

Biennial Work Program of the CIM Program Guidelines 2000-2002

I. INTRODUCTION

Since the 1998-2000 biennium has been highly productive in terms of initiatives on women's issues, the Biennial Work Program of the CIM for 2000 - 2002 will include proposals for their implementation. It will take into account areas of common interest and the realistic possibilities for the implementation of these initiatives.

In April 2000, an event of singular importance for the CIM was held: the First Meeting of Ministers or Highest-Ranking Authorities Responsible for the Advancement of Women in the Member States. This meeting was convened by the OAS General Assembly [AG/RES. 1625 (XXIX-O/99)] and coordinated by the CIM. The Inter-American Program on the Promotion of Women's Human Rights and Gender Equity and Equality was adopted at that meeting, forwarded to the OAS General Assembly for its consideration, and adopted by it through resolution AG/RES. 1732 (XXX-O/00). The Program clearly identifies an action agenda for the governments, for the OAS, and for the CIM in order to incorporate the gender perspective in their programs and initiatives. In addition, the Meeting of Ministers approved innovative proposals for the inclusion of a gender perspective in both the Declaration of Principles and the Plan of Action of the Third Summit of the Americas. They also called for a specific section on women's issues within democracy and human rights.

These initiatives were favorably received by the OAS General Assembly at its regular session held in 2000, which adopted resolution AG/RES. 1741 (XXX-O/00), "Integrating a Gender Perspective in the Summits of the Americas." That resolution also encourages the governments to consider the recommendations of the CIM in preparing the Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action of the Third Summit of the Americas. It also requests that the CIM prepare recommendations and provide technical support for this purpose.

In addition, the Strategic Plan of Action of the CIM, adopted in 1994 by the Assembly of Delegates of the CIM and presented in 1995 to the United Nations' Fourth World Conference on Women, proposed the development of strategies to ensure and strengthen the role of women until 2000. The Plan recognizes the importance of the 10 issues it discusses, and assigns priorities for the five-year plan to women's participation in power and decision-making structures, education, elimination of violence, and eradication of poverty. In 2000, the Strategic Plan of Action still has relevancy and was so understood by the Thirtieth Assembly of Delegates of the CIM, which considered the need for it to remain in effect until 2005 by assigning the CIM the mandate of continuing to implement the strategies proposed therein over the next five years.

The commitments undertaken in the aforementioned plans and programs, and others adopted in preceding biennia, have served as the basis for planning CIM activities and will guide its programming for the next biennium.

II. GENERAL CRITERIA

The Plans of Action adopted by the CIM (the 1994 Strategic Plan of Action and the 1998 Plan of Action on Women's Participation in Power and Decision-making Structures),

the Inter-American Program on the Promotion of Women's Human Rights and Gender Equity and Equality of 2000, and the Plans of Action adopted by the Summits of the Americas (1994 and 1998) suggest common priority areas. In light of existing human and financial resources available to the CIM, these programs are to serve as the driving force for the work program for the 2000 – 2002 biennium.

The CIM will continue to direct its efforts toward tasks of regional scope within the priority areas identified. In order to obtain results with the greatest potential for impact on society, it will concentrate on those efforts, which may have a multiplier effect. It will also continue to strengthen its relations with other agencies of the inter-American system, organs and organizations of the OAS, and civil society organizations.

The new officers of the CIM will have to evaluate proposals realistically so as to avoid creating false expectations if additional financial and external resources are not obtained. In view of the fact that budgetary appropriations from the Organization's Regular Fund have been steadily declining, the CIM's financial resources for the next biennium are limited, and therefore an attempt will be made to ensure that its objectives are met by identifying external resources, as has been done during this biennium.

The Permanent Secretariat will continue to provide technical support from headquarters to the Principal Delegates to further the activities of the member states, and will continue distribution of the Seed Fund, which will give preference to fulfillment of the objectives established in the Inter-American Program. It will assist in formulating and developing projects and in identifying external sources of funding.

III. PRIORITIES FOR THE BIENNIUM

1. The Inter-American Program for the Promotion of Women's Human Rights and Gender Equity and Equality – measures for action

With the governments: the CIM, in collaboration with the Principal Delegates, will direct its available resources, such as the Seed Fund and funds it may obtain from external sources, toward the development of activities in the member states of regional scope having multiplier effects, so as to promote the incorporation of the gender perspective in their programs and activities and implement the Inter-American Program on the Promotion of Women's Human Rights and Gender Equity and Equality.

With the OAS: In fulfillment of the Program's general objectives "to systematically integrate a gender perspective in all organs, organizations, and entities of the inter-American system," the CIM, in its capacity as the specialized women's organization, will collaborate with the General Secretariat to create an awareness of the need to incorporate a gender perspective in all of its activities and/or programs. It will also develop procedures to be implemented towards this end.

