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REPORT FROM COLOMBIA TO THE THIRTY-THIRD ASSEMBLY OF DELEGATES OF THE IACW

I. GENERAL ASPECTS

Since the last report was presented to the Inter-American Commission of Women, numerous advances have been made on legislative, jurisprudential, administrative, political and socioeconomic matters in relation to women and gender equity in Colombia. The most relevant aspects shall be indicated below, notwithstanding the possibility of providing additional information on the progress of the Colombian State on related programs and policies:

II. JURIDICAL, POLITICAL AND SOCIOECONOMIC SITUATION

In the last two years, progress has been made on the following aspects:

- a) Legislative advances: the Congress of the Republic passed the following laws related to the status of women:
- **Law 984 of 2005**, by which the “Facultative Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women” was approved
 - **Law 985 of 2005**, modified Law 747 of 2002 on trafficking persons, and established preventative measures and protection and assistance for victims
 - **Law 1009 of 2006**, by which the Observatory on Gender Issues was created permanently
 - **Law 1010 of 2006**, by which measures were adopted to prevent, correct and sanction harassment in the workplace and other forms of mobbing within the framework of labor relations
- b) Jurisprudential advances:
- Constitutionality sentence C-322 issued by the Constitutional Court on April 24, 2006, by means of which Law 984 of 2005 was declared enforceable, therefore the “Facultative Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women” as well
 - Constitutionality sentence C-355 issued by the Constitutional Court on May 10, 2006 by which abortion was decriminalized in three special cases: when a woman has been raped, when there is serious malformation of the fetus or when a pregnancy implies serious risk to the mother
- c) Administrative, political and socioeconomic advances:
- On October 5, 2005 the “Pact for the Effective Inclusion of Women in Politics” was signed, constituting a commitment of the political forces signing it, in order to strengthen the role of women in democracy and to lay out strategies that ensure their effective inclusion, through planned actions, in the exercise of formal power. The pact was signed by the representatives of 16 political parties and movements.

- On June 22, 2006, the Manual on Gender Transversality was launched in order to train public officials on the manner in which to incorporate the gender perspective in public policies.

III. FOLLOW-UP ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF IACW STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

1. *General Guidelines*

A) Work and the eradication of poverty

During the current administration, \$9,280,643,460 in micro credit was disbursed in the program, “Women Heads of Families and Micro-businesswomen”, aimed at promoting the empowerment and social and economic development of urban and rural women who are heads of families in strata 1 and 2 and sustain some economic activity or productive project.

During the 2003-2006 period, the II and III National Businesswomen’s Fairs were held. At the II fair, 23 departments and Bogotá, including 400 speaker businesswomen, participated in 18 impulse sessions and 18 selection sessions; and at the III fair, 25 departments and Bogotá, including 440 speaker businesswomen, participated in 23 impulse sessions and 23 selection sessions. The doors of EXPOEMPRESARIA (BUSINESSWOMEN’S EXPO) 2006 were opened to the public from June 22, 2006 until June 25, 2006. During these four days, 15,000 visitors attended the fair.

For the purpose of increasing opportunities for opening new commercialization channels and establishing commercial ties between buyers and suppliers, a strategy was implemented within the framework of the National Businesswomen’s Fair that included guided visits for Heads of Purchases of medium and small companies and a suppliers’ salon.

At EXPOEMPRESARIA (BUSINESSWOMEN’S EXPO) 2006, business forums in which subjects that serve as basic tools for starting up, running and sustaining a business were presented in a condensed format to 800 members of the public.

In the “Business Training Plan”, 2 business forums were held for the purpose of basic skill training through talks offered by a group of experts and professionals who, with their timely information on the fundamental lines of action of entrepreneurialism and business development, focused on fostering an entrepreneurial and business spirit in the community. Prior to this activity, as of December of 2004, 12,551 women had participated in training (educational sessions and business forums) in relation with the Business Training Plan.

Reduction of the unemployment rate:

A total of 2,878,115 persons unemployed in 2003 (of which 1,604,071 were women) decreased to a total of 2,405,957 in 2005 (of which 1,340,020 were women).

