

COLOMBIA

REPUBLIC OF COLOMBIA

**Report of the Colombian State on the implementation of the
Beijing Platform for Action (1995) and the outcome of the
twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (2000)**

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PART ONE

ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES IN PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT¹

The promotion of equality between women and men and the empowerment of Colombian women are decisive issues for building a fairer and more inclusive society and guaranteeing the political, economic, social and cultural rights of all citizens.

The follow-up to the Platform for Action and the outcome of Beijing+5 offers an opportunity for Colombia to make a systematic analysis of the results of its policies, programmes and projects in terms of improvements in women's living conditions and their empowerment. The report also throws light on the efficiency and effectiveness of the management of social questions from a gender perspective and its effects on social equity and the sustainability of the progress made.²

I. Priority areas of national action and the framework of the Beijing Platform for Action

The priority action areas are the interests of Colombian women, the country's social situation, and the foundations of the National Development Plan for the construction of a "State for the community".³ Within this framework, the Government's action is guided by the following four objectives: civil and democratic security, sustainable economic growth and creation of jobs, building of social equity, and increased transparency and efficiency of the State. Through the Presidential Advisory Office on Gender Equality (CPEM) the Government is promoting measures to foster equality for women and women's empowerment, with emphasis on the following areas: women and the economy, violence against women, and women in power and decision-making. Pursuant to the objectives of the National Development Plan, the work in these areas is permeating the management of the State with a gender perspective, as well as promoting the attainment of all the other goals of the Platform for Action.

1. Women and the economy: employment and the development of entrepreneurship, empowerment, and the elimination of poverty

This objective benefits more than 50 per cent of poor women, most of them unemployed or holding very unstable jobs, who have very little access to or control over production resources, especially monetary assets for work. The aim is to promote gender equity and social

¹ The analysis contained in this section is based on interviews with the Presidential Adviser on Gender Equality and with her Office's advisers and technical team. The information is taken from the following documents: CPEM 2003, "Informe de Gestión para la Presidencia de la Republica", January-December; chapter on CPEM published in the Administrative Department of the Office of the President of the Republic, August 2003; report to Congress 2003 and the operational reports and reports on the action plans submitted by CPEM to the Controller General of the Republic in 2003 and 2004.

² See annex VII for the methodology used in the preparation of the report.

³ Office of the President, Ministry of Finance and Public Credit - National Planning Department. National Development Plan "**Towards a State for the community**", 2003. The reference is to "a participatory State which involves the citizens in the achievement of social goals, a managerial State which invests public resources **effectively** and without waste, and a decentralized State which encourages regional autonomy with transparency, political responsibility and community participation".

equality on a coordinated basis by giving priority to poor women heads of household through the programme “Women heads of family running microenterprises”, which is aimed at urban and rural women. Efforts are also being made to encourage women who are already running or are in the process of setting up a microenterprise through the programme “First Businesswomen’s Fair: Entrepreneurial Spirit Day”. (See annex XII.)

CPEM is also carrying out the National Plan on Business Training for Women and is holding a competition to select the best women’s production projects, which will be supported through the establishment of a seedmoney fund using resources supplied by international cooperation. These programmes are designed to generate jobs and incomes, but they have been conceived and are being implemented as part of the crosscutting strategy for the gender-equality policy. They are expected to have a significant impact on the empowerment of Colombian women, especially among the most disadvantaged population groups.⁴

Where employment is concerned, the National Vocational Training Service (SENA) has been carrying out a number of projects under the Government’s social recovery programme, including: an integrated vocational training course leading to a qualification, which had been taken, up to December 2003, by a total of 192,531 persons, 48.36 per cent of them women; 2,070,902 of the total of 2,074,237 students in the supplementary integrated vocational training programme could be disaggregated by sex: 49.32 per cent were women; in the current youth programme (for persons aged 18 to 25) 67 per cent of the total enrolment of 19,151 were young women; in the rural youth programme, 41.43 per cent of the 5,214 persons receiving training were women; and in the retraining programme for civil servants dismissed by the State as a result of restructuring, 47.12 per cent of the total enrolment of 4,039 as of December 2003 were women.

2. Violence against women

Working through various agencies (Office of the Ombudsman for the Rights of Children, Women and the Elderly, Office of the Procurator for Children and the Family, CPEM, Colombian Family Welfare Institute, Ministry of the Interior and Justice, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Family Commissions, Office of the Attorney General, Ministry of Social Protection, Social Solidarity Network, and Office of the Vice-President of the Republic) the Colombian State is protecting the rights of women and providing care for women victims of violence. (See annex XIII for an account of State services provided in connection with the various forms of violence committed against women in Colombia.)

CPEM does not play a direct part in the provision of care for victims or in legal proceedings, rehabilitation work or punishment of perpetrators in cases involving offences against women, but it is contributing through the implementation of its policies to the elimination of the discrimination and inequality suffered by women and the violation of their human rights, in particular through the activities in the area of violence against women brought together under the proposal:

⁴ The main programmes mentioned here in Part One are described more fully in Part Two, which sets out the achievements and the challenges by area of action.

- **The “Non-violent roads” policy**

The programmes included in “Non-violent roads” seek to publicize, promote and guarantee women’s rights and to support women suffering the double impact of domestic violence and social violence. The approach is a positive one, and the beneficiaries are not defined as victims but as persons in situations of high social risk whose rights require special protection and guarantees from the State.

3. Political participation: women in power and decision-making

- **Towards political decision-making informed by women’s interests**

Generally speaking, women’s participation in political processes such as elections and referendums is based on little or no information. The programme “Towards education for women about the referendum”, proposed by CPEM to the Ministry of the Interior and Justice, was intended precisely to counteract the culture of “unempowered political action by women”. It proposed and carried out educational activities to publicise the text of the referendum and make its content understood and to encourage discussion and consideration of the positive and/or negative factors for women in the matters to be decided in this civil consultation exercise. In this sense, the transition from “uninformed political actor” who supports a proposal to “informed political actor” who assesses it in the light of her gender interests is perhaps one of the best examples of action for the empowerment of women.

- **Promoting organization and participation: Women’s Community Councils**

The expansion of the space for women’s participation in politics implies working for the inclusion of groups of women possessing fewer opportunities, especially women in the poorer sectors of the population, and implies involving them on the basis of their own experience and interests. This is what happens in the case of the Women’s Community Councils, which are established after an intensive process of visits, promotion and mobilization of women at the local level.⁵ (See annex X.)

II. The National Development Plan, the Action Plan and the policy “Women: builders of peace and development”

The Action Plan is taken explicitly into account in the National Development Plan and the national policy for women. Colombia is therefore fulfilling its inherent commitments in this context, and it is to be hoped that there is a very real possibility of attaining the other objectives of the agreement.

It may be stressed here that the policy “Women: builders of peace and development” is guided by the principles of the National Development Plan “Towards a State for the

⁵ CPEM report, 2003, *op. cit.*

community”, especially its sections on peace, equity and equality of opportunities.⁶ This policy is thus a response to the proposal to build social equity by focussing the measures on the poorest women, especially women heads of family, and encouraging the direct and autonomous participation of women’s organizations in the various procedures for consultation and negotiation.⁷ (See annex I for the text of the policy “Women: builders of peace and development”).

The bases, directives and principles of the policy “Women: builders of peace and development” also translate into the context of national policy some of the fundamental aspects of the Platform for Action in that:

- **The policy is based** on the proposition that “gender equity encourages social equity”;⁸
- **The policy** implies: (1) “recognizing the specific potentials, needs and interests of girls and young and adult women”; (2) including the proposals of the various women’s organizations and their demands and “incorporation of the proposals on priority measures to contribute to the building of peace in Colombia expressed in the various initiatives of women’s organizations”;⁹ and (3) explicitly promoting the international commitments of the Colombian State, such as its commitments under CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action, as well as the existing constitutional and legal mandates.¹⁰
- **The principles** governing the policy are broadly consistent with the principles of the Platform for Action, referring as they do to equity, equality, participation, respect for international humanitarian law, independence, respect for diversity, and promotion of decentralization;¹¹
- **The legitimization of CPEM leadership and coordination** is based on the “National Agreement on Equality between Women and Men”, promoted by CPEM. This Agreement confers a high level of legitimacy on CPEM in that it was signed by the highest authorities of the three powers of the State and by representatives of public and private institutions. CPEM is currently disseminating this text at the

⁶ The National Development Plan states that “in application of the Constitution, the Government shall promote policies for women in order to fulfil its international commitments and to encourage development with equal opportunities for men and women”.

⁷ The National Development Plan proposes in this connection: (1) to formulate national policies for peace, equity and equality of opportunities, together with a mass communication plan to promote equality between women and men and between generations and to consolidate and publicize women’s rights; (2) to give priority to poor women, especially women heads of family; (3) to create a national information system on the work done and on local and regional experience; and (4) to encourage “the direct and autonomous participation of women’s organizations in the various national and local processes of dialogue and political negotiation on the social and armed conflict, which will include and represent the interests of the diverse parts of the women’s social movement”.

⁸ CPEM. “*Mujeres Constructoras de Paz y Desarrollo: Una política nacional orientada a la paz, la equidad y la igualdad de oportunidades*”, 2003, pp. 10 and 11.

⁹ According to the text of the document, special account is taken of the proposals contained in the “Equal Opportunities Plan, 2000” formulated at women’s workshops in a number of regions of the country.

¹⁰ It should be stressed that in April 2004 the Colombian Government formally submitted to the Congress of the Republic the Protocol additional to CEDAW in continuation of the ratification procedure.

¹¹ The full text in Spanish of the policy “Women: builders of peace and development”, together with a folder on this topic produced by CPEM, will be found in annex I.

regional and local levels, especially in the municipalities.¹² (See annex IX for the instrument of adherence of the Department of Huila to the National Agreement, dated 8 March 2004.)

III. Attainment of the specific development goals of the Millennium Declaration and the Platform for Action

The Platform for Action and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) share a series of common objectives, so that it may be assumed that those countries which succeed in fulfilling their commitments under one instrument will probably fulfil their commitments under the other to a large extent. One fundamental point of intersection is found in MDG 3 (Promote gender equality and empower women) and in target 4 (Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and at all levels of education no later than 2015).

In the national context, and in accordance with the position set out above, these international commitments intersect with each other in the political decision to give priority in carrying out the Platform for Action to the poorest groups of women, especially the women who are the heads of some 30 per cent of all poor households. Progress towards the attainment of the objectives of the Platform for Action for poor women will mean significant progress towards reduction of the country's poverty rates.

As will be seen in Part Two of this report, the 2005 target for primary education has virtually been attained, although gender equality and women's independence are still far from being achieved. It must be acknowledged, however, that the attainment of the target in primary education will have a positive impact in breaking the vicious circle of poverty and its reproduction from generation to generation.

