



ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES

INTER-AMERICAN COMMISSION OF WOMEN

FOLLOW-UP MECHANISM
CONVENTION OF BELÉM DO PARÁ (MESECVI)
COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON VIOLENCE (CEVI)
August 13-15, 2008
Washington, D.C.

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MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS (CEVI) 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”

FINAL ACT

The inaugural session was held on Wednesday, August 13, 2008, at 9 a.m., in the Padilha Vidal Room, GSB Building, OAS headquarters, in Washington, D.C. The following took part in the event: representatives of the diplomatic corps, international organizations, the experts of the Mechanism to Follow Up on Implementation of the Inter-American Convention of *Belém do Pará* (MESECVI), civil society organizations, and other special guests. The following took the floor: Ambassador Roy Chaderton Matos, Permanent Representative of Venezuela to the OAS and Chair of the Conference of States Parties; Dante Caputo, OAS Secretary for Political Affairs, representing the OAS Secretary General; Santiago Cantón, Executive Secretary of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR); and Susana Chiarotti, Coordinator of the Committee of Experts (CEVI) of the MESECVI, who also launched the publication of the Hemispheric Report and presented the basic documents of the Mechanism.

The remarks made are published in documents MESECVI/CEVI/INF.9/08, MESECVI/CEVI/INF.10/08, MESECVI/CEVI/INF.11/08, and MESECVI/CEVI/INF.12/08, and are available via the Web page of the MESECVI:

<http://portal.oas.org/Portal/Topic/ComisiónInteramericanadeMujeres/tabid/621/language/en-US/language/es-CO/Default.aspx?en-US=Default.aspx>

1. Seminar on Strategies for Monitoring Implementation of the Recommendations of the Committee of Experts (CEVI) to the Governments

After a break, and as scheduled for the rest of the day, the seminar was opened on “Strategies for Monitoring Implementation of the Recommendations of the Committee of Experts (CEVI) to the Governments.”

The Coordinator of the CEVI, Susana Chiarotti, explained that taking part in the event were eminent specialists of international organizations, civil society, and academia. It had been convened to hear their suggestions to the CEVI for developing strategies that would make possible better follow-up to the recommendations made to governments. She emphasized that effective implementation of the CEVI's recommendations would strengthen the MESECVI and enable it to achieve its primary objective: the implementation of the provisions of the Convention of Belém do Pará in the States Parties.

This seminar was structured as three panels. Taking part in the first, which addressed the “legal framework: legislation and national plans” and was moderated by Susana Chiarotti, Coordinator of CEVI, were Teresa Genta-Fons, Lead Council, Legal Vice Presidency, World Bank, and Anne Goldstein, Human Rights Education Director, International Association of Women Judges (IAWJ).

Teresa Genta-Fons emphasized the urgency of reinstating the priority agenda of implementing the Convention of Belém do Pará, and again raising the urgency of addressing violence against women as a human rights violation and an exclusion- and poverty-related issue. For her part, Anne Goldstein emphasized the importance of training justice workers on how to address violence against women and, essential for trainers, of identifying arguments for use in convincing judges and prosecutors and not providing weapons to those opposed to the implementation of the gender perspective at the judicial level.

The second panel discussed the subject national budgets, information, and statistics. It was moderated by Carmen Lomellin, CIM Executive Secretary, with collaboration from Andrew Morrison, Lead Economist, Gender and Development, The World Bank, and Lilia Jara, Office of Gender, Ethnicity, and Health, Pan American Health Organizations (PAHO).

Regarding budgets, Morrison recommended focusing on national information and making specific recommendations. Regarding the subject of statistics, he suggested to the CEVI that they urge the states to improve health, justice, and police records and to conduct periodic specialized surveys on violence against women that took account of the prevalence of the problem. For her part, Lilia Jara referred to the draft indicators to be discussed by the CEVI at the meeting, and agreed with Andrew Morrison about the importance of training survey-takers on issues of violence against women so that they could gather such information in a sensitive manner, without jeopardizing the safety of women surveyed.

