



**FOLLOW-UP MECHANISM OF THE
BELÉM DO PARÁ CONVENTION (MESECVI)
SECOND SPECIAL CONFERENCE
OF STATES PARTY**
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RAPPORTEUR
**SECOND SPECIAL CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTY OF THE FOLLOW-UP
MECHANISM OF THE INTER-AMERICAN CONVENTION ON THE PREVENTION,
PUNISHMENT, AND ERADICATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN,
*CONVENTION OF BELÉM DO PARÁ***

1. Adoption of the Draft Agenda and Schedule of Activities and election of the Rapporteurship of the Second Extraordinary Conference of States Party

The Second Special Conference of States Party of the Follow-up Mechanism to the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women “Belem do Pará” (MESECVI), was held on February 21, 2018, at the headquarters of the Organization of American States (OAS), in Washington, DC.

Twenty-two delegations from the following countries participated in this meeting: Argentina, Barbados, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Republic Dominican Republic, Saint Lucia, Suriname, Uruguay and Venezuela.

The event was opened by the Assistant Secretary General of the Organization of American States, Ambassador Néstor Méndez, and the President of the Conference of States Party to the MESECVI/General Director of the National Institute for Women of Panama, Liriola Leoteau.

Once the agenda and the calendar of activities were approved, Uruguay was elected by acclamation as Rapporteur for the Second Special Conference of States Party.

2. Dialogue on emerging issues within the framework of the Strategic Plan of the MESECVI 2018-2023

The President of the Conference of States Party (CoSP), Ms. Liriola Leoteau, initiated the dialogue, giving the floor to the Judge of the Inter-American Court, Elizabeth Odio Benito, who spoke about *"Violence against women and access to justice."* The Judge began by mentioning that the CIM has not received its proper acknowledgment within the Inter-American Human Rights System and welcomed the work that the MESECVI has been doing. Continuing, she highlighted the obstacles that women face in the different countries of the region when they seek access to justice due to sexist violence. The Judge emphasized the need to review education programs. She mentioned that the Inter-American Court of Human Rights began to take the Convention of Belém do Pará into account in 2000. She emphasized the importance of the ruling of Campo Algodonero vs. Mexico and the application of the Convention particularly in the relation to the reparations focused on public policy to eradicate violence against women. Likewise, the Judge made mention of the judgments J. v. Peru, of 2013, Espinoza González v. Peru, and the recent case of forced sterilization, I.V v. Bolivia. She stressed that all these judgments bind the concerned States, as well as all other States that have accepted the jurisdiction of the Inter-American Court, with respect to the control of conventionality.

Next, Julianne Malveaux, President and founder of Economic Education, began her presentation on *"Violence and Human Rights of Afro-Descendant Women"*. She mentioned two cases in the United States of sexual violence against Afro-descendant women, highlighting impunity and levels of violence in such cases. She continued by mentioning how the data on violence against women in the United States is incomplete because women often do not report for various reasons. She emphasized that this situation is more complex for Afro-descendant women, and addressed

the issue of intersectionality and the absence of racial/ethnic factors in the #metoo movement, highlighting a case of workplace harassment against a woman of African descent that was first brought to the Supreme Court of the United States in the eighties. She said that in the United States and other countries in the region, violence against Afro-descendant women continues to be an invisible issue. Julianne Malveaux called on the States to incorporate the struggles of Afro-descendant women in their countries, and also mentioned violence against transgender women of African descent and the complexity of the violence they face.

Otilia Lux de Cotí, an activist for the rights of indigenous communities, continued with the dialogue by making her presentation on "*Violence and the human rights of indigenous women*". She mentioned that violence against indigenous women is a consequence of colonization and a patriarchal system, and that they have experienced discrimination and racism as well as human trafficking and child marriage among other forms of violence. She explained that most indigenous women live in rural areas, and their situation necessitates the creation of differential social policies. She highlighted structural discrimination against indigenous women, as well as political violence against women. She claimed that women are held hostage by the criminalization of the defense of land. She also referred to rape used as a weapon of war and genocide and as a strategy in all armed conflicts, and highlighted the fight against impunity in these cases in Guatemala. Finally, she mentioned litigation with cultural relevance, and mentioned the existence of challenges for justice systems in the area of sexual violence in armed conflict, and the need for innovation of evidentiary standard with a focus on human rights, cultural, gender and feminist rights.

Next, Pamela Molina, Disability Specialist of the Organization of American States (OAS), presented on "*Violence and women with disabilities*". To begin with, she highlighted the few spaces they have had to discuss violence against women with disabilities. She mentioned that disability is a social construction just like gender, and stressed the need to include women with disabilities in the work of the MESECVI. She explained that women and girls with disabilities suffer twice as many situations of violence, abuse and exploitation, and are at risk of disproportionate levels of poverty, lack of opportunities, access to education and employment and the denial of their political and civil rights. She emphasized how inequality has been normalized and that the laws do not take women and girls with disabilities into account. There is a serious lack of statistics that erases the experiences of these women and girls. She also highlighted the particular obstacles faced by handicapped women and girl victims of violence in accessing justice and the channels of denunciation, protection and containment, and emphasized that there is extremely limited access to the judicial system. She proposed an approach to human rights that takes into account all rights without putting them in opposition to each other. Pamela Molina also mentioned international and regional instruments regarding the rights of persons with disabilities, including the Inter-American Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities and the Program of Action for the Decade of the Americas for the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities. She highlighted the necessity of the generation of intersectional policies that measure the fulfillment of human rights, in collaboration with the CEVI and the United Nations. In summary, she highlighted challenges such as the lack of statistical data, the existence of myths about women with disabilities, the absence of

intersectionality, barriers to access to justice and national legal frameworks in harmony with international and regional instruments on the subject.

