

XXXVIII ASSEMBLY OF DELEGATES INTER-AMERICAN COMMISSION OF WOMEN

May 7th and 8th, 2019. Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.



DECLARATION OF SANTO DOMINGO ON EQUALITY AND AUTONOMY IN THE EXERCISE OF WOMEN'S POLITICAL RIGHTS FOR THE STRENGTHENING OF DEMOCRACY

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CIM/DEC. 16 (XXXVIII-O/19)

¹ The United States promotes an equal opportunity approach that seeks to ensure that all women are afforded access to social protection systems, access to public services, economic opportunity and sustainable infrastructure on the basis of non-discrimination. With this in mind, and despite the efforts of the Delegates of the CIM and the good-faith efforts of the United States, we remain concerned that this document is unwieldy and retains terms and concepts that remain controversial or unclear among the CIM membership.

First, some portions of the document departed from attention on women altogether, which we believe is misguided. In other portions, clarity would be improved if women were specifically named as the subject of the proposed actions.

Additionally, with respect to temporary special measures, including quotas and parity laws, the United States' position is that each country must determine for itself whether they are appropriate, in light of domestic law and policy. The best way to improve the situation of women and girls is often through legal and policy reforms that end discrimination against women and promote equality of opportunity.

The United States also understands that this declaration does not change the current state of conventional or customary law. The United States is not party to the American Convention on Human Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, the Inter-American Convention on Granting of Political Rights to Women, or the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (Convention of Belém do Pará). The U.S. Government takes this occasion to reaffirm its strong commitment to preventing, punishing, and eradicating violence against women and, in particular, prosecuting its perpetrators.

THE PRINCIPAL AND ALTERNATE DELEGATES TO THE INTER-AMERICAN COMMISSION OF WOMEN OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES (CIM/OAS), gathered in the City of Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, on May 7th and 8th 2019, on the occasion of the Thirty-eighth Assembly of Delegates of the CIM;

BEARING IN MIND:

rights enshrined in international and regional human rights instruments, mainly the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the American Convention on Human Rights;

The rights enshrined in international and regional instruments on gender equality and women's rights, mainly the Inter-American Convention on the Granting of Political Rights to Women, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979, CEDAW), and the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (1994, Convention Belém Do Pará), as well as that established by the General Recommendation No.23 of the CEDAW Committee on Women in Political and Public Life;

The commitments established in international and regional political agreements on democracy, gender equality and women's rights, mainly the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women and its report (1995), Resolution 1325 of the United Nations Security Council on Women, Peace and Security (2000), the Inter-American Program on the Promotion of the Human Rights of Women and Gender Equity and Equality (2000, IAP), the Inter-American Democratic Charter (2001), the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015, 2030Agenda) and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Montevideo Strategy for the Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda (2016, Montevideo Strategy);

The commitment of States embodied in the "Agreed Conclusions" of the 47th Session of the United Nations' Commission on the Status of Women "Collect, share, positively recognize and widely publicise good practices to counter gender stereotyping, negative portrayals and exploitation of women, in all forms of media and ICT, as part of their efforts to eliminate discrimination and violence against women" (paragraph s);

The commitments made through the “Declaration of the Inter-American Year of Women “Women and power: For a world of equality”” (CIM/DEC 10 (XXXV-O/10), adopted in 2010 by the XXXV Assembly of Delegates of the CIM and the “Declaration of San José on the Economic and Political Empowerment of Women of the Americas” (CIM/DEC.14 (XXXVI-O/12), adopted in 2012 by the XXXVI Assembly of Delegates of the CIM;

The commitments made through the Declaration on Political Violence and Harassment against Women (MESECVI-VI/doc.117/15 rev2), adopted in 2015 by the Sixth Conference of States Party to the Convention of Belém do Pará; and

The commitments made through the Declaration and Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995, Member States committed themselves, through Critical Area of Concern G “Women in power and decision-making” and H “Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women” to:

- Create or strengthen national machineries and other governmental bodies;

- Integrate gender perspectives in legislation, public policies, programmes and projects; and
- Generate and disseminate sex disaggregated data and information for planning and evaluation, as well as monitor and evaluate the progress made in the representation of women through the collection, analysis and regular dissemination of quantitative and qualitative data on women and men at all levels of the various decision-making positions.

TAKING NOTE:

Of the adoption of resolution AG/RES. 2928 (XLVIII-O/18) "Promotion and protection of human rights" by the OAS General Assembly at its forty-eighth regular session, held in Washington, DC from June 4th to 5th 2018, particularly Chapter xiv, "Strengthening of the Inter-American Commission of Women for the promotion of gender equity and equality, the human rights of women and girls and the elimination of discrimination and all forms of violence against them;"

Of the Report of the President (CIM/doc.11/19) and the Report of the Executive Secretariat of the CIM (CIM/doc.12/19) on the Implementation of the Triennial Program of Work 2016-2019 of the CIM, and the positioning and progress made in terms of strengthening and making visible the role of the CIM as a hemispheric political forum for women's rights and gender equality;

Of the recommendations issued by the Electoral Observation Missions (EOMs) of the OAS, which since 2009 have consistently included specific references to concrete strategies and mechanisms to: increase the participation and representation of women in the political sphere, effectively implement affirmative action measures such as quota and parity laws and alternation, guarantee the access of women candidates to public financing and the media, and make visible violence against women in electoral contexts, among other issues.

