

OWNING DEVELOPMENT
Promoting Gender Equality in New Aid Modalities and Partnerships
9 – 11 November 2005
Brussels, Belgium

Plenary 2
10 November 2005, 14.30–16.00

MEASURING PROGRESS IN GENDER EQUALITY
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Good afternoon. First of all, I would like to thank UNIFEM for its kind invitation, to participate in this event, and would also like to congratulate UNIFEM and the European Commission for this initiative. As Latin Americans, we join this effort, which will surely allow us to share our experiences among continents and find new forms of cooperation.

The Beijing Platform for Action constitutes the existing framework on which we continue building new programs and actions, in favor of equality and the elimination of discrimination, because the Millennium Development Goals, and all the additional indicators, are the worthy standards we need to reach for our development.

Ten years after Beijing, we recognize our region has made progress in the creation of an institutional structure and mechanisms for women to move forward, but it is necessary to continue adopting measures to eradicate discrimination. That is why it is very important for the role of the international community, and bilateral and multilateral cooperation, to be aimed at strengthening those initiatives and good practices we have accomplished for the protection, defense and enjoyment of women human rights, envisaged –at all levels- in the 12 spheres of special concern within the Beijing Platform for Action.

A meeting such as this one gives us the opportunity to jointly identify new aid and partnership modalities.

Ours is one of the most unequal regions of the planet. In this sense, I would like to highlight the report of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), “Millennium Development Goals: A look from Latin American and the Caribbean”. This valuable analysis allows us to recognize the great heterogeneity among and within countries of the region, as well as the high and persistent inequality, and place of residence, ethnic and gender inequities. Therefore, it is important to launch joint efforts, to build a social, political and economic pact which will lead us to growth and redistribution, to give our continent social cohesion.

In this context, we believe the four major strategic areas, to overcome the poverty of the women of our region, are: a reconciliation between the productive and reproductive spheres, the empowerment of women in political and social

participation, and in decision making positions, and the promotion of women's economic autonomy, and sexual and reproductive rights.

We coincide with ECLAC that the Millennium Development Goals should be understood as the highest ranking ratification of equality between men and women, as a fundamental objective of the international agenda, which complements those adopted at the 4th. World Conference on Women and other related summits.

In this regard, I would like to underscore the proposal that ECLAC and UNIFEM have developed, to envision the gender perspective within the Millennium Development Goals. They propose 54 complimentary indicators with a gender perspective, to supplement those that already exist for each one of the goals. With this methodology, gender perspective reports on the fulfillment of the Millennium Development Goals are prepared in Mexico, Guatemala, Venezuela, Peru, Nicaragua, Bolivia and Argentina. This shows our governments' and national institutions' political will, for women to move forward in the eradication of discrimination and inequities. It constitutes a good practice, which would be important to share in this meeting.

I would also like to note that the phenomenon of gender violence –in all its dimensions-, persists in our continent. This is a matter of concern and shame to us, and leads us to permanently seek measures and mechanisms to fight said violence.

Ten years ago, as governments, civil society and the international community, we cooperated to subscribe in our hemisphere the only legally binding document of the world, to eradicate gender based violence: "The Inter-American Convention to Prevent, Punish and Eradicate Violence Against Women", also called the Belem do Pará Convention. Last year, 31 party states adopted a Follow Up Mechanism, allowing us to reach goals established in said convention, through accountability and technical cooperation to exchange information, experiences and best practices in the fight of violence against women.

We can also share this process with other continents.

Furthermore, we also coincide with ECLAC in that women movement demands, government signed international agreements, technical international cooperation support, and the political will of governments, have played an important role in the establishment and institutional strengthening of national mechanisms for women to move forward in Latin America.

Evidence of this is the institutional scheme and scaffolding we have built among national women mechanisms in our region. We have developed a process of dialogue and exchange, which has helped strengthen our institutionality, the construction of a consensus and common strategies in the execution of equity policies, as of our participation in two intergovernmental mechanisms of the region: the OAS Inter-American Commission of Women and the Regional

Conference on Women of Latin America and the Caribbean.

The latter is a subsidiary body of ECLAC and, in its 28 years of existence, it has held 9 international conferences, apart from its regular and expert women meetings. Since this is a binding mechanism, it has become a space of regional debate, learning and support, for our respective national management processes. Currently, the conference is chaired by Mexico, through me, for I am the President of the National Mechanism for the Advancement of Women in my country.

The “Mexico Consensus”, derived from the last Regional Conference, and subscribed by the participating governments, reaffirms our commitment to adopt measures in different spheres towards gender equity, and constitutes our region’s gender agenda.

(We now have an English version of the “Mexico Consensus”, that we would like to share with you).

In Mexico’s particular case and its current administration, the sum of the aforementioned elements gave rise to the design and construction –practically from its foundations- of a mechanism, the National Women’s Institute (INMUJERES, by its Spanish acronym), with relevant characteristics and attributes to face up to the challenge of women’s advancement, including knowledge and capacity building and gathering.

To a great extent, INMUJERES is a reflection of a national process that began in 2000, to readdress the contents of democracy, of interlocution and co-responsibility mechanisms of the society and government relationship, of legitimacy of concrete issues, as part of the public and institutional agenda and, within it, the institutionality created to meet demands.

Our mechanism recovers previous experience of national programs and actions addressed to achieve women’s legal, social, economic and family equality. Nevertheless, therein lies its strength and difference of its degree. INMUJERES fulfills a mission aimed at institutionalizing the gender perspective, as the only way to make development benefits accessible, to men and women, with justice and equality.

