

Ressources for
Civil Society Participation in the
Follow-up and Implementation of
the Belém do Pará Convention



OAS MESECVI

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Introduction

Since the entry into force of the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women “Convention of Belém do Pará”, civil society and the women’s movement have played a key role in following up and monitoring compliance by the States with the obligations acquired to move towards a life free of violence for women and girls in the region.

The Convention of Belém do Pará is the first international treaty in the world to enshrine the right of women to a life free of violence, establishing positive obligations of the States to prevent, punish and eradicate such violence.

With a view to contributing to the achievement of these objectives, in October 2004 the OAS General Assembly created the Follow-up Mechanism for the Convention of Belém do Pará (MESECVI).

The Mechanism analyzes progress in the implementation of the Convention by its States Parties, as well as the persistent challenges in their response to violence against women. This follow-up is carried out during Multilateral Evaluation Rounds, through a system of progress indicators developed to measure the performance of the States.

As an integral part of the MESECVI, civil society participates in its various activities through several non-governmental organizations registered with the OAS whose mission is the promotion, defense and protection of women’s rights. The purpose of this guide is to provide guidance to civil society organizations (CSOs) in this process in order to promote and deepen their participation in the Mechanism.

Guide Objectives

- ▶ To deepen knowledge about the MESECVI, how it works and the processes of evaluation and follow-up of the implementation of the Belém do Pará Convention through Multilateral Evaluation Rounds.
- ▶ To present the Indicators System: how it works, what we measure, what it is used for.
- ▶ To provide CSOs with a set of tools to participate in the monitoring and follow-up process and facilitate the preparation of their Shadow Reports.

What is MESECVI?

The effective implementation of the Convention requires a process of continuous and independent evaluation and support, for which the MESECVI was created in 2004. It is integrated by the 32 States Parties to the Belém do Pará Convention.

The MESECVI is a systematic and permanent multilateral evaluation methodology, based on a forum for exchange and technical cooperation between the States Parties and the Committee of Experts, with the participation of civil society.

The Mechanism's task is to monitor, follow-up, and guarantee that the States comply with their obligations under the Convention and guarantee the right to a life free of violence for women and girls in the region.

The MESECVI comprises the Conference of States Parties (CEP), the Committee of Experts (CEVI), the Technical Secretariat, and the Civil Society.

The 4 pillars of the MESECVI

**Technical Secretariat:
Liaison**

**Committee of Experts:
National and Hemispheric
Reports, Recommendations,
Follow-up.**

**Conference of States Parties:
Implement Convention,
Information on their policies**

**Civil Society:
Monitoring and
Follow-up,
Shadow Reports**

MESECVI Statute

Article 1. Purposes/objectives

- A.** To follow up on the commitments undertaken by the States Parties to the Convention and review how they are being implemented;
- B.** To promote the implementation of the Convention and contribute to the achievement of the purposes established therein;
- C.** To establish a system of technical cooperation among the states parties, which shall be open to other Member States and Permanent Observer States, for the exchange of information, experiences, and best practices as a means to update and harmonize their domestic legislation, as appropriate, and attain other common objectives associated with the Convention.

How do Civil Society Organizations take part?

Civil society organizations participate in the MESECVI by analyzing the progress and challenges in implementing the obligations and recommendations made to the States during the Multilateral Evaluation Rounds.

- ▶ They exchange information and experiences with the other MESECVI bodies (Committee of Experts, States Parties and Technical Secretariat) through the presentation of Shadow Reports.
- ▶ They Support the dissemination of the different reports, recommendations, model laws and political declarations prepared by the Committee of Experts, as well as the monitoring and follow-up of compliance with the recommendations made by the CEVI to the States Parties.
- ▶ They submit proposals on issues of collective interest to the Committee's meetings and may be invited to participate in them.

The MESECVI Statute establishes that:

Article 10.2 The Committee of Experts shall include in its rules of procedure provisions that ensure the participation by civil society organizations.

Chapter V of the Rules of Procedure of the Committee of Experts contains provisions on the participation of CSOs and women's organizations.

Multilateral Evaluation Rounds

Belém do Pará Convention, Article 10

“...the States Parties shall include information on the measures adopted to prevent and prohibit violence against women, and to assist women affected by violence, as well as on any difficulties they observe in applying those measures and the factors that contribute to violence against women”.

The MESECVI operates through Multilateral Evaluation Rounds



System of Progress Indicators

The MESECVI designed a System of Progress Indicators to report on the State's actions, the objective being to monitor compliance with the obligations according to each right and commitment set forth in the Convention of Belém do Pará.

For example:

Article 1: "Violence against women shall be understood as any action or conduct, based on gender, which causes death or physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, both in the public and private spheres."

Article 7h: The States Parties agree to adopt such legislative or other measures as may be necessary to give effect to this Convention.

Obligation: to legislate on violence against women that occurs both in the public and private spheres.

How are they determined?

The Committee of Experts interprets the obligations of the Belém do Pará Convention to develop indicators that reflect the state of compliance with these obligations.



