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**FOLLOW-UP MECHANISM TO THE  
BELÉM DO PARÁ CONVENTION (MESECVI)  
SECOND SPECIAL CONFERENCE OF  
STATES PARTY TO THE  
BELÉM DO PARÁ CONVENTION**  
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## **MESECVI STRATEGIC PLAN 2018-2023**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The Inter-American Convention to Prevent, Punish and Eradicate Violence against Women, or Belém do Pará Convention (1994), was the first treaty, at a global level, to establish women's right to live in a world free of violence, in both the private and public sphere, as a human right. The Convention establishes positive obligations for States to prevent, punish and eradicate violence against women, and has served as an inspiration and reference for the modernization of legislative frameworks in the region.

The Third Round of Evaluation for the implementation of the Belem do Para Convention, based on Article 7 of the Convention, conducted an examination of the fundamental causes of violence against women, in all its forms.

Particular attention was paid to the problem of gender stereotypes, with a special focus on the role of formal and informal education in the fight against practices based on the superiority/inferiority of the sexes.

Taking into account the persistence of sociocultural patterns and historically accepted discriminatory behaviors, the MESECVI (See Annex I) has reiterated in its various reports, and especially in the Third Hemispheric Report on the Implementation of the Belem do Para Convention<sup>1</sup>, the importance of the promotion and implementation of laws that protect the rights of women. They also emphasize that these laws be accompanied by public policies to eradicate violence, taking into account the reality of the diversity of women in the region.

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<sup>1</sup> The *Third Hemispheric Report on the Implementation of the Belem do Para Convention, Prevention of Violence in the Americas* was presented to the VII Conference of States Party and adopted by the Committee of Experts of the MESECVI on the 31<sup>st</sup> of January, 2018.

Additionally to the situation of violence described, there is the incapacity of justice systems in adequately responding to violence against women. The Convention of Belém do Pará also establishes the duty to act with due diligence to prevent, investigate and punish those forms of violence, as an international obligation for the States Party, regardless of where they take place.

The Third Evaluation Round highlighted the low budget that the countries of the region allocate to the prevention of violence against women, which hinders the existence and effective implementation of public policies on the subject.

The Belém do Pará Convention has generated an important change in the juridical conscience of the hemisphere, as well as notable progress in national legislations, but it should be said that such progress is not uniform and that the application of Inter-American standards of protection, through National Justice Systems, are still not only unequal, but without a doubt, insufficient.

The development of public policies for the protection of women's rights, and especially for the right of women to live in a world free of violence, has had a significant impact on national legislation, however, the need to create changes in socio-cultural patterns in order to guarantee the full validity of the rights of women in the region remains an issue.

To an equal extent, while the development of public policy to protect women's rights –especially women's right to live in a world free of violence- has had a relevant impact in national legislations, it is also true that the need for socio-cultural change remains crucial in order to guarantee the full validity of women's rights in the region.

The effective and sustainable implementation of the Belém do Pará Convention requires a process of continuous evaluation, supported by the States Party to the Convention, as well as women's social movements, requiring interaction with the international community in order to advance in the conquest of their human rights. For this reason, the Strategic Plan has been proposed with the goal of advancing standards and deepening tools for the implementation, promotion and defense of women's human rights.

From this context are born the opportunity and need to promote more actively the visibility and validity of the Convention in the countries of the region, both in legal practice and in society as a whole, as well as the MESECVI as a useful tool in the defense of women's human rights.

## **II. GOALS OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN**

Article 1 of the Mechanism's Statute indicates that they must follow-up on the commitments made by the States Party to the Belém do Pará Convention and that the MESECVI has as an objective, the promotion of the implementation of the Convention and contribute to the accomplishment of the purposes established therein, as well as establishing a system of technical

cooperation<sup>2</sup>.