For that purpose, its ruling law defines us as an entity not only at the ministerial level, but also with well defined attributions, with sufficient available resources, and the capacity and competence to influence the incorporation of the gender perspective in national public policies.

Cross-cutting, federalism and linkage criteria, which define our path, have been fundamental to achieve an institutional and perception change replicated at all levels of the government and territory of our federal system. This network reinforces co-responsibility among the different government spheres, and our State capacity to comply with our national, regional and international commitments.

After about five years of its creation, INMUJERES can account for true and tangible results for the advancement of women, and an improvement in their living conditions. This is something we have achieved through cross-cutting public policies, formulated through a gender approach and based on a public agenda that legitimizes and recognizes our issues and needs, as a State priority.

In the programmatic context, INMUJERES guides its activities as of the National Program for Equal Opportunities and Non-Discrimination Against Women (PROEQUIDAD, by its Spanish acronym), with the general objective of enhancing the role of women through their participation, in conditions of equality with men in all social spheres, as a prerequisite for human development.

This instrument does not only concentrate actions to be implemented at all government levels and spheres, but for the first time in the country, it also offers a rational and systematic ordering of actions, with the purpose of transforming the conditions of Mexican women.

In other words, it is an axis through which all public policies are put in order, and it reflects the purposes and commitments of the government apparatus in favor of men and women equity. It was prepared after a broad-based consultation exercise with society, and its objectives are fully identified with the areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action:

As of PROEQUIDAD and its strategies, 1) gender perspective institutionalization, 2) a coordination mechanism, 3) a linkage with civil society, 4) attention to groups in conditions of vulnerability, and 5) the promotion of diversity related values, various legislative and other types of initiatives and actions have been launched, as for instance:

Through the Program for Gender Perspective Institutionalization in the Federal Public Administration, we have started a process of profound changes in the organizational culture of public institutions, to eradicate persistent practices that not only discriminate against women's rights, but also affect institutional development and efficiency.

This program includes the political will and readiness to change, which now give way to the development of technical instruments capable of incorporating the gender perspective in planning and program follow up and assessment; sensitization and training on the differentiated impact of government management on men and women public servants; as well as the availability of sufficient economic resources, to implement gender equity institutional policies.

In the aforementioned context, statistical information and indicators are one of the most valuable decision making instruments, for they offer objective and verifiable proof of women's situation. INMUJERES promotes the generation and update of said data, with the participation of national and international bodies, to assess progress made in terms of cross-cutting characteristics of the gender perspective in public policy.

Examples of this work are the development of the Indicators System for the Follow Up of Women's Condition in Mexico (SISESIM, by its Spanish acronym), and the Interactive System for the Follow Up of Women's Condition in Mexico (SICEDAM, by its Spanish acronym) with UNIFEM, or the Violence, Reproductive Health and Employment Surveys done with the National Statistics, Geography and Informatics Institute (INEGI, by its Spanish acronym).

We have also subscribed a framework agreement with UNIFEM, which allows us to carry out joint regional activities in Mexico, such as four international gender statistics meetings.

Since its creation, INMUJERES assumed the responsibility of establishing a policy among federal public entities, to favor their coordination.

In short, the National Women's Institute not only contributes towards maintaining gender inequity and discrimination related issues in public and institutional agendas, but has also promoted reforms and new standardization frameworks, as well as the formation of mediation structures or instances between the State and civil society, and maintained permanent relations with thematic networks and non-governmental women's organizations.

Throughout four years of activity, we believe that -for the first time-, we have been able to address the establishment of explicitly agreed and lasting programs. The current project for the nation, now in motion, privileges the attention of structural over conjuncture issues.

Institutions and mechanisms assume technical capacity development, for gender perspective incorporation, as an attribute linked to an efficient and transparent management, free from corruption and political patronage.

As of the creation of INMUJERES, the gender agenda has been designed according to that very perspective, and it is targeted to all institutions devoted to social and government policy vis-à-vis civil society, whose participation is respected and encouraged.

Mexico and its government, in the words of ECLAC (in the "Millennium Development Goals: A look from Latin America and the Caribbean), assume the region's historic stage which demands creativity, originality and boldness, to face regional and global challenges. This implies each country faces the challenge of designing its own strategy, to be nurtured from national and regional history, with its success and mistakes.

INMUJERES' institutional development and accumulated experience, have allowed us to establish cooperation links with other regional women mechanisms, and to contribute with advisory services and technical assistance, to maintain a permanent dialogue and generate synergies, with the purpose of incorporating our common agenda in the above mentioned regional and hemispheric intergovernmental mechanisms.

Furthermore, because of its location and foreign policy, Mexico has different ownerships. This situation has led INMUJERES to represent the country as an observer in regional integration mechanisms, such as specialized meetings of MERCOSUR women ministers, and the Central American Women Ministers Council (COMMCA, by its Spanish acronym), which is now part of the Central American Integration System.

These realities allow us to reflect upon the new modalities international cooperation can assume, and the role it could play in our countries' transition process from one government to another, in terms of ensuring the permanence of women development advancements, and the continuity of successful programs.

On one hand, the new institutional schemes generated in the region also constitute favorable spaces to develop bilateral and triangular cooperation, in which Mexico would make its experience and capabilities available, and on the other, international cooperation would make financing available, so that less developed countries could strengthen their institutionality.

This meeting is the ideal space for us to move forward in the creation of the new modalities cooperation should adopt in these times of new paradigms, which require greater creativity, other agreements, and the renovation of solidarity among our continents. Mexico reiterates its willingness to share its experience.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.