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ARGENTINE REPORT TO THE XXXIII ASSEMBLY OF DELEGATES  
OF THE INTER-AMERICAN COMMISSION OF WOMEN

I. GENERAL ASPECTS OF THE REPORT

STATUS OF WOMEN AND CHANGES SINCE THE LAST REPORT TO THE  
ASSEMBLY OF DELEGATES

Various programs to promote and defend women's rights are being carried out nationally, with priority attention paid to health, poverty, strengthening institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women, and the Millennium Development Goals. Noteworthy among them are the activities of the National Council on Women, particularly the national training program known as "Women, Fairness and Work," the meeting on "Fairness and Equality between Men and Women in Rural Areas," and "Methodology to Measure the Use of Time from a Gender Perspective." Also worth mentioning is the work of the Tripartite Commission on Equal Opportunity and Treatment of Men and Women in the Labor Market, which deals, among other things, with application of the Labor Union Quota, implementation of the National Program on "Equality against Discrimination," and the regional Project on "Strengthening Institutional Mechanisms for Social Dialogue," run by the ILO Regional Office.

Similar work is being done by the Gender Fairness Commission within the framework of the Civil Society Advisory Council set up by the Argentine Ministry of Foreign Affairs as a mechanism for cooperation and dialogue with NGOs and broad segments of civil society.

II. LEGAL, POLITICAL AND SOCIOECONOMIC SITUATION

According to the last national population census (2001) women account for 51.3% of the total population, with 90.3% of them living in urban areas.

The Permanent Survey of Households for the third quarter of 2005 shows an occupation rate for women of 48.4% and an unemployment rate of 12.8%. A breakdown of the figures puts the unemployment rate of women between 14 and 29 years of age at 22.5% and that of women between 30 and 64 at a significantly lower 8.4%.

According to the same source the percentage of women below the poverty line is 38.1%, slightly lower than the percentage for men.

III. MONITORING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CIM STRATEGIC PLAN OF ACTION

a.1) Eradication of poverty

Implementation of the following plans continues (2004 report):

- "Hands On" ["Manos a la Obra"] National Local Development and Social Economics Plan. Through this plan the Ministry of Social Development conducts activities to strengthen women's independence by providing self-sufficiency resources.

- National Food Security Plan known as "The most pressing hunger." Deals with direct food and nutritional assistance, the growing of subsistence crops, improving food services in school lunchrooms, caring for pregnant women and children.
- Comprehensive Plan to help Families and Communities: the National Families Plan. Provides support for mothers and their children at risk of violence, as well as social organizations working in prevention, assistance and training, through three lines of action: improving infrastructure, providing equipment, and prevention activities.
- Plan on Unemployed Heads of Households, established in 2002 to provide income directly. Changes were introduced in 2004 by proposing the insertion or reinsertion of beneficiaries into the labor market and family-care support for beneficiaries with large families.

a.2) Elimination of violence

Among the main steps taken to prevent and combat gender violence is the opening of a Specialized Office within the Administrative Investigations unit of the National Prosecutor's Office, so as to process reports of job violence (including sexual harassment) involving central government employees. It receives complaints and brings charges.

Some of the current main policies, actions and achievements are:

- NATIONAL ACTION PLAN TO ERADICATE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN WITHIN THE FAMILY. An Interinstitutional Committee has been set up with representatives from the Ministries of Health, Education, Labor, Human Rights and Social Development, coordinated by the National Council on Women. There are contacts and exchanges with various national organizations that play key roles in preparing and implementing this plan.

Technical assistance in this area envisions holding regional workshops with participants from the Ministry of Social Development, the Human Rights Secretariat, and the Ministry of Security of the Province of Buenos Aires, for police and security personnel and social workers (government and nongovernmental). These activities are primarily intended to:

- Design public policies from the global perspective of gender problems, in conjunction with various government levels involved (national, provincial and municipal) and civil society organizations working in this area;
- Continually update the System on Information and Monitoring of Violence against Women (SIMVCM) based on the Unified Case Registry;
- Set in motion the project on "Preventing and dealing with domestic violence from a gender perspective," under the Federal Program on Women;
- Sign an agreement with the Health Services Superintendence to train medical services personnel of employee organizations in the prevention and care of victims of domestic violence;

