



INTER-AMERICAN COMMISSION OF WOMEN (CIM)

THIRTY-EIGHTH ASSEMBLY
OF DELEGATES OF THE CIM
Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic
May 7th and 8th 2019

OEA/Ser.L/II.2.38
CIM/doc.14/19 rev.1
August 21st 2019
Original: Spanish

SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE THIRTY-EIGHTH ASSEMBLY OF DELEGATES OF THE INTER-AMERICAN COMMISSION OF WOMEN

1. INTRODUCTION

The Thirty-eighth Assembly of Delegates of the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM) was held in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic on May 7th and 8th 2019. The theme of the Assembly was “Equality and Autonomy in the Exercise of Women’s Political Rights.”

The President of the CIM 2016-2019, Gloria Montenegro Figueroa, Principal Delegate and Minister of Women and Vulnerable Populations of Peru, presided over the informal session of Heads of Delegation and the inaugural session, pursuant to Article 9 of the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly of Delegates of the Inter-American Commission of Women,¹ which states that the President of the CIM shall preside over regular and special assemblies away from Commission headquarters until the President of the Assembly is elected in the first plenary session (Article 10).

The Executive Secretary of the CIM, Carmen Moreno served as Technical Secretary of the Assembly, pursuant to Article 16 of the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly of Delegates.

2. SESSIONS

The Assembly held an Informal Session of Heads of Delegation, an Inaugural Session, four Plenary Sessions, including a thematic panel, and a Closing Session.

a. Informal Session of Heads of Delegation

During the informal session, held May 7th 2019 from 8:30 to 9:00 a.m., attended by the President of the CIM and the Heads of Delegation, the procedures related to the agenda of the Assembly, including the candidates for the officers of the Assembly (President, Vice President), the installation of the General Committee and Committee on Credentials, and the Order of Precedence (beginning with Bolivia), were considered and approved.

1. Available at: <http://www.oas.org/en/cim/docs/CIMRulesofProcedureAoD-2012-EN.doc>

The first plenary session was held immediately after the informal session, followed by the inaugural session.

b. First Plenary Session

CIM President Gloria Montenegro Figueroa opened the First Plenary Session of the Thirty-eighth Assembly of Delegates at 9:00 am. Welcoming everyone present, she thanked the host country and the Executive Secretariat on behalf of the CIM for their support in organizing the event.

Next, pursuant to Article 21(f) of the CIM Statute² and Articles 9 and 10 of the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly of Delegates of the CIM, the agreements reached during the informal session of Heads of Delegation were approved (see previous section).

- i. Election of the Officers of the Assembly of Delegates and Order of Precedence: The following officers of the Assembly were elected by acclamation during the first plenary session:

President: Janet Camilo Hernández, Principal Delegate of the Dominican Republic
Vice President: Isabel Plá Jarufe, Principal Delegate of Chile

- ii. Order of precedence of the delegations: As stated in the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly of Delegates of the CIM (Article 7), the order of precedence was determined by lot, as follows:

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|-------------------|---|
| 1. Bolivia | 19. Nicaragua |
| 2. Brazil | 20. Panama |
| 3. Canada | 21. Peru |
| 4. Chile | 22. Dominican Republic |
| 5. Colombia | 23. San Kitts and Nevis |
| 6. Costa Rica | 24. Saint Lucia |
| 7. Dominica | 25. Saint Vincent and the
Grenadines |
| 8. Ecuador | 26. Suriname |
| 9. El Salvador | 27. Trinidad and Tobago |
| 10. United States | 28. Uruguay |
| 11. Grenada | 29. Venezuela |
| 12. Guatemala | 30. Antigua and Barbuda |
| 13. Guyana | 31. Argentina |
| 14. Haiti | 32. Bahamas |
| 15. Honduras | 33. Barbados |
| 16. Jamaica | 34. Belize |
| 17. Mexico | |
| 18. Paraguay | |

2. Available at: <http://www.oas.org/en/CIM/docs/CIMStatute-2016-EN.pdf>

- iii. Adoption of the Agenda and Organization of the Work:³ The Agenda was approved by the Thirty-Eighth Assembly of Delegates and published in document CIM/doc.4/19. The calendar of work for the Thirty-eighth Assembly of Delegates of the CIM was approved and published in document CIM/doc.5/19.
- iv. Establishment and installation of the General Committee and the Committee on Credentials

Committee on Credentials

President: Nadine Gasman Zylbermann, Principal Delegate of Mexico
Member: Ana Lorena Flores Salazar, Principal Delegate of Costa Rica
Member: Adriana Maldonado Ruiz, Principal Delegate of Colombia
Secretary: Beatriz Piñeres (Executive Secretariat of the CIM)

General Committee

The officers of the General Committee, in which all interested countries could participate, were as follows:

President: Dayana Ureña, Advisor, Alternate Representative of the Dominican Republic's Mission to the OAS
Secretary: Hilary Anderson (Executive Secretariat of the CIM)

The President of the Assembly declared the installation of the General Committee, which was open to all accredited delegations. She reported that negotiations on the draft documents were already advanced thanks to the efforts of the Informal Working Group on Preparations for the Thirty-eighth CIM Assembly of Delegates, which had met five times at OAS headquarters between April 11 and May 2, 2019.

- v. Deadline for submission of draft resolutions: 5:00 p.m. on May 7 was set as the deadline for the submission of new draft resolutions.

c. Inaugural Session

The inaugural session began at 10:30 am on May 7th 2019. The head table was comprised of Margarita Cedeño de Fernández, Vice President of the Dominican Republic; Miguel Vargas Maldonado, Minister for Foreign Affairs; Gloria Montenegro Figueroa, President of the CIM and Minister for Women and Vulnerable Populations of Peru; Janet Camilo Hernández, Minister for Women of the Dominican Republic; Cristina Lizardo, Senator of the Dominican Republic; Nestor Méndez, Assistant Secretary General of the OAS; and Carmen Moreno, Executive Secretary of the CIM.

First, the host and Minister for Women of the Dominican Republic, Janet Camilo, took the floor. She welcomed the officers, delegates, and other attendees and thanked Dominican President Danilo Medina, represented at the Assembly by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, for his support for holding

3. Available at: <http://www.oas.org/en/cim/assembly.asp>

the Assembly in the country. She also asserted that the Dominican Republic is a State committed to fighting for the human rights of all, but especially those of women. Finally, Minister Camilo called on the States to join forces and approve the Declaration of Santo Domingo to guarantee the political participation of women in different public settings.

OAS Assistant Secretary General Nestor Méndez then took the floor and greeted the authorities, delegates and attendees. Thanking the Government and people of the Dominican Republic for their hospitality and for holding this Assembly, he saluted the work of the government's gender equity authorities, emphasizing that it was essential for democracy, sustainable development, and peace in all regions of the world. Declaring that democracy was the cornerstone of the OAS's work and that the theme of this Assembly directly reflected one of the main concerns of the OAS: women's participation in all areas, he noted the important work of the CIM and its role in protecting and promoting the political rights of women in the region since 1928, recalling that its promotion of the right to vote had been the first obstacle overcome. He pointed out that women held 30.6% of congressional seats in the countries of the Americas and that this region had the world's highest share of women in these positions. Nevertheless, he observed that, while women's participation in political life had increased, different forms of violence against them had as well. Bearing this in mind, he reminded the Assembly that under the Convention of Belém do Pará, the CIM had spearheaded efforts to strengthen the capacity of States to combat political violence with instruments such as the Inter-American Model Law on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women in Political Life, adopted in 2016. He affirmed that within the framework of that Convention, adopted 25 years ago, the OAS would continue its efforts to combat violence against women, adding that the OAS had made progress in mainstreaming the gender approach in the Organization, but much remained to be done and further advances were still needed. Finally, he declared that women leaders and the women's movement were essential for guaranteeing more rights for more women.

