



MÉXICO

**Statement by H.E. María del Rocío García Gaytán,
President of the National Women's Institute of Mexico**

**Fifty-third Session
of the Commission on the
Status of Women**

2 March 2009

(check against delivery)

Chairperson, distinguished delegates,

On behalf of the Mexican Delegation, I would like to congratulate the Board for its support of the important work carried out by this Commission, charged with follow-up on the commitments agreed to regarding equity between women and men in every aspect and which today constitute a challenge, faced as we are by the new international scenario we find ourselves in, almost fifteen years after the adoption of Beijing's Platform of Action.

For the Mexican State, the promotion, protection and defense of human rights are an irrenounceable commitment. We renew it today, within a framework in which we promote the adoption of fully developed policies, actions and regulating initiatives that contribute to the attainment of a complete equality of rights and opportunities for women and men, one that springs from the interaction of institutions, individuals and sectors which, in turn, grow stronger.

We have started the process of preparation towards the evaluation of compliance with Beijing's Declaration and Platform of Action in 2010 and we join the efforts carried out by the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) to integrate a regional evaluation that also takes into account the Consensus reached within the region and the work that will lead to the next Latin American and the Caribbean Regional Conference on Women.

Chairperson,

The Mexican Government is very pleased with the incorporation of Haiti, Guyana and Cuba to the Rio Group as a contribution to the union of wills that strengthens the Group in a process of integration also involves human rights—including those of women and girls—, social cohesion, peace and security in the region. Facing the challenges we have identified and share through regional and sub-regional cooperation, encourages work for the attainment of our common goals towards equality: prosperity and integral development for every person, woman and man.

We celebrate that, on this occasion, we approach the challenges of the Quito Consensus, adopted in 2007 during the Tenth Latin American and the Caribbean Regional Conference on Women, which constitutes our regional gender agenda and includes, among others, the establishment of measures and strategies for promoting an equitable co-responsibility for women and men within the frameworks of family and work lives, seeking to overcome gender stereotypes and eradicate discriminatory policies. Also, on that occasion, we committed to favoring strategies that aim towards an egalitarian participation, empowerment and leadership by women, in order to consolidate gender parity. Within this framework, I would like to single out the implementation of the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean with the support of ECLAC, which aims to contribute to the development of more effective policies and initiatives, as well as to homologate and analyze gender disaggregated statistical data.

In Mexico, the struggle to diminish the gaps between women and men and to fight gender discrimination at all levels of government has had the support of all the efforts carried out in compliance of the *General Law for Equality between Women and Men* and the *General Law for the Access of Women to a Violence-Free Life*. Starting from the implementation of the coordination mechanisms mandated by the aforementioned Laws, the current institutional framework has been strengthened and consolidated, as has been the inter-institutional actions towards the attainment of equality.

Also, 19 sector programs have been conciliated to the equality goals, strategies and lines of action established in the 2007-2012 National Development Plan. For 2009, the Federal Expenditure Budget (FEB) approved and earmarked for the advancement of women and equality had a 27.85% increase regarding to the 2008 budget. The amount to support institutional strengthening of the state and municipal mechanisms for women is approximately 598.77 million dollars¹ and contemplates 8 million dollars² for the Gender Mainstreaming Fund, 4.18 million dollars³ for the Fund for the Development of Municipal Mechanisms for Women (FODEIMM) and 123.38 million dollars⁴ to fight gender violence.

¹ Equivalent to 8.981.6 million Mexican pesos, at an exchange rate of 15 Mexican pesos per dollar, February 26th., 2009.

² Equivalent to 120 million Mexican pesos, at an exchange rate of 15 Mexican pesos per dollar, February 26th., 2009.

³ Equivalent to 62.7 million Mexican pesos, at an exchange rate of 15 Mexican pesos per dollar, February 26th., 2009.

⁴ Equivalent to 1.8507 billion Mexican pesos, at an exchange rate of 15 Mexican pesos per dollar, February 26th., 2009.