- Carry out joint activities with the National Ministry of Health in the area of training in sexual health and responsible procreation, publicizing Law 25929 on "Humanized Childbirth;"
- Participate in the "No to Human Trafficking" network, along with other government organizations (Council on Rights of Children and Adolescents, Women's Bureau of the city of Buenos Aires), journalists, congresswomen and nongovernmental agencies. This network seeks to combat trafficking in persons victimized by a wide variety of abuse. It has also taken part in activities under the Institutional Strengthening Project to Combat Human Trafficking in Argentina (FOINTRA) of the International Migrations Organizations (IMO); and
- INTERINSTITUTIONAL COOPERATION FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT:
  - Entered into by the Security Secretary of the national Ministry of the Interior and the National Council on Women. It seeks to promote and implement the undertakings made by Argentina under the "Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women," and the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women."
  - More specifically, the above agreement allows for joint implementation of projects to teach and support professional training and updating of police and security forces through regional seminars on domestic violence.
  - Under this agreement with the National Secretariat for Domestic Security, a commission was also set up with representatives from that agency, the National Council on Women (CNM) and provincial coordinators, in order to prepare a draft Action Protocol applicable nationwide. This Protocol will seek to preserve local characteristics while facilitating better police performance with a view to improving it, along with access to other services and enforcement of judicial orders.
- JOINT EFFORTS WITH THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH THROUGH THE FEDERAL COUNCIL ON HEALTH. Work is being done on applying a specific protocol to detect violence against women in health services, as well as on a health care and/or referral protocol. Efforts are also under way to reformulate the Unified Case Registry serving victims of violence.
- Ongoing implementation of the FEDERAL PROGRAM ON WOMEN. The following activities are being carried out under this program:
  - A Project on "Preventing and dealing with domestic violence from a gender perspective," which seeks to create and systematize information on resources and services dealing with violence against women.
  - Regional Encounters on Sexual and Reproductive Health, Sexual Violence, Employment and Retirement Situation of Women.

- Data collection and preparation of a National Resources Guide and Database on Preventing and Dealing with Domestic Violence against Women.
  - Reformulation and implementation of 95 training and technical assistance projects to frame equal opportunity policies and plans as well as equality between men and women, through seminars on strategic planning, local development, interinstitutional efforts and networking.
  - Training on Institutional and Resource Management for heads and technical personnel of approved projects.
- Agreements entered into with civil society organizations and the Argentine Sexual and Reproductive Health Association (AASSER) on training and technical assistance at meetings of AIL projects and Regional Encounters, and with the "Women in Action" Civil Association, to prepare a Resources and Database Guide of existing services on preventing and dealing with violence against women in family relations as well as training for centers at the provincial level;
- PROGRAM ON STRENGTHENING THE FAMILY AND SOCIAL ASSETS (PROFAM). The following activities took place under this program:
- Regional Encounters on strengthening and training, organized by program teams and the Council's National Bureau for Technical Assistance, with cooperation from the Sexual and Responsible Procreation Program of the Ministry of Health, coordinated with provincial women's agencies. A total of 202 organizations and 600 people took part.
  - Evaluation and monitoring of implementation of PROFAM projects by the National Universities of *Misiones, Jujuy, Comahue, La Pampa, Buenos Aires, La Plata*.
  - Preparation and screening of the 2006 PROFAM institutional video on proper practices to implement projects under the Program.
- Also, Argentina provides support to the recently established Follow-up Mechanism of the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women and has presented the first national report on the subject, prepared by the National Council on Women, the agency responsible for implementing the Convention.

Argentina's resources in the area of violence against women and violence and sexual abuse of women, children and adolescents include the possibility of using toll-free numbers, national in some cases and provincial and/or municipal in others.

a.3) Education

- The Federal Education Law provides that the State bears primary responsibility for defining educational policy guidelines. This law is known for its nonsexist language and for coordinating educational policies and establishing strategies to create a Comprehensive National Education System free from discrimination or exclusions.
- Illiteracy in Argentina is virtually nil, without an observable gender difference. School attendance is high in primary schools, with no noticeable gender difference. It drops at the secondary level, where the situation favors women. This is even truer at the university level, where gender differences favoring women are sharpest.
- A "Plan to Retain Students, Fathers/Mothers and Pregnant Women in Secondary and Technical Schools" is being implemented in the city of Buenos Aires, with a view to defending the right to an education established in the Convention on the Rights of Children (Law 23849) and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women. Starting in 2001 with the passing of Law 709, the number of unauthorized absences was raised for female students before and after childbirth. Monitoring of female students is essential for referrals, so as to deal with pregnancies and childbirth as well as issues connected with their education and school attendance. This is also a teaching challenge, inasmuch as it seeks to guarantee schooling on a shortened attendance schedule.
- One of the eligibility requirements of the Head of Household Plan is evidence that the children of beneficiaries are attending school.