RECOGNIZING:

That gender equality and the empowerment of women are the key to the effective exercise of human rights and the achievement of the full

autonomy of women, including their ability to protect themselves against gender-based violence and their participation and contribution as active agents of democracy;

That the CIM, since its creation in 1928, has played a primary role in the protection and guarantee of the political rights of women, beginning with its first goal of extending to women the right to vote, through the adoption by the OAS of the Inter-American Convention on the Granting of Political Rights to Women in 1948 and the catalytic role of the CIM on this issue since then;

That to achieve the international commitments acquired through the international and inter-American legal frameworks, as appropriate, it is necessary to broaden the public agenda for the effective achievement of women's political rights, taking into account three aspects: (i) women's full access to the spheres of the State, including legislative, judicial, executive, electoral and administrative, among others, and in general to all areas of public and political life, from the international to the local levels, and in particular to power and decision-making positions; (ii) the exercise of their rights under

conditions of equality, free of discrimination and violence; and (iii) the incorporation of women's rights into the public agenda; with the involvement of both men and women as an indispensable condition to achieve these ends;

That temporary and voluntary measures such as gender quotas have contributed to accelerating women's access to elected office in the legislative, judicial and executive branches, and that taking into account the diversity of national or domestic legal systems of the Member States, parity and alternation laws can strengthen the democracies of the countries that have instituted these standards, ensuring for the first time that various national parliaments have achieved parity in their composition. These measures constitute one of the most remarkable legislative innovations in the electoral sphere of the last decade;

That according to data from the Gender Equality Observatory of Latin America and the Caribbean, along with the progress made, important inequalities still persist between women and men in elected or appointed offices in the legislative, judicial and executive branches, which limit or impede the

exercise of women's rights, undermine the quality of democratic institutions and political processes, and limit development and the achievement of peace in the hemisphere;

That democratic systems in the hemisphere continue to face multiple challenges for women, in all their diversity to exercise their political rights in conditions of equality, free from discrimination and gender-based violence, because of the persistence of gender stereotypes and the sexual division of labor in public life and politics, the existence of gender biases among those responsible for designing and implementing public policies, the intersection of gender with other axes of inequality for women in politics, such as race, ethnicity, indigenous origin or identity social class, educational level, age, ability and sexual orientation or gender identity and expression, among others, women's restricted access to political financing and in general to networks of political power, women's access to the media, as well as their differential treatment by the media, the disparagement of women's capacities within the political parties, the multiple manifestations of harassment and violence against women in public and political life, including threats and attacks

received through communication media, social networks, pressures for resignation, and the absence of measures to reconcile personal life with political life, including maternity leave for parliamentarians, among others;

That from an intersectional perspective, there are still important inequalities between different groups of women in the exercise of their political rights, highlighting both the persistent gap in representation and leadership capacity and the effective incidence in the political agenda, especially of women in situations of vulnerability or belonging to historically discriminated groups, such as: young, older, Afro-descendant, indigenous, rural, disabled, and migrant women and those with diverse sexual orientations, and gender identities and expressions, among others.

CONCIOUS THAT:

Autonomy, equality and non-discrimination in the full enjoyment and exercise of political rights by women, in all their diversity, and their participation in decision-making, the determination of the political agenda, the allocation of resources and the formulation

and execution of policies in the political sphere are important goals in themselves and contribute to the consolidation and strengthening of democratic systems of the region.

DECLARE THEIR COMMITMENT TO:

1. Redouble their efforts to achieve equality and autonomy in the exercise of women's political rights and access to leadership and decision-making positions in all areas of public and political life in conditions of equality and free of violence;
2. Strengthen cooperation among member states in the framework of the OAS to promote the agenda for gender equality and women's rights in the hemisphere;
3. Encourage political dialogue among States, promote the exchange of good legislative practices and other policies on gender parity, and disseminate other measures to ensure the full and effective participation of women and men in all areas of politics;

4. Promote public policies and other concrete measures that increase the access of Afro-descendant and indigenous women, and women belonging to other groups in situations of vulnerability, to leadership and decision-making positions across all levels of government, ensuring their participation in the work processes;
5. Work with electoral institutions, parliaments, the private sector, and other relevant actors to adopt and implement effective measures and mechanisms to eliminate discrimination harassment, and violence faced by all women and all people of all sexual orientations and gender identities or expressions in the exercise of their political rights, consistent with national legal frameworks;
6. Promote regulatory reform and mechanisms to prevent, punish and address violence against women in political life, taking as a reference when it is considered pertinent the Inter-American Model Law on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women in Political Life, of the Follow-up

