

Feminist Alliances to Strengthen the Agenda for Gender Equality as a Human Right

Panel discussion with the women's rights movement

Washington D.C., 2023

PANEL DISCUSSION REPORT



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*The **Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM)** is the main hemispheric policy forum for the promotion of women's rights and gender equality. Created in 1928 - in recognition of the importance of women's social inclusion to democratic strengthening and human development in the Americas – CIM was the first inter-governmental organization established to promote women's human rights and gender equality.*

Feminist Alliances to Strengthen the Agenda for Gender Equality as a Human Right Panel discussion with the women's rights movement

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Preface

Over the last decade, both in the Americas and around the world, the emergence and expansion of movements and discourses against gender equality have been observed, opposing the progress of women's rights. These actions and narratives have managed to influence political agendas and public and legislative decisions, leading to setbacks in the scope of women's rights and autonomy. This has negatively impacted areas such as education, employment and labor inclusion, political participation, health, and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). Simultaneously, they create conditions that amplify violence and discrimination against women, activists, defenders, and feminist organizations. The arguments opposing women's rights and gender equality are clear expressions against the progressiveness, universality, interdependence, and indivisibility of human rights.

The Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM) recognizes that in order to address the resistance to the advancement of the agenda for gender equality, it is crucial to work alongside women's rights and feminist organizations to strengthen their capacity to respond to these threats. Alongside this, there is a need to strengthen gender mainstreaming with a view to seeking strategies that position the agenda for gender equality at the center of discussions and at the highest level of intergovernmental policy in the region, emphasizing the benefits that gender equality brings to all of humanity.

As part of multilateral efforts to address this context, the CIM, as an intergovernmental body of the Organization of American States (OAS), has engaged in various dialogues surrounding this situation. In June 2021, the Executive Committee of the CIM 2019-2022 encouraged the Secretariat to enhance its consultation and coordination with feminist organizations in the region and requested a specific strategy to strengthen gender mainstreaming efforts in the region's states.

In response to this request, the Strategic Plan 2022-2026,¹ approved by the CIM Assembly of Delegates (May and July 2022), includes a new line of work on “Alliances and Articulation for Gender Equality.” It is within this framework that the Project “Feminist Partnerships to Strengthen the Agenda for Gender Equality” emerged, with the support of the Government of Canada. Its main objective is to enhance gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in the hemisphere by promoting and strengthening collaboration among key actors.

In the framework of the 53rd Regular Session of the OAS General Assembly, the CIM, recognizing the regional context, organized a side-event titled “Feminist Alliances to Promote Gender Equality as a Human Right: A Conversation with the Women’s Rights Movement.” This event brought together various social organizations advocating for women’s rights, central actors in the protection and advancement of gender equality, women’s rights, and women’s empowerment in the region.

The purpose of the conversation was to create an open dialogue space among feminist organizations to share reflections on the challenges to advancing the agenda for gender equality, exchange good practices in organization and advocacy strategies, and stimulate a debate to collectively establish a roadmap for the project.


The CIM extends its recognition and gratitude to all those who participated in the dialogue and contributed their analyses and reflections. To those receiving this report, we invite you to recognize the struggles of women’s rights organizations, their contributions, and their efforts to move towards a more equal and inclusive region.

Alejandra Mora Mora
**Executive Secretary of the Inter-American Commission
of Women, OAS**

¹ Strategic Plan of the Inter-American Commission of Women for the period from 2022 to 2026. Available at: https://www.oas.org/en/cim/docs/plan_estrategico_ENG_22-26.pdf



Introduction



On June 20, 2023, the event “Feminist Alliances to Promote Gender Equality as a Human Right: A Conversation with the Women’s Rights Movement” took place in Washington DC, United States. The aim of the event was to facilitate an exchange between the CIM and feminist and women’s rights organizations (WROs) from the Americas regarding the challenges surrounding the social and political agenda for gender equality, as well as the necessary strategies to position it at the highest level of regional intergovernmental policy.


The conversation was divided into two segments following the opening remarks by the authorities of the Government of Canada and the Organization of American States through its General Secretariat and the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM/OAS).

