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CIM BIENNIAL WORK PLAN FOR THE 2008-2010 BIENNIUM: PROGRAMMATIC ORIENTATIONS

(Item 7 on the Agenda)

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THE INTER-AMERICAN COMMISSION OF WOMEN AND THE SUMMITS PROCESS

Since 1994, there has been a gradual evolution in the relationship between the CIM and the Summits Process. There has been an enhancement of, and in increase in, the mandates given to CIM throughout this process, gradually refining and strengthening its role within the Inter-American system.

The Plan of Action of the 1994 Miami Summit mandated that the governments "further strengthen the Inter-American Commission of Women", followed by the Plan of Action of the 1998 Santiago Summit which reiterated that governments "implement and follow-up on the commitments regarding the status of women as agreed to at the Summit of the Americas, with the support of the Inter-American Commission of Women…"

It was in the Plan of Action of the 2001 Quebec Summit that CIM's role was recognized, reinforced and strengthened, and that the integration of a gender perspective became more visible. The Quebec Plan of Action specifically requests that governments "recognize and reinforce the role as of the CIM, not only as technical advisor to the SIRG on all aspects of gender equity and equality, but also as the "principal hemispheric policy-generating forum for the advancement of the human rights of women and particularly of gender equality". The Quebec Summit also endorsed "*the Inter-American Program on the Promotion of Women's Human Rights and Gender Equity and Equality"* approved at the First Meeting of Ministers or of the Highest Ranking Authorities Responsible for the Advancement of Women as an effective tool for gender mainstreaming.

Following up, in the 2005 Plan of Action of the Mar de Plata Summit, the commitments were made to "eliminate discrimination against women through, among other measures, the implementation of a range of policies that will increase women's access to decent, dignified and productive work" and further stated that member states "ensure equal access for men and women to the benefits of social protection and ensure attention to gender issues in labor and social policies".[1/]

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1. In preparation for the April 2009 Summit of the Americas to be held in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, and the CIM Secretariat has begun the consultation process to ensure that a gender perspective is integrated into the Declaration of Commitment of the Summit.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Violence against Women in all of its manifestations continues to be the number one priority for the CIM, who continues to promote the ratification of the Convention of Belém do Pará by the two remaining states and continue to address the issue. In addition and as a result of an impact study commissioned by CIM and its presentations at sub-regional meetings of experts, the states party to the Convention gave CIM the mandate of exploring the most feasible way to follow up on the Convention's implementation. In 2004, the first meeting of States Party to the Convention was held where the statute for a follow-up Mechanism was approved The Permanent Secretariat of the CIM was designated as the Technical Secretariat to this mechanism. In 2008, the first Hemispheric Report on the Implementation of the Convention of Belem do Para was released.

FOLLOW-UP MECHANISM TO THE
CONVENTION OF BELEM DO PARA, MESECVI

ACTIONS:

- Within its capacity as Technical Secretariat to the Follow-Up Mechanism to the Convention of Belem do Para, MESECVI, the CIM Secretariat will support, promote and implement the conclusions and agreements of the Second Conference of States Party to the Convention of Belem do Para. It will also pay special attention to the design and implementation of the Second Multilateral evaluation round and the preparation of the next CEVI meeting.

- The Secretariat will actively promote the participation of civil society in the MESECVI process especially in the CEVI meetings.

- Training, awareness and capacity building seminar for Principal Delegates to the CIM, experts, Competent National Authorities and National Offices of the OAS will be held in the Caribbean for the CARICOM member states.

- Other regional partners will be engaged in order to promote the Mechanism.

- A MESECVI-dedicated website will be created in order to ease the process of consultation and to provide information to representatives of civil society organizations.

- The Technical Secretariat will expand its fundraising effort in order to strengthen the viability of the mechanism.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- The recommendations emanating from the first hemispheric report will be implemented.

- Working more closely with civil society will increase the exchange of information and will make the mechanism's process more transparent.

- Increased funding will substantially strengthen the Mechanism and the ability of the Secretariat to more effectively support the work of the CAN, the experts and the technical cooperation between States Parties and will improve the dissemination information and best practices to the member states.

- A strengthened mechanism will comply with its objective which is the full implementation of the Convention of Belem do Para, and therefore will be a better tool to achieve the prevention, punishment and eradication of violence against women in the States Party to the Convention.

FEMINICIDE/FEMICIDE

It is essential that the CIM continue to take initiatives to strengthen the efforts under way in Member States to fight gender-based violence in all of its permutations. This is the case in those countries where such violence has taken the form of the murders of women in ever-increasing numbers.

