

## **First Caribbean President Elected to OAS Committee of Experts of the Follow-Up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention**

**Fortaleza, December 18, 2025** — For the first time since its establishment, the Committee of Experts of the Follow-Up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention (MESECVI) has elected a Caribbean representative as its President. Mrs. Miriam Roache, of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, was appointed to this historic leadership role during the Committee's XXII Meeting, held from December 9 to 10 in Fortaleza, Brazil, as part of the broader regional gathering of the MESECVI.

MESECVI is the body created by the Organization of American States (OAS) to monitor the implementation of the Inter-American Convention to Prevent, Punish and Eradicate Violence Against Women (Belém do Pará Convention) — the first treaty at the international level to enshrine the right of women to live free from violence, adopted in 1994.

The Fortaleza meeting, which also marked the 20th anniversary of the MESECVI, brought together Ministers for Women, national authorities, civil society organizations, and members of the Committee of Experts for the XXII Meeting of the CEVI and the X Conference of States Parties to the Mechanism, organized from December 9 to 12, alongside side events and a civil society forum that gathered over 150 participants. The election of Mrs. Roache represents a significant milestone, both for the Committee and for Caribbean leadership within hemispheric efforts to eliminate gender-based violence.

The Committee of Experts (CEVI) is the technical and independent body of the MESECVI. It is composed of specialists appointed by the States Parties to the Belém do Pará Convention based on their recognized expertise in women's human rights. The Committee monitors the implementation of the Convention through evaluation rounds, analyzes reports submitted by States, and issues recommendations. Over two decades, the CEVI has also developed regional standards through general recommendations, political declarations, and model laws that advance the protection of women's rights and State accountability across the region.

Mrs. Roache, who has served as the inaugural Expert from Saint Vincent and the Grenadines since the Mechanism's inception in 2004, is highly regarded by her peers across Latin America and the Caribbean for her decades-long commitment to regional advocacy. As President of the Committee, she will now represent CEVI in regional and international fora, including within the Platform of Independent Expert Mechanisms on Discrimination and Violence against Women (EDVAW Platform).

Her election represents a significant milestone, not only as the first Caribbean Expert to assume the presidency of the CEVI, but also as a reflection of the growing recognition of the Caribbean's contributions to the Mechanism. Throughout her tenure, Ms. Roache has played an active role in the development of key MESECVI instruments, including the Model Laws on the violent killing of women (femicide/feminicide) and on violence against women in political life. Most recently, she participated in the CEVI Working Group on gender-based digital violence, contributing to consultations and technical discussions, which culminated in the adoption of the Inter-American Model Law to Prevent, Punish and Eradicate Gender-Based Digital Violence against Women.

Reflecting on her appointment, Mrs. Roache stated: "Serving as a member of the Committee of Experts has been both professional privilege and civic responsibility. Participation has deepened my appreciation for the rigorous work required to translate international human rights principles into tangible protections for women and gender-diverse people across the region. I am honored by the trust placed in me as the first Caribbean national to hold this position, and I thank my fellow Experts for their wholehearted support and confidence."

Mrs. Roache's leadership extends beyond MESECVI. In June 2025, she became the first Vincentian woman to be elected Assistant Secretary to the Board of Directors of the Caribbean Confederation of Credit Unions (CCCU), representing the Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Co-operative League. Nationally, she is widely recognized for her role as former Coordinator of Gender Affairs, and as a long-standing advocate for women's rights and youth empowerment through her work with Soroptimist International.

In addition to her election as President, Ms. Roache was formally honored during the opening ceremony of the X Conference of States Parties in Fortaleza for her twenty years of service as a member of the Committee of Experts. The recognition was presented by the Secretary General of the Organization of American States, Albert Ramdin, in acknowledgment of her sustained contributions to the MESECVI and her leadership in advancing the rights of women across the Americas.

Ms. Roache assumes the presidency at a pivotal moment for the region, as the Committee deepens its work on emerging challenges such as digital violence, climate-related impacts on women's rights, and the protection of women human rights defenders. Her leadership will be instrumental in guiding the CEVI's future agenda and strengthening the effective implementation of the Belém do Pará Convention throughout Latin America and the Caribbean.