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**REPORT OF THE THIRTIETH MEETING OF THE PRESIDING OFFICERS
OF THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON WOMEN IN LATIN AMERICA
AND THE CARIBBEAN**

Lima, Peru, 7 February 2000

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A. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

Place and date of the meeting

1. The Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean held their thirtieth meeting on 7 February 2000 in Lima, Peru.

Attendance

2. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following ECLAC member and associate member countries serving as Presiding Officers: Argentina, Barbados, Bolivia, Chile, Cuba, El Salvador, Mexico, Netherlands Antilles, Paraguay and Venezuela. The meeting was also attended by representatives from Peru, the host country for the meeting of the Presiding Officers and the eighth session of the Regional Conference. Representatives of the following bodies also attended: the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, the United Nations Development Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the Pan American Health Organization and the World Food Programme.

Chairperson and rapporteur

3. The meeting was chaired by the Minister-Director of the National Women's Service of Chile, Josefina Bilbao, Chairperson of the Presiding Officers. The deputy head of the Mexican delegation, Aída González, Director General for International Women's Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs served as Rapporteur.

B. AGENDA

4. The Presiding Officers adopted the following agenda:
 1. Adoption of the agenda
 2. Analysis of the activities of the Presiding Officers and of the ECLAC secretariat since the twenty-ninth meeting of the Presiding Officers
 3. Review of the documentation for the eighth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean

4. Organization of work to be carried out during the eighth session of the Regional Conference
5. Analysis of a possible draft Conference declaration
6. Other matters.

C. SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

5. After welcoming the participants, the Deputy Executive Secretary of ECLAC described the Presiding Officers as a crucial component of the Regional Conference, which had succeeded in living up to the expectations it generated and had provided an almost continuous link with the countries in assessing and fulfilling the provisions adopted.

6. He recalled that the main task of the Presiding Officers at their thirtieth meeting was to finalize activities preparatory to the eighth session of the Conference, due to begin the following day. The topics that had been chosen for consideration were of fundamental importance for development of the region. The ECLAC secretariat was proud to have been able to work with the Presiding Officers on the tasks they had to perform and, in view of all the information and material available, it was confident that the meeting would be a resounding success.

7. The Minister for Women's Affairs and Human Development of Peru spoke about the preparations made by her country for the eighth session of the Regional Conference. The session had been arousing great expectations, not only among the relevant authorities but in all walks of national life. Both the Government and the Peruvian people felt honoured by the presence of so many delegates, whom they hoped to come to know better. They also looked forward to benefiting from the knowledge and experience they had acquired in pursuit of the difficult but just goal of gender equality.

8. She was sure the eighth session of the Conference would leave its mark, not only on the participants themselves, but also on the country, as its new revitalizing force would strengthen everyone in the new century just beginning, which brought with it challenges in connection with the need to strengthen the countries societies based on solidarity, democracy and social equity.

Analysis of the activities of the Presiding Officers and of the ECLAC secretariat since the twenty-ninth meeting of the Presiding Officers, and review of the documentation for the eighth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean (agenda items 2 and 3)

9. The Chief of the Women and Development Unit of ECLAC reported that, pursuant to the request made by participants at the previous meeting of the Presiding Officers, a final version had been prepared of the position paper entitled "The challenge of Gender Equity and Human Rights on the Threshold of the twenty-first century" (LC/L.1295(CRM.8/3)), for presentation at the eighth session. She also presented a series of reference documents which among other issues analysed the economic aspects of gender equity, the social and legal situation of women five years after Beijing, and economic models consistent with the gender perspective. In addition, several United Nations bodies had made specialized contributions on topics related to the situation of women in the region.

10. One of the most positive aspects of the preparatory activities for the eighth session had been the harmonious and complementary work carried out with Governments and civil society institutions, thanks to which the delegations consisted of representatives from a variety of sectors. Information on the Conference had been posted on the ECLAC Website in recent months, and steps had been taken to publicize the deliberations and documents presented through this same medium.

11. The Chief of the Women and Development Unit explained that, in organizing the panel discussion to be held during the eighth session of the Regional Conference, experts from outside the region had been invited who would be able to provide an external point of view on the gender equity debate as a contribution to the widely acknowledged theoretical and analytical work carried out by academics and intellectuals in the region.

12. The countries responsible for preparing documents for the eighth session —Chile and Barbados (human rights, peace and violence), and Cuba and Mexico (gender equity)— then reported on the work carried out and the contributions received from the subregions.

