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REPORT ON FOLLOW-UP THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTER-AMERICAN
CONVENTION ON THE PREVENTION, PUNISHMENT, AND ERADICATION OF VIOLENCE
AGAINST WOMEN, “CONVENTION OF *BELÉM DO PARÁ*” (MESECVI)

(Presented by the Inter-American Commission of Women)



INTER-AMERICAN COMMISSION OF WOMEN

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TO THE INTER-AMERICAN CONVENTION ON THE PREVENTION,
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CONVENTION OF BELÉM DO PARÁ
IN COMPLIANCE WITH RESOLUTION AG/RES. 2330 (XXXVII-O/07)

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The Permanent Secretariat of the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM), as the Technical Secretariat of the Mechanism to Follow up on Implementation of the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (MESECVI) and in compliance with resolution AG/RES. 2330 (XXXVII-O/07) (*resolving* clause 11) submits to the Permanent Council the present report on the CIM's activities between February 2007 to February 2008.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Mechanism to Follow-up on Implementation of the Convention

The CIM, in compliance with the mandates from resolutions CIM/RES. 224/02 (XXXI-O/02), AG/RES. 1942 (XXXIII-O/03), and CIM/REMIM-II/RES. 6/04, undertook actions aimed at drawing up the draft Follow-up Mechanism to the Convention of *Belém do Pará*. The Permanent Secretariat of the CIM drafted a working document proposing a follow-up of the mechanism and made a process consulted to the member states, specialized international organizations, and civil society.

In June 2004, continuing the process that started up in 2002, a Meeting of Government Experts was convened; it was held on July 20-21, 2004 to examine the mechanism proposed and make recommendations to the States Parties. At the end of the meeting, the Experts indicated that the mandate of the OAS General Assembly, contained in Resolution AG/RES. 2021(XXXIV-O/04) had been fulfilled and requested the meeting's rapporteurship to submit to the Conference of the States Parties to the Convention of *Belém do Pará* the draft Statute of the Mechanism to Follow up on Implementation of the Convention for its adoption.

In compliance with the above-mentioned resolution of the General Assembly, the Secretary General of the OAS convened the Conference of the States Parties on October 26, 2004, which approved the "Statute of the Mechanism to Follow Up on Implementation of the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women, Convention of *Belém do Pará* (MESECVI).

With its adoption, the States Parties expressed their political will to have a consensus-based and independent system, to which progress shall be subject, in compliance with the Convention, accepting to implement its recommendations.

As a first step to implement the Mechanism, on January 28, 2005, the Foreign Affairs Ministers of the States Parties of the Convention were requested to appoint the expert who would represent their country in the Committee of Experts (CEVI), the Mechanism's technical body.

From August 22 to 24, 2005, with the valuable sponsorship of the governments of Mexico and Brazil, the First Meeting of the Committee of Experts took place at OAS headquarters. At this meeting, a coordinator (Brazil) and an alternate coordinator (Honduras) were chosen from among the experts. The event concluded successfully with the adoption of the following instruments: 1) Rules of Procedure of the Committee of Experts; 2) Time Table 2005-06; 3) Method for Evaluation of and Follow-Up on the Implementation of the Provisions of the Convention of Belém do Pará and 4) Questionnaire for the Implementation of the *Belém do Pará* Convention's Dispositions. All of the approved documents are available for public consultation in the CIM Webpage: www.oas.org/cim

On September 13, 2005, the Secretariat requested the Foreign Affairs Ministers of the States Parties to appoint a Competent National Authority (CNA) to serve as a link between the government and the MESECVI's Secretariat. The CNA would also have the responsibility of submitting the government's answers to the questionnaire, which constitutes the main input for the Committee's evaluation. On November 7, 2005, the Secretariat sent the questionnaire to the CNAs.

On February 1st 2006, the Government of Mexico made an additional contribution to the MESECVI by commissioning Flor de Lis Vasquez, official of the Mexican Foreign Service, to aid the CIM in the implementation of the Mechanism; she was directly appointed to the MESECVI's Secretariat. This appointment is a valuable contribution which has helped the CIM to carry out more efficiently the duties conferred upon to it by the States Parties of the Convention as Secretariat of the Mechanism.

