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Tenth session of the Regional Conference on Women
in Latin America and the Caribbean

Quito, Ecuador, 6-9 August 2007

QUITO CONSENSUS

The Governments of the countries participating in the tenth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, represented by ministers or machineries for the advancement of women at the highest level, gathered in Quito, Ecuador, from 6 to 9 August 2007,

1. *Considering* that the population of Latin America and the Caribbean is diverse, multicultural and multilingual and is composed of indigenous peoples, Afro-descendants, *mestizos* and diverse ethnic groups, among others,

2. *Reiterating* Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean resolution 605(XXX), in which it took note of the report of the ninth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, reaffirming the agreements set forth in the Mexico City Consensus, especially the need to evaluate and reverse the negative effects of structural adjustments on the paid and unpaid work, autonomy and living conditions of women, and reiterating the agreements adopted at the three subregional preparatory meetings for the tenth session of the Regional Conference, which were held for the Caribbean, Central America and Mexico, and South America in the first half of 2007 in Saint John's, Antigua and Barbuda (see the Saint John's Declaration annexed hereto); Guatemala City, Guatemala; and Santiago, Chile, respectively,

3. *Bearing in mind* that the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean is a subsidiary organ of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and that its Presiding Officers, at their thirty-ninth meeting, agreed that two themes of strategic importance for the region would be reviewed at the tenth session of the Conference: (i) political participation and gender parity in decision-making processes at all levels; and (ii) the

contribution of women to the economy and social protection, especially in relation to unpaid work,

4. *Reaffirming* the full relevance of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women, the International Labour Organization conventions related to equality, provided that they have been ratified by the countries, the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995), the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 1994), the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development (Copenhagen, 1995), the Plan of Action of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (Durban, 2001), the Millennium Declaration adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (New York, 2000), the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (approved by the Human Rights Council, 2006) and the recommendations made by the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, as well as all the ensuing agreements reaffirming Governments' adherence to the international agenda set out in those documents,¹

5. *Recognizing* the universality, indivisibility, interdependence and inalienability of human rights and advances towards equality won by means of international standards relating to the promotion, protection and exercise of the human rights of women throughout their life cycle, as well as of collective rights,

6. *Reiterating* the linkage among human rights, the consolidation of representative and participatory democracy, and economic and social development,

7. *Reaffirming* the duty of States to guarantee human rights through due diligence and the adoption of all necessary measures to ensure their full application,

8. *Recognizing* that the lay character of States contributes to the elimination of discrimination against women and guarantees the exercise of their human rights,

9. *Recognizing* the social and economic value of the unpaid domestic work performed by women, caregiving as a public matter which falls within the purview of States, local governments, organizations, companies and families, and the need to promote shared responsibility by women and men within the family,

10. *Recognizing* the importance of the economic and social value of the unpaid agricultural and subsistence work performed by rural and campesino women, and being aware of

¹ United Nations, Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women (A/CONF.177/20), Beijing, 1995; Report of the International Conference on Population and Development (A/CONF.171/13/Rev.1), Cairo, September 1994; Report of the World Summit for Social Development (A/CONF.166/9), Copenhagen, 6-12 March 1995; Report of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (A/CONF.189/12), Durban, 31 August - 8 September 2001; Millennium Declaration (General Assembly resolution 55/2), New York, September 2000.

the need to make this work visible and arrive at an accounting of its contribution to national economies and to the cohesion of our societies,

11. *Recognizing* the significant contribution made by women in their diversity to the productive and reproductive dimensions of the economy, to the development of multiple strategies for dealing with poverty and to the preservation of knowledge and practices which are fundamental for sustaining life, especially for food security and sovereignty and for health,

12. *Recognizing* that the sexual division of labour continues to be a structural factor in the economic inequalities and injustices which affect women within the spheres of the family, labour, politics and community affairs and which pave the way for a failure to value and to remunerate women's economic contributions,

13. *Recognizing* women's contribution to the return and strengthening of democracy, gender equality, social justice, the development of the countries of the region and the inclusion of populations that have historically been discriminated against,

14. *Recognizing* the valuable contribution of the different indigenous and Afro-descendent peoples and nationalities to the governance of States, as well as to the preservation of the cultural heritage and the reproduction of sociocultural values in the historical territories upon which the life of our peoples is founded,