In view of the crosscutting nature of gender analysis, the statistics on progress towards the MDGs will be more reliable if the outcome indicators are cross-referenced by sex, as is being done in the drafting of the report on poverty-reduction in Colombia, which uses gender equality as a transverse axis for describing the progress towards attainment of target 3 and takes as areas for monitoring the Millennium results virtually the same areas as the Platform for Action: gender violence, labour market, and women's political participation.¹³

IV. Problems and failings in the attainment of the Beijing objectives

1. Lack of a proper political framework: there was no policy or strategy or any updated action plans to facilitate the systematic monitoring of the fulfilment of the commitments.

¹² The Agreement and its content and implications are discussed in detail in Part III. The Spanish text may be consulted in annex II.

¹³ Considerations submitted by the National Planning Department (DNP) for the preparation of the Beijing+10 report. The DNP is coordinating the country's report on progress towards fulfilment of the Millennium commitments.

2. Lack of resources: there was no budget for funding the policies for women. This aspect requires further attention in terms of the recruitment of the necessary technical team to support the crosscutting approach to gender policy.

3. The effects of the policies are hard to assess: they may be very subtle at the outset but deliver a powerful impact later, for example in the case of the initiation of change in a trend. It is not easy to promote or sustain changes of this kind in the long term: what is needed is a sustained policy of institution-building, and this calls for human, technical and financial resources. And the women's organizations need more support in monitoring the policies and measures designed to guarantee women's rights and their strategic and practical interests.

PART TWO
PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN OF
THE
BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION AND THE FURTHER INITIATIVES AND
ACTIONS IDENTIFIED AT THE TWENTY-THIRD SPECIAL SESSION OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The measures adopted with a view to progress in Colombia in the critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action and the actions identified at the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly should be examined in the light of three factors: the particular internal situation in the country; the Government's social policies; and the action taken by CPEM.

To defend and preserve democratic governance is the purpose which guides the Government both domestically and internationally. To this end the President has undertaken to consolidate a State based on the rule of law and to re-establish the rule of law throughout the country, in the context of a commitment to human rights and international humanitarian law.

With regard to security and confidence, the general situation in the country has improved, and this improvement has benefited both men and women. Substantial progress was made between August 2002, when the Government of President Uribe took office, and December 2003: in 2003 the total national murder rate was 21 per cent lower than in 2002. Attacks on people have fallen by 84 per cent and kidnappings by 39 per cent. All of the 158 municipalities which had no policing now have a police presence. The Social Solidarity Network has reported a drop of 53 per cent in the number of displaced persons in the past year and an average of 7,582 families returned to their home areas.¹⁴

The economic impact of this progress is reflected in other figures: 50 per cent growth in tourism as a result of the tours now possible in the improved security situation; economic growth of 3.7 per cent, a level not achieved for seven years; a 25 per cent increase in private investment; a recovery amounting to 20 per cent growth in the construction sector, one of the engines of economic recovery; and a nine per cent rise in exports in the same period.¹⁵

All of this is part of the policy of democratic security adopted on the basis of an integrated vision involving not only the objectively necessary security dimension but also the dimensions of social equity and human development. In this sense the policy also implies taking action to encourage economic growth, generate jobs and combat poverty, as well as the adoption of measures to help the most vulnerable population groups, especially persons affected by the violence.

These efforts have to be made in the context of a social policy, and gender perspectives must be incorporated in their implementation. To this end, CPEM, the lead agency for public policies for women, carries out its activities in two frames of reference: the "seven tools of

¹⁴ Source: Office of the High Commissioner for Peace.

¹⁵ Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Presentation "*Como Vamos*", April 2004.

equality” established by the Government for attainment of the social-equity targets of the National Development Plan; and the policy “Women: builders of peace and development”.

The “seven tools of equality” constitute the axis of the Social Recovery Plan of the Government of President Uribe. They are: (1) a revolution in education; (2) improved social protection; (3) economic progress for the benefit of all; (4) social management of rural areas; (5) social management of public services; (6) establishment of a country of stakeholders; and (7) quality of urban life.¹⁶ The results achieved in respect of each tool are monitored by the national system for evaluation of the results of public management (SINERGIA) and the system for programming and monitoring presidential targets (SIGOB).¹⁷ CPEM has recently established an Observatory for Gender Issues, which will be responsible for gender mainstreaming in the analysis of these results.¹⁸

The Government’s social recovery policy has brought major benefits to women through the programmes carried out under each of the seven tools of equality, as can be seen from the CPEM monitoring by the Observatory for Gender Issues (see annex III).

The policy “Women: builders of peace and development” was devised on the basis of the existing constitutional and legal mandates¹⁹ and takes into account Colombia’s international commitments and obligations, including the ones stemming from the International Conference on Population and Development, the Beijing Platform for Action, the actions identified at the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and the Convention of Belém do Pará. The proposals contained in the various statements issued by the women’s movement were also taken into account, as were the specific potentials, needs and interests of women in Colombia.²⁰

¹⁶ The Plan may be consulted at: http://www.dnp.gov.co/ArchivosWeb/Direccion_General/Plan_Nacional_de_Desarrollo/reactivacion_social.pdf.

¹⁷ The SINERGIA and SIGOB programmes may be consulted at: <http://www.dnp.gov.co/>.

¹⁸ The operation of this Observatory is discussed in Part Three.

¹⁹ The provisions of the Constitution of Colombia include a series of articles on the equality of women, including article 13: “All persons are born free and equal before the law and shall receive the same protection and treatment from the authorities and enjoy the same rights, freedoms and opportunities without discrimination by reason of sex, race, national or family origin, language, religion or political or philosophical opinions. The State shall promote the conditions for such equality to be real and effective and shall adopt measures in favour of groups which suffer discrimination or are marginalized.”

Article 40, paragraph 8: “The authorities shall ensure proper and effective participation by women at the decision-making levels of the public administration.”

Article 42, paragraph 4: “Family relations shall be based on the equality of rights and duties of the couple and on reciprocal respect among all members of the family.” Paragraph 5: “Any form of violence in the family shall be regarded as destructive of its harmony and unity and shall be punished in accordance with the law.” Paragraph 8: “The couple shall be entitled to decide freely and responsibly on the number of their children and shall maintain and educate them while they are minors or if they are disabled.”

Article 43: “Women and men shall have equal rights and opportunities. Women shall not be subjected to any kind of discrimination. During pregnancy and after childbirth they shall enjoy special care and protection from the State and shall receive from the State a maintenance allowance if unemployed or unprotected at those times. The State shall provide special support for women heads of family.”

²⁰ The policy document will be found in annex I. In addition, a CPEM mission statement and the policy’s targets will be found at: <http://www.presidencia.gov.co/equidad/uno/dir02/2>.

The crosscutting approach to implementation of this policy was based *inter alia* on the critical areas of concern stated in the Beijing Platform for Action. Against this background the Government identified in the policy “Women: builders of peace and development” a number of priority areas in which to address problems arising in one or more spheres. These areas are: (1) employment and business development; (2) education and culture; (3) violence against women; (4) political participation; (5) health, in particular sexual and reproductive health; (6) rural women; and (7) institutional development.²¹

The measures adopted and the problems arising in these areas are described below in respect of the activities carried out in each area.²² Two crosscutting categories (ethnic groups and girls) have been included in order to highlight some of the specific measures which are being carried out. In each area care has been taken to include at least one example of a policy and programme regarded as successful, together with examples of measures carried out by means of intersectoral coordination.²³

I. Employment and business development

The problems addressed here relate to area 1 (Women and poverty), area 2 (Education and training of women) and area 3 (Women and the economy)

Twenty out of every 100 Colombians of working age in the country’s main cities are unemployed. Between 2000 and 2003 unemployment among women was consistently higher than among men by an average of almost 4.5 percentage points.²⁴ According to the national household survey of the National Statistics Department (DANE), in 2000 the number of Colombians with jobs totalled 16,276,945. Of this total, 10,001,063 (61.4%) were male and 6,275,882 (38.6%) were female.

According to the same source, the average household income depended on whether the head of the household was a man or a woman. In 2001, for example, the average national income was \$Col 556,065. However, while men received about \$Col 604,820, women received only \$Col 418,526. In other words, households headed by women received 70 per cent of the income of households headed by men.²⁵

Given this situation, the aim in the area “Employment and business development” is “gradually to create opportunities for urban and rural women to gain access to decent and well-

²¹ More information about the activities and programmes which are being carried out in each of these areas may be found in the CPEM management report for 2003, in the report submitted by Colombia to the Inter-American Commission of Women, and in Colombia’s report to CEDAW (under preparation).

²² Except for the area of institutional development, which is discussed in Part III of this document.

²³ This coordination is achieved through sectoral agendas agreed by CPEM with the various State agencies, usually within the framework of the National Agreement on Equality between Women and Men, which is discussed in detail in Part Three. This Agreement may be consulted at:
http://www.presidencia.gov.co/equidad/uno/dir02/fram_invi.htm.

²⁴ The figures cited here are based on the DANE national household survey and were reaffirmed in the study “*Diferenciales salariales entre hombres y mujeres para las siete principales ciudades colombianas*” in *La perspectiva de género. Una aproximación desde las estadísticas del DANE*. This document is part of a DANE/CPEM pilot project on the incorporation of gender-perspective analyses in national statistics.

²⁵ Figures cited by the National Planning Department on the basis of DANE statistics.

paid jobs, develop their business activities, and counteract the conditions which cause greater poverty among women”. The measures and programmes which are being carried out in order to attain this aim include:

1. Plan for improvement of the integrated support programme for women heads of household

This programme addresses credit, training, and monitoring of business development and economic empowerment among the most vulnerable women. It is currently being reformulated in the light of the existing agreements with mayors, governors and more than 9,000 women throughout the country. An improvement plan has been drawn up, and the reformulation will be initiated shortly with the aim of promoting processes of individual and collective empowerment, intensifying training in project formulation for the women participants, and ensuring the programme’s sustainability over the coming years; the main challenges are to recover matured loans and to generate a culture of payment of obligations.

The programme is operating in more than 30 towns and cities. As of September 2003 the Agrarian Bank had approved 1,946 urban and 1,034 rural projects and had disbursed funds for 1,107 urban and 998 rural projects in total amounts of \$Col 1,416,389,035 for urban loans and \$Col 2,258,466 for rural loans. CPEM personnel have made visits, in conjunction with the Agrarian Bank and the National Guarantees Fund, for the purposes of verifying that the investments have been made and the businesses exist and to advise on management of the payments.