On July 24 and 25, 2006, the Second Meeting of the Committee of Experts took place at CIM headquarters to begin the first multilateral evaluation round of the responses to the questionnaires. The expert from Argentina was elected as the alternate coordinator, as the expert who held that position had resigned. From that meeting on, and until the end of that year, additional questions were sent by the experts to the CNA's. The answers were submitted to the experts so that they could complete the draft preliminary reports.

The MESECVI progress reports are presented on a yearly basis to the OAS General Assembly and to the Executive Committee, and biennially, to the CIM Assembly of Delegates.

As of the date of this report, the MESECVI had 29 experts and 28 CAN. Twenty-eight States Parties answered the questionnaire; the experts prepared 28 preliminary country reports, and 13 CNAs sent their comments to these preliminary reports. (See Annex I).

1.2 Characteristics of the MESECVI

The MESECVI was designed to ensure follow-up of the commitments made by the States Parties to the Convention, to contribute to achieving the purposes established in it, and to facilitate technical cooperation between the States Parties, as well as with other Member States of OAS and Permanent Observers. It is based on principles of sovereignty, non-intervention, and legal equality of

the States and observes the rules of impartiality and objectivity in its operation, in order to guarantee fair application and egalitarian treatment between the States Parties.

The Mechanism consists of two bodies: The Conference of the States Parties, which is the political body, comprised of the representatives of the States Parties; and the Committee of Experts, which is the technical body, comprised of specialists from the sector being covered by the Convention. Although the Experts are designated by the governments, they carry out their duties personally. The Secretariat of the Conference and the Committee is held by the Permanent Secretariat of the CIM, where the headquarters of MESECVI has been established.

At each round, the Committee of Experts must adopt a questionnaire with the Convention's selected provisions whose implementation it shall be examining. On the basis of the responses to the questionnaires made by the States and on the basis of the information that is gathered, the Committee shall issue a final report with the corresponding recommendations, which it must monitor. Once the final report has been adopted by the Conference, it shall be published.

2. Implementation of the MESECVI

During 2007, the CIM Permanent Secretariat, as Technical Secretariat of the MESECVI, continued with its activities to implement the MESECVI. It received the revised preliminary country reports, which were sent to the CNAs for their comments, and prepared and held the Third Meeting of the Committee of Experts as well as other activities, as follows:

a) Experts Committee (CEVI) MESECVI

i. Third Meeting - Buenos Aires, Argentina, July 18 to 20, 2007

The MESECVI's Third Meeting of the Committee of Experts (CEVI) took place in the *Palacio San Martin*, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on July 18 to 20, 2007.

The inaugural session was held on Wednesday July 18 at 11:30 a.m., in the Libertador Conference Room. First of all, the Technical Secretariat of the MESECVI read a welcome message from the President of CIM, Jacqui Quinn-Leandro. She was followed by the Argentine Foreign Ministry's Special Representative for Women's Issues and Principal Delegate to the CIM, Ambassador Magdalena Faillace, followed by the the Ambassador of Mexico to the Government of Argentina, Her Excellency María Cristina de la Garza, who spoke on behalf of the Office of the Chair of the Conference of States Parties of the MESECVI, Jose Miguel Insulza, and closing the event, the Argentina's Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship, Jorge Taiana. Participating in the event were representatives of the diplomatic corps, officials of the national and provincial governments, international organizations, members of the Committee of Experts (CEVI) of the (MESECVI), civil society organizations and other special guests.

In the first session, the CEVI listened to the presentations of the national and international civil society organizations dedicated to eradicate gender-based violence. Right after this, three working groups were formed to review the country reports. Once these ended, the reports were presented to the second plenary session and were approved by the CEVI. The Technical Secretariat presented the draft Hemispheric Report, which had been previously sent to the experts. After receiving the comments from the experts, it was adopted. The Technical Secretariat was asked to make the appropriate modifications and resubmit the document to the experts so that they might review it again.

During the third plenary session, in accordance with the CEVI Rules of Procedure, the Argentine expert was elected as the new Coordinator for a period of two years. The expert from Guatemala was elected as Alternate Coordinator.

On August 31, the Technical Secretariat distributed the Final Minutes of the Third Meeting of Experts and the minutes of the three working groups among the CEVI experts. Following to the decisions adopted at the meeting, the Technical Secretariat incorporated the comments from the experts into the Hemispheric Report and, on September 10, sent it to them for a final revision, requesting that they, in turn, make the changes suggested by the working groups to their country reports and send them back to the Secretariat.