B) Elimination of violence

In addition to the legislative and jurisprudential advances mentioned in the first chapter of the report, the following advances on the matter of elimination of violence against women are presented as follows:

Among the objectives of *The Presidential Council on the Equity of Women* is contributing to the prevention, sanction and eradication of violence against women. In order to make progress on this objective, the council has established the strategy, “*Routes of Non-Violence*”, which comprises a set of special actions, such as (i) holding “Encounters of Women Builders of Peace and Development” on a national level, (ii) implementing the “Family Democracy” strategy at the national level, (iii) forming a Women Against Violence Network (community councils of women), (iv) conducting radio and media campaigns in order to raise consciousness on the impact and extent of domestic violence, (v) informing women about their rights and about mandates in the Constitution, in the laws and in international instruments through informational cards and leaflets and nationwide educational sessions, (vi) promoting an efficient national juridical framework in accordance with international agreements on matters related to humans rights, (vii) holding consciousness-raising campaigns and training against the trafficking of persons, (viii) consolidating the focus of the Observatory on Gender Matters (hereinafter OGM) on violence against women through research; gathering, processing and analyzing statistical information detailed by sex; entering into inter-institutional agreements and agendas, among others, (ix) formulation of a strategic plan to guarantee effective defense of the rights of Colombian women within the framework of the agreement signed by the Colombian government and the Autonomous Community of Madrid in the year 2005, which will be in effect from August of 2006 until August of 2010.

Additionally, since the month of April of 2003, the Colombian Institute of Family Welfare assumed the intersectorial coordination of the National Policy on Building Peace and Family Coexistence – Make Peace. Currently, it carries out its actions in this regard in two aspects: (i) the Intersectorial Plan of the 2004-2006 Policy and (ii) development, validation and/or expansion of models for prevention, detection, oversight of, and attention to, intrafamily violence.

Statistics:

In the year 2005, 18,474 sex-related offenses were reported. An increase of 3.1% (562 cases) occurred, likely related to increased reporting of cases. In the year 2005, the most vulnerable group was that of minors and over 70% of the cases were concentrated in the 5 to 9 and 10 to 14 groups. Of the victims, 88% were female.

Regarding intimate partner abuse, of 37,660 cases of intimate partner abuse were recorded, the majority involving women from 25 to 29 years old (8,117). The 30-to-34 age group followed (6,346). Regarding men, the ages in which the most violence was recorded involved the same age range as for women, those from 25 to 29 years old (616 cases) and from 30 to 34 (584 cases). The number of reports filed for intimate partner abuse increased by 6,001 cases (19%) between 2004 and 2005.

On the subject of child abuse, the group most affected is that of girls (52.8%). The group of boys under 9 is affected more than girls, but as their ages increase, this relationship is inverted. Of the cases evaluated, the majority of minors, girls from 10 to 14 were abused by their fathers, as were boys between the ages of 5 and 9 years old. Fathers and mothers are the main aggressors,

while other aggressors may be caregivers, step fathers, grandfathers, uncles, brothers, brothers-in-law and step mothers.

During the year 2005, the National Institute of Legal Medicine recorded 61,482 cases of family violence, of which 37,660 (61.20%) correspond to intimate partner abuse, 13,644 (22.2%) to abuse among other family members and 10,178 (16.6%) to child abuse. The total rate of family violence for the year 2005 was 155 per 100,000 inhabitants.

Trafficking of persons

Women of childbearing age are the population most vulnerable to this crime. The DAS estimates that between 45,000 and 55,000 Colombian women, victims of trafficking in persons, are abroad. The most vulnerable areas regarding the origin of the victims are: Risaralda, Quindío and Caldas, Cali, Tulúa, Buenaventura, Palmira and Cartago, Medellín and its metropolitan area, the valley of Aburrá and Bogotá and surrounding areas. The main destinations are Japan (40%), Spain (30%), the Netherlands (20%) and 10% made up of Greece, Germany, Singapore, Mexico, Hong Kong, Belgium, the United States, England, Italy, Ecuador and Panama.

C) Education

Of a total of 88,555 university loans granted by the ICETEX in the years 2003, 2004, 2005 and the first half of 2006; 39,427 were granted to women. Additionally, of a total of 443 beneficiaries of scholarships given by Colciencias between 2003 and 2005, 158 were given to women.

In the 2003-2005 period, of a total of 150,530 adults taught to read and write, 90,318 were women (60%). In addition, in the year 2005, of a total of 164,680 persons who graduated with a higher education, 80,115 were women (48.6%).

In Colombia, 24% of women of childbearing age that live in urban areas have a higher education, while 4% of the women of childbearing age who live in rural areas have this level of education. The percentage of women of childbearing age without education in urban area decreased from 2% in the year 2000, to 1.60% in 2005. Additionally, the percentage of women of childbearing age without education in rural areas decreased from 7.80% in 2000 to 6.60% in 2005.

D) Participation of women in power structures and decision making

In addition to progress related to the “Pact on the Effective Inclusion of Women in Politics”, the following advances have been made:

Compliance with the Law on Quotas: the increase in women’s participation in the total number of public positions for the year of 2005 is noteworthy. Within the executive branch, it increased 3.57%; in institutions it rose 5.53%, and in the Public Registry, there was a significant increase to 10.91%. Additionally, at the territorial level, over 33% of the management level positions in public administration are held by women.

