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INTER-AMERICAN GUIDELINES ON GENDER EQUALITY FOR THE GOOD OF HUMANITY (Draft)

1. ¿ WHY THESE INTER-AMERICAN GUIDELINES ON GENDER EQUALITY FOR THE GOOD OF HUMANITY?

Gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the world is an objective of 193 countries, which approved it as the fifth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development¹ in 2015. All the Member States of the General Assembly of the United Nations decided that this Goal should be taken into account and made effective when working on each of the SDGs. This expresses how much progress has been made on the rights of women in the last 40 years. Likewise, Latin America and the Caribbean have built the Montevideo Strategy,² which contributes to making gender equality a cross-cutting component of all the SDGs in our region. In fact, the proposal of both documents is framed by international and regional human rights instruments, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Belem do Pará Convention.

The gender equality agenda is now a central part of the good in the world. Therefore, those who want to maintain an order of masculine supremacy, a discriminatory sexual division of labor and the subordination of women have developed new forms of attack. They do so however not from a central position in international or regional institutions, but from the margins, albeit often with great political, economic and religious, or, more broadly, cultural powers that try to prevent all human beings from having rights and exercising them.

Every advance in women's rights advocated by the feminist and broader women's movement, by women's national machineries as well as by intergovernmental institutions, such as the CIM beginning with the struggles for the right to vote, and later by ECLAC and UN Women, as well as human rights treaty bodies, has been achieved by having to overcome discourses that justify discrimination, or the sexual division of labor, or the exclusion of women from public and political power.

1. <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-agenda/>

2. <https://conferenciamujer.cepal.org/en/documents/montevideo-strategy-implementation-regional-gender-agenda-within-sustainable-development>

In recent years, there has been a change in both the arguments and the way in which they are presented. Formally, anti-rights sectors have learned to participate in international forums and develop new discourses. One of them attacks *gender*; the main category of analysis and transformation towards equality, which has shown significant explanatory capacity for part of the social reality, in all the countries of the world, mainly through its axes of analysis: public-private and productive-reproductive.

This discourse takes different forms and has different messengers,³ whose relevance has been considered in the process of developing these guidelines. However, it must be said that it has been linked to mainly Christian and evangelical fundamentalist religious manifestations, and gained special strength in countries like Brazil, Colombia, Paraguay, Panama and Peru, among others. Even though in all the countries of the region there are moves to disqualify such an important instrument for the achievement of equality, in some countries the impact of this discourse is less, as for example in Argentina.

Although they are attacks on the category “gender” as an explanation of discrimination against women and as a social construction of the feminine and masculine, it is not a scientific or legal debate but a political one. One of the modalities is the distortion of analyses and proposals for equality. In themselves, they also constitute attacks on the idea of universal, indivisible and inalienable human rights.

Sexual rights and reproductive rights are not only attacked but addressed as bad and undesirable, which invalidates other rights. For example, addressing gender-based violence is said to be a proposal, or project, or policy that seeks to legalize same-sex marriage. But when asked in which article this is addressed, the response is not to point it out, but rather continue that it will also lead to abortion of pregnancies of more than 6 months’ gestation, etc.

One part of this discourse is correct, when they say that gender equality tries to change fundamental structures of the family - in the sense that the proposal of equality includes the transformation of the sexual division of labor and the change of roles. Likewise, there is a consensus in the human rights treaty bodies of both the UN and the inter-American system to decriminalize abortion by cause.⁴ This leads to attacks on gender equality being linked to the disqualification of human rights as *only protecting offenders*, regardless of the efforts of women to achieve non-impunity for the multiple forms of violence against them.

Delegates to the CIM have expressed their concern in this regard and considered it necessary to have a concept and a strategy to help them respond in a timely and adequate way. It should be noted that the Committee of Experts of the Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention

3. See for example:

- “Reservations and interpretative statements on the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action” (Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 1995, Chapter V, paragraphs 4 to 34, p. 154 to 175), available at: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/Beijing%20full%20report%20E.pdf>
- Reservations to resolution AG/RES. 2908 (XLVII-O/17) “Promtion and protection of human rights,” in particular section xii “Human rights, sexual orientation, and gender identity and expression” in “Declarations and resolutions approved by the General Assembly” (AG/doc.5606/17 corr. 1), available at: <http://www.oas.org/en/council/AG/ResDec/Default.asp?q=&e=&evento=>

