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ANNUAL REPORT OF THE INTER-AMERICAN COMMISSION OF WOMEN
TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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Organización de los Estados Americanos
Organização dos Estados Americanos
Organisation des États Américains
Organization of American States

17th and Constitution Ave., N.W. • Washington, D.C. 20006

No. 3-039/00

March 13, 2000

Excellency:

I have the honor to transmit to Your Excellency, in accordance with Article 35 of Rules of Procedure of the Permanent Council and pursuant to Articles 91 (f) and 126 of the Charter of the Organization, the Annual Report of the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM) to the General Assembly, from February 28, 1999 to February 29, 2000.

Accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

César Gaviria
Secretary General

His Excellency
Ambassador James Schofield Murphy
Chair of the Permanent Council
of the Organization of American States
Washington, D.C.

Annex

THE INTER-AMERICAN COMMISSION OF WOMEN

No. 3-038/00

The Executive Secretariat of the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM) presents its compliments to the Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS) and, on instructions from the President of the CIM, Ms. Dulce María Sauri Riancho, and pursuant to Articles 91.f and 126 of the Charter of the Organization of American States, has the honor to present the Annual Report of the CIM, to be transmitted to the Chair of the Permanent Council for adoption of the pertinent measures and for consideration by the General Assembly of the Organization at its thirtieth regular session.

The Executive Secretariat of the Inter-American Commission of Women avails itself of the opportunity to renew to the Secretary General of the OAS the assurances of its highest consideration.

March 6, 2000
Washington, D.C.

Annex

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE INTER-AMERICAN COMMISSION OF WOMEN TO THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES
AT ITS THIRTIETH REGULAR SESSION

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INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to provisions of Articles 91.f and 126 of the Charter of the Organization of American States (OAS), the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM) presents its Annual Report to the Permanent Council, so that it may submit it to the thirtieth regular session of the General Assembly, along with any observations and recommendations it deems pertinent.

This report summarizes the activities carried out by the CIM from February 28, 1999 to February 29, 2000. During this period, the CIM implemented the mandates of the Twenty-ninth CIM Assembly of Delegates and the twenty-ninth regular session of the General Assembly of the OAS. In fulfillment thereof, efforts were stepped up to strengthen and modernize the CIM. Two important research projects were begun on women's human rights, dealing with topics such as violence and trafficking in women and children, and a regional campaign in the field of education was developed.

In April 2000, the CIM will coordinate the first "Meeting of Ministers or Authorities at the Highest Level Responsible for Policies Affecting Women in the Member States." At that meeting, the "Draft Inter-American Program on the Promotion of Women's Human Rights and Gender Equality" will be considered. That program, along with proposals for the Third Summit of the Americas concerning women's issues, will be presented to the General Assembly of the OAS for adoption. These initiatives will undoubtedly set precedents and establish guidelines for future activities of the Commission in its efforts to promote women's human rights and achieve gender equality in the Hemisphere.

Comment [EB1]:

Dulce María Sauri Riancho
President

I. ORIGIN, LEGAL BASIS, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECTIVES

The Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM) was created at the Sixth International American Conference in Havana in 1928, to prepare “legal information and any other kind of information required so that the Seventh International American Conference could examine the issue of the political and civil equality of women in the hemisphere.”

The Ninth International American Conference, held in Bogota, in 1948, approved the first Statute of the Commission, which consolidated its structure and authorized the OAS Secretary General to establish the Permanent Secretariat of the CIM.

In 1953, the Commission signed an agreement with the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States, under which the CIM was recognized as an inter-American specialized agency with permanent status and technical autonomy to fulfill its objectives.

The Tenth Inter-American Conference, held in Caracas, in 1954, reformed the CIM’s Statute, and confirmed it as a permanent specialized agency. It also expanded its powers and authorized it to amend its own Statute in future.

Subsequently, in 1978, pursuant to Article 134 of the OAS Charter and the standards for application and coordination of the provisions of the OAS Charter on inter-American specialized agencies, a new agreement was signed between the Inter-American Commission of Women and the Organization of American States.

The purpose of the Commission is to promote and protect the rights of women, and to support member states in their efforts to ensure full access to civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights, so that women and men may participate on an equal footing in all spheres of society. In this way, they both will be able to enjoy fully and equally the benefits of development and thus share responsibility for the future.

The following organs of the CIM are working towards these objectives: the Assembly of Delegates; the Executive Committee, composed of the President, Vice President, and five member countries, all elected by the Assembly; the delegates appointed by governments; the National Cooperation Committees, chaired by the Principal Delegates, who perform the Commission’s function at national level; and the Permanent Secretariat, which performs the Commission’s administrative and management functions. The Assembly of Delegates is the highest authority of the CIM and its resolutions, together with those of the General Assembly, establish guidelines for the work of the CIM.

The CIM Statute authorizes governments with a permanent observer accredited to the OAS in addition to enjoy permanent observer status with the Inter-American Commission of Women.