The third speaker was Gloria Montenegro Figueroa, President of the CIM 2016-2019 and Minister for Women and Vulnerable Populations of Peru. Greeting the Assembly officers and attendees, she noted that the region was witnessing sweeping economic changes and growth and that, in this context, 50% of the population, women, had contributed to this. Underscoring the importance of social and environmental development through greater inclusion, social cohesion, and recognition of the work done by women, especially the most marginalized women, she stressed the importance of institutional development in congresses, regional governments, and judicial mechanisms, pointing out the total lack of trust among the populace. Within this context, she stated that the countries of the region faced major threats to democracy from high levels of corruption, insecurity, and impunity. She noted that it was women who suffered the most from this impunity, facing difficulties and obstacles to obtaining justice when they fall victim to violence, since public officials did not work with a gender perspective. She observed, however, that this was an opportunity for women to change the situation: to show that women cannot only work hard and steadfastly and transparently persevere in a disciplined manner but can also be agents of change to improve institutions and fight corruption in the countries. She commented that the region was in a moment of complex change and that women were capable of contributing across the board to a more egalitarian and just society, recognizing its wealth of diversity. Finally, she stated what an honor it had been to serve as President of the CIM and to have contributed to plans and programs in the region that promoted the political participation of women and their human rights.

Minister for Foreign Affairs Miguel Vargas Maldonado then addressed the audience, greeting the authorities, delegates and attendees. He asserted that despite the long road still ahead, Latin America can state with pride that the issue of gender has been a real concern in its historical development. Here he recalled that 90 years ago, the CIM had been the first intergovernmental body created to guarantee recognition of the human rights of women. He highlighted CIM's efforts to work with the States of the region to promote the political participation of women and their full and equal leadership and influence in the social, cultural, and economic sphere. He declared that it had been a great honor for him to attend the inauguration of the Assembly and that he recognized the importance of women playing an active role in all areas without exception. He acknowledged the struggle and activism of Dominican women and the progress they had made in this area. However, he also acknowledged that there were still obstacles to women's full participation, such as political violence against them, which directly affected their right to hold elective office and their work on the political and public stage. Finally, he stated that the Government of the Dominican Republic had considered it very important to host this Assembly promoting women's leadership and participation, and he thanked the ministers and delegates for their work, declaring that it was essential for meeting the goal of equality.

The inaugural session was also attended by the accredited delegations to the Assembly, as well as representatives of inter-American and international agencies, civil society organizations, and special guests. Document CIM/doc.3/19 contains the list of participants in the Thirty-eighth Assembly of Delegates of the CIM.^{4/}

d. Second Plenary Session

This session was held on May 7th at 11:00 am and included a panel on the main theme of the Assembly: *Equality and Autonomy in the Exercise of Women's Political Rights: The Challenge of Violence against Women in Political Life*. The panel, moderated by Principal Delegate of the Dominican Republic and President of the Assembly Janet Camilo Hernández, consisted of Otilia Lux de Coti, Maya Quiché Leader in Guatemala; Fátima Mena, Candidate for Mayor of San Pedro Sula, Honduras; and Cristina Lizardo Mezquita, Senator of the Dominican Republic.

Minister of Women of the Dominican Republic and President of the Assembly Janet Camilo, accompanied by Carmen Moreno, Executive Secretary of the CIM, greeted the attendees, acknowledging the work of the CIM and thanking the Commission.

Otilia Lux de Coti, Maya Quiché Leader in Guatemala, described and commented on the situation of women politicians in Guatemala. She informed the Assembly that elections would be held in Guatemala on June 16th and that four women were running for president. She stated, however, that there were problems at the highest level, such as corruption and violence against women in politics. She voiced concern about the threats to democracy posed by the high levels of corruption, underscoring the importance of women's participation in combatting this phenomenon and the need to work toward the eradication of political violence. She stressed that in the search for equality and women's full participation under conditions of equality, it was important to bear in mind that parity between men and women must include diversity, specifically the participation of indigenous women. Here she stated that budgets should be focused on women and recognize the importance of rural and indigenous women and women who perform domestic work.

4. Available at: <http://www.oas.org/en/cim/assembly.asp>

Fátima Mena, Candidate for Mayor of San Pedro Sula, Honduras, thanked the Commission for the opportunity to be there, noting the importance of these forums for eradicating violence against women who participate in political life. She discussed what had made her candidacy possible and noted that the political rights of half the country's population were at risk and threatened. She underscored the importance of legislation to address the issue and the need to design public policies and impose strict punishments for acts of violence in order to guarantee women's right to live free of violence in all settings, public and private. She asked, "What woman politician is not challenged about her success?" The delegate then noted that violence against women in political life occurs everywhere, especially in political parties, stating that women do not talk about it because they pay a high price for doing so and that while political parties are public entities, they are in fact private entities. She noted that the violence intensifies when women speak out, stating her refusal to accept a system in which she did not feel included because decisions were not made in an egalitarian manner. She stressed the importance of the Model Law as a tool, promoting its adoption in the region, and the importance of imposing penalties and designing protocols for addressing the issue, stating that declarations were not enough; penalties and engagement with the media were needed to mount public awareness campaigns and shine a spotlight on this problem.

Janet Camilo, President of the Assembly, introduced Senator Cristina Lizardo Mezquita, stating that she had been the only woman to head the country's Senate and the only one to have presided over the country's reforms. The Senator noted with pride that the Assembly was being held in her country and the importance of the Minister serving as President of the CIM. She declared that this was a very important event, since women's participation in these forums was essential in the struggle to guarantee women's full participation in public forums. She underscored the importance of education to ensure that boys and girls grew up and were educated the same way. She added that international support was very important for creating change at the national level. She concluded by stressing that public awareness efforts should target not only women but men as well.

The President of the Assembly reported that the graphic image for this Assembly was chosen through a competition among university students and that the image represented the Mirabal sisters. She then introduced the Executive Secretary of the CIM, noting her years of work fighting to promote women's rights. The Executive Secretary acknowledged all the work that the CIM had done to combat violence against women in political life and stressed that it had been a coordinated effort with women in politics. She spoke about the Model Law on violence against women in politics and the importance of punishment and eradicating impunity. She also noted the importance of streamlining the process for achieving the objectives, declaring that women could not wait another 200 years. Next, she stated that the CIM had been fortunate to have women who had been involved in politics, observing that it had been the women themselves who had fought for their rights. And in this context, she stated that the history of Dominican women and their liberation was really intense, fascinating, and important for the region. Finally, she confirmed that this would be her last Assembly, promising to continue supporting and contributing to this struggle.

At 12:55 pm, Minister Camilo opened the Q & A session. The following delegations participated:

The Delegate of **Bolivia**, Estefanía Morales, acknowledged the participation of all the panelists and thanked them for their comments. Addressing the panelist from Honduras, she asked why she had

decided to run for office, her motivation for becoming a public official, and the injustices she had had to endure along the way.

Next, the Delegate of **Ecuador** asked about the importance of education in producing cultural change, especially in the family, observing that in some of the countries, the issues of equality and gender violence were addressed in formal education.

Finally, the Delegate of **Chile** commented on violence in politics and gender violence in the region. She stressed the importance of strengthening and safeguarding democracy and declared that without democracy, it made no sense to talk about women's participation in political life.

The panelists responded to all the questions. Minister Camilo then thanked everyone present for their attendance. The session broke for lunch and the official photograph at 1:15 pm.

e. Third Plenary Session

The third plenary session, presided over by President of the Assembly and Principal Delegate of the Dominican Republic Minister Janet Camilo and Vice President of the Assembly and Principal Delegate of Chile Minister Isabel Plá, opened on May 7th at 3:00 pm with the report of the Committee on Credentials and the election of the CIM officers for the period 2019-2022, pursuant to Item 3 of the Agenda. Also seated at the head table was the Executive Secretary of the CIM, Carmen Moreno. The Vice President of the Assembly invited the President of the Committee on Credentials, Principal Delegate of Mexico Nadine Gasman, to present the report.