15. *Recognizing* the contribution made by women's and feminist movements, in all their diversity, to the development of public policies in the region that incorporate a gender perspective, and in particular to the deepening of democracy and the development of a public gender-based institutional structure,

16. *Recognizing* the work of institutional machineries for the advancement of women in formulating, designing and managing public policies for equality between women and men at the highest level of the States of the region and, at the same time, being aware that States are the ones which should take up the challenges of guaranteeing the human rights of women, girls and adolescents in the region,

17. *Recognizing* that parity is one of the key driving forces of democracy, that its aim is to achieve equality in the exercise of power, in decision-making, in mechanisms of social and political participation and representation, in diverse types of family relations, and in social, economic, political and cultural relations, and that it constitutes a goal for the eradication of women's structural exclusion,

18. *Condemning* the diverse forms of violence perpetrated against women, especially homicide of women, femicide and feminicide,

19. *Rejecting* structural violence, which is a form of discrimination against women and acts as an obstacle to the achievement of equality and parity in economic, labour, political,

social, family and cultural relations, and which impedes women's autonomy and their full participation in decision-making,

20. *Recognizing* that the region's economic and social development is directly related to the creation and establishment of comprehensive public social security systems that afford universal access and coverage, that are linked in with a broad spectrum of public policies and that are capable of ensuring the well-being, a quality life and full citizenship for women,

21. *Recognizing* that poverty in all its manifestations and unequal access to resources in the region, which have been deepened by structural adjustment policies in those countries where they were applied, continue to be an obstacle to the promotion and protection of all the human rights of women, and that the elimination and reduction of political, economic, social and cultural inequalities should therefore figure among the principal objectives of all development proposals,

22. *Considering* that all forms of discrimination, particularly racism, homophobia and xenophobia, are structuralizing factors that lead to inequalities and exclusion in society, especially against women, and that, therefore, their eradication is a common objective of all the commitments assumed in this declaration,

23. *Recognizing* gender inequities as social determinants of health that lead to the precariousness of women's health in the region, especially in areas related to sexual and reproductive rights, which are manifested in the spread and feminization of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and in high maternal mortality rates due, among other factors, to unsafe abortions, teenage pregnancies and the insufficient delivery of family planning services, which demonstrates the limitations of the State and society that still exist in fulfilling their responsibilities in relation to reproductive work,

24. *Considering* that sexist language needs to be eliminated in all national, regional and international reports, statements and documents, and that actions need to be promoted for the elimination of sexist stereotypes in the media,

25. *Having reviewed* the document entitled "Women's contribution to equality in Latin America and the Caribbean",²

1. *Agree:*

- (i) *To adopt* measures in all necessary areas, including legislative and budgetary measures and institutional reforms, to reinforce the technical capacity of government mechanisms for the advancement of women and their ability to have an impact on policies, as well as to ensure that they attain the highest-ranking level in the structure of the State and that the gender-based

² LC/L.2738(CRM.10/3).

institutional framework as a whole is strengthened so that they can fulfil their mandates;

- (ii) *To adopt* all necessary affirmative action measures and mechanisms, including the necessary legislative reforms and budgetary allocations, to ensure the full participation of women in public office and in political representative positions with a view to achieving parity in the institutional structure of the State (executive, legislative and judicial branches, as well as special and autonomous regimes) and at the national and local levels as an objective for Latin American and Caribbean democracies;
- (iii) *To foster* regional and international cooperation, in particular in the area of gender, and to work for an international order conducive to the exercise of full citizenship and the genuine exercise of all human rights, including the right to development, which will redound to the benefit of all women;
- (iv) *To broaden and strengthen* participatory democracy and the inclusion of women on an egalitarian, pluralistic and multicultural basis in the region, guaranteeing and encouraging their participation and valuing the function they perform in social and economic affairs and in public policymaking, and adopting measures and strategies for positioning them in decision-making spheres, opinion, information and communication;
- (v) *To strengthen and increase* women's participation in the international and regional spheres where the agenda for security, peace and development is defined;
- (vi) *To promote* activities that will enable the countries of the region to share strategies, methodologies, indicators, policies, agreements and experiences that facilitate progress towards the achievement of parity in public office and political representative office;
- (vii) *To promote* regional mechanisms for providing women with political education and training for leadership such as the recently created Caribbean Institute for Women in Leadership;
- (viii) *To develop* electoral policies of a permanent character that will prompt political parties to incorporate women's agendas in their diversity, the gender perspective in their content, actions and statutes, and the egalitarian participation, empowerment and leadership of women with a view to consolidating gender parity as a policy of State;
- (ix) *To seek* the commitment of political parties to implement affirmative action and strategies for communication, financing, training, political education, oversight and internal organizational reforms in order to achieve participation

by women on a basis of parity, taking into account their diversity, both internally and at decision-making levels;