4. See for example:

- MESECVI (2012). *Second Hemispheric Report on the Implementation of the Belém do Pará Convention*. Recommendations 10 “Legalize interruption of pregnancy on therapeutic grounds, that is to say, to save the life of the mother or avoid serious or permanent injury to her physical and mental health. Implement the services in hospitals and health centers and establish care protocols or guidelines to guarantee women’s access to such procedures” and 11 “Legalize the interruption of pregnancy caused by rape. Implement that service in hospitals and health centers and establish care protocols or guidelines to guarantee women’s access to such procedures” of the Committee of Experts of the Follow-Up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention (MESECVI) <http://www.oas.org/en/mesecvi/docs/MESECVI-SegundoInformeHemisferico-EN.pdf>
- MESECVI (2016). *Hemispheric Report on Sexual Violence and Child Pregnancy in the States Party to the Belém do Pará Convention*. Recommendation 1 “Eliminate unsafe abortion, ensuring normatively that all pregnancies in girls are considered high risk and allowing legal termination of pregnancy, a process that should be accompanied by the necessary measures to ensure the overall health of girls, as well as their sexual and reproductive health and their rights to life, personal integrity, intimacy, non-discrimination and to live free from violence” of the Committee of Experts of the Follow-Up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention (MESECVI), <http://www.oas.org/en/mesecvi/docs/MESECVI-EmbarazoInfantil-EN.pdf>

(MESECVI) has expressed the same concern at its meetings, considering that in the end attacks on women's equal rights weaken democratic states and especially one of its fundamental components, the secularism of the modern state, which guarantees freedom of worship and the non-confessional nature of public institutions. In this context, the Committee agreed at its last meeting (October 2016) "...take note of the dialogue held between the Committee and the civil society and promote, in connection with the Third Multilateral Evaluation Round, the implementation of the Convention of Belém do Pará with regard to the following issues: [...] Prevention of Violence against Women; Fundamentalisms and the Secular State" (Agreement 10, document MESECVI/CEVI/doc.237/16.rev1).

That is why these Inter-American Guidelines on Gender Equality for the Good of Humanity must be applied.

2. FRAMEWORK OF THE GUIDELINES

These guidelines are framed in human rights instruments, both of the Inter-American System for the Protection of Human Rights and the United Nations System, such as the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (Belém do Pará Convention, 1994) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 1979). Specifically, they are based on articles 6 and 8 b) of the Belém do Pará Convention and article 5 a) of CEDAW:

Art. 6, Belém do Pará Convention

"The right of every woman to be free from violence includes, among others:

- a. The right of women to be free from all forms of discrimination, and
- b. The right of women to be valued and educated free of stereotyped patterns of behavior and social and cultural practices based on concepts of inferiority or subordination."

Art. 8, paragraph b , Belém do Pará Convention

"The States Parties agree to undertake progressively specific measures, including programs: [...] to modify social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, including the development of formal and informal educational programs appropriate to every level of the educational process, to counteract prejudices, customs and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or superiority of either of the sexes or on the stereotyped roles for men and women which legitimize or exacerbate violence against women."

Art. 5, paragraph a, CEDAW

"States Parties shall take all appropriate measures:

- a. To modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women;"

In other words, the guidelines do not initiate a process, but rather constitute a way to comply with mandatory human rights treaties for the countries of the region. In addition, they follow up on public policy commitments to which the countries that are part of the CIM have signed on, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015, United Nations) and the Montevideo Strategy for the Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda (2016, XIII Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean):

United Nations 2030 Agenda:

- ODS 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
ODS 17: Revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

Montevideo Strategy (EM):

Pillar 6: Communication: access to information and cultural change

Pillar 9: Information systems: transforming data into information, information into knowledge and knowledge into political decisions

3. OBJECTIVE OF THE GUIDELINES

To have a set inter-American guidelines to strengthen the positioning of gender equality for the good of humanity; thereby effectively, but not necessarily directly, addressing the discourse against gender equality and women's rights.

4. DEVELOPMENT OF THE GUIDELINES

In follow-up to the CIM 2017 Work Plan, adopted by the CIM Executive Committee 2016-2019, a working session was held in May 2017 between the staff of the Executive Secretariat of the CIM and Line Bareiro, from which a set of guidelines emerged for the preparation of this document, including the steps that needed to be taken and the basic information to be collected. The central priority of this exercise was to contact States, through the National Machineries for the Advancement of Women (NMAWs) and request specific information on the particular context of each country.

In this sense, a form was developed that allowed for a brief analysis in each country of the main discourses against gender equality, who emits them, what are their effects and what resources are available to respond effectively.

The form was sent to all CIM Delegates in June 2017. In the context of the agreement of the Committee of Experts of the MESECVI, cited above, the form was also sent to them and finally, to ten selected regional networks:

- From the Principal Delegates, a reply was received from the following Governments: Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Paraguay, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela;
- From the MESECVI Experts, from the following countries: Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Paraguay and the Dominican Republic; and
- Civil society, from the following networks: The Latin American and Caribbean Network of Trans Persons (RedLACTrans) and the Latin American and Caribbean Network of Women Sex Workers (RedTraSex).

The information compiled was processed and analyzed and the first draft of the document was prepared and discussed at a Meeting of Experts on August 21st 2017. This meeting brought together the staff of the Executive Secretariat of the CIM with Line Bareiro, Catherine Pognat (Section Chief, Relations with Civil Society, OAS), Liz Meléndez (Executive Director of the "Flora Tristán" Peruvian Woman's Center) and Nielsen Pérez (Legislative Advisor to the Legislative Assembly of Costa Rica).

