

# COLOMBIA



Speech

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Madame President:

On behalf of the Colombian delegation, I would like to congratulate you and all members of the Chair for your Presidency in such an important commission.

For Colombia, the 4<sup>th</sup> Conference on Women, the Beijing Declaration and its Program of Action have represented a focal point for the development and progress of women. In that sense, we have created a cohesive plan of action where women have increased their participation and leadership in the political, social and economic spheres.

This progress has helped us identify and recognize the areas and sectors where inequalities affect women, in an environment of violence and limited possibilities for advancing and escaping marginality.

Nevertheless, the approach that has oriented actions in my country is the recognition and acceptance of the new role of women in society and the will to develop decisive actions for their progress and empowerment.

First, we have centered our approach in the formulation of effective gender public policies. Following the course of action determined by the National Development Plan 2010 – 2014, the government of President Santos is formulating the National Public Policy for Women Equality, by taking into account the participation of different organizations and population groups of women (of African-Colombian, Indigenous, Rural and Urban and women with different socio-economic levels). This Public Policy will be presented to the public this month.

For the Government of Colombia it is also very important to work in specific plans of action that guarantee displaced women integral attention and a life free of violence.

In that sense, and with the clear objective of implementing these policies, the Government has taken decisive actions in order to strengthen the Presidential Senior Advisor Office for the Equity of Women.

In the context of recent achievements I would like to highlight four important examples of legislation in my country:

1. Law 1413 of 2010 that recognizes the contributions of women by means of non remunerative labor to the economic and social development. In this context, Time Use and Non Remunerative Labor polls were completed and its results are now being incorporated into the National Monetary Accountability System.
2. Law 1434 of 2011 that entices the participation of women in political control and the legislative agenda through the creation of the Legal Congressional Commission for the Equity of Women.
3. Law 1475 of 2011 which regulates that the minimum quota of women that political parties and movements must observe in their election lists is 30%, thus strengthening pre-existent accords that have been in effect since 2005.
4. Law 1448 of 2011 that establishes special protection for women who pursue armed conflict related land restitution. This law also dictates attention, assistance and integral reparation to the victims of armed conflict. Differential policies and guarantees for non repetition are enforced for those women and girls who have been victims of armed conflict related sexual violence. This Law constitutes a decisive advance in state efforts to approach, in a consistent and coordinate way, the problematic of violence against women.

Additionally, in Education, Colombia has seen consistent achievements.

We have reached Millennium Development Goal No. 2, guaranteeing universal basic education, which in Colombia, includes preschool, elementary and high school.

- This gender disaggregated percentage, offers a difference in favor of women of 2.4 percentage points in the last 10 years, which means that more women receive basic education than men.
- In Intermediate Education (10th and 11th grades) the gross coverage is 78% and, likewise, the difference by sex favors women, this time in 15 percentage points. It is possible that female retention is higher than the male for reasons related to labor.



- In Higher Education the coverage has reached 35%.
- The illiteracy rate decreased to 1.9% in people between 14 and 15 years in 2010. This indicator also favors women, whose proportion of illiterates in 2010 was 0.83 percentage points lower than men's.
- Finally, the average years of study increased to 9.7 in 2010 in people between 15 and 24 years.

In the last decades flexible models of schooling have been implemented. This has allowed us to reach the most remote populations, including both girls and boys.

In reproductive and sexual health we have reached MDG No. 5. A policy that includes prevention and control of maternal mortality as a priority of the agenda has been implemented, as well as the design and implementation of a methodological proposal for the surveillance of maternal morbidity. The rate of maternal mortality in the country has been below the Latin American average since 2009 (87.4).

In Communications, Colombia has strengthened its action in the fields of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) as useful mechanisms toward women's equity. Digital alphabetization, techno-centers, donation of computers to schools in rural areas, computing rooms with appropriate technology for women with disabilities, virtual education, the creation and real participation in media such as radio stations or the appropriation and responsible use of ICTs are some of the advances achieved in this matter.

In themes related to participation, the Pact for Effective Inclusion of Women in Politics, signed in 2005, establishes the compromise of the political parties and groups to secure the role of women in democracy and her effective inclusion in formal political spheres. Its implementation is monitored by Gender Liaison Boards, which also check the commitments made in Law 581 of 2000 ("Quota Law") regarding female participation in public national entities.

Thus, the proportion of women in executive and judicial branches has reached 39%, beating the quota of 30%. Right now a woman is heading the Comptroller General of the Nation and the executive branch exceeds the quota with 40% of female participation in 2010.

Nevertheless, regarding violence we see different results. In relation to couple's physical violence, since 2006, the prevalence against women has been high and constant; in 2010, from 51,000 cases reported of partner abuse, 88% corresponded to women who were victimized. As part of the actions to counter this situation, broad communication campaigns have been designed aiming to abolish sexist messages, along with legal strengthening and permanent attention centers.



In the topic of unemployment, the gap between men and women is 6.6%, and the average gap of monthly labor income in 2010 was 21.20% in comparison with men.

Madame Chair,

Although in many aspects our progress is evident, there are still many challenges regarding rural women, the topic that matters most in our meeting today. In Colombia 24% of the population lives in rural areas; 43% of them are women, and a fourth of the whole are heads of house hold. Half of the female rural population is dedicated to domestic chores and are care-givers of children and 34% of them participate in productive activities, mainly in services and crafts. However only 23% of them receive remuneration in non cash payment or money; 61% of rural women are poor.

In addition, armed conflict in rural areas has brought high impact consequences for women: disintegration of their families, forced displacement, abandonment of their properties and direct violence against them.

We are developing direct actions to counter this situation: The agricultural sector constitutes one of the engines of growth of the Government's policy. Because of that, one of its main functions is to stimulate agricultural production for the generation of incomes and food security.

The policy of land restitution as a consequence of violence, considers rural women as first movers in local development, leaders of entrepreneurial processes, main actors in the process of modernization of rural areas, guarantors of the land devolution process, the return to original lands and in the strengthening of the peasant cultural identity.

Colombia trusts in the capacity of empowerment of the development strategies of the country, in which women are agents of change, peace and active subjects in rural productivity. We are convinced that the designed policies promote rural women to be more productive, recognized, capable, and encourages sharing care giving activities with men, thus, reducing the gaps between both genders.

Thank you very much, Madame President