

## **CIM WORK PROGRAM FOR THE 2006-2008 BIENNIUM PROGRAM GUIDELINES**

### **I. GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

#### *1. The Inter-American Commission of Women and the Summits of the Americas Process*

Since 1994, there has been a gradual evolution in the relationship between the CIM and the Summits Process. As a result, there has been an enhancement of, and an 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.

The Special Summit of the Americas, held in Monterrey, Mexico, in 2004, reiterated that the empowerment of women, their full and equal participation in the development of our societies, and their equal opportunities to exercise leadership, is fundamental for the reduction of poverty, the promotion of economic and social prosperity, and for people-centered sustainable development. The Heads of State and Government affirmed their commitment to continue promoting gender equality and equity and the mandates of the Summits of the Americas on this matter.

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.”

#### *2. The Inter-American Program on the Promotion of Women’s Human Rights and Gender Equity and Equality – the IAP*

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 in 2000 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 following up on 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.

### *3. The Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women*

One of the crowning achievements in CIM's seventy-eight year history is the development of the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women, Convention of Belem do Para, the only international instrument of its kind which focuses specifically on violence against women. Since the approval of the Convention, CIM has labored tirelessly to encourage its ratification by the Member States and to assiduously track its progress in impacting the lives of the women in the Americas. As of January, 2006, the treaty has been ratified by 32 of the 34 OAS member states.

The CIM was instrumental in developing the Statute of the Mechanism to Follow Up on Implementation of the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women, "Convention of Belém do Pará." (MESECVI), which was adopted in 2004 by the Conference of States Parties to the Convention and approved by both the XXXII CIM Assembly of Delegates, and the XXXIV OAS General Assembly. The CIM Permanent Secretariat serves as Technical Secretariat and headquarters of the MESECVI.

## **II. PRIORITIES FOR THE BIENNIUM**

### *1. The Human Rights of Women*

#### Violence against Women

Violence against women continues to be one of the main priorities for the CIM, and therefore it will continue to address the issue in all of its manifestations and to promote the ratification of the Convention of Belém do Pará by the two remaining states.

## Femicide-Feminicide

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

### ACTION:

The CIM, through the Permanent Secretariat, will consult with all of the governments and with civil society to compile background information on the efforts of governments, international, regional, and nongovernmental organizations to define the concept variously named femicide, feminicide, or femicidal violence and will write a concept paper to be considered by the Executive Committee;

### EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- Consensus on the appropriate terminology to be employed, and on the corresponding definition of femicide, feminicide, or femicidal violence, as a result of the joint effort of interested governments and international, regional, and nongovernmental organizations;
- A recommendation to the Committee of Experts of the MESECVI, that they include an indicator on femicidal violence or femicide in the questionnaire for assessing implementation of the provisions of the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women, "Convention of Belém do Pará" in future multilateral evaluation rounds, if deemed advisable; and
- Recommendations by the CIM to the Member States on the inclusion of this concept into their domestic criminal law and national policies, as appropriate.

### Technical Secretariat of the Follow-Up Mechanism to the Convention of Belem do Para, MESECVI:

In 2004, after the adoption of the Statute of the Follow-Up Mechanism to the Convention by the Conference of States Party, the Permanent Secretariat of the CIM received the mandate to act as the Technical Secretariat to this mechanism. Since then, the Permanent Secretariat has dedicated a great deal of effort to the implementation of the Mechanism. The Secretariat requested the appointment of Experts and National Competent Authorities by the States Parties and afterwards, organized the first meeting of the Committee of Experts (CEVI), where the CEVI's Rules of Procedure, Work Plan and Calendar of Activities were adopted, as well as the questionnaire to be sent to the States Parties. The second meeting of the CEVI was held in 2006, to evaluate the answers to the questionnaires provided by the States Parties and to make the appropriate recommendations.

### ACTION:

Working with independent experts and competent national authorities appointed by the States Party to the Convention, the Secretariat will continue implementing the process established by the statute of the MESECVI and the Regulations of the CEVI. After MESECVI issues its recommendations to the States Parties, develop a strategy to promote sharing of best practices among all Member States of the OAS.

#### EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- A hemispheric report with specific recommendations for the States Party on the effective implementation of the Convention.
- A website specific to the Mechanism to facilitate the exchange of information and the consultation process with the experts.

#### The Gender Aspects of HIV/AIDS

The 2004-06 Executive Committee identified the issue of the Gender Aspects of HIV/AIDS as a priority issue for the 2006-2008 biennium, focusing initially on the English-speaking Caribbean, where the prevalence is highest and second only to Sub-Saharan Africa. The Executive Committee has also identified this issue as the primary topic for the Dialogue of Heads of Delegation at the 2006 CIM Assembly of Delegates.