Example:

Obligation Harmonize national legislation with the Belém do Pará Convention.

Legal Standard Article 7. The States Parties condemn all forms of violence against women and agree to pursue, by all appropriate means and without delay, policies to prevent, punish and eradicate such violence and undertake to: c. include in their domestic legislation penal, civil, administrative and any other type of provisions that may be needed to prevent, punish and eradicate violence against women and to adopt appropriate administrative measures where necessary.

Progress indicator Evolution of the law on domestic violence to laws of comprehensive or second-generation violence.

A useful tool

The system of progress indicators:

- ✓ Allows the standardization of the available information and identifies gaps in sources of information on the situation of women and respect for their rights.
- ✓ Promotes a process of evaluation of the measures adopted by the States and pending obligations.
- ✓ Allows the systematization of good practices and challenges faced by the States.
- ✓ Serves to design, review and improve State actions.

The indicators offer an overview of how the materialization of the rights contained in the Convention is progressing and generate a sense of obligation on the part of the States.

We use this process to:

- ▶ Quantify and qualify the process to make women's human rights effective.
- ▶ Learn if there are public policies, plans or specific activities for each obligation and if the State is guaranteeing mechanisms for claims, complaints or access to justice for these obligations.
- ▶ Observe if the State is guaranteeing claims, complaints, or access to justice mechanisms for the established obligations.
- ▶ Establish if the information is regular, reliable, systematic, and respects the methodological guidelines.

Three categories of indicators were established to measure the State's performance:



What do we measure?

The Committee of Experts has developed indicators to measure progress at the level of:

- 1) Legislation
- 2) National plans
- 3) Access to justice
- 4) Information and statistics
- 5) Diversity
- 6) Budget

These indicators are further divided into categories of:

- ▶ Incorporation into the law
- ▶ Financial context and budget commitments
- ▶ State capacities

Examples of Indicators

Incorporation into the law

Structural Incorporation of the concept of gender-based violence in accordance with the definition of the Convention, into the violence legislation, both in the public and private spheres.

Process Number of male and female officers disaggregated by sex who receive complaints of violence victims.

Outcome Violence rate based on surveys: number of girls and women who declare having been victims of any form of violence by age range (psychological, physical, sexual, patrimonial, economic and others), divided between the total amount of women in those same ages, multiplied for 100.000.

Financial context and budget commitments

Structural National budget law with identification of funds allocated for Women's Mechanisms.

Process Periodic accountability reports on financial management of resources allocated for access to justice for women victims of violence.

Outcome Percentage of the budget assigned and executed with respect to services for violence victims in its different aspects: telephone assistance, legal and health care.

State capacities

Structural Existence of criminal investigation protocols on crimes of violence against women, femicide and violent deaths of women, with a gender perspective.

Process Number of courts and specialized prosecutors' offices, that undertake violence against women matters, in civil, criminal, or other areas.

Outcome Number and percentage of cases heard by the Criminal Courts (ordinary and specialized) for different crimes of violence against women in relation to the number and percentage of sentences (convictions and/or acquittals) handed down by the courts (ordinary and specialized) disaggregated by sex, age, race and ethnicity, in the year of the report.

Why measuring is essential...

The responses of the States to the indicators provide crucial information to advance in the design and implementation of public policies, measures and actions to achieve a life free of violence for women in the region.

This evaluation process deepens the exchange and technical cooperation between the States, the Committee of Experts and Civil Society.

What CSO Shadow Reports are for

During the evaluation process, the MESECVI provides the CSOs registered with the OAS with the matrix of indicators, as well as, the responses from the States, so that they can prepare Shadow Reports based on this information and their own inputs.

The content submitted by civil society organizations is essential to complement and enrich the information provided by the States Parties and to follow up on the States' responsibilities.

The Shadow Reports are an important contribution to the Committee of Experts during its process of evaluation and preparation of the National Reports and recommendations to the States.

Registration and participation

MESECVI supports CSOs working on women's human rights in their accreditation to the OAS.

How to take part?

All civil society organizations can seek accreditation from the Organization of American States (OAS). In case of not meeting all the necessary requirements, they can associate with other registered organizations.

Check out the [Manual for Civil Society Participation in OAS Activities](#).

How to get accredited?

Organizations seeking to register must follow the guidelines approved by the OAS Permanent Council. Find the details [here](#).

CSO must send a **letter of interest** addressed to the Secretary General of the OAS.

What else does it mean to be accredited to the OAS?

Accredited organisations can:

- ▶ Share information from their respective countries with the MESECVI.
- ▶ Cooperate with the States Parties and international organizations in the technical analysis of the implementation of the Convention.
- ▶ Submit reports related to the implementation of the Convention.
- ▶ Submit proposals on topics of interest to the Committee of Experts.
- ▶ Attend the meetings of the Conference of States Parties and the Committee of Experts of the MESECVI.

Inquiries to mese cvi@oas.org



OAS | MESECVI

www.oas.org/en/mese cvi/

mese cvi@oas.org

 @MESECVI

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