The Delegate of Mexico proceeded to read the Report of the Committee on Credentials, pursuant to Article 41 of the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly de Delegates of the CIM, describing the preliminary meetings and participation of the States in these encounters. She also indicated the other articles of the Rules that had served as the foundation for the work. Afterwards, the Vice President of the Assembly reported that in early May, the CIM had informed the officers of the CIM about the election process, indicating the articles governing the election of these officers and the candidates for the Executive Committee. She reported that there had been only one candidate for the office of President, nominated by the Government of the Dominican Republic, represented by Principal Delegate Minister Janet Camilo. There had been three open seats for Vice President, and three candidates had been nominated, one by each of the following governments: Canada, Colombia, and Panama. The Delegate of Mexico then stated that five governments had nominated candidates for the five remaining seats on the Executive Committee: Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru, and Suriname. Minister Plá then invited the delegates to unanimously elect the candidates by acclamation. The delegates agreed to do so. The Delegate of Chile congratulated the new members of the Executive Committee. The officers of the CIM for the period 2019-2022 are therefore:

<u>President</u>	Dominican Republic (Janet Camilo Hernandez, Principal Delegate)
<u>Vice Presidents</u>	Canada (Maryam Moncef, Principal Delegate) Colombia (Ana María Tribín Uribe, Principal Delegate) Panama (Liriola Leoteau, Principal Delegate)
<u>Members</u>	Costa Rica (Patricia Mora Castellanos, Principal Delegate)

Ecuador (Mireya del Carmen Muñoz Mera, Principal Delegate)

Mexico (Nadine Gasman Zylbermann, Principal Delegate)

Peru (Gloria Montenegro Figueroa, Principal Delegate)

Suriname (Judith Karijodrono, Principal Delegate)

Afterwards, the President of the CIM, Janet Camilo, thanked all the delegates to this Assembly. She then stressed the importance of dialogue and consensus when working with women and called on all the officers to recognize the work of all women, especially colleagues. Finally, she invited the delegates to proceed with the agenda.

Implementation of the Strategic Plan 2016-2021 and Triennial Program of Work 2016-2019 of the CIM

Report of the President of the CIM

Taking up Item 6 of the Agenda, the President of the Assembly offered the floor to the Executive Secretary of the CIM. The Executive Secretary indicated that the Report of the President of the CIM would be read by the Alternate Delegate of Peru, Mary Ann Silvia de Espinoza, from the Embassy of Peru in the Dominican Republic.

In her remarks, the alternate delegate discussed compliance with these mandates and the agreements adopted by the Executive Committee of the CIM 2016-2019. She also reported on progress in addressing the work priorities identified by Peru since the start of its Presidency of the CIM in 2016, especially:

- i. The strategy for integrating the provisions of the Model Law on political violence in the countries of the region;
- ii. The strategy for closing the wage gap between men and women;
- iii. The strategy for combatting gender ideology campaigns.

She stated that the objective is none other than to continue joint efforts to defend and promote the human rights of women in the particular context of the countries, in which despite progress, many manifestations of discrimination that women experience in society still persist.

During her tenure, the President of the CIM had presided over six regular sessions of the Executive Committee of the CIM, which had adopted 26 agreements, 22 of which had been fully complied with and four of which were still in the compliance process. The agreements covered matters such as the strengthening of the Inter-American Commission of Women as the main political forum for implementing the women's rights and gender equality agenda, including its budget; the application of the "Inter-American Guidelines on Gender Equality for the Good of Humanity"; inclusion of the gender approach in the work and results of the Eighth Summit of the Americas (April 2018, Peru); the creation and work of the Inter-American Task Force on Women's Empowerment and Leadership; the promotion of gender equality and human rights in international agreements on the environment; the celebration of the 90th anniversary of the CIM; the holding of the thirty-eighth Assembly of Delegates of the CIM; and the appointment process for the Executive Secretary of the Commission.

The delegate commented that one of the greatest difficulties that persisted in the States was structural discrimination against women simply because they were women, due to deep-rooted stereotypes about roles, settings, and gender attributes and sociocultural patterns still tolerated by society that continue to foster discrimination against women. She then asserted that these types of discrimination are expressed, for example, in different forms of gender-based violence against women (physical, psychological, sexual, economic, etc.).

Another challenge she noted was that women were not a homogeneous group, and less so in countries as multicultural as those of the Americas, observing that women were the face of poverty. Notwithstanding, she pointed out that the mainstreaming of age, disability, intersectionality and other approaches was not insufficient in practice. Here, the delegate enumerated the challenges that States face when it comes to women's rights, emphasizing, among other things, the importance of eradicating the different forms of discrimination against women, femicide, and all manners of resistance by the patriarchal system.

Report of the Executive Secretariat of the CIM

Taking up item 3.b of the Agenda, the Executive Secretary of the CIM, Carmen Moreno, presented a report on implementation of the Triennial Program of Work 2016-2019 and Strategic Plan 2016-2021, indicating that the objectives of the Strategic Plan were: positioning the CIM as the Hemisphere's political forum and benchmark for forging full citizenship for women, from a human rights perspective; and institutionalizing the rights and gender equality approach in the principal forums, programs, and institutional planning of the OAS. Other specialists from the Executive Secretariat of the CIM then gave a presentation on their specific lines of work.

Marta Martínez, CIM Specialist: Ms. Martínez discussed democracy and women's political rights. She reported that in the sphere of political engagement, the CIM had worked to create tools or conduct studies focused on providing references and solutions to problems related to discrimination against women in political life, almost always based on country experiences and good practices, and on applying these tools and studies to capacity building initiatives for different state actors. With respect to parity, she stated that the CIM had developed two study lines—the first, on parity laws, where it had examined the cases of the six countries with electoral parity, the features of the laws and their impact, the actors, and the strategies; and the second, on the preparation of case studies, also of countries, examining important decisions made in the electoral sphere concerning the political rights of women. The fruit of this work, she noted, was the first regional course on electoral governance with a gender perspective, geared to the senior management and staff of electoral bodies, organizations and electoral courts alike, to emphasize the gender approach in these entities, both internally and externally.

With respect to leadership, Ms. Martínez reported that in 2018, working with the OAS School of Governance, the Commission had introduced the Course on Strengthening Skills for Electoral Candidates, stating that in just over a year, it had offered a national course in Mexico, Peru, the Dominican Republic, and Panama and a subnational course in Chiapas and Aguascalientes, Mexico. She informed the Assembly that the course had been designed to improve the skills that every candidate needed to run for office—for example, knowing how to mount an electoral campaign and all aspects of political communication—but that it also provided resources and strategies to enable women to respond more effectively to gender-based attacks. With respect to political violence, Ms.

Martínez also highlighted the MESECVI's work in drafting the Model Law and Protocol for Political Parties. She reported that consultations and meetings had been held with congresswomen as part of CIM activities to promote policy dialogue. Finally, she informed the Assembly that a report was being drafted identifying good practices with respect to the political rights of women, highlighting parity, gender rotation, political parties, electoral financing, and political violence; the report would also include a series of arguments underscoring the importance of achieving women's equality in political life, as well as guidelines for the regulations of quota or parity laws.

Beatriz Piñeres, CIM Specialist: Ms. Piñeres discussed efforts to institutionalize the rights and gender equality approach, noting that the CIM was working on institutional strengthening of national mechanisms for the advancement of women to strengthen their leadership role in mainstreaming the gender approach in public institutions in their respective countries to make progress in the development of gender policies grounded in equality. She pointed out that within this framework, the CIM offered support to the countries in two ways: participatory assessment of the gender situation and transfer of the methodology for strengthening machineries for the advancement of women. She noted that the CIM had made three transfers: in 2015, to Paraguay's Ministry for Women; in 2017, at the municipal level, to the National Institute of Women (INAMU) in Costa Rica; and in 2018, to the Ministry for Women of the Dominican Republic. With respect to participatory gender assessments, she also noted that an internal analysis of this type had been conducted in the OAS General Secretariat (GS/OAS) following approval of the *Institutional Policy on Gender Equality, Diversity, and Human Rights*, the objective of which is to advance equity and equality in the exercise of rights, equality of opportunity, and equal treatment in all work of the General Secretariat by strengthening its management, culture, and institutional capacity. Ms. Piñeres reported that this analysis resulted in a concrete Plan of Action with indicators and time frames and that the Plan was centered on five strategic lines of action:

1. Strengthen the institutionalization and mainstreaming of the Institutional Policy on Gender Equality, Diversity, and Human Rights of the General Secretariat of the OAS
2. Strengthen the capacities of GS/OAS staff members in matters of gender, diversity and rights, in order to consolidate the integration of a gender perspective in their daily work
3. Mainstream a gender, diversity, and rights approach in GS/OAS programs and projects
4. The OAS projects an image that is committed to equality of opportunity and rights for more people
5. Integrate an inclusive and equal-opportunity approach into the GS/OAS's human resources policy and organizational culture.