2. Business training plan for women

This programme is implemented jointly by CPEM, the National Administrative Department for Mutual Economic Support (DANSOCIAL), a body which directs and coordinates public policies for social and mutual support organizations, the National Vocational Training Service (SENA), a body which promotes the social and technical development of Colombian workers, the Ministry of Social Protection, and the International Labour Organization (ILO). Its purpose is to “promote special technical training programmes tailored to women’s production capacities and aptitudes in order gradually to create opportunities for access to decent and well-paid jobs and to help women to engage in business activities, as means of counteracting the conditions creating greater poverty among women, with a special focus on depressed and conflict areas”. As of March 2004, 1,040 urban and rural women heads of household running microenterprises had been identified, selected and trained.²⁶

SENA is carrying out the programme “**Production units for special groups**”, which seeks to create mechanisms to enable population groups with special needs to improve their production situation and their position in society. This programme covers people displaced by

²⁶ DANSOCIAL trained 620 women under the programme for businesswomen heads of household in Pereira, Manizales, Armenia, Sincelejo, Corozal, Ginebra, Cali, Buenaventura, Pasto, Tunja and Bogotá. ILO trained 420 women under a programme on business management with a gender focus in Cundinamarca, Tolima and Valle del Cauca.

the violence, women heads of family, returnees, juvenile offenders, ethnic groups and disabled persons.²⁷

3. First National Businesswomen's Fair

This undertaking, which offers an opportunity to strengthen the links between Colombian women in the country's production process, seeks to promote and encourage a spirit of entrepreneurship as a work option on the basis of examples of successful businesswomen. The Fair grew out of a regional initiative which led to the "entrepreneurial spirit days", which in turn produced the national event in June 2004, attended by women from 15 departments and Bogotá. Exhibitors and visitors were given business training with a gender perspective.

Where the fight against poverty is concerned, attention is drawn to two programmes which include an important social component and are having an impact on the empowerment of women:

The programme "**Families in action**", which provides a direct cash allowance in exchange for fulfilment of commitments in health and education. This programme is aimed at municipalities with fewer than 100,000 inhabitants and it has about 200,000 beneficiaries, 91 per cent of them living below the poverty line. As of April 2004, allowances had been paid to 352,259 families, 332,705 (94.45%) of them headed by women. In all cases the allowance is paid to the mother, who is also given guidance about the allowances available under the programme and the accompanying commitments.²⁸

The programme "**Forest guard families**", which has enabled some 18,122 peasant or indigenous families to abandon the cultivation of illicit crops and become guardians and protectors of Colombia's biodiversity. This programme has facilitated more active involvement of women in the work of environmental protection and preservation.²⁹ As of April 2004, there were 5,299 forest guard families headed by women.³⁰

II. Education and culture

²⁷ As of March 2004, courses on crop cultivation, livestock raising, basic cooking, dressmaking and handicrafts had been held for 300 persons displaced by the violence. There are plans for starting up 172 more courses for 4,300 persons in Antioquia, Arauca, Bolívar, Casanare, Cauca, Bogotá, Magdalena, Norte de Santander, Santander, Valle and Tolima. With a view to helping persons who had reintegrated themselves in civilian life and young people in rural areas, an agreement was signed with FONADE in an amount of 2,430 million pesos, which will be used to contract training agencies offering comprehensive training for these people.

²⁸ Source: Observatory for Gender Issues. More information on the "Families in action" programme may be found at: <http://www.plancolombia.gov.co/programas/familias/index.asp>.

²⁹ These two programmes are having an impact at the local level. In April 2004 the Mayor of Bogotá launched a "Teacher families" initiative under which 115 persons, including men and women heads of family, are being trained in gardening. They are charged with the maintenance of the city's two main parks and if they remain in the programme they receive wages and places for their children in a local school. More information on "generating incomes by tending green spaces" will be found at: <http://www.bogota.gov.co/bogota/histo.php?idh=2399&patron=1>.

³⁰ Source: Observatory for Gender Issues. More information on the "Forest guard families" programme will be found at: http://www.plancolombia.gov.co/contenido/familias_guardabosques/index.html.

The problems addressed here relate to area 2 (Education and training of women) and area 8 (Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women) with respect to the integration of gender perspectives in education programmes

According to data of the National Planning Department, the gaps between males and females in access to education have declined considerably in recent decades. The female illiteracy rate, traditionally higher than the male rate, has fallen. When it comes to drop-outs, the figures show that, at all levels, more males than females leave the education system. The chief reason for dropping out for both sexes is the lack of economic resources. The second-commonest reason is pregnancy for women and the need to work for men. In the past decade, more females than males have attended primary and secondary school and university.³¹

It is fair to say that under the present Government there has been a real “*educational revolution with a gender perspective*”, for the following reasons: (1) the target for the four-year period is to provide 1,500,000 new school places. As of December 2003, 477,598 had been created, and almost half of them (49.72%) were taken by females; (2) females took most (67.8%) of the 34,858 new places in higher education; and (3) 55.22 per cent of the 26,014 loans granted by ICETEX went to female students (see annex III). Despite the progress, problems of the quality of education persist. One important factor is the persistence of a sexist content in school texts which predisposes girls and women to assume traditional roles and eventually to choose careers regarded as “female”, generally of lower social and economic status. Another problem is the shortage of qualified personnel to teach gender and equality issues and the “resistance to” or failure to see the need for a crosscutting gender approach in university curricula. Against this background, CPEM has agreed working agendas with the Ministries of Education, Culture and Communications. Attention may be drawn to the following current programmes:

1. National education programme on gender and diversity

This programme is headed by CPEM as a teaching initiative for formal and informal education and it seeks to encourage changes in sexist images and practices and to make progress towards gender equity and equality of opportunities between the sexes, as well as contributing from a gender standpoint to peace and development in diversity as shared targets of the State and civil society.

Under this programme and as part of the informal education strategy, in 2004 the Ministry of Education distributed throughout the country in the large-circulation newspapers materials on “civil competence”, including a major component containing information on gender and diversity. In the case of formal education, CPEM is negotiating with the Ministry on the mainstreaming of gender perspectives both in the formal curricula and in actual practices in the schools. One key element of this work is the agreement between the Office of the Ombudsman and the Ministry on use in schools of the national programme of human rights education, which contain a gender perspective.

³¹ Tables and graphs showing the trends in education may be consulted in the presentation on the Observatory for Gender Issues in annex IV.

2. Co-education Guide

In addition, as part of the effort to incorporate a crosscutting gender perspective in education, in 2000 the Ministry of Education and CPEM produced under the auspices of UNESCO 10,000 copies of a “Co-education Guide”.³² The project included discussions with teachers focused on gender analysis, introduction of methodologies for analysing sexist stereotypes, formulation of co-education programmes, and use of strategies to incorporate them in institutional education projects.

III. Violence against women

The problems addressed here relate to area 4 (Violence against women), area 5 (Women and armed conflict) and area 9 (Human rights of women)

The policy “Women: builders of peace and development” includes these problems as one of its themes with a view to facilitating their prevention and ensuring that they receive due attention in the Government’s policies and programmes for the protection of human rights, in particular in the programmes for people affected by the present situation in Colombia. Some of the main aspects of this topic are highlighted below.

1. Sexual violence

In 2000 the Office of the Attorney General of the Nation investigated 21,189 sex crimes, but it is thought that this figure represents only five to 10 per cent of cases.³³ The **Centre for Integrated Care of Victims of Sex Crimes** was established as a response to this phenomenon to care for persons affected by crimes against sexual freedom in a framework of respect for human dignity. The Centre’s mission is to offer victims suitable and timely psychological, social, legal and medical-legal services and to streamline the legal and investigatory procedures in order to facilitate recovery and create mechanisms for preventing this kind of crime.³⁴

2. Violence in the family³⁵

In 2002 the National Institute of Legal Medicine and Forensic Sciences delivered 64,979 expert opinions on bodily injuries following reports of violence in the family, an average of 178 opinions a day. Of this total, 62 per cent related to ill-treatment by a spouse; 91 per cent of the

³² This Guide was based on research conducted in Cundinamarca, Santander and Atlántico with teachers in urban and rural areas to identify and change sexist stereotypes in schools.

³³ According to the data submitted by the Office for Colombia’s report to CEDAW, there is a chronic situation of sexual violence which goes unreported and occurs within the family in 80 per cent of cases; the same proportion of the victims are minors.

³⁴ The project’s aims are: (i) to place the subject of sexual violence on the public agenda as a human rights issue; (ii) to produce a coordinated intersectoral and interdisciplinary proposal for joint activities in order to develop arrangements for integrated care of victims of sexual violence; (iii) to raise public awareness to a much higher level and secure a 50 per cent increase in the number of cases of sexual violence reported nationally; and (iv) to secure an effective commitment from participating institutions and municipalities in terms of earmarked budgets, in order to extend the initiative through the country.

³⁵ The statistics on violence in the family are taken from the study “*Forensis. Datos para la vida 2002*” published by the National Institute of Legal Medicine and Forensic Sciences.

victims were women. Twenty-three per cent related to violence between other family members and 16 per cent to child abuse. According to the same source, in 50,710 (78%) of cases the violence was inflicted on females, mainly women aged 25 to 34 (35%) and 18 to 24 (24%).³⁶

In order to tackle this phenomenon, “*Haz Paz*” (Make Peace), a national policy for building peace and good relations in the family, was formulated in 2002 following a process of collective supra-sectoral consolidation of bodies at the national level; the main aim is to build democratic families which tolerate differences and respect the dignity and rights of family members without distinction as to age, sex, culture or physical or mental ability.³⁷

3. Trafficking in persons

The population group most vulnerable to this kind of crime is women of childbearing age. The Administrative Department for Security (DAS) estimates that there are between 45,000 and 55,000 Colombian women victims living abroad.³⁸

Various measures have been adopted to combat this scourge, including the establishment of the Inter-Agency Board to Combat Trafficking in Persons, which is coordinated by the Ministry of the Interior and Justice and the Foreign Ministry. In addition, both the Office of the Attorney General, through its international affairs office, and the Interpol office in Colombia have established direct channels of communication with 180 countries members of Interpol with a view to the processing of police and judicial information on this crime by the authorities of member countries. DAS itself is carrying out campaigns in schools and governmental agencies in several parts of the country in order to raise public awareness and obtain information which will help the investigators to rescue victims and break up networks.

CPEM has been carrying out awareness and training activities in coordination with the International Organization for Migration (IOM). As part of this process it has sent information (on a CD) to 1,095 town halls and 32 governor’s offices. There is an agreed agenda on training in this subject in nine cities.³⁹

³⁶ The legal framework for dealing with cases of violence in the family includes Act 294 (1996) and Act 575 (2000). However, there are several factors still restricting the application of Act 575, including: the family commissioners’ lack of powers, the small number of commissioners’ offices for the whole country, and the failure to equip all these offices and the judicial offices with interdisciplinary teams - a fundamental requirement for dealing properly with family problems.