Before the third panel was opened, Dynis Luciano, Director, Development Connections, gave a presentation on the book “The Multiple Faces of the Intersections Between HIV and Violence against Women.” This text, published by Development Connections, UNIFEM, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM), and the Latin American and Caribbean Women's Health Network, explores the relationships between the transmission of HIV/AIDS and violence against women, with special emphasis on some groups (adolescent girls and young women, women deprived of liberty, indigenous women, and women senior citizens) and specific contexts (migrations and natural disasters).

The third and final panel, on the subject of access to justice for women affected by violence, was moderated by Hilda Morales, Alternate Coordinator of the CEVI. The following took part in the panel: Karen Musalo, Director, Center for Gender and Refugee Studies, University of California, Hastings College of the Law, and Valeria Pandjarian, Coordinator, International Litigation Program, Latin America and Caribbean Committee for the Defense of Women's Rights (CLADEM).

In that connection, Karen Musalo emphasized that the existence or formal recognition of rights was insufficient to establish women's access to justice or the high usefulness of diagnostic studies that took account of the problem, and recommended to the CEVI that it request further details on the implementation of care protocols and the sanctions for failure to implement them, as well as the outcomes of training programs for officials and details of sanctions imposed when provisions on violence against women were not enforced. For her part, Valeria Pandjarian emphasized as fundamental the recommendations regarding adoption and sanctions imposed on officials who impede access to justice, training for such officials, the implementation of the Convention of Belém do Pará at the national level, and the establishment of a national mechanism for follow-up to said Convention.

After each panelist was heard, a question and answer session was conducted for experts and participants. The videos showing the panelists' presentations and the participants' questions are available on the MESECVI web page:

<http://portal.oas.org/Portal/Topic/Comisi3nInteramericanadeMujeres/tabid/621/language/es-CO/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

2. Adoption of the agenda

On Thursday, August 14, CEVI's working meeting began. First, the Coordinator asked the experts to introduce themselves since, on this occasion, new experts and alternate experts had been included.

Then the agenda was submitted to the meeting for its consideration. It was adopted with the inclusion of three items under "other business." The first was the drafting of a reply to a public declaration that Amnesty International had forwarded by e-mail to the Technical Secretariat on August 12, requesting the CEVI to provide on its web page additional information on the activities of the Mechanism, as well as to promote participation by civil society organizations in such activities, also via its Web portal.

The second was discussion and adoption of a Declaration on Femicide, a subject included in the First Round's evaluation questionnaire, regarding which the CEVI had expressed particular concern owing to its magnitude in Latin America and the Caribbean. Finally, the third was to consider recommendations to the States Parties, with a view to increasing their participation in the Mechanism, such as the designation of a Competent National Authority (CNA), a principal and an alternate expert to the CEVI, and additional support for the experts so that they could carry out their work and participate in the meetings of the Committee.

3. Outcomes of the Second Conference of States Parties: Report of the Coordinator of the CEVI and Technical Secretariat of the MESECVI

After the agenda had been adopted and in order to make optimal use of the time and reduce costs, document MESECVI-II/doc.17/08 was distributed, containing the report on the activities of the Secretariat carried out since the last meeting of the CEVI. The meeting then took up the first agenda item, regarding the outcomes of the Second Conference of States Parties, held July 9 to 11, in Caracas, Venezuela.

The Coordinator briefly summarized the report, with contributions by the Technical Secretariat and the Expert of Venezuela, Asia Villegas, who reiterated the interest of her country's government in making contributions to the MESECVI. An exchange of views spontaneously arose regarding the issue of violence and discrimination.

4. Revision and adoption of indicators

Consideration was given to the document containing draft indicators that would be sent to the governments for their follow up to the recommendations made to the States Parties by the experts (MESECVI/CEVI/doc.86/08 rev. 1). In accordance with the suggestions made by the panelists at the seminar of August 13, the experts decided that it was necessary to reduce the number of indicators, improve their drafting, and check their definitions. In view of the size of the original draft (88 indicators), the Committee decided to form a working group composed of the Experts of Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, and Venezuela, to make a preliminary review of the indicators during the remainder of the morning and part of the afternoon, and to make a new proposal to the other participants before the end of the day.