a.4) Participation by women in power structures and decision-making

- In the area of participation and representation of women in political life, the application of quotas to slates of candidates for elective office has produced at present a National Congress made up of nearly 42% women in the Senate and 33% in the Chamber of Deputies.
- Within the National Executive, the ministries of Defense and Economy and Production are headed by women; two Deputy Ministers serve in the ministries of Labor, Employment and Social Security and Justice and Human Rights.
- In the judiciary, the Supreme Court of Justice of Argentina has two women among its seven justices.
- In the area of labor unions, Quota Law 25674 reserves for women 30% of management positions in labor unions and offices in deliberative bodies, or the same proportion as their female membership if it is lower.

a.5) Employment

- As regards women's participation in the economy, four out of ten urban jobs are now women's, and of the jobs created between the fourth quarter of 2004 and the

same period in 2005 in the 28 largest cities (i.e. 376,000 jobs) six out of ten are women's. Nevertheless, off-the-books jobs and unemployment are higher among women because, over the medium-term, job creation has not kept pace with women joining the labor market.<sup>1/</sup>

- At present, in the city of Buenos Aires and its larger metropolitan area, slightly more than 50% of women 14 and older are employed (working or looking for work). In all population areas the medium-term trend is similar.
- At higher educational levels, participation by women is higher and more stable than the general average; among the population with little education there are 58 female workers per 100 males; among those holding a tertiary or university degree, the ratio becomes 88 to 100.
- One heading where women's participation is striking is hotels and restaurants: women with jobs jumped from 37.1% in early 2003 to 46.8% by mid-2005. In industry, between 1994 and 2005, the women's jobs increased from 24.6% to 29.3%. In addition, perhaps because of traits that generally define women, who are more oriented towards persuasion and containment, the areas in which they register more rapid advances are human resources and marketing.
- On the other hand, areas such as financial management continue to be clearly dominated by men.
- In a report prepared by the Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Security, a comparison between men and women shows differences according to job level. For example, women whose job requires professional qualifications are paid an hourly rate that is 76% of the rate received by their male peers. In jobs requiring technical training, women receive 4% more than men; in jobs requiring operational qualifications or no qualifications, the differences are 8 and 14%, respectively.
- When nothing but monthly salary is considered, there is a gap favoring men: female university graduates receive \$57 per \$100 received by males. The reason appears to be a combination of two factors. First, it seems that women more often need to accept work calling for more training than they have received. Second, the average time worked by women (134 monthly hours) is lower than that of males (188 hours). The conclusion is that women bear more responsibility for household work.
- As to job quality in general, the urban total shows a picture of high vulnerability. More than two thirds of women working outside the home show at least one indicator of unsatisfactory job quality.
- As for women's nonpaying work, Argentina has begun to take steps to recognize their contribution. In one jurisdiction, the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, a law has been passed requiring a periodic survey that will make it possible to quantify the contribution made by women's nonpaying work.

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1. Data from the "Instituto de Estadísticas y Censos" (INDEC).

- The Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Security has launched a campaign to register paid domestic work, with a view to enforcing the law that provides retirement benefits to domestic workers.
- In the employment area, the National Council on Women continues implementing nationwide the "Women, Fairness and Employment" program, as well as training activities connected with the "Methodology to Measure the Use of Time from a Gender Perspective."
- Furthermore, among the major efforts undertaken by the Council is the signing of the Interinstitutional Cooperation Agreement with the INAES to foster development of cooperative and mutual-aid activities with proper access by women to the social economy.
- Likewise, this agency has participated in the Tripartite Commission on Equal Treatment and Opportunities for Men and Women in the Labor Market, contributing to train female labor union officers in the proper application of the Labor Union Quota law and, in the Rules Commission, the debate on the law on Violence in Employment.
- In addition, it coordinates workshops at the national level in the framework of the National Training Program for Facilitators: "Women, Fairness and Employment," whose graduates will in turn pass on their training in the provinces (southern area of *Mendoza*, provinces of *San Juan* and *Entre Ríos*).
- Similarly, it takes part in the design and planning of new training materials for the program "Women, Fairness and Employment" in the area of "associations and marketing"; in drafting proposals and legislative bills to amend employment contracts as regards maternity, shared family responsibilities; training and technical assistance on retirement benefits for women, and serving as observers in competitions for executive positions in the national public administration.

