

16 July 2010

ENGLISH

ORIGINAL: SPANISH

Eleventh session of the Regional Conference on Women
in Latin America and the Caribbean

Brasilia, 13-16 July 2010

BRASILIA CONSENSUS

The Governments of the countries participating in the eleventh session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, represented by ministers and delegates of the highest level devoted to promoting and defending women's rights, gathered in Brasilia from 13 to 16 July 2010 to discuss achievements and challenges relating to gender equality with a focus on women's autonomy and economic empowerment,

Reaffirming the validity of the Quito Consensus and its continued relevance, as well as the regional consensuses adopted at previous sessions of the Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, and restating our commitment to international treaties on women, principally the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol, the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women, the Declaration and Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995), the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (1994), the Programme of Action of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (Durban, 2001), the conventions of the International Labour Organization (ILO), and the other instruments, standards and resolutions pertaining to gender equality and women's empowerment and progress,

Bearing in mind that the Region has joined the United Nations Secretary-General's Campaign "Unite to End Violence against Women",

Bearing in mind also the need to redouble efforts in order to fulfil internationally agreed development goals, including those established further to the United Nations Millennium Declaration of the General Assembly (New York, 2000),

Bearing in mind further resolution 54/4 on women's economic empowerment adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women of the United Nations at its fifty-fourth session (New York, 2010),

Recognizing that over the 15 years since implementation of the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995) countries have made significant strides in particular as regards the increase in women's access to education and health, the adoption of egalitarian legal frameworks for building and strengthening machineries for the advancement of women, the design of plans and programmes for gender equality, the definition and implementation of national equal opportunity plans, the enactment and enforcement of legislation which deters and penalizes perpetrators of all forms of violence against women and which guarantees the human rights of women, the growing presence of women in decision-making positions and action taken to fight poverty,

Recognizing also the persistence of obstacles which show the need to redouble efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women and which limit or prevent full gender equality, such as the feminization of poverty; the sexual division of labour; the lack of social protection and of full access to education and health care, including sexual and reproductive health care; unpaid domestic work; racial and ethnic discrimination; and unilateral measures contrary to international law and to the Charter of the United Nations whose basic consequences fall disproportionately on women, adolescents and girls,

Highlighting the active, coordinated contribution made to those processes by Governments and by international agencies devoted to the promotion and defence of the rights of women and of civil society, through the feminist and women's movement,

Reiterating the contribution made by the feminist and women's movement in the region to deepening democracy, building real equality and developing institutions and public policies on gender,

Reaffirming that the secular character of States contributes to the elimination of discrimination against women and helps to ensure the full exercise of their human rights,

Reaffirming also that parity is a key condition for democracy as well as a goal for eradicating the structural exclusion of women in society, which affects primarily indigenous and Afro-descendent women and those with disabilities, and that it is aimed at achieving equality in the exercise of power, in decision-making, in mechanisms for participation and social and political representation and in family, social, economic, political and cultural relationships,

Considering that unpaid domestic work is a burden that falls disproportionately on women and, in practice, constitutes an invisible subsidy to the economic system that perpetuates their subordination and exploitation,

Considering also that one feature of the demographic transition taking place in the countries of the region is the ageing of the population, which overburdens women with the task of caring for older persons and for the sick,

Recognizing that access to justice is essential in order to safeguard the indivisible and comprehensive nature of human rights, including the right to care,

Drawing attention to the fact that the right to care is universal and requires solid measures to ensure its observance and to achieve co-responsibility of the whole of society, the State and the private sector;

Highlighting the significant contribution that women in all their diversity make to the productive and reproductive dimensions of the economy, to the development of multiple strategies for dealing with poverty and preserving knowledge, including scientific knowledge, and practices that are fundamental for survival and for sustaining life, especially for comprehensive health and for food and nutrition security,

Considering that progress in the region is uneven and that challenges to gender equality persist and require constant State investments and policies on issues such as the sexual division of labour, unpaid domestic work, the elimination of discrimination in the labour market and social protection for women, the prevalence and persistence of violence against women, racism, sexism, impunity and lesbophobia, parity in all areas of decision-making and access to high-quality universal public services in the areas of public awareness, education and health-care, including sexual and reproductive health care,

Considering also that the right to land ownership and to access to water, forests and biodiversity in general is more limited for women than for men, that the use of these natural resources is conditioned by the sexual division of labour, that environmental pollution has specific impacts on women in both rural and urban milieus, and that it is necessary for the State to recognize the contribution of women to biodiversity conservation, to implement affirmative action policies and to guarantee the exercise of their rights in this area,