II. MANDATES AND RESOLUTIONS OF THE OAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The OAS General Assembly resolutions that have ongoing impact on the work of the Inter-American Commission of Women are as follows:

- AG/RES. 587 (XII-O/82), “Day of the Women of the Americas,” which declared February 18 as the DAY OF THE WOMEN OF THE AMERICAS in commemoration of the date in 1928 on which the Inter-American Commission of Women was created in Havana, Cuba. Since 1983, the CIM has carried out different commemorative activities both at its headquarters and in member states.
- AG/RES. 829 (XVI-O/86), “Full and Equal Participation of Women by the Year 2000,”^{1/} which established that, every two years, the Secretary General will present a report to the subsequent sessions of the General Assembly on the status of compliance with this resolution, explaining how the various areas of the General Secretariat have collaborated.

The Sixth Biennial Report of the Secretary General on compliance with this resolution was presented to the twenty-eighth regular session of the OAS General Assembly.

- AG/DEC. 1 (XX-E/94), “Commitment on a Partnership for Development and Struggle to Overcome Extreme Poverty,” and AG/RES. 1 (XX-E/94) “General Policy Framework and Priorities: Partnership for Development,” which define the new concept and practice of partnership for development that the OAS would henceforth implement and also the cooperation priorities of the OAS system which, among others, should promote increased political and civic participation by women and underprivileged groups in full exercise of their rights, and the elimination of extreme poverty.
- AG/RES. 1257 (XXIV-O/94), “Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence Against Women, ‘Convention of Belém do Pará,” which marks the achievement of one of the Commission’s principal goals. As of date of this report, twenty-nine countries had ratified the Convention, which entered into force on March 5, 1995.
- AG/RES. 1422 (XXVI-O/96), “Cooperation within the Inter-American System to Ensure Full and Equal Participation by Women in the Development Process,” which invited the organs, agencies, and entities of the inter-American system to work with the CIM by drawing

1. Every two years, the Secretary General reports to the General Assembly on progress made in fulfillment of this resolution. See, in this connection, AG/RES. 933 (XVIII-O/88), “First Biennial Report on Compliance with AG/RES. 829 (XVI-O/86);” AG/RES. 1061 (XX-O/90), “Second Report of the Secretary General on Compliance with Resolution AG/RES. 829 (XVI-O/86);” AG/RES. 1192 (XXII-O/92); “Third Report of the Secretary General on Compliance with Resolution AG/RES. 828 (XVI-O/86);” AG/RES. 1303 (XXIV-O/94), “Fourth Biennial Report of the Secretary General on Compliance with Resolution AG/RES. 829 (XVI-O/86);” AG/RES. 1431 (XXVI-O/96), “Fifth Biennial Report of the Secretary General on Compliance with Resolution AG/RES. 829 (XVI-O/86);” and AG/RES. 1588 (XXVIII-O/98), “Sixth Biennial Report of the Secretary General on Compliance with Resolution AG/RES. 828 (XVI-O/86).”

up joint action programs within their respective spheres. It also urged the Secretary General to establish the mechanisms required to ensure proper coordination, when necessary, between the various areas of the General Secretariat and the Executive Secretariat of the CIM on women's issues.

- AG/RES. 1432 (XXVI-O/96), "Status of Women in the Americas," which urges member states that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the Convention of Belém do Pará. It recommends to member states that they either strengthen existing measures or create new ones for the advancement of women and that they take into account gender analysis in devising and executing public policy. It urges the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CIDI) to consider the gender perspective in the formulation and execution of development projects. It reiterates the importance of implementing the Strategic Plan of Action of the Inter-American Commission of Women.
- AG/RES. 1456 (XXVII-O/97), "Promotion of the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women, 'Convention of Belém do Pará,'" which instructs the CIM Permanent Secretariat to report every two years to the OAS General Assembly on the progress made in its application, and on experiences and results achieved through the initiatives and programs pursued in the member states to counter violence against women. It encourages member states to take appropriate measures to modify any legislation of a discriminatory nature in their legal system, if such exists.^{2/}
- AG/DEC. 18 (XXVIII-O/98), "Declaration on Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men and Gender Equity in International Legal Instruments," which declares that all inter-American legal instruments relating to individual rights should be applied by member states, its organs, specialized agencies, and departments in such a way as to ensure equality of women and men before the law, equal opportunity for women and men, and gender equity. It encourages member states to take concrete steps to promote equality of women and men before the law, equal opportunity for men and women, and gender equity, at both the national and international levels, and recommends that any relevant inter-American legal instruments adopted in the future on individual rights expressly ensure equality of women and men before the law, equal opportunity for men and women, and gender equity.
- AG/RES. 1586 (XXVIII-O/98), "Observations and Recommendations on the Annual Reports of the Organs, Agencies, and Entities of the Organization" requests the Permanent Council to consider examining these reports with the assistance of the technical areas of the General Secretariat. It instructs the Secretary General to make every possible effort to improve the financial status of the organs, agencies, and entities and, in particular, the Inter-American Commission of Women, within allocated resources approved in the program-budget and other resources.

The following resolutions of significance to the CIM were adopted by the OAS General Assembly at its twenty-ninth regular session:

2. The report, AG/RES. 1626 (XXIX-O/99), "First Biennial Report on Compliance with Resolution AG/RES. 1456 (XXVII-O/97), "Promotion of the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women 'Convention of Belém do Pará,'" was presented to the General Assembly at its twenty-ninth regular session for consideration.

