FOLLOW-UP MECHANISM TO THE
BELÉM DO PARÁ CONVENTION (MESECVI)
**XXII MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS**
December 9 and 10, 2025
Fortaleza, Brazil

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# MINUTES OF THE MEETING
# TWENTY-SECOND MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS OF THE FOLLOW-UP MECHANISM TO THE INTER-AMERICAN CONVENTION ON THE PREVENTION, PUNISHMENT AND ERADICATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN
## *CONVENTION OF BELÉM DO PARÁ*

The Twenty-Second Meeting of the Committee of Experts (CEVI) of the Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention was held on December 9 and 10, 2025, in Fortaleza, Brazil, with the participation of Experts from seventeen countries: Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, and Uruguay.

On December 9, at 9:00 a.m., the Technical Secretary of the MESECVI, Luz Patricia Mejía, welcomed the Experts. She thanked them for their presence, highlighted the continuity of the Mechanism's work, and underscored the importance of this forum for the analysis, coordination, and strengthening of the implementation of the Convention in the States. The Vice-President of the Committee of Experts, Sherna Benjamin, then delivered the opening remarks on behalf of the Presidency. She stressed the significance of the items on the agenda, the current regional challenges, and the Committee's responsibility in providing technical and political guidance to the States.

The working session began with a panel on new challenges in the implementation of the Convention. The Expert of Colombia, Adriana Benjumea, addressed the impact of organized crime on violence against women. She noted that these structures reinforce settings of territorial control, illegal economies, and power dynamics that increase women's exposure to multiple forms of violence, limit institutional action, and deepen impunity.

The Expert of Grenada, Elaine Henry-McQueen, then spoke on the relationship between violence against women and climate change in the Caribbean. She explained that, although island States contribute minimally to global warming, they bear a disproportionate share of its effects. Hurricanes, floods, sea-level rise, and prolonged droughts create precarious conditions that affect women differently and increase the risk of gender-based violence, particularly in contexts of emergency, displacement, and shelters. She emphasized that the root of this violence continues to be relations of power and control, in a setting of persistent stereotypes and the erosion of acquired rights. She called on States to incorporate into their policies data that integrate human and social components, not only environmental ones. She referred to the Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework, and the forthcoming COP30 Gender Action Plan, and highlighted the need to move toward transformative measures, strengthen institutional capacities, ensure climate financing with equity and violence indicators, and guarantee women's effective participation in decision-making spaces.

Next, Loreto Bravo, of the Mesoamerican Initiative of Women Human Rights Defenders (IM-Defensoras), presented the work of this network, which brings together some 300 organizations and more than 3,000 people from various social movements in Mesoamerica and places care at the center of political and community action. She presented the documentation of attacks against women defenders, according to which the use of technological tools as a means of aggression increased steadily between 2020 and 2025, accounting for 24% of recorded cases. She indicated that 62% of digital attacks have a gender component and that they occur mainly on social media, in a context marked by an anti-feminist agenda targeting women's rights, sexual and reproductive rights, and the rights of LGBTIQ+ persons. She identified two broad categories of perpetrators: external actors, such as State representatives and political actors, and people from the victims' close circle, such as relatives, partners, neighbors, and friends; 23% of aggressors act

anonymously. She highlighted that women defenders have organized to care for and protect one another and to build solidarity networks that prevent the isolation of those who face violence.

Ana Correa, of the Ni Una Menos movement, then presented the report on women's rights, digital violence, human rights, and gender, prepared with the participation of various organizations. The report provides an overview of the seriousness of gender-based digital violence, recognized as a form of violence falling within the framework of the Belém do Pará Convention. Drawing on reports from the MESECVI, the Spotlight Initiative, and civil society organizations, she noted that women and girls are the population most affected by harassment on social media, a form of violence that is steadily increasing, remains invisible, and rarely has identified perpetrators. She stressed that this violence drives women out of public debate and political participation because of the emotional, symbolic, and social harm it causes. She recalled that States are obliged to criminalize this violence, regulate digital services, and ensure its prosecution, and pointed to Brazil as one of the countries that has made the most progress in regulating digital platforms and as a reference for the region.

