

CONSEJO PERMANENTE



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ACTA
DE LA SESIÓN EXTRAORDINARIA
CELEBRADA
EL 7 DE MARZO DE 2006

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CONSEJO PERMANENTE DE LA ORGANIZACIÓN DE LOS ESTADOS AMERICANOS

ACTA DE LA SESIÓN EXTRAORDINARIA CELEBRADA EL 7 DE MARZO DE 2006

En la ciudad de Washington, a las tres y diez de la tarde del miércoles 7 de marzo de 2006, celebró sesión extraordinaria el Consejo Permanente de la Organización de los Estados Americanos sobre el tema “Género y Desarrollo en las Américas: Recordando a los Marginados”. Presidió la sesión la Embajadora Sonia Merlyn Johnny, Representante Permanente de Santa Lucía y Presidenta del Consejo Permanente. Participaron como panelistas las siguientes personas:

Doctora Violet Eudine Barriteau, Jefa de la Unidad de Género y Desarrollo
Universidad de las Indias Occidentales

Señora Carmen Lomellin, Secretaria Ejecutiva de la
Comisión Interamericana de Mujeres (CIM)

Señora Elena Crespo, Directora de Género,
Oficina de la Viceministro de Género
Gobierno de Bolivia

Doctor Linden F. Lewis, Profesor Adjunto de Sociología,
Universidad de Bucknell

Asistieron los siguientes miembros:

Embajadora Marina Valère, Representante Permanente de Trinidad y Tobago y
Vicepresidenta del Consejo Permanente
Embajador Denis G. Antoine, Representante Permanente de Grenada
Embajadora Lisa Shoman, Representante Permanente de Belice
Embajador Michael I. King, Representante Permanente de Barbados
Embajador Jorge Valero Briceño, Representante Permanente de Venezuela
Embajador Paul D. Durand, Representante Permanente del Canadá
Embajador Henry Lothar Illes, Representante Permanente de Suriname
Embajador John F. Maisto, Representante Permanente de los Estados Unidos
Embajadora Abigaíl Castro de Pérez, Representante Permanente de El Salvador
Embajador Gordon V. Shirley, Representante Permanente de Jamaica
Embajadora Deborah-Mae Lovell, Representante Permanente de Antigua y Barbuda
Embajador Mario Alemán, Representante Permanente del Ecuador
Embajador José Luis Velásquez Pereira, Representante Permanente de Nicaragua
Embajador Fernando de la Flor Arbulú, Representante Permanente del Perú
Ministro Consejero Jorge A. Seré Sturzenegger, Representante Interino del Uruguay
Ministra Consejera Mayerlyn Cordero Díaz, Representante Interina de la República Dominicana
Consejera María Guadalupe Carías, Representante Alterna de Honduras
Consejera Jasmine E. Huggins, Representante Alterna de Saint Kitts y Nevis
Consejera Legal Nisla Lorena Aparicio Robles, Representante Alterna de Panamá
Primera Secretaria Deborah Yaw, Representante Alterna de Guyana

Primera Secretaria Yasmin Solitahe Odlum, Representante Alterna de Santa Lucía
Ministra Consejera Roxana Terán de De la Cruz, Representante Alterna de Costa Rica
Segundo Secretario Rodrigo Hume, Representante Alterno de Chile
Primera Secretaria Marcelina Y. Cruz Mimila, Representante Alterna de México
Consejero Gerardo Bompadre, Representante Alterno de la Argentina
Consejero Otto Pérez, Representante Alterno de Guatemala
Tercera Secretaria Judith Anne Rolle, Representante Alterna del Commonwealth de Dominica
Segunda Secretaria Margarita Rosa Arango, Representante Alterna de Colombia
Ministro Consejero Fernando Simas Magalhães, Representante Alterno del Brasil
Ministra Consejera Suze Percy Filippini, Representante Alterna de Haití
Javier Viscarra, Representante Alterno de Bolivia

También estuvieron presentes el Secretario General de la Organización, doctor José Miguel Insulza, y el Secretario General Adjunto, Embajador Albert R. Ramdín, Secretario del Consejo Permanente.

PALABRAS DE LA PRESIDENTA DEL CONSEJO PERMANENTE

La PRESIDENTA: I declare open this special meeting of the Permanent Council on “Gender and Development in the Americas: Remembering the Margins.”

Let me first of all, with honor and profound pleasure, welcome our special guests:

- Dr. Violet Eudine Barriteau, Head of the Gender and Development Unit of the University of the West Indies (UWI);
- Ms. Carmen Lomellin, Executive Secretary of the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM);
- Ms. Elena Crespo, Director of Gender of the Office of the Vice Minister of Gender in the Ministry of Sustainable Development of Bolivia; and
- Dr. Linden F. Lewis, Associate Professor of Sociology at Bucknell University.

We have brought together an academically diverse and dynamic panel to examine natural disasters, the HIV/AIDS dynamic, the indigenous perspective, and men and masculinity, all underpinned by gender analysis.

I take this opportunity to remind you that this special meeting is being held as part of the annual observance of International Women’s Day, which is March 8, as the focus worldwide will be on honoring and celebrating the advancement and achievements of women in particular. However, here in this hemispheric body, we consider it a productive and constructive move to highlight some of the pertinent issues that affect not only women, but also those men who happened to fall in the penumbra of the spotlight, for today our focus is on men and women at the periphery of the Hemisphere, situated at the margins of the dominant subregional discourse.

In the Inter-American Democratic Charter and informing the work of the proposed Inter-American Social Charter, we see that respect for human rights is the very fulcrum of our democratic and development agendas. Paramount to this respect is the elimination of all forms of discrimination and exclusion within the interlinked social, political, and economic areas.

Let me applaud this august hemispheric body for recognizing the critical need to crosscut all of our work, be it democracy, in security, or in development, with a demonstrated commitment to acknowledging the differential that gender provides. Therefore, policies being formulated and programs being designed for implementation at the national, subregional, and hemispheric levels ought to demonstrate that we exist in an engendered world. We must recognize that men and women do experience all facets of their lives differently and that this difference impacts the quality of their equality.

Therefore, actively ensuring and promoting equity between the sexes allows for the full potential of both men and women to be actualized and developed in tandem with eradicating the intolerable tensions and inequities of race, class, culture, ethnicity, and a host of other interactive identities.

As Chair, I trust that this special meeting of the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States will not only be engaging but enlightening. I encourage every member state, as part of this hemispheric family, to work towards engendering even stronger democracies in the Americas. I thank you.

PALABRAS DE APERTURA DEL SECRETARIO GENERAL

La PRESIDENTA: I give the floor to Secretary General José Miguel Insulza for brief remarks.

El SECRETARIO GENERAL: Gracias, Presidenta.

Quiero saludar, además de a los señores Representantes Permanentes y Alternos, a los invitados a este importante panel y también a los Observadores Permanentes y Alternos que se encuentran presentes.

Creo que esta es una iniciativa muy importante que debemos agradecer especialmente a la Presidenta del Consejo Permanente, Embajadora Sonia Johnny. Ella nos brinda la oportunidad de que hoy, en esta Casa de las Américas, podamos unir dos celebraciones que tienen una identidad similar. Como ella lo ha señalado, en el ámbito internacional el 8 de marzo es el Día Internacional de la Mujer y en el ámbito interamericano, desde 1982, por decisión de la Asamblea General, el 18 de febrero se conmemora el Día de la Mujer de las Américas y el aniversario de la creación de la Comisión Interamericana de Mujeres.

Constituye esta una ocasión, entonces, para honrar a todas las mujeres de las Américas en su constante lucha por alcanzar igualdad de derechos y oportunidades, así como para examinar y valorar el trabajo de la Comisión Interamericana como nuestro principal foro generador de políticas hemisféricas sobre la promoción de los derechos de la mujer y la equidad e igualdad de género.

Desde luego, la condición de la mujer en nuestra región americana puede ser mirada desde dos puntos de vista. Quedan aún, como lo expondré a continuación, muchos problemas por resolver, muchas desigualdades por enfrentar, muchas injusticias que eliminar.

Reconozcamos, sin embargo, que ha habido avances importantes desde el punto de vista de la incorporación de la mujer a la fuerza de trabajo, a la educación, a la cultura, y reformas fundamentales en materia de derecho que, si bien todavía no crean una condición como la que quisiéramos, sin duda esta se compara muy favorablemente con la situación muy lamentable en que se desarrollan las mujeres en otras regiones del mundo, particularmente del mundo en desarrollo.

Esta es una época en que todavía hay mujeres privadas de derechos a quienes se les impide tener propiedades, ejercer tuición alguna sobre sus hijos e, incluso, en algunas partes, realizar actividades regulares de la vida moderna. Quiero recordar, por lo tanto, a todas esas mujeres y comprometernos a que nuestra lucha por la igualdad no alcance solamente a las Américas, sino también a otras regiones del mundo, donde las mujeres aún sufren condiciones mucho más deterioradas.

La idea de este evento es muy actual y muy necesaria porque América Latina y el Caribe nos plantean un desafío muy profundo, que es cerrar brechas en distintos aspectos, el principal de los cuales son la pobreza y la desigualdad que nos hace la región más desigual del mundo. Creo, además, que esta afirmación nos indica el camino que debe seguir nuestra política y en el cual es necesario, es indispensable fortalecer la acción de nuestra Comisión Interamericana de Mujeres.

En primer lugar, según el informe anual del Banco Mundial sobre la región, el 10% de los latinoamericanos más ricos acapara casi el 50% del ingreso total. El 10% de los más pobres obtiene solo el 1,6% y gran parte de los hogares en condición de pobreza son hogares monoparentales encabezados por una mujer.

Mujer y pobreza, entonces, son una desgraciada coincidencia que ocurre muchas veces en nuestras Américas y nos plantea un primer desafío para el trabajo de la Organización. Nuestra preocupación, nuestra política en materia de pobreza y desarrollo social debe necesariamente incluir, como las demás también, una perspectiva de género.

Un segundo aspecto que está muy claramente ligado a mujer y pobreza es mujer y trabajo. En los últimos años, hemos visto una incorporación acelerada de la mujer al mercado de trabajo. Ello ha traído, por cierto, más de una dificultad en un continente en que el 20% de la gente está sin empleo y en que la incorporación de la mujer, además de la prolongación de la edad laboral, hace que, como región latinoamericana y del Caribe, tengamos que crear todos los años cinco millones de empleos. Es una tarea que tenemos que acometer, pero la necesidad de incorporar plenamente a la mujer al mercado laboral, junto con la necesidad de crear igualdad en el trabajo, sigue siendo un desafío muy importante.

Tanto en el mundo desarrollado como en el mundo en desarrollo hay aún cifras que muestran que la mujeres son remuneradas en mucho menor medida que los hombres en empleos de igual naturaleza en todos los estratos de la sociedad, desde los empleos profesionales hasta los sin calificación.

Un tercer aspecto es el de mujer y democracia. Ciertamente, en nuestro hemisferio, la mujer logró hace ya bastante tiempo el derecho a elegir, a votar, a participar de la democracia como electora y como ciudadana. Pero no cabe duda de que aún tenemos que avanzar mucho en la plena participación de las mujeres en las distintas instancias de poder que existen, tanto en el mundo público como en el privado.

Si bien hoy día todavía hay un insuficiente número de mujeres en la administración pública de nuestros países, en los parlamentos de nuestros países, no cabe ninguna duda de que en los sectores sociales, particularmente en los sectores económicos, las mujeres están aún mucho más subrepresentadas de lo que están en el mundo de la política.

Por nuestra parte, reconozco ser partidario de formas legislativas que igualen, al menos por algún período prolongado, la condición de representación del hombre y de la mujer, en tanto se alcancen efectivamente los niveles de igualdad como para que realmente las mujeres puedan tener acceso a los cargos públicos igual que los hombres. Como sabemos, hay varios países de nuestra América que consagran esa igualdad o esa equidad de género en la política desde hace bastante tiempo en sus ordenamientos jurídicos y nacionales.

Hay un cuarto aspecto, que es el aspecto propiamente jurídico y-legislativo: la igualdad de los derechos de la mujer. La igualdad de los derechos de la mujer en la familia, con respecto a los hijos y un conjunto de otros fenómenos de la vida social es otro aspecto del cual todavía es necesario que nuestra Organización se preocupe de asegurar que efectivamente, dentro de cada país del Hemisferio, las leyes tengan el mismo trato sin ninguna discriminación para el hombre y para la mujer.

Finalmente, una lamentable situación de la cual también deberíamos ocuparnos, desde el punto de vista de nuestra actividad en materia de derechos humanos y de seguridad, que es la represión y la victimización que sufre la mujer en nuestro hemisferio. El maltrato de la mujer, la violencia intrafamiliar que afecta especialmente a las personas de ese sexo, el femicidio, que ha provocado denuncias y ha movilizó a las mujeres en muchas partes del Continente, también deberían ser preocupación de esta institución.

Pobreza, democracia, trabajo, igualdad jurídica, seguridad son algunas de las tareas en las cuales es indispensable que nuestra Comisión Interamericana de Mujeres adquiera una mucha mayor relevancia y que alleguemos los recursos para poder avanzar mucho más en ese trabajo, porque, finalmente, la condición de la mujer, la igualdad de la mujer, está indisolublemente ligada, es parte integral del concepto de democracia que queremos implantar en toda nuestra región.