- AG/RES. 1625 (XXIX-O/99), “Status of Women in the Americas and Strengthening and Modernization of the Inter-American Commission of Women,” which calls a meeting of ministers or of the highest-ranking authorities responsible for the advancement of women in the member states, during the first three months of 2000, and requests that the necessary funds from the program-budget for 2000 be assigned to hold that meeting. It requests the CIM, as coordinator of the meeting, to prepare a draft agenda that will include, among other things, approval of the “Draft Inter-American Program on Women’s Rights and Gender Equity,” and consideration of the commitments adopted by the Summit of the Americas. It reiterates to the General Secretariat and the Permanent Council the contents of its resolution AG/RES. 1586 (XXVIII-O/98), with a view to improving the financial condition of the Inter-American Commission of Women and decides to include on the agenda of the thirtieth regular session of the General Assembly the item: Approval of the “Inter-American Program on the Promotion of Women’s Rights and Gender Equality,” and requests the Permanent Council to report on the implementation of this resolution to the General Assembly at its thirtieth regular session.
- AG/RES. 1626 (XXIX-O/99), “First Biennial Report on Compliance with Resolution AG/RES. 1456 (XXVII-O/97), “Promotion of the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women ‘Convention of Belém do Pará,’” which notes the First Biennial Report to the General Assembly on compliance with resolution AG/RES. 1426 (XXVII-O/97), “Promotion of the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women, ‘Convention of Belém do Pará,’” encourages governments that have not yet done so to ratify the Convention, and urges the CIM and the member states to continue to develop strategies for attaining the objectives of this Convention.
- AG/RES. 1627 (XXIX-O/99), “Appointment of Women to Senior Management Positions at the OAS,” which urges the Secretary General to establish as an objective that, by the year 2005, women should occupy 50% of posts in all categories of the OAS system, particularly at the P-4 grade and above, and offer assurances that gender equality will be one of the priorities in his continuing efforts to establish a new management culture in the Organization. It requests the Secretary General to present a proposal on the best way to achieve this to the Special Joint Working Group of the Permanent Council and the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CIDI) on Strengthening and Modernization of the OAS, and to establish policies of gender equality in the workplace and make each manager accountable for the application of these policies and to report to the President and the Executive Committee of the CIM every year on the implementation of this resolution.
- AG/RES. 1635 (XXIX-O/99), “American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man,” which extends the mandate given to the Permanent Council in resolution AG/RES. 1591 (XXVIII-O/98) to study and propose, if appropriate, changing the title “American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man” to “American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Persons,” or any other agreed term, and replacing the word “man” in the text with “person,” or any other agreed term, where appropriate. It requests the Permanent Council to report on the implementation of this mandate to the General Assembly at its thirtieth regular session.

- AG/RES. 1659 (XXIX-O/99), “Support for and Follow-up to the Summits of the Americas Initiative,” which thanks the organs, agencies, and entities of the Organization for the special support they provide in implementing the initiatives of the Plan of Action of the Summit of the Americas, held in Miami, the Summit of the Americas on Sustainable Development, held in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, and of the Second Summit of the Americas, held in Santiago. It urges them to continue to implement the Plan of Action of Miami, the Plan of Action of Santa Cruz de la Sierra, and the Plan of Action of Santiago, in accordance with the mandates of the Second Summit of the Americas. It instructs them to give top priority to carrying out the initiatives assigned to them by the General Assembly pursuant to the mandates of the Summits of the Americas and to provide regular progress reports on their implementation to the Special Committee on Inter-American Summits Management.
- AG/RES. 1661 (XXIX-O/99), “The Organization of American States and Civil Society,” which welcomes the progress report on the implementation of AG/RES. 1539 (XXVIII-O/98) and resolves to establish within the Permanent Council a Committee on Civil Society Participation in OAS Activities, composed of all the member states of the Organization.
- AG/RES. 1669 (XXIX-O/99), “Observations and Recommendations on the Annual Reports of the Organs, Agencies, and Entities of the Organization,” which requests the organs, agencies, and entities of the Organization to include in the annual report to be presented to the General Assembly at its thirtieth regular session the draft resolutions they see fit to transmit to the Assembly, and to include in their annual reports, if appropriate, consideration of a gender equity approach.
- AG/RES. 1685 (XXIX-O/99), “Modernization of the OAS and Renewal of the Inter-American System,” which renews the mandates contained in AG/RES. 1603 (XXVIII-O/98), through which a Special Joint Working Group of the Permanent Council and the Inter-American Council for Integral Development was established to identify the aspects with regard to which it is necessary to foster and intensify the process of strengthening and modernizing the OAS. It instructs the Permanent Council to report on the implementation of this resolution to the General Assembly at its thirtieth regular session, especially regarding the completion of consideration of already initiated items; and the definition of strategies, procedures, and concrete actions – including funding and coordination with other inter-American organizations – with a view to promoting integral renewal of the inter-American system.