Once this process was completed, the country reports were sent to the National Competent Authorities on October 19th, so that they could make their observations before submitting them to the Conference of the States Parties to be held in Venezuela in the first half of 2008.

ii. Follow up to the CEVI Recommendations – Indicators

During the third plenary, it was decided that in order to follow up on the experts' recommendations to the governments, it was necessary to develop indicators according to the questionnaire, to make it easier to measure progress. In order to make the process of hiring a consultant more transparent and expeditious, the Secretariat asked the experts to provide names of specialists with recognized experience on the topic. At the end of September, a list of names had been compiled, and the Technical Secretariat proceeded to contact them to make the selection. In the beginning of October, and in coordination with the CEVI Coordinator, a consultant was selected and background information and documentation to prepare the indicators was immediately sent to her. In January of 2008, after several consultations with the Coordinator and the Secretariat, the final document on indicators was received, which will be forwarded to the experts for their future use.

The results of this meeting can be found in the Final Minutes, which is available on the CIM webpage, under the MESECVI file: <http://www.oas.org/cim/Spanish/MESECVI-indice.htm>

b) Conference of the States Parties

i. Consultation meeting for the preparation of the Conference of States Parties

The Statute of the MESECVI establishes that the Conference of States Parties, the political body of the Mechanism, must meet every two years, in this case, at the end of 2007. Aware of this, the Technical Secretariat initiated the preparation process for such an event.

The Conference of States Parties still does not have Rules of Procedure that define its procedure. Therefore, in consultation with the Department of Legal Services, the General Secretary convened a preparatory meeting of the States Parties. The Secretariat prepared a preliminary draft Agenda for the Conference and a preliminary draft Rules of Procedure, to establish the procedure to be followed by the Conference of the States Parties within the MESECVI implementation process.

In accordance to this, on April 16, the preparatory meeting for the Conference of States Parties was held, with participation of 23 delegations. At this meeting, the preliminary draft Agenda and Rules of Procedure were discussed. Some comments and proposals were received, which the Secretariat included into the documents to be adopted in the Conference. In compliance with the agreements of the preparatory meeting, and to initiate a consultation process with the governments, the Secretariat distributed the preliminary draft Rules of Procedure of the Conference to all the Permanent Missions setting June 1, as the deadline for sending comments or observations. As of the date of this report, no additional comments or observations to this document have been received.

ii. Venue for the Conference of States Parties

At various meetings of the Permanent Council and the Executive Committee of the CIM, the Government of Venezuela expressed an interest in hosting the Conference of States Parties. On February 27, 2008, Ambassador Nelson Pineda, Alternate Representative of the Permanent Mission of Venezuela in Washington, D.C., sent a note to the Technical Secretariat of the Mechanism confirming its offer to host the Conference and scheduling it for April 10 and 11, 2008. The Government of Venezuela and the MESECVI Secretariat are holding frequent meetings to move forward with preparations for the event.

c) Other activities

On August 22, the CIM Executive Secretary made a presentation to the Permanent Council regarding the results of the Third Meeting of the CEVI.

In September, the Technical Secretariat held a meeting with an Alternate Representative of the Permanent Mission of Venezuela to initiate preparations for the II Conference of States Parties. The Representative requested a budget proposal for hosting the event, and the Secretariat sent it to her.

In December, the Secretariat made a presentation to the CAUCUS of Caribbean ambassadors to inform them of the progress being made with the Mechanism, the appointment of experts and National Competent Authorities, and the comments made by the NCAs of their countries, highlighting that some governments had not yet appointed representatives to be a part of the MESECVI bodies.

The CIM's Executive Secretariat met again in the first part of 2008 with the Caribbean CAUCUS in order to reiterate the need to strengthen the participation of all countries of this sub-region.

3. DISSEMINATION

On July, 2007, work on an informational brochure on the work and objectives of MESECVI was completed. Six thousand copies were printed in English and Spanish and work began on translating and publishing it in French and Portuguese.