With respect to the line of action on women's economic citizenship, Ms. Piñeres stated that the CIM had been unable to carry out many of the activities included in the Triennial Program of Work 2016-2019, because adequate resources for advancing this work portfolio had been lacking. Finally, she indicated that the CIM had worked with the OAS Department of Human Development, Education, and Employment toward approval of a mandate by the Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor in 2017 to update the 2009 study *The Institutionalization of Gender Mainstreaming in the Ministries of Labor in the Americas* to report on the progress of these ministries in this regard, identify challenges, and create a firm foundation for new strategies to provide more effective support for their efforts.

Yasmin Solitahe Odlum, CIM Specialist for the Caribbean: Ms. Solitahe Odlum thanked Carmen Moreno, Executive Secretary of the CIM, for supporting the research project in the Caribbean and demonstrating her commitment by allowing her to devote two years to this important special project for the Caribbean subregion and document its presence in multiple CIM entities. She stated that as a result of numerous requests, especially from CARICOM's permanent missions to the OAS, the work portfolio for the Caribbean had begun to compile a database of the available information in the subregion to handle the volume of requests, adding particular trends in the subregion stood out, including leaps forward and pauses in its commitment to the CIM. Ms. Solitahe Odlum then summarized the process and progress of the Caribbean Research Project to date.

She reported that the symbiosis between the CIM and the Caribbean had begun in 1976, when the CIM became the pioneer and main sponsor of national and subregional activities in the subregion, contributing at least 30% of the financing for its projects. Ms. Solitahe Odlum noted that the CIM had received sponsorship for more than 60 activities in the subregion between 1976 and 2001, providing technical and financial assistance and supporting local, national, and subregional projects in the Caribbean member states in the areas of training, capacity building, and institutional strengthening, as well as income-generating projects for women. Finally, Ms. Solitahe Odlum concluded that the CIM-CARICOM connection was still asymmetrical and that greater priority should therefore be given to this work.

Luz Patricia Mejía, Technical Secretary of the Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention (MESECVI): Ms. Mejía summarized the work of the Mechanism from 2016 to April 2019. She stated that during this period, the work to ensure full and effective implementation of the Belém do Pará Convention by the States Party had continued, with special emphasis on prevention, pursuant to Article 6, which establishes the right of every woman to live free of violence. This includes the right to be free of all forms of discrimination and the right to be valued and educated free of stereotyping and social and cultural practices grounded in concepts of inferiority or subordination.

The Technical Secretary then reported that during the Third Multilateral Evaluation Round of the MESECVI, greater efforts had been made to convince the States Party to the Convention to align their legislation with the documents and recommendations issued during this Round, including the preparation of specific substantive material on the content of the Convention. She specifically noted the preparation and approval of the following documents:

1. Twenty-eight National Reports.
2. Third Hemispheric Report on the Implementation of the Belém do Pará Convention. Prevention of Violence against Women in the Americas: Paths to Follow.
3. Hemispheric Report on Sexual Violence Child Pregnancy in the States Party to the Belém do Pará Convention.
4. Declaration on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment for the Good of Humanity.
5. Inter-American Model Law on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women in Political Life.
6. Inter-American Model Law on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of the Gender-related Killing of Women and Girls (Femicide/Feminicide).
7. General Recommendation on Self-Defence and Gender-Based Violence.
8. General Recommendation on Missing Women and Girls in the Hemisphere.

9. MESECVI Strategic Plan 2018-2023.

The Technical Secretary later indicated that during the XV Meeting of the Committee of Experts in December 2018, agreement had been reached to begin the Follow-up to the Recommendations of the MESECVI Committee of Experts, corresponding to the Third Multilateral Evaluation Round. Next, she reiterated the importance of appointing or finding replacements for the competent national authorities and MESECVI experts and of contributing human or financial resources for the effective operation of MESECVI. Finally, the Technical Secretary noted that, concerning international cooperation with other international and regional organizations, the MESECVI was now part of the platform of international and regional mechanisms for combatting violence against women and their rights, an initiative launched by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, Its Causes, and Consequences. She stressed that through strengthened global and regional cooperation, the mechanisms had worked toward joint action to improve protection and promotion of the human rights of women and combat violence against women around the world, relying on the pertinent international and regional instruments in this field.

Flavia Tello, Coordinator of the Inter-American Task Force on Women's Empowerment and Leadership: Ms. Tello thanked the Government of Canada for its support for the Task Force's creation, moving on to discuss women's leadership as a key and inalienable element of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. There was no doubt, she said, that women had made real progress in terms of their rights, recognizing that the countries of the Americas and the Caribbean had made great strides from a regional standpoint. She noted, however, that the road is still one of light and shadows. In this context, she presented the Inter-American Task Force, aware that women in the Americas still face many obstacles to empowerment.

Ms. Tello indicated that the Task Force was comprised of key inter-American and international institutions with acknowledged experience and programs in areas connected with women's leadership: the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC); the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB); the Organization of American States: CIM and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR); the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO); ParlAmericas; the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and UN Women. Two civil society organizations were also permanent members of the Task Force: the Caribbean Institute for Women in Leadership (CIWiL) and the Latin American and Caribbean Committee for the Defense of Women's Rights (CLADEM).

Ms. Tello informed the Assembly that the main objective of this initiative was to position the Americas and the Caribbean as the leading region in the achievement of SDG 5.5, helping to accelerate the commitment and action of all relevant stakeholders. She stated that the specific objectives were: to increase the coordination and coherence of the activities of international, intergovernmental, and inter-American institutions and other stakeholders; to broaden current initiatives spearheaded by Task Force members and find opportunities to make them more accessible to historically excluded groups; and to create opportunities for women leaders to acquire knowledge, gain confidence, and establish networks to support their ongoing personal and professional growth.

Finally, Ms. Tello described the way the Task Force worked with the different agencies and the types of coordination, outlining the progress and proposals. She indicated that in response to the concerns

and proposals of the member states, the Task Force had identified and agreed on three strategic areas of commitment:

1. Promotion of change to mobilize actors.
2. Analysis and evidence to better understand gaps and work to close them.
3. Tools to support women leaders and the next generation of leaders of all origins.

Next, Carmen Moreno thanked the CIM Specialists, concluding the presentation of the Report of the Executive Secretariat of the CIM. Minister Plá then offered the floor to the delegations for questions and comments on the reports of the President and Executive Secretariat of the CIM.

Brazil: The delegate commented on the Task Force's presentation, specifically on the photo of Marielle Franco, who had been assassinated in her country, reiterating that the case was under investigation by the Brazilian justice system. He stated that the case would soon be closed, that two people were standing trial, and that the investigation was ongoing. He noted that the case was being examined by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

Panama: The delegate stressed the importance of commemorating the 25th anniversary of the Convention of Belém do Pará, stating that it was also important for other government representatives to participate and that the national machineries must join forces to commemorate so important a milestone in the struggle for women's rights. She therefore invited the ministers and delegates to make a commitment to commemorating the 25th anniversary of the Belém do Pará Convention, emphasizing that political commitment was very important and pointing out that Panama did not have a Ministry for Women.

The Delegate of Chile then invited the Executive Secretary to present the CIM Triennial Program of Work 2019-2022. The Secretary confirmed that document CIM/doc.6/19 had been widely discussed by the Informal Working Group that had met in Washington, chaired by the Dominican Republic. She also indicated that this program was based on the Strategic Plan and the tasks designated by the principal delegates. She acknowledged that some of the work had not been done due to a lack of resources. However, they were being taken up again and reviewed by those same delegates in Washington, D.C. She noted that this document contained a series of proposals and activities with targets, time frames, and explanations, commenting that it was up to the new Executive Committee to continue studying, working, and providing support in these areas. She stated that the program included all the topics chosen by the delegates:

- Institutionalization of the gender, diversity and rights approach in the work of the OAS
- Women's political rights for democracy and governance
- Women's economic rights for integral development
- Citizen security from a gender and rights perspective
- Preventing and punishing gender-based violence
- Operational continuity and strengthening of the Inter-American Commission of Women.