III. MANDATES OF THE CIM GOVERNING BODIES

A. The CIM Assembly of Delegates

The Assembly of Delegates, the highest decision-making organ of the CIM, meets in regular session every two years. The Twenty-ninth Assembly of Delegates was held in Washington, D.C., November 16-18, 1999. This annual report gives information on the activities carried out in fulfillment of those mandates, details of which have already been provided in the preceding report.

The Thirtieth CIM Assembly of Delegates will take place November 15-17, 2000. The Government of Nicaragua, which had offered to host that meeting, has given written confirmation, through unofficial channels, that it is impossible for it to fulfill this commitment.

B. Executive Committee 1998 – 2000

Meetings of the Executive Committee held in the period covered by this report:

DATE	MEETING	SITE
June 30 – July 2, 1999	Second Regular Meeting	Washington, D.C.
January 20 – 21, 2000	Third Regular Meeting	Washington, D.C.

The mandates of the Executive Committee are contained in the agreements approved in each regular session and are included in the various sections of this report.

IV. SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

A. Strategic Plan of Action of the CIM and Plans of Action of the Summits of the Americas

The Strategic Plan of Action of the CIM and the Plans of Action of the First and Second Summits of the Americas are the basis of the 1998-2000 biennial work program approved by the Twenty-ninth Assembly of Delegates of the Inter-American Commission of Women.

The Strategic Plan of Action of the CIM, adopted in 1994, set forth strategies to advance and strengthen the role of women in society up to the year 2000. The Plan covers ten areas of importance to women, and gives priority to four specific topics: participation of women in power and decision-making structures; elimination of violence; eradication of poverty; and education. These have constituted the CIM's main areas of action over the last six years and are the priority areas of its program guidelines.

The priority areas of the Plans of Action of the First and Second Summits of the Americas are consistent with those of the CIM Strategic Plan. The Plans also emphasize that strengthening the role of women in all aspects of political, social, and economic life is fundamental, not only in the framework of justice and equality, but also as a means of reducing poverty, achieving true sustainable development, and consolidating democracy. They indicate the need to strengthen policies and programs designed to increase the participation of women, strengthen national mechanisms and government entities responsible for promoting legal equality and equal opportunity, and further strengthen the Inter-American Commission of Women.

The Twenty-ninth Assembly of Delegates, determined to promote the process of renewal of the CIM, approved the topic of strengthening and modernization of the CIM as the fifth priority area for the biennium.

A summary follows of the activities carried out by the Commission in connection with the priority areas established in the 1998 – 2000 Biennial Work Program.

1. Participation of Women in Power and Decision-making Structures

Work in this area focused on regional activities. Two important meetings were held and other activities to promote women's leadership were carried out.

a. Women's Economic Summit of the Americas

The Commission co-sponsored the Women's Economic Summit of the Americas, held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, November 11 – 13, 1999. The Executive Secretariat and several principal delegates attended this meeting, in which over 350 women business and professional leaders took part. The objective of the Economic Summit, held to follow up on the meeting "Vital Voices of the Americas: Women in Democracy," held in Montevideo, Uruguay in 1998, was to extend trade and business relations initiated at that time and to provide information on the Latin American market and growth areas. The discussion panels focused their analysis on trade opportunities in the region, the search for strategies to enhance the entrepreneurial and trade capacity of women in the Hemisphere, and the use of the Internet as a work tool. Special attention was given to women and microenterprises.

The Secretary General of the OAS, César Gaviria, co-chaired the event with Ms. Ana Kesler, Minister of Small and Medium-sized Business of Argentina, and Aída Alvarez, Administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration.

Through the organizers of the event, the CIM obtained three fellowships for participants from Haiti, Honduras, and Peru.

b. The Meeting of Delegates and Experts from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay

With Seed Fund resources, and within the framework of the project on strategic subregional development to implement the priority areas of the CIM and fully incorporate women into 21st century society, the Meeting of Delegates and Experts from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay was held in Montevideo, Uruguay. Over 200 women leaders from the public, private, and political sectors and civil society attended this meeting to identify common problems and ways to work together through cooperation mechanisms among the countries in the subregion. At the close of the meeting, the Delegates to the CIM signed the Montevideo Declaration, which was presented to the meeting of the Presidents of MERCOSUR, Bolivia, and Chile, held in December 1999.

c. Program for the Support of Women's Leadership and Representation (PROLEAD) of the Inter-American Development Bank

The CIM continued its activities as co-sponsor and member of the Council of the Program for the Support of Women's Leadership and Representation, which funds leadership projects in the Hemisphere. In October 1999, the President and Executive Secretary, together with women representatives of the IDB, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), and the United Nations Development Programme

(UNDP) attended a meeting of the Council, held in Rio de Janeiro, in which two new projects were funded. This brings the total number of projects funded by PROLEAD to 42.

d. The CIM Plan of Action: “Women’s Participation in Power and Decision-making Structures”

In fulfillment of resolution CIM/RES. 198 (XXIX-O/98), “Plan of Action on Women’s Participation in Power and Decision-making Structures,” the “Plan of Action on Women’s Participation in Power and Decision-making Structures” was published, which had arisen from the inter-American meeting of consultation on that subject, held in February 1998. The publication was distributed to the principal delegates for presentation to and implementation by their respective governments.