The first draft was finalized and sent to the CIM Delegates for consideration at the Second Regular Session of the CIM Executive Committee 2016-2019, held in Lima on September 8th 2017.

5. DISCOURSES AGAINST WOMEN'S EQUALITY

This section synthesizes the lessons learned from the mapping carried out by the CIM. The complete results of this mapping are presented in Annex 1.

In general terms, in Latin America and the Caribbean, the discourse against women's equality must be analyzed in terms of various discourses that move from the defense of the patriarchal social, political and economic order to the general disqualification of both gender as an analytical category and the rights conquered by women and their exercise, as well as the protection that can be offered by States.

A strong facet of this discourse, present in others we will point out, is the one that openly defends the maintenance of the traditional roles of women and men in families, i.e. the sexual division of labor in the private sphere, and also in the public sphere as a place where women shouldn't be, and the continuation of their limited participation in decision-making. One important reflection of this discourse that worries those working for gender equality is the reproduction of patriarchal cultural patterns. Thus, in media and publicity, women who suffered violence are re-victimized and their image continues to be used as an object, as well as a social exacerbation of motherhood, as a good but also as the role and the principal, if not the only, identity of women. In many cases this speech is wrapped in scientific clothing. This type of speech underpins the obstetric violence that verbally punishes women who abort, unmarried mothers and even indigenous women accused of a crime.

Gender as an analytical category thus becomes identified with evil, linked to a wide variety of topics but built around the idea of a complex and intangible gender ideology, concealed in bills and peace agreements, destructive of society, created to put an end to the family and to promote debauchery, homosexuality and abortion. At the same time there are more traditional disqualifications of the term gender as a "women's issue" or something that is added to meet requirements for some institutions. In a similar way, human rights are attacked generally, including the belief that they lead to the protection of criminals and the abandonment of victims.

More concrete is the discourse against certain rights and against the three autonomies of women, as set out in the Montevideo Strategy: physical, economic and in decision-making. Thus the rights conquered by women, including affirmative actions, are presented as privileges and are very visible in family law where the payment of child support, school fees, or imprisonment for breach of duty to provide food are discredited in different ways.

In terms of physical autonomy, it appears as the central nucleus of the attacks, especially with regard to sexual rights, reproductive rights and the right to a life free from violence. In many cases the discourse is a religious one that stereotypes women and determines what is natural or decided by God and what is unnatural or a sin. This discourse promotes the fear and guilt of women. The arguments against reproductive rights range from a distortion of the consequences of contraceptive use to the defense of the absolute criminalization of voluntary termination of pregnancy. The disqualification of a life free from violence leads to justifications for gender-based violence, turning victims into victimizers and covering up multiple forms of sexual abuse against girls, boys, adolescents and even rape of women, leaving the perpetrators in relative or total impunity.

In the case of economic autonomy, it appears as a cause of social decomposition and that female employment results in the abandonment of their sons and daughters, with the consequent involvement of these sons and daughters in various types of criminality. In the case of autonomy in decision-making, there are strong disqualifications and obstacles to parity laws and in some cases quotas.

It has been possible to identify direct attacks on public officials who defend women's rights and sexual and gender diversity, also reaching institutional disqualifications trying to end the National Machinery for Women (NMWs) and creating Ministries of the Family. Special attention has been given to public policies mainly in primary and secondary education, in opposition to sex education, which violates children and adolescents who cannot defend themselves against sexual abuse of relatives, teachers and priests.

The discourse disqualifies gender equality by equating any proposal marriage equality and abortion as a result of debauchery. But it is also a discourse of maintaining laws with the aim or result of gender discrimination.

In the mapping, several churches, especially Catholic and non-traditional evangelicals, have been cited as the main emitters of the disqualifying discourse on gender equality; not only the hierarchy but also lay organizations. This anti-rights discourse also appears in the press and through professionals. Among the organizations are those who claim to defend the family with different denominations but

also others that in recent times have adopted the names of scientific or advocacy groups. Finally, a complex appearance in social networks must be noted even through false profiles.

Its effects, both in society and in the State, are multiple because it leads to a deepening and legitimization of *machismo* and misogyny and reinforces discrimination and a culture of intolerance, which goes against democratic coexistence. It also influences decision making in the State and in social organizations, leading to confusion and polarization. In at least eight countries, laws have been passed that are contrary to previous advances, but there is also a failure to adopt laws that favor women's equality and non-discrimination. There are also obstacles to the application of laws, to their proper regulation or to their dissemination. Likewise, a deficit is identified in the approval and implementation of public policies, or the financing of policies once approved.