The Strategic Plan 2014-2017 has as its objective, the dissemination of the Belém do Pará Convention and its historical relevance, the rights it includes and the mechanisms and their promotion and protection. On the basis of the document on the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2014-2017 (MESECVI/II-CE/INF.26/18), the MESECVI has carried out an analysis regarding the completion of the goals established in the former Plan, destined to: 1) strengthening the institutionalism of the MESECVI; 2) strengthening the technical capacities of the national mechanisms on women's affairs; 3) providing an intersectional answer to problems regarding violence against women; and 4) raising societal awareness about these problems, as well as promoting the Belém do Pará Convention.

The present Strategic Plan seeks to continue fulfilling the permanent mandates of the MESECVI from an intersectional approach in regard to the human rights of women in every stage of life, with emphasis on prevention and reparation, and introduces the working issues for the Third Round of Evaluation in which we are at, agreed to by the Seventh Conference of States Party to the MESECVI held on November 29th and 30th, 2017, in Panama City, Panama. Thus, it seeks to deepen the following goals:

### ***1. Strengthening the institutionalism of the MESECVI***

In 2014, the MESECVI established as a goal 10 years of institutional development. In the Seventh Conference of States Party to the MESECVI, the States reaffirmed their commitment to the strengthening of the MESECVI and the importance of the exchange of good practices and challenges in the implementation of the “Belém do Pará Convention” among all States Party, in this Third Round of Multilateral Evaluation.

Therefore, the MESECVI has to facilitate the processes of creating tools and strengthening channels of dialogue, in order to support the development and implementation of public policies oriented in compliance with Inter-American standards of protection of the human rights of women. In this way, the MESECVI is expected to generate, promote and aid the processes required in the development of promotion and dissemination instruments, diagnosis indicators, evaluation mechanisms, follow-up and analysis of the diverse and intercultural nature of our region. This will result in the assurance of efficient diagnoses of our current situation, as well as in the design and impact of public policies in the region. Through these formative processes we hope to accomplish aid and technical support of the States Party and civil society, both nationally and internationally within the Americas. Said processes are useful for the defense and guarantee of women's human rights and particularly, women's right to live a life free of violence in the region.

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<sup>2</sup> **Article 1** Purposes / objectives

1.1 The purposes of the Mechanism will be:

- a. To follow up on the commitments assumed by the States Parties to the Convention and analyze the way in which they are being implemented;
- b. Promote the implementation of the Convention and contribute to the achievement of the purposes established therein;

The evaluation document regarding the implementation of the former Strategic Plan reveals the diverse progress accomplished by the Mechanism with respect to the pre-set objectives, and underscores the need to continue strengthening pending challenges that contribute to the promotion of greater participation of Experts in the Committee of Experts to the MESECVI (CEVI), institutionalize the interaction between National Competent Authorities and Experts, and promote greater social participation in the processes of implementation, follow-up and knowledge of the Convention.

A Strategic Plan aimed at the accomplishment of these goals additionally requires a progressive focus, including the planning of parallel processes that strengthen the Mechanism in relation to the strengthening of State action and empowerment of women in the region.

## **2. Contribute to the strengthening of technical capacities of the States Party to the MESECVI in order to implement the Belem do Para Convention from an intersectional approach in regard to the human rights of women in every stage of life, with emphasis on prevention and reparation**

The MESECVI has been identifying, as an imperative necessity, the improvement of the guarantee of protection for women victims of violence, from an intersectional approach in regard to the human rights of women in every stage of life, with emphasis on prevention and reparation.

In this line, it agreed to promote, in the framework of the Mechanism's follow-up work, the application of the Belém do Pará Convention in the following issues:

- a) political violence and harassment against women;
- b) the guarantee of access to justice for women victims of violence;
- c) the combat of social and institutional tolerance to violence against women and girls;
- d) the prevention violence in order to guarantee women's right to be valued and educated free from stereotyped patterns of behavior, as well as social and cultural practices based on concepts of interiority and subordination;
- e) the continual promotion and strengthening of public policies oriented to comprehensively serve women, specially girls and teenage girls victims of all forms of violence, with special emphasis in physical and sexual violence, guaranteeing that they receive specialized attention and;
- f) advancement in the elaboration of the Draft Model Law to prevent, punish and eradicate violent deaths of women based on their Gender (Femicide);
- g) and the recommendation for the expansion of state capacities in order to allocate budgets for programs and plans that combat institutions linked to different forms of violence against women, with a gender focus.

