



REPUBLIC OF ECUADOR

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**COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN
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Madame Chairperson,

Allow me to begin by adhering to the statements given by the Delegations of Jamaica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and Argentina on behalf of the Rio Group.

In spite of the deep political and economic crisis and a persistent male culture, Ecuador has made important steps since 1995 in gender law issues as well as gender equality, mainly in what deals with consolidation of a favorable juridical framework and strengthen gender constitutionality in the country at central and local levels.

The pre and post Beijing process meant an important framework in the consolidation of the diverse women movement. As a result the Beijing process built the first Equal Opportunity Plan for the period 1996-2001 based on the recommendations of the Beijing Platform of Action.

The National Council of Women, CONAMU, was created in 1997 as a national mechanism at the highest level of State to deal with public policies enforcing gender issues to warranty the full exercise of women's rights. CONAMU differs from other regional organisms in being an equitable institution governed by a Board conformed by three representatives from national organizations of women and three representatives from Government Office. The Commission of Women at the National Congress, the Direction for Women and Children at the National Attorney's offices and the Commissions of Women, Gender and Equality at different sectorial entities and local government Office, effectively complemented the public affairs gender sector.

After a 30 years struggle, women demands were converted into guaranteed rights by the 1998 Political Constitution which incorporates throughout its entire text gender issues and specific the protection of women human rights.

I would like to remark Madame Chairperson that the Political Constitution of Ecuador has as a background CEDAW, the Program of Action of El Cairo and the Beijing Platform of Action, and is, without a doubt, a valuable instrument of justice and empowerment of the Ecuadorian women in the establishment of the fundamental principles of non-discrimination and legal equality; the right to integral dignity and a life free from violence; the right to sexual free option; sex and reproductive rights; the right to equal salary compensation; equal rights and job opportunities as well as access to production resources and properties, non discrimination of pregnant women rights, the right to equally participate in different decision-making stages as well as State's binding to incorporate it in the economic and social plan, among others.

Secondary legislation counts among other remarkable achievements the Law against Domestic Violence against women and family, the Law for Free Maternity, the Penal Law Reform and the Procedural Penal Law Reform and the Law of Quotas.

In spite of the progress obtained in the legal field, the Ecuadorian women face grave discriminatory situations on a daily basis. Undoubtedly, to decrease this discrimination forms in every way, is the country's essential challenge.

Ten years after the adoption of the Beijing Platform of Action, we can affirm without a doubt that great efforts have been focused on fortifying the institutionalization of gender public policies from the national mechanism. CONAMU has invested important resources in strengthening the functions of establishing, designing and guiding public policies in favor of women in their different work areas: violence, education, sexual and reproductive health, environment, development and local governments.

CONAMU has incorporated in the establishment of public policies gender issues and integral protection of rights in compliance with constitutional mandates which allows to include as a priority matter in the public agenda, the address of gender public policies especially in the field of social and macro-social protection policies. Furthermore, CONAMU has begun a process of gender impact in macroeconomic policies directed to poverty eradication, construction of democratic governability and an alternative model of sustainable development in the country in accordance with the Millennium Development Goals.

The Second Plan of Equal Opportunities 2004-2009 is based on a system of rights as a strategy that foster an integral, logical and concurrent Equity Action. The Plan has been established with the participation of a wide group of women both from the public and social sector.

The Plan is a technical-political instrument that allows us to correctly search for the fate of human, financial and technical resources that Ecuador counts to take decisions and actions Equity oriented in favor of women, girls and Ecuadorian youth. The construction of specific agendas with young women, indigenous, afro Ecuadorian, women in popular sectors, lesbians, sexual workers, entrepreneurs as well as territorial agendas of Amazonian women, coastal and north border, allow us to count on a tool to decrease gender breaches.

The Equal Opportunities Plan 2004-2009 constitutes the base for the National Equity Pact for Women and Girls in which civil society will and political State will are committed to a medium term significant decrease and a long-term eradication of the inequality breaches that affect the girls, youth and women lives.

Madame Chairperson,

To conclude, I would like to stress that the presence of the Ecuadorian official delegation in this forum, conformed by representatives of public institutions and civil society, reaffirms the commitment of the Ecuadorian State in the promotion, protection and demand of women human rights that are enforced in different international legal instruments.

In accordance with constitutional mandate, we reaffirms the commitment of the Ecuadorian State with the full application of the Beijing Platform of Action for its enormous importance to the parties involved in the process of formulating public policies to promote and protect women's human rights and gender equality.

My Delegation reaffirms the importance to fully keep the spirit of the Beijing Platform of Action, Santiago, Lima and Mexico Consensus, as well as the Declaration adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women in its forty ninth session, and honor the compromises of the Ecuadorian government to six million Ecuadorian women who wish to one day fully achieve gender equality and the protection of their human rights.

Thank you very much.