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COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS

MESECVI

Follow-Up Mechanism to the
Belém do Pará Convention

Committee of Experts of the MESECVI Expresses Concern over the Use of Sexist Advertising in English-speaking Caribbean Countries that Perpetuates Discriminatory Stereotypes against Women

Washington, DC, July 28, 2026. [The Committee of Experts of the Follow-up Mechanism to the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women](#) "Belém do Pará Convention" (MESECVI) expresses concern over the recent dissemination, across the English-speaking Caribbean, of advertising content promoted by an alcoholic beverage company with operations in several countries of the subregion. These advertisements portray women through hypersexualized imagery and perpetuate discriminatory stereotypes by reducing them to sexual objects. This type of advertising constitutes a form of symbolic violence that contributes to the normalization of discrimination and violence against women, is inconsistent with the principles and obligations established under the Convention of Belém do Pará and other international human rights standards relating to women's rights.

The Committee of Experts (CEVI) has become aware of the recent display of billboards in Jamaica and Belize that sparked public debate because of the highly sexualized images of women used to promote alcoholic beverages. Although some of these billboards were subsequently removed, the controversy spread to other Caribbean countries where the same company operates.

The use of such advertising strategies reflects a broader concern that the CEVI has addressed on numerous occasions: the impact of gender stereotypes in perpetuating structural inequalities and the various forms of violence against women. Images and messages that portray women as sexual objects and reinforce patterns of subordination undermine efforts to transform the social and cultural norms that sustain discrimination and gender-based violence.

In this regard, the Committee recalls that Article 6 of the Belém do Pará Convention recognizes that every woman's right to live free from violence includes the right to be free from all forms of discrimination and to be valued and educated free from stereotyped patterns of behaviour and social and cultural practices based on concepts of inferiority or subordination.

The Committee further recalls that Article 8 requires States Parties to progressively adopt measures aimed at modifying the social and cultural patterns that legitimize or exacerbate violence against women, promoting awareness-raising programmes in both the public and private sectors, and encouraging the media to develop appropriate guidelines that contribute to the eradication of violence against women.

The obligation to advance this social and cultural transformation in the way women are represented has been extensively addressed by the Committee in a number of its reports and declarations, some of which are particularly relevant in the present context.

The [Regional Declaration on the Eradication of Gender Stereotypes in Public Spaces Resulting in Symbolic and Political Gender-Based Violence Against Women](#), adopted by the States Parties of the MESECVI and the Committee of Experts, recognizes that symbolic violence is reproduced through messages, images and representations that normalize women's subordination through gender stereotypes. It further warns that this form of violence fuels other manifestations of violence against women, including physical, psychological, sexual and femicidal violence, and highlights the role played by advertising, the media and digital platforms in its widespread dissemination.

In that same Declaration, the States committed themselves to strengthening collaboration with strategic stakeholders, including the media, advertising agencies and the private sector, in order to prevent and eradicate symbolic violence. They also agreed to promote specialized training for those involved in the development of advertising and communication content, recognizing their essential role in building more equal societies free from violence.

Similarly, the [Declaration of Pachuca: Strengthening Efforts to Prevent Violence against Women](#) reaffirms that the primary prevention of violence against women requires the elimination of gender stereotypes and the fight against sexism in the media and advertising. To that end, States committed themselves to promoting the elimination of sexist and discriminatory images and messages in both public and private media, as well as to promoting gender training with a multicultural approach in journalism, advertising, and communication curricula at all levels, and within companies operating in the communications sector.

In light of the above, the Committee of Experts calls on State authorities to strengthen efforts aimed at preventing and eliminating the dissemination of messages, images and advertising campaigns that reproduce discriminatory gender stereotypes and contribute to the normalization of violence against women. It also urges companies, advertising agencies, media organizations and other private sector actors to review and align their content, practices and communication strategies with international human rights standards on women's rights, thereby actively contributing to the elimination of discriminatory stereotypes and symbolic violence and to the promotion of a culture of equality and respect for human rights.

The [Committee of Experts](#) is the technical body of the MESECVI, responsible for the analysis and evaluation of the implementation process of the Convention of Belém do Pará. It is made up of independent Experts, appointed by each of the States Parties from among their nationals, who perform their duties in a personal capacity.