³⁷ The measures are carried out within the framework of the implementation of the indicative plan of the policy “*Haz Paz*” 2003-2006. More information on this programme will be found at: <http://www.bienestarfamiliar.gov.co/espanol/HAZPAZ.ASP>.

³⁸ Source: Colombia’s report to CEDAW (under preparation). The areas of greatest vulnerability in terms of the victims’ places of origin are: Risaralda, Quindío y Caldas, Cali, Tulúa, Buenaventura, Palmira y Cartago, Medellín and its metropolitan area, the Aburrá valley, and Bogotá and its environs. The main places of emigration are Japan (40%), Spain (30%) and the Netherlands (20%); Greece, Germany, Singapore, Mexico, Hong Kong, Belgium, the United States, Britain, Italy, Ecuador and Panama account for 10 per cent.

³⁹ The legislative progress in this area includes: Act 747 (2002), which creates the crime of trafficking in persons; Act 765 (2002), which approves the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography; Act 800 (2003), which approves the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.

4. Displacement

In 2003, according to Social Solidarity Network data, 50.5 per cent of displaced persons were women and 24.3 per cent of displaced households were headed by women.⁴⁰ Integrated services are provided for displaced persons in four modalities: development and consolidation of programmes to prevent displacement and protect displaced persons; provision of emergency humanitarian assistance; socio-economic stabilization of displaced persons; and development and consolidation of the national system for the integrated care of displaced persons (SNAIPD). One example of these services in terms of emergency humanitarian assistance is the special treatment accorded by the Social Solidarity Network to pregnant and breastfeeding women and to the elderly and the disabled.⁴¹

5. Demobilization

With respect to reintegration in civil society, Decree 128 (2003) sets out specific guidelines on separation of persons from illegal groups. This Decree has a whole chapter on minors and, although it makes no specific mention of women as such, the whole text uses language inclusive of both sexes.

IV. Political participation

The problems addressed here relate to area 5 (Women and armed conflict), area 7 (Women in power and decision-making) and area 9 (Human rights of women)

Under the policies on civic participation there are two instruments designed to guarantee equal conditions of participation at the various levels and in the branches and agencies of the public administration and to facilitate women's access to decision-making bodies: Act 581 (2000), known as the Quotas Act,⁴² and Act 823 (2003), known as the Equal Opportunities Act,⁴³ which "sets out regulations on equality of opportunities for women". Where implementation of the Quotas Act is concerned, the Administrative Department for the Civil Service points out that in 2004 37.42 per cent of the persons holding posts at the highest levels of the State were women.⁴⁴ The proportion of women holding public posts at various levels was 37.24 per cent, a figure calculated on the basis of 111,125 posts and 41,379 women employed in the various branches and agencies of the State.

⁴⁰ According to this source, in 2003 49.6 per cent of displaced persons were aged under 18 years and 4.7 per cent over 65 years; 4 per cent belonged to indigenous groups, 9.7 per cent were Afro-Colombians, and 0.53 per cent were reported to have some kind of disability.

⁴¹ Full information on the Network's displacement programmes will be found at: <http://www.red.gov.co>.

⁴² The purpose of the Quotas Act is to secure greater participation by women in the management of State agencies and national, departmental, district and municipal authorities and to ensure that they have access to at least 30 per cent of public offices (see annex XI).

⁴³ The texts will be found at: (Quotas Act) <http://www.presidencia.gov.co/equidad/uno/dir02/normas.htm> and (Equal Opportunities Act) http://www.laleycolombiana.com/lle_contenido/Normas/2003/Leyes/823.htm.

⁴⁴ This figure reflects an improvement over previous years: 1980 - 20 per cent; 1985 - 22 per cent; and 1992 - 31 per cent.

Women's representation in the executive branch at the ministerial level stands in contrast to their share of posts filled by popular vote. According to figures from the Ministry of the Interior and Justice, for the Congress of the Republic women's current representation is 11 per cent in the Senate and 13.25 per cent in the Chamber of Representatives. At the local level, both in town halls and in governor's offices, the representation of women is much lower than that of men, who hold some 90 per cent of the posts.⁴⁵

In this context CPEM has been trying to promote and increase political participation by women and building up good citizenship in the various decision-making and negotiation bodies at the local, regional and national levels. One of the most useful tools for this purpose has been the **Women's Community Councils**, created as a participatory mechanism providing a valuable forum for discussions between women and the State in the departments and municipalities.⁴⁶ These Councils also operate as a mechanism for raising the profile of women's participation in the creation of conditions for peace and the enhancement of good citizenship in an effort to consolidate a "network of women against violence". In this context, women are proposing political agendas, creating opportunities in the municipalities, negotiating policies and democratic spaces with mayors and governors, and using training workshops to build better community relations. This innovative experiment is investing participation by women with new dimensions by creating forums for negotiation and dialogue based on women's own experience.

V. Health, in particular sexual and reproductive health

The problems addressed here relate to area 3 (Women and health)

According to the information provided by the Ministry of Social Protection, the gender perspective has been incorporated in all programmes and projects in the health sector. Moreover, health statistics record the differences between men and women at all stages of the life cycle. Some of the successful experiments carried out in this area are described below:

1. Access to the general social security system (SGSS)

One of the main challenges to the SGSS is to increase the affiliation of poor women. Two principal measures have been adopted to this end: firstly, Agreement 77 (1996) of the National Health and Social Security Council, which regulates priority insurance consideration for the most vulnerable groups, such as pregnant and breastfeeding women, the poorest members of the population, women heads of family, members of indigenous groups, adolescents, and new-born

⁴⁵ In 2002 the Office of the Ombudsman, CPEM and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FESCOL) monitored the operation of the Quotas Act in 1,098 municipalities and in a number of State agencies. They also carried out an education campaign using booklets and posters and communications addressed to elected mayors and governors.

⁴⁶ The Women's Community Councils are made up of the leaders of various organizations and groups, the wives of governors, mayors or other competent officials, the women's representative on the local planning council, representatives of Afro-Colombian women and peasant women, female academics and teachers, businesswomen, indigenous women, women representatives of the labour sector (public and private), women elected by popular vote (members of Community Action Boards, councillors, mayoresses), associations of women heads of family, and youth organizations. The Councils' regulations and a description of their operations may be found at: <http://www.presidencia.gov.co/equidad/index.htm>.

babies; secondly, Council Agreement 244 (2003), which regulates the identification of potential beneficiaries and includes among the groups to receive assistance neglected children, the indigent, persons displaced by force, indigenous communities, demobilized persons, the family units of the community mothers system, persons of the third age living in homes for the elderly, and the migrant rural population.

2. Sexual and reproductive health (SRH)

The formulation and dissemination of the national sexual and reproductive health policy are included among the priority public health targets for 2002-2006. This policy was officially introduced in 2003⁴⁷ with the objective of “improving SRH and promoting the exercise of the sexual and reproductive rights of the whole population, with special emphasis on reducing the vulnerability factors and risk behaviour and strengthening the protection factors and services for groups with special needs”.

The priority focuses of the SRH policy include the promotion of safe maternity, family planning for men and women, reduction of adolescent pregnancies, prevention and control of sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS, early detection of cancer of the neck of the womb, and prevention of domestic and sexual violence and provision of care for its victims.⁴⁸

The Ministry of Social Protection has headed a campaign to raise the profile of the topic of health and sexual and reproductive rights at all levels of Colombian society.⁴⁹ This campaign has been based on the simultaneous implementation of four groups of activities: (1) political mobilization of decision-makers and leaders of public opinion; (2) personal communication to consolidate knowledge, attitudes and practices with regard to health and the sexual and reproductive rights of men and women; (3) training of health personnel delivering SRH services; and (4) a mass media campaign with emphasis on adolescent pregnancies and sexual and reproductive health.

CPEM has also formulated a proposal for intervention under the “Family democracy” project designed to promote from a gender standpoint activities connected with sexual and reproductive rights among family members, within the framework of the adherence of the Ministry of Social Protection and the Colombian Family Welfare Institute (ICBF) to the National Agreement on Equality between Women and Men.

⁴⁷ The full text may be consulted at: http://profamilia.org.co/profamilia/P4/PDFS/Politica_SSR.PDF.

⁴⁸ The main SRH achievements also include the increased use of contraceptives, an area in which Colombia has led the way in Latin America. According to the PROFAMILIA national demographic surveys, in 2000 76.9 per cent of Colombian women living in a relationship used contraception and 64 per cent of them used modern methods. This level of use marks a major increase over previous years (66.1 per cent in 1990 and 72.2 per cent in 2001) and indicates a trend towards universal use.

⁴⁹ One of the main projects is “Support for the promotion of sexual and reproductive health and preventive health services in five regions of the country”, which gives emphasis to reducing maternal mortality and unwanted pregnancies, especially among adolescents, prevention and control of infections connected with HIV/AIDS and cancer of the neck of the womb, and prevention of violence in the family. The project covers contracts for the design of a model of integrated care for victims of sexual violence in Risaralda and is being implemented under an agreement with UNFPA financed with resources from the SGSS solidarity and guarantee fund (FOSYGA).

HIV/AIDS is one of the focuses of the SRH policy. Deaths from this cause are calculated at 3,940 a year, and the estimated overall mortality rate for Colombia at present is 0.4 per cent. However, in 2000 the watchtower report found higher than expected rates in the departments of the Atlantic coast, which suggests a trend towards a general epidemic in that region. Bearing the possibility of under-recording in mind, the Government intends to hold the rate below the present level over the next three years and to reduce perinatal infections due to HIV/AIDS by 20 per cent.⁵⁰

Of the 40,072 reported cases, 81.33 per cent involve men and 18 per cent women. But it must be stressed that the male:female ratio is steadily narrowing: it fell from 20:1 at the start of the epidemic to 8-10:1 between 1989 and 1993, to 4-6:1 between 1995 and 1998, and to 3:1 between 1999 and 2003. The ratio is 2:1 in some departments.

