Building women’s capacity for effective leadership

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The Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM), with support from the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) hosted a participatory course on “Public Policy Leadership for Women’s Citizenship.” The course, which took place from October 18th to 23rd 2010 in Santo Domingo, brought together government representatives with leading academic experts and other key stakeholders from OAS member states and other regions.

Women’s leadership within public policy processes is essential for the advancement of the women’s rights in political, social and economic spheres in the Latin American and Caribbean regions. However, women in the region have limited opportunities for training or capacity-development in the skills and knowledge that are crucial to effective leadership.

The CIM course allowed for professionals who specialize in this field to participate in leadership training and public policy education from the perspective of gender and rights. In addition to capacity-development on the issue of leadership (in public policy processes, incidence in policy debate and dialogue, and consultation and negotiation of public policies), the course gave participants a framework for understanding the way in which they (and their respective countries) conceptualize women’s leadership.

The aim of the course, which will be repeated over the next year and made available online through the Educational Portal of the Americas (http://www.educoas.org/), is to build a critical mass of professionals with the ability to lead and implement public policies that foster equality between women and men, and that are committed to the social change necessary to uphold a democracy based on the idea of full citizenship.

The Organization of American States (OAS) is the world’s oldest regional organization, dating back to the First International Conference of American State (October 1889 to April 1890). It was established in 1948 with the aim of achieving among the States of the Americas “an order of peace and justice, to promote their solidarity, to strengthen their collaboration, and to defend their sovereignty, their territorial integrity, and their independence.” The OAS prioritizes four pillars - democracy, human rights, security, and development – that support each other and are intertwined through political dialogue, inclusiveness, cooperation, and legal and follow-up instruments that provide the OAS with the tools to maximize its work in the Hemisphere.

Established in 1928, the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM) was the first inter-governmental agency established to ensure recognition of the human rights of women. CIM is made up of 34 Principal Delegates, one for
each member state, and has become the principal forum for debating and formulating policy on gender equality and women's empowerment in the Americas