The Executive Secretary stated that the document had been approved during the fifth meeting of the Informal Working Group for the preparation of this Assembly, inviting the delegates to consider the document and, if they deemed it appropriate, to approve it for implementation. The Vice President of the Assembly, the Delegate of Chile, offered the floor to the other delegations for comments on the document presented to the Executive Secretary of the CIM. No delegation requested the floor, and

the document was approved without comment. Minister Plá ended the session at 5:15 p.m. on May 7th 2019.

f. Fourth Plenary Session

CIM Executive Secretary Carmen Moreno opened the session on May 8th 2019 at 10:15 a.m. She greeted the delegations and then yielded the floor to the President of the CIM to begin the work. Minister Camilo asked the delegates to amend the agenda to allow the Government of the Dominican Republic to present the work it had been doing through the Social Policy Cabinet headed by Vice President Margarita Cedeño de Fernández. In this context, the President of the CIM informed the delegates that, by decree, the President of the Dominican Republic had formed a High-level Commission to study the SDG agenda. This Commission had three pillars, one of which covered the first five goals, which focus on people. She thanked the Vice President for her commitment to addressing gender issues and for the Ministry of Women's multidimensional approach.

In this context, the President of the CIM yielded the floor to Rosa María Suárez, Cabinet Chief and technical expert charged with supporting the agencies working to achieve the five people-focused SDGs, among them the Ministry for Women of the Dominican Republic. The Cabinet Chief expressed her gratitude for the opportunity to address these issues in greater depth and thanked the CIM and Minister Camilo for their leadership. With the aim of sharing good practices, the Cabinet Chief gave a presentation on the joint work under way with the Ministry of Women and other government agencies. She first described the conceptual framework, stressing the unremunerated and unrecognized work of women in the Dominican Republic and the rest of the region. Here she noted the barriers to women's participation in production processes and the exercise of their political rights. She invited the delegates to open a dialogue on social protection from a rights and gender-based approach so that women could exercise their rights in conditions of equality. She stressed the importance of designing and coordinating public policies to eliminate these inequalities. She also noted that the Government had a gender mainstreaming program aimed at identifying differences affecting men and women in the plans of other government agencies in the fields of housing, poverty, education, etc.

Afterward, the Cabinet Chief detailed the country's progress in reducing overall poverty and extreme poverty, describing women and children as the face of poverty. She also pointed to the higher human development ranking and increase in days of maternity leave. Nonetheless, she concluded that the Dominican Republic still faced significant challenges to achieving parity. In terms of employment, for example, 72% of men and 43% of women participated in the workforce; in terms of unemployment, the figures were 8% for men and 20.9% for women. Returning to the question of the unremunerated work of the majority of women, she pointed to the overall average wage gap of 21.3%, which was widening at the higher levels. She then noted the challenges of adolescent pregnancy, which was also related to young women's degree of participation in production processes and school dropout rates.

Next, she shared the government's experiences in this area, describing the Social Protection Floor with Gender Equality as an initiative that had facilitated the creation of a national and international roundtable, specifically with United Nations agencies: UN Women, UNDP, and ILO. Commenting that this work had led to a study of 27 social programs to assess the degree to which patterns of inequality between men and women were replicated in their design, she explained that following this

analysis, interventions to hasten the social protection of women and solve the problem of schooling and child care were prioritized. In this context, she stated that the Government had created a portfolio of services based on this analysis. She then invited the delegates to view a video summarizing the Social Protection Floor with Gender Equality program. Finally, she invited the delegates to adopt the issue of social protection as a rallying cry.

The President of the CIM thanked the Cabinet Chief for her participation and commitment and then returned to the Assembly's agenda, opening the **Dialogue among the Principal Delegates: Good Practices in the Theme of the Assembly: *Equality and Autonomy in the Exercise of Women's Political Rights***. The President of the CIM offered the floor to the delegations to present their good practices, experiences, and opinions.

All the delegations opened their remarks by thanking CIM Executive Secretary Carmen Moreno for her excellent work and years of service. They also thanked Minister Camilo for her work representing the host country and as the new President of the CIM.

Brazil: The Alternate Delegate commented on the Government of Brazil's commitment to the political rights of women in the Americas. He stressed the importance of the Belém do Pará Convention in the efforts to eradicate violence against women. He reminded the Assembly that the Convention had been signed in Brazil in 1994 and affirmed his government's commitment to implementing the Convention of Belém do Pará and combatting violence against women. He noted the creation of the Ministry for Women, Family, and Human Rights and stated that Brazil is a country committed to the international and human rights systems, reflected in its protection and prevention policies. The delegate affirmed his country's commitment to eradicating discrimination, femicide, and sexual violence and, finally, to indigenous and Afrodescendent women and women who work in the production of handicrafts.

Paraguay: The Principal Delegate noted that Paraguayan women had been actively involved in political life as voters since 1961. Since the dawn of the democratic era, some 30%-40% of the multiple candidates for office had been women. Nonetheless, only 16.8% of the seats in the National Congress were held by women. She noted the difficulty of participating under conditions of equality, despite Paraguay's legislation on campaign financing and access to media. Here she noted that the State provided subsidies and budget lines for political parties. However, there were still formal obstacles to obtaining elective office due to gender stereotypes; cultural, economic, and social factors, and the limitations of public policies. The delegate reported that in February of this year, the Ministry of Women had presented the Fourth National Equality Plan,⁵ whose main objective was to overcome the obstacles to substantive equality between men and women and one of whose human rights pillars was empowerment in decision making. Stating that one of the Ministry of Women's priorities was to promote the political engagement of women and the eradication of violence against women, the delegate noted that while progress had been made in this area, eliminating gender inequality and empowering women and girls were still national, regional, and global challenges. Finally, she called on the countries to work in concert to transform the political, economic, and cultural landscape.

5. Available at:

http://www.mujer.gov.py/application/files/6515/4583/7140/DECRETO936_plan_de_igualdad.pdf

Canada: The Alternate Delegate underscored her country's commitment to gender equality, stating that to effectively achieve this, women and girls must participate in all areas and their diversity must be recognized. She then stated that Canada was committed to women and girls when it came to guaranteeing their right to live free of violence and guaranteeing their sexual and reproductive rights. She noted that Canada had a feminist agenda and sought to work with and contribute to the international agenda for the promotion of women's rights. She stated that the country had been working with different organizations to improve the quality of life of indigenous, Afro-descendant, and immigrant women, as well as women working in different social settings. She acknowledged that violence against women was still a challenge for the region and that Canada was fully committed to protecting women and girls against violence and discrimination and investigating such incidents. She noted that the women's movement had been essential to strengthening the women's agenda in both the political sphere and the national and international agenda and that diversity had been an important line of work for Canada. She emphasized that the Government of Canada considered violence against women a human rights violation and that in this context, Canada had invested millions of dollars to promote women's rights and guarantee their right to live free of violence in all settings, both private and public. Finally, she noted Canada's participation and support for the creation and work of the Task Force, indicating that it would continue its support and work to promote women's rights in the region.

Dominican Republic: The Alternate Delegate described the Ministry for Women's progress in promoting the political rights of women and equality, historically demanded by Dominican women, stating that the Ministry considered parity and equity essential for safeguarding democracy in the Dominican Republic and the region. In this regard, she reaffirmed the commitment of Minister Camilo, through the Ministry of Women, to promoting more women to senior management positions and the administrative bodies of political parties. With respect to specific Ministry actions, she indicated that the Ministry was holding workshops for women throughout the country to develop strategies for promoting the participation of women politicians by raising awareness among women leaders of political parties and providing technical and conceptual tools to qualify them to run for office – all this with a view to the 2020 elections. Other good practices cited by the delegate were the inclusion of affirmative action in some laws, with rotation of the sexes in the mayors' and deputy mayor's offices. She indicated that the new Election Law requires a minimum of 40% and a maximum of 60% women candidates, the creation of gender committees in the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate and of gender offices in municipalities, the creation of an Observatory on the Political Participation of Women⁶ by the Central Board of Elections, the creation of a Commission on Policies for Equality between Men and Women, activities and training for women politicians, the allocation of 4% for gender activities in the municipalities, and the organization of a national photo for women in political parties, among other initiatives. She confirmed that work is currently under way on a third iteration of the National Gender Equality and Equity Plan, one of whose main concerns will be political participation and representation. Finally, she noted that to date, the country had gained two women vice presidents, presidents in the national Senate, and presidents in the high courts.

