



## DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT

8<sup>th</sup> Annual Gathering organized by the Group of Women Parliamentarians of ParlAmericas  
***Diversifying Political Power to Build Inclusive Societies***  
Quito, Ecuador | June 2- 3, 2016

Parliamentarians from 29 countries and territories gathered in Quito, Ecuador from June 2-3, 2016 for ParlAmericas' 8th annual gathering on gender equality organized by the Group of Women Parliamentarians, engaging in dialogue centred on the shared objective of promoting greater diversity of political power and in other decision-making spaces, in order to make our parliaments and societies more inclusive.

Through this, the delegates continued the work and commitments initiated in 2003 to strengthen the leadership of women politicians through ongoing regional exchange of best practices, and to foster the creation of mechanisms encouraging women's participation in politics.

### ***Recognizing:***

That parliaments, as key institutions for the strengthening of democracy, must aspire to reflect, in substantive terms, the diversity of the societies they represent; and that this representation also encourages and promotes legitimacy in decision-making spaces;

That reducing the social, political, and economic gap between men and women is a fundamental priority in creating parity democracy and more inclusive societies, and at the same time, is a necessary component of designing and promoting gender-sensitive public policies;

That women face systematic gender-based discrimination in public life, and as a result, institutions must recognize and be sensitive to the multiple identities of women and other traditionally marginalized groups by preventing political practices that exclude these groups, particularly those related to discrimination based on gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, ethnicity, socio-economic status, disability, etc.;

That women have been crucial in the advancement of democracy in the Americas and the Caribbean, particularly in processes of democratic transition;

That it is necessary to continue to make advances in strengthening the constitutional rights and protection of Indigenous peoples and communities across the continent, ensuring the respect, preservation, and promotion of their traditions, customs, and wisdom, with the objective of continuing to overcome the historical injustices these groups have faced;

That despite the systemic obstacles they face, Indigenous leaders on the continent have led important social movements to demand change in the public sphere, to promote

The countries and territories convened were: Argentina, Aruba, Bahamas, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Sint Maarten, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay and Venezuela.

the holistic well-being of Indigenous women, families, and communities;

That the inclusion and promotion of male and female Indigenous leaders, as well as other traditionally marginalized groups, in the respective parliaments of the countries across the region encourages more inclusive agendas and policies; nevertheless, there is still persistent under-representation of these groups in decision-making spaces, including national parliaments;

That despite the significant progress achieved in the Americas and the Caribbean in terms of the political participation of women and other traditionally marginalized social groups, enduring phenomena like gender-based political harassment and other forms of discrimination create obstacles for effective participation in public life and decision-making processes;

That it is of the utmost importance to ensure the necessary conditions are in place to guarantee women's labour rights across the continent, in equal and equitable conditions and in a manner responsive to the socio-economic issues they face, including wage gaps, unpaid domestic work, and other forms of gender discrimination that make it difficult for women to join the labour market and thereby affect their financial independence and well-being;

That men and boys play an essential role in advancing gender equality and, as such, must work jointly with women and girls to transform the social norms limiting the latter's access to opportunities and rights into conditions of equality and mutual respect, recognizing the importance of families in empowering women;

That we recognize the seriousness of gender violence and the need to promote and support the social demonstrations in many of our member countries as part of the "Ni Una Menos" campaign;

That incorporating voices from a variety of civil society actors will enrich consultations, debates, interventions, and parliamentary oversight, as well as lead to more sustainable development and the prevention and resolution of conflict;

That, in this regard, it is essential to ensure that parliaments are accessible and receptive to promoting the political representation of women, minorities, and other groups with interests and needs that have historically been marginalized in decision-making processes.

***We commit to:***

1. Proposing and advancing, in our parliaments and in regional parliaments, legislative reforms that facilitate and encourage the substantial and effective participation of Indigenous women in the decision-making process, and reviewing existing legislation to ensure that it reflects inclusive and gender-sensitive perspectives.
2. Considering potential special mechanisms and electoral reforms appropriate to national contexts that will facilitate women's presence in parliaments, and

evaluating the effectiveness of those that already exist in achieving gender equality and parity.

3. Defending women's labour rights through appropriate legislation that addresses the gaps, challenges, and disparities that women face in the labour market.
4. Continuing efforts to eradicate sexist, exclusionary, and discriminatory practices in politics, including phenomena like political harassment and other manifestations of gender violence in both public and private spheres.
5. Placing greater emphasis on involving men in work related to women's rights and gender equality, including in such issues as childrearing, unpaid domestic work, discriminatory practices and harmful stereotypes, and denouncing and taking action against gender-based violence.
6. Strengthening our work with international and civil society organisations, particularly with women's groups and associations; actively seeking their participation and fostering social dialogue to find joint solutions to the problems we collectively face in the region.
7. Promoting the use of information and data disaggregated by gender and other social indicators as tools that allow for the creation of public policies better directed at overcoming socio-economic gaps between men, women, and marginalized groups.
8. Continuing inter-parliamentary dialogue, between national parliaments as well as regional and international parliaments, and fostering the exchange of legislative best practices focused on gender and social inclusion in order to achieve more inclusive and gender-sensitive societies.
9. Proposing actions and strategies, at the legislative level, to eliminate patterns of exclusion of Indigenous communities from decision-making on topics that impact the well-being of their communities and organizations.
10. Proposing, in our respective parliaments, the adoption of gender-sensitive approaches for the creation of public policy.
11. Reporting on the progress and difficulties in conducting this work during the next annual gathering of ParlAmericas on gender equality.

Finally, the parliamentarians gathered here express to the people of Ecuador as a whole, and to our colleagues in the National Assembly of Ecuador, our most sincere sentiments of support, solidarity, and humanity in the wake of the earthquake that took place this past April 16. We offer the victims and their families our respectful condolences, and to the survivors we extend a message of strength and resilience.

*Issued in Quito, Ecuador, June 3, 2016*