



REPORTS ON RECENT IPU SPECIALIZED MEETINGS

**(a) REGIONAL SEMINAR FOR LATIN AMERICAN PARLIAMENTS ON
VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

(Cuenca, Ecuador, 21-23 April 2010)

1. All Latin American countries have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (Convention of Belém do Pará). These legal instruments have provided the basis for national legislation on violence against women in various countries. Enforcement, however, remains a challenge. As in other parts of the world, the statistics on violence against women in the region are alarming: according to available country data, it is estimated that up to 70 per cent of women will fall victim to physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime.
2. In order to respond to this challenge, the IPU and the National Assembly of Ecuador jointly organized a regional seminar on *Combating violence against women: From legislation to its effective enforcement*. One of the main objectives of the seminar was to highlight different mechanisms that can be put in place to ensure adequate enforcement of existing legislation. As part of the IPU campaign to mobilize parliaments and support their efforts to address violence against women, the seminar brought together more than 40 parliamentarians from Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, Panama and Uruguay. The meeting also benefitted from the support of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women (UN DAW).
3. The inaugural session was addressed by Ms. Machuca, an Ecuadorian MP, representing Mr. Cordero Cueva, Speaker of the National Assembly; Mr. Serano, the Minister of Justice; and Mr. A.B. Johnsson, Secretary General of the IPU. The Cuenca municipal authorities and members of the Judicial Council and the Provincial Court of Azuay also attended the opening session.
4. The meeting provided an opportunity to assess the situation of violence against women in the region and learn about new legislation adopted by several countries over the past four years. Participants also exchanged views and experiences on the allocation and control of resources earmarked for the eradication of violence against women, mechanisms for monitoring enforcement of legislation and processes for overseeing executive action. With respect to budget allocations for the enforcement of relevant legislation, parliamentarians stressed the need to analyse the national budget from a gender perspective and assess its impact using appropriate indicators. Concerns about inadequate coordination among, as well as training for, all stakeholders involved in the eradication of violence (judges, prosecutors, law enforcement officials, defence attorneys, health care personnel, social workers, civil society, etc.) were raised during the debates.

5. The Speaker of the National Assembly of Ecuador closed the meeting following the adoption of 10 priority recommendations for concrete parliamentary action to ensure implementation of legislation on violence against women. These recommendations include adopting measures to promote men's involvement in violence eradication efforts, analysing budgets from a gender perspective and providing budget allocations, in particular, to secure the coordination and proper training of all actors concerned with curbing this form of violence (see Annex).
6. The seminar was broadcast live on the website of the National Assembly of Ecuador and featured prominently in the national press and on the Say NO <http://www.saynotoviolence.org/> website, set up within the framework of the United Nations Secretary-General's campaign UNiTE to End Violence against Women and Girls .
7. On the heels of the seminar, the Parliament and Government of Ecuador officially launched a campaign entitled "El machismo es violencia" (Machismo is violence), which is part of the National Plan for the eradication of gender-based violence against girls, adolescents and women. The campaign aims to break with the traditional pattern of battered and abused women by sending a positive message and engaging men.
8. As a follow-up to this regional seminar, parliamentary activities at the national level in Latin America are foreseen with a view to facilitating and securing implementation of the recommendations of this seminar.

COMBATING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: FROM LEGISLATION TO ITS EFFECTIVE ENFORCEMENT
21-23 April 2010
Cuenca, Ecuador

RECOMMENDATIONS ADOPTED BY MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

Submitted by Ms. Daniela Payssé, MP (Uruguay), Rapporteur of the Seminar

Representatives of the Parliaments of Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, Panama and Uruguay met in Cuenca, Ecuador, from 21 to 23 April 2010, for a regional seminar on the role of parliaments in implementing legislation on violence against women. The seminar was organized jointly by the National Assembly of Ecuador and the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

The meeting has enabled us to assess the situation in the region and learn about new legislation adopted by several countries over the last four years. The discussion highlighted several common denominators for such legislation, including the fact that violence against women is defined as discrimination and a violation of the human rights of women and that violence is not only physical but also psychological, sexual, moral, economic and financial. But important differences were also noted: not all of the legislation refers to international conventions — and in particular to the Convention of Belém do Pará — or provides for the necessary budget allocations.

We have exchanged views and experiences on legislative frameworks, the allocation and control of resources for the eradication of violence against women, mechanisms for the supervision and application of the legislation and processes for monitoring and overseeing State action. Several statements during the seminar referred to the issue of proportionality between criminal violence against women and the sanctions established for punishing it — as well as the treatment to be accorded to victims and aggressors. It was suggested that to work only with women would be to address the symptoms but not the causes of violence against women and would delay the process of change.

We have noted the inadequacy of coordination among, as well as training for, the various actors concerned with the eradication of violence (judges, prosecutors, law enforcement, defence attorneys, health and social services, civil society, etc.).

With respect to budget allocations for the application of legislation in this area, we have stressed the need to analyze the budget from a gender perspective and earmark it, and assess its impact using appropriate indicators (e.g. on steps taken to make budgets more responsive to gender issues).

The minutes of the seminar, currently in preparation, will be circulated to all parliaments in the region.

The present document contains 10 priority recommendations that we have undertaken to pursue in our respective legislative assemblies and congresses:

1. Recognize the new forms of violence against women in national laws and programmes: cyberviolence, political violence, violence against pregnant teens, sexual harassment at school and in the workplace — giving special attention to the most vulnerable population segments: rural women, youth, indigenous peoples, migrants, the disabled and the elderly — and reaffirming that violence against women is structural in character.
2. Repeal laws that discriminate against women and adopt legislative provisions for promoting male participation in efforts to eradicate violence against women.
3. Incorporate international and regional provisions (such as at the Inter-American Convention of Belém do Pará) in national legislation so as to require States to comply with them and take responsibility for acts or omissions in this regard.
4. Regularly review Periodic Country Reports on measures taken to comply with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), ensuring that they are submitted to and discussed within parliament, enabling parliamentarians to contribute to their content, participate in their national delegations to meetings of the CEDAW Committee and receive the Committee's recommendation for subsequent discussion and action.
5. Develop, in the area of prevention, school programmes for male and female children and teenagers — as well as teacher training — on gender issues and the treatment of gender as perceived in and portrayed by the media.
6. Minimize the persistent gap between current legislation and the daily lives of women. To close this gap training should be provided to relevant actors to help women understand and enjoy their rights. Ensure that legislation is sufficiently sensitive to the national political, economic and cultural context and disseminate it widely enough so that State agencies and society as a whole are informed about their respective rights and obligations in this regard.
7. Identify all actors (judges, law enforcement, defence attorneys, health and social services, civil society, etc.) whose involvement is required to effectively implement the legislation, make them accountable through effective oversight by Parliament and other State institutions and train them through public programmes financed from the national budget.
8. Develop and institutionalize gender-sensitive budgets in pursuit of the objectives established for the eradication of violence against women; devise impact statistics and indicators for use in designing and evaluating public policy, to ensure more efficient use of resources.
9. Promote cooperation among parliaments, international organizations, civil society and the private sector — at national and regional levels — in developing policies and programmes for the prevention and eradication of violence against women.
10. Conduct an initial assessment of progress in implementing the recommendations of this seminar within no more than 24 months.