Next, Maisha Palma, of the Afro Women's Network, described how digital violence affects Afro-descendant women through racist discourse, hypersexualization, and systematic attacks in public opinion, leading many women and young people to restrict their participation in digital spaces. She indicated that in many Afro-descendant communities this violence is compounded by contexts of harassment, surveillance, and militarization. She noted that States do not adequately guarantee protection or the development of effective public policies, and underscored the importance of protecting young Afro-descendant women so that their political participation does not put them at risk.

Dulce Patricia Torres, of the Continental Network of Indigenous Women of the Americas (ECMIA), addressed systems of structural violence stemming from poverty, economic inequality, and the concentration of power, with reference to the situation of women in Indigenous communities. She proposed that the Committee prepare a General Recommendation on Indigenous women from an intersectional perspective.

At the close of the panel, the Presidency summarized the issues addressed: the impact of organized crime; individual and collective rights; the need for a comprehensive implementation of the Convention that goes beyond sexual violence; effective compliance by States with their commitments; the incorporation of race, gender, and intersectional perspectives; recognition of the human right to care, self-care, and to be cared for; and the relationship between climate change, access to health, and the deterioration of living conditions.

The Report of the Presidency on the work carried out in 2025 was then presented, covering the Fourth Hemispheric Report, the Fourth Round of Evaluation for the Caribbean, progress on the Model Law, and the work of the Group on Patrimonial Violence and Child Support.

The Experts of the Dominican Republic and Colombia acknowledged the work of the Technical Secretariat and highlighted the country reports as tools that have strengthened civil society participation; the Expert of Colombia also emphasized the Experts' technical contribution to the formulation of recommendations. The Expert of Bolivia acknowledged the work on the Model Law, whose public consultations have mobilized and strengthened the women's movement for

digital rights, and highlighted the political value of the Committee's statements. The Expert of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines stressed the need to raise the profile of the Model Law, strengthen Caribbean participation, and follow up with the countries that have not yet responded to the indicators of the Fourth Round of Evaluation.

The Expert of Brazil highlighted the importance of the Technical Secretariat's presence in the countries to strengthen the visibility of the MESECVI before the States. She referred to Brazil's proposal for a law on domestic violence aligned with Article 2 of the Convention and to the need to move toward a general law covering all forms of violence. The Expert of Paraguay valued the country reports as a tool for assessing progress and challenges, highlighted the Committee's statements, and expressed concern about setbacks in gender policies in some States, underscoring the need to strengthen the use of regional instruments. The Expert of Peru expressed concern about the changes to the Ministry of Women in her country and underscored the importance of the Committee's voice in the face of political changes that have negatively affected women's rights in the region, a scenario that also represents an opportunity to strengthen the role of the Committee and the Convention. The Expert of Grenada highlighted the importance of the Fourth Round of Evaluation in the Caribbean and the need to support countries in responding to the indicators. The Expert of Trinidad and Tobago acknowledged the Technical Secretariat's sustained efforts to ensure the functioning of the Mechanism.

The election of the new Board of the Committee of Experts was then held. The Expert of Bolivia nominated the Expert of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines as President, the Expert of Chile as Vice-President, and the Expert of the Dominican Republic as Second Vice-President. The Experts of Peru, Grenada, and Colombia supported the nomination. Having accepted their nominations, the candidates were elected by acclamation.

The Committee then considered the Inter-American Model Law to Prevent, Punish, and Eradicate Gender-Based Digital Violence against Women. The Expert of Chile, on behalf of the working group, noted that the Model Law is the result of the joint work of the CEVI and civil society. Following the presentation of the statement of reasons, Model Law was approved by acclamation.