In the afternoon, at the plenary meeting, the working group with responsibility for the indicators reported that it had been unable to complete its work. Therefore, it was decided that it would meet for additional time, after the close of the plenary meeting, with support from the Technical Secretariat, with a view to presenting a draft on Friday morning. The next day, 54 draft indicators were presented which, after an exchange of views among the members of the Committee, were reduced to 38 indicators. These were adopted by the plenary.

It was decided that the Technical Secretariat would forward, on August 30, 2008, the document of indicators adopted to both the States Parties for their launch of follow-up to the recommendations, as well as to the experts. The States would be able to forward the information requested until November 30. The Technical Secretariat would have until February 2009 to compile the replies received and would forward a document containing the compilation to the members of the CEVI between April and May 2009.

The document of indicators finally adopted was classified as MESECVI/CEVI/doc.86/08 rev. 3.

5. Declaration on Femicide

A working group was formed, composed of Argentina, Brazil, El Salvador, Honduras, Uruguay, and Paraguay, to work in parallel with the other group on the revision of the draft

declaration of the CEVI on femicide and to present a revised draft declaration at the plenary session on Thursday afternoon.

At its plenary session, the proposal of the working group was accepted to use provisionally the term “femicide” until broader consultations had been made on the use of this term. After some points had been clarified and stylistic changes made, a recommendation to the media was incorporated for it to discuss cases of violence against women in general, and femicide in particular, respecting the dignity and integrity of the victims and avoiding gruesome details, sexist stereotypes, and/or morally condemning remarks about the women. With this inclusion, the declaration was adopted. It was classified as MESECVI/CEVI/DEC. 1/08 and is published on the CEVI/MESECVI web page.

6. Reply on the Public Declaration of Amnesty International

On Thursday, August 14, the meeting considered the reply CEVI would make to the public declaration sent by e-mail by Amnesty International to the CEVI Technical Secretariat on August 12. After evaluating in plenary the contents of the Public Declaration, the Experts of Venezuela and Brazil drafted a reply. After an exchange of ideas, the text of the note was approved and it was decided that the MESECVI Technical Secretariat would have responsibility for its English translation and for forwarding it by e-mail to the International Secretariat of Amnesty International.

7. Implementation of the Second Multilateral Evaluation Round

On Friday, August 15, CEVI discussed the implementation of Second Multilateral Evaluation Round, which was to begin when the follow-up to the recommendations of the First Round had been concluded.

Regarding the evaluation of the country reports, it was decided to maintain the three working groups (Caribbean, Central America, and Southern Cone), assigning to the experts countries other than those for which they had responsibility in the First Round. In accordance with the decision taken at the Third Meeting of the Committee, in Buenos Aires, the experts reiterated the need for an expert to provide support in preparing the country reports. After an exchange of ideas, the CEVI decided that the expert with responsibility for a country in the First Round would serve as support expert for that country in the Second Round. The Coordinator read out the composition of the working groups and the new countries assigned to the experts. This was approved.

Regarding the questionnaire, the experts expressed their wish to maintain the questionnaire used in the First Round. However, the Committee considered it opportune to make some changes of form and substance to said questionnaire, taking account of the views of the Committee members present and the evaluation of the questionnaire made by the CEVI at its Third Meeting, in Buenos Aires (document MESECVI/CEVI/doc.84/07). The CEVI decided that the Technical Secretariat would prepare, based on these considerations, a draft questionnaire, to be sent to the CEVI prior to its next meeting.

8. Biennial schedule 2009-2011

At the plenary meeting held on Friday, August 15, the CEVI considered the biennial schedule for 2009-2011. Since the follow-up to the recommendations of the First Round would be completed in mid-2009, it decided to prepare a biennial schedule for 2009-2011, rather than 2008-2010, as initially included on the agenda. The Technical Secretariat was tasked with preparing the draft biennial schedule and submitting it to the CEVI for consideration at its next meeting.

9. Other business

At the plenary meeting of August 15, the Committee decided to meet again in June 2009, to evaluate, based on indicators, the follow-up to the recommendations and to adopt the new questionnaire for the Second Round. The Coordinator of the CEVI reported that Guatemala had offered to host the Third Conference of States Parties to the Mechanism and, should no offer be made to host the meeting of the CEVI, it would be held in Washington. The Expert of Ecuador offered to make the necessary consultations to see whether her country could host the next meeting of the Committee.