This is a multi-faceted issue requiring a multi-dimensional approach. Indeed, the Quebec Summit of the Americas acknowledges "that another major threat to the security of our people is HIV/AIDS and that "we are united in our resolve to adopt multi-sectoral strategies and to develop our cooperation to combat this disease...".

#### ACTION:

In addressing HIV/AIDS, and in partnership with PAHO, the CIM will use its comparative advantage as the "principal hemispheric policy-generating forum for the advancement of the human rights of women and particularly of gender equality" to contribute to the achievement of gender equality in policies and programs on HIV/AIDS. CIM will identify, compile and share best practices, and establish the linkages between gender-based violence and the incidences of HIV/AIDS. CIM will also review existing research to analyze the relationship between migration and HIV/AIDS and identify sources of funding, including the private sector that can contribute to support programs in the region.

Where necessary, CIM delegates will promote studies and discussions on the relationship between HIV/AIDS and gender-related violence and will seek to introduce the concept in Ministries of Health and other pertinent official agencies as well as coordinating actions to address the issues raised by this relationship.

They will also work on the creation of Inter-Agency Task Forces to address the multi-dimensional aspects of HIV/AIDS;

#### EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- Policies and programs with a gender perspective implemented in the Region to address the problem of HIV-AIDS, with special emphasis on HIV-AIDS and gender-based violence and its impact on migrant women and all other vulnerable groups.
- A compilation of best practices that will be disseminated throughout the region.
- Increased collaboration among governments, agencies and civil society on the issue of HIV/AIDS.

#### Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children

Tremendous strides have been made at the OAS on the issue of trafficking in persons, especially Women and Children (TIP). As a result of CIM's work over the past five years, the issue is now directly on the agenda of the OAS. In March of 2006, for the first

time ever, a meeting of National Authorities responsible for the issue of trafficking in persons, was convened by the OAS to begin the process of developing a hemispheric plan to address this scourge. It was well noted at this meeting that CIM's role in the entire process was pivotal in bringing the issue to the forefront and placing it on all the agendas of ministerial meetings.

However, as a result of exhaustive negotiations by the Member States, it was decided that TIP would be better coordinated within the context of Hemispheric Security and through the Ministries of Justice (REMJA). The Secretary General has therefore decided to move Anti-Trafficking Unit and the coordination of the issue to the section on Public Safety within the Department of Multi-Dimensional Security. However, in discussions between the Secretary General and the CIM Executive Committee, the commitment to maintain a gender perspective was agreed upon.

#### ACTION:

During this biennium, the Permanent Secretariat will implement the policy proposals agreed upon by the CIM Assembly of Delegates and the Executive Committee and will coordinate on an ongoing basis with the Anti-Trafficking Unit, in order to guarantee that a gender perspective is an integral part of their work against trafficking in persons. The Permanent Secretariat will be the liaison between the Permanent Delegates of the CIM and the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Unit in implementing the recommendations of the Meeting of National Authorities in the Member States. The Secretariat will also work with the CIM delegates to identify potential partnerships and program and policy initiatives in the region. A concerted effort will be made to raise the funds necessary to assist in this process.

#### EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- All programs and policies adopted in the OAS related to the issue of trafficking in persons should include a gender perspective.
- Progress made in the OAS on the issue of trafficking will be disseminated to all CIM delegates through the Permanent Secretariat.
- Compile best practices at governmental level related to the trafficking of persons.

## *2. Gender Equity and Equality: Implementation of the IAP*

### Integration of a Gender Perspective in Ministerial Agendas (SEPIA)

In compliance with the IAP mandate of ensuring "that a gender perspective is consistently mainstreamed into the preparation and application of international instruments, mechanisms and procedures within the framework of the OAS, and particularly on the agendas of ministerial-level meetings," the CIM launched a process for incorporating a gender perspective into ministerial agendas. This process, called SEPIA, has enabled the CIM to work in conjunction with experts from civil society, governments, and other regional and international organizations to submit to ministerial meetings, recommendations for integrating a gender perspective in their agendas and, subsequently, to establish specific lines of action for monitoring implementation of those recommendations. The SEPIA process has been applied in the following areas: Labor (SEPIA I), Justice (SEPIA II), Education (SEPIA III), and Science and Technology (SEPIA IV). As a result of these efforts:

- Specific issues such as violence against women, trafficking in persons, and gender and justice have been integrated into the Plan of Action of the Fifth Meeting of

Ministers of Justice or of Ministers or Attorneys General of the Americas (REMJA V) (2004);

- Gender equity issues have been included in the Plans of Action of the IV Inter-American Meeting of Ministers of Education and the XII, XIII and XIV Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor;
- The recommendations presented by the CIM to the First Meeting of Ministers and High Authorities on Science and Technology under the aegis of CIDI (2004) were adopted as one of eight Hemispheric Initiatives included in the Plan of Action.

