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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Sixtieth session
Agenda item 18 (b)

**EFFECTIVE FUNCTIONING OF HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS:
NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND REGIONAL ARRANGEMENTS**

Information submitted by the Ibero-American Ombudsman Federation

Note by the secretariat

The Secretariat of the Commission has received the following communication* which is reproduced below in accordance with the decision adopted by the Commission at its fifty-seventh session that, if requested, information or reports received from national institutions on their regional meetings might be circulated as documents of the Commission (E/2001/23-E/CN.4/2001/167, para. 22).

* Reproduced in the annex as received, in the language(s) of submission and English.

Annex

**DECLARATION BY THE IBERO-AMERICAN NETWORK OF WOMEN'S
ADVOCATES TO THE EIGHTH ANNUAL CONGRESS OF THE
IBERO-AMERICAN OMBUDSMAN FEDERATION (FIO)**

Panama, 19 November 2003

The Ibero-American Network of Women's Advocates, meeting in Panama in conjunction with the eighth Annual Congress and Assembly of the Ibero-American Ombudsman Federation (FIO) over the period 17-21 November 2003,

Recalling that at the regular annual meeting of the FIO Congress held in Toledo in 1997 it was decided, by the ombudsmen there present, to establish an Ibero-American Network of Women's Advocates committed to guaranteeing a high-level special-purpose body within the institutional structure of ombudsmen's offices to defend and promote the human rights of women in the region, an undertaking which is making progress in some countries but not elsewhere,

Bearing in mind that the difficult human rights situation of Ibero-American women due to discrimination and systematic violence, especially in the exercise of their rights to health, education, political participation, and justice, besides the widespread violence they encounter in the home and in their sexual integrity and freedom, the violence used on migrant and displaced women, sexually exploited women and female victims of social and political violence, and killings of women, among other serious problems, requires an immediate review of management strategies on the part of the ombudsmen's offices belonging to FIO,

Considering that, according to the latest report of the United Nations Population Fund, 45 per cent of the inhabitants of Latin America live below the poverty line and this has an effect on the steady increase in the incidence of HIV/AIDS, teenage pregnancy and maternal mortality, among others, which most strongly affect girls and young, teenage and adult women,

Convinced that the exercise by the region's women, including teenagers and girls, of their human rights requires determined encouragement and strengthening of ombudsman mechanisms at all institutional levels, notably that of women's advocates, in order to urge and incite States and national and local Governments to introduce public policies guaranteeing that basic needs will be met through the promotion and protection of economic, social and cultural rights,

RESOLVES:

FIRST. To invite the FIO Annual Congress to reaffirm the commitment, made in the Toledo Declaration and confirmed at all congresses since, to establish and put into operation a high-level special-purpose body to defend, promote and publicize women's human rights as part of the structure of every one of the ombudsman institutions belonging to the Federation;

SECOND. Formally to request the FIO Annual Congress to include the full text of statements by the Ibero-American Network of Women's Advocates, beginning in 2003, as annex 1 to the declarations by each FIO Annual Congress, forming an integral part of the official proceedings and an undertaking to take action;

THIRD. To convey to the FIO Annual Congress the need to encourage sex education policies and programmes at educational institutions and targeted at the general public; to guarantee unimpeded access by teenagers and young people, male and female, to appropriate information and the best possible reproductive health services as a contribution to the millennium goals for comprehensive human development, as countries that have signed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women and the declarations of the Cairo and Beijing Conferences specially convened to promote the inalienable, indivisible and integral human rights of women and girls;

FOURTH. To request the FIO Annual Congress to urge States and national and local Governments to guarantee progress in economic, social and cultural rights in order to combat the poverty in the region which weighs directly on women, who continue to be ill-treated and discriminated against at work, in access to productive and economic resources, in health services and in education. Where civil rights are concerned, women also face infringements of their rights to liberty, inviolability of the person and access to justice;

FIFTH. To urge the ombudsmen, male and female, who belong to FIO to ask States and Governments for ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in countries where this has not yet occurred, so as to provide women in the region with a legal instrument which they can invoke in support of the substantive rights established in that Convention;

SIXTH. To request the FIO Annual Congress to admit the Ibero-American Network of Women's Advocates as a voting member of the Congress in order to cement the Network's truly democratic, inclusive involvement in the Federation.

Signed in Panama City on 19 November 2003 by the following members of the Ibero-American Ombudsmen's Network of Women's Advocates:

Blanca Tirachini. Argentina
Gabriela Moffson. Argentina
María Bressa. Argentina
Betty Pinto. Bolivia
Beatriz Linares. Colombia
Ligia Martín. Costa Rica
Rosario Utreras. Ecuador
Raquel Caballero. El Salvador
Leonor González. Guatemala
Indhira Mejía. Honduras
Susana Thalía Pedroza. México
Gabriela Aspuru. México
Patricia Independencia Obregón. Nicaragua
Dayanara Salazar. Panamá
Mayda Ramos. Perú
Carmen L. Monroig. Puerto Rico
Luz Patricia Mejía. Venezuela
