



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

*Commission on the Status of Women
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MINISTERIO DE LA MUJER

¡Trabajando por la Igualdad y la Equidad!

*Statement by
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(Check against delivery)

Mr. President:

We welcome this important meeting, which strengthens the joint efforts of our countries in search of that equality between women and men should become a universal reality. But above all, this is an opportunity to visualize the obstacles faced so far and the strategies to overcome them.

First, we want to express our solidarity and deep condolences to our Brother countries of Chile and Haiti, for the terrible disasters they have suffered.

The Dominican Republic joins the interventions of the Distinguished Delegations of Yemen, in the name of the Group of 77 and China and Chile, in the name of the Río Group.

The Government of the Dominican Republic, headed by our President, Dr. Leonel Fernández Reyna, works to achieve equal opportunities between the Dominicans, leading to the improvement of their quality of life and ensuring women's access to education, health, political participation, economic development and access to work, among others. The international and regional commitments to the advancement of women constitute a primary reference to start implementing policies that we have been developing in the struggle for genuine rights equality and the eradication of all forms of discrimination against women.

The Dominican Government, through the Ministry of Labor promotes the implementation of equality policies in employment, establishing fair and equal opportunities for women and men in the labor market, also with the development of tools for the dissemination of labor rights, campaigns against sexual harassment, the strict adherence to non-mandatory pregnancy testing as a condition of employment, the non-acceptance of dismissal of pregnant women, the participation of women in domestic responsibility programs, training and guidance occupational where women represent 58% amount of the beneficiaries. We have achieved further reduction in women unemployment rate from 28.8% in 2005 to 22.8% in 2009.

A significant breakthrough for women is the new Dominican Constitution, proclaimed on January 26th 2010. The new constitutional text establishes the principle of equality between men and women, the right of women to a life free of violence, recognition of the productive value of domestic work, recognition of the right to assemble, equal pay for equal work, the popular legislative initiative and the language of popular gender in the entire constitutional text.

Moreover, in coordination with the judiciary, prosecutors and civil society organizations working in the area, the Ministry of Women is encouraging the application of the Model for Prevention and Comprehensive Care for Victims of Violence. For this purpose we have in place multiple Recovery Centers for Survivors of Violence; Shelters for women and children at risk and therapy programs for offenders. We also have local care networks to Violence Against Women and Standards of Care for Victims of Violence.

In educational terms the curriculum in schools integrates gender equity and equality of opportunity between women and men in the fight against gender discrimination at all levels, grades and areas of the Dominican education system.

In the area of sexual and reproductive health, we highlight significant advances in our legal framework of rights, such as the General Health Law, the Social Security Act, the System of Fundamental Rights Protection of Children and Adolescents and the implementation of public policies for preventing teen pregnancy, a major problem which prevents the young women out of the circle of poverty and the Ten-Year Health Plan, the National Plan for Equality and Equity Gender, among others.

Another aspect we would like to highlight is the need that the new gender entity resulting from the reform process that is taking place within the United Nations, will represent a further strengthening and will drive forward the agenda of gender and women's rights, in structure, hierarchy, budget and regional equity.

In that regard, our country takes note of the adoption of the General Assembly resolution 63/311 on "system-wide coherence" and hopes that in this 64th. session of the General Assembly we will conclude negotiations to consolidate the new gender composite entity, unifying the management of the gender issue, fully preserving, as it was agreed, the mandates of each of the four existing institutions. In our government's vision, it is essential to keep the added advantage of maintaining a geographical balance and to preserve the link between global research and training, which is carried out at present by INSTRAW from its current facilities in the Dominican Republic.

Our delegation reiterates its concern that, since last December, despite many efforts, a Director has not been appointed for the International Institute for Research and Training for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), at a critical time when it needs to be revitalized in order to adequately and efficiently prepare to approach towards its future consolidation into a new entity. We believe that this situation should be given the priority and importance that it deserves by the Secretary General for its immediate solution.

It is important to underline the value of strengthening regional networks and coalitions to contribute to the advancement and empowerment of women as the Council of Ministers for Women in Central America and the Dominican Republic should receive all the necessary official support given the role of joint and regional linkages, addressing issues such as approval of electoral systems, justice and gender and justice observatory, world economic and financial crisis financial and its impact on women, among others.

We know that in the Dominican Republic and other countries remain significant barriers that are still entrenched in our cultures, which are expressed in exclusionary and discriminatory practices. However, the Dominican government reaffirms its commitment to continue promoting and implementing public policies to achieve freedom, equality, democracy and the elimination of discrimination which limits the full development, the equal enjoyment of rights and respect for the human dignity of women.