Strengthening of the CIM: The Inter-American Program recommends that the governments (paragraph 1.7) strengthen the CIM as the principal hemispheric policy-generating forum for advancement of women's rights and gender equality. Among actions to be taken by the OAS General Secretariat (paragraph 2.1.5), it recommends the strengthening of the CIM Permanent Secretariat. Accordingly, enhancement of the Secretariat's technical, human, and financial resources will continue to be promoted so as to provide the Secretariat with the necessary means to promote pertinent initiatives designed to implement its objectives and follow-up on the Inter-American Program.

With civil society: In compliance with the mandate of the Twenty-ninth Assembly of Delegates (CIM/RES.208/98) and also included in the Inter-American Program, the CIM will continue the process of integrating civil society organizations into CIM activities and will encourage their accreditation by the OAS so as to promote their participation in the inter-American system. Toward that end, the process of identifying such organizations will be completed so that a database may be established and placed on the CIM Internet Web page, classified by region, country, topic, and sphere of action (regional, national, or local).

2. *Summit of the Americas – Canada 2001*

The CIM, in fulfillment of the mandate of the OAS General Assembly (AG.RES.1741/00), will present recommendations to the Summit Implementation Review Group (SIRG) on the incorporation of a gender perspective in the draft Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action of the Third Summit of the Americas, providing information and technical advisory services. It will also continue to provide support to the coordinating country and coordinators on women's issues for Summit follow-up and will collaborate with other international organizations on developing gender indicators.

3. *Strategic Plan of Action of the CIM – areas for priority action*

Education: Gender-sensitive education is a way to form new values and change attitudes. It is essential in guaranteeing the full exercise of women's rights with a view to including them at all levels of the political arena, allowing them to enter and remain in the labor market, and enhance their quality of life. In the education area, the CIM proposes developing activities that will produce and induce social and cultural changes, eliminate stereotypes regarding domestic and work roles, and create an awareness that men and women should share the tasks of public and private life. It will, in general, focus attention on women's education throughout their life cycles, with special attention to training programs for educationally disadvantaged groups, such as minorities, people living in rural areas, marginal urban groups, indigenous groups, and other ethnic groups.

Eradication of poverty and discrimination. The CIM will promote activities geared to women microentrepreneurs, and to women's access to technology and information. In this area, the CIM will promote projects designed to identify discriminatory laws still in force in the member states so as to encourage their review and will endeavor to have such laws amended to incorporate the gender perspective to ensure, inter alia, women's access to land, financial services, and credit programs. Highest priority will be given to the needs of rural and indigenous women.

Human Rights and the elimination of violence against women

Violence against women. For the CIM, the adoption of the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women, "Convention of Belém do Pará," marked the start of a process aimed at achieving its universal signature and ratification, and eradication of violence in the Hemisphere. The process of ratifying the Convention has advanced and is very close to achieving its final objective, as 29 countries have already ratified it. Substantial progress has been achieved in this area, but levels of violence against women are still high enough in the Hemisphere to justify and call for the continuing assignment of priority attention to this topic.

The CIM has developed a project making it possible to pinpoint the scope of this problem in the Hemisphere, the impact of the Convention since its adoption five years ago, measures developed in the countries, the scope and impact of national programs, and the basis of which strategies designed to prevent, punish, and eradicate violence against women will be promoted. As part of the project, the CIM proposes holding meetings in all subregions of the Hemisphere to analyze the project's results and make recommendations for the governments. It will also continue to promote the compiling of statistics on this subject, which will be an additional a tool in identifying the scope of the problem and facilitating the design of such strategies as may be necessary to solve it.

Trafficking of women and children for sexual exploitation in the Americas. The CIM is developing a project in this area whose aim is to identify the scope of this problem and make recommendations to combat it. Pilot research, conducted in nine countries, will be completed within a year. The results of the research will be presented to the governments of the member states, along with recommendations for action.

The CIM will continue working with the Special Rapporteur on Women's Rights of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), who has expressed her wish to engage in ongoing information exchanges with the CIM and establish a close working relationship by supporting the CIM in the area of violence against women and trafficking of women and children.

Women's participation in power and decision-making structures. With the contribution of experts from throughout the Hemisphere, regional diagnoses and proposals were drawn up, which formed the basis for the CIM Plan of Action on Women's Participation in Power and Decision-Making Structures, with specific strategies for the CIM. As many measures as possible will be implemented during the next biennium in fulfillment of the Plan and the mandate assigned in this area in the Inter-American Program on the Promotion of Women's Human Rights and Gender Equality and Equity.