Mechanism to the Belem do Para Convention
(MESECVI);

7. Strengthen the legal cooperation of the CIM in the electoral field to ensure the administration of electoral justice from a gender perspective;
8. Consolidate and expand actions for women's political empowerment, in all their diversity from a perspective of inter-sectionality and with emphasis on groups in vulnerable situations, through awareness-raising and training programs for women seeking to enter political life, ensuring that these programs incorporate an intercultural approach;
9. Promote and strengthen women's leadership in strategic decision-making spaces in State entities and levels of government to promote and strengthen the leadership of women in strategic decision-making spaces, and that all public policies should consider the perspective of the whole population;
10. Promote and support the work of the Inter-American Task Force on Women's Leadership,

facilitating dialogue and commitment processes for collaborative work among States, intergovernmental organizations, international agencies, and other key actors, as an opportunity to take advantage of and optimize international cooperation, improving efforts, effectiveness of aid and the impact of actions in favor of greater empowerment of women around the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs;

11. Encourage the design of robust data collection, disaggregated and with a gender perspective, reporting instruments and the construction of specific indicators aligned with the SDGs on the equal or non-discriminatory exercise of women's political rights, in all their diversity and throughout their lives and with emphasis on their leadership within different fields;
12. Express the importance of continuing to advance the strengthening and institutionalization of the National Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women in the region and, in this regard:
 - a. Call on Member States to reaffirm the

importance of National Mechanisms as the leaders of national equality plans and of the implementation of commitments made at the international level, and to continue providing them with sufficient human, financial and material resources and to assign authority at the highest level of administration; and

b. Promote their projection towards the international and regional spheres to close the gap between the commitments made by the States at international and inter-American levels in the area of women's human rights and gender equity and equality and the legal and operational framework at the national level; and

13. Continue to strengthen and consolidate the Inter-American Commission of Women as a hemispheric political forum for the protection and guarantee of gender equality and women's political rights.

REQUEST THAT THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT OF THE CIM:

14. Present to the member states a proposal for discussion of the specific theme of achievements and challenges in the exercise of women's rights and the commitment of the OAS to this agenda for inclusion in the framework of the OAS General Assembly in 2020, 20 years after the adoption of the Inter-American Program on the Promotion of the Human Rights of Women and Gender Equity and Equality;
15. Support Member States who so request it with technical cooperation projects and special missions with a view to achieving the equal participation and leadership of women in political life;
16. Continue and deepen its efforts to mobilize resources for specific projects of the CIM in the areas of the Strategic Plan 2016-2021, and also at the request of member states to strengthen the National Mechanisms for Women through the Methodological Transfer for Participatory Gender Assessments;

17. At the request of member states, strengthen collaboration and cooperation in the specific area of political participation and leadership by women, strengthening channels that ensure the regular exchange of information and good practices;
18. At the request of member states, establish coordination mechanisms with electoral institutions, through their gender units or equivalents, to strengthen actions leading to the administration of electoral justice from a gender perspective;
19. Deepen its coordination work with other bodies and entities of the OAS whose work is related to the achievement of women's political rights, and in particular with the Secretariat for the Strengthening of Democracy;
20. Strengthen efforts to achieve equitable representation and participation among the staff of the General Secretariat, within the framework of the measures established in the "Institutional Policy on Gender Equity and Equality, Diversity and Human Rights of the OAS General Secretariat;"

21. Continue to strengthen collaboration with the institutions and organizations of the Inter-American System, the United Nations System, women's and human rights organizations, and other international cooperation and intergovernmental organizations in the framework of the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2016-2021 and of the Triennial Program of Work 2019-2022 of the CIM with a view to promoting synergies and joint initiatives of interest to the member states;
22. Encourage close collaboration between the CIM, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) in:
 - a. the preparatory process for the XIV Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean (Santiago, Chile, November 2019); and
 - b. the initiatives to be defined for the commemoration of the 40th anniversary of the adoption of CEDAW (2019) and the 25th

anniversary of the Declaration and Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women (2020); and

23. Taking into account the commitment assumed by the States through the IAP to the international agenda for women's rights, deepen efforts to mainstream the gender perspective in all of the organs and entities of the OAS.
24. The execution of the activities foreseen in this Declaration will be subject to the availability of financial resources in the program-budget of the Organization and other resources.

An illustration of a crowd of women at a protest. In the foreground, three women are smiling and looking towards the right. The woman on the left has dark hair and freckles, wearing a white t-shirt. The woman in the middle has dark hair and is wearing a red dress with white polka dots. The woman on the right has dark hair, is wearing a yellow hat and a blue denim vest over a white t-shirt, and is holding a sign. Behind them, a large crowd of women is shown in silhouette, many with their hands raised in the air. The background is a solid light blue color.

Más
derechos
más Mujeres

Más Mujeres
más
Candidat



s,
as

Democracia
paritaria
¡Ya!

