



Statement by
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Commission on the Status of Women

General Debate

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PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BEIJING DECLARATION AND PLATFORM FOR ACTION

Mr. Chair,

I begin by recalling that in August 2002, at the beginning of the Government of President Álvaro Uribe Vélez, Colombia was living in a catastrophic situation of violence, with armed groups recognized as terrorists by many of the States represented here. This violence had put at risk the security of women and men, the environment and the rule of law.

After 7 years of this Government, progress in the demilitarization of many of the paramilitaries, and the dismantling of the most violent organizations through the Demobilization Security Policy, has been reflected in the decrease in all forms of crime: in drug-related homicides by 45.1% and kidnappings by 84%. These achievements are generating confidence in the country, social investment and the strengthening of institutions.

The Colombian State will continue to make every effort to confront the terrible scourge of kidnapping, so that future generations do not have to read the names of victims of this heinous crime.

I take this opportunity to appeal to this Commission, in solidarity with Colombia, to demand from the guerrillas that discriminate against women and girls to stop kidnapping, and to exercise the right to freedom.

Mr. Chairman,

In this context of improvements in security, and in the economic and social areas, the measures related to the 12 areas of concern of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action have been implemented by all branches of government, the private sector and other actors, so that women are contributing to national development and gender equality is a state policy.

Among the progress in the implementation I would like to mention:

- The signing of three important agreements: the *Basic Agrarian Agreement on Equality between women and men* (October 2003); the *Pact for Effective Inclusion of Women in Politics* (October 2003); and the *Agenda for Labour Equality* (March 2004).

Education

Equitable access to education is confirmed by the following statistics concerning the percentage of women and girls enrolled in the education system:

- 49.0% in primary and secondary education in the last 5 consecutive years.
- 53% in comprehensive professional education in 2009, a trend that has continued in recent years.
- 53% in the Rural Youth program.
- 53% in training processes through virtual learning environments.

Health

- The total fertility rate for urban areas is 2.1 and for the rural area 3.4.
- Life expectancy of women exceeds 75 years.
- The maternal mortality rate fell from 93.9 in 1998 to 75.6 in 2007 per 100,000 live births.
- Coverage in health insurance increased between 2003 and 2008 by 39%, which are the highest common new entries. The percentage of women insured was 29%.

Participation

Participation of women in public administration, in high-ranking positions, has increased and today is as follows:

Executive Branch	29%
Legislative Branch	30%
Judicial Branch	26%
Autonomous institutions	33%
Monitoring Bodies	42%
National Register Office	37%

This contrasts with the low participation in elected offices because there is no quota law for these positions:

Senate	12%
House of representatives	10%

Other social programmes

Minimum wage and Social Security from a gender perspective has been an area that different programs have favored women, a necessary step that is contemplated in social inclusion in Colombia.

women also have been important beneficiaries in:

- The Productive Program of the ELN, with cash subsidies.
- 18% in the PFSA Food Security Program between 2003 and 2008.

Labour

The occupation rate of women increased in 2009 to 41.9%.

Measures for the Advancement of Women and Gender Equality

As mentioned on Monday, Colombia has today has 6 institutional mechanisms for gender equality at national level:

- in the executive branch: General Secretariat of Gender Equity, which in turn leads the Center of Gender and Inter-Agency Committee to ERD Violence Against Women.
- in the Legislative Branch: Comandante of Women.
- in the judicial branch: National Commission on Gender.
- in the Control and Monitoring Institutions: Inspector's Office for the rights of children, youth and family, Ombudsman's Delegation for the Rights of Children, Youth and Women.
- in the private sector: Joint Board on Gender of Business Associations.

Eradication of Violence

Colombia has an important set of public policies supported by the legal framework. Among them, I would highlight:

- The Democratic Security Policy to combat terrorism, kidnapping, and the protection of protesters' rights to life and personal integrity.
- The National Strategy to combat trafficking in persons, including with a gender perspective.
- The Policy for Comprehensive Assistance to Displaced People with its specific programs for women.
- Policy on the Prevention and Eradication of Child Abuse.
- Policy for the Demobilization and Reintegration of former paramilitary organized armed groups.
- A set of actions for the prevention and eradication of domestic violence, partner violence, sexual violence, among which I would highlight the comprehensive program against gender-based violence, developed jointly by the national government and the United Nations agencies, as well as the process of literacy and income generation interventions.