Considering further that women are marginalized from access to and control of the media and new information technologies, and that States should design specific policies which, together with general policies, ensure their participation on an equal footing,

Bearing in mind that food, energy, and financial crises threaten the sustainability of women's achievements and underscore the urgent need for more rapid progress in the area of gender equality,

Considering that the measures adopted to achieve macroeconomic stability have not reduced gender inequalities and that the tax burden and public investment remain low,

Recognizing that, despite the measures taken to predict, prevent or minimize their causes and mitigate their adverse consequences, climate change and natural disasters can have a negative impact on productive development, time use by women, especially in rural areas, and their access to employment,

Reaffirming the need to overcome the tendency to link equality policies exclusively to social issues,

Stressing the importance of and need for broad, inclusive, sustainable, redistributive, solidarity-based and strengthened social security systems that work as social protection mechanisms for vulnerable populations, promote social justice and help reduce inequalities,

Considering that women's comprehensive health is a fundamental right that involves the interaction of social, cultural and biological factors and that gender inequality is one of the social determinants of health,

Bearing in mind that Latin America and the Caribbean is still the most inequitable region in the world and exhibits widening gender, ethnic and racial gaps; that the social, political, cultural and economic patterns underlying the sexual division of labour must be changed without delay; and that the key to this is a new equation between the State, society as a whole, the market and families in which unpaid domestic work and caregiving are construed and treated as public matters and a responsibility to be shared among all these spheres,

Emphasizing that economic autonomy for women is born out of the interrelationship between economic independence, sexual and reproductive rights, a life free from violence, and political parity,

Recognizing the importance of strengthening State structures and the strategic role played by machineries for the advancement of women, as well as the need to endow these machineries with autonomy and with the necessary human and financial resources to enable them to have a cross-cutting impact on the structure of the State with a view to building strategies for promoting women's autonomy and gender equality,

Recognizing also the persistence of racism and the resulting accumulation of disadvantages for Afro-descendent and indigenous women,

Considering that women's comprehensive health depends on concrete measures aimed at reducing maternal morbidity and mortality and adolescent maternity and ensuring a better quality of life, and that Millennium Development Goal 5 is the furthest from being achieved,

Bearing in mind that organized crime and de facto powers, which threaten security and democracy-building, and armed conflicts and the displacements they cause, have a particular impact on the trafficking of persons, sexual commerce and women's lack of safety,

Recognizing that the territory historically occupied by indigenous women forms the basis for their economic and cultural development,

Decide to adopt the following agreements in order to address the challenges to women's autonomy and gender equality:

1. Attain greater economic autonomy and equality in the workplace

- (a) *To adopt* all the social and economic policy measures required to advance towards the attribution of social value to the unpaid domestic and care work performed by women and recognition of its economic value,
- (b) *To foster* the development and strengthening of universal care policies and services based on the recognition of the right to care for all and on the notion of sharing the provision of care between the State, the private sector, civil society and households, as well as between men and women, and of strengthening dialogue and coordination between all stakeholders;
- (c) *To adopt* policies conducive to establishing or broadening parental leave and other childcare leave in order to help distribute care duties between men and women, including inalienable and non-transferable paternity leave with a view to furthering progress towards co-responsibility;
- (d) *To encourage* the establishment, in national accounts, of a satellite account for unpaid domestic and care work performed by women;
- (e) *To promote* changes in the legal and programmatic framework aimed at achieving recognition in the national accounts of the productive value of unpaid work, with a view to the formulation and implementation of cross-cutting policies;
- (f) *To develop* active labour market and productive employment policies to boost the female labour-market participation rate, the formalization of employment and women's occupation of positions of power and decision-making, as well as to reduce unemployment rates, especially for Afro-descendent, indigenous and young women who suffer discrimination based on race, sex and sexual orientation, in order to ensure decent work for all women and guarantee equal pay for equal work;
- (g) *To promote and enforce* equality-in-employment legislation which eliminates discrimination and asymmetries of gender, race, ethnicity and sexual orientation in access to the labour market and employment continuity, in decision-making and in the distribution of remuneration; establishes mechanisms for the filing of complaints; and provides for the sanctioning of sexual and other forms of harassment in the workplace;