Muchas gracias, Presidente.

La PRESIDENTA: Thank you, Secretary General, for your very inspiring remarks.

“ANÁLISIS DE GÉNERO Y GESTIÓN DE LOS DESASTRES NATURALES EN EL
COMMONWEALTH DEL CARIBE”, PRESENTADO POR LA
DOCTORA VIOLET EUDINE BARRITEAU, JEFA DEL CENTRO DE
GÉNERO Y DESARROLLO DE LA UNIVERSIDAD DE LAS INDIAS OCCIDENTALES

La PRESIDENTA: It is my pleasure to give the floor to Dr. Eudine Barriteau, Head of the Gender and Development Unit of the University of the West Indies (UWI). Dr. Barriteau will address this meeting on the theme of “Gender Analysis and the Management of Natural Disasters in the Commonwealth Caribbean: Implications for Public Policy and Planning.” This presentation will examine the critical importance of applying gender analysis to the management of natural disasters in the countries of the Commonwealth or anglophone Caribbean.

The focus on the Caribbean is deliberate. Even though there have been some credible and worthwhile attempts recently to focus on gender and natural disasters within the Caribbean as a geopolitical subgrouping, not enough is known within the region about how gender analysis can and should influence public policy dedicated to mitigating and managing natural disasters.

Dr. Barriteau’s analysis, therefore, will focus on the typical characteristics of the political economy of these countries and delineate our policymakers’ need to incorporate gender analysis in the work of prevention, reconstruction, and management of the social and economic trauma arising from natural disasters. The presentation also will provide a definition of gender analysis and will use the experience of Grenada with Hurricane Ivan as a case study in demonstrating how the techniques of gender analysis can create more meaningful public policy.

Dr. Barriteau, I give you the floor.

La JEFA DEL CENTRO DE GÉNERO Y DESARROLLO DE LA UNIVERSIDAD DE LAS INDIAS OCCIDENTALES: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Your excellencies, alternate and permanent representatives; distinguished guests: good afternoon! On behalf of the Center for Gender and Development Studies (CGDS) of the University of the West Indies (UWI), I am very pleased and honored to be in Washington, D.C. to be part of the celebration of International Women's Day by the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States. To all women of the Americas, a very happy International Women's Day tomorrow!

In my presentation, I shall interweave three themes. The emphasis of the presentation is on establishing the relevance of gender analysis in the management of reconstruction efforts following natural disasters. I am not concerned with the specific strategies to be implemented. The OAS and other international institutions have done very credible work outlining strategies to be pursued. Rather, I am rather focusing on the fact that whatever strategies are introduced, they must be informed by gender analysis. I have written a fairly extensive paper that I will go into and extract from for my presentation of about 20 minutes.

The three themes that I want to interweave are:

1. the need to use gender analysis;
2. the use of gender analysis, interwoven with the creation of effective public policy for disaster management; and
3. the central placement of women in that process.

I focus on gender analysis to call attention to the social inequalities that arise from the power relations of gender. I demonstrate that the power relations of gender intersect with and exacerbate other inequalities, thus distorting even further the differential effects of natural disasters on women and men.

My main thesis is: given existing relations of gender and the socioeconomic and cultural characteristics that define Latin American and Caribbean societies, placing women at the center of reconstruction efforts is vital to their success.

In demonstrating how these techniques of gender analysis can inform more meaningful public policy, given the experience of Grenada with Hurricane Ivan in 2004 and, on a smaller scale, with Hurricane Emily in 2005, I use information from that country to illustrate the application and relevance of gender analysis. Although my examples are drawn from that anglophone Caribbean country, the observations and policy applications apply to all the countries of the OAS.

Now, you may wonder why we need to focus on gender analysis. What is different about the domestic and public experiences and responsibilities of women and men in the reconstruction and rebuilding of their societies and economies in post-disaster situations? Is there any difference? Should there be a focus on one sex as opposed to the other? After all, disasters do not choose communities to be dislocated and houses to be destroyed based on the sex of the respective household

heads, neither do these disasters occur based on the socioeconomic class of those affected. The rich and the poor, middle class and working class, government and corporate sectors, priests and prisoners, men and women, boys and girls—all suffer devastation. Yet, as gender analysis reveals, the impact of these disasters has significantly different outcomes for children, women, and men.

This is precisely the point at which gender analysis offers critical methodologies to help policymakers understand that even though natural disasters may affect everyone and everything in their paths, the effect or outcome of these disasters is heavily determined by existing political, economic, and social inequalities, which are deeply entrenched in the existing political, economic, and gender systems, so that if there are ingrained systems of inequalities, any well-meaning policy will be distorted or corrupted by the existing inequalities. In other words, even though a policy may be designed to be neutral, the existing inequalities in a particular society will prevent the effect of that policy from being experienced in that way. This is perhaps the major point policymakers need to grab in comprehending the significance of gender analysis in the management of natural disasters.

The prejudices and power differentials that exist in a society prior to the impact of a disaster do not evaporate after a country has been hit. Instead, as several assessments of disasters have shown, crisis conditions exacerbate these inequalities. A researcher has said:

While the poor will be most vulnerable to the toll of natural disaster, it is often women and children among them who are hit hardest, especially poor, including the recent poor, and indigent women; female-headed households; female-headed households with large families; poor elderly women who live alone; women with mental and physical disabilities; indigenous women; and women at risk of violence, including battered women.

This comes from a study carried out by the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLAC) in 2004.

In the rush to respond immediately to natural disasters, some policymakers view considerations of gender differentials as an unnecessary luxury, a strategy that can be pursued much later, engaging in what Sarah Bradshaw describes as “the tyranny of the urgent.” And an international humanitarian assistance partner is on record in a Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) study as saying:

Although I am a strong advocate of gender-sensitive approaches to programming, I am also quite practical in terms of what can be done on the ground, particularly with rapid onset emergencies. In some cases, but definitely not the majority, the focus on ensuring gender equity, as with many rights-based approaches in programming, can be slow and frustrating, leading to a delay in carrying out immediate programming needs that focus on saving lives.

In that quotation, you hear the suggestion that gender analysis is not practical; that we need to back off; that if you use gender analysis, you will, in fact, cost lives. My whole argument is the opposite. A focus on and application of gender analysis should result in even more lives being saved, and I hope to give you evidence of that. So I am warning us not to see gender analysis as a luxury, but to see it as something that is absolutely necessary pre-disaster, but especially in post-disaster reconstruction efforts.

Gender analysis reveals the pivotal and multiple roles Caribbean and Latin American women occupy, irrespective of their social status. Research has demonstrated that when women are healthier, societies are healthier. If women receive better wages, children and men eat more nutritious meals.

So what is this thing that I am calling gender analysis? I define gender analysis as the process by which we reveal the social, psychological, ideological, and material inequalities and power differentials existing between women and men that are outcomes of the social relations of gender at both the individual and institutional levels within a society. Although I am not going to dwell on this, I also want to state that if gender inequalities exist for men, then these need to be dismantled immediately and that any conditions that deny men their civil, political, economic, and cultural rights should be immediately tackled. I do have a good colleague and friend who will be addressing the issue of men and masculinity, so I expect him to take that up. [Risas.]

Several studies show that gender inequalities prevent women from taking advantage of economic reforms by constraining their ability to invest in human resource development, such as gaining skills in nontraditional areas. For example, the 2002 Grenada Educational Statistical Digest, published two years before the disaster of Hurricane Ivan, revealed that only two women and 158 men were enrolled in skills training courses. One woman was enrolled in masonry craft and another in electronics. The Grenada National Organisation of Women (GNOW) also reported in 2002 that at the T.A. Marryshow Community College, there were 15 women and 263 men enrolled in technical education.

Given the importance of postdisaster construction, policymakers using gender analysis would ask: are women encouraged to acquire the skills of construction, plumbing, masonry, and electrical installation? Do policymakers—both women and men—believe that these skills belong to men? Can countries attempting to reconstruct after natural disasters afford counterproductive notions of a rigid segregation of the labor market into traditional men's work and women's work?

If policymakers did not have the political will before natural disasters to tackle gender inequalities, in the postdisaster reconstruction phase they can no longer afford to ignore these inequalities. Gender inequalities are not only costly to women, but they are costly to children, men, and societies. Such inequalities create costs to societies in the form of lower output of goods and services, lower development of people's capacities, lower leisure, and lower well-being.

A World Bank study, for example, provides strong evidence that increases in women's well-being immediately benefit their children and yield productivity gains in the future. I quote from the World Bank study:

The probability of children being enrolled in school increases with their mother's educational level, and extra income going to mothers has a more positive impact on household investment in nutrition, health, and education of children than extra income going to fathers. The information gained from gender analysis enables us to thoroughly examine the adverse social conditions that would impede the social and economic recovery of postdisaster countries. Gender analysis facilitates the application of existing data to yield new interpretations not apparent with conventional methods of analysis. The effective use of gender analysis will assist countries in moving back to a path of sustainable development. Using gender analysis changes our understanding of where women and men are located in their affected society and economy, and the different roles and responsibilities they perform.

It alters the questions asked and, therefore, the information received. Whether in government or civil society, gender analysis enables planners to integrate information in new and meaningful ways. Natural disasters affect everyone, but gender analysis reveals that the consequences of the devastation are very dissimilar for children, women, and men.

I am going to give six specific ways in which women are affected by natural disasters, and the information is taken from a study in which the Global Fund for Women (GFW) reviewed all the natural disasters experienced worldwide in 2005:

1. Women are far more likely to die than men. For example, estimates by Oxfam International, made on the basis of the sex of the survivors of the Asian tsunami, suggests that around three times as many women as men perished. In Pakistan, early reports indicated that more women than men were killed in the October 2005 earthquake. This has to do with cultural practices of women being at home and being located in certain areas when a disaster strikes.
2. Women are at an increased risk of violence. In the chaos and social breakdown that accompany natural disasters, women become uniquely vulnerable to sexual abuse, including rape and gang rape. A World Health Organization (WHO) study reports that the stress and social disruption of natural disasters may lead to an increase in gender-based violence, particularly sexual violence. Newspapers reports and anecdotal information from Grenada in the early post-Hurricane Ivan situation suggest that some relief soldiers expected sexual favors from women to obtain food supplies, and that some women were prostituting themselves in hope of receiving the same. In regions with a history of armed civil and social conflict, problems of violence can even be worse.
3. Women do not receive necessary health care. Disaster relief efforts often fail to include attention to specifically female health needs. Pregnant women lack obstetrical care and may miscarry or deliver under extremely unsatisfactory conditions. Displaced women frequently lack access to contraceptives and even undergarments and sanitary supplies, which in some cases have been distributed by men.
4. Women may be denied adequate relief or compensation for their losses. At times, essentials like blankets, mattresses, and even food and water have been distributed on the basis of the needs of a single adult, forcing mothers to share meager rations in order to feed their children. In other cases, women have been too intimidated to collect aid when the distribution of supply is controlled by men. Government compensation for loss often completely excludes women in societies where only males are recognized as heads of households. For example, in Thailand, the Government paid twice as much to families for the funeral expenses of men than for those of women.
5. Women experience ongoing economic vulnerability. While women are expected to continue performing traditional duties, like childcare and nursing the wounded, those who have lost partners or parents must take on the burden of providing all of the financial support. More women are likely to work in the agricultural industry or the

informal economy, both of which tend to be heavily impacted by natural disasters. Due to this and other factors, women tend to be overrepresented among those who end up unemployed. Economic status at the time of the disaster sharply influences the pace of recovery. Poor families led by women have virtually no resources to draw on to rebuild their lives. Right here in the United States, at the time that Hurricane Katrina struck, 41 percent of all female households in that region were living in poverty.

6. Women are excluded from a say in rebuilding and reconstruction efforts. Women are often the first to mobilize local relief efforts, yet women are rarely included in policymaking and decisionmaking and frequently go unrecognized for their ongoing critical roles.

After Hurricane Mitch struck Guatemala and Honduras in 1998, Guatemalan and Honduran women readily took on traditionally masculine tasks in their societies, like building homes and shelters, hauling water and digging wells, yet they were excluded from decision-making processes.

Women's lack of participation in decisionmaking reverberates at the most basic level. For example, in post-tsunami Sri Lanka, women had no say in temporary housing design. As a result, dwelling houses were actually constructed without any kitchen facilities. The lack of safe cooking areas led to smoke and fire hazards.

From the information I have given, you may want to consider whether or not gender analysis in a postdisaster reconstruction effort could be considered a luxury or a time waster.

I am almost out of time, and I had promised to give some examples of how information will be used in Grenada. I'll do that in a very shortened sense, and some of the information I have can be taken up in the question and answer segment.

Before Hurricane Ivan hit Grenada, the population stood at 102,632 persons, of which 51 percent were women. Migration tends to be a common response throughout the world to natural disasters. Policymakers designing reconstruction policies need to determine whether Grenadians, both men and women, have migrated in search of work since the hurricane; what percentage are women; what happens if women migrate and leave their children behind; and who provides for their care.

In Nicaragua, 17 percent of households surveyed reported migration by one or more persons after Hurricane Mitch in 1998. Forty-eight percent of the migrants were women. I am trying to show that we need to delineate the statistics and trace the implications, both socioeconomic and cultural, back to households and, of course, back to the larger society.