Of 13 ministries, 8 are headed by men and 4 by women. The participation of women in the Congress of the Republic is approximately 11% (the Senate and the House of Representatives). At the local level, in governorships as well as mayorships, the participation of women is low in relation with that of men, who occupy approximately 90% of the positions.

In the judicial branch, there is 1 magistrate position (out of 9) held by a woman on the Constitutional Court, 3 magistrate positions held by women on the Supreme Justice Court (of 23), 6 magistrate positions held by women on the State Council (of 27) and 2 magistrate positions held by women on the Superior Judiciary Council (of 13).

Additionally, over 320 Women's Community Councils have been consolidated in the 2003- July 2006 period in 28 departments.

In the elections of May 28, 2006, female votes totaled 6,161,817 and masculine votes totaled 5,700,547. The total valid votes amounted to 11,864,470. The percentage of the feminine vote was 51.9% and masculine 48.06%. In addition, a total of 25 women were elected to Congress in the March elections.

E) Health

Within the State, there are the following women health programs:

1. Families in Action, through the President's Council on Social Action and International Cooperation
2. Nutritional Safety Net (known by its Spanish acronym, RESA), through the President's Council on Social Action and International Cooperation
3. Student Restaurants, through the Colombian Institute of Family Welfare
4. Program for the Protection of Senior Citizens, through the Colombian Institute of Family Welfare

According to the National Demographic and Health Survey 2005, 99.80% of women between the ages of 15 and 49 know about some method of birth control (100% for urban areas and 99.8% for rural areas).

In addition, regarding the subject of health, the following table is relevant to the issue of pregnancy:

PERCENTAGE OF ADOLESCENT GIRLS (15-19 YEARS OF AGE) WHO ARE ALREADY MOTHERS OR ARE PREGNANT FOR THE FIRST TIME, BY SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS				
Age	Already mothers	Pregnant with first child	Total pregnant at some time	
15	2.70%	3,80%	6.50%	1506
16	7%	4%	11%	1379
17	13.60%	5.40%	19%	1380
18	25.90%	3.70%	29.60%	1324
19	34.40%	4.60%	39.10%	1313

There are higher percentages of prenatal care in the urban sector than in the rural sector.

F) National institutions responsible for the advancement of women

By means of Decree 519 of March of 2003, the President's Council on the Equity of Women was created as the national entity responsible for promoting the advancement of women and gender equity. Additionally, the Colombian State promotes and protects the rights of women through the following entities:

1. Presidency of the Republic – President's Council on the Equity of Women: supervises all actions aimed at the advancement of women and gender equity.
2. Ministry of the Interior and Justice: through the "Houses of Justice", the National Promoters of Coexistence Program and the Citizens' Coexistence Centers.
3. Ministry of National Education: through models for the prevention, detection and treatment of domestic violence in educational institutions and the Colombian Institute of Family Welfare.
4. Presidency of the Republic – Office of the High Commissioner on Peace; through the Local Self-Determination Project.
5. Presidential Agency for Social Action – Social Solidarity Network: through the Attention Program for the Displaced Population.
6. Office of the National Ombudsman: through the Delegated Ombudsman for the Rights of Children, Women and Senior Citizens.
7. Department of Justice: through the Office of the Delegate Procurator for Minors and Families.
8. Office of the Attorney General: through the Center for Integral Attention to Family Violence (Spanish acronym – CAVIF.)
9. National Institute of Legal Medicine: through the preparation of medical legal opinions on filing charges related to family and sexual violence.
10. National Police - DIJIN- Humanitas Group: through Operation Dignity, which arranges captures.
11. Superior Judicial Council: by gathering statistics on the number of reports of family violence, sexual violence and trafficking of persons.
12. International Committee on the Fight Against Trafficking of Persons.
13. Family Police Stations: through police protection and assistance in cases of violence.

G) Status of women in areas of conflict

Forced displacement

From January to December 2004, a total of 1,755 displaced families returned home; of these, 540, equivalent to 30.76% corresponded to families headed by women and 1215 (69.23%) to families headed by men. From January to December 2004, a total of 50,026 displaced families benefited from emergency humanitarian assistance; of these, 24,286, equivalent to 48.54%, corresponded to families headed by women and 25,740 (51.45%) to families headed by men. For the year 2005, the information detailed according to sex is not available, due to modifications to the information-gathering instruments used by the Social Action Program.