One of the greater challenges we have identified in Mexico is the application of indicators to measure the effective use of resources earmarked for women in the FEB; to this end, the Ministry of Finance and INMUJERES are advising and assisting the Federal Public Administration (FPA) entities in this task.

Chairperson,

Convinced that the legislative framework is one of the most important tools to achieve equality and eradicate violence against women, during 2008 we worked intensely to achieve legislative harmonization at the state level. To date, 18 out of 32 States of our federation have incorporated the principle of equality in their constitutions, 15 of them the non-discrimination tenet and 11 States have Laws for the Equality Between Women and Men.

Regarding the *General Law for the Access of Women to a Violence-Free Life*, 30 States have related legislation of which 5 already have specific Regulations and 21 have State-wide systems to prevent, address, punish and eradicate violence against women. Initiatives and proposals for the legislative reform of other important ordinances, such as penal and civil Law, are also being promoted.

I would like to acknowledge the work of our legislators, who have promoted fundamental measures regarding the budget earmarked for equality and the advancement of women and the struggle against gender violence and discrimination. Currently at the House of Representatives there is a Law initiative to promote the conciliation of labor, family and personal life.

Regarding the priority theme of this period of sessions, the results of the surveys we have conducted in Mexico, such as the 2002 National Survey on Time Use, indicate that women devote more than 28.4% of their time to domestic work, while men devote 6.5% to such work. Mainly, it is women who are in charge of children, the sick and the elderly, including HIV/AIDS-positive persons, devoting twice as much time as men to home healthcare.

Regarding this, I would like to highlight the fact that, among the measures we are currently developing, there is the Ministry of Social Development's (SEDESOL) Infant and Children Day Care Program, in support of working single parents, as well as the Program to Support Adults over 70 years old. The Ministry of Labor and Social Prevention (STPS) has in turn implemented the Certification for Family-Responsible Enterprises and, beginning in 2008, an Equality Labor Policy Between Women and Men has been put into practice through the Mexican Standard for the Incorporation of Policies and Practices for Labor Equality between Women and Men in public agencies and entities, private enterprises and labor unions, in order to promote, among other aspects, the conciliation of family and labor responsibilities.

Also, as of 2001, the Ministry of Health implemented the People's Health Insurance and the Healthy Pregnancy Strategy, aimed at reducing maternal mortality. Also noteworthy is the granting of scholarships to women and girls by the Ministry of Education.

Starting in 2003, INMUJERES implemented the Gender Equity Model (GEM) that grants a certification to private enterprises, public institutions and social entities that incorporate a gender perspective in their labor practices and actions.

Together with the Ministry of the Public Function we are developing the *Institutional Culture Program for the Federal Public Administration*, based on the results obtained from applying the *Questionnaire of Gender Perspective and Non-Discrimination Institutional Culture* at more than 250 institutions of the FPA.

We firmly believe that the transformation of the institutional culture of government agencies and entities and of the private sector from a gender perspective is a strategically necessary factor in order to eradicate inequities, adopt institutional policies that harmonize labor and family life and to modify the stereotypes based on gender and discriminatory practices.

Chairperson,

In the consolidation process of democracy in Mexico, an equitable participation of women and men in all realms of the country's political, economic and social life is an indispensable factor. The General Law for Equality between Women and Men and the National Program for Equality between Women and Men (PROIGUALDAD) emphasize the importance of promoting the empowerment of women, their participation and representation in the decision-making processes, as well as the generation of the necessary conditions for women to make full use of their rights as citizens and to acquire autonomy.

We are still facing challenges in the consolidation of spaces that assure the permanence of women in the spaces for decision-making and political participation. In Mexico, women represent 39.6% of all middle and top level officials within the FPA; locally, they hold 16% of governorships, head 4.6% municipalities, 29.5% participate in city counsels and 15.8% in other local instances. Regarding the LX Legislature (2006-2009), they hold 19.5% of seats in the Senate, 24.2%⁵ in the House of Representatives and, locally, they hold 20.8% of seats in state congresses.