Consideration then began of the draft General Recommendation No. 7 on Economic and Patrimonial Violence, prepared by the working group composed of Argentina, Ecuador, Grenada, Guatemala, and Suriname. The context presented addressed the disproportionate burden of care borne by women and its economic impact in situations of separation, female-headed households, and gender-based violence. Sandra Ramírez, of Equality Now and CLADEM, on behalf of the Belém do Pará Regional Network, stressed the need for the Mechanism to issue clear guidelines to States on economic violence.

The Expert of Bolivia noted that there are few guarantees for women regarding economic violence in her country. The Expert of Brazil underscored the need for this Recommendation given the lack of laws that effectively protect women, particularly in situations of separation, and mentioned the possibility of imprisonment as a means of ensuring compliance with child support obligations. The Expert of Panama highlighted the importance of intersectionality, especially in the case of migrant women, for whom the risk of losing custody of their children is used as a tool of power; she proposed that the State also assume responsibility in setting child support and underscored the need to eliminate stereotypes in justice systems. The Expert of Peru noted that labor informality

prevents the setting of fair child support and highlighted the high vulnerability of migrant women, whose dependency is used as a mechanism of control without sufficient legal guarantees. The Expert of Uruguay indicated that the contributions received would be taken into account to further develop the proposal; she stressed the importance of individual care and the need for new measures to prevent evasion of child support payments, and expressed concern about the use of false accusations as a reactionary strategy to weaken the rights women have won.

Finally, the Technical Secretariat reported that this working group was established pursuant to the agreements of the Committee's last Meeting; that the initial findings will be shared; that new meetings will be convened, including sessions with the Experts from Latin America and the Caribbean; and that organizations will be invited to take part in the process. It also highlighted the importance of the participation of Caribbean Experts to strengthen information on child support in that region.

The first day's session closed at 4:33 p.m., and the Experts were invited to attend the scheduled side events.

On December 10, at 9:43 a.m., the President of the Committee of Experts, Miriam Roache, opened the second day with the panel "Toward a Coordinated Response to Gender-Based Digital Violence."

The Expert of The Bahamas, Janet McKenzie, spoke about digital violence and the challenges the English-speaking Caribbean faces in responding to it. She underscored the need for regional coordination that would enable the States of the subregion to act in a concerted manner against a form of violence that transcends national borders.

Marcela Hernández Oropa, of the Ley Olimpia Movement and the Belém do Pará Regional Network, spoke from her experience accompanying survivors. She recounted that, beginning in 2014, a group of women promoted reforms on digital violence at a time when this form of violence was not yet named. These reforms were first approved in Puebla, Mexico, in 2018, and at the national level in 2021, recognizing the digital sphere and covering cyberharassment and the dissemination of real or simulated intimate sexual content, including deepfakes. She noted that the 2025 Model Law represents a major step forward and that the movement has worked to support victims and develop prevention methodologies in schools and communities, in partnership with organizations such as CLADEM, Equality Now, and Ni Una Menos, and with UN Women on digital violence campaigns. She warned that technology companies do not guarantee women's protection and that platforms monetize the sexualization and consumption of this content. She highlighted that laws help victims feel protected, prevent the normalization of digital violence, and ensure that "fear changes sides." She underscored that the Model Law was a collective process with the participation of civil society and governments, and that its implementation must include victims in order to give it legitimacy and continue building safe digital spaces.

Ana Carolina Querino, Representative of UN Women Brazil, addressed the impact of digital violence on public life. She explained that this violence is often anonymous, since anyone can create fake accounts and attack, which makes it difficult to identify perpetrators. She noted that nearly 80% of women in public life limit their participation and exposure for fear of violence, that 40% have self-censored, and that 50% have also experienced violence offline.

