



## Economic and Social Council

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### Commission on the Status of Women

#### Fifty-ninth session

9-20 March 2015

**Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and  
to the special session of the General Assembly entitled  
“Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for  
the twenty-first century”**

### **Statement submitted by Centro Regional de Derechos Humanos y Justicia de Género, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council\***

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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\* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



## **Statement**

### **Contribution of Corporación Humanas - Centro Regional de Derechos Humanos y Justicia de Género**

#### **Fifty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)**

As a centre for gender studies and feminist political action, Corporación Humanas, takes the opportunity to contribute to the preparation of the fifty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), and in particular to the evaluation of the implementation of the Peking Declaration and Platform for Action, adopted 20 years ago.

As part of the Beijing+15 commemoration, considerable work was carried out in 2010 to assess the situation in respect of women's rights throughout the world, in the light of the challenges established in the Peking Declaration and Platform for Action, 1995. In that context, the various advances and challenges in Chile and the region of Latin America and the Caribbean were identified and juxtaposed with the States' international obligations regarding the protection and promotion of women's rights. Currently, emphasis should be placed on challenges pending in the following four areas, crucial to women's status in Chile and the said region: political participation, care work, violence, and sexual and reproductive rights.

With respect to political participation, a key challenge identified in 2010 has been the promotion of women's participation in political parties and trade unions, especially through the encouragement of and support for access to financing aimed at facilitating women's participation in political life and public action.

Unfortunately, the above challenge has not yet been fully met in Chile. Structural barriers obstruct women's access to positions of power and decision-making. Characteristically, the Chilean electoral system is geared towards domination by two main blocks, preventing the expression of the country's political diversity and significantly inhibiting women's representation in the parliament, only 15.8 per cent of whose members are women, well below the regional average of over 25 per cent.

Actually, women are under-represented at all government levels. Although women account for 39 per cent of the ministers (with nine women appointed to 23 ministries), the proportion of women declines drastically at the level of undersecretaries' offices, regional secretariats and departmental councils. Women account for 20 per cent of Supreme Court and Constitutional Court members, while empirical evidence suggests that women's participation in public and private organizations tends to decline as the hierarchical level rises.

Thus, we consider this session as an opportunity to draw up procedures and specific proposals to buttress the democratic systems and urge States to align their domestic systems with their international obligations, mainly in respect of their law on political parties and electoral financing, in order to ensure a balanced representation of men and women in all election processes.

Democratization of the public sector must be accompanied by democratization of the private sector. In Chile and the region, little progress has been made towards just and fair distribution of care work between men and women. While they

continue to be the ones exclusively responsible in that area, women have limited access to real equality because their integration into the labour market faces problems (inter alia, informal employment and low wages), reducing their potential for autonomy, a key element in seeking to escape from situations of violence.

Thirdly, challenges persist in connection with violence against children and women, access to justice, protection of victims, and timely and appropriate punishment of domestic or other violence. Indicators of violence and femicide in the region are alarming. The States have failed to take effective steps, such as institutional prevention mechanisms or adequate budgetary provisions. As regards the implementation of international human rights instruments, the fact that the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women is pending in Chile, Cuba and El Salvador gives grounds for concern.

The problems of violence and inequity are intertwined, since violence is an expression and manifestation of discrimination and unequal relations of power. As long as no specific and tangible advances are achieved in terms of gender equality, no significant progress is possible towards the eradication of violence against women and girls in the world.

With respect to ensuring the protection of sexual and reproductive rights, the main problem consists in a State's non-recognition of the need for a domestic legal framework governing specifically the access of girls and young persons to sexual education and to effective and safe contraception and the situation of women and girls unwilling or unable to carry their pregnancy to term.

In the case of Chile, large-scale criminalization of abortion under an excessively restrictive legislation at variance with the relevant international standards is particularly alarming.

In that connection, Chile is unique in the world. Yet the penalization in question is ineffective, since thousands of women, for multiple and complex reasons, decide to interrupt their pregnancy, while such clandestine abortions involve serious risks for their life and health.

Poor women and girls unable to afford an abortion under minimum conditions of safety are especially vulnerable to the above risks. Moreover, they are liable to criminal prosecution since they may be denounced in the event of complications requiring medical attention in public establishments.

We are grateful for the opportunity to contribute to the Beijing+20 evaluation process of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and hope that our contribution to the discussion on the most effective measures to attain the goals of the Platform for Action in the area of gender equality and women's empowerment may be useful.

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