According to the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Human Development Report, the labor force participation rate in Grenada stood at 68 percent for men and 38 percent for women in 2002. This means that for all Grenadian women able to work and wanting to work, only 38 percent were in the labor force. With all the major sectors of an economy severely hit, what is the employment ratio now in Grenada—I am just using Grenada as an example for any country dealing with a disaster—and what effect would it have on the traditional responsibilities of women?

The interconnectedness between education and poverty eradication in the prevention of ongoing, systemic postdisaster crises is another important area that policymakers must focus on in the reconstruction phase, and I'll use this as my last example.

In the educational sector, in the reconstruction phase, policymakers must concentrate on building an educational infrastructure at three levels:

- at the micro level of the individual and the household;
- at the community level; and
- at the macro level of national sustainable development.

At the micro level, which is where our schools are allocated and where individual children receive their education, policymakers must use information to provide marketable skills; combat low self-esteem; and enhance the provision of educational activities, such as reading, doing homework, and completing school-based assignments and library visits.

At the community level, workers providing skills training should understand the importance of attracting women to nontraditional skills training. Programs should provide opportunities for worker retooling, developing attitudinal changes, and inculcating different values.

At the macro or state/national level, policymakers should ensure a national spread of training institutions, breaking the urban-rural divide. A lot of our societies are defined by a concentration of educational resources in urban areas. In postdisaster situations, it becomes critical to ensure that all public goods are spread throughout countries. At the macro or state level, there should be a national spread of training institutions and opportunities, and governments should continuously replenish and upgrade the educational infrastructure and support it with an integrated set of goals, strategies, and output.

I think I'll conclude, in the interest of the presentations of the other panelists. What I haven't managed to cover in this presentation, I will hopefully be able to add during the question and answer section. I thank you.

La PRESIDENTA: Thank you, Dr. Barriteau, for your very informative presentation and thoughtful remarks. I will open the floor for comments and questions after all the panelists have made their presentations.

“GÉNERO Y VIH/SIDA: ¿CUÁL ES LA SITUACIÓN DE LAS MUJERES EN EL CARIBE ANGLÓFONO?”, PRESENTADO POR LA SEÑORA CARMEN LOMELLIN, SECRETARIA EJECUTIVA DE LA COMISIÓN INTERAMERICANA DE MUJERES (CIM)

La PRESIDENTA: We now move on to the second panelist, who is the Executive Secretary of the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM), Ms. Carmen Lomellin. She will speak on: “Gender and HIV/AIDS: Where Do Women Stand in the Anglophone Caribbean?”

The CIM, as we know, always emphasizes the ongoing need to incorporate a gender perspective in policies and programs designed, endorsed, and executed by the Organization of American States. With this in mind, this presentation will examine the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the English-speaking Caribbean by focusing on women in the region to fully understand the breadth of the disease from a gender perspective. The reason gender is being underscored is to fully comprehend how HIV/AIDS impacts the lives of women and to then take into consideration a tailored response to the local realities of the region as they relate to women and the disease.

Ms. Lomellin, you have the floor.

La SECRETARÍA EJECUTIVA DE LA COMISIÓN INTERAMERICANA DE MUJERES:
Thank you and good afternoon, Madam Chair.

Mr. Secretary General, Mr. Assistant Secretary General, distinguished ambassadors, distinguished panelists, and guests:

Madam Chairman, allow me to first congratulate you on this excellent initiative to hold this special meeting of the Permanent Council on women and development, an issue that has always been a priority for the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM). On behalf of the President of the CIM, the Honorable Nilcea Freire of Brazil, I wish to express my appreciation for your generous invitation to participate in today's meeting.

The CIM Executive Committee has begun to look at the gender aspect of HIV/AIDS. Indeed, it will be an issue for discussion at the CIM Assembly of Delegates later this year. It is a new issue for us. However, we have reached out to the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), which has done outstanding work in this area and has expressed great interest in a partnership with us, should the Assembly of Delegates mandate work on this issue.

Madam Chair, the Declaration of the 2001 Quebec Summit of the Americas acknowledged HIV/AIDS as "another major threat to the security of our people" and stated in the Plan of Action:

Our governments will commit, at the highest levels, to combat HIV/AIDS and its consequences, recognizing that the disease is a major threat to the security of our people. We will adopt a multisectoral and gender-sensitive approach to education, to prevention, and to controlling the spread of HIV/AIDS.

My presentation today is taken from a research document, recently prepared for the CIM by Dr. Alison Moses, who did an outstanding job in compiling a tremendous amount of information. We will shortly be publishing her document as an official CIM document. The objective of Dr. Moses' research was to focus on women and HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean in order to understand the breadth of the disease from a gender perspective. The reason that gender is being underscored is that it is imperative that we fully comprehend the nature of how the disease impacts the lives of women. Because the CIM emphasizes the ongoing need to incorporate a gender perspective in policies and programs designed, endorsed, and executed by the OAS, it is necessary to take responsibility and report on the region's experience with this devastating disease.

This is a huge issue, impossible to cover in such a short period of time. For today, I will touch on the following points:

- The prevalence and incidence of HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean;
- The specific gender aspects of the disease;
- HIV/AIDS and gender-based violence; and lastly,
- Preliminary recommendations for the OAS.

Please note that the statistics and information that I will present are taken from studies done by the World Health Organization (WHO), the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), and numerous other experts.

It is estimated that, globally, young people between the ages of 15 and 24 account for half of all new HIV infections. More than six thousand persons become infected with HIV every day. As of December 2005, approximately three hundred thousand people are living with HIV and AIDS in the Caribbean. In three countries in this region—The Bahamas, Haiti, and Trinidad and Tobago—more than 3 percent of the population is HIV positive. AIDS is now one of the leading causes of death in some of these countries, with Haiti being the worst affected. An estimated twenty-four thousand lives are lost each year to AIDS in Haiti, and approximately two hundred thousand children have been orphaned by this epidemic.

The AIDS epidemic began in the Caribbean in the late 1970s. The first case was reported in Jamaica in 1982. One year later, eight cases were reported from Trinidad and Tobago—all gay or bisexual men. By 1985, however, female and pediatric AIDS cases represented 28 percent of the total cases reported to the Caribbean Epidemiological Centre (CAREC) by its member countries. The shift happened very quickly, in keeping with the fast-moving spread of the disease. As such, it indicated that AIDS was no longer a disease of gay or bisexual men only, but was quickly becoming a general population issue.

Although none of the countries in the region has been spared, regional totals of officially reported cases and estimates of actual cases disguise a wide variation in prevalence among the countries of the region. Heavy reliance on case data, compounded by underreporting in most countries and weak HIV surveillance systems, really obscure an absolutely clear picture of the size of the problem at the regional level and of its variations across the region. However, it is very, very clear that the disease has worked its way into the general population in most, if not all, of the countries.

Despite these shortcomings, from 1982 to 1996, an increasing trend of reported AIDS cases was observed. For example, in 1996, 9,978 cumulative AIDS cases were reported to CAREC by 19 of its 21 member countries. This represents a regional rate of 168 cases per 100,000 people, making the Caribbean the number one area of HIV/AIDS prevalence in the Western Hemisphere.

AIDS is now the leading cause of death in the 15 to 44 age group in the region. With an overall prevalence of 2.11 percent among adults, the Caribbean currently has the highest HIV prevalence rate of any region in the world other than Sub-Saharan Africa. According to the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the unrelenting acceleration of the epidemic is underscored by the fact that more AIDS cases were reported between 1995 and 1998 than since the beginning of the epidemic in the early 1980s.

The most recent figures report that the AIDS epidemic claimed an estimated 24,000 lives in the Caribbean in 2005, again making it the leading cause of death among adults aged 15 to 44. Three hundred thousand people are now living with HIV in the Caribbean, including the 30,000 who became infected in 2005.

The documented mode of transmission in 75 percent of the cases reported to date is sexual contact, specifically heterosexual contact. In the heterosexual mix of HIV/AIDS transmission in the Caribbean, it should be noted that women are more vulnerable to HIV infection than men because of certain gender inequality issues. As a result, the percentage of women with the disease is on the rise. As of the close of 1999, about 35 percent of the adults infected with HIV in the Caribbean were women.

According to a 2004 UNAIDS report, the number of women and girls being infected by HIV/AIDS is increasing. Globally, slightly less than half of the people living with HIV are female. PAHO reports that of the 1.4 million people living with HIV/AIDS in Latin America, 30 percent are women, and of the 420,000 people living with the disease in the Caribbean, 50 percent are women.

This feminization of the HIV/AIDS pandemic makes it imperative to understand how women are vulnerable to the disease and, hence, how to incorporate a gender perspective in strategies to combat it. It may not be by choice, but women often engage in sexual intercourse with men, ignorant of the fact that these men have an illness or some sex-related problem that threatens women.

The long incubation period of the HIV virus is also a major contributing factor to the rapid spread of the infection, because those who are unaware of being carriers may or may not practice safe sex. This, of course, oftentimes impacts children born to these persons. In the Caribbean, for example, approximately three thousand children are born annually to HIV-infected mothers. It stands to reason that as the number of women with HIV increases, so does the number of HIV-infected children.

While women are physiologically more vulnerable to HIV/AIDS transmission than men, the existing social, economic, and cultural factors also significantly exacerbate this biological risk. Therefore, any discussion about mitigating biological risks needs to recognize the various social, economic, and cultural factors present in the Caribbean as they affect women.

There is a growing recognition of the relationship between gender-based violence and HIV/AIDS, as gender-based violence increases a woman's vulnerability to HIV infection. The relationship between gender-based violence and HIV/AIDS is critical because it implies that programs need to simultaneously address both women's vulnerability and gender-based violence to ensure effective protection of women's health. The relationship between the two manifests itself in several ways:

- Women can be infected with the HIV virus through forced sex. According to PAHO, more than 36 percent of all girls have suffered some type of child sexual abuse.
- Sexual abuse during childhood is associated with risky behavior later in life, which increases an individual's risk of contracting HIV. Sexual risk-taking manifests itself in various ways in victims of sexual abuse compared to nonvictims.

- Victims of childhood sexual abuse are more likely to start voluntary sex earlier; to have sex with multiple partners; to abuse alcohol and other drugs; to trade sex for money and drugs; and to not use contraception, including condoms.
- Gender-based violence severely inhibits a woman's bargaining power to insist on condom use or refusing unwanted sex.
- When women reveal that they are HIV positive, they risk abandonment by their partners, their family, and their friends, and additionally face further violence.

In sum, socially constructed gender roles give girls and women little control over what happens to them sexually; that is, little control over men's sexual access to their bodies and the conditions under which sexual encounters take place. Women's vulnerability to male authority often reflects their social and economic status and reinforces the sexual double standard in which women are made responsible for the reproductive process, yet they are denied the right to control it. It is unfortunate that reproductive health is no longer only defined in terms of pregnancy and maternal and child health matters. It took the specter of HIV infection and AIDS to begin to understand that sexual health is just as critical as reproduction itself, and that both are integral components of physical and emotional well-being for women in the Caribbean and across the globe.

So, what can the OAS do? Although extensive discussions must be held and the list of recommendations could be exhaustive, the following is a list of potential actions in which the OAS, through the CIM, can begin to address HIV/AIDS:

- Work with PAHO to identify the most effective role for the CIM in this partnership in which both the CIM and PAHO build on their strengths;
- Work with PAHO to identify and share best practices with member states, through the CIM delegates;
- Carry out in-country or secondary resource studies to interview leaders in the area and compile a database on institutional initiatives for partnership cooperation initiatives;
- Use a baseline study to promote OAS management interest to consider HIV from a gender perspective as a priority development cooperation agenda item;
- Organize a CIM-initiated workshop/seminar/conference on HIV/AIDS, perhaps entitled, as was the research paper "Where Do Women Stand Now in the 21st century?" This, of course, would be done in partnership with academia, international organizations, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and other interested stakeholders.

Madam Chair, distinguished representatives, I thank you for this opportunity to begin a serious dialogue here at the OAS on gender and HIV/AIDS. This initiative will take a tremendous amount of time, a tremendous amount of dedication, and resources, but I think the OAS should begin this dialogue.

I thank you for your attention.

La PRESIDENTA: Thank you, Ms. Lomellin, for your very thoughtful and interesting intervention. It is important that the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM) continue its work in this critical area.

“GÉNERO Y DESARROLLO: LA PERSPECTIVA INDÍGENA”,
PRESENTADO POR LA SEÑORA ELENA CRESPO,
DIRECTORA DE GÉNERO DE LA OFICINA DE LA
VICEMINISTRA DE GÉNERO DEL GOBIERNO DE BOLIVIA

La PRESIDENTA: The next speaker is Ms. Elena Crespo, Director of Gender in the Office of the Vice Minister of Gender of the Government of Bolivia. Ms. Crespo's presentation will highlight the reality of the Bolivian Republic with respect to the situation and position of women, with an emphasis on indigenous women. Based on this analysis, she will identify the myths and ideological aspects that support the development of cultural, political, and economic models that do not meet judicial goals, equality, and fairness for men and women. She will also indicate to us the advances with regard to the defense of the human rights of women and, of course, she will analyze the number of challenges that women still need to overcome in Bolivia.

