

PERMANENT MISSION OF THE
BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELAN
TO UNITED NATIONS

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VENEZUELA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

49 SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

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Statement by the Delegation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the
49th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women

Ms. Chairperson.

Good afternoon Madam Chairperson and distinguished colleagues. Allow me to congratulate you for the extraordinary works of the Commission under your leadership.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela ratifies its commitment and adherence to the Beijing Platform of Action, the Cairo Programme of Action, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the realization of the Millennium Development Goals and the Consensus of Mexico.

The Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela consolidates, widens and strengthens governmental mechanisms to promote gender equality that is the case of the National Council on Women (NIW) that by the modification of the Law on Equal Opportunities, enacted in 1999, its organizational status was changed and became a higher level entity which is now the National Institute of Women. Another important decision for the improvement and advancement of women is the NIW budget increasing in 500 per cent, during the last five years. Furthermore, we are implementing the 2nd National Plan on Equal Opportunities for Women.

Additionally, we have established other institutions in order to assist specific needs and women's human rights: the National Women Defender, in 1999; Women Special Defendant attached to the People Defendant Office, established in 2004; and in the economic area, we created the Women Development Bank in 2001. All of these institutions provide nationwide assistance.

The National Institute on Women (NIW) facilitates state — social interaction by means of thousands of "points of encounter" with the NIW. These grassroots women organizations integrated to the works of the NIW are addressed to implement feasible solutions for problems affecting communities, consistent with the principle of co-responsibility set up in our Constitution, within a participative democratic model committed to building of a just and peace loving society.

To assist women victims of domestic violence, in 1998, the former National Congress, now National Assembly promulgated the *Law on violence against women and family*. The National Institute on Women along with other entities of our Government as part of the implementation of the Plan on Prevention of Violence against Women has created "Casas de Abrigo" shelters created as to provide housing and protection for women and their families,

victims of violence. We are also providing specialized assistance through a toll free number.

The Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela categorically refuses women, girls white and boys slave trade by signing in 2000. the United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and by ratifying the two additional Protocols in May 2002.

On the other hand, we submitted to the National Assembly a Law Project on Crime Prevention which establishes white slaves trade as a crime.

The new Law on Immigration and extanjeria, enacted in 2004, in article 56 sets out imprisonment of any natural or juridical person trafficking in human beings by any act or omission. (establishes imprisonment for natural or juridical person that by any action or omission incur in trafficking in human beings)

In order to include in the national statistics the perspective of gender, NIW signed an agreement with the National Institute on Statistics in September 2004, taking an important step forward towards the recollection, production and analysis of information desegregated by sex. We have also established a Gender Sub-committee for the production of figures on Gender Perspective.

With the Promulgation of the Law on Social Responsibility on Radio and Television, in 2004, NIW is member of the Council on Responsibilities that will take care of the elimination of discriminatory, sexist, and violence against women contents from radio and television programs.

The proportion of women at governmental positions has considerably increased; such is not the case for direct election positions. Currently, NIW is promoting a quota of 50/50 per cent as to strengthen the protagonist role of the Venezuelan women and their political empowerment.

Ms Chairperson

The Venezuelan Government is accomplishing its commitment of poverty eradication as agreed in the Millennium Summit, by the implementation of social – economic oriented strategies addressed to meet the population basic needs such as health, nutrition, education and employment; as well as the defense of full respect to integral human rights of women and men, regardless social status, ethnic or racial status, and by a more equitable distribution of wealth.

In this context, the Women Development Bank, since its creation in 2001 up to February 2005, has provided low –rate subsidized loans, generating 154.248 potential jobs, and benefiting 771.240 people across the country. In

addition, more than 30.000 people have been trained (96 per cent women and 4 per cent men) in the areas of popular economy, community analysis, cooperatives, macro-enterprises management, leadership and issues on human development such as integral health, sexual health, reproductive health and intra-family violence prevention.

In order to hasten the process of social inclusion we have established the Social Missions. Mission Robinson is aimed at eradicating illiteracy in our country. The last year and a half we account on 1.300.000 newly literate people (65 per cent women). We have requested UNESCO our certification as a country free of illiteracy. In order to increase the educational level of the population lagging behind, we have established Missions Ribas and Sucre aimed to achieve that all Venezuelan people can culminate and access to higher education. The vast majority of the enrolled population is Women.

Mission Barrio Adentro has been established in order to provide primary health care to lower income population, and to assist people who used to have little or not access health care services. We are implementing a wide-ranging Program in Sexual and Reproductive Health to assure timely pre-birth assistance and cervix cancer early detection, aimed to reduce child and maternal mortality.

We acknowledge the unconditionally solidarity and cooperation of the Government and people of Cuba for the fulfillment of the purposes of these Missions.

The protection of the sexual and reproductive rights of Venezuelan women and men is now guaranteed with the promulgation of the Official Norms for The National System on Sexual and Reproductive Health in Public and Private Places, and by the National Program on Sexual and Reproductive Health, entity that formulates policies, actions and strategies for prevention and assistance, facilitates the institutional coordination, and assess policies and projects on sexual and reproductive health. The Venezuelan Ministry for Health and Social Development provides for free, prescriptions for people infected with HIV/AIDS, being pregnant and children are the main priority.

Ms Chairperson

We reiterate our commitment in the fight to eradicate social status, gender and ethnic and racial status, gaps by the implementation of the national and international legal instruments that assure the protection of women rights, inspired in the principles of solidarity, participative democracy and social justice, as it is enshrined in our Constitution

Finally, we emphasize our government's strong refusal to the use of coercive and unilateral measures as instruments of economic and political pressure against any country. These measures are both incompatible with international law and the Charter of the Organization and restrain social and economic development of the peoples, affecting specially women, girls and boys.

Thank you, Madam Chairpersons