The statistics also point to the need to strengthen strategies to prevent the spread of the epidemic among adolescents: 52.86 per cent of recorded cases involve persons aged between 15 and 35; this means that these persons were probably infected before age 20. It is moreover of greatest importance to continue to carry out campaigns aimed at empowering women with respect to use of contraception: although the epidemic still seems to be concentrated among homosexual and bisexual men,⁵¹ this pattern is changing, as can be seen from the evolution of the male:female ratio described above.⁵²

VI. Rural women

According to the 1993 census, Colombia's rural sector then had 12.1 million inhabitants, 52.4 per cent of whom were female. Traditionally, the rural employment statistics have produced lower proportion of females (30%) than males.⁵³ In addition, access to credit for poor rural women has been difficult, either because they cannot provide the required guarantees or because the small amounts which they request are expensive in administrative terms and offer little attraction to the financial bodies. Furthermore, many rural women lack the basic knowledge to formulate production projects and deal with the red tape of loans and guarantees.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ According to the watchtower report of the National Health Institute, the HIV rate among pregnant women attending for antenatal checks is 0.2 per cent. This same report states that for every reported case of HIV/AIDS there may be 10 unreported or simply undiagnosed cases; this would mean that 2,300 pregnant women have a confirmed diagnosis as carriers of HIV and that there are 23,000 others in the same situation but unreported.

⁵¹ According to the study on seropositive rates among men who have sex with men in Bogotá. Colombian League to Combat AIDS, National Health Institute, 2000.

⁵² Attention may be drawn here to the campaign "*El Condón lo cargo YO*" (I'M wearing the condom), headed by PROFAMILIA under the National Sexual and Reproductive Health Policy. The complete campaign document will be found at: <http://www.profamilia.org.co/profamilia/P4/PDFS/EICondonLoCargoYO.PDF>. PROFAMILIA (Information and Resources Centre for Women) is a non-profit organization working in close collaboration with the Ministry of Social Protection and other State agencies; it has played an important role in the promotion and protection of sexual and reproductive health.

⁵³ Source: DANE quality of life survey. This trend does not indicate female unemployment but rather that the work done by women is invisible and informal and is not regarded as work because it does not generate an income.

⁵⁴ Nevertheless, the number of loan applications has been rising as a result of the programmes carried out by official agencies. The proportion of applications from rural women was 23 per cent in 2001, 25 per cent in 2002, and 26 per cent in 2003, according to data of the Agrarian bank and FINAGRO.

Landholding remains a problem; the figures continue to reflect lower participation by women despite their increased involvement in production activities.⁵⁵ In order to address this problem, in 2000 the Ministry of Agriculture, the Inter-American Cooperation Institute for Agriculture (IICA), the sectoral agencies and the rural women's organizations agreed on an **equal opportunities plan for rural women in Colombia**, the main goal of which is "to help to reduce the political, socio-economic and cultural obstacles preventing rural women from enjoying equal opportunities to participate fully in the processes of economic growth and social development and from enjoying the full exercise of their civil rights".⁵⁶

The **programme for the development and consolidation of microenterprises run by rural and urban women heads of poor families** was introduced under this equal opportunities plan in order to help 28 per cent of all rural households headed by women; the aim is to contribute to the socio-economic empowerment of women and reduce poverty in Colombia by generating more jobs and incomes for women.

This programme is currently being carried out in 22 departments and 147 municipalities.⁵⁷ A further move in this direction was the drafting of Act 731 (2002), which contains regulations favouring rural women.⁵⁸

Attention may be drawn to the following progress resulting from these measures: the establishment of the Promotion Fund for Rural Women (FOMMUR); Decree 2998 (2003), which regulates property titles in the event of abandonment by one half of the couple and equitable participation by women in the procedures governing the award and use of land;⁵⁹ Decree 1042 (2003) on rural housing, under which 4,584 subsidies were allocated in 2003 to women heads of family; and the project on support for rural microenterprises (PADEMÉR), which between 1998 and 2003 assisted 13,394 persons, 5,090 (38%) of them adult rural women and 938 (7%) young rural women.

VII. Ethnic groups

The Government's activities in this area have their source in the Constitution, which acknowledges the nation's multi-ethnic character and establishes in articles 7, 8 and 13 the responsibility of the State to recognize and protect ethnic and cultural diversity, preserve cultural

⁵⁵ According to INCORA, 6,153 property titles were held by women in 2000, i.e. 27 per cent of the total.

⁵⁶ Promotional activities are carried out under this plan in the following areas: access to income-generating activities; access to good-quality social services; consolidation of good citizenship and participation in decision-making; respect for cultural and ethnic diversity; and incorporation of a crosscutting gender perspective in institutions, policies and legislation relating to the rural sector and its support agencies.

⁵⁷ To date, 1,020 rural women heads of household have benefited directly in the form of loans in a total amount of \$Col 2,513,194,706. A similar number of women have received training, advice and technical assistance.

⁵⁸ The main provisions include: access by rural women to funds providing financing in the rural sector; creation of quotas and lines of credit at preferential rates for women with low incomes; access to the Farm Guarantees Fund; establishment of the Promotion Fund for Rural Women; expansion of family benefits in cash, kind and services; membership of the general occupational risks system (SGRP); access to the SENA vocational training programmes; award of land titles under the agrarian reform to community enterprises or associations of rural women; family housing allowances; and equal pay and certified days for rural women.

⁵⁹ It also allows the award of land to community enterprises and confirms the preferential status of women heads of household.

and natural wealth, and promote conditions of equality for groups suffering discrimination or marginalization. The constitutional mandate guarantees *inter alia* the right of all inhabitants to social security and access to services which promote, protect and restore health, as well as to health care and environmental health services.

This mandate covers the indigenous peoples and other minorities. For the purposes of their development, Act 100 (1993), which establishes the general social security system (SGSS), provides that the poorest and most vulnerable members of the population in rural and urban areas, including the indigenous communities, shall receive subsidies.⁶⁰ At present, these subsidies are paid to 60 per cent of the indigenous population, and the Government's commitment for 2002-2006 is to extend the coverage to 100 per cent. According to DANE, the 1993 census recorded an indigenous population of approximately 729,957 persons, 621,186 (85%) of them living in the legally established reservations. Colombia's indigenous inhabitants are distributed among 82 peoples, speak 64 different languages, and are found in most of the country's departments. Thirteen per cent of the indigenous population live in places not established as reservations.⁶¹

Act 387 (1997), which contains measures for the prevention of displacement and for the care, protection, consolidation and socio-economic stabilization of persons displaced within the country by the violence, prescribes special care for women and children, especially widows, women heads of family and orphans. This Act also guarantees special services for black and indigenous communities in accordance with their habits and customs and facilitates their return to their territories.

In addition, Act 731 (2002) on rural women provides for the participation of rural Afro-Colombian women in the decision-making bodies of the community councils and stipulates that they must be represented, in a proportion of at least 30 per cent, in the general assemblies and on the boards of the councils in Afro-Colombian communities, as well as in the departmental, regional and high-level consultative commissions.⁶² In addition, ICETEX has made two appeals for funding for education programmes for the Afro-Colombian communities pursuant to Decree 1627 (1996), which regulates the promotional arrangements for training courses in black communities. Women account for 1,154 of the 2,564 beneficiaries.⁶³

⁶⁰ For the purposes of the application of Act 100, laws, decrees, resolutions and agreements have been adopted on the provision of health services for the indigenous peoples. One leading example is Act 691 (2003), which regulates the participation of ethnic groups in the SGSS and is designed to provide effective protection for the health rights of the indigenous peoples, while guaranteeing their cultural integrity and their survival, as stipulated in the Constitution and in the international treaties and other relevant legislation.

⁶¹ According to the 1993 census, 45.2 per cent of the indigenous population is aged under 15 years, 19.3 per cent 15-24 years, 12.6 per cent 25-34 years, 9.1 per cent 35-44 years, and only 13.9 per cent over 45 years.

⁶² The Afro-Colombian population has some 10.5 million members, 26 per cent of the country's total population. Eighty-six per cent of its members have unsatisfied basic needs and 74 per cent receive less than the minimum legal wage. The illiteracy rate in Afro-Colombian communities is three times higher than among the rest of the population, and 151 of every 1,000 Afro-Colombian babies die before the age of 12 months, against a national average of 39. Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "*Población Afrocolombiana y Políticas Públicas*", 2004.

⁶³ In addition, agreements have been signed since 1996 on the provision of university places for young Afro-Colombians. To date, an annual average of 1,650 young people, 45 per cent of them women, have taken up these places.

Last March the Social Solidarity Network called upon the State and CPEM to collaborate on the production of a national action plan for Afro-Colombia communities. It identified existing programmes, projects and budgets which would facilitate the plan's implementation. It should be pointed out that a large number of Afro-Colombian women took part in all stages of this process.

Lastly, there is another large ethnic group consisting of the indigenous inhabitants of the San Andrés y Providencia Archipelago, who have an Afro-Anglo-Antillean culture and retain a strong Caribbean identity with socio-cultural and linguistic features differing from the rest of the Afro-Colombian population. In 1999 DANE conducted a population and housing registration exercise (pilot census) in coordination with local bodies. The estimates numbered this population at 73,474 persons, 51 per cent male and 49 per cent female, proportions which tally with the national figures of 49.2 and 50.8 per cent respectively.⁶⁴

VIII. Girls

Colombia has 44 million inhabitants, 16,716,530 (37.4%) of them aged under 18 according to the Colombian Family Welfare Institute (ICBF). In recent years the Government has introduced many measures relating to this section of the population, including, most importantly, draft legislation on reform of the Minors' Code which will bring the country's laws into line with the international rules, within the context of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It has also been encouraging collaboration between civil society and official agencies on the drafting of a ten-year plan for children, which will address the priorities in this area. Taking integrated care as the reference point, the Government has been moving forward policies, projects and programmes to promote, protect and defend the inherent rights of children and adolescents, together with services to provide integrated inter-institutional care.

Gender perspectives have been incorporated in a number of programmes to support women heads of household and pregnant and breastfeeding women and to establish monitoring, prevention and care services in connection with violence in the family, especially violence against women (girls, young women and adults) and violence between spouses. In addition, action is being taken to strengthen the family group and to provide care for children who are homeless and/or in situations of risk and to secure restitution when their rights are violated.

Within the concept of integrated care, the services for girls are based on large groups of rights, such as participation, education and development, life and survival, and special protection. This last group has four main categories: (1) girls in situations of emergency (girls involved in armed conflict); (2) girls in conflict with the law; (3) girls in situations of exploitation and/or abuse; and (4) girls belonging to ethnic minorities.

⁶⁴ It should be pointed out that Colombia also has some Roma or gypsy communities. Most of them belong to the Cingaros Kalderash group, and the main sub-groups are the Bolochoch, the Boyhas, the Churón, the Mijjhasi, the János and the Greco. Between 5,500 and 8,000 gypsies are estimated to hold Colombian nationality.