ACTIONS:

- The Secretariat will support the recommendations of the MESECVI Committee of Experts (CEVI) as expressed in the Declaration on Femicide approved at their meeting in August, 2008.

- The CIM will promote public policies in the member states that prevent and sanction femicide/feminicide.

- CIM will encourage member states to gather information and statistics regarding femicide/feminicide and publicize said information.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- There will be an increased awareness in the member states of feminicide/femicide.

- Public policies will begin to address the issue of feminicide/femicide.

THE GENDER ASPECTS OF HIV/AIDS

The Thirty-third Assembly of Delegates of the CIM chose the subject of the gender-related aspects of HIV/AIDS as its priority for the 2006-2008 biennium. Furthermore, the Seventh Special Assembly of Delegates of the CIM, held in November 2007, adopted the Declaration of San Salvador: Gender, Violence, and HIV [CIM/DEC. 4/07 (VII-E/07)]. That Declaration addresses the HIV pandemic from a gender and human rights perspective and reviews the link between violence

against women and HIV, which, as research has shown, increases the vulnerability of women to this disease, especially that of young women, who account for the majority of new cases of HIV infections. It looks at the social implications of HIV, such as inequality and discrimination, and puts forward recommendations to OAS member states for countering the impact of the HIV pandemic on women.

ACTIONS:

- The CIM will develop and evaluate pilot experiences to integrate policies and programs for HIV and GBV in the six countries participating in the HIV and Violence projects in the Caribbean and Central American, in partnership with PAHO and others.

- Virtual resource centers will be developed for exchanging information, lessons learned, good practices and technical cooperation at sub-regional levels in the Caribbean and Central America within the context of the two projects.

- In partnership with PAHO, the CIM will use its comparative advantage to contribute to the achievement of gender equality in policies and programs on HIV/AIDS.

- The CIM Secretariat will update and share best practices, and explore the linkages between gender-based violence and the incidences of HIV/AIDS.

- The Secretariat will replicate the pilot research done in the Bahamas on “Men and Masculinities” in selected CARICOM countries and will develop program and policy recommendations for consideration of the members states.

- CIM will include the linkage between gender-based violence and HIV into the CEVI questionnaire.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- Models of integrated services on HIV and VAW that can be scaled up and replicated will be implemented in 6 pilot countries.

- Resource centers and regional networks for both sub-regions will be created and coordinated through the technical platform set up for the training course.

- Collaborating with the Ministries of Health, CIM delegates will work on implementing policies addressing HIV/AIDS and gender based violence and HIV/AIDS and trafficking in persons.

- CIM Delegates will work in establishing multi-sectoral focal points to address the multi-dimensional aspects of HIV/AIDS.

- There will be a compilation of best practices on the intersection between gender-based violence and HIV/AIDS that will be disseminated throughout the region. There will be

increased collaboration among governments, agencies and civil society on the issue of HIV/AIDS.

THE INTER-AMERICAN PROGRAM ON THE PROMOTION OF WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUITY AND EQUALITY

In April 2000, in fulfillment of the mandate issued in resolution AG/RES. 1625 (XXIX-O/99), "Status of Women in the Americas and Strengthening and Modernization of the Inter-American Commission of Women," the OAS convened the first *Meeting of Ministers and Highest-Ranking Authorities Responsible for the Advancement of Women in the Member States*, where the Inter-American Program on the Promotion of Women's Human Rights and Gender Equity and Equality" (IAP or "the Program") was adopted.

This instrument provides an unprecedented and comprehensive approach to gender mainstreaming, both within the inter-American system and in the member states, and has quickly become *the* strategic plan defining the policies and program of the CIM. As such, it is a clear manifestation of the Hemisphere's consensus on the need to undertake initiatives in both the member states and at the OAS in which the integration of a gender perspective is included as a key element for promoting development.

The IAP, approved by the OAS General Assembly and endorsed by the 2001 Quebec Summit of the Americas, has greatly enhanced CIM's visibility in integrating a gender perspective into hemispheric policy. It assigns the CIM the task of monitoring implementation of its mandates, which contribute to fulfilling the mandates of the Biennial Work Program of the CIM Assembly of Delegates, the General Assemblies of the OAS and the Plans of Action of the Summits of the Americas. The implementation of the IAP has opened the door to the creation of policies with a gender perspective throughout the Western Hemisphere.