The main challenge is the articulation of all these policies, the incorporation of gender variables (ethnicity, age), the revision of indicators based on international standards and the adoption of measures against sexual violence.

Mr. Chairman,

To conclude this report I want to focus on the economic empowerment of women and the actions undertaken in two important areas: first, Women and Business, saying that to tackle poverty and social exclusion, the national government has implemented, in accordance with the last two National Development Plans, a social policy that has reduced poverty by 17 percentage points between 2008 and 2010 from 53.7 to 46%.

Family Action is a social program that has achieved significant progress against poverty, and 2010 is benefiting 2.3 million women, representing 90% of the beneficiaries of the program.

In the area of women and the economy I want to share with you that Colombia has implemented a continuous effort, from a billion women support strategy that allows women to access training, markets, microcredit and other financial services from the formal banking system; it also has made possible the establishment of networks of women entrepreneurs, partnerships between public and private sector and the commitment of business sector leaders to the development of an Agency for Equality at Work, in order to remove barriers in access to employment faced by women and the wage gap between women and men doing equal work.

Colombia is a country that has addressed the effects of the economic crisis with success.

In 2010, we will host *Expoempresaria 2010 - Women's Entrepreneur Summit* with leaders and entrepreneurs from across the country and international community who will share our successes in a way that has been a tribute to women and that may serve as a starting point for a regional strategy to promote the economic empowerment of women, a key step for the elimination of poverty that affects them.

Colombia reiterates its invitation to all countries to support the adoption of the resolution on the economic empowerment of women that my delegation has proposed in this session in order to accelerate the achievement of this objective.

Thank you very much.

Initiatives of Women Against Women

Colombia has an important set of public policies supported by the legal framework. Among them we would highlight:

- * The Economic Security Policy to combat poverty, technology, access to education and to protect the right to the individual income.
 - * The National Strategy to combat violence in persons, including with a gender perspective.
 - * The Policy for Comprehensive Assistance to Displaced Persons with Special Assistance.
 - * Policy on Investment and Employment of Child Abuse.
 - * Policy for the Identification and Management of members of illegal armed groups.
 - * Policy on the identification and management of victims of armed conflict.
- Another strategy which I would highlight the comprehensive program against gender-based violence developed jointly by the national government and the United Nations agencies, as well as the process of gender equality women about their rights.

The main challenge is the articulation of all these policies, the incorporation of gender variables (technical, etc), the revision of indicators based on international standards and the adoption of special measures against gender violence.

in Colombia

To conclude this report I want to focus on the economic empowerment of women and the inclusion of women in two important areas: *Women and Poverty*, noting that in tackle poverty and social inclusion, the national government has been successful in cooperation with the private sector. Development Bank a social policy that has reduced poverty by 7.7 percentage points between 2015-2018 from 17.1 to 9.4%

Female labor force is a social programme that has achieved significant progress against poverty, and in 2018 is benefiting 2.7 million women, representing 60% of the beneficiaries of this program.

In the case of women and the economy, the national government has implemented a strategy that allows women to access training, resources, credit from a multidimensional approach, a strategy that allows women to access training, resources, credit and other financial services from the formal banking system. It also has made progress in the registration of activities of women entrepreneurs, partnerships between public and private sector and the commitment of business credit leaders to the development of an agenda for *Empowerment of Women* in order to remove barriers to access to employment faced by women and the wage gap between women and men that exist.

Colombia is a country with a high level of economic growth and social progress, with a strong effect of the economic crisis with such strategies.

In 2018 we will have 100 years of the *100 Women Empowerment Strategy*, with leaders and organizations from across the country and other nations. In this day we will share the successful story that has brought benefits to women and that may constitute a starting point for a regional strategy to prevent the economic and social impact of women, a first step for the promotion of policies that affect them.

Colombia continues its invitation to all Member States to positively consider the adoption of the resolution on the economic empowerment of women that my delegation has proposed in this session, in order to contribute to achieve some of the objectives.

Thank you very much.