



**Speech by H.E. Ms Eleonora Menicucci de Oliveira, Minister of Policies for Women, at the General Discussion of the 56<sup>th</sup> Session of the Comission on the Status of the Women (CSW).**

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Madam Chairperson,  
Honorable Ministers,  
Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Representatives of feminist movements and women's rights organizations.

The Brazilian delegation's participation in the 56th session of the Commission on Status of Women is of singular importance. For the first time in the history of our country a woman is President of the Republic, and we are consolidating the promotion of national development combining economic growth with environmental sustainability and the reduction of social inequalities.

These national development policies have been responsible for the eradication of poverty amongst 28 million people throughout the country, 4 million of which within the rural environment, through the implementation of measures geared towards rural development and food security, as well as gender equality, which also take into account ethnic-racial and geographic disparities. Such measures expand women's autonomy through multiple facets: economic, social, cultural and personal, the pillars of the new cycle of development.

In some of these actions, we have implemented affirmative policies, such as quotas. We have increased the capacity of policymakers to advocate on behalf of women, and created specific credit lines to women's economic organizations.

The economic empowerment of rural women in our country still faces many challenges since the majority of these women work predominantly for sustenance without generating monetary income. Although their work is essential in guaranteeing food security as well as preserving natural resources and traditional knowledge, women still have less access to land, agricultural inputs, productive resources, and rural services, as well as decision-making power.

This reality is being transformed throughout our country. Since 2003, the country has been elaborating and consolidating an agenda for the promotion of rural development which integrates policies for rural women while incorporating them into the National Policy Plan for Women. This agenda includes joint actions of different Ministries,

coordinated by the Ministry of Policies for Women and by the Ministry of Agrarian Development.

This agenda is also the result of a strongly expressive movement of women's organizations in rural and forest areas, such as the "Marcha das Margaridas" and Via Campesina Brasil", which are part of the National Council of Women's Rights, and are also part of the Brazilian official delegation to this session.

Brazil is already committed to incorporating the majority of the recommendations which will be presented here. We are investing in integral policies for rural women aimed at generating economic autonomy, combined with the promotion of citizenship. Such policies have been designed to provide credit, technical assistance and extension services, insurance, price protection, and product diversification aimed at generating income, jobs and the promotion of agro-ecological transitioning.

I would like to emphasize the importance of granting documentation to women, as well as social security for women farmers, indigenous and black women from traditional communities. Since 2004, more than 830 thousand women have received their documents.

Our actions aim at stimulating social participation and decision-making of smallholder agriculture for rural development, with women's participation and the articulation of policies at the local level, leading to greater autonomy.

Equal rights to land are secured by the land reform and regularization program through mandatory joint titling, with a preference to women heads of family. We are implementing policies towards increasing the access to water and electricity. For rural women employees, we have a program for technical qualification and intermediation of labor which includes rural workers and a vigorous policy of valuing the minimum salary and formalizing labor contracts.

As a way of preventing violence and assisting victims in matters regarding domestic and gender violence, we have passed specific legislation – the "Maria da Penha" law - and promoted awareness campaigns with the participation of women in rural areas, forests

and traditional communities. We are also structuring a network of mobile services which will complement the already existing network in order to assist victims of violence.

With regards to health services, we have made important progress with the implementation of mobile units for preventative medicine which provide training about breast and uterine cancer, maternity protection, and promote sexual and reproductive rights.

Although millions of poor people have attained better life conditions, 16 million people still live below the poverty line. Launched by President Dilma Rousseff, the “Brasil Sem Miséria” (Brazil Without Poverty) Program integrates other national policies. Women are not only beneficiaries of conditional income transfer programs. They are now recognized as agents, beneficiaries and protagonists of public policy.

Policies for rural women are part of the agendas of regional integration within MERCOSUL and South-South cooperation efforts. Brazil is part of an important global effort to grant greater recognition of women’s roles in the eradication of poverty. National sovereignty can only be achieved by strengthening of women’s autonomy and self-determination.

To conclude, I would like to mention the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), to be held in Brazil, in June 2012, which will provide an important opportunity to strengthen rural women’s contributions to sustainable development and poverty eradication.

Thank you.