

Committee of Experts of the Follow-up Mechanism
to the Belém do Pará Convention (MESECVI)

DECLARATION OF PACHUCA

“Strengthening efforts to prevent
violence against women”

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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2013-2015

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We, the principal and alternate delegates of the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM) and the Experts of the Committee of Experts of the Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention (MESECVI) of the Organization of American States (OAS), gathered in Pachuca, Hidalgo, Mexico, on May 15th 2014, on the occasion of the Hemispheric Forum Belém do Pará +20 “The Belém do Pará Convention and the prevention of violence against women: Good practices and proposals for the future,” and the Third Regular Session of the CIM Executive Committee 2013-2015;

BEARING IN MIND:

That twenty years ago, the *Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women* (Belém do Pará Convention) established the right of women to be free from violence;

That on ratifying the *Belém do Pará Convention*, States Party committed to adopting policies to prevent, punish and eradicate violence against women, to applying due diligence to prevent, investigate and impose penalties for violence against women (article 7, paragraph b); and to modifying social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, including the development of formal and informal educational programs appropriate to every level of the educational process, to counteract prejudices, customs and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or superiority of either of the sexes or on the stereotyped roles for men and women

which legitimize or exacerbate violence against women (article 8, paragraph b);

That through the *Declaration and Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women*, held in Beijing in September of 1995, the participating Governments declared their commitment to elaborating recommendations and develop curricula, textbooks and teaching aids free of gender-based stereotypes for all levels of education (paragraph 83a); developing human rights education programmes that incorporate the gender dimension at all levels of education (paragraph 83j); and establishing consistent with freedom of expression, professional guidelines and codes of conduct that address violent, degrading or pornographic materials concerning women in the media, including advertising (paragraph 244b)

That through the *Consensus of Santo Domingo*, adopted during the 12th Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean in October 2013, the participating Governments agreed to strengthen the mainstreaming of gender across all areas of public policy in connection with information and communications technologies (paragraph 34);

That through the *Consensus of Montevideo*, adopted during the 1st Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean in February 2014, the Governments agreed to reaffirm the political will of the region, at the highest level, to combat and eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against women and

actively promote the sensitization of justice officials on the implementation of a gender perspective;

That through the Agreed Conclusions of the 58th Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (E/CN.6/2014/L.7), the Member States declared their commitment to implement concrete and long-term measures to transform discriminatory social norms and gender stereotypes (paragraph 42d); fully engage men and boys, including community leaders, as strategic partners and allies in the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls (paragraph 42e); and recognize the important role the media can play in the elimination of gender stereotypes, and to the extent consistent with freedom of expression, increase the participation and access of women to all forms of media, and encourage the media to increase public awareness of the Beijing Platform for Action, the Millennium Development Goals, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls (paragraph 42xx).

TAKING NOTE WITH SATISFACTION:

That over the last two decades, the *Belém do Pará Convention* has paved the way for a new generation of integrated laws and, in that context, for the establishment of legal standards at the national, regional and international levels, the formulation of public policies and national plans, the organization of information and awareness-raising campaigns, the development of specialized care and support services and other initiatives and activities;

Of the positive results of these efforts in terms of increasing the visibility and the collective knowledge of violence against women as a social problem and a violation of human rights, as well as the establishment of a legal and political framework to guide an inter-sectoral response to this problem in terms of prevention, punishment and care;

Of the Belém do Pará +20 Hemispheric Forum “The Belém do Pará Convention and the Prevention of Violence against Women: Good practices and proposals for the future,” and the ideas, experiences and methodologies exchanged to foster education based on human rights and free from gender stereotypes, train different sectors on the nature and extent of violence against women and how to prevent it, build alliances with communications media and publicity agencies to promote gender-sensitive communication that is free of discrimination, and how to evaluate the impact of prevention efforts in order to identify good practices and lessons learned.

RECOGNIZING

That violence against women and girls is an offense to human dignity and a violation of human rights; it undermines development, generates social instability and impedes progress towards justice and peace;

That the different forms of violence against women and girls are an obstacle to their individual development, weakens the exercise of their rights and freedoms, blocks the full

development of their capacities and autonomy and limits their public, economic, social and political participation;

That in spite of the commitments adopted and the efforts made, of all the areas of work that are touched on by the Belém do Pará Convention, it is in the area of primary prevention that we have made the least progress in terms of the goals that have been set;

That although there has been a still incipient development of integral and integrated models of prevention that allows us to go beyond isolated efforts, we still possess little systematized knowledge on how to conduct prevention and how to measure the impact of prevention efforts;

That the prevention of violence against women, including primary prevention, is affected by the consideration of violence against women as a “private” matter, by the lack of recognition of the different manifestations of violence against women, including psychological, economic and symbolic violence, sexual harassment and trafficking of women, among others, and by the interrelation between these manifestations of violence.