Organization of work to be carried out during the eighth session of the Regional Conference
(agenda item 4)

13. The Chief of the Women and Development Unit reported that messages had been received from countries expressing interest in having their representatives serve as Presiding Officers during the coming term. In view of that interest, the secretariat had taken steps to gather information aimed at helping countries form a clear idea of the criteria used in selecting the Presiding officers and how those criteria had evolved since 1977. It had also summarized that information in a short document. Given the considerable interest shown in participating, she suggested that when the delegations elected the next Presiding Officers they should revive the principle of equitable geographic representation. She further proposed that the Presiding Officers should continue to hold two meetings per year, one of which would be open to participation by all the countries. Following an exchange of comments and points of view and an analysis of the past work and operations of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference, the participating delegations decided it was necessary to establish firm criteria for the election of Presiding Officers and adopted an agreement on the subject (see annex 1).

Analysis of a possible draft Conference declaration (agenda item 5)

14. After circulating a draft declaration which, at the request of the Chairperson of the Presiding Officers, had been drawn up by the secretariat following consultations with the host country, the Chief of the Women and Development Unit pointed out that since it was not necessary to adopt a new Regional Programme of Action, the declaration should instead take the form of an analysis in which the Governments of the region would act as the main interlocutors. Its prime goal was to provide inputs for economic and social policies, especially with regard to equity, from a women's perspective.

Annex 1

AGREEMENT

Having carefully analysed the achievements and progress made in the region, and particularly in the functioning of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, the member countries whose representatives served as Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean make the following recommendations:

1. To request the Regional Conference to elect Presiding Officers, based on the criteria of rotation of posts, suitable geographical representation and effective operation, who will work to facilitate participation by all the countries.
2. To ask the Regional Conference to make one of the annual meetings of the Presiding Officers open to all member countries of the Conference and to hold that meeting at ECLAC headquarters in Santiago, Chile.
3. To suggest that the Regional Conference should encourage member countries who have representatives serving as Presiding Officers to consider hosting their meetings in their countries.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**ARGENTINA**

Head of Delegation: Lila Subirán de Viana
Embajadora, Subsecretaría de Asuntos Globales

Delegates: Magdalena von Beckh Widmanstetter, Dirección de la Mujer, Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto
Noemí Aumedes, Directora General de la Mujer, Ciudad de Buenos Aires

BARBADOS

Head of Delegation: Patricia Hackett-Codrington
Bureau of Women's Affairs

BOLIVIA

Head of Delegation: Jarmila Morávek de Cerruto
Viceministra, Viceministerio de Género, Generacionales y Familia

CHILE

Head of Delegation: María Josefina Bilbao
Ministra Directora, Servicio Nacional de la Mujer (SERNAM)

Delegates: Teresa Rodríguez, Jefa Departamento de Relaciones Internacionales y Cooperación, SERNAM
María Soledad Gómez, Departamento de Relaciones Internacionales y Cooperación, SERNAM

CUBA

Head of Delegation: Magalys Arocha Domínguez, Secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores, Federación de Mujeres Cubanas

Delegates: Mayda Alvarez Suárez, Directora, Centro de Estudios de la Mujer
Edith Felipe Duyos, Especialista en Cooperación, Ministerio de Inversiones Extranjeras
María del Carmen Herrera, Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores
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EL SALVADOR

Head of Delegation: Jenny Flores de Coto
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 Deputy Director, Department of Welfare, Family and Humanitarian Affairs

PARAGUAY

Head of Delegation: Cristina Muñoz, Ministra de la Mujer

Delegates: María Beatriz Nogués de León, Encargada de Negocios interina de la Embajada del Paraguay en Perú
 Lilianne Lebrón-Wenger, Directora General de Política Multilateral, Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores
 Sonia Brucke, Directora de Planificación de la Secretaría de la Mujer
 Ana Medina Zorrilla, Secretaria General

VENEZUELA

Head of Delegation: Moni Pizani, Coordinadora Comisión Mujer y Relaciones Internacionales

Observer

PERU

Luisa María Cuculiza, Ministra de Promoción de la Mujer y el Desarrollo Humano
Ana Peña, Primera Secretaria, Jefa del Departamento de la Mujer y Pobreza,
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores

United Nations bodies

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Magdalena Moyano, Deputy Resident Representative in Venezuela

United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS

Adriana Gómez, Regional Adviser for the Andean Area

United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)

Roxana Carrillo, Human Rights Adviser
Mónica Martínez, Vice-Chairperson, "Beijing +5" Preparatory Committee
Gilda Pacheco, Costa Rica
Flavia Pansieri, Deputy Director

Specialized agencies

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

Marcela Ballara, Regional Officer, Women in Development

Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization

Elsa Gómez Gómez, Regional Adviser

World Food Programme

James Conway, Regional Director for South America
Lucía Echeopar, Principal Programmes Adviser, South American Region

ECLAC secretariat

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