



FOLLOW-UP MECHANISM TO THE
BELÉM DO PARÁ CONVENTION (MESECVI)
SEVENTH CONFERENCE OF STATES PARTY
February, 21st, 2018
Washington, D.C.

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Declaration on regional challenges for the human rights of women in the Americas and the eradication of violence against women
(Draft)

THE COMPETENT NATIONAL AUTHORITIES OF THE FOLLOW-UP MECHANISM OF THE INTER-AMERICAN CONVENTION ON THE PREVENTION, PUNISHMENT, AND ERADICATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, CONVENTION OF BELÉM DO PARÁ (MESECVI) OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES (OAS), convened in the City of Washington DC, on February 21, 2018, on the occasion of the Second Extraordinary Conference of States Party to the Convention of Belém do Pará and the commemoration of the 90th Anniversary of the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM);

TAKE INTO ACCOUNT:

That the American Convention on Human Rights, the Inter-American Convention to Prevent, Punish and Eradicate Violence against Women, Convention of Belém do Pará, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), among others instruments, form a *corpus juris* for the protection of women's human rights;

That the art. 6 of the Convention of Belém do Pará states that "*The right of every woman to a life free of violence includes, among other elements: a. the right of women to be free from all forms of discrimination, and b. the right of women to be valued and educated free of stereotyped patterns of behavior and social and cultural practices based on concepts of inferiority or subordination*" and that according to arts. 8 (b) of the same Convention and art. 5 of the CEDAW, the States Party agreed to adopt appropriate measures to modify these stereotyped patterns in order to eliminate prejudices and customs of any kind that perpetuate inequality and violence against women;

That the art. 5 of the Convention of Belém do Pará also affirms that "*Every woman may freely and fully exercise her civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights and shall enjoy the full protection of the rights enshrined in regional and international human rights instruments*";

That equality between women and men and the empowerment of all women and girls are objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and that the States Party to the Convention of Belém do Pará adopted the Montevideo Strategy for the Implementation of the Agenda Regional Gender in the Framework of Sustainable Development Towards 2030 (2016). Axis 9 of this Strategy establishes the

need to transform data and information into knowledge and creative arguments for the criticism of “post-truths” and the consideration of equality as a benefit to humanity;

That even though there are major advances in laws recognizing women's rights, there are backwards threats regarding the achievements made in terms of equality and freedom from violence, which infringe upon the principle of progressivity contained in Article 8 of the Convention of Belém do Para and Article 25 of the American Convention on Human Rights, as well as the prohibition of regressivity in the matter of human rights;

That the proliferation of various conservative, fundamentalist and religious groups justifies discrimination, harmful practices, the sexual division of labor, and the exclusion of women from public and political power. This proliferation also questions the advances in the recognition of women's rights, misrepresenting concepts, misinforming and confusing the public, opposing laws and public policies that promote physical, economic and political autonomy, and decision-making by women;

That the Americas are a structurally unequal region in which social inequality and multiple factors of discrimination are normalized, which is why public policies and multiple forms of social work are essential for the elimination of stereotypes and the strengthening of cultures of equality.

TAKE SATISFACTORY NOTE OF:

The *Strategic Plan 2014-2017 of the MESECVI*, which establishes the need to strengthen the national mechanisms of women as one of its goals;

The *Declaration on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women as a Benefit to Humanity*, adopted at the Fourteenth Meeting of the Committee of Experts (MESECVI/CEVI/doc.244/17.rev1) on November 28, 2017;

The *Inter-American Guidelines for Gender Equality as a Benefit to Humanity* (CIM/CD/doc.10/17 Rev.2), approved by the Second Ordinary Session of the Executive Committee of the CIM on November 20, 2017;

The *Advisory Opinion OC-24/17 of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights*, which recognizes the right to equality and non-discrimination of all persons in the Americas.

DECLARE THEIR COMMITMENT TO:

1. Continue working to strengthen the national mechanisms of women, vital for every woman in the region to have access to a life free of violence and the exercise of their civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, as well as for the protection of those rights enshrined in regional and international human rights instruments;
2. Take the necessary measures to comply, within the capacities of the States, with objective 5 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which mentions equality between men and women and the empowerment of all women and girls;
3. Adopt the appropriate measures in order to modify stereotyped patterns, in order to eliminate prejudices and customs of any kind that perpetuate inequality and violence against women;
4. Strengthen the institutional and social fabric for the development and cultural advancement of the equality of women and men as a benefit to humanity;

5. Deepen the gender-conscious approach in laws and public policies, including education free of stereotyped patterns of behavior and social and cultural practices based on concepts of inferiority or subordination, at all levels and in all areas, with the aim of guaranteeing equality of rights and opportunities, and resulting in a life free of violence for women;
6. Empower women to exercise their rights and strengthen mechanisms for prevention, protection, punishment and reparation of violence;
7. Strengthen the mechanisms of access to justice for women, girls and adolescents by guaranteeing free legal advice and ensuring inter-institutional coordination to improve access to their rights;
8. Encourage the deepening and dissemination of knowledge with a gender perspective, at different levels of education as well as in cultural and artistic production, to promote equality and non-discrimination, as well as religious freedom and the strengthening of the Secular State;
9. Create a regional alliance to work jointly and punctually for gender equality and respond in multiple facets to anti-equality and anti-women's rights discourses, from a consultation/dialogue-based approach with the principal actors of these discourses. This will occur within the framework of SDGs 17, and will include the involvement of civil society, feminist and women's movements, MAMs, public institutions, Inter-American system agencies, the United Nations and regional integration systems, as well as international cooperation;
10. Work with communication media and professionals in order that they may actively participate in cultural change for equality and non-discrimination;
11. Find language that allows for a better and wider diffusion of information, of the production of knowledge, concepts, rights, possibilities and protection mechanisms, in synthesis of gender equality as a benefit to humanity, in collaboration with the media, and make this information accessible through the augment of pre-existing channels or the creation of new observatories on equality and non-discrimination.