- (h) *To promote and encourage* the enactment of legislation that extends to female domestic workers¹ the same rights as those of other workers and establishes regulations to protect them, promotes their economic and social valuation and ends child domestic work;
- (i) *To promote* the ratification and implementation of Convention 156 of the International Labour Organization;
- (j) *To ensure* equal remuneration for men and women workers for work of equal value, in conformity with the international conventions that have been ratified, particularly Conventions 100, 111 and 112 of the International Labour Organization, and with international standards relating to women's rights,
- (k) *To promote* the adoption of policies and programmes on professional training for both rural and urban women in competitive and dynamic areas of the economy in order to achieve access to technologies, the recognition of traditional technologies and fuller and more diverse and skilled participation by women in the labour market while taking into consideration the constraints imposed by the double working day;
- (l) *To ensure* women's access to productive assets, including land and natural resources, and access to productive credit, in both urban and rural areas;
- (m) *To promote* the valuation and recognition of women's economic contribution in rural areas, in traditional communities and indigenous and Afro-descendent peoples or minority groups, and of migrant women through remittances;
- (n) *To promote also* the economic and financial autonomy of women by means of technical assistance, by fostering entrepreneurship, associations and co-operatives and integrating women's networks into economic and productive processes and local and regional markets;
- (o) *To encourage and strengthen* the adoption of systems to oversee and promote gender equity in the public and private sectors, with a view to non-discrimination in employment, the reconciliation of professional, private and family life, and the prevention and elimination of all forms of gender violence in the workplace, especially sexual and other forms of harassment;
- (p) *Enact* legislation directed towards the accreditation of non-formal studies and education programmes which qualify adult women for productivity and employment,
- (q) *Adopt* measures to end all forms of economic violence against women, particularly those that infringe their human dignity or exclude them from the right to receive financial resources, with a view to encouraging their autonomy and the respect of their labour-related rights.

2. Enhance the citizenship of women

- (a) *To promote and strengthen* State policies that ensure respect for and the protection and observance of all the human rights of women of all ages and walks of life as the substantive foundation for democratic processes;
- (b) *To ensure* freedom of religion and worship, providing that women's human rights are respected;
- (c) *Ensure* that fiscal policies combine criteria of effectiveness with criteria of equity, with emphasis on their redistributive and progressive function, and that they ensure the development of women;
- (d) *Promote and ensure* gender, race and ethnic mainstreaming in all policies, especially in economic and cultural policy, and coordination between branches of government and social stakeholders to ensure gender equality;

¹ This term is extracted from the report entitled "Decent work for domestic workers" presented by the Committee on Domestic Workers to the 99th session of the International Labour Conference held in Geneva in June 2010, in which paragraph 145 (b) states "the term "domestic worker" should mean any person engaged in domestic work within an employment relationship".

- (e) *To increase* public investment in social security, so as to comprehensively address the specific care and social protection needs of women that arise in situations related to ill health, disability, unemployment and life cycles, especially childhood and old age;
- (f) *To strengthen* the production of the disaggregated statistical information needed to raise the profile of gender inequality issues in the spheres of physical and economic autonomy and decision-making;
- (g) *Adopt* an approach of gender, race and ethnic equality and the corresponding measures in relation to economic, fiscal and tax policy, agrarian reform, and access to ownership of land, housing and other productive assets, in order to ensure the equitable distribution of wealth;
- (h) *Conduct* studies on how the economic, financial, food, energy and environmental crisis affect women and, in particular, internal and international migratory flows and the reconfiguration of all spheres;
- (i) *Make progress* in the adoption of measures to improve the status of migrant women and their families, bearing in mind their vulnerability, in order to improve their labour-market situation and social inclusion;
- (j) *To develop* policies that favour the settlement of rural women and rural employment in areas undergoing productive restructuring and to ensure that mechanisms needed to implement them are in place;
- (k) *Implement* measures aimed at eliminating the specific constraints faced by women in accessing formal financial services, including savings, credit, insurance, and money-transfer services;
- (l) *To ensure* women's right and access to ownership of land and housing provided under government housing programmes, with the respective title deeds, while respecting the right of indigenous women to their land since this forms the basis for economic and social development;
- (m) *To promote* the reformulation of national social security systems in order to extend their coverage to female workers in the informal market, female rural family workers, independent female workers, female domestic workers,² different forms of family, including same-sex couples, and women engaged in caregiving activities;
- (n) *To encourage* the review of existing national social security systems, in order to guarantee women's rights as beneficiaries, taking into account the state of their participation in the labour market;
- (o) *To implement* systems of management of natural and anthropic risks with a gender, race and ethnic focus for addressing the causes and consequences of natural disasters and the differential impacts that such disasters and climate change have on women, focusing especially on the recovery of sustainable livelihoods, the administration of refuges and shelters, sexual and reproductive health, the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence and the elimination of obstacles to women's rapid integration or reintegration in the formal employment sector, due to their role in the economic and social reconstruction process;
- (p) *Promote* the reform of the education system and educational practices in order to transmit the notion of co-responsibility in family and public life;
- (q) *Encourage* the elimination of gender stereotypes through measures directed at the education system, the media and business;
- (r) *Incorporate* the variables of sex, ethnicity and race, considering self-identification as a basic criterion for recording information in population and housing censuses, household surveys, rural surveys and vital statistics, among others;
- (s) *Prepare and implement* lifelong learning policies and plans with sufficient resources and measurable targets, directed in particular at young and adult women, in order to enable them to exercise their citizenship more fully.