- (x) *To adopt* legislative measures and institutional reforms to prevent, punish and eradicate political and administrative harassment of women who reach decision-making positions through electoral means or by appointment at national and local levels, as well as in political parties and movements;
- (xi) *To encourage and secure* the commitment of the media to recognize the importance of parity in women's participation in political processes, to offer fair and balanced coverage of all candidates and to cover the various forms taken by women's political participation and the issues that affect them;³
- (xii) *To adopt* public policies, including laws when possible, for eradicating sexist, stereotypical, discriminatory and racist content in the media and to motivate them to promote egalitarian relationships and responsibilities between women and men;
- (xiii) *To adopt* measures of co-responsibility in family and working life that apply equally to women and men, bearing in mind that sharing family responsibilities equitably and overcoming gender stereotypes create conditions conducive to political participation by women in all their diversity;
- (xiv) *To adopt* measures in all spheres of institutional democratic affairs and, in particular, in economic and social areas, including legislative measures and institutional reforms, to ensure recognition of unpaid work and its contribution to families' well-being and to countries' economic development, and to promote its inclusion in national accounts;
- (xv) *To implement* comprehensive public social security systems, with universal access and coverage, that are linked to a broad spectrum of public policies and are capable of ensuring women's well-being, quality of life and full citizenship;
- (xvi) *To formulate* policies and programmes for providing quality employment, social security and economic incentives designed to guarantee decent paid work to women who have no income of their own, on equal conditions with men, in order to ensure their autonomy and the full exercise of their rights in the region;
- (xvii) *To guarantee* the elimination of all discriminatory, precarious and illegal labour conditions, and to encourage women's participation in creative,

³ See operative paragraph 2(m) of resolution 58/142 of the United Nations General Assembly.

innovative occupational sectors that transcend sexist forms of labour segregation;

- (xviii) *To formulate and implement* public policies to broaden sustainable access for women to land ownership and access to water, other natural and productive resources, sanitation and other services, and financing and technologies, valuing work done for household consumption and recognizing the diversity of economic initiatives and their contributions, with particular guarantees for rural women, indigenous women and Afro-descendent women in their historical territories when relevant;
- (xix) *To implement* public affirmative action policies for Afro-descendent women in countries where they are not fully integrated into the development process and for indigenous women as measures of social reparation to ensure their participation, on an equal footing, in the region's political, economic, social and cultural affairs;
- (xx) *To formulate and apply* State policies conducive to the equitable sharing of responsibilities by women and men in the family, overcoming gender stereotypes and recognizing the importance of caregiving and domestic work for economic reproduction and the well-being of society as one of the ways of overcoming the sexual division of labour;
- (xxi) *To equalize* the labour conditions and rights of domestic work with those of other types of paid work in accordance with ratified International Labour Organization conventions and international standards of women's rights, and to eradicate all forms of exploitation of domestic work by girl and boy children;
- (xxii) *To eliminate* the income gap between women and men and wage discrimination in all areas of work, and to propose that legislative and institutional mechanisms that give rise to discrimination and precarious working conditions be abrogated;
- (xxiii) *To develop* instruments, especially time-use surveys, for periodically measuring unpaid work performed by women and men in order to make such work visible and recognize its value, to incorporate their results into the System of National Accounts and to design economic and social policies accordingly;
- (xxiv) *To ensure* that sexual and reproductive rights which are human rights and that universal access to comprehensive healthcare, which includes sexual and reproductive healthcare, are considered to be an essential condition for guaranteeing women's participation in political affairs and in paid work and, hence, in decision-making positions for all women and, as a matter of priority, for young women, the poorest women, indigenous women, Afro-descendent women, rural women and women with disabilities;