Ms. Crespo, you have the floor.

La DIRECTORA DE GÉNERO DE LA OFICINA DE LA VICEMINISTRA DE GÉNERO DEL GOBIERNO DE BOLIVIA: Gracias.

Embajadora Sonia Johnny, Presidenta del Consejo Permanente de la Organización de los Estados Americanos; don José Miguel Insulza, Secretario General de la OEA; don Albert Ramdin, Secretario General Adjunto; distinguidos Embajadores y Embajadoras ante la Organización; señores Representantes Alternos; Observadores Permanentes; distinguidos y distinguidas panelistas en esta sesión extraordinaria del Consejo Permanente; señoras y señores:

Como mujer aymara, indígena originaria de mi país, es un placer estar en este evento y, a la vez, poder transmitir, con mucho cariño, el saludo de nuestra flamante Viceministra del Viceministerio de Género y Asuntos Generacionales.

Voy a empezar señalando que, para diferenciar a los países del mundo, se han realizado determinadas caracterizaciones, por ello se los clasifica como países en desarrollo, países subdesarrollados o en vías de desarrollo, o países pobres. Bolivia es considerada como uno de estos últimos países. Bajo estas definiciones se han guiado la realización de políticas, planes, proyectos y acciones de desarrollo, tanto a nivel internacional como a nivel nacional. En este contexto, Bolivia es uno de los países que ha sido intervenido por esta lógica. Sin embargo, las acciones que bajo esa forma de pensamiento dan lugar a estrategias para erradicar la pobreza no tienen los efectos esperados. En esto confluye una serie de aspectos y, entre ellos, creemos fundamental reflexionar sobre la necesidad de analizar críticamente estas definiciones que tenemos sobre el término desarrollo.

En este sentido, creemos que ha llegado el momento de interactuar y de establecer un diálogo real y efectivo con las poblaciones indígenas, originarias de nuestros países para poder así enriquecer aún más el concepto de desarrollo y, como consecuencia, lograr acciones que puedan tener resultados satisfactorios. Para ello, creemos que se hace necesario contar con una voluntad política real para conocer, escuchar, reflexionar sobre la sabiduría ancestral de nuestros pueblos.

Por ejemplo, para los indígenas, originarios de mi país, pobreza no es sinónimo de carencia económica; desarrollo no solo es elevada capacidad productiva, elevados niveles de ingreso y consumo per cápita y otras características ligadas al acceso tecnológico y conocimiento. Menos aún consideramos que el bienestar de la persona esté ligado a la acumulación de bienes.

Desde la cosmovisión y sabiduría ancestral señalamos que, para lograr un verdadero desarrollo de las personas que devuelva la alegría, la felicidad, la sonrisa franca a hombres y mujeres, se debe buscar el *suma jaqaña*, palabra aymara que significa la búsqueda de la armonía interna de todas las dimensiones que hacen a la persona en equilibrio y sintonía con su entorno, entorno que también debe guardar armonía y equilibrio.

Es decir, a partir de sentirse uno muy bien consigo mismo, de saber que sus dimensiones de vida se encuentran en equilibrio, el interactuar con otros seres humanos individuales o colectivos y con la naturaleza, que involucra a todo lo que nos rodea, debe dar como resultado este *suma jaqaña*, recordando que, para que esto suceda, hombres y mujeres debemos apostar a la realización de acciones que permitan a este entorno desarrollarse al igual que nuestras vidas, o sea, desarrollarse también de manera integral en equilibrio y armonía.

El *suma jaqaña* centra la atención en el equilibrio de la persona y de la persona con su entorno. De ese modo planteamos la necesidad de desarrollar una política integral que abarque todos los planos de la vida social, económica, política, ideológica, cultural y de espiritualidad, que implica enfrentar el dilema y desafío para la construcción de una sociedad sin exclusiones, una sociedad sin violencia, un desarrollo centrado en el equilibrio interactuante de la persona y la naturaleza, una libertad para el ejercicio de lo espiritual, un afianzamiento de valores y principios que no rompan este equilibrio y la armonía sistémica, holística y, más que nada, proyecte una estrategia de desarrollo con propia identidad. Un desarrollo integral íntimamente relacionado con lo espiritual. Destacamos este aspecto, ya que desde esta perspectiva el desarrollo que han mantenido los indígenas durante la historia tiene su conexión directa con lo espiritual individual y con lo colectivo, pues respetar a la naturaleza, a la producción que surge de la tierra, es respetar a la espiritualidad humana.

Al no contar con esta forma de pensamiento, muchas propuestas de desarrollo naufragan en sus objetivos, pues apuntalan la mayoría de las veces una finalidad meramente economicista, dejando de lado otros aspectos sustanciales para el desarrollo integral de las personas. Queda de lado, por ejemplo, el trabajo de buscar recuperar la identidad cultural de las personas, con el pensamiento o idea de que este accionar es folclórico, anecdótico, cuando, en realidad, este es un aspecto fundamental para el posicionamiento de la persona, pues conociendo y definiendo quién es, de dónde viene, a qué entorno pertenece, podrá proyectar su propio horizonte y el de su pueblo con más certezas que con nebulosas.

Esto no significa un retroceso, un aislamiento o desconocimiento de la dinámica social cultural. Al contrario, pensamos que estamos dentro de esa dinámica social cultural, pero, a la vez, reafirmamos que, a partir de la definición del identitario e imaginario propio, la persona cuenta con

mejores elementos que le permiten interactuar en una sociedad abigarrada y con fuerte presión de valores individualistas, de acumulación y otras propias del sistema capitalista.

Bajo esta mirada, tenemos que reconocer que nuestro país, al igual que otros países, ha perdido el camino que conduce al vivir en armonía, al vivir en equilibrio. En este reconocimiento nos incluimos las poblaciones indígenas.

Es por eso que Bolivia vive en desigualdad, en desequilibrio. Las mayorías poblacionales no pueden acceder a la educación, la salud y los servicios públicos, a la tierra, a otros recursos, al funcionamiento de los mercados de crédito y laborales formales, a la participación e influencia en espacios de poder. Este alto nivel de desigualdad se origina desde las instituciones excluyentes que se han perpetuado desde tiempos coloniales y han sobrevivido a los diferentes regímenes políticos y económicos.

En nuestro país aún funciona un poder constituido por determinadas élites que resguardan sus intereses. Y hasta hace poco, el escenario propicio, para que esto suceda, lastimosamente, fue la democracia formal. Así, este poder ha establecido su sistema político, su sistema económico, su sistema jurídico e intentó, además, homogeneizar una cultura racista, patriarcal, machista y corrupta.

Sin embargo, esta forma de ejercer poder ha entrado en crisis. Esta crisis, desde nuestros pueblos, también es entendida positivamente como una oportunidad para el cambio. Esta crisis también nos ha ayudado a romper varios mitos:

El mito de la neutralidad. No es así. La neutralidad no existe. Todo tiene una determinada tendencia.

El mito que sostenía que la población indígena y de las mujeres eran minorías. Tampoco es así. Somos mayoría.

El mito de que el actual modelo económico solucionaría los bolsones de pobreza, cuando lo que existe en mi país son más bien bolsones de gente que cuenta con acumulación de bienes, pequeños bolsones.

El mito de que las reivindicaciones indígenas y de los distintos sectores sociales nos llevarían a una situación apocalíptica.

El mito de que la desigualdad entre hombres y mujeres era resultado del atraso económico, que la liberalización del mercado redundaría en estabilidad, crecimiento y reducción de la pobreza, cuando, en realidad, la supuesta mejora o evolución del desarrollo social ha ido en dirección contraria, pues las reformas de apertura de las economías dieron lugar a la flexibilización laboral, que es desprotección y precarización del empleo, aspectos que afectaron más a las mujeres, que en la actualidad son el 83% de la masa desempleada.

El mito de que las desventajas de las mujeres tenían su origen en la falta de educación y capacitación. Reconocemos que se ha avanzado en este tema y evidentemente que afecta a la mejora de ingresos económicos, a la disminución de la mortalidad materno-infantil y acceso al mundo laboral y espacios políticos. Sin embargo, los beneficios de la educación aún no se reflejan en igualdad de ingresos monetarios. En 2002, las mujeres del mismo nivel de instrucción que los hombres percibían

el equivalente del 68% del salario de los hombres. La educación tampoco afecta a la descolonización mental; más bien la consolida, desestructurando los valores de la reciprocidad, la solidaridad, el respeto con base en la igualdad, el pensamiento de que nadie es más que los otros, incluidos seres humanos y naturaleza.

El mito de que la inequidad por razón de género se debía al sistema jurídico, porque, pese a las actuales reformas jurídicas, el sesgo por razón de género se impone.

El mito de la complementariedad entre hombres y mujeres dentro de determinadas culturas, cuando la relación de poder es asimétrica y determinados usos y costumbres violentan los fundamentales derechos de las mujeres.

Así seguiríamos enumerando hechos que nos hacen concluir que hemos perdido el camino, el equilibrio, la armonía, por esta situación también se impone la violencia contra las mujeres y, pese a esta realidad, poco se hace para erradicarla.

Por ejemplo, 373 mujeres fueron asesinadas entre 2003 y 2004 en mi país. De esos casos, solo fueron sentenciados dieciocho bajo la figura de homicidio, con sanciones de cárcel de dos a seis años, y solo dos casos se encuentran en proceso bajo la figura de asesinato, que sanciona a treinta años de cárcel. ¿Qué pasó con los otros 353 casos? Se quedaron en la denuncia y la mayoría de ellos actualmente se encuentran archivados.

Las mujeres seguimos siendo discriminadas, excluidas por ser mujeres, por ser indígenas y por pertenecer a una clase social de bajos ingresos económicos.

Sin embargo, pese a todo este contexto, actualmente se abre una oportunidad histórica para corregir el camino. Se abre la posibilidad de iniciar el proceso para lograr el *suma jaqaña*, o el vivir en armonía y equilibrio, o el desarrollo desde una nueva mirada tenida por la sabiduría ancestral indígena originaria.

Tenemos bastante esperanza en la realización de la Asamblea Constituyente. No queremos decir que esta sea la panacea que resuelva todos los problemas que tenemos; pero, si realmente logramos la participación de las representaciones legítimas de todos los sectores poblacionales, principalmente de aquellos históricamente excluidos, entre ellos las mujeres, si verdaderamente se logra un diálogo y consenso, esta Asamblea Constituyente en nuestro país puede constituirse en un hecho histórico que puede dar inicio a reparar daños históricos y empezar a dar pie para realizar cambios de maneras de pensar y llevar de mejor manera la búsqueda del desarrollo.

En esta circunstancia, nos encontramos movilizadas y movilizadas para que la Asamblea Constituyente pueda lograr un nuevo pacto social, pero que también pueda lograr un nuevo pacto entre hombres y mujeres de nuestro país.

Asimismo, nos encontramos trabajando para que la Asamblea Constituyente deba sentar las bases y condiciones de posibilidad para que las disparidades por razón de género no se conviertan en un obstáculo al buscar el verdadero desarrollo humano o el *suma jaqaña* que proclamamos, que al buscar la armonía y el equilibrio en sí y con su entorno tiene como sus bases principales la equidad, la justicia, la igualdad, la solidaridad, la reciprocidad.

Como verán, creemos que tanto a nivel internacional y nacional llega la hora de iniciar cambios. No será fácil, pero tampoco imposible, por ello es necesario hacer lo posible por cambiar nuestra lógica, nuestra propia lectura de las cosas, para ganar conocimientos que no solo afecten acciones dirigidas a la sociedad, sino que también nos afecten como personas, iniciando cambios primero en nosotros y nosotras mismas, para sí llegar a los demás.

Para Bolivia, de acuerdo con nuestro actual Gobierno, nos toca iniciar el camino para encontrar el *suma jachaña*. Así pensamos que estaremos incidiendo en la búsqueda de un real y efectivo desarrollo de hombres y mujeres, partiendo del conocimiento de que existen grandes brechas por razón de género que necesariamente tenemos que resolver.

[Habla en aymara.]

Esperemos estos días de cambio y estamos todos y todas convocadas para ser parte de eso.

Gracias.

La PRESIDENTA: Thank you, Ms. Crespo, for your very thought-provoking presentation.

“EL HOMBRE, LA MASCULINIDAD Y EL PROCESO DE DESARROLLO”,
PRESENTADO POR EL DOCTOR LINDEN F. LEWIS,
PROFESOR ADJUNTO DE SOCIOLOGÍA, UNIVERSIDAD DE BUCKNELL

La PRESIDENTA: Our final panelist is Dr. Linden F. Lewis, Associate Professor of Sociology at Bucknell University, who will speak on “Men, Masculinity, and the Process of Development.”

Though this process has been largely viewed through the eyes of the female, it was generally felt that such an initiative would always redound to the benefit of men. However, in recent years, a more nuanced interpretation would suggest that while men, as a general category, benefit from development initiatives, not all of them do. Indeed, it is becoming increasingly evident that poor, rural men with limited education do not benefit from many development efforts. The social class of men is becoming an important indicator of how and whether they stand to benefit or lose in the process of development.

Professor Lewis will be clarifying and providing us some answers to these issues. Professor Lewis, I give you the floor, sir.