During the first segment, a panel was held featuring prominent WORs in the region, which focus on promoting the gender agenda and demanding the rights of women, girls, and adolescents in all their diversity. The panel included representatives from the following organizations:

- Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean for the Defense of Women’s Rights (CLADEM)
- Ipas Latin America and the Caribbean (Ipas LAC)
- Women’s Association for Life and Dignity – Las Dignas, El Salvador.
- IxPop, Guatemala
- Centre for Women’s Rights, Honduras
- Coalition for Women’s Rights, OEA
- Women Transforming, El Salvador
- CEDAW Committee, Trinidad and Tobago

Representatives from these organizations participated in the panel, addressing questions related to recognizing threats to women’s rights and gender equality, and the need to articulate a more coordinated and effective response strategy to the challenges posed by these scenarios.

In the second segment of the conversation, a small group dialogue exercise was conducted, involving all attendees. The aim was to collectively identify the Strengths, Opportunities, Weaknesses,



and Threats (SWOT) that these organizations bring to the project, shaping the scenario in which the strategies to achieve the proposed objectives will unfold. The groups had the opportunity to share their findings and main concerns in a plenary session, which are summarized in this report.

As the event concluded, the insights and conclusions of the conversation were shared, along with some initial recommendations to guide the efforts of coordination and cooperation among the involved parties.

This report² brings together the main reflections shared during the conversation by authorities and representatives of the WROs that participated. These reflections serve as the starting point for the situation analysis and will guide the search for solutions to the issues raised and the coordination efforts that will be part of the project.

² This report was prepared by Andrea Solano Flores, under the coordination and technical supervision of Flavia Tello and Hilary Anderson, Specialists from the Executive Secretariat of the Inter-American Commission of Women of the OAS.



**Commitments of the OAS,
the CIM and Canada to the
Advancement of Gender Equality**

To begin, representatives from the Government of Canada, the OAS, and the CIM welcomed participants, including the representatives of the WROs, all of which are dedicated to the promotion and defense of women's rights. The authorities emphasized that gender equality is currently facing challenges. Therefore, it is crucial to form alliances between civil society organizations, governments, and intergovernmental organizations to advocate for the agenda for gender equality and mitigate setbacks in the region, as highlighted by Ambassador Hugh Adsett, Canada's Permanent Representative to the OAS, emphasizing that:

"Feminist and Women's Rights Organizations play a central role in leading the changes that advance towards gender equality."

The event was also attended by the Secretary General of the OAS, Luis Almagro, who stressed the urgent need to fight for the guarantee and protection of the rights of all women, and the importance of ensuring that progressive changes in the agenda for gender equality are lasting and can be reaffirmed. In his remarks, he highlighted that achieving the reaffirmation of gender equality as a point of no return requires dismantling cultural patterns and restrictive views on gender equality. He called on everyone to work together to improve conditions of equity and access to rights. The Secretary General emphasized that:

"If we cannot assert gender equity, we certainly cannot speak of democracy. We cannot talk about a society projected towards development, nor about better economic and social conditions for our countries."

On the other hand, it can be affirmed that national and transnational feminist movements in the region have acted as a democratizing force, driving the conquest of various rights - human, economic, social, civil, political, cultural, sexual, and reproductive - and

broadening discussions that lead societies to a phase of greater inclusion of all women and all people as citizens in democratic life.


The Director of Global and Inter-American Affairs of Canada, Emily McLaughlin, acknowledged that there are currently movements trying to roll back the progress achieved on gender equality, promoting intolerance and violence against women, as well as against LGBTI+ persons. She reaffirmed her government's commitment to working together to mitigate resistance and threats against gender equality in the region. She added:

“The reversal of achievements in gender equality will negatively impact economic growth, democracy, and sustainable development. We need to work together to *mitigate this setback and to ensure that all voices of women and girls in the region are heard.”