In the ensuing dialogue, the Expert of Chile recalled that the process of drafting the Model Law took three years and highlighted that civil society participation, by contributing knowledge and experience from working with women, gives the instrument legitimacy. She thanked the region for its participation and emphasized the use that will be made of the Model Law. The Expert of Grenada referred to deepfakes and to Denmark's experience regarding copyright over one's own likeness. The Expert of Panama highlighted the relevance of the Model Law as a tool to guide national legislative reforms on digital violence.

Salud sin Miedos then took the floor, sharing its work experience and reiterating the importance of guaranteeing women access to health services free from violence and discrimination.

Next, Dinorah Acerta, of the Mesoamerican Network on Women, Health and Migration, thanked the Technical Secretariat and the Committee for the invitation. She explained that the network brings together 15 organizations that assist approximately 500 girls, women, and LGBTI persons in situations of human mobility. She noted that, according to ECLAC data, human mobility remains high and the majority of people on the move are women, many of them displaced. She indicated that many women who begin their journey from Costa Rica to Mexico report having been victims of violence, and that LGBTI persons experience it in all cases. She identified climate change, disasters, gender-based violence, organized crime, and economic violence as the most common causes of women's migration, situations that worsen during transit. She added that changes in migration policy toward the United States have left a growing number of women stranded in border countries, where they suffer violence without guarantees from the States. Among her recommendations, she proposed producing data with a gender and sexual diversity perspective; fully implementing the Belém do Pará Convention, incorporating migratory status as a protected category; linking migration policies with systems for the prevention, care, and eradication of violence; guaranteeing regular, safe, and gender-responsive mobility pathways, as well as access to migratory regularization for women in situations of vulnerability and survivors of violence; strengthening asylum systems with a gender approach; creating transnational mechanisms for access to justice; promoting socioeconomic integration to redistribute the care burden of migrant women; and integrating into all these efforts the organizations led by migrant women and the feminist networks that sustain protection in the territories.

Agustina Rossi, on behalf of the Regional Feminist Network, presented an analysis of the status of compliance with the Convention in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, and Peru using data from 2022 to 2024, the period following the Fourth Round of Evaluation, in order to show the changes that have taken place in the region, including setbacks in legislation and rights. Among the advances, she highlighted that all the countries analyzed have comprehensive laws recognizing gender-based violence as a human rights violation; the trend toward expanding the recognized forms of violence beyond the domestic sphere; progress in sexual and reproductive rights, such as the decriminalization of abortion up to week 24 in Colombia and the regulation of voluntary termination of pregnancy in cases of rape in Ecuador, both in 2022; and the incorporation of intersectional approaches into legal frameworks.

She noted, however, that the gap between laws and their implementation remains the main structural obstacle to guaranteeing women's right to a life free of violence. She identified fragile gender institutions, insufficient budgets—particularly for care, protection, and reparation services—, a shortage of specialized personnel, weak inter-institutional coordination, and the

absence of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, which undermines the enforceability of the duty of due diligence. She warned that this structural weakness makes the elimination or downsizing of gender mechanisms quick and politically easy: while Colombia, Mexico, and Ecuador raised their mechanisms to ministerial rank, Argentina and, in 2025, Ecuador experienced setbacks through their elimination or merger with other ministries. She recommended that governments sustain and strengthen gender institutions with stable and specific budgets for the implementation of comprehensive protection laws; strengthen interdisciplinary teams; consolidate a unified, public national data system with a gender and intersectional approach; design specific strategies for Indigenous, Afro-descendant, migrant, rural, and LBTIQ+ women and women with disabilities, with their participation in all phases of policymaking; promote their economic autonomy; and guarantee effective and non-revictimizing access to justice, with better dissemination of care pathways and comprehensive, accessible protection measures, with an emphasis on rural areas and populations in situations of vulnerability.

The Technical Secretariat referred to the preparation of the Fifth Round of Multilateral Evaluation and identified sexual and reproductive rights and migration as two issues affecting the situation of women that should be considered in it, together with sexual violence and its impunity.