Costa Rica: The Alternate Delegate referred mainly to the progress that Costa Rica had made in recent years in the field of human rights and the political engagement of women, stating that its greatest achievement had been application of the parity principle in its vertical and horizontal dimensions. She stated that this had not been achieved until the 2018 elections, since in the 2014 elections, the parity principle had only been applied vertically. She informed the Assembly that in the

6. Available from: <http://observatorioigualdad.jce.gob.do/>

national elections of February 2018, 26 women deputies had been elected in 57 districts – that is, representation of 46% women, the highest figure in the country’s history. She also noted the election of the third woman to hold the office of President of the Legislative Assembly in Costa Rica, the creation of a legislative directorate with women in the majority in 2018, the election of the first Afro-descendant Vice President in the country and the region, and the election of the first female Attorney General of Costa Rica, among other women in high public office. Finally, she observed that these great strides notwithstanding, women still faced significant barriers and challenges to political participation.

Chile: The Alternate Delegate described the plans for achieving women’s participation in different public settings, stating that Chile had made progress toward women’s full participation in politics. Much remained to be done, however she noted that the full participation of women was key to building and maintaining a healthy democracy and went hand in hand with gender equality, since women needed democracy to change the systems and laws that hinder their advancement. She indicated that in Chile, this situation is reflected in contradictory figures that show that despite women’s efforts and desire to participate, they still faced structural barriers to achieving full participation. She observed that while 52% of political party activists were women, only 22% of seats in the Chamber of Deputies were held by women; that although half of the students enrolled in higher education were women, only 6.5% of the CEOs of major enterprises were women. She then reported that through the regulatory process, Chile had opted to improve its institutions to promote women’s participation, pointing to Law 20.840 of 2015⁷ replacing the binomial system and offering incentives for political parties to promote women’s participation in politics. She then indicated that the initial results of Law 20.840 had been reflected in the parliamentary elections of 2017, which resulted in an increase in the number of women elected to both houses. The delegate emphasized, however, that this progress was not enough, noting the Chile was committed to accelerating and increasing women’s participation in all public spaces.

Argentina: The Alternate Delegate stated that Argentina’s efforts in the struggle and search for parity and equality in political participation dated back to 1911 with the first bill on women’s suffrage, which had met with little success. It was not until 1947 that progress was made in this area. The delegate then reported the passage of the quota law of 1991, mandating that at least 30% of congressional seats must be held by women. She noted that this first initiative had been a success, since the percentage of female legislators in the Chamber of Deputies had risen from 4.3% to 27.6%. Nonetheless, she indicated that implementation of this law had also revealed some gaps that needed to be addressed to meet the minimum target of 30%. In this context, she also noted that the law did not require female candidates to be on the ballot; thus, the quotas could not always be met. She observed that as a result, new regulations to close these gaps had been adopted in 2000 and that these regulations also covered Senators, which had not initially been covered by the law. She informed the Assembly that as the result of these changes, 38% the seats in the Chamber of Deputies were held by women in 2018. She also noted that in the Senate, this figure had jumped from 1.4% to 40% in 2018. In this context, the delegate commented that women’s political participation had improved not only quantitatively but qualitatively, since their participation had resulted in more laws and regulations with a gender perspective, notably: the quota law for women in unions, the Law for Protection and the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women,⁸ the Law for the

7. Available from: <https://www.leychile.cl/Navegar?idNorma=1077039>

8. Available from: https://www.oas.org/dil/esp/ley_de_proteccion_integral_de_mujeres_argentina.pdf

Prevention and Punishment of Human Trafficking,⁹ and the Reform of the New Civil and Commercial Code, recognizing the economic value of the unremunerated work of women and providing compensation for this work in the case of divorce, among other advances. She highlighted the Parity Law, scheduled for implementation in the next elections, which amends the Organic Law on Political Parties, introducing the obligation of parties to guarantee parity in their charter. She observed, however, that Argentina faces significant challenges in this area, since women are still under-represented. Finally, she commented that while women have held high public offices in Argentina, parity has not yet been achieved.

Ecuador: The Principal Delegate discussed the greatest milestones in the country's history, such as women's suffrage. She stated that the country had made real progress in advancing women's political and civil rights, fundamental freedoms, and the prevention and eradication of violence against women. As for increasing the number of women in decision-making positions, despite the progress on paper – for example, the Parity Law of 2009, the Democracy Code of 2009, and the clear increase in women's political participation, there was still a wide gap in terms of elected officials at the national level. The delegate pointed out that in the parliamentary elections of 2017, while the 50% quota was in force, only 38% of the seats were held by women. On the other hand, she noted that several women had been selected to occupy senior positions in various State functions through merit-based competitions. She noted, for example, that legislative, electoral, and judicial functions were overseen by women. In the case of elections, she indicated that an indigenous woman was in charge and that the National Attorney General's Office was headed by an Afro-Ecuadorian woman. She also emphasized the importance of amending the regulations to include parity in *first-past-the-post* positions: establishing mechanisms to achieve parity in electoral results and not just candidacies; and improving training for women to achieve their participation and representation in decision-making positions at all levels of government. She added that this should take place in a context free of discrimination and violence against women, noting that in Ecuador, the Comprehensive Organic Law for the Prevention and Eradication of Violence against Women included political violence as a type of violence perpetrated against women that, while not typified in current legal instruments, required action to prevent, address, and provide reparations for this type of violence. Finally, the delegate observed that in addition to respect for human rights, guaranteeing the exercise of women's right to participate in political and public life was a critical strategic issue for guaranteeing democracy in the country.

Suriname: The Alternate Delegate stressed that the Government of the Republic of Suriname was committed to the right of all women to participate in public spaces free of violence. She reiterated the country's support for the OAS and the CIM and noted that her country had ratified the Belém do Pará Convention in 2002, which had resulted in real progress in the country in this regard. In this context, she stated that the government had made a commitment to eradicating violence against women in the form of domestic violence and trafficking. She indicated that Suriname had actively participated in the MESECVI and had been committed to the work that joining the Convention entailed. She also noted that Suriname had supported the OAS and CARICOM initiatives in this regard. The delegate then stated that the government had presented priority public policies for this year, with initiatives focusing especially on children, youth, and gender policies. She noted that action had been taken to combat domestic violence and sexual abuse and harassment in the workplace and to raise awareness about violence against women. The delegate also stressed that her country was promoting gender

9. Available from: <http://servicios.infoleg.gob.ar/infolegInternet/anexos/140000-144999/140100/norma.htm>
<http://servicios.infoleg.gob.ar/infolegInternet/anexos/140000-144999/140100/norma.htm>

equality as part of its international commitments, and women's participation in politics as an important factor for the country. In the name of the Government of Suriname, the delegate expressed support for the Declaration of Santo Domingo and the Triennial Program of Work 2019-2021 adopted by this Assembly.

Bolivia: The Principal Delegate reaffirmed her government's commitment to the international mechanisms for the promotion of women's rights and participation. She described the regulatory advances in parity and rotation and the work of different women's organizations toward progress in this area. The delegate stated that the legislative reforms had represented major progress in promoting women's participation, but they were not enough, emphasizing that women must organize to advance the national agenda. She reported that a depatriarchalization agenda had been drafted with the national and regional authorities. She indicated that last October 11, on National Women's Day in Bolivia, President Evo Morales had reaffirmed his commitment to prioritizing the creation of the National Machinery for the Advancement of Women in the country. As a result, the Ana María Romero Plurinational Service for Women and Depatriarchalization¹⁰ was created under the Ministry of Justice and Institutional Transparency, commencing operations on March 8th of this year. The delegate noted that one of the mandates of this new service was the monitoring and evaluation of gender equality policies.

She also reported the creation of a Cabinet, presided over by the President of the Republic himself, for the formulation and implementation of policies to accelerate the advancement of women's rights, listing four priority objectives in this regard: contribute to the reduction of political violence against women in elective office, promote the political participation of women, reduce the wage gap between men and women, and make progress toward deconstructing gender stereotypes associated with perceptions of men and women's role in society. In this regard, the delegate stated her government's commitment to advancing equality and co-responsibility for care. Finally, she underscored the importance of CIM support to improve data on the exercise of women's rights and the reduction of political violence against women.