Another mandate contained in the same resolution requested the Executive Secretary of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights to make a juridical analysis of the compatibility of affirmative action measures to promote the political participation of women with principles of equality and non-discrimination. In his response, published as document CIM/CD/doc.31/99, Annex 1, the Executive Secretary of the IACHR concluded that affirmative action measures are fully in compliance with the principle of non-discrimination and the applicable provisions of human rights law.

2. Elimination of violence

The CIM continued to promote the ratification of the Convention of Belém do Pará by all OAS member states and implementation of the objectives thereof in the 29 countries that have already ratified it. In that connection, two important projects were initiated with funding from the United States Government.

a. Project: “Violence against Women/Regional analysis: Including a Review of the Implementation of the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Eradication, and Punishment of Violence against Women”

This project, executed jointly with the International Centre for Criminal Law Reform and Criminal Justice Policy of Canada (ICCLR) and the United Nations Latin American Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (ILANUD), gathers and analyzes information on progress made by several countries in the region in implementing the “Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women, ‘Convention of Belém do Pará,’” five years after its adoption and entry into force. When the research and analysis have been completed, the CIM will convene a meeting of experts, who will analyze the conclusions of the final report of the project and make recommendations to be presented to the Thirtieth Assembly of Delegates, in November 2000. These conclusions will be used to make recommendations for action by the member states, which will be published and disseminated throughout the Hemisphere.

b. Project: “The Study of the Trafficking of Women and Children for Sexual Exploitation in the Americas”

This project is being developed in partnership with the Inter-American Children's Institute and the International Human Rights Law Institute of DePaul University. Research has begun in several of the region's countries on trafficking in women and children for sexual exploitation. The project will conduct studies in the following areas: (1) laws on trafficking in women and children; (2) analysis of existing provisions in family and penal codes, and in other codes establishing sanctions where such trafficking exists; (3) proposed legislation or activities in each country in which the project is being executed for passage of laws to prevent such trafficking; (4) statistics on the application of such laws; and (5) analysis of the prevalence of the problem in each country in which the project is being executed. As a first step in the research process, the CIM will coordinate a meeting of experts, in April 2000, in Washington, D.C., in which representatives of the Inter-American Children's Institute, nongovernmental organizations, and specialized agencies with expertise in this area will participate. Development of a methodology to ensure that all possible information on the situation in each country is compiled will be discussed at that meeting. In the final stage of the project, another meeting of experts will be convened, in which the project's results will be analyzed and recommendations made to the CIM and the Inter-American Children's Institute. These results will be used to make recommendations to the member states for action, and will be published and distributed throughout the Hemisphere.

- c. Project: "Equal Legal Rights for Women: Report of the Special Rapporteur of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights on the Status of Women in the Americas"

In fulfillment of CIM Assembly of Delegates resolution CIM/RES. 199 (XXIX-O/98), "Equal Legal Rights for Women: Report of the Special Rapporteur of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights on the Status of Women in the Americas," the CIM wrote a letter to the Special Rapporteur of the IACHR expressing an interest in finding a more appropriate procedure for maintaining a reciprocal and ongoing relationship in the future. The Special Rapporteur presented the CIM proposal to the 106th regular session of the IACHR so that a response could be formulated. The IACHR's reply is still pending on the form that such a relationship would take, especially if the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Women is transformed into a working group.

3. Eradication of poverty

- a. Project: "Health Profiles and Quality of Life from a Gender Perspective in the Mexico-USA Border Area"

In the period covered by this report, the CIM/PAHO project "Health Profiles and Quality of Life from a Gender Perspective in the Mexico-USA Border Area" was completed. Its objective was to describe the health status of women who live or are part of the transient population in the Mexican-USA border area, in view of the globalization and economic integration affecting this subregion. The final report consists of four chapters: a sociodemographic and mortality profile of women in the border area; a critique of documentary information compiled on the health status of women in this area; an analysis of the status of physical and mental health of women working in *maquiladoras* in the area; and an analysis of the use of pesticides on the health of women workers in the agricultural export sector.

The results of the work, and the recommendations arising therefrom, will be presented at a binational meeting to be held in 2000, in El Paso, Texas. That meeting will convene a meeting of health authorities and interest groups on both sides of the border to call attention to the problems identified and discuss possible solutions.