² Ibid.

3. Broaden the participation of women in decision-making and the exercise of power

- (a) *To increase and enhance* opportunities for the equal participation of women in making and implementing policies in all spheres of public authority;
- (b) *To adopt* all necessary measures, including amending legislation and adopting affirmative policies, to ensure parity, inclusion and alternation of power, in the three branches of government, in special and autonomous regimes, at the national and local levels and in private institutions, in order to reinforce the democracies of Latin America and the Caribbean from an ethnic and racial point of view;
- (c) *To contribute* to the empowerment of indigenous women's leaderships in order to eliminate existing gaps and ensure their participation in decision-making, and respect the principle of free, prior and informed consent in the design and implementation of national and regional public policies;
- (d) *To promote* the creation of mechanisms which ensure women's political partisanship and participation and which, as well as parity in candidate registers, ensure parity of outcomes, equal access to campaign financing and electoral propaganda, and women's participation in decision-making within party structures, and support such mechanisms where they already exist; in addition, create mechanisms to sanction non-compliance with legislation in this area;
- (e) *To encourage* measures to ensure women's access to decision-making and strengthen their unionization, among others, in both urban and rural areas, in order to make further progress towards equal opportunities and equal treatment for men and women in the workplace;
- (f) *To encourage also* the creation and strengthening of government machineries for policies on women at the national and subnational level, endowing them with the necessary resources and highest hierarchical status within the Government, in keeping with national contexts;
- (g) *Promote* parity-based representation in regional parliaments, for example, the MERCOSUR Parliament, the Central American Parliament, the Andean Parliament and the Latin American Parliament;
- (h) *Promote also* the creation and strengthening of citizens' mechanisms for oversight of electoral processes and the establishment of institutional mechanisms to ensure compliance with legislation aimed at guaranteeing women's political participation;
- (i) *Create* mechanisms to support the political participation of young women in decision-making, free of discrimination based on race, ethnicity or sexual orientation, and to ensure that their forms of organization and expression are respected and not subjected to generational stigmatization;
- (j) *Promote* measures to increase women's presence on corporate boards;

4. Address all forms of violence against women

- (a) *To adopt* preventative and punitive measures as well as measures for protecting and caring for women that further the eradication of all forms of violence against women in public and private spheres, with special attention to Afro-descendent, indigenous, lesbian, transgender and migrant women, and those living in rural, forest and border areas;
- (b) *To broaden and guarantee* effective access to justice, and to free legal assistance for women in violent situations, and provide training and awareness-raising, from a gender perspective, for staff and officials responsible for administering justice,
- (c) *To take* all effective measures necessary to prevent, punish and eliminate all forms of trafficking and smuggling of women, adolescents and girls for sexual exploitation or any other purpose;

- (d) *To formulate and apply* measures for combating violence against women who are engaged in prostitution;
- (e) *To promote* the human rights of women deprived of their freedom;
- (f) *To mainstream* into public safety policies specific measures for preventing, investigating, sanctioning, penalizing and eliminating femicide and feminicide, understood as the most extreme form of gender violence against women;
- (g) *To promote* policies and programmes for the prevention of violence against women, directed at aggressors and their families with a view to preventing recurrence;
- (h) *To promote* policies aimed at changing the sociocultural patterns that reproduce violence and discrimination against women;
- (i) *To create* national gender-based violence surveillance systems to collect, compile and analyse data on gender-based violence in an effort to influence national and local policies and programmes;
- (j) *To ensure* that women are not victims or at risk of any type of violence in situations arising from natural and climate disasters and that the humanitarian assistance provided in such cases takes into account women's needs, in order to avoid the double victimization of women;
- (k) *To promote and strengthen* programmes of awareness-raising and training with a gender focus, directed towards those responsible for administering justice, in order to ensure high-quality attention and eliminate institutional violence against women;
- (l) *To adopt*, in the framework of regional and national strategies, public safety measures with a perspective of gender and of urban or community diversity, as forums for bringing all people together so as to guarantee an environment free of violence against women;
- (m) *To ensure* free, comprehensive multi-professional services for women who are victims of violence;
- (n) *To promote and adopt* measures to ensure budget allocations for programmes aimed at preventing violence against women.