Comments were received on the results of the First Evaluation Round and the operation of the Mechanism. The participants showed concern regarding the financial situation of the MESECVI, which had operated with special funds allocated by Mexico and Brazil, and the difficulties being encountered in obtaining additional resources, financial or human, for its operation.

The Coordinator of the CEVI also indicated her concern regarding the scant support some experts were receiving from states to be able to attend the meetings of the Committee, as well as the scant participation by some states throughout the First Evaluation Round. She therefore suggested a mapping to evaluate the level of participation by the States Parties. Mapping indicators would include the designation of the Competent National Authority (CNA) and a principal and alternate expert; their participation in Conferences of States Parties; participation by their expert and or alternate in meetings of the Committee; and the transmittal of their CNAs' reports in the First Multilateral Evaluation Round. The suggestion was accepted by the Committee, which decided that the Technical Secretariat would prepare the tables and that, prior to the start of the Second Evaluation Round, the Coordinator would send letters to the States Parties containing the outcomes of the mapping, congratulating each for its participation or encouraging it to commit itself more fully to the implementation of the Round.

Some experts expressed interest in disseminating the activities of the Mechanism and the outcomes of the First Evaluation Round. Accordingly, they expressed satisfaction at seeing the Hemispheric Report and country reports on the OAS Web portal and recommended disseminating the outcomes of the Fourth Meeting of CEVI. They also emphasized the importance of keeping updated the MESECVI directories (CNA and experts) on the OAS Web portal. The Technical Secretariat took the opportunity to request their collaboration in updating the data on the CEVI members and to remind them that, in the case of the CNAs, an official note was required from the governments regarding any change in the directories in order to make such changes.

10. Decisions and agreements

The CEVI adopted by consensus the following decisions:

Follow-up to the recommendations of the CEVI

- 10.1. On August 30, 2008, the Technical Secretariat will forward the approved document of indicators to both the States Parties for them to begin their follow-up to the recommendations, and to the experts.
- 10.2. The States Parties may forward the information requested for the indicators until November 30, 2008. The Technical Secretariat will have until February 2009 to compile the replies received, and will forward a final document to the CEVI between April and May 2009.

The Second Multilateral Evaluation Round

- 10.3. The Technical Secretariat will prepare a draft questionnaire based on the questionnaire evaluation document prepared by the el CEVI at its Third Meeting, in Buenos Aires, and the views expressed by the experts at the plenary meeting. Said questionnaire will be forwarded to the CEVI prior to its next meeting.
- 10.4. It was decided to maintain three working groups for the Second Round, and to work with teams composed of a rapporteur expert and a reviewer expert. For the Second Round, different countries were assigned to the rapporteur experts, and it was decided that the reviewer expert would be that who had prepared the report for the country in the First Round.
- 10.5. The Technical Secretariat was tasked with preparing the draft biennial schedule 2009-2011 and for its presentation to the CEVI for consideration at its next meeting.

The Declaration on Femicide

- 10.6. To disseminate on the Web portal of the MESECVI the Declaration on Femicide adopted by the CEVI.

The letter replying to Amnesty International

- 10.7. The Technical Secretariat would have responsibility for the English translation of the letter replying to Amnesty International and for sending it by e-mail to Irene Khan, Amnesty International's International Secretariat, with a copy to Hugo Rodríguez Brignardello, Legal Adviser Americas, of said organization.

Mapping participation by States Parties in the MESECVI

- 10.8 The Technical Secretariat will prepare a mapping showing the States Parties' level of participation in the MESECVI and its First Evaluation Round. To that end, it will prepare tables showing the designations of CNAs and principal and or alternate experts, the transmittal of reports in the First Round, and participation in meetings of the Conference of States Parties and the CEVI.

- 10.9 Before the launch of the Second Round, the Coordinator of the CEVI will send letters to the States Parties containing the outcomes of the mapping, congratulating the States for their participation and urging them to commit themselves more fully to the implementation of the Round. Those that have not yet done so will be requested to designate a Competent National Authority and expert, and all will be requested to designate an alternate expert to the CEVI, and to provide them with additional support so that they can carry out their work and participate in all meetings of the Committee.