Given these encouraging results, it is important to work towards establishing a systematic follow up process for SEPIA, to ensure that the recommendations and lines of action on gender mainstreaming are put into effect.

#### ACTION:

The CIM will continue promoting implementation of the IAP within the OAS General Secretariat by providing gender specific technical assistance on the integration of a gender perspective in the different areas. These efforts will be coordinated with the newly-created Department of Planning, Control and Evaluation, the point of entry for all projects. In addition, the Secretariat will continue providing technical support on the internal gender training of OAS staff. The CIM will also promote the IAP through the political bodies of the OAS, such as the Permanent Council, the various Commissions and Committees, to ensure that a gender perspective is in place.

The CIM will continue working with the OAS units in charge of the ministerial-level meetings and with civil society to systematize implementation of the SEPIA recommendations, to establish the best way to do so. The Secretariat will also provide technical support to the Principal Delegates in the dissemination of the IAP in the Member States.

#### EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- Gender-sensitive programs and policies implemented at the highest levels of the OAS.
- Systematic follow up of the four areas of the SEPIA initiative; in partnership with the OAS units responsible for the ministerial meetings and civil society.
- Increased collaboration among Inter-American agencies, civil society and other organizations working on gender issues.

#### Women, Peace and Security

The CIM is also working on integrating a gender perspective in the area of hemispheric security. In the 2004-2006 biennium, the CIM, working together with the Department of Crisis Prevention and Special Missions of the OAS and the Program Initiative for Inclusive Security received funding from Hunt Alternatives and the People's Republic of China, to carry out training seminars on gender, conflict and peace building in the Andean Region (October 2005) and Central America (September 2006). The objective of the training was to give men and women representing government, civil society, academia, justice system and law enforcement of 10 Member States the tools to integrate a gender perspective in their work in conflict prevention and resolution and peace building. To date, 60 people have been trained. The participants have duplicated the course in Colombia and Ecuador and an Internet-based network was established for both regions to share information and best practices on the issue.

#### ACTION:

The Permanent Secretariat will follow up on the work of the peace network, to determine how to best strengthen and institutionalize it.

Best practices will be identified in order to collect experiences and disseminate them.

To the extent possible, the participants will support the duplication of the training courses and will seek external resources to continue the training in other spheres. Training materials will be systematized.

Collaboration will continue with the OAS Under Secretariat of Political Affairs, the Initiative for Inclusive Security of Hunt Alternatives Fund, and other partners, to promote gender mainstreaming in peace –building and hemispheric security areas. At the same time, the work already initiated with the OAS Commission on Hemispheric Security will be strengthened.

#### EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- Multiplier effect of the training in the countries and integration of a gender perspective in programs and projects on conflict prevention and resolution and peace building;
- A network of peace builders trained in gender;
- A data base on best practices used in the countries, and
- Greater participation of women in peace and democracy processes and in social, political, economic and environmental development.

#### Women and Natural Disasters

CIM delegates have recognized that the issue of the “Impact of Natural Disasters on Women” is of deep concern for the Member States of the Caribbean, Central America and Mexico. The Permanent Secretariat has been asked to ensure that a gender perspective is included in any and all work done on this issue at the political levels in the OAS.

#### ACTION:

In this biennium, the Permanent Secretariat will work with the Committee on Natural Disasters to integrate a gender perspective into all declarations, resolutions and plans of action. The CIM will also provide technical assistance to the Department of Sustainable Development. If possible, joint initiatives will be undertaken.

#### EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- Policies and programs of the Inter-American Committee on Natural Disasters and the OAS Department of Natural Disasters with a gender perspective;
- Information on gender and natural disasters will be available to the CIM Delegates to facilitate their collaboration with the agencies responsible for implementing programs and plans of action on natural disasters.

#### 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."

**ACTION:**

The Permanent Secretariat, in consultation with the Principal Delegates, will continue to provide technical assistance on gender to the OAS organs that address migration issues. It will also continue to comply with the tasks assigned to it by the Program.

**EXPECTED OUTCOMES:**

- Programs and policies to protect women migrants and their families, especially women heads of household, and to combat violence against women;
- Information on the human rights of migrants will be available to the CIM Delegates to facilitate their collaboration with the organs responsible for implementing programs and plans of action on the issue.