Through its implementation, the IAP has redefined the CIM's role in the Inter-American system and has reoriented its strategies and work plans. It has become the "Blueprint for Action" for gender mainstreaming.

ACTIONS:

- With funding from Canada, the CIM will provide gender specific training on the integration of a gender perspective in the different OAS program and policy areas through on line and on site courses and will develop gender indicators for specific areas as well as an on-line information System with interactive gender tools.

- The CIM will continue promoting the IAP, within the OAS General Secretariat and through the political bodies of the OAS, i.e. the Permanent Council, the various Commissions and Committees, to ensure that a gender perspective is in place.

- With funding from Canada , the CIM will support implementation of the "Strategic Guidelines for Advancing Gender Equality within a Decent Work Frameworks", adopted by the Ministers of Labor at the XV Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor (Trinidad and Tobago, 2007).

- The CIM will continue to work on the other SEPIA areas: gender and justice, gender and education and gender and science and technology.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- All programs and policies within the General Secretariat will be gender-sensitive.

- Gender sensitive policies and programs will be implemented at the highest levels of the OAS, with a special focus on the four areas of the SEPIA initiative.[2/]

- Women's rights and gender equity and equality will be promoted in labor policies and programs.

- There will be increased collaboration among Inter-American agencies, civil society and other organizations working on gender issues.

WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

Starting in the 2004-2006 biennium, the CIM has addressed the issue of incorporating a gender perspective in the area of hemispheric security. In 2005 and 2006, training workshops were held in the Andean and the Central American regions, respectively, in order to provide government representatives, civil society, academic circles, the judicial sector, and the security forces with tools for incorporating a gender perspective in conflict prevention and resolution and peace-building. As a result of the courses, a virtual network was set up to exchange information and best practices in this field. Moreover, in order to facilitate replication of the workshops in different countries, the curriculum was revised and formally presented in May 2008 during the III Meeting of the Executive Committee of the CIM. The package includes a detailed Trainer's Manual, a Handbook for Participants, and an extensive list of training resources. The publication has been posted on the CIM website and distributed in DVD format.

ACTIONS:

- The Permanent Secretariat will follow up on the work of the peace network, created as an outcome of the capacity-building projects carried out in the Andean and Central American regions.

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2. Labor, Justice, Education and Science and Technology.

- The Secretariat will work on strengthening the network and identify avenues to institutionalize it.

- The Secretariat will work with the newly-established OAS Peace Fund as well as with the OAS/MAPP Colombia Peace Mission to identify opportunities for collaboration on programs and/or projects relating to peace initiatives and to ensure that their work includes the gender perspective.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- The work being done in the Andean and Central American regions on women, peace and security will be publicized and duplicated.

- The programs and policies of the OAS Peace Fund will have a gender perspective.

WOMEN, CLIMATE CHANGE AND NATURAL DIASTERS

The "Impact of Climate Change and Natural Disasters on Women" has been identified as an issue of profound concern, especially to the member states of Central America and the Caribbean. The Permanent Secretariat has been asked to ensure that the gender perspective in included in any and all work done on this issue at the political levels.

To date, the recently-formed Committee on Natural Disasters has invited CIM to be a member of this Committee and to ensure that the gender perspective in present in their work. The Secretariat is suggesting the following:

ACTIONS:

- The Permanent Secretariat will prepare a study (working document) that will analyze the impact of climate change and natural disasters on women.

- CIM will compile a database of Best Practices for distribution and dissemination.

- The Secretariat will develop a "Digital Library" of pertinent publications and data on women and natural disasters.

- A Meeting of experts, government and civil society, will be organized to address issue of women and natural disasters.

- The Secretariat will provide technical assistance on gender to the Inter-American Committee on Natural Disasters.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- Policies emanating from the Committee on Natural Disasters will have a gender perspective.

- The CIM Secretariat will create an awareness of the gender aspects of natural disasters.
- Recommendations emanating from the Meeting of Experts will assist in developing gender-sensitive policies.

WOMEN AND MIGRATION

The Inter-American Program for the Protection of the Human Rights of Migrants and their Families, adopted in 2005, assigns specific tasks to the CIM. The program has, as a specific goal, to provide "Attention to the specific needs of vulnerable groups of migrants, including women, indigenous persons, afro-descendants and handicapped, among others." It asks that CIM, among others, "develop policies and programs designed to protect migrant women, in particular, women heads of household, and to combat violence against women."