In general terms, those responsible for the National Machineries for the Advancement of Women (NMAWs) consider that they have the institutional capacity to respond to anti-rights discourses, and there is also a unanimous view that there are qualified human resources in each country that can provide adequate response to the attacks. These include international and / or regional organizations, civil organizations integrated by public servants and mechanisms that form part of the institutional fabric for equality. In all cases, civil society organizations, academia, some media and non-NGO civil society women, such as independent feminists, are particularly important.

Significant experience has been reported in institutional and communication campaigns, cellular applications, training and dissemination, publications and sports activities in favor of equality. A complete processing of the mapping that includes possible actions at both the national and regional levels is presented as an annex to these guidelines.

6. KEY CONCEPT

While it is possible to analyze much of the attacks as falsification, lies, distortion, global disqualification without foundation, etc. it would seem that the conceptual category most suited to its characteristics is that of *post-truth*. This concept is new although it alludes to phenomena that could have been present much earlier, for example in political propaganda.

In 2016, the Oxford English Dictionary designated "post-truth" as the word of the year - with the definition "relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief" (see: <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/word-of-the-year/word-of-the-year-2016>).

It is necessary to consider that the truth has been and is used to achieve different objectives, for example, when the invasion of Iraq was justified because the dictator of that country was going to pollute the world with chemical weapons that would affect millions of people, their emitters knew that there was no such possibility, but it served to achieve the legality and even partial legitimacy of the invasion. That is just one example, but it is currently one of the ways to carry out political propaganda, which possibly has a long history of using fear, or hopes, or resentment of the population to gain their support.

Even the Royal Spanish Academy (*Real Academia Española*, RAE), commonly opposed to the gender or language inclusive of the feminine, has already decided to incorporate the term in the dictionary, possibly because of other fields of political dispute and not in support of gender equality (see: <http://www.lanacion.com.ar/2046231-historia-del-termino-posverdad-desde-la-guerra-del-golfo-hasta-donald-trump>), although they have not yet published the definition in Spanish. In any case, the director of the RAE, Darío Villanueva said that "posverdad" [*post-truth*] means that "assertions are no longer based on objective facts, but appeal to the emotions, beliefs or wishes of the public." This notion can help to understand and also adequately respond to discourses that disqualify gender equality for the good of humanity.

In the face of significant advances in gender equality and the structural changes it has achieved and which it represents for the future in all spheres of life, but particularly in terms of the definition and functioning of “the family,” the post-truth of the gender ideology⁵ seeks to foster the fears and insecurities of certain sectors of society. It uses threats such as the "destruction of the family" or "sexual debauchery" to generate resistance and disqualify the idea of gender equality and those who promote it. Concrete examples of these discourses are given in Annex 1.

7. ACTORS OF THE GUIDELINES

Within the framework of article 8, paragraph i, of the Belém do Pará Convention, "...to foster international cooperation for the exchange of ideas and experiences and the execution of programs aimed at protecting women who are subjected to violence," as well as Sustainable Development Goal #17 "Revitalizing the Global Alliance for Sustainable Development," the implementation of these guidelines will pursue a close coordination between actors from different sectors and levels, seeking above all to generate a "rapid response" capacity to specific attacks on gender equality for the good of humanity.

As a priority, though not exclusively, the guidelines will mobilize:

- The Inter-American Commission of Women: Delegates (Leaders of the NMAWs) and Executive Secretariat;
- The Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention (MESECVI), in particular its Committee of Experts;
- Governments in the region - in particular and as a priority: Ministries of Education, Justice, Health, national communication bodies (Agency, Secretariat, Regulatory Commission, etc.);
- The feminist and broader women's movement in the region (national and regional level);
- International and regional organizations active in the region for gender equality (ECLAC, UN Women, UNFPA, UNICEF);
- Media / Journalists with a gender perspective;
- Parliamentarians with a gender perspective, inter-parliamentary networks and regional parliaments (PARLATINO, PARLACEN, etc.);
- Private sector (in particular advertising and communication agencies).

8. STRATEGIC AXES

8.1. Articulate and form alliances:

In a structurally unequal region in which social inequality and multiple forms of discrimination are naturalized, it is particularly important to expand the institutional and social fabric of mutual strengthening for the development and cultural advancement of gender equality for the good of humanity.

In that sense, within the framework of ODS 17, the aim is to bring to life a regional alliance to work jointly and even periodically, for gender equality and respond in multiple spaces to anti-women's rights discourses. These partnerships and alliances begin with work in the CIM itself, both the Delegates and the Secretariat and Experts of the MESECVI.

Civil society working for gender equality, and especially the feminist and broader women's movement, NMAWs, public institutions, agencies of the inter-American system, United Nations and regional integration systems, as well as international cooperation are fundamental

5. See for example ““Gender ideology” as a post-truth slogan” [“La "ideología de género" como slogan de la posverdad”] at: <http://www.elmostrador.cl/noticias/opinion/2017/07/30/la-ideologia-de-genero-como-slogan-de-la-posverdad/> or “Gender And Post-Truth” at: https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/gender-and-post-truth_us_58306ae9e4b0eaa5f14d454a

actors whose commitment to the guidelines is essential to the achievement of their objectives. Public policies and multiple forms of social work are essential means to the elimination of stereotypes and the strengthening of cultures of equality.

