

Oral Statement by EL SALVADOR

Thank you Madame Chairperson.

My name is Claudia Monterrosa and I am presenting this statement on behalf of CLADEM, the Gender Committee of the National Union of Workers in El Salvador and the 16 organizations that took part in the drafting of our report. I will focus on six critical issues.

1. Measures adopted by the State to eliminate discrimination
2. Trafficking of persons
3. The rights of women to education
4. Rights in the workplace
5. The right to health
6. Rural women and poverty

1. **Measures adopted by the State to eliminate discrimination:** In a report by the Salvadoran Institute for the Development of Women (ISDEMU), the following weaknesses were recognized: a lack of budgetary capacity dedicated to the elimination of discrimination against women, the lack of a gender perspective in public policies, and the fact that the State has yet to ratify the Optional Protocol. Also, it is worrying that in El Salvador there is no national mechanism for the collecting of statistics regarding the death of women due to violence.
2. **Trafficking of persons:** in 2004, the trafficking of persons was criminalized, however, there remains no acknowledgement of violence against victims, the methods used to obtain their consent, the conditions regarding the vulnerability of victims, or the economic advantages the traffickers enjoy.
3. **The rights of women to education:** firstly, the lack of resources and the inefficiency of the education system are reflected in the high drop-out and repetition rates of girls. Moreover, cases of harassment, sexual abuse and resulting pregnancies are part of a vicious cycle that discourages women to continue their education. These issues are not reflected in official State reports.
4. **Rights in the workplace:** In El Salvador there is no law regarding the prevention of risks in the workplace. Complaints denote that women are victims of sexual harassment and inspections carried out by the Ministry of Employment show that the harassment and firing of pregnant women remains prominent.
5. **The right to health:** ISDEMU recognizes the obstacle generated by the existence of conservative groups to the effective exercise of sexual and reproductive rights. Such is the case with the prohibition of abortion, despite the fact that the Salvadoran Ministry of Health has recognized that this takes place in clandestine centers with unqualified personnel. Also, we are seeing a trend in feminization of HIV/AIDS.
6. **Rural women and poverty:** there are 1, 102, 219 women living in rural areas and they have limited access to social services such as healthcare, education, housing, portable water and electricity. Also, there is a governmental program called 'Solidarity Network' that leaves single mothers in rural areas the with sole responsibility for the improvement of their situation and that of their children.

THANK YOU.