The Strategic Plan, will highlight the situation of women, girls and adolescents with disabilities, elderly women, those of African descent, indigenous women, women farmers, lesbians, transsexual and intersex persons,<sup>3</sup> migrants and refugees, in the attempt to include the other forms

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<sup>3</sup> The Republic of Paraguay reaffirms the precept established in Title II "On the Rights, Duties and Guarantees"; Chapter III "On Equality" and the Chapter IV "On the Rights of the Family" of their National Constitution and accords. In this vein, they express their reservations about the text "lesbians, transsexuals and intersex persons".

of violence that affect women, especially those who are victims of multiple discriminatory factors. Furthermore, the Mechanism can be particularly instrumental in highlighting work regarding the protection of trafficked or missing women, as well as in the context of armed conflicts and natural disasters, among others.

### **3. Intersectional response to issues related to violence against women**

Since the issuing of the Second Hemispheric Report, the Committee recommended that States Party adopt national intersectoral plans to prevent, punish and eradicate violence against women that include mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation, dissemination and the participation of civil society, as well as the establishment of sanctions for public officials who don't comply with the implementation of said plans<sup>4</sup>.

In this context, during the Third Round of Multilateral Evaluation, the MESECVI highlighted the strategies implemented by States Party, which were focused on the prevention, punishment and eradication of violence against women, girls and teenage girls. In this Round, the States Party responded in relation to inter-agency and intersectional actions taken to prevent violence against women in the following areas:

- a) Execution and implementation of National Plans/Strategies to prevent, punish and eradicate violence against women;
- b) The incorporation of gender perspective and eradication of violence against women in a transversal manner in other intersectional National Plans and Actions for development, human rights, inclusion and social justice;
- c) The execution of training programs in women's human rights, forms of violence and state and regional resources for its eradication, focused on the entirety of the public administration, with an emphasis on justice operators, officials that belong to the security bodies of the State and to health and education systems;
- d) The effective and high quality incorporation of civil society organizations that defend women's human rights, in all of the phases related to the design, execution and measurement of national plans, strategies and actions related to the promotion and protection of women's rights, contained in international human rights instruments and national legislation;
- e) Participation of the media and advertising agencies in the promotion of women's rights and the role of the media in the process of promoting equality and gender equity, the elimination of stereotypes associated to gender, promotion of non-sexist language and the struggle against violence and discrimination against women;

The MESECVI has observed progress in the intersectional and multidisciplinary design of national plans presented by States Party, highlighting the existing dedication to substantively improve women's situation and reduce all forms of discrimination against them, in any sphere, mainly in the exercise of public administration.

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<sup>4</sup> MESECVI (2012). Second Hemispheric Report on the Implementation of the Belém do Pará Convention. Recommendation No. 17: Adopt national and intersectoral plans to prevent, sanction and eradicate violence against women, which have monitoring, evaluation, dissemination and participation mechanisms of civil society, organized communities and social movements in their different stages. Establish sanctions for civil servants and officials who fail to comply with its implementation.

However, it is necessary to deepen the efforts surrounding the adoption of methodologies that allow the execution of national plans involving competent authorities, among them education agencies in particular, from an intersectional and multidisciplinary perspective focused on societies as a whole, especially the media, state agencies and civil society organizations, and the guarantee of necessary funding in order to accomplish all of the foreseen goals contained in national plans.

**4. Raise awareness in society as a whole, with regard to violence against women, as well as promoting the Belém do Pará Convention**

In facing the need to continue advancing in the prevention of violence against women, in 2014 the MESECVI celebrated the Hemispheric Forum Belém do Pará +20 “Prevention of violence against women: Good practices and proposals for the future”, where the Declaration of Pachuca was adopted in collaboration with principal and alternative delegates to the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM). The Declaration urges the “Strengthening of efforts to prevent violence against women”, and reaffirms the State’s commitment to take concrete policy, education and communication actions, in order to promote gender equality and violence prevention, highlighting recommendations directed at building content that counters media violence against women and discrimination based on gender in the media, as well as promoting diversity and equal opportunities and rights as values that are fundamental to democracy.