El PROFESOR ASOCIADO DE SOCIOLOGÍA DE LA UNIVERSIDAD DE BUCKNELL:
Thank you, Ambassador Johnny.

Secretary General Insulza, Assistant Secretary Ramdin, distinguished ambassadors, distinguished panelists, ladies and gentlemen:

I take this opportunity to thank Professor Johnny and Ms. Odlum for inviting me here today. I take it that this is not an empty gesture to place a man on the panel [risas.], but that it is a genuine

attempt to broaden the scope of the discourse on the issue of gender and to recognize that gender really applies to both men and women.

Perhaps the best way to proceed is to first address the issue of development so that we can clear the air for a discussion of how men fit into an analysis of this process.

In the postmodernization academic literature on development, we have largely agreed that development meant a simultaneous increase in growth and a material improvement in the lives of people. Since that basic agreement, we have added that such improvement should by all measure be sustainable; that is, the social transformation should not come at the expense of the quality of the lived experience for humans, animals, plants, and the environment. In short, development should in no way threaten the environment or the people who live on this planet. Sustainability suggests that we leave the planet for future generations in better shape than how we found it. The notion of development, then, became increasingly associated with efficient management of human and natural resources.

How did these issues of gender come to be part of the matrix of development initiatives? Well, first, it became increasingly evident that, as articulated, development discourses were represented as gender-neutral and universal. In other words, there was no sensitivity to the impact of development of men and women. Whatever changes development was supposed to bring about were expected to be for the benefit of everyone. The only problem with this approach is that, both institutionally and with respect to personnel, development initiatives were organized and implemented largely by men. In short, development strategies and goals had a decidedly masculine gaze. The specific development needs of women were not always distinguished from those of men, or traditional roles of women trumped efforts at social transformation. A case in point is the fact that most development initiatives involving women tended to underscore traditional activities, such as basket weaving and sewing, in much of the Caribbean, for example, when, in fact, these activities were not always market-sensitive or market-driven.

If we could fast-forward to the 1970s, two important developments emerged to contest this approach:

1. The growing global feminist activism and scholarly movement began to push for greater sensitivity to women's issues; and
2. The declaration of the United Nations of International Women's Year and the First World Conference on Women in Mexico in 1975 placed gender more firmly on the agenda so that future development projects could not ignore this issue.

In the 1980s, with the advent of structural adjustment measures, it quickly became noticeable that the burden of such reforms fell disproportionately on women and children. The combination of these factors has largely brought us to the present awareness of the impact of gender on our thinking about development. While we were busy disaggregating the impact of development on women as distinct from men, we seemed equally insensitive about how men were being affected by this process. Since we identified the gender bias of the development process, we also seemed to convince ourselves that we could treat all men as a single, homogenous block. Therefore, we concluded that all men benefited from development, without any consideration of issues of class, race, or any other of

the social markers. One of the things that we notice very often is that the issue of social class seems to fall out of the analysis of gender for the most part.

We find ourselves at the present time groping for a way to deal with this question of men and development. In the first place, some, including men themselves, are only now waking up to the reality that they are, in fact, gendered subjects. Men did not always claim a gendered identity. Indeed, it was not until women started to raise the issue of gender that men, rather reluctantly, began to think of themselves in such terms. This is understandable, given the nature of the discourse. One aspect of privilege is that we never really recognize it until we don't have it.

As Pierre Bourdieu once noted, "masculinity, as a hegemonic ideology, dispenses with the need for justification." It is no coincidence that Rafael Ramírez's "*Dime Capitán: Reflexiones sobre la Masculinidad*," later translated "What it Means to Be a Man: Reflections of Puerto Rican Masculinity"; Richard Parker's "Beneath the Equator: Cultures of Desire, Male Homosexuality, and Emerging Gay Communities in Brazil"; and Alfredo Mirandé's "*Hombres y Machos: Masculinity and Latino Culture*" were all published in the 1990s, long after the discourse on gender had been in its ascendancy for most women.

For the anglophone Caribbean, Graham Dann's "The Barbadian Male" and Errol Miller's "Marginalization of the Black Male" and "Men at Risk" were all published in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

In short, we have all come to this subject of men, masculinity, and the process of development rather late in the ball game. What is important is that everyone begin to discern the ways in which the process of development, economic reform, and globalization reshapes the way national and local masculinity is practiced and, therefore, transforms the practice of domestic and public patriarchies.

Development initiatives, of which global economic restructuring is a part, are affecting men in ways that undermine the foundation of male domination. Whereas job security and living wages were important in establishing stable forms of masculinity, globalization and neoliberal policies have tended to expose the vulnerability of such lived experiences. The insecurity and vulnerability generated by shifts and changes in the regimes of capital accumulation are often incompatible with traditional understandings of masculinity, particularly that of the role of the male breadwinner.

Related to this problem, which requires men to make adjustments to how they understand themselves as men, is the issue of job insecurity, which plagues those people—men and women—who are currently employed. The condition of work raises the level of vulnerability for workers, engendering demoralization and the loss of militancy in the context of an industrial environment characterized by high levels of unemployment, underemployment, and, as Bourdieu argues, societies "haunted by the spectre of joblessness."

This specter of joblessness and insecurity affects not only those immediately involved, but also those indirectly touched by the phenomenon; namely, spouses or partners and children. Some men fear that unemployment threatens their masculinity, while others often take these problems home, where they play themselves out in all manner of dysfunctional ways.

Unemployment and poverty are forcing men to redefine how they understand themselves as men. In certain areas, men have lost some of their traditional jobs and are being forced to depend on the wages of their spouses or partners to supplement household incomes. Let us not be fooled by this: it doesn't necessarily mean that their dependency in any way weakens the role of patriarchy. Helen Safa talked very eloquently about men who show up at the work sites of their spouses or partners and demand their paychecks on Friday afternoons.

Such changes have tended to destabilize the traditional role of men. Men's failure to contribute adequately to the household is, for many, a major source of embarrassment, alienation from the family, and powerlessness that often manifests itself in domestic violence and abuse of women. Domestic violence is a growing problem in Latin America and the Caribbean. Not only does it affect the safety and well-being of women and children, but it also has been shown, in a number of studies by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), to affect the process of development in terms of absenteeism and loss of productivity at work, when women have to seek medical attention or protection from their abusers and are unable to go to work.

What is gradually being realized is that global capitalism is seizing on the differences between men and women, particularly the differential valuation of labor, and exploiting them for its own ends. Some men are failing to recognize the extent to which these economic policies are exacerbating those problems, and so, rather than recognize that an economic system is making the difference between men and women, they tend to point fingers in one direction or the other. The net result is that customary tensions between men and women are exacerbated under the impact of global economic restructuring and neoliberal economic policies.

I want to suggest that there are ways to deal with this question of men and development. We need to create a better balance between work and family so that men can be encouraged to participate in the domestic affairs in which they have not been so actively involved. We need also to encourage men to develop alternative models of development, based on more cooperative projects in collaboration with women, as opposed to projects that simply separate men from women. We also need to begin to rethink the models of democracy with which we are used to working. If we place gender firmly in the context of a genuine democratic system, we might be in better shape to deal with this problem.

We need to generate more consciousness among men about matters of gender, including gender analysis, about which Dr. Barribeau spoke, and sensitivity to matters of gender difference. No gender transformation can take place with only one gender; hence, the need to bring men into the process. We need to work with men to find out what their needs are and how they can help in this process.

Policymakers should fully examine the impact of global economic restructuring and neoliberal policies on the role of men. Public policymakers must recognize and account for the gender impact of the process of globalization on men in much the same way that we carefully examine the impact of development and structural adjustment on women. I believe that a strong case can be made for the state, trade unions, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to intervene to help men cope with these challenges in more constructive ways.

We have a lot of work to do in Latin America and the Caribbean about assessing the social and psychological impact of unemployment on men of all social classes. Programs and policies

aimed at retraining and retooling men in these circumstances are critical to a healthy industrial environment.

The point here is, therefore, very straightforward. We need to move away from the model of development that was predicated on the notion that development is a male prerogative and that somehow all men benefit from this process, which masquerades as a universal and neutral one, when, in fact, it has a male bias.

Let us be clear here: I would still argue that development has a built-in male bias, but we need to recognize that not all men benefit from the process in the same way. Certain classes of men develop the projects, fund them, implement them, and manage them, while others are simply left to produce the necessary labor. The latter are the vulnerable men about whom we are to be concerned, the ones that are at the margin. However, we need to be concerned with the former, who implement the policies, so that they can be more sensitive, not only to these vulnerable men, but to the needs of women as well.

One of the things that I found in talking about these issues about men is that it always creates a certain amount of tension and nervousness on the part of women, who see the issue of raising men as gendered subjects, in some cases, as somewhat threatening resources that would normally have gone to projects for women. What we need to move away from and what we need to transcend is the notion that we are playing a zero-sum game. The full development of both men and women is what counts, and we should work together to establish that sort of balance.

Thank you.

La PRESIDENTA: Thank you, Dr. Lewis, for your very interesting and informative presentation and for having brought this important perspective to our dialogue.

INTERVENCIONES DE LAS DELEGACIONES

La PRESIDENTA: I open the floor to representatives who wish to comment on the matters that have been presented by the panelists. I give the floor to the Ambassador of Belize.

La REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE DE BELICE: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I believe I have not yet had the honor and the occasion to wish you very well as the new Chair of the Permanent Council. You have now been in office for some time, I realize, but it would be remiss of me not to recognize your ascension to this important office and not to congratulate you on today's effort, this provocative, interesting, and informative panel of speakers. Madam Chair, you have, as usual, done us all proud. I only wish that there were more men around the room to hear a lot of what we have discussed today, but I celebrate and embrace the fact that there are so many women seated at the table, heading the delegations here at the Organization of American States.

I would also like to congratulate the panelists, all of whom have given us much food for thought and much meat for discussion. I would like to request that we get the full document from Dr. Violet Eudine Barriteau because her presentation is certainly one that not many of us have had an opportunity to absorb before. Our dear Carmen Lomellin has done her usual thorough job. As a

woman of indigenous origin, I always appreciate and celebrate the fact that it is important to put the indigenous aspect into context when we are addressing gender issues. It adds, Madam Chair, to the spice of the stew that you have served us today.

Madam Chair, I would like to say how much I appreciated the valiant presentation by Dr. Linden Lewis. I assure him that he is no mere gesture as the only man on the panel—other, of course, than the Secretary General and the Assistant Secretary General—so he ought to take comfort in the fact that he is well surrounded and that his back is fully protected. But I would like to say this to him: welcome to our world! For untold years, Dr. Lewis, the women in this room have been in the position you are in today. The shoe is on the other foot; enjoy the fit! [Risas.]

Madam Chair, we are told as women in various ways—graciously, rudely, diplomatically, and frankly—that addressing gender issues as women means that there is a cost to men. Madam Chair, no civil rights leader anywhere in the world has ever had to seriously contend with the assertion that more rights for people of color meant fewer rights for Caucasians. Madam Chair, more rights for women means simply this: more human rights for a greater number of humans.

It is very interesting that our discussion centers around the politics of power, because that is really at the heart of the entire discussion on gender rights.

Why gender rights? Because those of us who are women have not yet arrived at that felicitous position where we can, in our own individual right, gain power so simply for so many of us. It is not to say, Madam Chair, that women have not ascended to the highest levels of government and of leadership, both temporal and spiritual. The fact that these women are still an exception rather than the rule is, perhaps, one of the most glaring inequalities of our day. The face of slavery, Madam Chair, in the modern context; the face of poverty, Madam Chair, in the modern context, is still that of a woman. This inequality affects not just women but their families—intimately—and that includes the men in the lives of those women with families.

Madam Chair, turning to the Caribbean, I have always found it very interesting that the politics of power in the Caribbean, in some quarters, seems to suggest that the empowerment of women can tend to emasculate Caribbean men. We have to acknowledge that ancestral memories die hard. For many, the imbalances created by slavery, imperialism, and colonialism still hold true. Too many of our men were made powerless by the status quo and by the plantocracy, and in many cases, our men had to rely on or to relinquish power to their women, who were viewed by the system as less threatening and who, therefore, were usually in a better position to negotiate concessions more easily.

Madam Chair, once and for all, we must slay the idea that women's power is equal to men's powerlessness, or that women's development will mean the marginality of men. Madam Chair, without tension, without any nervousness, without any fear of being called a woman who is an alarmist, I agree with Dr. Lewis. It is not a zero-sum game, and I will continue, Madam Chair, on every occasion that I am afforded the opportunity, to insist and demand that women and their families are able, finally, to obtain those human rights that we all know they so richly deserve.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

La PRESIDENTA: Thank you, Ambassador of Belize, for your kind sentiments. As usual, your eloquent presentation has made many of us sit up and take notice. Let me also thank you for

noting the number of men in the audience today. [Risas.] Let me personally thank those who made that special effort to be here to be informed of the issues that affect not only women, as you have heard this afternoon, but also men. I will, of course, be taking up the issue with my male colleagues. [Risas.]

I now give the floor to Ambassador Durand of Canada.

El REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE DEL CANADÁ: Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

As we prepare to celebrate International Women's Day tomorrow, Canada congratulates you on this timely initiative.