The Expert of Peru indicated that sexual violence and reproductive rights should be included on the Committee's agenda, given that several cases have reached the Inter-American System due to the denial of access to therapeutic abortion in her country, putting the lives of girls and women at risk, and that there is research in several countries of the region on which to build. The Expert of Panama noted that in her country more than 80% of sexual violence cases involve girls as victims, and proposed including obstetric violence under the sexual and reproductive rights pillar. The Expert of Bolivia observed that the Round works with 137 indicators while the Caribbean is beginning its process with around 60, in a context of weakening gender institutions, and proposed building a more coordinated process with the Caribbean to facilitate countries' responses.

The Technical Secretariat reported that 15 countries have responded, with the exception of Venezuela and Nicaragua, and that Belize and Suriname are at an advanced stage of the process. It noted that the quality of responses has improved, that work is under way on the visualization of the report and on improving the analysis tool, and that information is more limited when governments are asked for data from other institutions, such as prosecutors' offices. It stressed the need for the Experts to become involved and for States to provide complete information on violence.

The Expert of the Dominican Republic expressed concern about the persecution of women's organizations and the elimination of ministries of women in some countries, and proposed that sexual and reproductive rights be a core pillar of the Fifth Round. The Expert of Uruguay warned that States are delegitimizing women's achievements and that speaking about gender is now frowned upon in her country and in the region, and called on the Committee to reflect on how to counter this political wave and its setbacks.

The Expert of Chile recalled that the Committee has already addressed violations of sexual and reproductive rights in previous recommendations, and noted the need to examine how justice systems—the police, the judiciary, and the public prosecutor's office—respond. She proposed revisiting the General Recommendation of the Committee of Experts of the MESECVI (nº6): On

the use of stereotypes that compromise the integrity of justice systems (MESECVI, 2024), given that stereotypes remain entrenched and violence against women is still not treated as a human rights issue. She added that protection measures are one of the most pressing problems and that evidence must be gathered on the types of measures granted in order to improve coordination.

The Expert of Brazil noted that in federal States it is difficult to obtain information from independent bodies and recommended greater dialogue with the Competent National Authorities regarding setbacks. She highlighted the high levels of institutional violence in the health system, the high rates of child marriage and adolescent pregnancy, and the situation of girls forced to continue pregnancies resulting from rape. She warned that data do not reflect intersectionality and that treatment in the health system is racialized and discriminatory, as shown by the higher mortality of Black women in Brazil, and that reproductive rights should therefore be a priority issue.

The Expert of Colombia underscored that the Fifth Round faces the challenge of addressing both longstanding and new issues, including the increase in sexual violence, patrimonial and economic violence, and armed conflicts and peace zones in the region. She proposed defining the Committee's agenda before developing the indicators, and that the indicators be more demanding of States, even in a context of limited resources, and include data on girls and on women with disabilities, Afro-descendant, Indigenous, and migrant women. She recalled that technical work is never apolitical and that it is the Committee's responsibility to contribute technically to preventing setbacks.

The Expert of Guatemala congratulated the panel and identified migration and sexual and reproductive rights as the main challenges in the region. The Expert of Paraguay expressed concern about the adoption in her country of a law on NGOs that represents a setback for civil society; about the lack of transparency in electoral processes, which affects the democratic system; and about the elimination of several ministries. She underscored the need to consolidate and guarantee civil society participation.

Under other business, the Expert of Peru asked the Presidency whether the matters discussed during the panel would be considered in the agreements. The Expert of Grenada proposed including sexual violence and sexual harassment in the workplace as a recommendation, and further addressing consent and sexuality education.

Finally, the agreements were read. The Experts incorporated changes to the proposal and, following its review, the Agreements of the Twenty-Second Meeting of the Committee of Experts (MESECVI/CEVI/doc.300/25) were adopted. The Meeting ended at 3:37 p.m.