



DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT

9th Gathering organized by the Group of Women Parliamentarians of ParlAmericas
Women's Empowerment: Social and Political Responses

Buenos Aires, Argentina | May 22-24, 2017

We, parliamentarians and former parliamentarians from 24 countries and territories, met with representatives from social movements in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on May 22, 23, and 24, 2017, on the occasion of the 9th Gathering organized by the Group of Women Parliamentarians of ParlAmericas. We discussed opportunities for joint work between parliaments and social movements and organizations fighting for gender equality in the Americas and the Caribbean.

We held working sessions in which we shared successful collaboration experiences and determined the necessary actions required to make progress on women's empowerment in the hemisphere, especially considering the relationship between gender-based violence and economic dependency. Given this and

Recognizing:

That proactive dialogue between citizens and parliaments is a fundamental value of democracy, which when put into practice results in social and political benefits necessary to achieve the common good;

That legislators, as representatives of citizens' interests, are responsible for establishing conditions that facilitate civil society's participation in decision-making processes;

That the recent rise in citizen mobilization, particularly in defence of causes related to gender equality and women's empowerment, presents a significant opportunity to strengthen the collaborative work between parliaments and civil society;

That this reinvigorated setting brings before parliamentarians urgent demands including the eradication of gender violence, the economic empowerment of women, the diversification of political representation, peace-building, the protection of women leaders and social activists, and the recognition of the human rights of the LGBTQI community and other groups historically discriminated against*;

That the empowerment of women and other traditionally marginalized groups requires the active participation of men in parliaments, including their contribution to the social construction of positive masculinities;

That, as a result of their convening and democratizing nature, social networks in combination with traditional media form a novel scenario that presents opportunities and challenges for both citizen participation and mobilization, as well as for interaction with political spaces;

That in our countries the alarming levels of gender violence in all its forms demonstrates insufficient comprehensive responses by State powers;

The countries and territories convened were: Argentina, Aruba, Belize, Bolivia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Saint Lucia, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, and Venezuela.

That women's economic empowerment is an essential condition for ensuring their autonomy and well-being, and includes, among other things, equal access to the labour market and productive resources, financial inclusion, the redistribution and recognition of non-remunerated work, and fair pay;

That gender violence and economic dependency are connected, systemic problems whose multiple effects undermine women's empowerment and increase vulnerability to abuse and exploitation;

That, as was agreed through the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, especially in the targets listed under SDG 5, women's empowerment is essential to establishing the foundation for inclusive development that guarantees justice, equality, and the full exercise of human rights.

We commit to:

1. Participating in new spaces for dialogue with social movements and organizations, with the objective of establishing a collective agenda to advance gender equality and women's empowerment.
2. Insisting on the application of gender perspectives, considering the intersections with ethnicity, age, social class, sexual orientation, legal status, and disability status, among others, in the creation of all public policy.*
3. Strengthening the measures in place to protect women leaders, activists, and participants in social movements to ensure their ability to exercise their political rights free from threats and violence.
4. Promoting men's responsibility in advancing on women's empowerment and gender equality.
5. Promoting laws and policies that broaden the State's responsibility in the provision of care services, and that generate a more equitable distribution of domestic responsibilities between men and women.
6. Advancing parliamentary work on eliminating all forms of gender-based violence, with comprehensive reforms and initiatives that address prevention, detection, reporting, sanctioning, and reparation.
7. Designing and supporting laws directed at promoting women's economic empowerment, financial autonomy and access to credit, and the elimination of the wage gap for work of equal value by women and men.
8. Ensuring the implementation of international agreements and commitments related to women's empowerment signed by our governments, including that agreed upon under SDG 5.
9. Creating and strengthening, from our parliaments, spaces for exchange with civil society representatives working towards gender equality.
10. Encouraging the adoption of gender-based analysis for all legislation and government spending.
11. Insisting that statistics are gathered to clearly document women's unpaid work and demonstrate how maximizing women's participation in the workforce would benefit the overall economy.

Issued in Buenos Aires, Argentina, May 24, 2017, with reservations or objections to the construction of the starred () points by the delegations from Belize, Grenada, Haiti,¹ Saint Lucia, and Trinidad and Tobago.*

¹ Clarification regarding Haiti's reservation: in accordance with the Concordat of 1860, signed between the Republic of Haiti and the Holy See.