



A parliamentary perspective on discrimination and violence against the girl child



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Developing a safe and secure environment for girls

**Sen. Blanca Judith Díaz Delgado,
Chair, Committee on Equity and Gender, Mexico**

Madam Chair,
Honourable parliamentarians, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

I appreciate being invited to participate in this important session largely because of its theme, which is the development of a safe and secure environment for girls.

I should like to share with you a brief summary of the work done by the Mexican Congress in this connection:

- First, articles 4 and 8 of the Political Constitution of the United Mexican States have been reformed.
- The Law for the Protection of the Rights of Children and Adolescents was enacted In May 2000. Its guiding principle is equality: the enjoyment by all boys, girls without exception—both children and adolescents—of fundamental rights enshrined in our Constitution: non-discrimination and respect without distinction as to race; colour; sex; age; language; religion; political opinion; national, social, or ethnic origin; economic status; or disability, to mention a few.

With the aim of keeping our legislation in this regard up-to-date, various initiatives to enrich the content of the Law have been presented for discussion. They focus primarily on the protection of children against all forms of economic exploitation or the performance of hazardous or unhealthy work. But they also seek to promote awareness among parents about basic principles of health, hygiene, and accident prevention. Measures have been proposed to promote the physical and psychological recovery of girls who have been victims of any form of abandonment, exploitation or abuse, while ensuring respect at all times for the integrity and dignity of the child.

- A draft decree to implement the General Law Creating the National System for the Prevention and Eradication of Violence against Women and Girls, and for their Protection, reflects the fundamental principles recognized by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child.
- I should mention that during the seminar held last December on the role of parliamentary committees in gender acceptance and the promotion of the status of women, one of the main

commitments I mentioned concerned efforts to gain full acceptance of the General Law on Access for Women to a Life Free of Violence. I am now pleased to tell you that this law was published in the Official Journal of the Federation by the President of Mexico, Felipe Calderón Hinojosa, on 1 February of this year and has been in force since that date. This law establishes the basis for coordinating prevention, protection, and assistance activities for women and girls. Its aim is to eradicate violence against them and to help modify socio-cultural patterns of behaviour—among women as well as men—including a review of school programs and the design of social education curricula.

- This law is also designed to foster general public awareness, using all media channels, about the need to prevent and eradicate all forms of violence against women and girls and ensure respect for their rights. It proposes the establishment of a National System for the Prevention and Eradication of Violence against Women and Girls, and for Their Protection, composed of various decentralized offices and agencies of the Federal Public Administration, as well as the authorities responsible for women's affairs in each Federal entity. It sets out the fundamental principles that should guide the Mexican State in this area, citing the international instruments ratified by Mexico in this regard and establishing State mechanisms to ensure a life free of violence for women and girls.
- With respect to the sexual exploitation of children, there are plans under the Federal Law against Organized Crime (DOF 11/05/2004), for providing protection against corruption, pornography, sex tourism, prostitution, trafficking in persons, assaults, abductions, and trafficking in minors, including preventative activities and tougher punishment.
- We have also conducted reviews of the Federal Code of Criminal Procedures and the Federal Law for the Prevention and Elimination of Discrimination, and have criminalized domestic violence in 15 state penal codes.

We have made significant progress, but our work goes on, for much remains to be done. We shall not yield, however, until we have achieved better living conditions in the home, the community, and the workplace, and the security and equality of opportunity enabling our girls to grow and realize their full potential.

Thank you.