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**FOLLOW-UP MECHANISM TO THE
BELÉM DO PARÁ CONVENTION (MESECVI)
THIRD EXTRAORDINARY CONFERENCE
OF STATES PARTIES**
September 20, 2023
Virtual platform: Zoom

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RAPORTEURSHIP

The Third Extraordinary Conference of States Parties to the Follow-up Mechanism to the Inter-American Convention to Prevent, Punish and Eradicate Violence against Women “Convention of Belém do Pará” (MESECVI), was held on September 20, 2023, through the virtual platform Zoom.

The Competent National Authorities of the following twenty-two (22) countries participated in this meeting: Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic, Saint Lucia, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago and Uruguay.

The meeting began with a welcome speech by the President of the Conference of States Parties, Mrs. Nadine Gasman, who thanked all the delegations for the work done to reach this Conference and gave way to its inauguration.

First of all, Alejandra Mora Mora, Executive Secretary of the CIM, participated in the inaugural session, who, among other issues, pointed out the different topics that will be reviewed at the meeting, the way in which the political declarations have been constructed within of the MESECVI, as well as the importance of making symbolic violence visible for the full guarantee of women's rights in the region.

Likewise, Marcela Huaita, President of the MESECVI Committee of Experts, spoke, thanking the Committee of Experts for the invitation to participate in the different instances that have been developed for the construction of the declaration on symbolic violence, and emphasized the fundamental importance it will have for women and girls in the region.

For her part, Mrs. Nadine Gasman, President of the National Women's Institute of Mexico (INMUJERES) and President of the Conference of States Parties to the MESECVI, expressed, among other issues, the importance of this Conference and highlighted how symbolic violence affects women. and girls, especially those who live in a situation of intersectionality.

At the end of the inauguration , the Conference formally began at 10:55 am (EST) and the quorum of the session was verified, in accordance with the Regulations of the Conference of States Parties to the MESECVI.

Likewise, the agenda and calendar of activities were approved, and the official photograph of the Conference was taken.

- Presentation of the Objectives of the Third Extraordinary Meeting and Report of the Presidency

The President of the Conference of States Parties indicated that, on this occasion, an exception would be made to the regulations of the Conference for the appointment in an Extraordinary Conference of a new Presidency for the Conference of States Parties of the MESECVI, as well as the two Vice-Presidencies.

Likewise, it was expressed that the main objective of the next ordinary conference will be to discuss and approve the Strategic Plan of the MESECVI, whose efforts will be accompanied by the next presidency; and that in this Extraordinary Conference the following objectives will be met: 1) elect the authorities of the Conference; 2) present the culmination of the work of the presidency of Mexico through the presentation and, where appropriate, approval of the Regional Declaration on the Eradication of Gender Stereotypes in Public Spaces that Result in Symbolic Violence and Gender-Based Political Violence.; and 3) approve the venue of the Ninth Conference of States Parties to the MESECVI.

Likewise, the President presented an executive summary of the Presidency's Report, with the main activities that have been carried out by the MESECVI, since the Mexican State assumed the presidency and which she requested be published by the Technical Secretariat of the MESECVI.

- Regional Declaration on the Eradication of Gender Stereotypes in Public Spaces that Result in Symbolic Violence and Gender-Based Political Violence.

The President pointed out that symbolic violence is a priority issue for our region. That is why during the Eighth Conference of States Parties the mandate was granted to make a Regional Declaration. In this sense, he expressed that the project presented during this Extraordinary Conference is the result of a broad consultation that included a questionnaire for all States Parties, dialogue tables where all States Parties were convened and where the participation was, from civil society, academia, international agencies and the private sector and the States Parties.

She also expressed that this task does not end with the approval of this Declaration but rather represents a basis for continuing to fight against violence against women and girls, especially those in the most vulnerable situations.

Next, a dialogue took place between the delegations in which they shared their observations on the aforementioned Declaration.

In this regard, the State of Chile indicated that, from its ministry, as the Competent National Authority, it supports the regional declaration and highlighted that the incorporation of symbolic violence within national legislation and plans is a very important advance, since women, without distinction, are in a situation of exclusion from political spaces, therefore it is important to address intersectional and intercultural approaches.

The Minister of Women of Costa Rica, Mrs. Cindy Quesada, highlighted the participation of experts from both the Mechanism and the States Parties, as reported by the Mission of Costa Rica. However,

she insisted that “generating statements and not directly engaging in concrete actions keeps us far away from women,” which is why she made an urgent call to take advantage of these spaces, to be much more responsive, efficient and close to people, with a simpler language. She highlighted that her team was never approached or provided with feedback. However, Costa Rica has made progress in women's rights, with the law approved for the prevention and eradication of violence against women. Minister Quesada expressed that, taking into consideration that the title of this Declaration is a mandate of the previous Conference of States Parties, she withdraws the proposal to shorten the name of the Declaration. Finally, she clarified that Costa Rica's stand is that the name does not necessarily reflect the content of the body of the declaration.

The State of El Salvador expressed that its national law provides for symbolic and political violence and that, through its public policies, it is making institutional efforts to prevent violence. Likewise, they established that they support this effort and that they will send a note with the specific language details that they cannot support.

The State of Peru expressed that they have legislation that describes various types of violence and this serves as support for symbolic violence, and considered that it is important to continue advancing in the areas involved in the proposed Declaration.

For its part, the State of Barbados expressed its support, in general terms, for the proposed declaration, expressed the importance of having clarity about what the declaration seeks to achieve and requested that the MESECVI be able to prepare a specific report on the process for the preparation of the Declaration of symbolic violence.