8.2. **Knowing and producing:**

This axis proposes the need to encourage the production of knowledge and symbolism with a gender perspective, necessary to promote equality and non-discrimination, as well as religious freedom and the strengthening of the secular state. Although a privileged field is the analysis of discourse, it is certainly essential to have good analysis of scenarios and actors or mentalities, and legal analysis, as well as information processing. As pointed out in Axis 9 of the Montevideo Strategy, data and information must be transformed into knowledge and creative arguments for the critique of post-modernity and the consideration of equality as a good.

This production should not be limited to the human sciences but should probably be expanded to include other fields of science, since from the beginning the gender category posed the question of how much culture and how much biology exists in the social construction of the masculine and feminine, which can contribute to understanding differences and changes, although in no way should this justify discrimination and inequality.

Symbolic production implies the encouragement of the arts for equality. Without a doubt, the visual arts, theater, film, music, literature and other symbolic expressions can contribute to the development of critical thinking and the promotion of equality and non-discrimination.

Both research and symbolic production must reach broad regional distribution.

8.3. **Informing, sharing and training:**

It is a question of finding languages that allow a better and wider dissemination of information, knowledge production, concepts, rights, possibilities, protection mechanisms, synthesis of gender equality as a good of humanity. Social media are fundamental in this work.

The information must be accessible, mainly through observatories. In that sense, the possibility of increasing existing lines or creating new observatories should be analyzed, for example, on post-truths and responses for equality and non-discrimination.

A field in which there is a great accumulation of capacities is precisely that of education and training. Much of the advancement of women in rights was made possible by their willingness to know more and make it possible in non-formal training. However, the importance of working at the different levels of formal education should not be ignored.

In summary, it is about developing local, national and regional proposals to strengthen the social perception of gender equality as a good.

9. FOLLOW-UP OF THE GUIDELINES

- i. Consideration of the first version of the guidelines by the CIM Delegates (during the Second Regular Session of the CIM Executive Committee 2016-2018, September 8th 2017)
- ii. Renewal of contact with States (Delegates and Experts of the MESECVI) that did not participate in the initial round of information gathering, in an effort to include their inputs

- iii. Identification by the Delegates of specific actions (plans?) for the implementation of these guidelines (analysis of context / national actors, programming of specific actions in the context of the strategic axes)
- iv. Presentation and discussion of guidelines within the OAS (IACHR, Secretariat for Access to Rights and Equity, Press Department) with a view to establishing alliances and concrete support actions
- v. Contact (face-to-face meeting?) with international organizations to validate the guidelines and establish alliances for their implementation
- vi. Presentation and discussion of the guidelines during the 14th Feminist Encounter of Latin America and the Caribbean (November 23rd to 25th 2017).
- vii. From the communication team of the CIM and with relevant partners (see list of actors previously), ground of some of the aforementioned strategic axes, particularly in the field of communication.
- viii. Within the OAS, contact with the personnel who manage the inter-American education processes to try to put the issue on the agenda of the ministerial process⁶
- ix. Presentation of the actions carried out at the national level, progress report of the President and the Executive Secretariat of the CIM and next steps during the Third Regular Session of the CIM Executive Committee (mid-February 2018, Washington, DC).

Tentative timeline of work

Actividad	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb
Consideration of the Guidelines by the Delegates of the CIM							
Increased participation and inputs of the other States / Experts of the MESECVI							
Analysis of context / actors at national level, programming of specific actions							
Contact with international organizations							
Feminist Encounter of Latin America and the Caribbean							
Final version of the strategy (virtual approval)							
Communication campaign development (CIM Secretariat)							
Follow-up Inter-American processes of Education							
Progress Report to the CIM Executive Committee (February 2018)							

6. Inter-American Committee on Education: <http://www.oas.org/en/sedi/dhdee/cie.asp>
 Inter-American Meetings of Ministers of Education: http://www.oas.org/en/sedi/dhdee/ministerial_meetings.asp

ANNEX 1: RESULTS OF THE MAPPING DEL MAPEO (AT AUGUST 28TH 2017)

1. CURRENT DISQUALIFICATIONS OF WOMEN'S EQUALITY

1.1. General overview of the discourse

A systematization of the responses to the mapping process, prepared by the CIM, is presented below. As can be seen, disqualification of gender equality transcends traditional arguments for the maintenance of the patriarchal order to encompass the disqualification of the exercise of conquered rights and the protection of women

Maintenance of the traditional gender order

It is identified that traditional roles in families are maintained in the countries of the region, and that women have little participation in decision-making in some countries, although in the region as a whole this has increased. It has also been pointed out that the prevalence of discrimination and violence against women continues. Not only is it maintained however, but there is a broad discourse for maintaining the sexual division of labor and patriarchal roles, which end up being discriminatory. It even seems to have increased a discourse about the importance of maintaining the social roles of women, both in the family and in society.

