seventh Summit of the Americas that will be held in Panama City, Panama, in 2015.