4. Education

Pursuant to the initiatives of the Second Summit of the Americas, the Executive Committee of the CIM devoted its attention to the topic of education with a gender focus.

a. Project: “Women and Education in the Americas of the 21st Century”

The project “Women and Education in the Americas of the 21st Century” was prepared. Its purpose is to conduct, jointly with the principal delegates, a regional campaign on the topic of education with a gender perspective. The project comprises a series of support materials which include: a study on the educational status of women in the Hemisphere; a poster and post cards referring to the topic; a recording to be used in a radio publicity campaign; and a guide for the use of the campaign materials. The materials were disseminated widely and distributed to all CIM delegates to launch the Hemisphere-wide campaign now being conducted.

b. Project: “Women, Justice, and Gender”

The “Women, Justice, and Gender” project was completed, in cooperation with the United Nations Latin American Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (ILANUD). Its objective was to train instructors in law and judicial schools in Central America on gender sensitivity in the law, so that justice administrators and other law officials can then apply the gender perspective. The project included production of teaching materials to be used in law and judicial schools in the region and of a guide, “*Manual Hacia la Igualdad Real*” [“Guide Towards Real Equality”], which is adapted to the appropriate educational and cultural levels and translated into the Maya, Maya-Quiché, and Katchiquel languages, so that it can be used by indigenous peoples. The formation and implementation of gender committees in law and judicial schools are also contemplated.

5. Strengthening and modernization of the CIM

The topic of strengthening and modernization of the CIM was among those receiving most attention during the period covered by this report, in fulfillment of the mandates contained in CIM/RES. 209 (XXIX-O/98), “Strengthening and Modernization of the CIM” and AG/RES. 1625 (XXIX-O/99), “Status of Women in the Americas and Strengthening and Modernization of the Inter-American Commission of Women,” approved by the Twenty-ninth Assembly of Delegates of the CIM and adopted by the twenty-ninth regular session of the OAS General Assembly, respectively.

In its capacity as coordinator of the “Meeting of Ministers or Authorities at the Highest Level Responsible for Policies Affecting Women in the Member States,” to be held in Washington, D.C., on April 27 and 28, 2000, the CIM began the preparatory work for that meeting.

The Permanent Secretariat and a working group in which the member states were represented, prepared the agenda for the meeting, and the preliminary draft “Inter-American Program on the Promotion of Women’s Rights and Gender Equity,” which, when it has been approved by the Executive Committee, will be presented to the Meeting of Ministers for approval and then to the thirtieth regular session of the OAS for adoption.

In fulfillment of resolution CIM/RES. 208 (XXIX-O/98), “The Inter-American Commission of Women and Civil Society,” a database was created containing information provided by the principal delegates on nongovernmental organizations involved in issues of interest to the CIM in each member state. The database will enable ongoing contacts to be established for the exchange of information and successful experiences and will facilitate decision-making on the possible participation of some NGOs in CIM meetings. To date, some 900 entries have been made in the database.

Work has continued on the organization and classification of the bibliographic material in CIM’s Specialized Library on Women. A total of 450 bibliographic entries have been made in the PROCITE information system, including all documents published by the CIM, other important materials, and periodicals.

To facilitate access to information on its activities, the CIM restructured its Web page. With the support of the Department of Management Systems and Information Technology, its design was modified and updated information and many documents were included. The site can be accessed via the OAS website: <http://www.oas.org> or directly at <http://www.oas.org/cim>. The two first issues of the new CIM newsletter, “Mujer Interamericana” were also published in English. All issues of the newsletter may be consulted via the website in English and Spanish.

The Executive Secretary will continue efforts to raise the profile of the Commission and establish cooperative relations. The CIM was invited to participate as the main speaker at the gala event for the 26th anniversary of *Mujeres Latinas en Acción “Uniendo,”* held in Chicago, Illinois. It also made the presentation “The Status of Women in the Americas” at the international symposium of the U.S. Hispanic Leadership Institute, also in Chicago. For purposes of collaboration and funding, it met with members of the Board of Directors of the *Instituto Tecnológico de Estudios Mayores* in Monterrey, Mexico. It participated in the Women Leadership Breakfast in the context of the Americas Business Forum, held in Toronto, Canada, and made presentations on CIM activities at the Pan American round table and the National Hispana Leadership Institute in Washington, D.C.

It also obtained USAID funding for the project “Violence against Women/Regional Analysis: Including a Review of the Implementation of the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women” and from the Permanent Mission of the United States to the OAS for the project “The Study of the Trafficking of Women and Children for Sexual Exploitation in the Americas.” These projects are described in Sections IV.A.2a and IV.A.2b of this report.

B. Seed Fund

The Seed Fund of the CIM was established in 1991 to provide the member states with a source of funding to support activities for the advancement of women in the priority areas established in the CIM Strategic Plan of Action and in the Program Guidelines approved by the Assembly of Delegates. Its funds are distributed in the first year of each biennium and project proposals may be of a regional or a national character.

For the 1998-2000 biennium, Seed Fund resources were assigned to the following nine (9) projects presented by the principal delegates:

Antigua and Barbuda (national): “The quality of life of young parents in Antigua and Barbuda.” US\$5,000. The objective is to implement counseling services and job training programs for young parents, and to reform education policy to enable teenage mothers to return to school and continue their education after they have given birth.

Argentina (regional): “Political Training in Democracy for Women in MERCOSUR countries.” US\$30,000. A program of the MERCOSUR Women’s Forum designed to develop the maximum leadership potential of women politicians in MERCOSUR countries at the national and provincial levels, and encourage involvement by women politicians.