It is a matter of concern that the media and advertising reproduce patriarchal cultural patterns. For example, women who suffer or suffered violence are revictimized, their image is still used as an object that can be purchased, or is linked exclusively to their reproductive roles. In this sense, there is even a social exacerbation of motherhood. For example, the good thing is to breastfeed for a long time and even leave paid employment to take care of children. In the latter case it should be noted that although breastfeeding is a practice supported by inter-governmental organizations such as WHO, at the same time, its duration should not lead to a loss of rights or careers for women. This raises the additional point that in many cases, anti-rights discourse can also be based on scientific recommendations.

In public health services, the spread of obstetric violence has increased in recent times, especially in cases of abortion, as well as against unmarried young mothers. There was even a mention of the case of an indigenous mother, in preventive detention, who was kept shackled to the stretcher during delivery.

Attack on the gender category

Gender as a category, focus, or proposal for equality is identified with evil. This has occurred throughout the region in different circumstances and linked to a variety of issues. Even instead of recognizing it as a category that explains part of social relations, it is considered an "ideology" as a means of disqualifying it. Thus, for example, those who opposed the peace accords in Colombia used as an argument that gender ideology was hidden therein, in other cases in criticism of a public policy that includes gender, which is destructive of society. In other cases it was created to destroy the family or that it is a strategy of the rich countries to promote sexual promiscuity, "homosexuality" and abortion in our countries.

It is interesting that traditional disqualifications to the gender category persist, to a certain extent from lack of knowledge, such as gender is a word that is added to meet requirements for some institutions, or that it is a women's issue.

Anti-rights

Perhaps one of the most important elements to reverse is the disqualification of human rights, not only as protectors of criminals, which has been traditional, but as bearers of the evil gender ideology that confuses children and adolescents.

In this sense, it is important to see that the rights linked to the three autonomies set out in the Montevideo Strategy have been disqualified - physical autonomy, economic autonomy and autonomy in decision-making.

Anti-physical autonomy and related rights

In this field we find possibly the most-attacked nucleus: sexual rights, reproductive rights and the right to a life free of violence. But the physical autonomy of women is also discarded on the basis of religious arguments.

The discourse against sexual rights promotes fear and guilt in women and is lesbo- and homophobic or in broader terms it disqualifies non-discrimination and the equal rights of the LGBTI population. Examples range from impediments to changing data in the civil registry for transgender women, to extensive denial of rights.

The arguments against reproductive rights range from a great disinformation about the use of contraceptives to a strong pressure to maintain the absolute penalization of the voluntary termination of pregnancy in several countries of the region. The decriminalization of abortion for cause is rejected, with open activity by churches with great presence in organs of public powers, even in countries that declare themselves as non-confessional or secular. The same type of arguments that affect not only the public powers but also the media are intensified in processes of modification of criminal codes, in opposition to any extension of the grounds for abortion and trying to declare it a crime regardless of the woman's age, even if she is a child victim of rape, for example, preventing the implementation of regulations for therapeutic abortion, which is decriminalized in the legislation.

Anti-right to a life free of violence

The opposition to the fact that women can live free of violence is of particular importance for the CIM. It has been seen that even public servants who serve women victims of violence consider that they make false accusations to harm men, affecting their assets and their relationship with their children. In other cases it is a question of establishing that men face violence in similar proportions to women and there have been cases of a large number of false allegations of domestic violence in which women allegedly used violence against men.

Although sexual violence against girls and adolescents is considered a crime or offense, arguments have been developed justifying the behavior of the aggressors and promoting impunity. In some cases the abuse, rape and pregnancy of girls between 10 and 14 years old is alarming, without public health institutions reporting the situation if they become aware of these pregnancies, and considering it normal that these pregnancies are brought to term. Judgment of the life and conduct of women victims of violence is also recorded as frequent, transferring focus from the aggressor to the victim.

It is difficult to achieve progress towards nonviolence in the street and public spaces, as street harassment and touching are ridiculed, saying that we want to prohibit flirting, which is cultural. In cases of symbolic violence even the mechanisms find it difficult to find justice, assuming that this violence is even penalized. For example, in one country fences were placed that offered space for advertising, but with the caption "I am available," and implying that it was a woman. The mechanism made the complaint, got support from the prosecutor's office, but the judiciary said there was no symbolic violence.

There are also situations of justification of gender violence, with criticism of feminism and marches against violence. Even in relation to the violent death of women, prejudices develop that these women

belonged to organized gangs or that they were killed for links to drug trafficking, without conducting thorough investigation.