Establishing a favorable legislative framework is part of the strategies we have adopted to increase the number of women in public spaces until we can achieve full parity. As of 2008, we have a new *Federal Code for Electoral Institutions and Procedures (FCEIP)*, which establishes 60% as the maximum percentage of plurinominal candidates of the same gender in their listings. It also stipulates that political parties have to ensure "an equality of opportunities and an equality between men and women regarding access to elected positions", as well as to "ensure and seek gender parity in their internal government structures and in the determination of candidacies". The Code is also very clear as to penalties for non-compliance.

⁵ Data as of February 17th., 2009, taken from the Senate's and House of Representative's website.

We are currently in a federal process to elect the members of the next legislature at Congress and, to that end, we are promoting a Strategic Platform for Political Equality, for the purpose of strengthening the empowerment of women, their participation and equitable representation in the realms where State decisions are made and to consolidate democratic culture. We are working with the heads of the political parties to this end.

Chairperson,

The financial and economic context we are living in increases the challenges we face in achieving an equality of rights and opportunities for women and men. At the same time, it represents an opportunity to re-structure, from a gender perspective, the policies and actions needed to maintain the advances we have attained until now and to counteract the increase of factors favoring discrimination, the feminization of poverty and the different types of gender violence. We are worried about the effects and the impact the economic crisis may have on women and, especially, on migrant women, due to the threatening conditions that they may face; we are worried about the protection of human rights of Mexican women and men living outside of our borders.

Among the measures we have adopted in Mexico, the following deserve being singled out: the *National Agreement in Favor of the Family Economy and Employment*; which includes the participation of the Legislative Power and that of social, entrepreneurial and labor organizations; the *Program for Job Preservation*, which has more than 133.3 billion dollars⁶ for the protection of jobs, income and the welfare of male and female workers' families; and the *Program for Promoting Growth and Employment*, which will give its support to small and medium-sized enterprises and will revise the rules for spending public money in infrastructure.

Chairperson,

I would like to refer to the challenges confronting the Government of my country: the strengthening of an effective State where the Rule of Law is applied, the overcoming of inequalities, the suppression of impunity, organized crime, public unsafety, corruption, discrimination against women and the different types of gender violence.

⁶ Equivalent to 2 billion Mexican pesos, at an exchange rate of 15 Mexican pesos per dollar, February 26th., 2009.

In facing those challenges, we have advanced in the creation and transformation of institutionality and in the strengthening of the State's capabilities from the point of view of human rights. In 2008, a reform to the Penal Justice and Public Safety System was approved; a Special Prosecutor's Office for Violent Crime against Women and Trafficking (FEVIMTRA) was created and, through the Fund for Supporting Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women in the Federation's States for a Complete Attention to Women who are Victims of Gender Violence (MVVG Fund), 6.96 million dollars⁷ were transferred to the States in order to pursue actions for fully assisting gender violence victims. We are currently designing the Program for Preventing, Addressing, Punishing and Eradicating Violence Against Women.

We have strengthened inter-institutional linkage and work, we have increased the budget destined to the advancement of women and equality; we are carrying out reforms and modifications so that these advances become part of the institutions. We have accepted the human rights recommendations regarding women, the fight against violence and gender discrimination that were made by the Human Rights Council in relation to Mexico's report to the Universal Periodical Examination Mechanism. They constitute both a challenge and a framework for action.

My government is grateful for the U.N.'s Secretary General's Report on the priority theme we are addressing at this meeting and we gladly acknowledge its recommendations. We are in agreement that we are living in a socio-economic and financial context that makes it necessary to adopt a global approach in facing the current unfair distribution of paid and unpaid work between women and men. The value and the cost of care given at the household level and, in general, within society, must be recognized and incorporated in economic and social policies and plans, in domestic budgets and in international cooperation programs for development.

Faced with the evaluation process fifteen years after Beijing and within the world context we are currently living in, we are convinced that it is strategically sound to confront the challenges we have identified from a perspective of opportunity and transformation oriented towards equality.

⁷ Equivalent to 104.4 million Mexican pesos, at an exchange rate of 15 Mexican pesos per dollar, February 26th., 2009.

