



Mr. Chairperson

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STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF CHILE  
54<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN  
New York, 5<sup>th</sup> March 2010

Mr. Chairperson, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Over time, in the nineties of the United Nations General Assembly, there was a President who began by saying: "I come from Chile, a small country but no one here each citizen is free to express himself or herself as he or she sees fit, with unlimited cultural, religious and ideological tolerance, where there is no room for racial discrimination".

Today I can paraphrase those words and say that in our country, accordingly, government by a woman, Dr. Michelle Bachelet, who in her intention to create a more equitable society implemented policies, plans and programmes that narrowed gender gaps in the national life and, as soon as she assumed office, achieved parity in her Cabinet which was unprecedented in Chile, and her bold agenda which has been a model for the formulation of public policy in our country.

And so today, in the year of our bicentenary we can say that in Chile we are closer to achieving equality of opportunities and rights between women and men.

Allow me then to convey to you greetings from Her Excellency President Bachelet and to announce the commitment of the Government of Chile to fully implement the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Beijing Platform for Action.

We should also like to express the hope that at this White Year a year for the efforts and coordination in the occasion of the commemoration of Beijing 15, the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the United Nations International Year of Women.

In this connection, Chile welcomes the Secretary General's report on the composite entity for gender equality and the empowerment of women (A/64/589) and hopes that Member States will succeed in organizing the governance and funding of this entity so that it will have substantial and significant contributions.

In addition, we are proud that UNIFEM has been entrusted as champion of human rights, as International Spokesperson for the agenda for the protection of women and girls.

Mr. Chairperson,

Once democracy was restored in Chile, a process in which the women's movement played a crucial role, the new Republic recognized the tenets of this social movement and created an institution, the National Service for Women (SERNAM). From then on, a series of legislative measures to mainstream gender in public policies and the State system.

For the past 10 years, the slogan We are all Chile was adopted, reaffirming the commitment of the Government of Chile to a gender-equal approach for Gender Equity Action by Ministries and Services, stressing that without the advancement of women, considered as persons with legal rights, the country cannot grow.

The vision of a more inclusive society inspired the adoption of measures to combat discrimination against women in the labour sphere, such as the measure to eliminate the salary gap and the Law to enhance the rights of women workers in private incomes, women workers in trade and women with small children, among others.

In this connection, SERNAM implemented various programmes, such as the one for female heads of household, empowering them as entrepreneurs and workers. The programme to promote good labour practices and equality is supported by the Code of Good Labour Practice from a gender perspective, which is compulsory in the public service and was the basis to work with the country's largest private firms.

The incorporation of a gender perspective was also symbolic. It included measures to enhance women's participation in the national economy and to reduce the inequalities affecting their access to social security. The reform values the contribution of domestic work and motherhood and includes all women, including those who have not engaged in paid work, to a pension insurance system. As a result, we see today that 60 per cent of those who benefited from this reform are women.

Another important standard of living for women and their families is the social protection system which covers Chileans throughout their lifetime. The initial programme Chile is Growing With You and its additional provisions gave importance to women and their families, enabling them to be more independent by providing child care facilities to help women to enter the labour market or obtain an education. The number of public crèches multiplied, providing preferential access and extended hours of children working mothers.

Mr. Chairperson,

In the open field of health care, the Law on Health Entitles everyone to treatment for the 66 most common medical conditions, including comprehensive care meeting women's most important health needs, such as pain relief in childbirth, and treatment of breast and uterine cancer. Comprehensive care affects a large number of Chilean women. In addition, free health care is guaranteed to persons over 65 years of age through the public health system, of which women are the main beneficiaries.

We should like to emphasize that a reforming process on which the determination of the Executive Branch to promote this policy was demonstrated, the law on Information,

Guidance and Benefits relating to fertility regulation was finally promulgated. In our President, this legislation establishes rights in the area of fertility that will enable us to move forward, always bearing in mind the needs of the population and the rights of women.

This legislation ensures that over one million women regulating their fertility in the public health system will be entitled to hormonal and surgical methods and have access without charge to the various contraceptive methods offered by the health system, including emergency contraception. It is also very important that the new rules require establishments in Chile to provide sex education, which will help to prevent teenage pregnancies and promote responsible sexuality.

Mr. Chairperson,

We have worked hard to achieve progress in the 'bravemint and skin' and penal repression of gender-based violence. In accordance with General Assembly Resolution 17/14, an intensification effort to eliminate all forms of violence against women. This series of initiatives to increase public awareness of the problem of violence against women. These initiatives have resulted in a gradual increase in complaints and a decrease in violence. For example, in 2000 one out of 10 Chilean women was the victim of physical, psychological violence, and 20% of the figure was one out of three.

In recent years, the legal framework on domestic violence has been improved and the Prevention of Violence Programme, spearheaded by SERNAM has been implemented, providing for 90 women's centres and 25 shelters in all regions of the country, which are engaged in grassroots preventive work and protection and comprehensive care of victims. Some steps are being taken to launch a special programme of psycho-social care of victims of violence, with the aim of reducing repeat offences.

In addition, Chile was the first Latin American country to adopt a comprehensive and cross-cutting resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, aimed at comprehensive and cross-cutting implementation of measures to protect women and girls in armed conflict and to promote their participation in the processes of peacebuilding and reconstruction of countries.

Accordingly, we also co-sponsored Security Council Resolution 1820 (2008) and 1888 (2009) on sexual violence in situations of armed conflict.

In this context, Chile welcomed the appointment of Mrs. María Wainer as the Secretary-General's Special Representative on sexual violence against women and children in conflict. We hope that she will bring the necessary resources of her mandate in a timely and effective manner.

In the area of human rights, achievement of the identification of the victims of the international instrument setting up the International Criminal Court as well as creation of the Human Rights Institute and the Museum of Memory, which will do preventive work and file complaints about any action infringing human rights and will improve the policy for awarding compensation to persons whose rights have been violated.

Mr. Chairperson,

With regard to our main mandate, Chile's Government has facilitated the Economic and Social Council resolution on *Mainstreaming the gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system 2009/12*. We endorse the content of this resolution because it seeks equality with dignity and full enjoyment of the rights of women and girls.

At the national level, Chile has since 2009 been implementing a strategy for mainstreaming gender in public policy and in public agency management systems, through instruments of a political and technical nature. Starting in 2009, the gender equity system has been included as a strategic element in national management and quality assurance (ISO 2005:2008) standards to raise standards for monitoring and enhancing the gender commitments of each ministry and public service.

Mr. Chairperson,

In a participatory process, we are involving over 50,000 women and organizations throughout the country. Chile has drafted national policies, quotas, opportunities and rights for women and men, 2010-2020.

In conclusion, 15 years after the beginning of the Millennium Development Goals, Chile's commitment to gender equality. We are confident that on the occasion of its bicentenary Chile will redouble its efforts to promote women's empowerment and women's rights. And we know that women will continue to work together as they have done throughout Chile's history, to achieve a more fair and inclusive society.

Thank you.