I would also like to thank the excellent speakers today. Their presentations were very professional, very objective, and very thoughtful. They reflect Canada's view that gender issues cannot be considered in isolation.

We have heard presentations on gender as it relates to natural disaster management, to HIV/AIDS, and to the indigenous, and we heard a very interesting presentation from Dr. Lewis on men, masculinity, and the process of development. Clearly, the gender perspective has to be considered an integral part of all the issues addressed by the Organization of American States.

It is well known that Canada is committed to promoting gender equality within the Organization and the inter-American system. In this regard, let me commend the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM) and its permanent secretariat on carrying out its role as the principal forum for generating hemispheric policy to advance women's human rights and gender equality.

In Canada, we have made particular efforts to ensure that aboriginal, indigenous women have a place at the table, because we recognize that we have been remiss in the past. An example of our recent attempts is the First Ministers Meeting (FMM) on Aboriginal Issues, which was held in the fall of 2005 and included the Native Women's Association of Canada. Although important steps such as this have been taken, much more needs to be done to promote indigenous women's rights.

Canada, through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), has committed substantial resources to address HIV/AIDS, both in the Americas and in global, multilateral efforts.

Again, Madam Chair, I thank you, as well as the speakers who made presentations today, for putting these issues on the agenda of the OAS.

La PRESIDENTA: Thank you, Ambassador, for your information, for your kind words, and for your presence. I now give the floor to the Alternate Representative of Saint Lucia.

La REPRESENTANTE ALTERNA DE SANTA LUCÍA: Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

The Delegation of Saint Lucia takes the floor to express its profound gratitude for this wonderful initiative entitled "Gender and Development in the Americas: Remembering the Margins." My delegation considers this special meeting of the Permanent Council to be of utmost significance,

not only for its observance of International Women's Day, to be held on March 8, but also as a very important contribution to the ongoing work with respect to gender in the Hemisphere.

My delegation recognizes that as part of the development agenda of the Organization of American States, and in keeping with the work of other august fora, such as the United Nations, there is a necessary conjoining of gender with development that must be kept at the forefront of our concerns. The outcome of the United Nations Conference on Women (Beijing +10), coupled with the trajectory of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), all point to the critical need for not merely getting gender onto the agenda, but also making it a crosscutting issue of all facets of sustainable development and economic progress.

Therefore, my delegation reiterates its support for this initiative and looks forward to its informing and furthering our hemispheric work through the incorporation of gender analysis, such as was expounded on today in this forum. It is imperative that the Hemisphere genuinely acknowledge its diversity, and part of dealing with such interstate differentials is recognizing the specificities of gender within the multidimensional context of all member states.

Madam Chair, my delegation wishes to take this opportunity to congratulate all of the panelists who made presentations here today. We applaud the depth of your analyses, the breadth of topics chosen, and the very cogent ways in which you have enlightened the discourse on gender and development.

My delegation would like to make special mention of Dr. Violet Eudine Barriteau, whose presentation on gender and the management of natural disasters is a welcome contribution that will inform our work in the Joint Consultative Body of the Committee on Hemispheric Security (CSH) and the Permanent Executive Committee of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CEPCIDI) on Natural Disaster Reduction and Risk Management, which is cochaired by Ambassador Gordon Shirley of Jamaica and Ambassador Esteban Tomic of Chile. In the spirit of Dr. Barriteau's presentation, we anticipate a tighter interface between the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM) and the important Joint Consultative Body.

It would be remiss of my delegation not to acknowledge the invaluable work of the CIM throughout the Hemisphere in the advancement of women, with its focus on establishing gender equality and equity through its policies and programs. In fact, we welcome the new trajectory of the CIM's work into HIV/AIDS and gender, which, of course, is a very important topic for our subregion, as you clearly pointed out in your presentation.

My delegation is acutely aware of the CIM's precarious position within the OAS and its predicament. The CIM has been expected to cater to the multitudes of the Hemisphere, with its multiple demands, and to do so with dwindling resources, even of five fish and a few loaves. It is time to remedy that situation. Therefore, my delegation hopes that the importance of the work of the CIM will find concrete support in the allocation of resources to its noble cause of engendering the Hemisphere. In this way, the CIM will be able to maximize its impact and mobilize the development of those in the Hemisphere who live on the margins, as we have heard today. My delegation welcomes any initiative that allows for heightened visibility of other marginalized groups in the Hemisphere and that actively caters to the concerns of the Caribbean subregion in particular.

Allow me to take this opportunity to wish all delegations a happy International Women's Day on March 8, 2006, and to hope that the men won't feel marginalized because we have definitely been singled out for a day. As Dr. Lewis so eloquently said, we must not necessarily believe that because the focus is on women, there should not be a focus on men as well.

Madam Chair, I thank you.

La PRESIDENTA: Thank you, Alternate Representative of Saint Lucia, for your comments. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Grenada.

El REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE DE GRENADA: I thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I first wish to express my appreciation to the panelists for their very insightful presentations.

You know, whenever there is a crisis in this hemisphere and that crisis is being discussed in the Permanent Council, there is usually a flood of lights and cameras. If there was a coup somewhere or some political rivalry in one of our countries, you would see cameras and lights in here, and had the doors been opened, there would be a flurry of media activity.

Are we to accept that gender and development in the Americas is not in a crisis because we meet today in our usual collegiate manner to quietly discuss behind closed doors? Look around! We are locked in, and we are politely discussing a subject with such political and developmental implications.

The few of us here who have been alternates and heads of mission hear each other again today and see each other again today. We welcome the panelists; what you had to say was very meaningful.

In our hemisphere, how do we fix the problem? Are women so affected because they are women or because the process of socialization and policy implementation, which is generations old, is beginning to demonstrate its flaws? When did our societies lose their way? The panelist from Bolivia mentioned the loss of our way. How do we find our way back? Back to where? Were we ever at a point when we were not gender-conflicted in our relationship for power? We need to prescribe new formulas for equitable gender development.

Suma jaqaña—I hope I pronounced the words correctly—can only be achieved through very rational discourse. We have to include human development, and I want to hear about that. So let's talk about that socialization process. We cannot ignore human development, social development, development politics, and global development. We cannot merely discuss gender equity from the standpoint of economic statistics and power plays.

I am very pleased that the destruction that occurred in Grenada provided a laboratory for data to be utilized and analyzed, I hope, for the good of this hemisphere. In Grenada, today and before the hurricane, the power differential reads like this: the Minister of Health, our parliamentarians, and within the ministries of social services, education, and public works, there are women. The permanent secretaries—the administrative heads of the ministries of health, public works, agriculture, foreign affairs, social services, national security, and human resources—are all women. In addition,

after the hurricane, the person chosen to head the social reconnection and reconstruction was a woman.

Someone talked about the power differential. I don't think it's about power. Somebody on the panel mentioned poverty, social class, and caste in the process of development. I do hope that there is no back and forth of words between men and women, but we have to form a strategic alliance because the poor countries of this hemisphere and of the world cannot afford to have gender differences. They were cast upon us; we have to push them away. We have to find balance and recognize, as was noted, the 51 to 49 percent ratio between males and females, in most cases. We need each other. We do not need competition; we need cooperation to find that balance.

I thank you.

La PRESIDENTA: Thank you, Ambassador of Grenada, for raising some very thought-provoking issues and, of course, for giving us information on the advancement of women in Grenada. We commend your government.

I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Venezuela.

EL REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE DE VENEZUELA: Quisiera agradecerle, distinguida Presidenta, Embajadora Johnny, en nombre de la Delegación de Venezuela, la oportunidad que nos brinda de disfrutar realmente de esta sesión, porque hemos escuchado ponencias que dan cuenta de un nuevo enfoque sobre el papel de la mujer. También hemos tenido la oportunidad de registrar en nuestra memoria los novedosos enfoques que están surgiendo en el Continente para tratar el tema.

Reitero el agradecimiento a la distinguida Presidenta porque estamos celebrando el Día Internacional de la Mujer por adelantado y lo estamos empezando a celebrar muy bien en medio de la reflexión, en medio de la crítica y mirando hacia el futuro para construir un continente más justo, más equitativo, más incluyente.

Esta es la primera vez, que yo recuerde – seguramente, si revisamos los anales de la OEA, alguna situación específica pudiera desmentirme– que la sesión del Consejo Permanente está conformada mayoritariamente por mujeres. Creo que he contado veinte Representantes Permanentes y Alternas, lo cual representa una clara mayoría. Y quisiera aprovechar, distinguida Presidenta, esta oportunidad tan excepcional para proponer la consideración de un proyecto de resolución para que circule a los países, aprovechando, repito, que hay una mayoría de mujeres aquí, que es el siguiente.

Hace algunos años me tocó desempeñarme en un país asiático, del cual se decía que había unas profundas diferencias entre hombres y mujeres, sobre todo diferencias de ingresos y que, por lo tanto, era una sociedad profundamente machista.

Las mujeres, con el concurso de los hombres, y apoyadas por sindicatos, lograron que un sector industrial de ese país resolviera el problema muy fácilmente. Eso es lo que quiero proponer para que se convierta en un proyecto de resolución en la perspectiva de la próxima Asamblea General de la OEA. Lo que lograron fue algo muy sencillo. Cuando las empresas hacían los depósitos en los bancos para que los hombres fueran a cobrar su sueldo, estos estaban impedidos de cobrarlo y quienes

cobraban eran las mujeres, razón por la cual se logró un importante avance en materia de igualdad de género.

Por supuesto que estoy haciendo un símil más bien jocoso del asunto y de paso digo que la presentación del proyecto de resolución es una ficción. [Risas.] Pero todo lo que sea con la perspectiva de avanzar en un logro para que el enfoque de género resulte asumido por nuestros Estados estaríamos dando un gran avance y un avance muy considerable.

En ese sentido, solo quisiera comentar que, ciertamente, la desigualdad entre mujeres y hombres es uno de los mayores obstáculos para alcanzar un desarrollo basado en la justicia, en la igualdad, en la equidad y en la soberanía del ser humano. Por eso, la perspectiva de género, como aproximación teórica al tema, constituye un importante análisis que ayuda a comprender y, eventualmente, superar las inequidades y desigualdades que se construyen en las sociedades que conocemos hoy.

La perspectiva de género, tal como lo hemos escuchado en las exposiciones de las ponentes y el distinguido ponente, constituye una importante herramienta de análisis, ya que la perspectiva de género es muy importante para, entre otras cuestiones, construir una sociedad basada en los principios éticos de la igualdad, la equidad y la justicia social, para alcanzar una verdadera democracia, para lograr un desarrollo alternativo a los modelos vigentes, especialmente al capitalismo salvaje que estructuralmente hace imposible que se pueda alcanzar esa igualdad de género. Por lo tanto, toda política pública que se proponga lograr –y eso es lo que piensa Venezuela– un desarrollo equitativo y justiciero entre hombres y mujeres deberá incorporar la perspectiva de género.

Por esto –y con esto concluyo–, hoy la Constitución de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela contiene todo un articulado en el cual no existe un lenguaje sexista. Se establece una plena igualdad jurídica entre las mujeres y los hombres. En ese sentido, se ha avanzado en la formulación de todo un andamiaje jurídico, aunque, por supuesto, no es suficiente si no se acometen las condiciones reales en las cuales se incluye la vida de la gente y de las mujeres especialmente, pero se ha articulado y definido un nuevo andamiaje jurídico para lograr la equidad y la eliminación de la violencia contra la mujer. Solamente quiero citar la Ley sobre la Violencia contra la Mujer y la Familia, la Ley de Igualdad y Oportunidades para la Mujer, la Norma Oficial para la Atención Integral de la Salud Sexual y Reproductiva, la Ley para la Reforma Parcial del Código Penal y la Ley de Tierras y Desarrollo Agrario, y paro de contar.

Quiero saludar de nuevo, distinguida Presidenta, su iniciativa, agradecerle que nos haya ofrecido la posibilidad de escuchar tan excelentes ponencias, de las que creo que todos nos vamos a nutrir, y les prometo que el proyecto de resolución lo voy a retirar ahora mismo. [Risas.]

La PRESIDENTA: Thank you, Ambassador, for your kind words. You didn't need to withdraw the draft resolution at this time, since it seems that a number of resolutions that are passed by the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM) and sent to the General Assembly don't get implemented because they are viewed as fiction. Maybe your draft resolution would have been one of those. [Risas.] Why? Because adequate funds are not being allocated to the CIM to implement these resolutions. And so, if we get the funds to implement these resolutions, we'll take them off the category of fiction. Thank you, Ambassador.

Let me also commend the Venezuelan Ambassador and his government for the nonsexist legislation enacted. Thank you and congratulations.

I now give the floor to the Representative of the United States.

La REPRESENTANTE ALTERNA DE LOS ESTADOS UNIDOS: Madam Chair, the U.S. Delegation wishes to thank you for organizing this important platform for discussion on gender and development as we prepare to celebrate International Women's Day tomorrow. The presentations by the panelists were interesting and timely, as there is much work to be done in these crosscutting areas.

I also wish to thank each of our expert panelists: Dr. Violet Barriteau of the University of the West Indies (UWI); Ms. Carmen Lomellin, Executive Secretary of the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM); Ms. Elena Crespo of the Office of the Vice Minister of Gender of the Government of Bolivia; and Dr. Linden Lewis of Bucknell University. Each of your enlightening presentations will help to reinforce some of the discussions that have already occurred and shape future actions on the part of member states in these areas within the context of the Organization of American States.

