



MISION PERMANENTE  
DE LA REPUBLICA DOMINICANA  
ANTE LAS NACIONES UNIDAS



*Commission on the Status of Women*

*56 Session*

*Statement by*

*H. E. Alejandrina Germán*

*Minister of Women*

*February 28, 2012*

*United Nations Headquarters*

*New York*

*(Please Verify Against Delivery)*



Mrs. Chairperson

On behalf of the Dominican Government and its people we welcome this meeting and recognize its importance as a critical space for the evaluation of actions, programs and projects promoted by governments to achieve equality between women and men, eliminating all forms of discrimination against women and achieving full inclusion in all areas and levels of society, as established by the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

The Government of the Dominican Republic continues to strengthen its efforts and commitment to the Beijing Platform for Action in an effort to achieve equal opportunities for women and to continue improving their quality of life as well as access to goods and services.

In the case of rural women, the priority theme of this Session, the country continues exercising efforts to facilitate the inclusion and participation of rural women in education, science, technology and in the access to the economy and of labor.

The rural population in our country is defined as that part of the population residing in country spots and sites. It represents 33% of the total population and its main economic activity is concentrated in food production, animal husbandry, and hand crafts, among others.

In the Dominican Republic, from the 33% of the population living in rural areas, 48% are women. The female heads of household in the country represent 31.9%. There are no significant differences in the advancement of educational levels between urban and rural population. The average schooling of 15 years or more up to the year 2009 was of 8.2 years completed, 8.5 years for women and 8.0 for men, 79.1% of women aged 15 to 19 years finished basic education and only 67% of men in this age group completed that level. In the

middle level (aged 20 to 24 years), 58.2% of women concluded the school while the figure is only 42.0 for men. In higher education women constitute 62% of college tuition.

The employment situation of women in rural areas is difficult to measure because most of the work is not considered as such, but as an extension of their roles and domestic responsibilities, which makes invisible the role of women as producers or as unpaid assistant in work activities generating income.

The 2.67% of women living in rural areas are devoted to agriculture and livestock activities, 21% in commercial activities, and the vast majority, 48% is performing other services. These data indicate that women in rural areas are more vulnerable to unemployment or informal employment.

45% of rural households have access to water by facilities outside the home, 89% have access to electricity, even though 17% do not have adequate services for the disposal of solid waste. 7.5% of the floors are plain soil, and 24% use firewood or charcoal as their main cooking fuel.

Mrs. Chairperson

To continue improving the indicators reflecting the situation of rural women in our country, the Government of the Dominican Republic has at first a favourable legal framework for the process of empowerment of rural women, to reduce the discrimination that hampers the exercise of their rights. The Dominican Constitution establishes the principle of equality between women and men, the right of women to a life free of violence, recognition of the productive value of domestic work, the recognition of de facto unions, and equal pay for equal work. In addition, our Constitution provides for the use of land for useful purposes and

gradual elimination of large estates, and promotes land reform and the effective integration of the rural population to the national development process, for women and men, equally.

Our country also provides Law 55-97, on Land Reform, which grants women the opportunity to access land property, thus overcoming the obstacles and conflicts of power, historically exercised in cases of possession and land distribution, and through which it removes the restrictions that women had to access the land and credit in equal condition as men.

Administrative records from 1962 to 2007 reveal that 81.469 plots were awarded for farming, of which 60.136 were awarded to men and 21.330 to women. In quantity, this means 3.5 million task of Land reform land, of which 29.5% is in the hands of women.

From the mechanisms and measures for the advancement of rural women, we highlight the National Plan for Gender Equality and Equity 2007-2017, of the Ministry of Women, which raises the right of women to own land, and the establishment of a revolving fund to finance agro forestry projects for women, and to improve the access to quality basic services such as health, education, clean water, shelter and electricity.

The Office of the First Lady runs the Program for Gender Equity and Rural Women's Development, and the program "Progressing" aimed to promote and support actions directed towards expanding opportunities for social empowerment, political, economic and cultural status of women, to which some 178, 277 families were incorporated by 2011. The Office of the First Lady also has set up 75 Community Technology Centers (CTC), which provide to people living in rural areas, mainly women, the ease of access to Information and Communication Technology . These centers have trained about 40 thousand people, of which over 60% are women.

The global and national character of the social policies allows that its application does not make any difference between urban and rural areas so that rural women are equal

beneficiaries, such as the Solidarity Program that includes the following components: Eating is first, the Family Health Insurance, Incentive to school attendance, Gas Bonus and Light Bonus. By the year 2011 this program had incorporated 866, 944 households, of which 63.6% are headed by women. The Solidarity Program also adds as a component of the Dominican Social Security System, the benefits of the family health subsidized regime for rural and urban unemployed and their families. In this subsidized scheme, there are incorporated 901,168 households, with 2,023,465 beneficiaries, of which 574,234 households (63.2%) are headed by women. In households headed by men, there are 541, 930 women beneficiaries (48.26%).

The country has an extensive network of primary care units and of municipal hospitals, rural clinics and a network of supervisors and health workers and promoters, to ensure quality health services for women living in rural areas, including information, counselling and services on family planning.

All these efforts of the Dominican Government are framed within the objective of closing the gaps of inequality between men and women and in the inclusion of the rural population to the development process.

The Country has an adequate legal framework to achieve full equality between men and women; the challenge is to continue strengthening the public policies to advance in the equality of conditions, in both the urban and the rural areas.

Thank you very much, Mrs. Chairperson.