

65 Pre-Sessional Working Group (07 Mar 2016 - 11 Mar 2016)

Submission from the Women's and feminist movement in Honduras members of the CEDAW Platform

Issues to be directed to the Honduran Government

1. The women's and feminist movement in Honduras has led the implementation of the temporary measures mentioned by **Article 4** of the Convention. Some aspects have been assumed by the appropriate State institutions; however, these efforts have not been sustained despite the fact that discrimination against women continues. Some examples of this include: the closure of the Investigation of Crimes Against Women Unit in the Ministry of Public Services; the cancellation of the Live Emergency Line for Integrated Support—Code 114 for female victims of violence; the weakening and closure of a large proportion of local offices for women; the cancellation of most gender units within the Executive Branch of government; the loss of municipal transfers, five per cent of the national budget, dedicated to women whereas now funds are going to a Presidential assistance program called *Better Life*; and others. The State must explain these decisions as they represent an apparent and increasing disregard for women's rights.
2. The State affirms that all forms of abortion are penalized in Honduras, recognizing that it has rejected the 2007 recommendations made by this very committee. However, in the state's report (**paragraph 130**), it is mentioned that the 2011 National Norms on Maternal Neonatal Care recognize therapeutic abortion. The question is: Can a woman go to the health system and request a therapeutic abortion given the Norms? If the answer is yes, what mechanisms has the State implemented to promote this? If the answer is no, why has Honduras not followed the recommendation made by this committee in 2007—eight years ago?
3. In its report, the State does not mention its refusal to offer integrated sexual education to girls, boys and teens within the education curriculum. The Honduran state mentions **in paragraph 135** of its report that 20,000 teachers—of the 57,000 working in the country's education system—have become qualified to teach the *Guide for Teachers on Integrated Sex Education: Caring for My Health and My Life*. However, as of December 2015, the education system and Education Secretariat have only recorded training 6,300 teachers on the topic in the last eight years; what's more, there is no mechanism to compel teachers to implement these courses in the classroom. Because of this, civil society introduced an Integrated Law on Sexuality but the National Congress did not discuss or approve it.
4. In **paragraph 149** of the report: in relation to women in rural areas, Indigenous women and Afro-descendants, reference is made to land access and the resources these women hold. However, we pose this question to the State: how many property titles are owned by Indigenous women and by women of African descent? Knowing that there are two million rural women in Honduras, what is the budget for CREDIMUJER and the National Bank of Agricultural Development in relation to women? How much money would be dedicated to each rural woman? What type of legal, economic, environmental and agricultural security do Indigenous and Afro-

descendant women hold through the Secretariat of Agriculture and Animal Raising, the National Bank of Agricultural Development and the National Institute Agrarian-INA? Why does the National Congress not approve the integrated law of agrarian reform with perspective on gender that was introduced in the National Congress in 2014?

5. In **paragraph 155** of the report, the Honduran State expresses that the National Agrarian Institute issued resolutions of expropriation and recovery in 210 cases; however, it is well known that 86% of rural women lack land and that Indigenous/Afro-descendants are perpetually discriminated against, criminalized, evicted and murdered. Furthermore, in 2012, 684 rural women were reported as criminalized; in 2014, 1500 women suffered severe legal repercussions. In 2015, four women from the municipality La Paz were jailed for land theft. What did the National Agrarian Institute do to avoid evictions in La Paz, Barra Vieja and Villanueva, among others? Finally, what answer does the State have for the families of the rural leaders: Alma Yamileth Díaz and Erlinda Castellanos, murdered March of 2014; Marilú Miranda, murdered in May of 2014; and the defender of land rights, Margarita Murillo, who had precautionary measures from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and was murdered in August of 2014?
6. The State's report makes no mention of the levels of impunity in violence against women—94% in sexual violence and 90% in violent death and femicide in the last three years. Although the report has many projects to address these problems, in **paragraph 180 and 181** there are two care models mentioned that have been put forward with international support. How many of the 20,000 women who denounce domestic violence and the 4,000 women who denounce sexual violence—both annually and at the national level—are served by these two care models?
7. In its report, the State makes no mention of the ban on emergency contraception. In **paragraph 184 and 185** of the report, the State mentions the formal measures that it has taken to guarantee access to justice and health for victims of sexual violence. This formality has not involved substantial changes—in fact, quite the opposite. Honduran women had access to emergency contraceptives but, through Ministerial Decree No. 2744 from 2009, the commercialization, promotion, sale and use of emergency contraceptives was prohibited. This left all sexually active Honduran women unprotected—especially rape survivors. Why did the authorities allow this and why have they not corrected this violation of Hondurans' reproductive rights?
8. The State's report, in **paragraphs 186 and 187**, makes an ambiguous mention of the CEDAW Optional Protocol. It is well known that, at the beginning of this century, the State promised Honduran women that the government would ratify the CEDAW Optional Protocol and that this promise has not been honoured. In 2011, in the recommendations made to the State in the first Universal Periodic Review (UPR), Honduras committed, in this international context, to ratify the protocol but has not done so. During its second UPR in March 2015, the State only took note despite the fact that 19 countries had addressed the same recommendation. To whom do we owe this regression? Why had the protocol not been ratified despite the women's organisations work and government's commitment for already 15 years?

9. In **paragraph 208** the State noted that the Prosecutor's Office for Women identified the need to improve the capacity of the Unit on Investigation of Femicide and Related Crimes. Why, following this statement, did the Unit begin to disappear—becoming limited to three prosecutors in Tegucigalpa rather than in seven important cities in the country? We know that the State recently approved \$1.3 million, thanks to the efforts of feminist and women's organizations in the country, to create the Investigation of Violent Female Deaths and Femicides Unit in Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula. What strategy will the government follow to make this unit sustainable so that this initiative does not suffer the same fate as previous ones?