- (xxv) *To implement* measures and policies that take into account the linkages between social and economic vulnerabilities as they relate to women's possibilities of participating in politics and in paid work, especially in terms of access to sexual and reproductive healthcare, water and sanitation, and HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and care, with priority being placed on the poorest women and their families;
- (xxvi) *To promote* public policies aimed at strengthening adolescent and young women's access to education and their continuation in it, to job training, sexual and reproductive health, employment, and political and social participation for the full exercise of their rights;
- (xxvii) *To adopt* the necessary measures, especially of an economic, social and cultural nature, to ensure that States assume social reproduction, caregiving and the well-being of the population as an objective for the economy and as a public responsibility that cannot be delegated;
- (xxviii) *To adopt* measures that contribute to the elimination of all forms of violence against women and their manifestations, especially homicide of women, femicide and feminicide, as well as to the elimination of unilateral measures that run counter to international law and to the United Nations Charter, whose fundamental consequences are borne by women, girl children and adolescents;
- (xxix) *To guarantee* access to justice for women, adolescents and girl children who have been victims of gender violence, with no discrimination whatsoever, through the creation of legal and institutional conditions that guarantee transparency, truth, justice and the consequent reparation of the violation of their rights, strengthening public policies for protection, prevention and care with a view to the eradication of all forms of violence;
- (xxx) *To develop* comprehensive, non-sexist public education programmes designed to counter gender and racial stereotypes and other cultural biases against women and promote relationships of mutual support between women and men;
- (xxxi) *To review and harmonize* laws and regulations at the national and regional levels in order to ensure that the practices of smuggling and trafficking in persons are established as criminal offences and to develop public policies from a comprehensive and gender-based perspective in order to support prevention and to guarantee protection for people who have been victims;
- (xxxii) To eradicate the causes and impacts of organized crime networks and of new types of crimes that are interrelated with modalities of economic exploitation that victimize women and girls on a differential basis and that infringe the full exercise of their human rights;
- (xxxiii) *To adopt* laws, public policies and programmes based on research into the conditions and impacts governing interregional and intraregional migration by women in order to fulfil international commitments and guarantee the full

security, promotion and protection of all their human rights, including mechanisms for the reunification of families;

- (xxxiv) *To promote* respect for undocumented women's integral human rights and to take steps to guarantee full access to identity and citizenship documents for all women, especially for those who have been excluded from this right, such as indigenous, Afro-descendent and rural women;
 - (xxxv) *To undertake efforts* to sign, ratify and disseminate the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol as a means of ensuring its application;
 - (xxxvi) *To reaffirm* our decision to promote the adoption of the International Rural Women's Day within the United Nations as an explicit recognition of their economic contribution and the development of their communities, in particular with regard to the unpaid work they perform;
2. *Instruct* the Presiding Officers of the Conference to specifically devote one of the meetings they hold each year to an evaluation of the fulfilment of the commitments set forth herein, and agree that at the eleventh session of the Regional Conference, scheduled for 2010, a general medium-term assessment of the progress made should be undertaken;
 3. *Request* the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, together with other organizations in the United Nations system, to collaborate with member States that request them to do so in following up on the fulfilment of the agreements that have been adopted through the creation of an equality observatory that will help strengthen national gender machineries;
 4. *Request* the Chairperson to submit the agreements set forth herein to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean for its consideration at its thirty-second session, to take place in the Dominican Republic in 2008, and, within the framework of the events marking its sixtieth anniversary, to hold a high-level activity to evaluate the Economic Commission's contributions in the area of gender during the period;
 5. *Note with satisfaction* that the majority of the national delegations accredited to this tenth session of the Conference include representatives of civil society, indigenous women and parliamentarians;
 6. *Commend and support* the Women and Development Unit of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean for the excellent work that it has been carrying out for the benefit of the women of Latin America and the Caribbean;

7. *Express* our gratitude to the President of Chile, Michelle Bachelet, to the First Vice President of Spain, María Teresa Fernández de la Vega, and to the President of Ecuador, Rafael Correa, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ecuador, María Fernanda Espinosa, for their participation in this session of the Conference;
8. *Thank* the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and United Nations agencies for their contribution to the organization of this session of the Conference;
9. *Thank* the people and Government of Ecuador for having provided the facilities for this session of the Conference and for their generous hospitality.
10. *Thank* the Mayor of the City of Quito, Paco Moncayo Gallegos, for having declared all participants in this session of the Conference illustrious guests of this city in recognition of their contribution to the visibility of women's presence in this public forum;
11. *Also thank* the feminist women's networks for their participation.