We look forward to working with member states to ensure that women play an important role in the response to and mitigation of the impact of natural disasters.

I know that the CIM had discussed, during the December Executive Committee meeting, the need for more research and analysis of HIV/AIDS within the context of the Caribbean. Ms. Lomellin's presentation today gives us more insight into the current and future challenges associated with this serious problem in the region. We look forward to the May Executive Committee meeting for additional discussion in this area.

Again, we congratulate the Secretariat and the panelists for these very informative presentations. Thank you, Madam Chair.

La PRESIDENTA: Thank you very much, Alternate Representative of the United States. I now give the floor to the Alternate Representative of Brazil.

El REPRESENTANTE ALTERNO DEL BRASIL: Obrigado, Senhora Presidente.

Permita-me, em primeiro lugar, agradecer a Presidência do Conselho Permanente pela oportunidade da convocação desta sessão extraordinária de hoje e pela relevância do tema que abordamos na véspera do Dia Internacional da Mulher. Quero agradecer muito especialmente aos expositores que nos deram um panorama amplo da situação de gênero no nosso Continente, cujas apresentações ressaltam aspectos de multidimensionalidade, interdisciplinaridade e transversalidade, aspectos fundamentais do trabalho da Organização e que devem ser tratados assim de agora em diante.

Reconhecemos que, no esforço que está sendo envidado pela Secretaria-Geral de reestruturação dos seus trabalhos e dos seus escritórios, o aspecto da transversalidade ganha um especial destaque. O Brasil sente-se comprometido com a idéia de uma transversalidade no tratamento de muitos dos assuntos que abordamos aqui hoje. Eu lembraria, apenas para dar uma idéia e um exemplo desse compromisso do Governo brasileiro, que estamos no momento, na pessoa da Ministra Nilcéia Freire, na Presidência do Conselho Executivo da CIM; estamos na Presidência do

Grupo de Trabalho encarregado de preparar uma Convenção Interamericana contra o Racismo e Toda Forma de Discriminação e Intolerância e também sediaremos muito brevemente em Brasília a Sétima Reunião do Grupo de Trabalho em Busca dos Consensos com vistas a uma Declaração Americana sobre os Direitos dos Povos Indígenas.

Há nessa abordagem mais ampla uma idéia de sinergia que é necessária e que, a nosso ver, deve refletir-se na própria estrutura de trabalho da Organização. Apoiamos plenamente os esforços que vêm sendo envidados neste sentido pelo Secretário-Geral Insulza e pelo Secretário-Geral Adjunto Ramdin.

O Governo brasileiro tem dado prioridade ao papel do Estado como promotor e articulador de ações políticas capazes de alterar e de corrigir as desigualdades sociais existentes no Brasil. Acreditamos nesse papel do Estado e acreditamos no papel do Estado como promotor de políticas públicas que, entre outros problemas sociais, sejam capazes de atacar a desigualdade de gênero. A construção dessas políticas públicas deve ser feita em um permanente diálogo com a sociedade civil e com as organizações que a representam. Devemos continuar a apoiar também as iniciativas de âmbito regional e internacional que sejam capazes de apoiar os esforços dos Estados com vistas a incorporar a perspectivas de gênero à luta contra a discriminação econômica, política e social.

Neste sentido, gostaria de reafirmar o permanente apoio do Brasil ao trabalho da Comissão Interamericana de Mulheres e agradecer, na oportunidade de hoje, o trabalho incansável e valioso da nossa Secretária-Executiva, Carmen Lomellin. São muito importantes as contribuições da Comissão no âmbito interamericano para o desenvolvimento e a implementação de ações dedicadas a promover o tema da igualdade e da equidade de gênero das Américas.

Recentemente tivemos a oportunidade, na última sessão do Conselho Permanente, de receber o Relatório Anual da Comissão Interamericana de Mulheres relativo ao período de março de 2005 a fevereiro de 2006 e, talvez pelo avançado da hora naquela sessão, não tenhamos tido a oportunidade de um debate mais aprofundado, mas eu saúdo o fato que hoje fomos capazes de resgatar a importância do debate sobre a perspectiva de gênero no Conselho Permanente. Mais uma vez agradecemos a Presidência do Conselho pela convocação desta sessão extraordinária.

Merece destaque no elenco das realizações da CIM o avanço em relação ao tema da violência contra a mulher, um fenômeno endêmico persistente nas Américas, com a implementação do funcionamento do Mecanismo de Seguimento da Convenção de Belém do Pará, o MESECVI, ao qual o Governo brasileiro atribui grande importância.

Por outro lado, o Governo brasileiro vê também com satisfação a continuidade atribuída pela CIM à implementação do Programa Interamericano sobre a Promoção dos Direitos Humanos da Mulher e da Equidade e Igualdade de Gênero (PIA), bem como os esforços envidados em relação ao tema do combate ao tráfico de pessoas, especialmente mulheres, adolescentes e crianças.

Considera igualmente o Governo brasileiro de grande valor os renovados esforços da CIM no sentido de incorporar em sua agenda novos temas, novos enfoques, como é o caso do tema da transmissão do HIV/AIDS sob uma perspectiva de gênero, objeto aqui hoje de uma interessantíssima apresentação. Perante o efeito devastador daquela pandemia para as mulheres da América Latina e do Caribe e diante da impossibilidade de que a Comissão deixe de assumir um papel ativo na elaboração de estratégias voltadas para a prevenção e o combate à doença, tenho o prazer de anunciar que, em

reciente visita a Washington, à sede da Organização Pan-Americana da Saúde (OPAS), o Ministro de Saúde do Brasil discutiu com a Diretora da OPAS uma ampliação da capacidade do Brasil de cooperar com países vizinhos em estratégias de combate à doença e em estratégias de prevenção da transmissão de doenças sexuais.

Finalmente, gostaria de reafirmar, em nome do meu Governo, o apoio incondicional ao importante e insubstituível trabalho da Comissão Interamericana de Mulheres na promoção de uma perspectiva mais ampla no tema da igualdade de gênero, não só nos nossos países, mas dentro da Organização também.

Obrigado, Senhora Presidente.

La PRESIDENTA: Thank you, Alternate Representative of Brazil, for a very informative statement. Let me also commend your government on the work done in advancing gender issues. I now give the floor to the Alternate Representative of Argentina.

El REPRESENTANTE ALTERNO DE LA ARGENTINA: Gracias, señora Presidenta, y quisiéramos agradecer también a usted por la organización de esta sesión extraordinaria del Consejo Permanente y a los panelistas por sus presentaciones.

Para la República Argentina el logro de la equidad de género tiene una doble función: es un objetivo en sí mismo y constituye un instrumento para alcanzar las demás metas de desarrollo humano planteadas en la Declaración del Milenio.

La Argentina ha realizado avances sustanciales en materia de promoción y protección de los derechos de las mujeres, y la equidad de género. La potenciación del rol de las mujeres y la progresiva eliminación de toda forma de discriminación son componentes ineludibles de los esfuerzos para promover el desarrollo sostenible en el marco de sociedades inclusivas, basadas en la equidad y en el pleno respeto a los derechos humanos.

Compartimos el criterio de que la creciente feminización de la pobreza está relacionada con la discriminación que afecta a las mujeres para acceder a posiciones de poder y a los recursos económicos y financieros, por lo que promovemos la adopción de medidas tendientes a remover tales obstáculos.

En ese sentido, la Argentina favorece la implementación de políticas que permitan generar empleo genuino, alcanzar una mejor y más justa distribución del ingreso y garantizar el respecto a los derechos laborales de las mujeres y su acceso a los beneficios de la protección social. También prioriza el reconocimiento del valor económico del trabajo no remunerado, las acciones de apoyo a las mujeres que trabajan en el sector informal y la adopción de medidas que permitan conciliar la vida familiar y laboral.

Asimismo, resulta de particular importancia para el Gobierno argentino la erradicación de todas las formas de violencia contra la mujer, teniendo en cuenta la incidencia de este factor en el desarrollo social, en la capacidad de las mujeres para realizar plenamente su potencial en todos los ámbitos de la vida.

En ese sentido, asigna prioridad a la prevención y combate de la trata de personas, en especial de mujeres y niñas y niños, teniendo en cuenta sus vinculaciones con la pobreza, la explotación laboral y la discriminación, entre otros aspectos.

La participación plena de las mujeres es fundamental para el desarrollo económico, social, político y cultural de los países, pues ello constituye una contribución indispensable para lograr una sociedad más justa basada en la equidad.

En ese sentido, se manifestaron, en junio pasado, los Presidentes de los países del Mercado Común del Sur (MERCOSUR) y los Estados asociados, quienes se comprometieron a continuar impulsando políticas de igualdad y no discriminación en todos los ámbitos.

Finalmente, esta Delegación se permite recordar que la promoción de la igualdad de oportunidades, con el fin de eliminar las disparidades existentes en el mundo del trabajo a través de un enfoque integrado que incorpore la perspectiva de género a las políticas de empleo, incluyendo la promoción de más oportunidades para que las mujeres sean dueñas de su propia empresa, es uno de los compromisos asumidos por la República Argentina y los demás países del Hemisferio en la Declaración de Mar del Plata adoptada en la Cuarta Cumbre de las Américas.

También allí nos comprometimos a procurar la igualdad de oportunidad de empleo para todos y a trabajar para erradicar la discriminación en el trabajo, en el acceso a la educación, a la capacitación y en la remuneración, así como a prestar especial atención a las diferentes necesidades basadas en género.

Muchas gracias, señora Presidente.

La PRESIDENTA: Thank you, Alternate Representative of Argentina, for your informative statement. Let me commend your government for its policy on gender issues. Next, I wish to give the floor to the Alternate Representative of Mexico.

La REPRESENTANTE ALTERNA DE MÉXICO: Muchas gracias, señora Presidenta.

Quisiera agradecerle por la convocatoria de esta sesión extraordinaria sobre género y desarrollo, en una fecha tan apropiada y oportuna, con un panel tan diverso que reafirma la multidimensionalidad del tema de género.

Gracias a los panelistas por sus ponencias que han enriquecido a todos los presentes en esta sesión. Nos unimos a la solicitud de contar con las presentaciones de sus ponencias porque todas fueron extraordinarias.

Señora Presidenta, quisiera agradecer a la doctora Eudine Barriteau por su análisis sobre género y por la explicación de la experiencia de Grenada, que ha permitido preparar propuestas y actividades interesantes que, sin duda, podrán ser utilizadas por la OEA, a través de la Comisión Interamericana de Mujeres (CIM), para promover mínimos puntos para incorporar la perspectiva de género en los proyectos, programas y políticas relacionados con los desastres naturales.

Gracias a la señora Secretaria Ejecutiva de la CIM por su presentación sobre la pandemia del SIDA y las alarmantes cifras que nos trajo a la mesa. Nos parece que el enfoque no podría ser más

adecuado. Creemos que en la situación que está la CIM en estos momentos tratar de fortalecer la cooperación entre los organismos del sistema interamericano en este tema, que afecta al 50% de la población de casi el 50% de países miembros de la OEA, es impactante.

Señora Presidenta, estos dos temas se están perfilando como los temas prioritarios para el diálogo de la Asamblea de Delegadas de la CIM, a finales del presente año en El Salvador.

La Delegación de México se suma plenamente a lo expresado por la Delegación de Santa Lucía en relación con el llamado para fortalecer los recursos humanos y financieros con que cuenta la Comisión Interamericana de Mujeres. Los temas de violencia, la capacitación en materia de género, la trata de personas, especialmente mujeres y niños, y ahora estos temas que se perfilan como prioritarios de género y de desastres naturales, y la atención de pandemias, como el SIDA, sin duda requerirán que la CIM cuente con mayores recursos.

Gracias a la doctora Crespo por su interesante presentación que nos obliga a la reflexión sobre esta perspectiva indígena que enriquece, sin duda, el acercamiento al tema del desarrollo.

Gracias al doctor Lewis por su impactante y provocativa exposición. Coincidimos plenamente en que la lucha de género no puede ser resultado de la acción de uno solo de los géneros. Es una lucha compartida y, en este sentido, quisiera retomar las palabras de la distinguida Embajadora Lisa Shoman: “desarrollo y derechos humanos para las mujeres es desarrollo y derechos humanos para un mayor número de la población”.

Muchas gracias, señora Presidenta.

La PRESIDENTA: Thank you, Alternate Representative of Mexico. I now give the floor to the Alternate Representative of Panama.

La REPRESENTANTE ALTERNA DE PANAMÁ: Muchas gracias, señora Presidenta.

La Delegación de Panamá también desea sumarse a los agradecimientos y a las felicitaciones a usted, señora Presidenta, por esta interesantísima reunión que definitivamente nos da insumos muy importantes para nuestros trabajos. Desea felicitar, desde luego, a los panelistas por sus brillantes exposiciones.

La Delegación de Panamá, señora Presidenta, quisiera manifestar que compartimos la idea de la importancia del análisis de género conjuntamente con desarrollo, que, como nos recordaba el Secretario General más temprano en la tarde, tiene un carácter pluridimensional o multidimensional que envuelve términos como pobreza, democracia, trabajo, igualdad jurídica y seguridad.