Lately and in connection with technologies, expressions have appeared that harm women, including new forms of revenge, for example at the end of a relationship a man may publish photos or intimate videos of women, and this is called *revenge porn*.

Anti-economic autonomy of women

While there has been only one response to attempts to prevent women's economic autonomy, it is likely that this type of case will also be registered in other countries. The discourse considers that the fact that women work and want to be equal to men has given rise to social decomposition in homes, because women do not care for their children.

Anti-autonomy in decision-making and the empowerment of women and girls

Even though 7 countries in the region have established 50% parity in the submission of candidacies with different levels of regulation, there is a rejection of women's political participation in the debate on parity in legislative lists. There has been a similar de-legitimization of the mechanisms for parity in decision-making positions, on the grounds that these should be decided on the basis of merits and capacity, rather than gender. Even in cases where parity has been denied, discrimination against men was referred to if parity, quotas or other specific reforms were approved to ensure equality in political representation.

Disqualification of the rights conquered by women

Logic similar to that noted above occurs in different fields of law such as family law. Thus, the idea has been raised that now the privileged are women, that the Judicial Branch takes away men's family rights; and that affirmative or positive actions for women constitute unjust favoritism.

Women who demand payment of alimony and school fees are stereotyped, with arguments that they have children in order to force their former partners to provide economic support, and it is argued that there are millionaire alimonies. There has even been evidence of the development of instruments to guide the decision-making of the judiciary on supposedly scientific grounds that do not consider the needs of minors.

Discourses have been registered that seek to discredit the imprisonment of alimony and child support debtors. For example, it is argued that men are massively imprisoned even though they owe amounts much lower than any others that would justify imprisonment.

Attack on public institutions and officials defending women's rights

People who defend and / or work in the defense of women's rights are stereotyped or prejudice is generated against them, including public figures such as Ministers in charge of the NMAWs or female officials. The conclusion is that the NMAWs should be closed and replaced by mechanisms to strengthen the family, as though this took only one form.

Disqualification is also directed against the United Nations, especially UNFPA. It has been disseminated that the demon reigns in the UN, international agencies and human rights, because what they seek is to confuse and cause parents to lose control over the family.

Anti-gender in education

There are cases of rejection of education with a gender perspective, which includes calls for fathers and mothers to combat the perverse gender ideology, since the education of children corresponds to nothing more than parents and guardians.

In other cases a rejection of sex education is expressed, arguing that gender ideology is sought in proposals and primers of sexual education for students of basic education.

Disqualification of gender equality

One way to disqualify gender equality is to conflate any proposal with marriage equality and abortion. Another is to state that it encourages debauchery.

Maintenance of laws with discriminatory intent or result

In several cases it is a matter of maintaining laws with discriminatory effect. For example, that marriage is exclusively between a man and a woman, or patrimonial regimes of marriage in which if one does not opt for another legal regime, the legal regime is a conjugal society in which man is an administrator and has the power to dispose of common goods, over women.

Ways to deal with attacks on gender equality (violence, sexual rights, reproductive rights, gender as an approach, perspective or equality): Normative progress, good public governance – in accordance with laws and human rights.

Disqualification of gender equality as an ideology (example of discourse)

“The next big disappointment: the failure of gender ideology.

Gender ideology will end in a disappointing collapse. To say this could seem very daring, especially when it appears an unbeatable advance in the civilized world, between the great countries of the West and also when in some developing nations like ours some minorities seem fascinated with the novel disorder. There is an arcane elitism in its defenders who presume to have discovered what, according to them, humanity was not able to decipher about itself in thousands of years of its own sexuality. In summary they express that things are not as they are naturally seen but that gender is subject to a construction of its own, alien to sex, whose limits are in the infinity of human fantasy as a great Lego toy of sexuality.”

1.2. Key emitters of the discourse

Several churches have been cited as the main emitters of disqualifying discourses on gender equality. In the case of the Catholic Church, it includes both the hierarchy, through homilies and communiques, as well as groups of lay Catholics and even referents of that church. The same thing is observed in evangelical churches that in some cases have come to have benches in some legislatures. The Islamic church has also been quoted in one case.

The emitters can be both authorities and the political opposition, which establishes alliances with the aforementioned churches, but also the media, which functions as a generator or sounding board for discourses against gender equality. This includes journalists, although other professionals also appear, such as health professionals and even personalities, men and women, who have gained prestige in some field.

In civil society, we the main emitters identified are so-called “Family Organizations,” with different denominations, but also companies that distribute propaganda, such as pharmacy chains. This becomes especially complex in the social networks, especially through false profiles.

1.3. Effect(s) of anti-gender discourse on society

The effects of this discourse on society clearly hinder substantive equality, since it deepens machismo and misogynies, reinforces discrimination and a culture of intolerance, which affects democratic coexistence. It also reinforces and perpetuates stereotypes and gender roles and hinders the exercise of women's rights.