5. Facilitate women's access to new technologies and promote egalitarian, democratic and non-discriminatory practices by the media

- (a) *To promote* actions that facilitate women's access to communications and new information technologies, including education and training in the use of such technologies for networking, advocacy and exchange of information, educational activities, and the specialized use of these technologies in economic activities;
- (b) *To formulate* policies aimed at eliminating sexist and discriminatory contents in the media and train communications professionals correspondingly, valuing the dimensions of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and generation;
- (c) *To build* mechanisms for monitoring the content transmitted in the media and for regulating the Internet, ensuring the active, ongoing participation of society in order to eliminate sexist and discriminatory content;
- (d) *To promote and ensure* access of women, especially indigenous and Afro-descendent women, to the mass media through plans that incorporate their languages and cultural identities into community radio and audiovisual slots;
- (e) *To promote* women's access to science, technology and innovation, encouraging the interest of girls and young women in scientific and technological fields.

6. Promote the conditions for the integral health of women and for their sexual and reproductive rights

- (a) *To guarantee* the conditions and resources for the protection and exercise of women's sexual and reproductive rights throughout the lifecycle and across population groups, free of all forms of discrimination, based on the integrated approach promoted in the programme of action of the International Conference on Population and Development;
- (b) *Include* in national and subnational budgets sufficient resources to broaden the public supply of high-quality comprehensive health services for women in all their diversity, particularly chronic and non-communicable diseases;
- (c) *To foster* the regulation and implementation of legislation enacted in relation to gender equality, including laws concerning physical autonomy, and promote women's access to and continuity in the labour market;
- (d) *To ensure* access to sexual education, by implementing culturally relevant comprehensive sexual education programmes with a gender focus;
- (e) *To ensure also* universal access by women in their diversity to comprehensive, high-quality sexual and reproductive health care, including care for human immuno-deficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS), its prevention, diagnosis and free treatment, and especially, to carry out campaigns to promote the use of the male and female condoms;
- (f) *To review* laws that punish women who have undergone abortions, as recommended by the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women, including the further initiatives and actions identified for the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, as well as the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the general observations of the Committee against Torture of the United Nations, and ensure that abortions are performed safely where authorized by the law;
- (g) *To strengthen and broaden* plans and programmes that promote healthy maternity and prevent maternal mortality by ensuring universal access to health-care services, especially for indigenous and Afro-descendent adolescent girls and women;
- (h) *To promote* the reduction of adolescent pregnancies, through education, information and access to sexual and reproductive health care, including access to all contraceptive methods;
- (i) *To promote also* access by indigenous and Afro-descendent women to culturally and linguistically relevant health-care services, incorporating and valuing the knowledge and practices of ancestral and traditional medicine, especially those practiced by women;
- (j) *To recommend* that, at the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals, which will be held in September 2010, particular attention should be paid to target 5B concerning universal access to reproductive health.

7. Carry out training and activities for exchanging and disseminating experiences with a view to the formulation of public policies based on the data collected by the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean

- (a) *To request* the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean to carry out training and capacity-building activities for exchanging and disseminating experiences, including those with a political impact, aimed at public policymakers and political operators. These activities would be aimed at compiling the practices employed in the countries and making progress in formulating public policies using the data of the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, and providing a general source of know-how and a complement to the Observatory.

8. Promote international and regional cooperation for gender equality

- (a) *Encourage* regional, subregional and multilateral cooperation programmes, taking advantage of the processes of integration for socio-economic development under way in Latin America and the Caribbean, particularly actions that promote gender equality;
- (b) *Strengthen* South-South cooperation in order to achieve gender equality and women's advancement;
- (c) *Urge* donors to meet their official development assistance commitments, as an essential element for the promotion of gender equality.

9. Welcome the offer extended by the Government of the Dominican Republic to host the twelfth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, and accept this invitation with pleasure.