ACTIONS:

- The Permanent Secretariat, in consultation with the Principal Delegates, will provide technical assistance to the OAS Committee on Migration as it continues discussion and implementation of the Inter-American Program on the Human Rights of Migrants and their Families, to insure the inclusion of a gender perspective.

- The CIM will work with the Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs in developing a seminar on Gender and Migration.

- The CIM will identify and create strategic partnerships in the implementation of the Migrant Workers' Program.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- The Inter-American Program on the Human Rights of Migrants and their families will have gender as a cross-cutting theme.

- Programs and policies emanating from the Program will have a gender perspective.

- The CIM Delegates will have access to the above-mentioned policies, facilitating the implementation of the programs and subsequent plans of action.

EMPOWERMENT AND PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN

Progress has been made in increasing the participation/representation of women in decision-making processes. However, with respect to elected and executive positions, national and local (governorships, mayors, municipal offices, and parliamentary positions), obstacles and resistance remain that must still be overcome. The under-representation of women in political systems is currently much more visible than in previous years and is more visible in public debate. In fact, in some countries the media reports on the lack of women in cabinet positions, and this has helped to change the previous perception that their absence is natural.

The need to expand the political participation of women and create the conditions necessary for equal participation/representation with males, as established in numerous international legal instruments, as well as in instruments that deal specifically with women, such as the Beijing Platform for Action, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, among others, or those of general scope such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Inter-American Convention on Human Rights (San José Covenant), and the Millennium Development Goals. As a result of all of these processes in the Hemisphere, the representation of women in parliaments has been increasing in the last decade, although there are still many challenges to be overcome.

ACTIONS:

- With funding received by the Spanish Cooperation Agency, the Permanent Secretariat will prepare a working document that reviews and analyzes the impact of quota laws from a gender perspective on the full and equal participation of women at the local, national and regional levels in the Andean region.

- Recommendations will be develop that will address a more effective implementation of existing quota laws.

- The Secretariat will convene a meeting of experts that will include parliamentarians, electoral officials, gender experts and invited representatives from other regional and international organizations, to review the recommendations and to develop a strategy for the increased participation of women in electoral processes.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- There will be recommendations and strategic lines of action for the increased participation of women in electoral processes.

- Recommendations and strategic lines of action will be shared with other regions.

STRENGTHENING OF THE NATIONAL MACHINERIES

Responsibility for gender mainstreaming should not and cannot be left entirely to the CIM. Success will only be achieved with the active engagement of other partners, the Member States and commitment from the OAS as an institution. The National Machineries for the Advancement of Women have been pivotal in addressing and reducing inequalities by improving the condition of women. As a result of their work, laws have been enacted protecting women's rights and programs and policies have been enacted that have greatly contributed to the empowerment of women and to the attainment of gender equality.

ACTIONS:

- The CIM will implement the recommendations of the Declaration of Santiago, approved by the 34th CIM Assembly of Delegates.[3/]

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- The work of the National Machineries will be reinforced, resulting in their more active participation within the member states.

- The National Machineries will be strengthened.

COLLABORATION WITH OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

The CIM has a long history of collaboration and partnerships with other International Organizations, especially with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO), and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), INSTRAW, the World Bank, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and regional organizations. This has especially been the case in the work of the Commission on Violence against Women and Leadership Development. The CIM has also been an active member of the Program for Women's Representation and PROLEAD Advisory Council, participating in strategy meetings and project selection meetings.

ACTIONS:

- The CIM will continue developing new strategic alliances, and strengthening existing partnerships. The primary partners in our efforts will be, among others, the Inter-American Development Bank (PROLID program), the World Bank, the Pan-American Health Organization, UNIFEM, UNDP and ECLAC.

- Special efforts will be made to reach out to CARICOM member states.

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3. The Declaration will be approved at the Assembly of Delegates, November 10-12, 2008.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- Existing partnerships will be strengthened and new partners will be identified.

FUNDRAISING

Given the financial situation of the OAS regular fund, aggressive efforts must be made to raise the necessary funds to implement the mandates that the CIM has received. To date, all of the projects of the Secretariat are being funded by external donors. It is expected that this trend will continue for the foreseeable future.

ACTIONS:

- In coordination with the OAS Department of External Relations, the CIM Secretariat will increase outreach to the OAS Observer Missions and OAS Permanent Missions to identify opportunities for project funding, keeping in mind mandates received from the CIM Executive Committee and Assembly of Delegates and the priorities established by the Secretary General.

- The Secretariat will identify potential private sector partners for funding opportunities.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- Project-specific funding will increase enabling the Secretariat to implement mandates received.