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Informal Meeting with NGOs – 23 July

Brazil and Compliance with CEDAW
SHADOW REPORT BY CIVIL SOCIETY

To the Sixth National Report of Brazil on the Convention
on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination
Against Women – 2001–2005 Period

Thank you Madame Chair. **I am Jussara Prá**, from the Brazilian Network of Feminist Studies and Researches. We will talk on behalf of twenty three networks and national articulation of women and feminists, joining around of thousand women's organizations involved in our shadow report.¹ I am going to talk on the empowerment of women and my colleagues on health, sexual rights and reproductive rights and rural women.

The insufficiency and the bad quality of the public policies make evident the great exclusion of women, aggravated by racial, ethnic, generation, economic, regional, urban and rural discriminations.

Women are less than 9% in the national parliament and only 5 are son ministries of the State. The women's rights mechanisms have no politic strength or resources, as the answers of the government report to the Committee make evident.

This requires from the State specific and more effective programmes for the empowerment of women and campaigns which increase the female presence in the decision spaces. It requires that in the ongoing politic reform mechanisms be adopt in order to guarantee a major participation of women in the politics, such as lists of candidates with *alternance* between sexes and access to public resources to the women's election campaigns.

The ineffectiveness or absence of public policies for women makes difficult their access to the public goods and to the social well-being. As an example, we point out the violence, the sexual exploitation and trafficking of women and girls. This makes ugent the effective implementation of the Maria da Penha Law, with the creation of the Special Courts for Domestic and Family Violence against Women and additional services – such as specialized police station, centers of reference, shelters – with quality of attention and accessibility to all women, in articulation with politics of health, education, housing and work.

The gravity of the problems appointed demands to go beyond of the approval of the laws; it demands from the State actions, programmes and campaigns which deconstruct stereotypes and give value to the role of women in all their spaces of the social and political life; it demands to have social indicators disaggregated by sex, race and ethnicity in order to know the real situation of women and do the monitoring and the citizen control of the public policies for women.

Now my colleague is going to speak on health in English.

¹ Tenemos acá la presencia de la Red Nacional Feminista de Salud, Derechos Sexuales y Reproductivos, del Movimiento de Mujeres Campesinas, del CLADEM (Comité de América Latina y el Caribe para la Defensa de los Derechos de las Mujeres) y de la ONG AGENDE (Agende Acciones en Género Ciudadanía y Desarrollo), coordinadora y secretaria ejecutiva del proceso del Contrainforme de la Sociedad Civil.

Thank you Madam Chair. I'm going to speak in English. **My name is Telia Negrão**, I'm the executive secretary of the Brazilian Feminist Network of Health, Sexual Rights and Reproductive Rights.

The magnitude of the adolescent pregnancy in Brazil is surprisingly great: 31% of them end in abortion. Women of all ages have no guarantees of dignity to enjoy their sexual and reproductive rights. Around 1.4 million spontaneous and unsafe abortions occur annually.

Despite the advances and the existence of many new norms and legal rights, the regional, social, and mainly the gender, race and ethnic inequalities are the **barriers for the changes**.

Illustrating this problem we have: the absence and insufficiency of public policies toward sexual and reproductive health; the lack of access to oral contraceptives of low hormonal dosage; the lack of personal training in the health field to offer services to this age group; and the difficulties in the provision of emergency contraceptives; the low quality of the prenatal; the difficulties for breast cancer treatment and the exposition to the HIV and other TSDs.

The advances on the public health system do not reach the country side. The conservative cultural pattern naturalizes violence and the death of women, and impedes changes in the law.

We request to the Committee to recommend the Brazilian State adopt in-depth measures to reduce maternal mortality, prevent and treat the most frequent illness, such as arterial hypertension, the principal cause of the maternal mortality, especially in black women. Adopt in-depth measures to confront the feminization of the Aids epidemic; broad provision of information and sexual education, in particular for adolescents, with special attention to the prevention and greater control of HIV/AIDS and adolescent pregnancy. Guarantee full access to integrate and high quality health care to all women, with special attention to the necessities of specific segments, specially women with disabilities, youth, elderly and lesbians.

In Brazil, **abortion** is considered a crime. Young and adult women are submitted by humiliations and violent arrests. The cases are noticed by the Brazilian newspapers. At July eleven, a young 20 years old girl was arrested from the clinic to the police, and after 12 hours without medical attention, she was taken to the penitentiary. At July twelve, another woman 32 years old had struggled 73 days to get the authorization of the highest federal legal instance for the medical procedure, despite the fetus had the Meckel-Gruber Syndrome, that produces irreversibles anomalies.

Urge the State Party to approve the bill on the decriminalization of abortion. This proposal resulted of a united effort of a Tripartite Committee created by the Brazilian Government to revise the punitive legislation.

The Brazilian women's movement is fighting to move on with broader participation and with some important strategies. It is necessary the effective separation between church and state. It's necessary that the Brazilian government promotes changes in the legislation, and, effectively confront the challenges of the women's citizenship.

Now my college will speak in Spanish. Thank you.

I am Rosana Tenroller, from the Peasant Women's Movement.

The social exclusion and discrimination affect rural women from all over the region of the country. When we talk about rural women, we include: rural workers, peasants, river women, indigenous, "coconut-breakers", extractivists, traditional fishers, *quilombolas* – who are women from remaining communities of slaves² – and others.

The absence of civil and professional documentation excludes all these women from the benefits of the public policies, labor rights and social security.

The national government program of documentation results from a struggle of more than thirty years of rural women's movement, but, in the practice, it reaches only women from the agrarian reform settlements and its surrounding communities. Urge, then, the State to guarantee the universalization of the access to this program for all rural women.

The *quilombolas* women fight for the right of land among other demands, which requires from the State to adopt the necessary measures for the recognition of the possession and ownership of the land to these communities, guaranteeing the grant of the title in the name of the man and woman.

The economic empowerment of rural women demands from the State to promote changes in the programs of specific credit lines and trainings, aiming to diminish the bureaucracy, and breaking with the cultural patterns and the male chauvinism which leave them in a situation of dependency. In almost every rural programmes the man is considered the chief of the productive unity, and for that, is the beneficiary of the programmes.

The exclusion of rural women still appears in the total absence of services for the attention to those who are in situation of violence. Urge the State to create in the rural areas mechanisms for overcoming the large distances so that women in situation of violence can have access to the services of attention.

The rural women and all women in Brazil are fighting for changes in the cultural patterns and for new relationships of power. This is only will be a reality under effective public policies which promote social changes with equality and social and gender justice.

Thank you Madam Chair.

² The quilombolas communities were originally formed by blacks that fled captivity during the period of slavery.