



# Speech

Organization of American States



**LUIGI R. EINAUDI, ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL OF  
THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES  
AT THE INAUGURAL SESSION OF THE MEETING OF  
EXPERTS ON GENDER AND SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY  
August 23, 2004 - Washington, DC**

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Dr. Sophia Huyer, Executive Director of the Gender Advisory Board of the UN Commission on Science and Technology for Development  
Dr. Alice Abreu, Director of the OAS Office of Science and Technology  
Dr. Carmen Lomellin, Executive Secretary of the Inter-American Commission of Women,  
Delegates to COMCYT and CIM, invited Experts and Guests  
Ladies and Gentlemen

I am pleased to welcome you today to this Meeting of Experts on Gender and Science and Technology. The Office of Science and Technology of the OAS, the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM) and the Gender Advisory Board (GAB) of the United Nations Commission on Science and Technology for Development (UNCSTD) are to be congratulated for this initiative. You are distinguished regional experts and I hope your conclusions will have a significant impact.

Our objective is to develop recommendations on gender mainstreaming for the First Meeting of Ministers and High Officials in Science and Technology in the framework of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development. The meeting is scheduled for November 11 and 12, 2004, in Lima, Peru and will be the first such meeting in 8 years. The Hemispheric Agenda in this area must be completely re-evaluated. So you have an unusual opportunity to shape key inputs for the next Summit of the Americas.

Two interesting and convergent processes have led to this opportunity. Last year, to comply with the mandates of the Summit of the Americas Process, of the Inter-American Program on the Promotion on Women's Humans Rights and Gender Equity and Equality (IAP), of the Inter-American Program on Science and Technology, and of other pertinent bodies, such as the Inter-American Committee on Science and Technology (COMCYT), the OAS Office of Science and Technology (OST) began efforts to integrate a gender perspective in its activities, and to support Member States in formulating recommendations for gender mainstreaming into science and technology policies and programs. These efforts have been framed within the preparatory process for the Science and Technology Ministerial Meeting.

Even before the OST began its effort, the CIM, the Inter-American Commission of Women developed a strategy, known as SEPIA, to integrate gender perspectives into Ministerial Agendas. This strategy was applied to the areas of labor in 2001, justice in 2002, and education in 2003. The convergence of purposes of the OST and the CIM, and the opportunity of using the SEPIA strategy for the Science and Technology Ministerial resulted in a joint project, in which, fortunately for us all, the Gender Advisory Board of the UN Commission on Science and Technology for Development is also participating.

On a broader note, I am also exceptionally satisfied with our progress in placing the issue of gender equity and equality on the forefront of our consciousness at the OAS. When I speak of "our" progress, it is important to note that the progress achieved has been the result of many efforts at many levels. The governments of the OAS Member States, civil society and multilateral organizations have all contributed. Since the adoption in 2000 of the Inter-American Program on the Promotion of Women's Rights and Gender Equity and Equality, through the three successful SEPIA initiatives, the OAS has increasingly emphasized the need to ensure that women's voices and needs are taken into consideration, and that women and men share fully and equally, both in the benefits of development and responsibility for the future.

Women as a class face considerable barriers outside the home, in school, in the

workplace, and in public life. These barriers are I suspect particularly pronounced in the area of Science and Technology, including even as consumers of scientific and technological innovations for development. In general, the participation of women in science and technology is limited by cultural and traditional prejudices that begin in childhood. In the scientific and technical workplace – perhaps even more than other areas like the law where women are gaining substantial opportunities, women earn less, are promoted less frequently to senior academic ranks, and have less opportunity to publish than their male counterparts. In society as a whole, studies have shown that women's general marginalization, their poverty levels and lower access to resources of all kinds, severely limit their access to new technologies and to scientific knowledge. Women's inability to participate in the knowledge society hinders development and the reduction of poverty.

I believe that it is possible to change these conditions. The OAS actively promotes the full and equal participation of women in political leadership, economic empowerment and peace and security, among other issues. Gender promoting initiatives in science and technology should now be in the forefront of efforts to develop the intellectual capital our societies need to succeed..

I am hopeful that the initiative to integrate a gender perspective in Science and Technology policies and programs in the Hemisphere can yield successful results. I wish you much success and look forward to the results of your meeting.

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