The Executive Secretary of the CIM, Alejandra Mora Mora, echoed the Secretary General of the OAS, emphasizing that “Democracy is incomplete without women.” She continued, highlighting that the feminist movement is one of the most transformative in the world, demonstrating the relevance of alliances to advance the women's agenda. In this regard, she emphasized that alliances are necessary, first and foremost, among all women, to then invite men to join the transformation process for equality, stating that:

“The agenda for equality not only transforms the lives of women, it transforms the lives of everyone.”

During her participation, the Executive Secretary of the CIM also reflected on how resistance movements and discourse against the agenda for gender equality are co-opting concepts to denaturalize and distort them. She emphasized the need to drive transformation processes and design strategies to place gender equality at the center of reflection, using common language to respond to movements that question the rights that belong to all women.



She invited organizations to be part of collective efforts and the process of formulating alliances, discourses, research, and campaigns to advance the agenda for gender equality.

Conversations like this provide an opportunity for feminist organizations to share their priorities in the process of public policy formulation. Through collective advocacy, strengthening alliances, and taking strategic actions together, it will be possible to advance the women's rights agenda.

Among her remarks, the Executive Secretary recalled that the CIM is celebrating its 95th anniversary, and at the time of its creation, there were suffragist feminists who understood the importance of forming alliances at a historical moment to seize the opportunity to influence the agenda of that time. "Today, we are also at a historical turning point. Let us follow the example of the founding women of the CIM to create sisterly, transformative, and disruptive alliances," she concluded.



Panel discussion with Women's Rights and Gender Equality Organizations

The Conversation was divided into two moments, as mentioned before. In the first moment, an open dialogue took place with WROs regarding the difficulties for advancing the agenda for gender equality in a context of high social polarization. To guide the interventions, Paulina Corominas, Chief of the Section for Relations with Civil Society of the OAS's Secretariat for Access to Rights and Equity, acted as the moderator.

The organizations that participated in this first moment were as follows:

Women's Association for Life and Dignity - Las Dignas, El Salvador:

A feminist political organization committed to eradicating the patriarchal and heterosexist order, advocating for women's rights for 33 years with national and international recognition, and significant advocacy work in Salvadoran society. It emerged at the threshold of the Peace Accords in El Salvador (1990).

Center for Women's Rights (CWR), Honduras:

An autonomous feminist organization that has contributed to building a Honduras with gender and social justice for 30 years, promoting women's autonomy and exercising their rights. Since 1995, CWR has been working on a proposal for a law against domestic violence, conducting research, awareness campaigns, advocacy with congress members, public officials, and socializing a first draft of the law with women's and feminist organizations in the country. The proposal was widely embraced, enriched, and strengthened, and finally approved in 1997, with reforms in 2005. Additionally, they have supported more than 25 women's networks conducting actions in their municipalities or localities to defend and promote women's human rights, advocating before local and central authorities.

Colectiva IxPop, Guatemala:

A collective formed by the Mayan Association Uk'Ux B'e, JASS Mesoamerica, ECAP, and Tik Na'oj. Since 2013, together with several women's rights organizations in Guatemala, they have promoted an international gathering with indigenous women from different territories to analyze the content of CEDAW, considering the importance of individual and collective rights of indigenous women

and girls. Since 2018, Colectiva IXPOP, which in the Mayan language means “interwoven and empowered women,” has engaged in international advocacy efforts, leading to the issuance and approval of General Recommendation No.39 of the CEDAW Committee, which is one of their main achievements.

CEDAW Committee of Trinidad and Tobago:

With seven years of experience and work, the Committee for the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) of Trinidad and Tobago has the mission to ensure that the principles and mandates of the treaty are respected and that the recommendations presented during the country reviews are implemented. Among its main achievements, it stands out the collaboration with other civil society organizations to successfully advocate for changes in marriage laws to align them with the age of consent. This change standardized the legal age for marriage to 18 years, thus abolishing the laws that allowed child marriages and early unions at that time.

Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean for the Defense of Women’s Rights (CLADEM):

CLADEM is a regional network with 35 years of experience that brings together women and organizations that, from a socio-legal feminist approach, seek social transformation and the construction of radical democracies. They do so from an intersectional perspective, recognizing cultural, ethnic-racial, sexual, intergenerational, and social diversity, aiming for the full exercise and enjoyment of human rights for all women. Among its main achievements, CLADEM has presented 13 cases to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, including paradigmatic cases such as Campo Algodonero vs. Mexico and Maria da Penha vs. Brazil. At the national level, CLADEM Brazil and Argentina have extensive experience in strategic litigation, with a larger number of significant cases and topics. CLADEM also collaborates with other institutions, presenting *amicus curiae* in litigation cases before the United Nations and the inter-American system.

Ipas Latin America and the Caribbean:

Founded in 1973, Ipas has been working globally for 50 years to achieve a world where all individuals have the right and ability

to determine their sexuality and reproductive health. Among its main achievements, Ipas supported and provided advice for the update and development of official guidelines for the care of legal abortion in Argentina, Colombia, Ecuador, and Mexico, based on the World Health Organization's guidelines for safe abortion.

Women Transforming, El Salvador:

Women Transforming is a feminist organization from El Salvador that has been working for 20 years to defend the labor rights of textile workers in Central America. It is part of the Alliance for Feminist Movements, a convergence of States, women's funds, feminist civil society, and philanthropy to mobilize political support and increase and improve resources for feminist movements.

Latin America and Caribbean Women's Health Network (LACWHN):

The LACWHN is a coalition of individuals and organizations advocating for women's health in LAC. Founded in 1984, it has more than 1000 affiliates in 33 countries in the region, and it is highly recognized by multiple actors at national, regional, and international levels. The Network aims, through its political and programmatic actions, to promote the construction of a non-patriarchal and non-violent culture for women, as well as to advocate for comprehensive health and sexual and reproductive rights throughout their life cycle, from an intersectional, intercultural, and intergenerational perspective.

The interventions focused on sharing experiences and reflections around women's rights organizations, their initiatives, and good/promising practices in a context of growing resistance to the agenda for gender equality and collective actions for the future. Considering these key points, the main highlights shared during the conversation are presented below³.

3 Given the sensitivity of the topics discussed and the goal of providing a safe space for exchange among participants, out of privacy and respect for the representatives of participating WROs, specific references to the sources of quotes and reflections are not provided.



Experiences and reflections from advocacy for women's rights and feminist movements

In the initial reflections shared in the panel, there was discussion of the configuration and threats posed by resistance movements to the advancement of the agenda for gender equality unfolding in the region. Among the concerns highlighted were:

“The movements opposing rights and gender equality are operating from various fronts. They engage in political activities, investing heavily to occupy positions of political power. Additionally, they are targeting and seeking to infiltrate and control multilateral organizations. At the same time, they use the same mechanisms of human rights protection, offering parallel and opposing interpretations to the progressiveness of these rights.”

Another element of concern for WROs is the **weakening or disappearance of the secular State** as a principle enshrined in the majority of the Constitutions of countries in the Americas, which is not being upheld, as pointed out by one of the commentators. The weakening of the secular state **jeopardizes essential democratic principles** such as freedom of worship and the non-confessional nature of public institutions. Given this political context, another panelist emphasized:

“It is urgent to promote collaboration between different sectors to confront the challenges posed by setbacks and resistance to the agenda for gender equality.”

For her part, another panelist emphasized the importance of continuing to highlight racism and discrimination as a form of violence that hinders the full enjoyment of individual and collective rights, particularly for indigenous women and girls. She also pointed out that other obstacles include the constant criminalization of leaders from indigenous territories, the exacerbation of poverty, and the expropriation of ancestral lands and knowledge. These elements, as she emphasized, need to be placed on feminist and multilateral agendas:

“It is very important for us to continue positioning and raising before the CEDAW committee and other international organizations those cases that refer to **the violence experienced by indigenous women because many of these cases have their origins in racist, gender, and class oppression. If we don’t provide that analysis, we can achieve very little.**”

Adding to the reflection, one of the panelists shared that contexts of widespread violence, repression, and militarization experienced in some countries of the region have had differentiated impacts on the lives of women, violating their human rights. She also pointed out:

“In some countries, we have experienced a significant setback in terms of sexual and reproductive rights. Programs have been shut down, and a legal framework that absolutely criminalizes and penalizes abortion has been deepened. Also, issues related to sexual and reproductive rights are increasingly absent from the public agenda.”