In the framework of the Third Evaluation Round, which focuses its efforts on preventing violence in order to guarantee the right of women, girls and adolescents to be valued and educated free from stereotyped patterns of behavior and social and cultural practices based on concepts of interiority or subordination, the MESECVI proposes supporting States Party that request assistance in the elaboration of adequate dissemination guidelines that contribute to the eradication of all forms of violence against women and enhance respect for women’s dignity.

We understand that the design and planning of these Goals and their activities in the Strategic Plan should not function in an independent manner, but should take into account the level of progress and development of the Convention in each country in the region, also allowing for progressive, permanent and continuous implementation, as well as a process of feedback regarding best practices and the peer review system currently developed by the Mechanism.

Thus, the following is proposed:

<b>Goals</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Outcome indicators (annual frequency unless otherwise indicated)</b>	<b>Responsible/ Coordinators</b>
1 Institutional strengthening of the MESECVI	1.1 Institutionalize dialogues between the organs of the MESECVI according to the document Guidelines for the development of dialogues between the Competent	1.1 Number of meetings developed	NCA and CEVI with TS support

	<p>National Authorities (CNA) and the Committee of Experts (CEVI) of the MESECVI (MESECVI/I-CE/doc.6/14)</p> <p>1.2 Strengthen the dialogue between the organs of the MESECVI regarding measurement indicators for the elaboration of hemispheric reports.</p> <p>1.3 Appointment and effective participation of experts in the activities and meetings of the CEVI.</p> <p>1.4 Promote the participation of civil society under the framework of the “Guidelines for the participation of Civil Society Organizations in the activities of the OAS”, as appropriate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disseminate at the national level the guidelines for civil society participation in the OAS, in order to promote the registration of a large number of women’s organizations.</li> <li>• Disseminate the mandate of the MESECVI at the national level and through electronic media</li> <li>• Develop workshops and virtual forums</li> </ul> <p>1.5 Set concrete goals for development and cooperation with the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and the Inter-American Commission on</p>	<p>1.2 Number of meetings held and agreements reached.</p> <p>1.3 Experts appointed and number of experts that have participated in the CEVI meetings</p> <p>1.4 Number of civil society organizations that participate in the forums, workshops, and other MESECVI events</p> <p>1.5 Number of ongoing activities/cooperation projects</p>	<p>NCA and CEVI with TS support</p> <p>NCA</p> <p>NCA with TS support</p> <p>TS in consultation with NCA</p>
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	<p>Human Rights as well as other international organs or organisms.</p> <p>1.6 Identify effective fundraising plans to increment the raise of funds, including the request to the General Secretariat of the OAS to grant additional regular funds to the MESECVI.</p>	1.6 Variation of raised funds	NCA and TS
<p>2. Contribute to the strengthening of the States Party's technical capacities for the implementation of the Belem do Para Convention from an intersectional approach in regard to the human rights of women in every stage of life, with emphasis on prevention and reparation</p>	<p>2.1 Formulate technical assistance programs to:</p> <p>2.1.1 Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporate and use the indicators for the measurement of violence against woman in States Parties</li> <li>• Strengthen national capacities in the design of indicators and data collection.</li> <li>• Strengthen or develop mechanisms to advance in homogeneous and comparable indicators</li> </ul> <p>2.1.2: Education</p> <p>2.1.3: Violence and women with</p>	<p>2.1 Number of States that have received technical assistance from the MESECVI.</p> <p>2.1.1 Number of States that have submitted their indicators to the MESECVI on time and in the proper format.</p> <p>Number of countries for which data is statistically comparable and/or number of initiatives implemented to this end</p> <p>2.1.2 Number of activities to disseminate the recommendations for preventing violence with the aim to guarantee 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 results</p> <p>2.1.3 Number of meetings with</p>	<p>TS in consultation with NCA and CEVI</p> <p>TS in consultation with NCA and CEVI</p>

