

The Republic of Cuba

Positions for the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)

I. Beyond Micro-financing: Ensuring Diverse Sustainable Development Opportunities for Women

The Republic of Cuba (Cuba) endorses sustainable development opportunities for women, with the assistance of micro-financing. Cuba continues its efforts in emphasizing the importance of micro-financing, notably the positive benefits it brings for people living in poverty. **Internationally**, Cuba notes with approval the United Nations (UN) Charter, Article 1, which aims to promote and encourage "respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion." Cuba recalls A/RES./52/193 and A/RES./52/194, reaffirming that microcredit and microfinance programs have succeeded in generating productive self-employment and proved to be effective in lifting people out of poverty. Keeping in mind A/RES/53/197, which proclaimed 2005 as the International Year of Microcredit, called upon Member States to "give impetus to microcredit and microfinance programs in all countries, particularly the developing countries." Cuba also takes into account the Beijing Platform for Action, noting Strategic Objective A.3, which calls for providing women with access to savings, credit mechanisms and institutions. To apply Strategic Objective A.3, the government can enhance credit access to disadvantaged women, promote entrepreneurship among women, and commercial banks can reduce transaction costs for women who lack traditional sources of collateral. On a **Regional** level, Cuba signed onto the Economic Agreement of Bogota with the Organization of American States (OAS). Prior to being on a forcible hiatus, provisions of this agreement are in accordance with the Constitution of Cuba with measures adopted against discrimination by other States. Based on data from the Economic Commission in Latin America (ECLAC), (LC/L. 3175) 43.6% of women in urban areas in 13 Latin American countries did not have their own income in 1994, and has since then been reduced with 32.5% by 2007. Cuba also recognizes the improvement in access to credit for women micro-entrepreneurs in the region and how this enhanced access benefits the local economies. According to the same ECLAC resolution Cuba is one of the world leaders in terms of women's representation in parliament. **Nationally**, following the Beijing Platform for Action Cuban delegates filed a survey asserting that Cuba has a high number of women in social organizations and unions and such groups have made economic development within the country far more sustainable. The non-governmental organization (NGO) Federation of Cuban Women (FMC), which received consultative status by the ECOSOC, has membership with over 3.6 million and has aimed in providing many workshops particularly training programs designed to facilitate economic independence for women in various careers, such as computing and marketing. Cuba proposes a four-point plan of action entitled **G.R.A.N.T.:** **Green-light** training and informal discussions about how micro-financing opportunities for women are pivotal for the global economy. **R**atify constitutional amendments that eliminate discrimination against women who participate in micro-financing. **A**ccesses to loans must be improved to ensure no discrimination based on gender, as supported by Strategic Objective A.3 of the Beijing Platform for Action. **N**otifying the proper authority if any of the accordance's that eliminates discrimination to microloans is not followed. **T**ransform existing programs to ensure details are up to date stemming from the recent global financial crisis.

II. Education and Empowerment; Reassessing Opportunities for Women after the Global Financial Crisis

The Republic of Cuba (Cuba) recognizes the extensive progress towards empowering women through education, despite the obstacles set forth by the global financial crises. On an **International** level, Cuba recognizes A/RES/64/290, affirming education as a basic human right, as further supported in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Cuba reaffirms its support of A/RES/55/2 which established the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Towards this end, Cuba has completed Goal 3 and is working to eliminate inequality altogether in primary and secondary education. Cuba takes into account A/Res/64/215, stressing that gender equality and the empowerment of women are essential to achieve "equitable and effective" economies. Cuba also reaffirms its commitment to A/RES/64/215, committing to eliminate gender-based

discrimination in all its forms, including labor and financial markets. Cuba has ratified the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) Convention against Discrimination in Education in 1962. **Regionally**, Cuba is ranked first in math and science achievement at all grade levels in females in Latin America according to a World Bank study titled, "The Cuban Education System: Lessons and Dilemmas." This report was a comparative study with Colombia undertaken by organizers in the Ministry of Education in Cuba, and representatives of the Colombian government, it records the Cuban educational system as "outstanding." **Nationally**, according to the 9th and 10th meetings of the 55th session of the CSW, approximately 53.4% of Cuba's teachers are women; more than 98% of graduates from Cuban universities are women; 53.2% of Cuban scientists, and 48% of people in technological workers are women. There is universal school enrollment and attendance, with 99.8% literacy rate in women. Cuban third grade language exams have scored significantly higher than students in other Latin American countries. Cuba devotes 13.6% of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to education higher than UNESCO's recommended 6%. Cuba is 12th in the list of women in parliamentary representatives. Cuba has developed a four-point plan of action titled **P.O.D.E.R.**, Spanish for power. **P**arenthood: The female parent, primarily if she's the sole care-giver, would be eligible to receive affordable education or workshops regardless of age and race. With the establishment of Parenthood, it can set to **O**rganize teambuilding efforts for women to be knowledgeable of economic needs. With better **O**rganizing, the women can **D**raw out plans on how fellow women in their position can learn or overcome troubles which will be **E**xhibited under the UN Women website available for all Member States to read and use for their own workshops. **R**eestablish connections for women to be involved in political decisions, thus providing them opportunities to understand how political economics work and can be applied for their own personal entrepreneurship.

III. Gender Mainstreaming and Economic Empowerment: Evaluating Strategies for Gender Equality after the Beijing Conference

The Republic of Cuba (Cuba) is leading the way in gender mainstreaming and improving gender equality after the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in 1995. **Internationally**, Cuba is proud it has completed Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 3 (A/Res/55/2) in eliminating gender inequality. Cuba emphasizes the importance of the discoveries found in the CSW's of the 54th session in March 2010, 15 years after the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, that "common tools to combat poverty and increase women's economic empowerment have included...microcredit or microfinance programmes." Cuba is fully aware of the agreed conclusion on financing gender equality and the empowerment of women report made of the 52nd session of the CSW where it reaffirms that States have the primary responsibility for promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls and that "gender mainstreaming and national machineries are necessary and play a critical role in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action." On a **Regional** level, Cuba is the world leader in terms of female representation in Parliament, with 43.32%, according to ECLAC resolution LC/L.3175. Cuba hails it's achievement of earning a diploma at the Festival of Good Practices on Gender, organized by the Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP-RBLAC) which classified Cuba's good practice and contribution to gender mainstreaming in public policy. Cuba recalls its support of UN WOMEN Caribbean which supports gender mainstreaming of macroeconomics, trade, and poverty eradication policies as well as gender training for the region. **Nationally**, Cuba believes the importance placed on gender mainstreaming is what helped our country achieve gender equality and as a benefit it has improved all political, economic, and social aspects within the country. Cuba would like to highlight that it has passed a Social Security Law in 2008 which introduced amendments to our constitution including an extension to 15 years of the period for selecting the five best salary years for calculating pensions, and set the retirement age of 60 years for women, all this in the same year the global financial crisis began to impact the major markets. According to ECLAC, the Cuban government is committed to the advancement of women, plans, and programs with the efforts of the Organismos de la Administración del Estado con la Federación de Mujeres Cubanas. Cuba has devoted attention to ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Cuba draws attention to its plan of action titled **YOUTH**. The goal of **YOUTH** is to continue to promote awareness of gender inequality to civil society organizations in respective Member States. By taking this bottom up approach Cuba believe the plan Youth will be better able to reach a larger cross-section of people ranging from the female student and youth to early adult. Youth will focus on teaching essential theoretical and practical aspects of gender equality. The hops is this tool kit will give women the impetus and education to seek change in their own community. **YOUTH** has the potential to be an important tool in eliminating discrimination against women there by enhancing their economic opportunity.