The panelist concluded her remarks by pointing out that the criminalization of abortion and the existence of restrictive legal frameworks have serious consequences for the health, well-being, human rights, and sexual and reproductive rights of women.

From a social and legal perspective, one of the commentators shared that they have observed legislative changes and bills in the region that attack and impose setbacks on women’s rights, such as parental alienation. Regarding this, she pointed out:

“Legislative changes that attack and impose setbacks on women’s rights and **restrictive bills** in the region can constitute **new forms of violence**, along institutional, economic, and psychological lines, against women and their children.”

All the panel interventions coincided in pointing out that the organizations present in this conversation make significant efforts to defend women's rights in the region. However, they also face **difficulties that limit their social or political impact**. One panelist expressed concern that many feminist organizations lack the necessary resources to continue their operations, so **strengthening the capacities and resources of these organizations will be crucial for advancing gender equality**.

Furthermore, another commentator mentioned that one of the main challenges they face is the rise of fundamentalisms. She identified:

“One of the main difficulties is the action of fundamentalisms versus the capacities of feminist organizations and movements. There is a significant resource gap, so it is important for us to strengthen alliances, both externally and internally in our countries, and participate in platforms like this one to promote gender equality.”



Initiatives and Good Practices in Advocacy for Women's Rights

The representatives of the WROs that participated in the conversation also shared strategies and good practices for advocacy, implemented in the defense of women's rights and the agenda for gender equality.

The **strategic litigation** carried out by CLADEM, considering its social and legal approach, is identified as a good practice. Strategic litigation uses argumentation tools based on a gender perspective, seeking justice and "emblematic sentences" in cases of human rights violations against women and girls and gender-based violence. It is considered a best practice due to its sensitive approach to differentiated, individual, social, and structural experiences of rights.

Likewise, the representative from IxPop in Guatemala shared several strategies. Among others, she highlighted the **analysis** of instruments such as CEDAW, since the guidelines established by these international agreements were adopted by States and constitute the State's obligation to defend, recognize, and protect the human rights of women and girls. The IxPop collective contributed to positioning a **perspective sensitive to the context** of the needs of indigenous women and girls. Regarding this point, she stated:

"By using the CEDAW instrument as a strategy for advocacy, we achieved the acceptance of General Recommendation 39 on the Rights of Indigenous Women and Girls in Guatemala."

A similar experience was shared by the CEDAW Committee of Trinidad and Tobago, who have taken this **instrument as their primary tool for advocacy and demanding the rights of women, adolescents, and girls** in their contexts. As part of the CEDAW Committee, their work involves overseeing the implementation of the Convention by the States that have ratified it. This is considered a best practice because the guidelines of CEDAW - and other instruments - provide a way to fulfill human rights treaties that are obligatory for countries in the region.

On the other hand, the organizations agreed that **networking is an important strategy** to advance the agenda for gender equality. In

this regard, the CEDAW Committee of Trinidad and Tobago shared their experience:

“We collaborate with both public and private sectors, with allies and partners across the region and globally, as a way to carry out our work and mobilize resources for our organizations.”

Another panelist also emphasized the need to strengthen networking, particularly within their own countries, so that organizations can **identify allies and connect with women** from diverse sectors and communities.

The demand for accountability regarding the progress of State commitments in protecting women’s rights, as well as **sharing** and **making** instruments such as CEDAW **widely known**, so that more women and organizations know their rights, are relevant practices shared by Ixpop Guatemala. They explained that:

“To intertwine and weave together the rights that belong to us, it is necessary for women and social and human rights organizations to become familiar with, know, and defend the rights contained in instruments like CEDAW.”