Recientemente nuestro país ha hecho una estructuración del ministerio que se encarga de manejar los asuntos de la mujer, que ahora se denomina “Ministerio de Desarrollo Social”, precisamente, señora Presidenta, en el entendido que los temas de género deben ser vistos desde una perspectiva de desarrollo integral y que, definitivamente, a las mujeres les beneficia esta perspectiva.

Desde luego, felicitamos a la Comisión Interamericana de Mujeres (CIM) por el importante papel que tiene en todos estos temas y, seguramente, por el papel que tuvo en la organización de este evento. Esperamos, con avidez, la transcripción del acta de esta sesión que, como mencionaba

anteriormente, constituirá definitivamente un insumo de la mayor importancia para los trabajos que realizan los Estados en los temas de igualdad y equidad de género.

Por último, señora Presidenta, quisiéramos manifestar que lamentamos que el distinguido Representante de Venezuela retirara su propuesta, pues creo que hubiera contado con el copatrocinio de varias delegaciones. Pero, bueno, esperamos que reconsidere esta decisión.

Muchas gracias, señora Presidenta.

La PRESIDENTA: Thank you very much, Alternate Representative of Panama, for your statement. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Ecuador.

El REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE DEL ECUADOR: Gracias, señora Presidenta.

Al igual que las demás delegaciones, quisiera sumar mi voz de felicitación entusiasta a usted por la importante iniciativa que ha tenido para que nuestro Consejo aborde el tema de género y de desarrollo. Esta tarde nos hemos enriquecido escuchando las presentaciones de los distinguidos panelistas. Siempre es bueno conocer las realidades de las otras regiones, especialmente la brillante exposición que hiciera la doctora respecto de la realidad caribeña, la exposición igualmente lúcida sobre una realidad más cercana a la nuestra, hecha por la señora Crespo, de Bolivia, y la exposición sobre el tema de salud y del VIH/SIDA hecha por la señora Lomellin. Me alegra también la intervención del doctor Lewis porque él enfocó en el asunto desde la vereda de enfrente.

Al escuchar las intervenciones, señora Presidenta, recordaba mis tiempos universitarios en que una de las primeras impresiones que no fueron muy agradables fue la de conocer que en el Derecho Civil ecuatoriano, heredado de otras legislaciones, los ciegos, los sordos, los mudos y las mujeres casadas eran consideradas personas incapaces. Es decir, que no podían asumir responsabilidades por sí mismas.

Felizmente, el sentido de justicia, de equidad y de no discriminación se ha abierto paso en el Ecuador a partir de mediados del siglo anterior y hoy las mujeres hacen acto de presencia en más de 50% en las escuelas, colegios y universidades. Las filas de los institutos armados y de la policía se han abierto en igualdad de condiciones a las mujeres. Las filas del Servicio Exterior del Ecuador también se honran con una presencia considerable de mujeres, de tal manera que creo que en el Ecuador hemos dado pasos muy importantes, porque consideramos que la costilla que nos falta de cuando Dios creó a la mujer ha sido muy bien compensada con una compañía grata y dulcificadora de su presencia junto a nosotros en la creación de la familia y en el mejoramiento de una sociedad que tiene que ser, sobre todo, más justa y más equitativa.

En la misma universidad, me enseñaban que la justicia da a cada cual lo suyo y lo que queremos todos, como seres humanos, es que nuestras sociedades reconozcan en favor de la mujer lo que es suyo, lo que les pertenece por derecho propio.

Gracias, señora Presidenta.

La PRESIDENTA: Thank you very much, Ambassador, for your very enlightening statement. I also wish to commend your country for the work done on gender issues. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Antigua and Barbuda.

La REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE DE ANTIGUA Y BARBUDA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am compelled to take the floor to thank you for this wonderful initiative this afternoon.

The panelists have brought with them a wealth of knowledge, and I discern certain themes in each presentation. I am particularly gratified that the question of “gender,” as opposed to “women issues,” was the main area of concentration this afternoon, as well as the idea of looking at all persons on the margins. Perhaps next time we can look at youth at risk.

I was particularly interested in the crosscutting nature of the discussion. The multidimensional approach to gender, I thought, enriched the discussion tremendously. More particularly, Madam Chair, the philosophical thrust of the discourse—dealing with the question of power and almost shattering the myth of neutrality—also brought heft to the discussion.

With respect to my own country, during the past two years, a deliberate attempt has been made to ensure that women take their rightful place in the corridors of decision-making processes and at all levels—the foreign service, the police force, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and, of course, in parliament. This, however, does not underscore the whole question of ensuring that the power differential is no longer important.

As I close, Madam Chair, let me again thank you for bringing this important topic to the Permanent Council. Thank you very much.

La PRESIDENTA: Thank you, Ambassador of Antigua and Barbuda. Your proposals, of course, will be given due consideration for inclusion, hopefully, in our next panel discussion. Maybe the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM) could look at youth at risk in that context.

I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Trinidad and Tobago.

La REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE DE TRINIDAD Y TOBAGO: Thank you, Madam Chair.

On behalf of the Delegation of Trinidad and Tobago, I wish to express deep appreciation for the very stimulating presentations of our distinguished panelists at this special meeting of the Permanent Council on this day that immediately precedes the day that gives special recognition to the role of women. I wish to especially thank you, Madam Chair, for providing us with this opportunity.

The issues addressed, although diverse in content and effect, revolve around the single theme of gender equity as we struggle with the challenges arising from differences in sex, ethnicity, class, and economic status and how they impact the developmental processes in our societies. I take comfort in the fact, Madam Chair, that gender and development constitute an integral part of the developmental discourse at the national, regional, and global levels, and more so as they relate to the work undertaken by the Organization of American States within the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM).

Once again, Madam Chair, I thank you and all participants in today’s event. You have made it the success that we can all agree it has turned out to be.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

La PRESIDENTA: Thank you, Ambassador of Trinidad and Tobago. I now give the floor to our final speaker, the Ambassador of Jamaica.

El REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE DE JAMAICA: Thank you, Chairman.

It would be remiss of me if I didn't join my colleagues in thanking you for your initiative in placing this very important item on the agenda of the Organization of American States. Discrimination in any form is an attack on human rights, and gender-based discrimination is no less so.

The speakers provided us with a very enlightening and engaging set of presentations on this issue. The fact that we have had so many requests for the floor, Madam Chair, speaks to the quality of these presentations and the extent to which they have been thought-provoking, but it also speaks to the significance of the theme of the meeting.

Chairman, some of us have for some time been trying to place emphasis on natural disasters as one of the more significant impediments to development in the region. The presentation by Dr. Barriteau highlighted a very important, if neglected, element of this whole issue of disaster management by emphasizing the peculiar vulnerabilities of females in disasters, so I thank her greatly.

Chairman, having listened to these presentations, there are so many good things to say, and many of my colleagues have already said them. I would only make one small criticism: almost all of the presentations presented gender in a static context, meaning at a particular point in time. We know that there is a level of discrimination taking place; the reality is that the problem is dynamic.

In Jamaica, for example, while it is true that if we look at the Global Fund for Women (GFW) data that Dr. Barriteau presented, women are more likely to die than men; they are at greater risk of violence; and they don't receive as much health care. I could go on. This is true, but what is the reality in Jamaica? Well, several of you are aware of the historic developments at the level of leadership and governance in Jamaica. We will be represented by a woman at the very highest level, and we certainly expect to see women's affairs elevated as this takes place.

It is true also that the number of organizations managed or headed by women is on the increase. The number of ministries, permanent secretariats, and private organizations headed by women has increased quite significantly. The number of firms headed by women and of women entrepreneurs is on the increase.

Chairman, at the tertiary education level, at the University of the West Indies (UWI) in Jamaica, more than 66 percent of those enrolled are women. At the secondary education level, girls outperform boys considerably. I believe that both of these trends are true across the Caribbean.

The death rate per 1,000 births is decreasing. One of the most significant areas of emphasis in health care is breast cancer, a major area of focus in Jamaica.

Lest we think that only good things are happening, the truth is that women's role in crime is on the increase as well. [Risas.] Women are known to be the bearers of arms for soldiers and gangs, and they harbor male soldiers, if you will, in that process.

My point, Chairman, would be that, yes, there is gender discrimination, but it is a dynamic situation. It would be useful, therefore, in subsequent presentations, to receive information that allows us to understand the changes that are occurring, because we don't wish to replace one group in the margins by another. Some of my colleagues have pointed this out. If we are presented with information that will allow us to understand how these patterns are changing, we might seek to encourage our governments to take action to eliminate inequalities that are destructive to our development.

Thank you very much, Chairman.

La PRESIDENTA: Thank you, Ambassador, for your very enlightening statement. Your proposals will certainly be taken into consideration at our next panel discussion on the issue or within the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM).

PALABRAS DE CLAUSURA DEL SECRETARIO GENERAL ADJUNTO

La PRESIDENTA: I now wish to give the floor to the Assistant Secretary General, Ambassador Albert Ramdin, for closing remarks.

El SECRETARIO GENERAL ADJUNTO: Madam Chair, distinguished ambassadors, I hope that this discussion will continue over the coming months and years in the Organization of American States.

First, let me congratulate you, Madam Chair, for bringing this issue to the attention of the Organization. We have heard many views today. We've heard about region-specific challenges; about gender and natural disasters; about gender and HIV/AIDS; and about the democratic and political aspects of gender. There are many more areas to which specific attention needs to be given. In a way, some of these issues are almost institutionalized in societies that create an automatic mechanism of inequality. We have to address this.

Let me congratulate the four presenters on their input. We have listened very carefully, and we will be guided by the presentations. We already utilize a gender perspective as a crosscutting issue in all of the programs and projects of the OAS. It does not mean that we are satisfied, but certainly we have the intention. A couple of years ago, with help from the Government of Canada, we began training OAS staff at all levels so that every initiative at the OAS involves a gender perspective in order to understand its impact on gender.

Madam Chair, I want to quickly raise three much more substantive issues. First of all, it is important to realize that gender and development is not so much about women or men; rather, it is about building sustainable economies and stable democracies. If we don't pay attention to gender as soon as possible, the cost and negative impact will be far greater than the investment we are making. As with many other issues, it is better to prevent the problem and to work on solutions, rather than to

wait until the problem occurs. In this case, by not capitalizing on the input of women in society because of inequality, we lose an opportunity.

My second point, which Ambassador Shirley rightfully pointed out, is that this is not a static process; it is clearly dynamic. It changes over time, and as many countries have indicated, we have made a certain level of progress. Much more needs to be done, but progress has been made.

It is important, in designing policy and measures, that we recognize that priorities differ according to region. For example, in the Caribbean, different aspects of priorities need to be stressed, compared to other parts of the Hemisphere. We have to realize that when designing policy, but also when dedicating funds to specific projects. We may miss the boat if we take a generic approach to gender.

My last point is the need for a differentiated, holistic approach. This is not an ad hoc thing; it should be part of development in general. We have to maximize the impact of policies and investments in this regard.

Madam Chair, I'd like to quickly raise a couple of much more practical issues. Given the fact that the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM) falls within the purview of the Office of the Assistant Secretary General, we pledge to fully support the work of the CIM and to ensure that it receives attention within the different policy areas of the OAS.

In the context of the Convention of Belém do Pará, the Mechanism to Follow Up on Implementation of the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women, "Convention of Belém do Pará" (MESECVI) has been established by the membership, and many activities are taking place. I want to be very practical and urge member states to help us to respond to the issues and initiatives undertaken by the CIM so that we can get a comprehensive picture of the situation in the Western Hemisphere.

I am trying to say that it is nice to talk about a problem, but when there is an initiative, we expect also a response so that we can accommodate further policymaking in that regard. I hope that on the questionnaires, we can get a response from member states.

Many countries raised their concern regarding funding for the CIM. Speaking on behalf of the General Secretariat, I know that we look forward to increasing funding for the CIM, but it's a decision that the member states have to make in the Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Affairs (CAAP). We look forward to that decision so that we can do much more.

Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

La PRESIDENTA: Thank you, Ambassador Ramdin, for your words.

I hope that the delegations will note and implement some of the proposals that have been presented here. I hope that they have taken note, Ambassador Ramdin, that you are committed to gender issues and to their enhancement in this organization. I also hope that they have noted that it is the delegations who will decide to increase the amounts allocated to the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM). This is an ongoing topic that we have discussed on numerous occasions. However, it seems to be difficult to bring it to fruition. I hope that things will be different this year.

Let me once again thank our guest panelists, who addressed us on these very important issues. They have made us sit up and take notice, and we will be using some of their proposals as guidelines in our work in the CIM and in the other bodies of the Organization.

I wish to thank the delegations for being here and for giving the necessary support to gender issues in this organization.

Let me also take this opportunity to congratulate all the women in the room today on International Women's Day, which will be celebrated tomorrow, March 8, 2006.

But before we go, let me leave this saying with you. There is an old saying—well, maybe it's new—"In a bacon and egg breakfast, the chicken is engaged, but the pig is committed." [Risas.] Which one should the Organization of American States be? I hope it is the committed one.

Thank you very much. The meeting is adjourned.

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