a.6) Health

- The importance of the current NATIONAL PROGRAM ON SEXUAL HEALTH AND RESPONSIBLE PROCREATION lies in its emphasis on prevention. It provides contraceptives universally and free of charge, access to information and counseling, early detection, and encourages women's participation in decisions and commitment by men, as well as quality coverage of sexual and reproductive health.
- MOTHER/CHILD PROGRAM. Its primary aim is to reduce mother and child morbimortality. It deals with prenatal and pediatric care, children's development and adolescent problems, nutrition, permanent training of service personnel, and social communication to improve the health of mothers and children, infrastructure and equipment.
- Activities continue under the NATIONAL PROGRAM TO COMBAT HIV, AIDS AND STD.



- Programs on SECONDARY PREVENTION OF BREAST CANCER and SECONDARY PREVENTION OF CANCER OF THE CERVIX, to reduce deaths from these types of cancer and improve the quality of life of patients.

a.7) National institutions dealing with women's issues:

- National Council on Women.
- Special Representation for Women's Issues in the International Arena, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship.
- Ad hoc Commission to Monitor the Beijing Action Plan.
- Commission to Support and Publicize the Sexual Health and Responsible Procreation Program.
- Tripartite Commission on Equality of Opportunities and Treatment for Men and Women, Ministry of Labor and Social Security.
- Coordinating Unit of the Mother/Child and Nutrition Program of the Ministry of Health.

a.8) Migrations

Noteworthy in this area is the groundbreaking migration policy introduced in Argentina by Migrations Law 25871. This new law, based on a consensus arrived at by various government and nongovernment sectors, guarantees respect for the human rights of migrants and their families and establishes mechanisms for easy access to migratory regularization, thereby facilitating the full integration of foreigners into the community.

a.9) Situation of women in areas of conflict

Argentina recognizes and values the essential role of women in promoting peace. This belief underlies its firm support for initiatives that pursue wider participation of women in peacekeeping and peace-consolidation operations, both in the field as well as in all decision-making levels. Argentina has included gender perspective in its training centers for peacekeeping operations - CAECOPAZ - and participates with female personnel in peacekeeping forces. There are no restrictions on female personnel gaining access to any position or job, and participation in peacekeeping operations is voluntary.

Steps to apply the *Belém do Pará* Convention

Several bills have been introduced in the National Congress on the subject of job violence, including sexual harassment, which encompasses the private sector as well.

In addition, this year the Senate is close to passing a bill defining sexual harassment as a criminal offense and including it in the Criminal Code. Under this bill the harasser could be sentenced to a prison term of four months to four years.

Future actions to further implement the CIM Strategic Plan of Action.

a) Nationally, to improve the status of women

A proposal under the FEDERAL PROGRAM ON WOMEN would create a network of reference centers to guide and advice on domestic violence, using a central database covering the whole country. This will be supplemented by technical assistance to women's areas in the provinces, through orientation and training seminars for personnel in those areas, in conjunction with Federal Counselors on Women in each province, as well as by partnering with leading agencies and government and nongovernmental organizations dealing with these issues. Local coordination will be established to provide containment, advice, follow-up, referrals and monitoring of cases of women victimized by domestic violence. The aim is to widely publicize and exchange data and information on various services and organizations, so as to facilitate consolidation of a diagnosis that will make it possible, as a first step, to set up a National Plan to deal with this problem.

b) Regionally, to support CIM's short-term efforts

As regards the specific issues in "Prevention of Gender Violence," the following agreements have been entered into in the framework of the Specialized Meeting on Women at MERCOSUR-REM:

- Creation of a regional telephone card to promote women's rights and prevent domestic violence.
- A proposal to hold a Meeting of National Officials dealing with violence against women, with a view to establishing certifiable public records. The aim would be to systematize and produce a comparative legal analysis of legislation in the region that may facilitate access to information and the administration of justice.