1. Girls involved in armed conflict

According to estimates by UNICEF and the Office of the Ombudsman, in 2000 some 6,000 children were involved with some armed group operating outside the law. Since 1999, as a response to this situation, the Government has been promoting intersectoral programmes to end this involvement and reintegrate the children in society. The main aim is to provide support for the stabilization of their lives once they are removed from the conflict. Emphasis is given to their reintegration in family, social, cultural and working life. The institutional model which is being developed is focused first and foremost on the personal security of the children and the members of their family network. Efforts are also made to identify, trace and locate families in order to make an initial approach to them and assess the possibilities of the children's reintegration.⁶⁵

Care for girls removed from situations of armed conflict is a priority for the country which requires ever increasing efforts from the national family welfare system and international cooperation, in particular with regard to education, food, nutrition, use of leisure time, and strengthening of the social fabric and community life in urban and rural areas where the risk of recruitment is high; the ICBF needs institutional support nationally, regionally and locally.

According to ICBF figures up, 1,538 demobilized children had received attention up to February 2004. Of this total, 1,078 (71.9%) were boys and 420 (28.81%) girls. There are currently five transitional hostels with 135 contracted places for children and adolescents separated from the conflict, together with 15 integrated care centres with 396 places, and five juvenile homes with 116 places; they have links to the social protection networks. Work is also being carried out on the design of an evaluation and monitoring system, on the formulation in conjunction with the Ministry of Education of a policy to provide education for these children throughout the country, and on the provision in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Protection of priority health care, as well as on arrangements for their inclusion in projects to prepare them for life in society and at work.

2. Care for girls in situations of abuse or exploitation

- **Exploitation of labour**

ICBF estimates that there are 1,568,000 children and adolescents aged five to 17 working, with or without pay, in the production of market goods or services; this figure shows the seriousness of the phenomenon of child and adolescent labour nation-wide. There are also 184,000 children and adolescents registered as seeking work, giving a total, with the addition of those already working, of 1,752,000 persons aged five to 17 involved directly in the labour

⁶⁵ The programme started in 1999 with 10 young people. It catered for 100 in 2000, 196 in 2001, and 394 in 2002, and in 2003 it had helped more than 500 by September. Of the total number, 796 (72.32%) were boys and 297 (27.13%) girls. The assistance was accepted voluntarily by 744 (68.06%) of them, 280 (25.61%) were captured, and in 69 (6.33%) cases the assistance was negotiated; 52.22 per cent had full or partial primary education, 24.93 per cent had taken the baccalaureate course, 8.07 per cent had not attended school at all, and there was no information on 14.7 per cent.

market.⁶⁶ When it comes to school attendance by working children, a DANE survey showed that 10.8 per cent of those attending school were also working at a job and that 35.9 per cent of those working at a job were not attending school.

In view of the magnitude of this problem, the State's action has working to establish and implement national and local action plans to eliminate child labour by carrying out strategies involving research, cultural change and direct intervention to improve the quality of life of working children; this action is based on inter-institutional cooperation with international agencies such as ILO and its International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) and with national governmental and non-governmental organizations.

To this end, Colombia has been carrying out since 1995 action plans for the elimination of child labour and improvement of the living conditions of child workers. The end of 2003 saw the presentation of the third national plan, which was drawn up on a decentralized basis and seeks to secure increased participation by local society.⁶⁷

- **Sexual exploitation**

Where cases of the sexual abuse of children are concerned, the statistics of the National Institute of Legal Medicine for 2002 show a total of 14,421 expert reports, indicating an increase of 0.8 per cent over the preceding year. ICBF data also show an increase of 20 per cent between 2001 and 2002 in the admission of children to protection programmes following sexual abuse and a total of 3,748 children receiving care. In view of the big number of cases of sexual abuse and exploitation of children reported in the country, an initiative for the "design and implementation of integrated care models for victims of sex offences" has been under implementation since February 2000 within the context of the "*Haz Paz*" policy for building peace and good relations in the family.

The **problems of sexual abuse and exploitation** in Colombia prompted, in the case of the sexual abuse and exploitation of children, the adoption of Act 470 (1998), Act 679 (2001), Act 765 (2002) and Act 800 (2003), which are designed to prevent and punish international trafficking in children, regulate the civil and criminal aspects of such trafficking, secure recognition of children's right to be protected against economic exploitation, encourage cooperation to prevent and combat organized transnational crime more effectively, and establish preventive and punitive measures with regard to exploitation, pornography, sex tourism, and other forms of sexual abuse of minors.

⁶⁶ Persons aged 15 to 17 constitute the main age group (29.9%), followed by 12 to 14 (19%), 10 and 11 (12.1%), and five to nine (5.1%). The following regions have the highest rates of child labour: Pacific (18.5%); Eastern (16.4%); Central (15.6%), Atlantic (13.8%); and Bogotá (14.5%).

⁶⁷ At the national level there are various laws and decrees on measures to eliminate child labour, including Act 704 (2001) approving ILO Convention 182, which is currently undergoing the constitutional procedures for its ratification. This legislation is designed to develop a national policy to secure the effective abolition of child and adolescent labour and gradually to raise the minimum age for admission to employment, while at the same time prohibiting and eliminating the worst forms of child labour for all persons aged under 18, i.e. all those forms which adversely affect children's physical, mental or moral development, including the use, recruitment or offering of children for prostitution, production of pornography, or pornographic acts.

3. Child health

Colombia's infant mortality rate is one of the health indicators which has undergone the greatest decline and structural change in recent years. The rate moved from 123.2 deaths of children aged under 12 months per 1,000 live births in 1950 to 37 per 1,000 in 1990 and to 28.1 in 2000, according to DANE figures, and to 21 per 1,000 live births for the five-year period 1995-2000, according to the national health survey. This has made a big contribution to the increase in life expectancy at birth, which rose from 50.6 years in 1950 to 72.2 in 2002. This decline in infant mortality is associated with various causes, including in particular women's improved educational standards, the systematic efforts to put health education messages across to the population, and better access to basic health services. Maternal mortality declined by 3.5 points between 1998 and 2000, according to figures from the Ministry of Social Protection. In 2002, for every 100,000 live births 67.7 women died in Colombia from causes associated with maternity,⁶⁸ although some regions still show rates much higher than the average, and not all maternal deaths are registered as such.⁶⁹

According to the Ministry of Social Protection, nutrition studies over the past decade show a decline in the incidence of general malnutrition in under-fives from 10 per cent in 1990 to 8.4 per cent in 1995 and 6.7 per cent in 2000. Chronic malnutrition fell from 16 to 15 and then to 13 per cent in the same period. There are marked regional differences, and rural areas have the worst indicators.

⁶⁸ Ministry of Social Protection, basic indicators, 2002.

⁶⁹ According to ICBF, the main cause of maternal deaths in Colombia is toxemia, followed by childbirth complications (18%), abortion (17%), haemorrhages (17%), puerperal complications (6%), and other complications (4%).

PART THREE INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

I. Institutional mechanisms and arrangements for the follow-up and implementation of the Platform for Action and the outcome of Beijing+5

1. The Presidential Advisory Office on Gender Equality (CPEM): a mechanism for promoting gender equality and empowering women

As the lead agency for governmental policies for promoting equity for women and gender equality, CPEM is working to incorporate a crosscutting gender approach in the design, application and evaluation of public policies.⁷⁰ It has three main objectives: to establish a national policy on equality for women, to mainstream this policy on a crosscutting basis, and to build up its institutional support, recognizing that equality for women is goal whose attainment involves many different male and female players.

The 2003 policy “Women: builders of peace and development” is the “starting point for the coordination of objectives, strategies and measures whose execution is a joint responsibility of the entire public administration in an effort to attain a common goal: the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.”⁷¹ CPEM has also taken up the challenges of sustaining the progress made, giving heed in its work to the heterogeneity and diversity of the practical and strategic interests of Colombian women, and addressing the need to promote women’s social inclusion, with priority attention focused on the groups suffering severest exclusion in the various regions of the country.

The CPEM mission is to negotiate and agree with the sectors of the public administration the best way in which to set in motion the policy “Women: builders of peace and development” and to establish a framework for collaboration with the legislative and judicial branches; this was the purpose of the signature of the National Agreement on Equality between Men and Women. The underlying **principles** of its work are: equality and equal opportunities for women; participation; crosscutting; respect for women’s human rights and international human rights; independence; plurality; and decentralization.⁷²

2. The CPEM objectives and implementation of the Platform for Action⁷³

⁷⁰ CPEM was created by Decree 1182 of 29 July 1999 as the lead agency for policies for women. Its functions were redefined by Decree 519 of March 2003.

⁷¹ CPEM, 2000. Presentation on the National Agreement on Equality between Women and Men (mimeo).

⁷² CPEM, 2003. Folder on the policy “Women: builders of peace and development”.

⁷³ The main CPEM functions include: (1) assisting the President of the National Government with the design of the necessary policies for promoting equality between women and men; (2) encouraging the incorporation of gender perspectives in the formulation, management and monitoring of national and local policies, plans and programmes; (3) establishing arrangements for monitoring compliance with national legislation and international treaties; (4) forming strategic alliances with the private sector, international agencies, NGOs, universities and research centres in order to encourage research and generate knowledge about the situation and status of women; (5) supporting women’s organizations and encouraging their active participation in State activities and programmes; (6) supporting the formulation, regulation, monitoring and evaluation of programmes and projects to improve women’s living conditions, with emphasis on the poorest and least protected; and (7) channelling international cooperation resources

The work of CPEM in connection with the mainstreaming of gender perspectives in the Development Plan 2003-2006, the formulation and introduction of the national policy “Women: builders of peace and development”, the signature of the National Agreement on Equality between Women and Men, and institution-building in CPEM itself have produced clear progress in:

- **Structuring the national policy for women** by designing intervention models in the seven programme areas, providing technical support for the implementation of the national policy, and initiating training and guidance activities for the formulation of gender-sensitive departmental and municipal budgets;
- **Promoting a crosscutting gender approach** in national, regional and municipal management, bearing in mind the critical areas of concern of the Platform for Action and within the framework of the National Agreement on Equality between Women and Men, which gained the support of the national authorities in 2003 and of the local authorities in 2004 in a negotiation process backed by widespread distribution of materials and by field visits.⁷⁴ This strategy has led to the agreement of 18 sectoral agendas based on the seven priority areas set out in the national policy document. CPEM has been providing technical advice for the determination of the sectoral agendas and training and technical support for personnel of 18 State bodies and 15 departments and for town halls with regard to the implementation of policy for women and the incorporation of the gender approach in the development plans currently being approved at the local level;
- **Institutional development for the policy for women and the gender approach** at the formal political level and at the technical level.⁷⁵

At the formal political level, the Development Plan 2003-2006, the National Agreement on Equality between Women and Men, the policy “Women: builders of peace and development”, Act 823 (2003) backed by the President of the Republic, the dissemination of gender-sensitive policies and the efforts to increase awareness of them and their acceptance at both national and local levels have all helped to legitimize the policy for women as a State policy and have led to the creation of databases and the Observatory for Gender Issues.