DECLARES THEIR COMMITMENT TO:

Reaffirm the validity and urgency of the provisions of the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women and the Declaration and Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women, in light of their twentieth anniversaries, including the

need to make visible the different manifestations of violence against women and their interrelatedness;

Strengthen the focus on primary prevention of violence against women as an essential part of an integrated response, without detracting from existing punishment, care and eradication efforts, on the basis of proven experiences and methodologies, taking into account the ensemble of agreed commitments on the promotion of and education in human rights and the elimination of gender stereotypes in education and communication, and addressing the various manifestations of violence against women and the needs of specific populations;

Combat the culture of impunity for violence against women and the utilization of discriminatory stereotypes and sexism in communications media;

In the area of legislation and public policy

Coordinate with the relevant government entities and civil society, including citizen observation, oversight and monitoring bodies, to promote that the actions undertaken to prevent, punish and eradicate violence against women and girls have sufficient political support and financial and human resources for their full and effective implementation and follow-up, on the basis of agreed commitments on human rights, from a perspective of results-based management and using progressive indicators that account for the access and enjoyment of women and men of their rights;

Include a participatory impact evaluation component in public

policies on prevention, care and punishment of violence against women, with a view to identifying good practices and lessons learned;

Articulate policies to prevent violence against women and girls with: i) policies to punish and care for that violence, in order to maximize their impact on prevention; and ii) policies on security and prevention, punishment and care for social violence;

Mainstream a diversity approach in violence prevention policies in order to respond to the needs of specific groups;

Promote that policies adopted on the prevention of violence are State, rather than government policies, in order to ensure the continuity and sustainability of the response to violence against women and girls. Similarly, ensure that the policies adopted at the level of the State are valid in all the states of federal systems;

Compile information on the risk factors for violence against women and girls, taking into account the progress made in this area by the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO);

Broaden the process of formulating public policies in order to include full citizen representation, with particular emphasis on marginalized groups.

In the area of education

Coordinate with the relevant government bodies to integrate a gender and human rights perspective in educational curricula

and in non-formal educational environments, reaffirming the commitment to implement the Ministerial Declaration “Preventing through Education,” adopted by the First Meeting of Ministers of Health and Education to Stop HIV and STIs in Latin America and the Caribbean;

Incentivize educators to demonstrate the benefits for all of education on human rights and gender equality, and offer them certified professional development tools that are consistent with agreed commitments on human rights;

Broaden the work of education for human rights and gender equality beyond the education sector to include other key spaces and actors such as mothers and father, teachers unions and organizations of educators, and religious groups, among others;

Include the issue of masculinities in all educational curricula in order to guide the socialization of boys and girls, with an emphasis on health and respectful gender and power relations, peaceful conflict resolution and the exercise of sexuality in conditions of equality and free from discrimination;

Articulate the work of the education sector with other relevant sectors, including health, justice and security and ensure that educational policies include a participatory evaluation component.

In the area of communication

Foster the elimination of gender stereotypes and sexist and

discriminatory images and messages in communications media - including both content and publicity, in private and public media - promoting the use of inclusive language on the basis of strategies that promote creativity;

Foster the self-regulation of media - including ICTs - and their oversight through autonomous bodies that include citizen participation and, similarly, promote the fulfillment of international norms, respecting both freedom of expression - including the right of women and girls to information and communication - and the right to non-discrimination;

Promote gender training from a multi-cultural perspective in the curricula at all levels of journalism, publicity and communication; as well as within enterprises linked to communication; and foster gender certification for these entities;

Facilitate sufficient resources for the implementation of programs, campaigns and other actions designed to prevent violence against women and girls in the media; as well as evaluation of the impact of these measures; and that public media provide the example in terms of content that promotes equality;

Work with civil society in the task of evaluating the fulfillment of the Belem do Para Convention in relation to communications media, as well as the application of sanctions to sexist publicity and media coverage.

WE REQUEST THAT THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2013-2015 AND THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT OF THE CIM:

Follow-up the recommendations of the Belém do Pará +20 Hemispheric Forum “The Belém do Pará Convention and the Prevention of Violence against Women: Good practices and proposals for the future” through the Platform on Good Practices in the Implementation of the Belém do Pará Convention (<http://www.belemdopara.org>), by distributing the practices presented during the Forum and compiling and organizing additional information; and

Strengthen the utilization of traditional and alternative communications media to increase the visibility of the Belém do Pará Convention and the achievements of its Follow-up Mechanism (MESECVI).

Follow-up Mechanism to the
Belém do Pará Convention

MESECVI

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