During the years 2004 and 2005, the execution and consolidation of the policy on democratic security has permitted the Colombian government to achieve significant progress on matters related to the protection of human rights. Homicides decreased 14% in 2004 and by 10% more in 2005, massacres by 52% in 2004 and by 4% more in 2005, abductions by 35% in 2004 and by 44% more in 2005 and forced displacement by 29% in 2004 and 13% more in 2005. Similarly, the government has concentrated efforts on protecting the lives and safety of populations particularly vulnerable to the criminal actions of illegal, armed groups. Within this framework, due to the protection programs fostered by the government, killings of union representatives decreased by 11% in 2004, murders of indigenous persons by 59% in 2004 and 44% more in 2005. Killings of journalists decreased 57% in 2004 and by 33% more in 2005 and murders of councilmen decreased 76% in 2004.

According to the sexual and reproductive health survey, Status of Displaced Women, conducted in marginal areas by PROFAMILIA (PRO FAMILY), 70% of the women of fertile age between 13 and 49 years of age had had children during their reproductive years. Additionally, among women displaced due to armed conflict, 67% had been victims of psychological abuse by their husbands or intimate partners, 58% in the case of verbal abuse and 44% in the case of physical abuse.

Demobilizations

During the year 2005, there were 1,463 demobilizations of subversive groups and 1,105 of illegal self-defense groups.

The Humanitarian Attention Program for Demobilized Persons (Spanish acronym, PAHD) of the Ministry of Defense recorded 2,538 voluntary demobilizations in 2003, and 2,972 persons demobilized in 2004, which represented an increase of 17%. During these 2 years, the mass demobilization of 3,660 members of self-defense groups occurred, in addition to 2,972 individual demobilizations during 2004 from the FARC Armed Revolutionary Forces of Colombia), the ELN (National Liberation Army), self-defense groups and the different dissident groups.

Of the persons demobilized, 87% (2,571) were men and 13% (401) were women. Of the 2,972 individual demobilizations recorded from January to December of 2004, 1,299 (44%) corresponded to members of the FARC; 1,269 (43%) to members of the self-defense groups; 334 (11%) to the ELN and 70 (2%) corresponded to different dissident groups, that is, 1,703 persons linked to subversion (57%), which represents a reduction of 8% compared to the year 2003. Regarding the self-defense groups, there was an 83% increase over the previous year.

Abductions

In the year 2004, 1,441 abductions were recorded, 759 fewer than in 2003 (2,200), which is a reduction of 35%. Of the 1,441 abductions recorded in 2004, 748 involved extortion (52%), 658 were of a simple nature (46%), 13 were perpetrated against members of the armed forces and police (1%) and the purpose of 22 was undetermined (2%). In the year 2005, 800 abductions were recorded, 44% fewer than in 2004.

Protective measures

The Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Justice are carrying out a protection program aimed at union officials, political groups, social organizations, non-governmental human rights organizations, leaders and members of UP-PCC, journalists and social communicators, mayors, council members, members of congress, party representatives, medical missionaries and leaders of displaced person organizations and ethnic groups. The protection measures provided consist of architectonic bullet-proofing, mobile protection schemes, international tickets and bullet-proof vests. From January to March 31, 2006, a total of \$11,138,930,183 was earmarked for protective measures. While the information is not broken down by gender in the ministry, the measures are provided without distinction to men and women who are at risk.

2. *Measures for applying the Convention of Belém do Pará*

In the first half of 2006, the Colombian Report on compliance with the directives established in the Convention of Belém do Pará was presented to the Inter-American Commission of Women. In this report, all the plans and policies of the State aimed at effective compliance with the convention were clearly presented in accordance with the guiding questions in the report. According to the report, Colombia has made considerable progress on the measures for the application of the Convention of Belém do Pará.

IV. FUTURE ACTIONS FOR PROGRESS IN THE APPLICATION OF THE IACW STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

1. *At the national level, to improve the status of women*

At the national level, beginning in August of 2006, the Strategic Plan for the Effective Defense of Women's Rights before the Colombian Justice System will be placed in effect. The plan was developed with the cooperation of the Autonomous Community of Madrid and contains areas of action in consciousness raising, education, and the prevention and detection of violence.

At the legislative level, laws were proposed for the protection of women and family that contain reforms on diverse laws that regulate the issue of the family within the State. Additionally, the State plans considerable advances in the implementation of gender-related policies in all branches of the government, at the national level as well as at the territorial level, and continued progress on the programs and strategies carried forward from 2002-2006.

2. *At the regional level, to support the actions that the IACW generates in the short term*

At the regional level, Colombia will support the work of the Inter-American Commission of Women and will continue implementing the development policies in the Strategic Action Plan of the CIM. Additionally, concerted efforts will be made to comply with international human rights treaties that protect women's rights.