At the technical level, CPEM has been offering advice and training in gender perspectives and respect for women’s human rights to authorities and technical personnel at the national, regional and local levels, and to women’s organizations and other non-governmental organizations, and it has been supporting the ongoing formulation on a participatory basis of the action plan for indigenous women and the regulations for Act 731 (2002) on rural women. It has also been supporting initiatives by other institutions, such as those of the Social Solidarity Network with respect to the action plan for the Afro-Colombian community.

and activities to projects aimed at ensuring the inclusion of the gender perspective and the participation of women in the social, political and economic spheres.

⁷⁴ A thousand copies of the National Agreement, 10,000 copies of the institutional document, and 9,000 copies of the folder in two editions were published and distributed. See CPEM, 2000. *Informe de Gestión. Período comprendido entre Enero y Diciembre 2003*.

⁷⁵ CPEM, 2003. Progress report on the attainment of the objectives (mimeo).

II. The 2003 National Agreement on Equality between Women and Men: legitimization of the institutional role of CPEM for coordination of the introduction of the crosscutting approach

The National Agreement was promoted by CPEM in order to secure the support and commitment of the three powers of the State and of all the players involved in gender-equality issues at the national, regional and municipal levels and it has become a mechanism for incorporating a crosscutting approach in policy implementation.⁷⁶ The signature of the National Agreement has led to:

- **Recognition** that equality policies should start by identifying the basic gaps between men and women, with respect both to opportunities and to results, that they constitute strategies for correcting imbalances of various kinds and in different areas, and that they require the backing of the three branches of State power, for they seek to establish “a situation of true justice which offsets or moderates the inequalities between individuals and ensures, through deliberate action, equality of rights and opportunities”;⁷⁷
- **Definition** of “the gender perspective as a paradigm of social analysis and a method of identifying and correcting inequalities which should constitute a crosscutting axis of equality policies and a strategy for transforming institutional measures for addressing social problems”;
- **Agreement**: (1) “to sign the National Agreement on Equality between Women and Men as a commitment of the National Government and the legislative and judicial branches to empower women through their participation on an equal footing with men in all areas of society and to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women, in order to secure human development with quality and equity; (2) to support CPEM in securing consolidation of the policy and signature of the relevant agreements; (3) to commit the signatories to establishing a programme on institutionalization of gender perspectives with specific and quantifiable targets for the short, medium and long terms; (4) to work at the tasks to be carried out under the commitments entered into, in accordance with the premises of the national policy “Women: builders of peace and development”;⁷⁸ (5) to manage the programmes and measures in accordance with

⁷⁶ In the executive branch the National Agreement was signed by all the Ministers and all the Directors of national executive agencies; in the legislative branch, by the Presidents of the Senate and the Chamber of Representatives and 48 senators and 50 representatives; in the judicial branch, by the Presidents of the Supreme Court of Justice, the Constitutional Court and the Higher Council of the Judiciary, the Attorney General of the Nation and the Ombudsman; it was also signed by the rectors of three public universities (National, Antioquia and El Valle) and by a number of presidents of trade unions (ASOBANCARIA, ANDI, Comfécamaras, COTELCO and the Farmers’ Association of Colombia (SAC)).

⁷⁷ Office of the President of the Republic, CPEM, UNDP, 2003. “*Equidad de género: Acuerdo Nacional por la igualdad entre mujeres y hombres*”. The quotations are from this publication.

⁷⁸ The strategic features of the policy are: to structure the national policy on equality for women; to make it a crosscutting policy by introducing the gender dimension as a guiding focus of all the plans, programmes and operational mechanisms of the public administration; to establish arrangements for negotiation, coordination and cooperation with a view to working from a gender perspective in the various branches and agencies of the public administration, while respecting the functions of each of them; to secure the participation of civil society in the

the objectives of the policy areas defined by CPEM; (6) to participate in the monitoring of the commitments entered into under the Agreement and the intersectoral activities and to set work targets for integrating the policy in a gender-sensitive national budget and ensure monitoring of the adaptation of domestic legislation to the international commitments on women's rights; (7) to submit annual reports on sectoral progress; and (8) to facilitate the adhesion of other relevant organizations to the Agreement.

III. Results-oriented management

1. Roles of the various players

- **National and local authorities** play a key role under the National Agreement. Together with players at the local level they carry out publicity and awareness activities and offer training to the personnel of the authorities and women's organizations. For example, at the joint meetings with governors and mayors CPEM informed them about the role of departmental and municipal authorities in carrying out the gender equality policy and provided them with copies of the national policy and the Agreement. Support is also furnished to the departments and municipalities and their personnel in the form of training and technical assistance with a view to management from a gender perspective;
- **Women in planning, implementation and monitoring activities.** The methods of working with these organizations from different regions of the country are diverse and innovative and take account of the objectives of the Development Plan and the national policy, the interests which draw the organizations together, the heterogeneous characteristics of the women and their organizations, their regional locations, and the type of programme in which they are involved. For the staging of the First Businesswomen's Fair, for example, more than 12 meetings were held in 15 departments, with emphasis on direct and open communication with more than 2,500 businesswomen;
- **Women's Community Councils.** These Councils were set up in 2003 in order to expand the spaces for the participation and recognition of women and facilitate the implementation of the national policy "Women: builders of peace and development". The legal framework for the Councils is to be found in the Constitution (arts. 40, 43, 103, 209 and 305); this concept emanated from the Constitutional Court in a decision on participatory democracy and political rights and from Act 489 (1998). As of December 2003, 120 Councils had been established, and more are on the way.

2. Coordination and supervision bodies

- **The Technical Advisory Council.** This body facilitates the interface between CPEM and the various public organizations and institutions headed by women. It consists of persons of recognized experience in the policy areas, including the directors of the gender centres of the public universities which signed the National Agreement, the

evaluation of the relevant policies; to accord attention to vulnerable groups; and to foster family values with respect for diversity.

director for women's issues of the Office of the Ombudsman, the president of the Women's Bank, and a representative of the organizations of black women. The Council ratifies the CPEM programmes and activities and makes recommendations to be acted upon by CPEM;

- **Gender networks in the sectoral ministries and offices.** The year 2003 saw the initiation, with technical assistance from UNIFEM and UNDP, of the negotiation of intersectoral agendas to determine the institutional commitments of most of the ministries and other State agencies. For the purposes of advice and discussion and the adjustment of the intersectoral agendas, CPEM held a number of working sessions and offered training in several areas, for example in the formulation of institutional plans and budgets from a gender perspective. It is hoped that these networks will give firm support to the execution of the institutional and intersectoral agendas.

3. Capacity to promote gender mainstreaming

CPEM itself and the Observatory for Gender Issues are examples of the capacity which is being acquired to mainstream gender perspectives in accordance with the commitments of Beijing+10.

- **CPEM: clarity of the strategy for promoting crosscutting.**⁷⁹ Since 1995 all Governments have established mechanisms for implementing the Beijing Platform for Action, but it has proved difficult to establish a permanent gender perspective in either the structure of the management of the State. The institutional challenge for the present CPEM is to incorporate the gender policy on a crosscutting basis in a four-step process: (1) gender analysis of policies, programmes and projects; (2) measures and projects to raise the profile of women's social role (intersectoral agendas and specific gender programmes);⁸⁰ (3) education and awareness activities; (4) monitoring systems, which in Colombia's case have materialized in the Observatory for Gender Issues;
- CPEM management is consistent with this framework and brings clarity to the strategy for equality and the sustained empowerment of women's role, giving priority to the poorest and most vulnerable women. The implementation of each component of the strategy is conceived in such a way as to consolidate the capacity to establish the gender policy on a crosscutting basis and to breathe new life into social policies. The technical team has thus acquired a shared vision and a clear commitment to the work of CPEM.
- **Production sector from a gender perspective.** This is the orientation of the First Businesswomen's Fair, the organization and advertising of which is involving meetings with more than 2,500 women running microenterprises in Bogotá and 16 other cities and towns; it is the first time that most of these women have been invited

⁷⁹ Source: interviews with the Presidential Adviser and her team conducted for this report.

⁸⁰ Raising the profile of women's role in various fields such as culture is a task which is being tackled systematically by highlighting the presence of Colombian women in the most diverse spheres of activity. To mark International Women's Day in 2004, CPEM organized in Cartagena de Indias on 4 and 5 March an "Encounter with Colombian women writers: They count". (See annex V.)

to a national event in their capacity as paid workers and businesswomen.⁸¹ The Fair provides an opportunity for presentations on microenterprises which are competitive in the national, regional and local markets and for links to be established between businesswomen, consumers, and public and private sector agencies, especially local authorities and chambers of trade;⁸²

- **Decentralization and the work of local authorities from a gender perspective.** Much of the time and management effort of CPEM is devoted to regional and local activities to publicize the policy, raise its profile and people's awareness, transfer to departmental and municipal governments the methodology for establishing a crosscutting approach in regional and local administration, and promote the various sectoral and women's policies. Although it is still too soon to talk about results, some local bodies already have gender policies and related action plans, for example the Departments of Huila and Antioquia and the municipalities of Neiva, Medellín and Tunja. These documents are kept in the CPEM files pending incorporation in the development plans. (See annex VIII for the treatment of gender equity in the Boyacá development plan.)

4. Indicators

- **The Observatory for Gender Issues: identifying and highlighting inequalities.**⁸³ CPEM believes that "the building of equality begins with an awareness of the existence of people who have clear differences in terms of needs and require special attention and protection from the State in order to develop as agents of progress and improve their status and quality of life".⁸⁴ The Observatory "operationalizes" the gender approach as a category and an analytical method for understanding and studying the entry and exit barriers and generating measures to help disadvantaged groups.

- **Structure of the Observatory: (1) Thematic focuses:** employment and business development; education and culture; health and sexual and reproductive health; violence against women; political participation. **(2) Components:**⁸⁵ legislative; administrative (policies, plans, programmes, projects and budgets); legal; and statistical. **(3) Activities:** data collection and organization; construction of gender indicators; dissemination of the data collected and the analyses produced; formulation of recommendations and suggestions to help to overcome the existing gender inequalities; and, in conjunction with participating bodies, evaluation of the quality, relevance, efficiency and impact of the jointly devised procedures and products;

⁸¹ CPEM, Ministry of Commerce, and Confécamaras, 2004. "Primera Feria Nacional de la Mujer Empresaria. La otra cara productiva del país".

⁸² Annex VI contains copies of the folder and the registration form.

⁸³ The Observatory was created as a response to the mandate of the Beijing Platform of Action, CEDAW, the Development Plan 2003-2006, and Act 823 (2003) and "because there is a political mandate in the agreement on equality between women and men". Observatory for Gender Issues, *Boletín 1*, May 2004.