Colombia: The Alternate Delegate stressed that for Colombia, women's leadership was closely linked with autonomy and power. She stated that the country was working to guarantee women's autonomy and equality in the exercise of their political rights. She cited the enactment of the Quota Law in 2000, which had contributed to greater inclusion of women on the ballot and enabled women to have a place in political parties. She observed that these were positive developments but that much remained to be done because of the persistence of institutional and cultural barriers. She noted that too few women held elected office and that the reason for this was still the lack of support from political parties and political movements, along with continued discrimination against women. Thus, she called for models to follow that could open the way and facilitate the discussion of gender equity issues. She considered the election of the first woman to the office of Vice President in 2018 a great achievement, reminding the Assembly that this was the highest elected office held by a woman in the country's history. She added that the national government has the political will to form a ministerial cabinet with parity in which women oversee important portfolios such as labor, education, transportation, justice, the interior, mining and energy, information technology, and culture. She also indicated that secretariats had been created in the country's mayoral offices and governorates to implement programs to address women's lack of autonomy in the regions and enable them to exercise their rights and citizenship. She also pointed to the country's efforts to guarantee Colombian women's access to higher education, indicating that more women were currently graduating than

10. See: <https://www.lexivox.org/norms/BO-DS-N3774.html>

men. In other words, Colombia had achieved the academic qualification of more women. Finally, the delegate stated that there were several initiatives to promote women's leadership in politics and enhance women's role in closing the gender gaps cited in the National Development Plan 2018-2022;¹¹ these initiatives included the design and implementation of training activities to encourage women's participation in the popular election dynamic and the implementation of parity measures.

Antigua and Barbuda: The Principal Delegate stated that women's rights had been a key concern and challenge for the Government of Antigua and Barbuda, indicating that the country had made progress with respect to women's representation in positions of power. She then described the situation of women who had been victims of violence, noting that with assistance from UN Women, the country had been able to provide concrete support to tackle the issue of violence against women, which had had a significant impact on the services offered. The delegate stated the Government of Antigua and Barbuda considered prevention an important line of work, indicating that it had been working to educate the public and raise awareness to promote women's rights; a number of projects were under way in the country to promote this agenda. With regard to legislation, the delegate stated that the country was working to address the issue of sexual harassment and abuse, promoting specific legislation in this area. She then indicated that one of the country's greatest challenges in this regard was collecting data and information for the subsequent design of public policies. The delegate also noted the need to improve the response to the situation of women in hurricanes and natural disasters, stating that dealing with women's issues in these situations was a complex matter. Finally, with regard to women's political leadership, she emphasized the need to intensify work with political parties, observing that this is a process that required willingness on the part of the parties themselves. Thus, it was very important to promote this agenda.

Before proceeding to the other delegates' remarks, the President of the CIM asked the delegations to approve a change in the agenda to allow the country's media to enter for a press conference, a proposal that was endorsed by the delegates. The President of the CIM invited the Vice Presidents-elect of the CIM to come to the head table. Accordingly, the delegates of Canada, Colombia, and Panama joined the President and the Executive Secretary. After the press conference, the delegates resumed their remarks.

Mexico: The Principal Delegate stated that women's political rights were a priority issue for the Government of Mexico, because decision-making bodies were undoubtedly where significant changes could be made that affected the public, especially women, girls, and other groups that had been omitted from the priorities. The delegate reported that six years ago, an initiative had been launched that addressed the demands and needs of different women's groups and civil society organizations to reinforce women's political and electoral rights. She stated that political parties were required to guarantee parity in the registration of candidates in both houses of Congress and local districts. The delegate commented that under the Election Policy Reform, the National Institute of Women (INMUJERES) had promoted activities and strategies to guarantee respect for the parity principle and had promoted vertical and horizontal national legislation to create the necessary conditions for ensuring equal opportunities in federal, state, and municipal elections. The delegate noted that strict application of the parity principle had yielded results that favored not only women but society as a whole, putting Mexico at the forefront of women's political participation. She observed that the elections of 2018 were marked by the historic participation of women, with 18,299 federal and local posts in contention and half of the candidacies set aside for women. The delegate

11. Available from: <https://www.dnp.gov.co/DNPN/Paginas/Plan-Nacional-de-Desarrollo.aspx>

reported that today, women constituted 49% of the Senate and 48% of the Chamber of Deputies, ranking Mexico fourth in the world in terms of female legislators in the lower house. The delegate also reported that application of the parity principle had also had a significant impact on local governing bodies, since women held 49% of the seats, on average. The delegate stated that the number of women Presidents in the municipalities had risen from 6.8% in 2014, prior to the parity requirement, to 22.6% after the last elections in 2018. She observed, however, that despite this progress, Mexico continued to grapple with sociocultural barriers designed to keep women from exercising their rights through deplorable actions such as gender-based political violence. Finally, the delegate stated that combatting this violence would require strengthening the rule of law, which should guarantee equal and peaceful exercise of the political and electoral rights of all citizens.

Honduras: The Principal Delegate reported that Honduras had had a parity and rotation rule since 2016, commenting that the results of the 2017 elections had by no means been positive. Noting that before, with the 40% minimum, the situation had been better, stating that Honduras had gone from 25.8% in 2014 to 21.8% in 2018; in other words, women's participation had decreased with the Parity and Rotation Law; furthermore, it had only increased by 1% in the mayoral elections and a bit more in the elections for deputy mayor, figures that were insufficient to generate change. One good practice that the delegate cited was the Academy for Women Candidates,¹² created to train and educate all women who were potential candidates for public office; she pointed to Fátima Mena, a deputy in Parliament, as a product of these candidate training courses. The delegate noted the need for an Academy for Women Parliamentarians as follow-up to the Academy for Women Candidates,¹³ in order to pursue the gender agenda in parliament. She also indicated that the National Institute of Women offered a platform for women's leadership in the municipal women's offices, from which candidates emerged. Thus, there was ongoing training. The delegate stressed the importance of working with local governments, mainly women mayors.

Panama: The Principal Delegate informed the Assembly of Panama's recent elections on May 5, 2019, citing its 72% citizen participation and noting that the majority of people who went to the polls were women. She indicated that in terms of equality, the country was experiencing difficulties of an "informal" nature, since despite the parity law, political parties did not encourage women's participation, creating a bottleneck. She noted that even though parity had been mandated, it was not reflected in women's participation, since only 16% of the mayoral candidates had been women. She therefore concluded that the main obstacle lay in the political parties. The delegate stated that Panama had made significant progress: for example, the National Institute for Women had taken action to guarantee greater participation by women in the recent elections, and, with CIM support, the leadership of new political figures had been promoted. She also reported that Panama had a women's political forum with a united front, creating a new organization that called on women to be proactive, to be young women with their own agenda who sought to increase their participation in public forums. Citing the CIM's Model Law on political violence as an instrument that should be implemented in Panama, she observed that the new administration would face the challenge of enforcing the law and increasing women's participation in political life. She asserted that it was not enough to have the formal right if women did not pursue equality with one voice and with strength and determination, which should begin by working with the political parties. At the same time, she pointed out that it was women who had brought the issue of equality to the fore and it was they who

12. See: http://www.inam.gob.hn/web/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=78:academia-de-candidatas&catid=34&Itemid=297

13. See: <http://congresonacional.hn/index.php/2018/08/02/7048/29/>

had pushed to advance the agenda. Finally, the delegate praised the MESECVI's work to implement the Convention of Belém do Pará, which had been signed and ratified by the State of Panama.

Nicaragua: The Principal Delegate reported that the country had made real progress in women's participation but, there was awareness that it could go backwards or stagnate. She stated that the political situation in the region was complicated and that women's empowerment and participation were essential for eradicating poverty. She also stated that Nicaragua had introduced reforms to promote the political participation of women and that as a result, 53% of the members of the government cabinet were women. She noted that the country had also made progress in increasing the number of women in embassies. Pointing out that Nicaragua was a relatively young country and a country of women, she emphasized that the Government considered it essential for women to gain access to positions of power, adding that having and wielding political power was essential; thus, increasing political empowerment and access was key and a task that should continue to receive support. The delegate indicated that education was another major challenge, stating that the country had introduced the Peace Policy, in which civil society, leaders, teachers, and students participated to develop a model of peace and equity. Finally, she asserted that respect and equal human and political rights for women and men must be a reality in all public spaces.