	<p>disabilities</p> <p>2.1.4: Trafficking and missing women</p> <p>2.1.5: Femicide/Feminicide</p>	<p>the Follow-up Committee of the Inter-American Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities; the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights, the Institute of Boys, Girls and Adolescents, and the Department of Social Inclusion, in order to make progress on issues related to disability, with special emphasis on women and girls, and results</p> <p>2.1.4 Number of meetings with the Secretariat for Multidimensional Security of the OAS on the issue of Human Trafficking in all of its modalities, particularly of women and girls, from a gender perspective and within the framework of respect for Human Rights, and in accordance with the Belém do Pará Convention; and results</p> <p>2.1.5 Elaboration of a regional map about the situation in the Region and results</p> <p>Number of dialogues in coordination with the with the Secretariat for Multidimensional Security of the OAS on the issue of Femicide/Feminicide, according to the Belem do Para Convention and results</p> <p>Number of consultations for the elaboration of Draft</p>	<p>TS in consultation with NCA and CEVI</p>
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	<p>2.1.6: Violence against Women in Political Life</p>	<p>Comprehensive Model Law to Prevent, Punish, and Eradicate the Gender-related Killing of Women (Femicide/Feminicide), and results</p> <p>Draft Model Law elaborated and reported in Conference of States Parties</p> <p>Number of activities to disseminate the Comprehensive Model Law to Prevent, Punish, and Eradicate the Gender-related Killing of Women (Femicide/Feminicide), and results</p> <p>Number of States that have incorporated the guidelines of the Comprehensive Model Law to Prevent, Punish, and Eradicate the Violent Gender-Related Killing of Women (Femicide/Feminicide) within their legal frameworks, and consistent with national legislation.</p> <p>2.1.6 Number of activities to disseminate the recommendations for Strengthening the Institutional Capacities of States and Political Parties to Respond to Political Violence and/or Harassment against Women” and results</p> <p>Number of activities to disseminate the <i>Inter-American Model Law to Prevent, Punish, and</i></p>	
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	<p>women in the face of violence)</p> <p>2.1.9: Budget</p> <p>2.2 Develop a needs-based analysis to continue strengthening the technical capacities of national mechanisms of women's affairs.</p> <p>2.3 Compile, publish, and exchange of good practices and public policies between competent authorities of respective countries for the prevention, punishment, and eradication of violence against women.</p>	<p>and adolescents, senior women, indigenous women, afrodescendant women, and women with disabilities in the Region and results</p> <p>2.1.9 Number of activities to enhance the capacities of States to guarantee budgets assigned to programs, plans and institutions related to different types of violence against women with a gender perspective</p> <p>Number of States Party that have dedicated at least 1% of their budgets to programs and plans that combat institutions linked to distinct forms of violence against women, with a gender perspective.</p> <p>2.2 Information available on the needs of existing technical cooperation in States Parties.</p> <p>2.3 Number of publications compiling good practices</p> <p>Exchange forums about good practices that have been developed.</p>	
3. Intersectoral answer to problems regarding violence against women	3.1. Strengthen communication channels between the national competent authorities of the MESECVI and other relevant national sectors, particularly in justice, education, health, public security, and authorities responsible for migrant women and authorities responsible for	3.1. Number of actions taken to institutionalize communication channels, like meetings, agreements or other actions.	NCA