The State of the Dominican Republic pointed out that the MESECVI has been a fundamental space to promote international standards on violence against women for gender reasons and for national legislative development, which is why they support this declaration that helps advance the guarantee of women's rights, clarifying that they cannot accompany the term “girls in all their diversity.” Likewise, they remembered the Mirabal Sisters and their struggle.

In turn, the State of Panama pointed out the importance of the work of the MESECVI and expressed its support for the declaration due to its importance for women in the region. Likewise, it was pointed out how the Political Declarations that have been carried out within the framework of the MESECVI have served for national legislative development.

For its part, the State of Guatemala thanked the work carried out and pointed out the importance of observing work times and supported the name change of the declaration proposed by the State of Costa Rica.

The State of Costa Rica reiterated that the title of the declaration does not fully reflect the content, but, as it is an agreement of the Eighth Conference of States Parties to the MESECVI, it affirmed that the title mandated by it can be maintained.

The State of Trinidad and Tobago thanked the work carried out and its support for the declaration and indicated that it would send a note with its reservations in relation to certain specific language issues.

For its part, the State of Argentina pointed out the importance of the declaration and how this type of instruments contribute to the improvement in the development of public policies in the States of the region. Likewise, they pointed out some additions to the statement and emphasized that they cannot

fail to mention the attempted “magnifemicide” of Cristina Fernández de Kirchner and Francia Márquez, as well as the femicides of Marielle Franco, Juana Quispe and Berta Cáceres.

Barbados supports the statement, however requests to add a footnote to the unagreed paragraphs.

Ecuador reaffirmed that its legislation refers to "women in all their diversity and throughout their life cycle."

Finally, the Declaration was approved with the language qualifications that will be sent by the States of Barbados, El Salvador, Guatemala, Paraguay and the Dominican Republic, Trinidad and Tobago to the Technical Secretariat of the MESECVI within a week.

- **Election of Conference Authorities: Presidency, First and Second Vice-Presidencies and Rapporteurship**

The country delegations elected the authorities of the Ninth Conference of States Parties, which was formed as follows: The Presidency was assumed by Chile; The First and Second Vice Presidencies were assumed by Brazil and Peru, respectively, and Costa Rica assumed the Rapporteurship of the event. The election of the Presidency was by acclamation, and those of the First and Second Vice-Presidencies by vote, as the candidacies were presented by three States.

Faced with the proposal of three States to exercise the Vice Presidency, the delegates from Brazil and Colombia proposed that Peru withdraw the nomination in order to seek an equitable geographical distribution and let Costa Rica assume a Vice Presidency without the need for a vote. However, the delegation of Peru did not accept that proposal, thus Brazil (10 votes) was elected as First Vice Presidency and Peru (8 votes) as Second Vice Presidency, against those of Costa Rica (7 votes), which was chosen by acclamation to serve as Rapporteur of this meeting. The States of Argentina, Barbados, Bahamas, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago participated in the vote.

The new President took office, thanked the outgoing president and the trust granted by the States Parties to the Convention. Likewise, she mentioned various situations of gender-based violence that women in the region face.

- Headquarters of the Ninth Conference of States Parties to the MESECVI

The delegations approved that the next meeting of the Conference of States Parties to the MESECVI will take place in June 2024 in the State of Chile.

-MESECVI Strategic Plan

The Technical Secretariat of the MESECVI indicated that the Strategic Plan 2018-2023 was approved at the Second Extraordinary Conference of States Parties, which took place on February 21, 2018. This plan had as its main objectives: i) institutional strengthening of the MESECVI; ii) contribute to strengthening the technical capacities of the States Parties to the MESECVI to implement the Belém do Pará Convention from a focus on intersectionality and human rights of women throughout their life cycle with emphasis on prevention and reparation; iii) provide an intersectoral response to the

problems of violence against women; and iv) raise awareness about the situation of violence against women and the promotion of the Belém do Pará Convention.

Likewise, it was expressed that next year it is necessary to generate a new strategic plan that will be valid from 2024 to 2029 in which the priority issues are indicated to strengthen the right of women to a life free of violence in the region.

The President pointed out the importance of strengthening the MESECVI in financial matters, and in its relationship with civil society organizations. She also stressed the importance of working on the MESECVI Plan, in line with the priority issues indicated by the Inter-American Commission of Women and of including the guidelines of the Model Laws in the monitoring indicators.

The Executive Secretary of the CIM thanked all the delegations for the sustained work that has been generated within the framework of this Conference, noted her commitment to continue advancing with elements that contribute to the work of the National Women's Mechanisms and congratulated the State of Chile for his work.

-Other issues

For the sake of transparency, Costa Rica requested a report on the quorum, as well as of the voting, since not all participants voted and, additionally, votes would be needed. Furthermore, they recommended that procedures should be prepared for voting on virtual platforms. In this regard, the countries that voted and the total votes cast were informed and the Presidency suggested to Costa Rica that if they had recommendations, they should be sent to the Technical Secretariat. The State of Panama thanked the outgoing President for her leadership and wished the new presidency the best of success. Likewise, she reiterated her commitment to the work being carried out by the MESECVI and to women's rights.

The State of Ecuador reaffirmed its commitment to actions in favor of women and noted the progress in its national legislation on violence against women and human rights.

-Agreements

After the dialogue between the delegations and the corresponding adjustments, the agreements of the VIII Conference of States Parties to the Convention of Belém do Pará were adopted.