⁸⁴ Martha Lucia Vásquez Z., 2003. Presentation of the National Agreement on Equality between Women and Men.

⁸⁵ These components will be found to be consistent with the international guidelines to be followed by States in the preparation of their reports. (See United Nations document HRI/GEN/2/Rev.1/Add.2 of 13 May 2003.)

- **Capacity and sustainability.** In addition to the measures for the short, medium and long terms, the Observatory is working to consolidate the crosscutting approach in national and local agencies, evaluate the impact of the selected norms, produce analyses and inputs for the preparation of future international reports, and contribute to institution-building in the bodies cooperating with the Observatory and CPEM.

- **Gender perspectives in national statistics.** The National Statistics Department (DANE) applies gender perspectives in the collection and analysis of five of its basic products: (1) wage gaps, in the permanent housing survey 2002-2003; (2) heads of household, in the quality of life survey 2003; (3) structure of households, migration and displacement, in the Soacha pilot population and housing census 2003; (4) census of street people in Bogotá 2001 and (5) in Medellín 2002, with a comparative analysis between the two cities based on this data disaggregated by age, place of origin, and sex.⁸⁶

⁸⁶ DANE, UNDP, 2004. “*La perspectiva de género: una aproximación desde las estadísticas del DANE*”.

PART FOUR MAIN CHALLENGES AND ACTIONS TO ADDRESS THEM

I. Areas requiring future action

This report has documented significant progress in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome of Beijing+10. The achievements are substantial but they must be consolidated and from that standpoint all areas require new measures. This is because the building of equality between women and men is a long-term process requiring profound cultural change at all levels and in all governmental agencies and a renewed institution-building effort.

New measures must be introduced with a view to integrated progress, on the basis of recognition that since the spheres are interdependent the successes and difficulties affect each other. There is also a need for measures to establish the crosscutting approach to gender issues by means of a huge coordination effort among the authorities of all the branches of the State and at the national, regional and local levels. From this standpoint, the country has given priority to the three areas described in the next section, for they will deliver a more powerful joint impact in the effort to attain the equality goals and focus action on the poorest groups of women, as well as facilitating the inter-institutional work and the work at the local level with the regional authorities and women's community organizations.

II. Priority areas for improving implementation of the Platform for Action

The following are the priority areas which the Government will continue to back in the CPEM Action Plan 2002-2006: (1) women and the economy; (2) violence against women; and (3) women in power and decision-making.

1. Women and the economy: employment and business development, empowerment, and poverty eradication

In order to generate jobs and incomes, help women to control production resources such as loans, empower marginalized women, and establish the policy for women in the economy on a crosscutting basis, the programme on urban and rural women heads of family running microenterprises will be continued, for it operates effectively. The work with women running microenterprises, whose profile is being raised as "the country's other productive face" and who are being organized through the First Businesswomen's Fair will also be continued by means of the national business training plan for women and the establishment of a seedmoney fund with resources from international cooperation.

2. Violence against women: "Non-violent roads"

In order to guarantee women's rights and support women suffering the double impact of violence in the home and violence in society the "Non-violent roads" policy will be continued; it includes the family democracy programme, the Ursula Iguarán campaign for return to the land, and the "Tenderness for you" programme. These programmes recognize women as citizens in

situations of high social risk whose rights require special protection and guarantees from the State. The measures to strengthen women's representation on the Women's Panel on Peace and Security will also be continued.

3. Women in power and decision-making: proactive follow-up

In this area, one of the aims of the Observatory for Gender Issues is to produce a situation assessment of women's political participation in the light of the legislative, administrative and legal components, in order to evaluate the degree of implementation and the achievements and the challenges with respect to the empowerment of Colombian women. The analytical framework has two components: the first recognizes that the presence of women on the political stage is still very limited; and the second asserts that "political inclusion does not guarantee genuine representation" and that "women's participation and therefore their genuine representation are impossible without inclusion".

Monitoring and evaluation will proceed on the basis of the following concepts, assumptions and criteria: (1) it is established that the conceptual perspective of gender analysis and its tools are clearly consistent with the goal of crosscutting the gender policies; (2) what is proposed is an analysis which starts by explicitly stating the sources of information. The aim of this analysis is to try to produce three situation assessments of women's political participation: legal; legislative, which covers legislation enacted since 1993; and administrative, which reviews the application of the Quotas Act in 1,098 municipalities and the policy "Women: builders of peace and development".

Annex IV covers the following matters: the Observatory's power-point presentation, which mentions the legislation brought in since 1993 (Act 82 on women heads of family), which is being monitored under the legislative component; the laws, policies, procedures and agencies which are being studied under the administrative component; and, under the legal component, the decision of the Constitutional Court declaring the Quotas Act to be constitutional as affirmative action in favour of women.

III. Institutional development: the challenges for CPEM

As pointed out in Part Three, given the magnitude of the social change required for the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women, even with the progress made since the 1990s, and for the fulfilment of the national commitments to Colombian women and the Beijing Platform, CPEM has spelled out clearly the objectives and the challenges as well as the action needed to maintain what has been accomplished, fulfil the commitments and secure sustainability for the building of a fairer and more equal society. From this standpoint, the three main CPEM objectives remain: to have an impact on national and sectoral policies, to establish the policy on a crosscutting basis, and to build up the institutions carrying the policy out.

- **To have an impact on national and sectoral policies** established in the development plan which are driven by the strategic objectives of the Platform for Action and the Millennium goals and targets.

- **To incorporate gender perspectives in policies and budgets on a crosscutting basis** by means of a strategy which will include: (1) gender analysis of policies, programmes, projects and budgets at all levels; (2) projects under the sectoral agendas and specific gender programmes; (3) strengthening the monitoring arrangements, which will mean building up the promotional capacity of the Observatory for Gender Issues; (4) policies for women; and (5) concrete measures to raise awareness of the problem of gender inequality and provide training in gender analysis and its tools for national and local authorities and NGOs.
- **To improve the capacity of CPEM to influence the formulation of policies, programmes and projects with a gender perspective** by means of measures to facilitate the implementation of the National Agreement and the recommendations of the National Council on Economic and Social Policy (CONPES), on which CPEM has a seat. Institutional development requires the strengthening and/or establishment and start-up of the data bank, the projects bank, the Observatory, the Technical Advisory Council, and the communications strategy, as well as the mobilization of monetary and technical resources.
- **To promote the organization and involvement of the Women's Community Councils.** The expansion of the forums for women's participation in politics implies the involving the groups of women with fewer opportunities and inviting them to participate on the basis of their own experience and interests. That is what is happening under this project, which includes an intensive schedule of visits for the encouragement and mobilization of women at the local level.
- **To involve local authorities in the implementation of the project at the local level.** This will require continuation of the awareness-raising meetings and the training programmes on management, policy formulation, activity design, and budget preparation with a gender perspective.
- **To incorporate the MDGs on a crosscutting basis and with a gender perspective** in order to secure the coordinated and efficient fulfilment of commitments under the Beijing Platform for Action and the attainment of the MDGs, which foster the building of fairer and more sustainable societies.

IV. Final considerations

By way of closure, attention is drawn to some of the progress made in areas which were highlighted in the concerns expressed by some of the organizations of the women's social movement and by non-governmental organizations in a Political Declaration issued at the Beijing+5 Conference.⁸⁷ Unequal conditions and opportunities between women and men still persisted in Colombia in 2000 in economic, cultural and political life, constituting "an obstacle to women's access to and full exercise of their human rights". In the light of the matters raised by the signatories and of the information presented on the progress made since Beijing+5 (see in

⁸⁷ Political Declaration of Colombian Women at the Beijing+5 Conference in June 2000, signed by the combined women's network, other women's networks, NGOs and national women's groups and by a number of individuals. This document was submitted to CPEM by a group of organizations of Colombian women as representing recommendations to be taken into account in the preparation of this report. The meeting to report on the preparation of the Beijing+10 document and seek collaboration in the process was convened by UNIFEM at the request of CPEM; it was attended by representatives of various organizations.

particular Part Two of this report), it may be observed that, although there is still far to go, there have been some very significant achievements in tackling the situation as then described:

- Policies and measures for fulfilment of the international commitments, especially those of the Platform for Action and Beijing+5;
- The inclusion in section 10.C of the Development Plan 2003-2006 of article 8 of the policy for women backed by the Government; the formulation of the policy “Women: builders of peace and development” and the signature of the National Agreement on Equality between Women and Men;
- Policies and programmes to facilitate women’s access on an equal footing to resources, jobs, markets and trade which give priority to women with low incomes, as proposed for example in the policy and programmes for urban and rural women heads of family running microenterprises and at the First National Businesswomen’s Fair, as well as in the associated programmes on access to credit and training;
- Introduction of monitoring arrangements, formulation of policies, and adoption of measures to guarantee women equal access to and full participation in bodies exercising power and to deliver their human rights;
- The participatory and decentralized work which is being done to empower women in the places where they live and work and to ensure that the policy is incorporated in the departments and municipalities on a crosscutting basis;
- Implementation of the national programme for education in gender and diversity and production of the Co-education Guide; the reduction, according to National Planning Department data, of the female illiteracy rate, as well as the gap which exists between women and men even though the drop-out rate is higher among men; but the quality of education must be improved as a matter of urgency;
- The theme of “violence”, which is one of the focuses of the policy “Women: builders of peace and development”, where the aim is to highlight the need to address this problem and introduce preventive measures and ensure that it receives due attention in governmental policies and programmes for the protection of human rights and for displaced women.

Lastly, but no less importantly, it must be stressed that the capacity of the Government and the Presidential Adviser’s Office to fulfil the commitments made to women will be a decisive factor in solving the problems and accelerating progress towards the goal of equality and empowerment of women on the basis of the National Agreement and with the contributions of all the persons involved in it, the growing, informed and effective involvement of local authorities and local women, and the creation of monitoring and evaluation bodies to follow up the process and determine the results achieved and the goals still to be attained.

LIST OF ANNEXES

- I. The policy “Women: builders of peace and development” and the accompanying folder
- II. The National Agreement on Equality between Women and Men
- III. The results produced by the tools of equality with a gender perspective
- IV. The Observatory for Gender Issues (power-point presentation and *Boletín*)
- V. “Encounter with Colombian writers: They count”
- VI. First National Businesswomen’s Fair (folder and registration form)
- VII. Methodology for preparation of the report
- VIII. Social development plan with a gender perspective of the Boyacá and Antioquia governments
- IX. Instrument of adherence of the Department of Huila to the National Agreement
- X. Folder on Women’s Community Councils
- XI. Folder on application of the Quotas Act
- XII. Folder on the programme for women heads of family running microenterprises
- XIII. State action to address the various forms of violence against women in Colombia