*3. Participation of Women in Politics and Decision Making: Gender Parity*

The integration of women with full equality with men in decision-making and in political participation is a basic concern of the OAS Member States.

"Gender parity" is an emerging concept within discussions on gender equality. However, to date no definition of gender parity has been internationally agreed upon. Some understand "gender parity" to be an extension of gender equality, giving a gender dimension to politics, citizenship and democracy, and promoting women's equality in the public arena and the appropriate and equitable distribution of roles in the private sphere.

**ACTION:**

The CIM will gather background information on the conceptual work done by governments, NGOs and researchers to facilitate a consensus on common terminology on the term "gender parity."

The CIM will create awareness of the need to achieve a greater degree of participation of women in decision-making spheres, through mechanisms that will generate an impact in the short term, taking into account the unique characteristics of societies.

The CIM will encourage Member States to consider a cultural transformation in which parity is understood as a manner of interaction between the sexes that benefits society as a whole, and not only as a set of measures that exclusively favor women.

**EXPECTED OUTCOMES:**

- Develop a consensus for a working definition of "gender parity" through discussion and analysis within and among countries, leading to the development of practical applications of this concept.
- Include gender parity as a theoretical framework to strengthen gender equality in the generation and adoption of resolutions and other documents of the OAS.

#### *4. 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, both 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.

#### **ACTION:**

The Permanent Secretariat, in consultation with the Principal Delegates, will make proposals in this biennium on how to share best practices in the region and how to develop networks to gain strength in order to expand formal and real proactive measures.

Seminars, meetings, and discussions on proactive measures in Latin America and the Caribbean with speakers who are recognized as representative political figures in our countries.

Promote leadership programs with political training and pedagogy for women, adolescents and girls.

Promote policies of equality, equal opportunity, and non-discrimination to create the conditions that reconcile the public and private spheres so that women can build and develop full citizenship.

Greater collaboration between the CIM and agencies and non-governmental organizations of the Member States to coordinate actions to promote the leadership of women in all political levels.

#### **EXPECTED OUTCOMES:**

- National and regional mechanisms that promote the use of women's networks and best practices in the hemisphere about how to increase the participation of women in decision-making positions.
- Regional or national policies and programs for proactive measures that facilitate the entry and ongoing presence of women in cultural, social, economic, and political life.

## 5. 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.

### ACTION:

To ensure a more effective integration of a gender perspective as a cross-cutting issue, CIM delegates will continue to promote the strengthening of national machineries on gender equity, equality and women's empowerment, by urging their more active and increased participation within the context of their national governments and encouraging the allocation of adequate human and financial resources that will enable them to do their work effectively.

### EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- National machineries on gender equity and equality and women's empowerment, elevated and strengthened with the highest level participation in decision making spaces of their governments and with adequate financial and human resources;
- Public policies, strategies and proposals with a gender perspective in all areas of national interest.
- Greater access of women to decision-making

## III. OTHER ISSUES

### 1. *NGO Participation*

#### ACTION:

In an effort to increase the participation of women in the OAS and Summit processes, the CIM will encourage NGOs that work on gender issues to register for accreditation with the OAS Summit Office as civil society observers. This will ensure that they will have a voice and an opportunity to participate in the meetings organized by the OAS.

In addition, different ways of collaborating with civil society organizations will be identified and new partnerships will be established to carry out joint initiatives on issues of interest to the CIM.

#### EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- Increased number of gender-related civil society organizations registered with the OAS and participating in OAS activities.
- More joint initiatives carried out by the CIM and NGOs on issues of interest to the CIM.

### 2. *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), 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.

**ACTION:**

The CIM will continue developing new strategic alliances and strengthening existing partnerships. The primary partners in our efforts will be: the IDB (PROLID program), the World Bank, the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO), UNIFEM, UNDP, INSTRAW and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

**EXPECTED OUTCOMES:**

- Existing partnerships will be strengthened and new partners will be identified.
- Sharing of information and joint and complementary strategic action.

#### **IV. FINANCIAL SITUATION OF THE OAS**

Since the 2004 Assembly of Delegates, the OAS has elected a new Secretary General. As a result, there has been a restructuring of the organization and a realignment of priorities. In this period, the financial situation has been tenuous; however there appears to be a slight easing of the budgetary situation.

The Permanent Secretariat will continue to provide, to the extent of its technical and financial possibilities, support for the Principal Delegates to promote activities in the Member States. In addition, it will substantially increase efforts to secure funding from outside sources and encourage the contribution of additional specific funds to implement mandates given to the CIM, especially in priority areas.