**Future collective action to advance
the agenda for gender equality**

The representatives of WROs and feminist movements agreed on the need to create alliances and strengthen bonds to continue their work, enhancing advocacy and strategies to promote the agenda for gender equality in the region as a way to confront movements and discourses of resistance and opposition to gender equality.

Furthermore, they emphasized the need to develop feminist strategies to respond to those resistances, establish key cooperation alliances, influence and mobilize political will, and **build communication, training, and political empowerment strategies**, so that within the organizations, there is a capacity for strategic response to fundamentalist speeches.

On the other hand, the organizations recognized that there are gaps in generating knowledge that demonstrates the benefits of gender equality for humanity. This would constitute a fundamental tool to counteract the misinformation generated by fundamentalist groups opposed to the agenda for gender equality. In this regard, a participant in the panel emphasized: “We need positive messages, scientific messages, messages of truth.”

“We need **positive messages, scientific messages, messages of truth.**”

In addition to having more knowledge around gender equality as a human right, the organizations highlighted the importance of having a communication strategy that allows them to identify and **create spaces where positioning those messages becomes crucial to advocate for gender equality and women’s rights.** One of the panelists added:

“We have to see **advocacy as a process.** Advocacy will lead to the accumulation of political strength and the strengthening of citizenship and leadership; therefore, it is important to consider it in the medium and long term.”



Group dialogue exercise: SWOT analysis to strengthen alliances for gender equality

In the second part of the conversation, with the aim of promoting constructive dialogue, fostering alliances, and collectively guiding future efforts for gender equality, a group exercise was conducted in which all attendees had the opportunity to participate. The group work aimed to jointly recognize strengths and opportunities, as well as identify challenges and threats related to the defense of women's rights, and particularly within the context of the CIM project 'Feminist Partnerships to Strengthen the Agenda for Gender Equality.'

The groups had the chance to share the main elements they identified in a plenary report-back session, summarized below:

Figure 1. SWOT Analysis conducted by WROs

Strengths

- Collective awareness of the reasons to transform the world and capacity for initiative.
- Knowledge and accumulated experience in working on the gender agenda (legal frameworks, common knowledge, advocacy, etc.)
- Strong impact and communication skills and the ability to share strategies, such as the **Green Tide** movement.
- Sense of belonging in regional feminist networks.
- Resilience, creativity and organizational capacity of the feminist movement.
- Accumulated political potential and common struggles.

Opportunities

- Spaces provided by multilateral organizations (CIM, OAS).
- Use of technologies for communication, negotiation, engaging in discussions, and obtaining financing.
- Integration of women's rights, sexual and reproductive rights, and rights of sexual dissidents.
- Possibility to advocate based on favorable resolutions from the Inter-American Court of Human Rights.
- Networking opportunities at the Feminist Encounter of Latin America and the Caribbean to be held in El Salvador in November 2023.
- Leveraging the intersectionalities of feminism (indigenous women, Afro-descendants, etc.).
- Existence of spaces, frameworks, and instruments of human rights.
- Learning from the strategies of other organizations.

Weaknesses

- Economic autonomy of organizations and sustainability: limited resources (financial, time, personnel).
- Cultural, language and human mobility barriers.
- Insufficient alliances with different movements.
- Weak articulation from the local to the international level.
- Need to create safe spaces for defenders.

Threats

- Lack of political will and conservative policies.
- Weakened democracies, authoritarian governments, and opposition to the gender agenda.
- Presence of groups against women's rights in governments.
- Adoption of fundamentalist narratives by society.
- Insecurity, lack of protection, and scenarios of social repression.
- Institutionalized discrimination.
- Co-optation and distortion of human rights discourses.

Source: Results of the group work as shared by the WROs participating in the Conversation, compiled by author

The following are a couple of reflections shared by the spokespersons of some groups:

“We have the challenge of forming broader alliances with different movements because to rescue democracy, strengthen the State, and advance our demands, we must do it in an expanded manner.”

“We all have agendas and different types of feminisms, but we can find a common ground to continue positively impacting the region.”