4. FINANCING THE MESECVI

On January 18, 2007 the Technical Secretariat held a meeting with the office of the Secretary General, in order to present to him the financial and human resources requirements of the MESECVI. Documents were prepared with relevant information regarding the importance of the subject of violence, the structure of the Mechanism and the work of the Secretariat. His support was sought for hiring sufficient personnel and resources, providing a table comparing the MESECVI with the two other convention follow-up mechanisms, the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (MEM-CICAD) and the Follow-up Mechanism of the Inter-American Convention against Corruption (MESICIC). The Secretariat also sent to him a proposal on holding a seminar for the Caribbean countries on the operations of the MESECVI for CNAs and experts in this region.

In September the Technical Secretariat sent the OAS Director of External Relations three project proposals for the MESECVI, with the goal of obtaining the external funding for their implementation. Funds were requested to construct a special webpage for the Mechanism, to hold a forum with non-governmental organizations dedicated to the issue of gender-based violence and to carry out training and dissemination seminars on the MESECVI.

Last October 3, in compliance with **Agreement No. 6 of the Executive Committee**, the CIM President sent note No. 10-061/07, urging the Principal Delegates of the States Parties of the Convention of the *Belém do Pará* to take the necessary measures to alert their governments about the current financial needs of the MESECVI. This note highlighted the urgency of making a contribution to the specific fund created to finance the mechanism. It also urged them to encourage their governments, through the framework of the Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Affairs of the Permanent Council, to authorize funding for the MESECVI from the OAS Regular Fund, as is the case of the other follow up mechanisms that operate within the OAS General Secretariat.

In response to the interest shown by some of the governments, the Technical Secretariat sent them a note in requesting that they explore the possibility of commissioning a person for the MESECVI, to ensure continuity of the Mexican Government's initiative, which for two years (2006 and 2007) commissioned an official from the Foreign Service to support the activities of the Mechanism.

5. RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE OAS ASSEMBLY

In 2001 and 2003, the OAS General Assembly adopted resolutions AG/RES. 1768 (XXXI-O/01) and AG/RES. 1942 (XXXII-O/03), respectively, in order to receive the biennium reports on compliance with the Convention of *Belém do Pará*. Resolution AG/RES. 1942 urges the Secretary General to convene, in coordination with the CIM, the Conference of the States Parties to the Convention of *Belém do Pará* to adopt a decision on the most suitable way to ensure follow-up on the Convention.

In 2004, the XXXIV General Assembly adopted resolution AG/RES. 2012 (XXXIV-O/04), urging all States to continue, *inter alia*, supporting the CIM's efforts in the process of establishing and implementing the Follow-up Mechanism to the Convention.

The XXXV General Assembly of June 2005, by means of resolution AG/RES. 2138 (XXXV-O/05), urged the Member States, *inter alia*, to continue advancing in the process of implementing the MESECVI and requesting the Permanent Council to report on its implementation to the 36th regular session of the General Assembly.

The XXXVI General Assembly of 2006 adopted resolution AG/RES. 2162 (XXXVI-O/06) receiving the report on the implementation of the MESECVI, and inviting all the governments to contribute to the specific fund created at the OAS to finance it.

Finally, in 2007, the XXXVII OAS General Assembly adopted AG/RES. 2330 (XXXVII-O/07), which welcome the progress of the first multilateral evaluation round of the MESECVI; congratulate the states parties on their efforts to meet the objectives of the Convention, and urges the states parties to the Convention as well as all member states of the OAS to strengthen the MESECVI and hemispheric cooperation to combat violence against women. It also to invite all states parties and states not party to the Convention, permanent observers, international financial institutions, and civil society organizations to contribute to the Specific Fund established in the OAS to finance MESECVI's operations, and requests the Secretary General to allocate more human, technical, and financial resources to enable the CIM to continue supporting the implementation of the MESECVI.

País / Country	Expertas/ Experts	ANC/ CNA	Respuesta/ Responses	Inf. Prelim. I Prel. Report I	Inf. Preliminar II Prel.Report II	Comentarios ANC CNAComments	Inf. Prel. III Prel. Rep III	Coment.ANC Coments.CNA
25. República Dominicana	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
26. Saint Kitts y Nevis	NO	NO						
27. Saint Vincent y las Grenadinas	X	NO						
28. Santa Lucía	NO	X	X		X			
29. Suriname	X	NO	X	X	X			
30. Trinidad y Tobago	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
31. Uruguay	X	X	X	X	X			
32. Venezuela	X	X	X	X	X			X
Total	29	28	28	22	28	20	20	14