	<p>combating poverty, among others, as appropriate.</p> <p>3.2 Promote intersectoral initiatives for the elaboration and application of public policies oriented to follow up on obligations under the Belém do Pará Convention</p> <p>3.3 Adequate progressively national norms on protection standards and Inter-American jurisprudence.</p> <p>3.4 Disseminate good practices and public policies for the prevention, punishment, reparation and eradication of violence against women in every stage of life in all relevant sectors, particularly in justice, education, health, public security, and authorities responsible for migrant women and authorities responsible for combating poverty, among others.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design and development of workshops and training materials for personnel from the relevant sectors mentioned before.</li> <li>• Strengthen capacities in educational systems in the development of programmatic contents and curricula about the Belém do Pará Convention.</li> </ul>	<p>3.2. Public policies implemented and advances made on the adequacy of norms and standards of Inter-American protection and jurisprudence.</p> <p>3.3. Advancement in adequate national norms on protection standards and Inter-American jurisprudence.</p> <p>3.4. Number of actions taken, including disseminated publications, training materials that have been produced and distributed, designed and developed workshops, number of people that have been trained, disaggregated by sex and kind of personnel among which the training has been implemented and the training materials have been disseminated</p>	<p>NCA</p> <p>NCA</p> <p>NCA</p>
4. Raise awareness about the situation of violence against women and	4.1 Disseminate information about the situation of violence against woman in the region, taking into	4.1 Circulated publications, including materials to sensitize and to raise awareness that have been	NCA and TS

<p>promotion of the Belém do Pará Convention.</p>	<p>consideration, among others, the situations of vulnerability mentioned in art.9 of the Convention<sup>5</sup>.</p> <p>4.2 Promote communication strategies about the right of women to live without violence, aimed at the deconstruction of cultural stereotypes causing violence against women</p> <p>4.3 Organize public information strategies and campaigns in order to increase the visibility of the importance of the Belém do Pará Convention and the work of the MESECVI.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop of a media directory of national and hemispheric relevance.</li> <li>• Strengthen relations with the media and journalists sensitive to this issue.</li> <li>• Design of training and awareness workshops for journalist and media outlets</li> <li>• Promote partnerships with universities, film schools, and other arts schools, in order to include the issue of violence against women in their workshops, performances, contests, and other activities that could be taken as the centerpiece of the creative process, so that they constitute instances of awareness and</li> </ul>	<p>produced, workshops that have been held, and type and number of participants</p> <p>4.2 Number of activities, elaborated and disseminated communication materials with media, journalists and television channels</p> <p>4.3 Number of actions including, among others, elaborating training materials and number of annual workshops to sensitize journalists and media outlets.</p>	<p>NCA and TS</p> <p>NCA and TS</p>
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<sup>5</sup> [Art. 9 Convention of Belém do Pará: “(...) the States Parties shall take special account of the vulnerability of women to violence by reason of among others, their race or ethnic background or their status as migrants, refugees or displaced persons. Similar consideration shall be given to women subjected to violence while pregnant or who are disabled, of minor age, elderly, socio-economically disadvantaged, affected by armed conflict or deprived of their freedom.”

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## ANNEX I

### II. MESECVI AS A RESPONSE

This situation has highlighted the need to revise women's protection mechanisms developed and implemented in the region. Therefore, in October 2004, as a response to this reality and the necessity expressed by the States Party to have a more efficient Mechanism to follow-up on women's situation and the fulfillment of the obligations derived from the Belém do Pará Convention, the MESECVI was created, a formal mechanism to monitor, follow-up and assist in the nation implementation of the Convention.

The creation of the MESECVI has assumed the institutional expression of political will to have a consensual and independent system to evaluate the progress made by the States in complying with the Convention, with the objective of implementing the recommendations issued by the Mechanism<sup>6</sup>. In addition to creating the Mechanism as a tool to follow-up and shape measures derived from the Convention, article 10's purpose is broadened, according to which the State shall account for their compliance and implementation of their obligations resulting from the Convention.

Article 1 of the Mechanisms Statute, indicates that in addition to following-up on the commitments made by States Party to the Belém do Pará Convention, the MESECVI has as one of its objectives, to promote the implementation of the Convention and contribute to the achievement of the purposes established therein, as well as establishing a system of technical cooperation between States Party, open to Member States and Permanent Observers<sup>7</sup>.