It influences the decision-making of the State and social organizations and social debate itself, in such a way that violence against women continues to be normalized, it leads to a confusion of concepts and in some cases social polarization has been generated.

1.4. Effect (s) of anti-gender discourse on the State

In at least 8 countries, the approval of laws that are contrary to the progress made, the non-approval of laws favorable to equality and non-discrimination of women, or the elimination of the aspect of these laws that refer to gender equality have been noted. In several countries, it has been difficult to apply laws favorable to women and easy to ignore them.

There is a deficit in the incorporation of the gender perspective or approach in public policies, as an effect of disqualifying discourse, as well as a limitation of budgetary resources for approved policies and even development policies. An important field of contention is education, in which the teaching and distribution of pedagogical materials explaining gender and sexual and reproductive rights is prevented or hindered.

Religious values are placed above the rights and non-confessionality or secularism that are included in national legislation.

Finally, it leads to a low participation of women in various fields.

1.5. Institutional capacity for response

Of the OAS

Within the Executive Secretariat of the CIM, there are personnel trained in gender and human rights approaches and also in the area of communication. In recent years there has been greater emphasis on communication and dissemination, and the CIM has succeeded in establishing an extensive network of followers and partners.

In addition, the General Secretariat of the OAS has:

- The Executive Secretariat of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), which has its own communication and press unit and an extensive network of followers; and
- A Press Department with communication professionals reaching all Member States of the Organization.

Of the NMAWs

All countries responded positively, stating that they have personnel trained in gender and / or human rights, except the MESECVI Expert from Brazil, who states that "the Special Secretariat for Policies for Women (SPM) does not have access to public resources and international cooperation support for women's organizations has declined in recent years." In cases like Honduras, they have trained human resources, but few in numbers.

Of civil society

To be completed after additional consultations

Of international organizations

To be completed after additional consultations

1.6. Actions or campaigns by the institution / organization:

Campaigns:⁷

- Institutional: Regarding varied topics such as violence prevention towards women, gender equality, sexual and reproductive rights, social and political participation. For this, the most diverse media were used, such as spots on radio and television, social networks, printed materials, promotional items (shirts, pens, etc.).
- Communications: They are not aimed at a particular campaign, but are fixed spaces: Radio programs (also in indigenous languages), TV programs, social networks.
 - Mobile applications
 - Workshops, seminars and training days
 - Publications
 - Sports activities

1.7. Available NMAW resources to implement the Guidelines

In all the countries, the Delegates identify human resources of the country that do not work in the NMAW

- International organizations: UN Women, MESECVI Committee of Experts, CEDAW Committee, UNFPA
- Other governmental organizations: Groups of women parliamentarians and councillors, gender offices in Ministries, Governments, Municipalities, in the Executive, Judicial and Legislative Branch, Ombudsman's Offices
- CSOs (of great importance): specialized groups on topics such as violence against women, disability, sex work, indigenous women, peasant women, LGTBI groups, etc., women's groups and feminist groups
- Academic level organizations: universities, researchers, academic staff with emphasis on gender
- Media (some)
- Women in the civil sector, not associated with CSOs, independent feminists.

1.8. Proposal for possible actions at the national level

- Statistics that are raised in a solid way, with scientific methodology, to make inequality and violence visible: Mexico, Colombia (exp.) as well as the concrete benefits of gender equality from a social, political and economic perspective
- Have a clear message of equality, and carry out campaigns to communicate it
- To deepen the laws that protect women and their application and the application of articles 7 and 8 of Belem do Para
- Gender focus in public policies. This includes incorporating the gender approach into the curriculum and, where appropriate, into educational reform
- Dialogue between the State and civil society
- Working with the media and sensitizing journalists
- Inter-sectoral action of the State with public institutions at all territorial levels.

7. Campaign Links:

- <http://www.minmujeryeg.gob.cl/sitio/prensa/campanas/> (Chile)
- <https://www.facebook.com/SEPREM/videos/1432888793420968/> (Guatemala)
- <https://www.facebook.com/SEPREM/videos/1401819996527848/> (Guatemala)
- www.inam.gob.hn (Honduras)
- <https://www.gob.mx/igualdad> (Mexico)
- <http://comolehago.org/> (Mexico)
- <http://www.mujer.gov.py/index.php/campanas> (Paraguay)

1.9. Proposal of regional actions to strengthen the social perception of gender equality as a good

- Building an inter-American agenda among the NAMWs, promoting the Montevideo strategy
- Carry out regional campaigns and exchanges of experiences
- Dissemination and application of international agreements. One example is that as a result of a thematic hearing in the IACHR on "Discrimination against sexual diversity", the Executive Power of Guatemala started to develop a public policy to guarantee the human rights of LGBTI communities
- Steady and integrated action by regional organizations such as the OAS and MERCOSUR and international organizations such as the United Nations, especially the CEDAW Committee and agencies such as ECLAC, UN Women, UNFPA and UNICEF.