



BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA
PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

**54TH SESSION OF THE COMISSION ON
THE STATUS OF WOMEN (CSW)**

**STATEMENT BY THE DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO THE
UNITED NATIONS, AMBASSADOR ILENIA MEDINA**

**ITEM 3: Follow-up of the Fourth World Conference on Women
and the 23rd Special Session of the General Assembly
"Women 2000: gender equality, development
and peace for the XXI century"**

NEW YORK, MARCH 2010

Mr. President,

The Delegation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela associates itself with the statements made by the G77 and China as well as by the Rio Group and MERCOSUR in the context of this session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW).

The Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela reiterates its commitment with the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Outcome of the Twenty Third Special Session of the General Assembly entitled "*Women 2000: Gender Equality, development and peace for the XXI Century*". Similarly, we reaffirm our country's commitment to fully implement our obligations through the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and its Optional Protocol.

In many parts of the world women continue to be an invisible subject, a victim of the oppression from an unjust neoliberal development system that reproduces stereotypes that condemns and enslaves them.

In contrast to this commercial and dehumanizing vision, the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has undertaken the construction of a new development model, one that is human centered, which guarantees equality between men and women and respect for the human rights of all.

The Bolivarian Constitution of 1999, considered one of the world's most ground-breaking constitutions, incorporates and institutionalizes an inclusive language that is non-sexist and non-discriminatory, enshrines gender equality and ensures the promotion and protection of the rights of women, including the recognition of domestic work as a generator of added value, creating income and social welfare.

The Venezuelan woman participates in a protagonist role in the political, economic, social and cultural life of our country as well as in the decision-making process, contributing directly to the construction of a new social order of law and justice. Thus, the Venezuelan government has been able to enhance the various women's organizations, especially those community-base and those focusing on indigenous women.

Since 1999, the Bolivarian Government implements innovative policies in **four main areas**: gender equality, women empowerment, eradication of discrimination against women and eliminating violence against women. These axes lie in a new legal framework through which the institutions mentioned in the regulatory framework are created and developed; the mechanisms for implementing policies and programs to provide guarantees in delivering the objectives contained in the laws are created and the mechanisms for monitoring the results of government policies and support in the national budget are created.

Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women

In Venezuela, gender equality is at the axes of a state policy to and for women. The implementation of gender mainstreaming in public policies, the defense of the rights of women and promoting women's empowerment and leadership, including indigenous women, Afro-descendants and disabled, are a substantive part of our political process.

The new legal framework mentioned has been adopted in the country in order to guarantee political rights, civil, economic, social and cultural rights of women and ensure their integration into the socio-productive process in the country. Among these we emphasize: the **Organic Law on the Ombudsman of the Peoples**, which created the "*Ombudsman for the protection of the rights of women*", with national jurisdiction; the **Organic Law on Prevention and Working Conditions**, which establishes the protection of maternity, the safety of women at work and licenses or permits for the protection of their health; the **Social Services Law**, which establishes family-responsibility, the protection of pregnancy and breastfeeding and provides financial allocations for elderly people, people with disabilities and homemakers, recognizing the value of reproductive work; the **Law for the Protection of Families, Maternity and Paternity**, which establishes mechanisms for the design of policies for the comprehensive protection of families, motherhood, fatherhood and the co-responsibility in the upbringing of children; and the **Law Regulating Unemployment**, which governs the comprehensive assistance to unemployed people, including women with unskilled jobs, women heads of household or victims of gender violence.

The **Law on Protection of Victims, Witnesses and other Parties**, which provides for the protection of elderly women, disabled women, children and adolescents and victims of sexual crimes or domestic violence; the **Venezuelan Heroine Decoration Order Act**, which recognizes the work in the protection of human rights and the social equality of women;

In terms of political rights, we should highlight the **Standards for Gender Parity**, promulgated by the National Electoral Council, which calls for parity (50/50) on the electoral lists for elective office. Thanks to this legislation, the access of women to senior positions in the government has increased. Of the five public authorities that exist in Venezuela, four are headed by women (the National Assembly, the Supreme Court of Justice, the National Electoral Council, the Attorney General's Office, the Attorney General's Office and the Ombudsman for Human Rights Office).

New institutions develop and implement innovative policies and programs in Venezuela in order to overcome inequities and contribute to the equality for women. Within this new institutional framework we should mention, among others, the *Ministry of the People's Power for Women and Gender Equality*, and other institutions belonging to the same such as the *National Institute of Women (INAMUJER)*, the *Development Bank of Women (BANMUJER)*, and various social missions, in particular, the *Mission Mothers of the Neighborhood*.

The National Institute of Women (INAMUJER) drives development programs at national, regional and municipal levels. The Institute developed the **Plan for Equality for Women**, to systematize, on a gender approach, the formulation of public policies, programs and projects of national agencies.