Guatemala: The Alternate Delegate reminded the Assembly that the human rights of women had historically been violated, stating that in the particular case of Guatemala, it had become a recurrent and extremely serious problem that had burgeoned in recent years, infringing on the human rights of women, among them the right of all women to live free of violence. The delegate stressed that women's right to actively participate free of harassment and violence should be guaranteed and that Guatemalan institutions had introduced mechanisms to promote women's political participation, forging partnerships with the Guatemala Forum of Women from Political Parties to empower and train new generations of women. She indicated that this line of work was consistent with the line of work on participation found in the National Policy for the Promotion and Comprehensive Development of Women and the Equal Opportunities Plan¹⁴ – policy instruments that give young and adolescent girls, women, older women, and Maya, Garifuna, and mestiza women real and effective access to comprehensive development. She mentioned the work the country has done with men with respect to their view of masculinity and the search for support from more men. The delegate reported that laws against femicide and other forms of violence against women,¹⁵ sexual violence and human trafficking,¹⁶ and comprehensive protection for children and adolescents were currently being advocated.¹⁷

The President of the CIM thanked all the delegates for the presentations, discussions, and good practices they had shared and ended this session at 12:25 pm on May 8th 2019. Before proceeding to lunch, she stressed the importance of recognizing women, since history had been written mainly by

14. Both available from:

http://www.segeplan.gob.gt/downloads/clearinghouse/politicas_publicas/Derechos%20Humanos/Politica%20Promoci%C3%B3n%20y%20desarrollo%20Mujeres%202008-2023.pdf

15. Available from: <http://www.sipi.siteal.iipe.unesco.org/normativas/1465/decreto-ley-ndeg-222008-ley-contra-el-femicidio-y-otras-formas-de-violencia-contra>

16. Available from: http://www.sipi.siteal.iipe.unesco.org/sites/default/files/sipi_normativa/ley-contra-la-violencia-sexual-explotacion-y-trata-de-personas - decreto 9-2009 -guatemala.pdf

17. Available from: <http://www.sipi.siteal.iipe.unesco.org/normativas/115/decreto-ndeg-272003-ley-de-proteccion-integral-de-la-ninez-y-adolescencia-pina>

men. In this context, she stated that since the founding of the OAS, many women had deserved recognition, citing the case of Wanda Jones, Principal Delegate of the United States to the CIM, who was the most senior delegate in the CIM. The President thanked her for her work in the CIM since 2008 and presented her with a token of recognition. The President of the CIM then yielded the floor to the Delegate of Mexico to recognize Carmen Moreno for her 10 years as Executive Secretary of the CIM. The President thanked her for the progress in promoting women's rights and advancing the gender agenda in the region. The Principal Delegate of Mexico acknowledged the work of the Executive Secretariat of the CIM under the leadership of Ms. Moreno since 2009. Afterwards, the Principal Delegate of Panama, as President of the Conference of States Party to the Belém do Pará Convention, also recognized the work of the Executive Secretary and presented her with an award on behalf of all the delegates. The President of the CIM ended the session and invited the delegates to a luncheon in honor of Carmen Moreno.

Report of the General Committee

The President of the CIM, together with the Executive Secretary of the CIM, resumed the fourth plenary session at 2:30 pm with the presentation of the Report of the General Committee and consideration of the drafts of the Declaration of Santo Domingo and resolutions under Item 7 of the Agenda. The President thanked the delegates for their work, collaboration, and efforts in preparing the drafts of these documents. She then yielded the floor to Dayana Ureña, Advisor, Alternate Representative of the Permanent Mission of the Dominican Republic to the OAS, who had chaired the meetings of the Informal Working Group for the Preparation of the Thirty-eighth Assembly of Delegates of the CIM in Washington, D.C.

The Representative described the Working Group's preparations for the Assembly, which had involved six sessions – five in Washington, D.C. and one in Santo Domingo – stating that the documents that had emerged from these sessions already enjoyed a broad consensus. She then presented the draft Declaration of Santo Domingo on Equality and Autonomy in the Exercise of Women's Political Rights to Strengthen Democracy, along with three draft resolutions. The President of the CIM thanked the Representative for her report and invited the delegations to consider the final text.

Consideration of the draft Declaration of Santo Domingo and draft resolutions

The President of the CIM yielded the floor to the Executive Secretary of the CIM to provide an overview of the Declaration of Santo Domingo. The Executive Secretary indicated that the Informal Working Group had agreed on the draft and was submitting it to the delegates for consideration. The President of the CIM then yielded the floor to the delegations.

United States: The Principal Delegate thanked the Executive Secretariat of the CIM and the Government of the Dominican Republic for hosting this Assembly de Delegates. She also acknowledged the work and efforts of Carmen Moreno in the Executive Secretariat of the CIM to promote the rights of women and girls in the region. She stated that the Government of the United States had supported equality between men and women and the CIM's efforts all these years, especially its work on the right to be free of violence in public and political spaces. She underscored that her country had always sought a consensus that benefitted all women and girls and the political rights they deserved. She also stated that, in her Government's view, investing in these issues meant

investing in peace and the future, since women contributed to democratic stability and peace. The delegate indicated that the United States could not join the consensus on the Declaration, though it emphatically supported the efforts to strengthen the political participation of women. She stated that her country preferred the use of the term “women” instead of “gender”.

Paraguay: The Alternate Delegate reiterated Paraguay’s position regarding the Declaration of Santo Domingo. She noted that the country had indicated its desired changes in the exchange of documents and Working Group sessions and expressed concern that her requests had not been reflected in the document. She confirmed that her country would not join the consensus and would send a note so stating to the President through the Executive Secretariat.

The President of the CIM thanked the United States and Paraguay for their comments and proceeded to declare the draft Declaration approved with the observations of these countries.

Next, the President submitted the three draft resolutions to the Assembly for consideration:

CIM/doc.8/19	Draft Resolution on the Venue and Date of the Thirty-ninth Assembly of Delegates of the Inter-American Commission of Women
CIM/doc.9/19 rev.1	Adoption of the Triennial Program of Work 2019-2022 of the Inter-American Commission of Women
CIM/doc.10/19 rev.1	Vote of thanks to the Government and people of the Dominican Republic

The plenary adopted the resolutions as agreed in the Informal Working Group.

Other matters

Proceeding to Item 8 of the Agenda, the President of the CIM offered the floor to any delegation wishing to address another matter.

The Principal Delegate of the **United States** took the floor to comment that after her years in the CIM, despite important progress, women still faced obstacles in all public and private settings. However, she noted the advances of the past 30 years, offering personal examples of how she had identified women’s progress from the vantage point of her own experience. She recalled her 11 years working in the CIM and stressed that she would not cease her work to promote women’s rights.

Brazil thanked all delegations for their contributions and for the work to promote equality between men and women. The delegate reiterated the position of the Brazilian Government that favors the use of the term "equality between women and men" instead of "gender equality." She expressed, however, support for the recently approved Declaration of Santo Domingo and the work of the CIM.

g. Closing Session

In the closing session, Janet Camilo, President of the CIM 2019-2022 and Principal Delegate of the Dominican Republic, offered some closing remarks, thanking her Government and the Executive Secretariat of the CIM for their work in organizing the Thirty-eighth Assembly of Delegates and

inviting all the delegates to continue their support for the Executive Committee over the next triennium. She reminded the delegates that the CIM was an organization that since its founding in 1928 had sought to maintain promotion of the human rights of women in the Americas as its lodestar, serving as a forum for dialogue and helping to foster public policies that promoted women's rights and gender equality. The President affirmed the political will of the authorities to approve the Declaration of Santo Domingo despite their differences. She thanked the ministers for supporting her candidacy, especially Liriola Leoteau, Principal Delegate of Panama, who had done so while withdrawing her own, stating that women knew how to reach agreements to make progress. The President stated that this was the century of women in power and that women would not accomplish this alone. She therefore thanked men for supporting the cause. The President acknowledged the work of the team and reiterated her thanks to the delegates.

At 3:05 p.m., the President closed the Thirty-eighth Assembly of Delegates of the Inter-American Commission of women.