

## **Key Recommendations to the CEDAW Committee with Regards to Colombia**

**Presented at the 37<sup>th</sup> CEDAW Session – January 15—February 2, 2007  
Committee for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women  
United Nations, CEDAW  
Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women**

Every day, in many contexts, women in Colombia suffer violations of their rights. They are the principal victims of intra-familial and sexual violence; have less access to employment than men; earn less than men for equal work despite having a higher educational level; and occupy fewer than 15% of elected positions. Their autonomy with regards to sexual and reproductive rights is in question. The State, for its part, does not have the capacity to implement adequate mechanisms and public policies to protect and promote women's rights and to confront historic gender discrimination through positive, targeted action. There is a vast disparity between regions and among ethnic groups regarding access to rights, gaps in gender equality, and the effective application of public policies that promote equal opportunity.

For this reason, the women's movement in Colombia<sup>1</sup> urges the CEDAW Committee to recommend that the Colombian State, in order to guarantee the full implementation of the Convention, prioritize the following measures:

- Implement an integrated national public policy for women – articulated in every area of State policy – through positive and targeted action, with adequate financial resources and a system of evaluation and enforcement.
- Guarantee policy and legislative reform in the areas of labor, employment and social security that will redress the impact of labor instability (caused by recent labor reforms and the implementation of international treaties) on women.
- Implement a legislative reform of domestic and sexual violence laws that will guarantee an integrated law to mandate recovery services for survivors as well as the sanction, prevention and eradication of all forms of violence against women, in accordance with compulsory international norms.
- Guarantee Colombian women access to and adequate coverage by voluntary termination-of-pregnancy services through the public health system, within the framework of the recent de-penalization of abortion.

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<sup>1</sup> Confluencia Nacional de Redes de Mujeres: comprised of Red de Educación Popular entre Mujeres (REPEM) – Colombia, Red Nacional de Mujeres, Fundación de Apoyo Comunitario (FUNDAC), Liga Internacional de Mujeres por la Paz y la Libertad, LIMPAL – Colombia, Corporación Humanas, Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir – Colombia y Red Mujer y Participación Política; Comité de América Latina y el Caribe para la Defensa de los Derechos de la Mujer. CLADEM – Colombia; Corporación Colombia Diversa y Profamilia – Colombia (Programa Salud Sexual y Género).

- Comply with the recommendations of various bodies of the UN and Inter-American systems to confront the gendered effects of the armed conflict and the exacerbation of all forms of violence in women's lives, guaranteeing measures for prevention, attention and prosecution of the diverse forms of violence that women suffer in the context of the armed conflict, so that all women victims of the conflict have access to truth, justice and reparation. Along the same lines, it is essential to establish a targeted policy of positive action for the most vulnerable women: internally displaced women, indigenous and Afro-Colombian women, and sexual minorities, who in the context of the armed conflict have seen their rights disproportionately jeopardized. Likewise, it is urgent that the authorities prosecute the many armed actors who have committed violence against women in the civil population as well as among their own forces.
- Immediately deposit the instrument of ratification of the Optional Protocol to CEDAW with the Secretary General of the UN.