With these purposes, the Mechanism is designed with two fundamental components, the

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<sup>6</sup> Report of the Technical Secretariat on the implementation of the Follow-up Mechanism for the Implementation of the Inter-American Convention to Prevent, Punish and Eradicate Violence against Women, "Convention of Belém Do Pará" to the XXXIII Assembly of Delegates of the Cim. OEA / Ser.L / II.2.33 CIM / doc.10 / 06 23 October 2006. See: <http://www.ramajudicial.gov.co/csj/downloads/UserFiles/File/ALTAS%20CORTES/CONSEJO%20SUPERIOR /ARCHIVOS%20CONTENIDO/INFORME%20DE%20LA%20SECRETARIA.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> **Article 1 Purposes / objectives**

1.1 The purposes of the Mechanism will be:

- a. To follow up on the commitments assumed by the States Parties to the Convention and analyze the way in which they are being implemented;
- b. Promote the implementation of the Convention and contribute to the achievement of the purposes established therein;

Conference of States Party and the Committee of Experts (CEVI):

- The **Conference of States Party**, comprised by the 32 Member States to the OAS that have signed, ratified or acceded the Belém do Pará Convention. Its main functions include: i) formulate guidelines for CEVI's work; ii) receive, analyze and evaluate the reports and recommendations issued by CEVI; y iii) publish and disseminate the MESECVI Hemispheric Report. The Conference meets every two years.
- The **Committee of Experts**, comprised by national experts, designated by their own States Party to serve with the MESECVI in an independent character. Their main functions include: i) formulate a methodology of evaluation and establish a work methodology; ii) receive and evaluate the States Party' reports and prepare recommendations; iii) present their reports to the Conference of States Party.

The MESECVI works with Multi-lateral Evaluation Round (MER) that includes two different phases:

- **Evaluation**– during which the CEVI analyzes the implementation of the Belém do Pará Convention, based on questionnaires completed by the States Party, and prepares recommendations;
- **Follow-up** – during which the CEVI circulates an additional questionnaire to the States Party to inquire about the implementation of their specific recommendations, and prepares a Hemispheric Report.

Because the States have recognized that violence against women constitutes a human rights and fundamental freedoms violation, and limits partially or totally women's recognition, enjoyment and exercise of such rights and freedoms<sup>8</sup>, and that the MESECVI is the product of Inter-American consensus to deal with this issue, the MESECVI has to:

- Analyze the multiple forms of violence that impede the full enjoyment and exercise of women's human rights, their right to live a free and dignified life, to be valued and educated free of stereotypes of behavior and social and cultural practices based on concepts of inferiority and subordination.
- Follow-up on the actions implemented by States Party in the fulfillment of non-delegable obligations of States to guarantee, by all appropriate means and without delays, policies oriented to prevent, punish and eradicate such violence<sup>9</sup>.

On the other hand, given the importance of articulation and participation of women's organizations, through academia, NGOs and groups and social movements to accomplish the full enjoyment of human rights, the MESECVI should also activate the necessary mechanisms so that this instrument is an institutional reference point for the defense of women's human rights in the region.

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<sup>8</sup> Preamble to the Belém Do Pará Convention

<sup>9</sup> Art. 7 Convention of Belém do Pará

In exercise of its functions, in 2014 the MESECVI prepared the Guide for the Application of the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (Convention of Belém do Pará), where it recognized that violence within the family is a generalized phenomenon that affects women from all social strata, yet continues to be perceived as acceptable and legitimate. It is a crime that is rarely reported, mainly due to fear of reprisals, pressure from the family or the community to avoid revealing domestic problems, women having limited knowledge about their rights, lack of support services, economic dependence and the perception that the police do not respond with appropriate solutions. These are obvious obstacles that perpetuate patterns of violence against women.

In the same guide, the MESECVI also points out the seriousness of violence against women when it is perpetrated or tolerated by the State or its agents, particularly in cases of sexual violence, including rape, committed in hospitals, educational centers and incarceration facilities, among others. Likewise, the proliferation of sexual violence in armed conflicts or massive violations of human rights in the region demonstrates its massive use as a weapon for the subjection of the bodies and lives of women.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> MESECVI, 2014, Guide for the Application ..., op. cit., page 24.