Continuing with the dialogue, Claudia Paz y Paz, Secretary of Multidimensional Security of the OAS, spoke about "*Trafficking and Missing Women*". She pointed out that recent studies suggest that 71% of victims of human trafficking are women, and that most of them are victims of sexual exploitation, forced marriage and servitude. 63% of traffickers are male, although there has been an increase in active traffickers who are women. She informed the room that there is a positive trend in the advancement towards combatting human trafficking and towards its prioritization within the framework of public policies. Dr. Paz y Paz also mentioned that trafficking in women is a serious crime and that it cannot be combatted in isolation, but also concerns the competent National Authorities of CoSP. She relayed some data of the Report that will be presented in March of this year, mentioning that of the countries that have collegiate authorities against human trafficking, more than half include national entities specializing in women's issues; that two thirds of the States explicitly mentioned the consideration of the gender perspective in national plans to prevent and punish human trafficking, and; that two thirds mentioned the gender perspective in the protection of victims of human trafficking. She emphasized the need to generate statistics that in turn inform public policies.

In conclusion, the President of the CoSP gave a brief account of the different interventions of the panelists. Claudia Paz y Paz spoke again and suggested a potential project: to hold a meeting between national and regional security authorities and the women's ministers in order to make visible the issue of violence against women. The President thus ended the panel.

Dialogue with Delegations

Venezuela highlighted its country's initiatives and provided data and information on violence against women, specifically on indigenous and Afro-descendant women and others in relation to the emerging issues discussed during the previous dialogue.

El Salvador indicated that human trafficking is a regional issue and mentioned their progress on this issue, emphasizing that both the consumer and the trafficker are already punished in their country, but that, nevertheless, there are many complexities related to the operation of human trafficking networks and the challenges they face in confronting it.

Chile took the floor and mentioned statistical data on violence against women in their country and specified the need to include reparation in the Convention of Belém do Pará.

Argentina noted the importance of combatting trafficking in women and emphasized the need to include this topic in the next meeting. They also mentioned different initiatives in their country regarding the fight against trafficking of women. Lastly, they extended an invitation to Pamela Molina to establish contacts that would link entities and non-governmental organizations in order to address the issue of women with disabilities in Argentina.

Nicaragua indicated the existence of different initiatives and advances regarding trafficking in persons in their country, highlighting work in terms of prevention and legislation. They highlighted the commitment to continue working on these issues.

Guatemala highlighted the importance of the emerging issues presented by the panelists and called to place them, along with intersectionality, at the center of the agendas of the States Party and the Mechanism. They also mentioned that in some countries there is no clarity on how, for example, human trafficking is a form of violence against women, and that there have been minimal conversations about violence against women living with HIV.

In response to the point made by the Guatemalan delegation on violence against HIV-positive women, the Executive Secretariat of the CIM presented the work that they have carried out since 2000, more specifically on the challenges reflected in the *Declaration of San Salvador: Gender, Violence and HIV* of the CIM, adopted in 2007.

Costa Rica indicated the importance of understanding intersectionality in order to fight violence against women, and of international standards in justice and violence, underlining the reflections of Judge Elizabeth Odio Benito and referring to men as active perpetrators of violence against women. They also mentioned the possibility of communicating with the private sector and, additionally, stressed the importance of reparations in harmony with the Convention of Belém do Pará and the prevention of violence.

Colombia mentioned the need for clearer local and national statistics, prevention and education. They called for participation in the Inter-American Week of Afro-descendants in the Americas and that of Indigenous Peoples and to include the topic of violence against women.

Honduras noted the efforts made in their country in terms of violence against women. The representative highlighted the importance of raising awareness and interest of local authorities to make effective efforts in women's rights, as well as for the strengthening of mechanisms for women's advancement.

Mexico took the floor to acknowledge the participation of Claudia Paz y Paz, and to encourage the inclusion of the gender perspective in discussions about security.

Haiti highlighted the importance of education as a preventive measure of violence against women and girls.

3. Presentation of the Report on the status of implementation of the Strategic Plan 2014-2017

The Technical Secretary of the MESECVI, Luz Patricia Mejia Guerrero, presented the Report on the status of implementation of the Strategic Plan 2014-2017, in which the different activities carried out by the Secretariat were highlighted.

4. Presentation and adoption of the draft Strategic Plan of the MESECVI 2018-2023

The Strategic Plan 2018-2023 was also presented. The participants made comments to the mentioned Plan, agreeing to include a perspective of the intersectionality of women's human rights with an emphasis on prevention and reparation throughout the plan.

5. Presentation of the Declaration of the Committee of Experts of the MESECVI on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women as a Benefit to Humanity adopted in Panama in November 2017

Sylvia Mesa, Prseident of the Committee of Experts of the MESECVI, presented the Declaration of the Committee of Experts of the MESECVI on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women as a Benefit to Humanity, adopted in Panama, November 28, 2017, document OEA/CEVI/DOC.244/17.rev1.

6. Consideration and Adoption of the Agreements of the Second Special Conference of States Party of the MESECVI

After the dialogue between the delegations, the agreements of the Second Special Conference of the States Party of the Convention of Belem do Pará were adopted.

7. Other Matters

Within the framework of the celebration of the 90th anniversary of the CIM, the President presented a draft declaration on regional challenges for the human rights of women in the Americas and the eradication of violence against women for the consideration of the Conference of States Party. The delegations from Colombia, Ecuador, Chile, Mexico, Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic, Uruguay and Venezuela spoke on the presented draft and recommended that it be considered within the framework of the General Assembly of the OAS, allowing for more analysis time and greater impact, which is reflected in the agreements of the Second Conference of States Party of the MESECVI.