Based on this plan, new mechanisms such as "**Meeting Points**" have been implemented which, acting as a supportive network of women; help foster the direct participation of women in solving problems and developing economic projects for their communities. As of 2008, it had formed 21,598 meeting points, involving about 256,579 women in different activities.

Another initiative of great significance was the creation in February 2008 of the **National Observatory of Gender Equity** with the aim of strengthening the system of gender statistics and indicators based on the analysis of gender gaps that persist in Venezuelan society and contribute to the planning of public policies with gender perspective.

Since 2005, the Bolivarian government made mandatory the **incorporation of the gender perspective in the budgeting system of the National Executive, at all levels of government, including at the national, regional and municipal levels.** These initiatives have been strengthened since 2008, with the guidelines of the National Public Administration leaders designing the Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB), with the participation of the National Budget Office (ONAPRE), the Ministry of the People's Power for Finances (MPPF), the Ministry of People's Power for Planning and Development (MMPPPD) and the support of the United Nations agencies: UNDP, UNIFEM, UNFPA and the German Technical Cooperation Agency (GTZ).

In order to articulate and harmonize the productive work and domestic work of women, and contribute to their empowerment, the Bank for Development of Women has provided women in poverty credit loans, with subsidized interest rates with a view of providing them with productivity tools to ensure their full integration into the socio-economic development of the country. Thanks to these policies, Economic Associative Units and Cooperatives of women have been promoted as emerging forms for economic organization. Preferential support has been granted to projects for women belonging to indigenous communities.

The success of these new socio-productive units has been that the issuance of these financial allocations has been accompanied by training programs and workshops in areas such as leadership, holistic health, sexual and reproductive health and prevention of gender based violence.

The participation of women in public policy development at local level has also been enhanced with the creation and the strengthening of popular organizations and autonomous popular networks of women.

Social Missions, implemented by the Bolivarian government in the areas of health, education, housing, food security, among others, have contributed to lowering poverty rates in the country and improving the socio-economic wellbeing of the population. The **Mission Mothers of the Neighborhood**, in particular, has been implemented since 2006 to fight the feminization of poverty and for the social protection of mothers and female heads of households in poverty by providing financial allocations and their incorporation in productive activities. This Mission has promoted the creation of grassroots women's organizations called *Committees of Mothers of the District*.

III

Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Mr. President,

In the interest of eradicating discrimination against women, the Government of President Hugo Chávez Frías carries out a policy which aims to ensure those who live in poverty have access to public services and productive resources: credit, microcredit, education, training, technology, knowledge and information.

Our country also incorporates into national policy stipulations enshrined in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), of which we have been parties of since 1982, as well as its Optional Protocol. As a State Party to the Convention, Venezuela introduced in 1995 its second and third reports before the Committee on the Convention, and in July 2004, a consolidated report for the fourth, fifth and sixth, thus fulfilling its obligations under the Convention on reporting.

IV

Elimination of Violence against Women

Mr. President,

Gender violence is the most brutal face of discrimination against women. To combat this crime, the Bolivarian government has enacted innovative laws such as the *Organic Law on Women's Right to a Life Free of Violence*, 2007, considered one of the most advanced legal instruments on the subject in Latin America and the Caribbean.

This new law defines violence against women as a matter of public concern and sets apart nineteen (19) different types of gender violence, among them; media violence, violence in regards to patrimony or assets, obstetric violence, forced sterilization, institutional violence, symbolic violence, trafficking of women and adolescents, among others. This legal instrument creates conditions to prevent, respond, punish and eradicate violence against women and promotes changes in socio-cultural patterns that sustain gender inequality.

Thanks to this law, since 2008 **Special Courts for Violence against Women** throughout the country have been created. More than 100 thousand complaints of violence against women throughout the country and 53 thousand in the metropolitan area have been submitted in recent months in those courts.

The Attorney General's Office has also established, for its part, over 50 **Special Public Prosecutor's Office for Attention to Women Victims of Violence** in the country. And the **National Protection Office of the Rights of Women** has doubled its assistance to women victims of violence.

At regional level, Venezuela is a Party to the Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women, *Convention of Belém do Pará*, the only instrument in the world specializing in violence against women. In July 2008, in Caracas, Venezuela, our country assumed the presidency of the Conference of States Parties of the Monitoring Mechanism of the Convention (MESECVI).

In conclusion, Mr. President, allow me to report that the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela attaches vital importance to the issue of trafficking. Our country addresses this issue with a comprehensive approach that incorporates preventive action, and therefore, attention to the different causes of this crime, so as to create conditions for the elimination of poverty that affects women and promoting international cooperation to address the issue, taking into account the shared responsibility that must exist in the area.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela recently has associated itself with the Group of Friends United against Human Trafficking in the United Nations framework, which aims to ensure the speedy drafting and adoption of a Global Action Plan against Human Trafficking. We hope that with the support of all the Member States that make up this organization a universal instrument of accession, is consolidated soon in order to address this important issue.

Thank you very much,