The **analysis** shared by the organizations through the group exercise is crucial in **guiding future efforts to promote the agenda for gender equality and women’s rights. These identified elements will guide the future work of the CIM and the Government of Canada**, both within the project and other related initiatives, aiming to make it the first of many dialogue spaces to come, stated Hilary Anderson, CIM Senior Specialist. She added that there is a commitment from CIM and their allies to continue creating these spaces for dialogue, strengthening alliances, and collectively building solutions.



Conclusions: Future efforts and alliances to promote women's rights in the Americas

Attacks on women's equality and rights represent a weakening of the democratic state's key principles, such as secularism, freedom, equality and equity, non-discrimination, and the non-confessional nature of public institutions. The Conversation focused on the challenges faced by social organizations for women's rights and feminist movements in a context of setbacks and resistance to the agenda for gender equality. At the close of the Conversation, members of the CIM stated:

“Today's dialogue aims to be a safe space for women and feminists, and **we will continue building safe spaces** so that we can collectively, confidently, and transparently strategize to reach those other spaces that may not be as secure for us and our agendas.”

It is necessary to expand the social and institutional network that, through mutual strengthening, can **jointly and strategically confront** discourses of resistance to the agenda for gender equality, emphasizing gender equality as a human right. Alejandra Mora Mora **recognized the resilience of the organizations** and invited WROs to **prioritize points on the agenda for gender equality that can be addressed together and strategically** to counter narratives and movements against the advancement of rights. She also highlighted that it will be crucial to do so through different lines of action, such as communication, knowledge generation, strategic advocacy, linkage, and coordination based on a common agenda.

The Project: “Feminist Partnerships to Strengthen the Agenda for Gender Equality”

As part of the conclusions of the panel discussion, the path to jointly promote the development and advancement of the agenda for gender equality in the region was outlined, focusing efforts through the project 'Feminist Partnerships to Strengthen the Agenda for Gender Equality.' This project aims to gather proposals for future collective actions that focus on promoting the agenda for gender equality in the region, given the concerns expressed by organizations about setbacks in women's rights in some countries and the resurgence of discourses and movements against the advance-


ment of that agenda. Flavia Tello, a CIM specialist and coordinator of the project, emphasized:

“With this initiative, we seek to provide support from the CIM for the construction of a collective strategy through which we can reach multilateral spaces, influence national and local governments, and communities. We want to promote the social transformations necessary to support the agenda for gender equality and women’s rights.”

The project’s action framework is based on three strategic pillars: 1) establishing relationships and partnerships; 2) knowing and producing; and 3) informing, sharing, and training. ‘Feminist Partnerships to Strengthen the Agenda for Gender Equality’ seeks to work closely with WROs while supporting the strengthening of their capacities to respond to restrictive reactions to the agenda for gender equality. Additionally, the project aims to collaborate with academia to produce data and evidence on the benefits of gender equality and to develop a communication and advocacy campaign supported by this evidence and by narratives around the advantages of gender equality and women’s rights.

Furthermore, the project’s objective is to support the incorporation of gender equality into governmental agendas and public policies at the national level. To achieve this, it will reach decision-makers with tools and support for the effective integration of gender perspectives into public policies and the guarantee of rights. For more strategic coordination, in addition to WROs, the project has identified key actors from various sectors, such as National Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women, Permanent Missions to the OAS, academia, philanthropy, and allies in religious organizations that share the equality agenda, among others.

During the closing of the panel discussion, on behalf of the CIM and the Government of Canada, gratitude was extended to all defenders, feminists, and WROs for their collaboration and participation in the dialogue: **“We trust that we can count on all of you to be the channels for transforming our societies and communities.”**



Among the conclusions, organizations were invited to share the knowledge they have acquired throughout their trajectory, as these lessons will be a key resource for other feminist organizations and movements to continue their advocacy efforts.

To conclude, in the words of one of the panelists who expressed gratitude to the CIM and the Government of Canada for their commitment to this project:

“We are very thankful for this project and initiative, which highlights one of the significant challenges that we women face in the region. **These kinds of initiatives can indeed make a difference in the lives of women.**”

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