Barbados (national): “Safe Shelter and Control and Elimination of Violence against Women in Barbados.” US\$5,000. The objectives are: to establish a Safe Shelter Fund to provide sheltered accommodation for battered women and children; to provide professional counseling for victims and abusers and training in conflict resolution for victims and abusers, police, teachers, priests/pastors, doctors and nurses; and to educate the public on the issues and the ways of helping, dealing with, and reducing violence against women.

Colombia (national): “Trans-generational Equity: Girls of the Coffee-Growing Region.” US\$15,000. This objective of this project is to formulate a plan of action to promote policies, programs, and projects for the comprehensive development of girls aged 12 to 17 in selected municipalities.

Ecuador (national): “Vocational Training Project for Women in Poor Urban Areas of Quito.” US\$15,000. The project’s objective is to provide vocational training to women, particularly adolescents, single mothers, and women in marginalized sectors, in productive economic activities that enable them to enter the economy of community-based business by setting up microenterprises.

Mexico (national): “Telephone Assistance Program for Women.” US\$10,000. This program will serve Mexico’s female population by providing a telephone help-line for women victims of violence. Information will be provided on sources of immediate care, detection, and prevention and referrals made to appropriate care providers in cases of all types of violence against women. Assistance will be provided on health, women’s rights, and psychological counseling.

Nicaragua (national): “Integration of Women Affected by Hurricane Mitch into Economic and Social Development.” US\$15,000. The purpose of the project is to enable Nicaraguan women affected by Hurricane Mitch to attain a financial standing that will allow them to obtain credit in future and enable them to break out of the extreme poverty visited upon them by this natural disaster.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines (national): “Poverty Alleviation through Animal/Vegetable Production.” US\$15,000. This project’s objective is to offer 100 rural unemployed women an opportunity to attend workshops to develop their self-esteem and leadership capacity, and raise awareness of their human rights and gender issues.

Uruguay (regional): “Sub-regional strategic development to implement CIM’s priority lines of action and incorporate women fully into 21st century society.” US\$20,250. The overall objective of this project is to strengthen the countries’ internal processes for enhancing women’s status in political, and public life, and in business.

C. Summit of the Americas – Follow-up

The Government of Nicaragua, the coordinating country on the topic of women’s issues for the Summit of the Americas, requested technical assistance from the CIM to prepare, in conjunction with the co-coordinating countries, the system to monitor implementation of that topic in all countries of the Americas. The CIM Permanent Secretariat coordinated the preparation of the draft follow-up document presented by the Government of Nicaragua to the November 1999 meeting of the Summit Implementation Review Group (SIRG).

The document contains six chapters: strengthening national mechanisms for gender equity; equal legal rights for women; status of women in the Americas; women’s health policy; eradication of poverty and discrimination; and problems detected in fulfilling the mandates and suggestions for overcoming them.

The CIM continues to provide support to the member states in the preparatory work for the Summit, and, for that purpose, will prepare an information document on hemispheric activities carried out as follow-up on the topic of women’s issues, with special reference to the strengthening and modernization of the CIM, strengthening of national mechanisms, and the system of indicators.

V. RELATIONS WITH OTHER REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND AGENCIES

A. The Inter-American System

1. Within the OAS

Permanent Council. The Executive Secretariat attended the meeting of the Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Affairs (CAAP) that discussed the request for additional funds to hold the “Meeting of Ministers or Authorities at the Highest Level Responsible for Policies Affecting Women in the Member States,” convened for April 2000. It also attended meetings of the Special Joint Working Group of the Permanent Council and the Inter-American Council for Integral

Development on Strengthening and Modernization of the OAS. That group, chaired by Ambassador Antonio Mercader, Permanent Representative of Uruguay, held discussions on civil society, a topic of great importance to the CIM, which has received many specific mandates of the Assembly of Delegates to strengthen relations with civil society organizations.

Office of Summit Follow-up. In fulfillment of a mandate of the Permanent Council, in April 1999, a report was presented to the Office of Summit Follow-up on the civil society organizations with which the CIM maintains relations. The information was included in a document presented by the Secretary General to the Permanent Council for purposes of discussion on accreditation or other type of recognition of these organizations having formal or informal relations with the OAS. The Executive Secretariat also made a presentation at the October 1999 meeting of the Special Committee on Inter-American Summits Management on activities carried out by the CIM in fulfillment of the mandates of the Summits of the Americas within the OAS framework.

Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs. The Principal Delegate of Colombia, Dr. Elsa Gladys Cifuentes Aranzazu, represented the CIM at the Meeting of Government Experts on the Prevention of and War on Crime, organized by the Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs, held in Medellín, Colombia, on April 19 and 20, 1999. In her presentation, Dr. Cifuentes mentioned the fact that most victims of intrafamily violence and domestic violence are women, and requested that statistics included in reports prepared on the topic be broken down by gender. This request was included in the recommendations arising from the meeting.

2. Other inter-American entities

In fulfillment of the mandates of the OAS General Assembly and the Assembly of Delegates referring to promotion of the gender perspective at regional and international level, the CIM is carrying out cooperation activities with various entities of the inter-American system. Invitations have been extended to the Inter-American Development Bank, the Pan American Health Organization, and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture to participate in the regular meetings of the Executive Committee to further the exchange of information and explore joint initiatives.

Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). The CIM cooperates closely with the IDB, in particular in follow-up to the Program for the Support of Women's Leadership and Representation (PROLEAD), which the CIM co-sponsors. (See Section IV. A.1.c of this report).

Pan American Health Organization (PAHO). The CIM and PAHO have maintained continuous collaborative relations. The project "Health Profiles and Quality of Life from a Gender Perspective," described in Section IV.A.3 of this report, was completed this year. The CIM is also one of the co-sponsors of the Conference on Women, Violence, and Health, organized by PAHO, to be held in Canada, in November 2000.

Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA). The CIM and the IICA are participating jointly in execution of the project on the integration of rural women coordinated by IICA. The CIM Executive Secretariat made a presentation on CIM activities to the Executive Committee of IICA in San José, Costa Rica, in July 1999.

Inter-American Institute on Human Rights (IHR). CIM Vice President, Hon. Indranie Chandarpal, represented the CIM on the course on enhancing the promotion and international protection of women's rights, organized by the IHR. She made a presentation on the history of the CIM, its achievements, and its priority activities for 1999-2000.

B. The United Nations system

The CIM maintains close relations with United Nations specialized agencies. It is a co-participant with UNDP, UNIFEM, and UNFPA in the campaign against violence against women and to promote human rights. An invitation has been extended to these agencies and ECLAC to participate in the regular meetings of the Executive Committee to further their exchange of information and mutual collaboration.

The Executive Secretariat attended the forty-third meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), held from February 28 to March 4, 1999, in New York, and was present at the High-Level Consultation on Rural Women and Information Technology, organized by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) in Rome, from October 4 – 6, 1999.

The CIM also participated in the twenty-eighth and twenty-ninth meetings of the Executive Committee of the Regional Conference on Integration of Women in Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Curaçao, Netherlands Antilles, June 2 – 4, 1999, and in Santiago, Chile, July 11 - 12, 1999, respectively, and in the eighth meeting of specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system on the advancement of women in Latin America and the Caribbean, held on November 9 and 10, 1999.

The CIM and ILANUD completed a joint project to train professors in Central American law and judicial schools in the application of the gender perspective in judicial proceedings, described in section IV.A.4.b of this report. ILANUD is currently collaborating in the project "Violence against Women/Regional Analysis: Including a Review of the Implementation of the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Eradication, and Punishment of Violence against Women." (See Section IV.A.2.a of this report).

C. Other regional entities and organizations

The Ninth Conference of Wives of Heads of State and Government. The CIM Executive Secretary took part in this meeting, held in Canada, in October 1999 and also attended the preparatory meeting, held in July.

European Union. In fulfillment of resolution CIM/RES. 197/98, "Alliances for the Globalization of Equity," initial contact was made with the European Union's Directorate of Relations with Latin America, Asia, and the Mediterranean, the Directorate General on External Relations with Africa and the Caribbean, and the Human Rights and Democratization Unit, all of which are headquartered in Brussels, to initiate an exchange of information and explore the possibility of undertaking joint activities.

D. Nongovernmental organizations

International Women's Forum (IWF). The IWF, in Washington, D.C., awarded the CIM President the recognition "Women Who Make a Difference," given to women leaders whose vision, commitment, and contributions have opened doors and improved women's prospects.

Inter-American dialogue. The CIM maintains close relations of exchange with this nongovernmental organization. The Executive Secretariat attended the technical meeting of the Women's Leadership Conference of the Americas, held in Washington, D.C., on April 15 and 16, 1999.

VI. FINANCIAL SITUATION

The CIM once again reports a shortage of human and material resources allocated to it to fulfill its objectives, activities, and mandates as a permanent inter-American specialized agency.

This situation has not improved, despite the recommendations adopted by the twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth regular sessions of the OAS General Assembly. In this regard, it is important to refer to resolutions AG/RES. 1451 (XXVII-O/97) and AG/RES. 1586 (XXVIII-O/98), entitled "Observations and Recommendations on the Annual Reports of the Organs, Agencies, and Entities of the Organization" which, in operative paragraphs 4 and 6, respectively, instruct the General Secretariat to make every effort to improve the financial status of the Inter-American Commission of Women, so that it will be better equipped to carry out its essential activities.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

The CIM requests the Permanent Council to submit the following recommendations to the General Assembly, through the appropriate channels, so that they may be included in draft resolutions on the topics indicated below:

The Secretary General is urged to make every effort to:

- Improve the financial status of the Inter-American Commission of Women, pursuant to operative paragraph 4 of resolution AG/RES. 1451 (XXVII-O/97) and operative paragraph 6 of resolution AG/RES. 1586 (XXVIII-O/98), "Observations and recommendations on the Annual Reports of the Organs, Agencies, and Entities of the Organization."
- Fulfill resolution AG/RES. 1627 (XXIX-O/99), "Appointment of Women to Senior Management Positions at the OAS."

The CIM proposes to present to the Preparatory Committee of the OAS General Assembly a draft resolution, together with the report of the "Meeting of Ministers or Authorities at the Highest-Level Responsible for Policies Affecting Women in the Member States," to be held on April 27 and 28, 2000.