

## **WOMEN BEYOND 2015**

### **Venezuela is not going to achieve the Millennium Goals**

September 2015 is the deadline to accomplish the Goals of the Millennium adopted for 189 Heads of States and Governments in September 2000 when they signed the United Nations Millennium Declaration. The Venezuelan Platform Network of Civil Society Organization created in May 2013, had made a national consulting regarding the global campaign Beyond 2015 in order to find out if Venezuela is going to reach the Goals of the Millennium near the target date. Venezuelan Observatory of Human Rights for Women, a network that gathers 45 NGOs countrywide, concluded its first meeting in July the third. After that, an on Line survey was completed by organizational members and women´s affairs experts.

We found that shortage, inaccurate, unregistered data and delay on the production of new official statistics are some of the reasons why it is not easy to establish the progress or delay in the achievement of the MDGs. In addition, National Institute of Statistics (INE) has been changing the measurement criteria which difficult the construction of temporal series. On the other hand, there are few institutions producing the independent and reliable information to follow up the issues of the Global Action Plan. Upon these limitations we have prepared our report.

After we Submitted the First NGOs Shadow Report to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women alternative to 4th, 5th and 6th Reports presented by Venezuelan Government, Venezuelan Forum of Gender Equality (17 women NGO's) changed into the Venezuelan Observatory of Human Rights of Women expanding our area of influence. We endorse all the principles and rules in Human Rights required to adjust the Objectives of The Goals of the Millennium Beyond 2015.

### **How Venezuelan Women organized in the Observatory see the process of MDGs?**

#### **Goal # 3 Promote gender equality and empowered women.**

1. It stands out the lack of a goal or variable to eliminate violence against women and girls.

Actually, Violence and civil insecurity are the main concern for Venezuelan people. More than 30% of Venezuelan homes have been victims of delinquency.

International reports set Venezuela as one of the most violent countries. Levels of Violence had increased fast in the past years. For example, Murders in 1999 were 5.974; in 2003, 11.342 ;in 2009 we had 19.133 but we reached 21.692 in 2012. 95% of these homicides are between 15-35 years old young man, which indicates a population of more than 7 million affected and in mourning, most of them traumatized. Most of the people mourning in Venezuela are women, mothers, grandmothers, daughters and wives, which have to survive without any mental or physical care support. Beside they belong to the same communities of the killers. All this happens in a context of impunity; more than 92% of these crimes never find a legal solution, along with violent political speeches from governors and their political allies. Expressions of violence, discrimination and intimidation against the half of the population which do not support Venezuelan 15 years government is the most common issue.

On the other hand, female violence is on the rise with deaths every year, most of them executed for their former partners, whether married or not after women decide to separate. According to a non-official data from the Forensic Division, in the DC Area, 106 women were killed up to August 2013.

According to Venezuelan Constitution, Police and Security Forces must be composed by civilians. In spite of this from 2.993 deaths occurred in the past 15 years, 11% were responsibility of the National Army, all of them executions and using excess of force. PROVEA's Report "15 Years of Human Rights" affirms that between 1997-2011 occurred 24.051 public demonstrations, social conflict has increased as well as repression from Government. As an example, 44 of 550 street protests were repressed in 1997; in 2011 protesting activity increased to 4.472 and 134 obstructed. A balance of this social activity we have 39 dead, 2.963 wounded and 4.053 people arrested. Lastly, since September 10th 2013, Venezuela is out of The Inter-American Human Rights System with a debt to pay to 265 victims protected by Inter-American Court of human right after all intents of repair failed in national courts of law. Impunity is related to all of these cases. Inter-American Court found violation on human rights in 11 of 15 decisions; also in 6 decisions the Court sentenced Venezuelan State for Violation against life and personal integrity; in 4 more cases were probed violation of freedom of speech and finally, in 3 verdicts Inter- American Court comprehended the weakness of Venezuelan Legal System, because judges can be removed by the Executive Power 80% of Venezuelan Judges are provisional, 15% are titular y 5% are suspended and waiting for trial. International Standard establishes that impunity from more than 35% indicates emergency, the fact is that in Venezuela 92% of crimes are never solved.

Even though, National Assembly approved in 2006 an Organic Women Law of Right for life free of Violence, valid on March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2007, in substitution of Law against Violence against Women approved on 1998, and also create some government offices and plans like National Attorney for Women Human Rights and Foundation Madres del Barrio Josefa Joaquina Sanchez, the problem of violence against women is still unsolved. Venezuela has had different Laws and many National Plans of Action regarding Women issues since 1998 but there is no official up dated data about violence against women and girls.

The implement of the Organic Law about Women for a life free of Violence, has become a very difficult process in Venezuela, mainly because of a lack of enforcement mechanism able to ensure the compliance with precautionary measurements and penalties, where aggressors often are left unpunished and victims are not adequately protected. Judges and other Court employees need to be trained in the right way in order to process and inquire complaints about felonies and violence against women. Most of the time, complains become a new process of suffering and guilt or even death by the aggressor. Currently, victims, instead of the aggressor, are the ones requiring having a psychological evaluation to proceed with the legal trail which is an impediment hard to skip in order to access to justice.

Provisional judges and lack or stability for technical staff negatively influenced the efficiency of the legal process. When titular judges decide accordingly to law and legal procedures they are likely to lose their jobs. For example, Judge María Lourdes Afiuni lost her career, and was sent to jail where was victim of violence including rape. Even now, is under judicial process and in conditional liberty.

Access to justice in cases of violence against women should be much more than approving Laws and National Plans of Actions, which must include protection plans to victims, help and punishment to the aggressors.

## 2. Political empowerment

Even Venezuelan National Constitution (1999) establishes on the Art. 21, the positive measures to eliminate discrimination based on race, sex, creed or social standing, there was only one Art. (144), in the Organic Law of Suffrage and Political Participation, that set up a regulation of 30% of women in political participation. This means that every political group or party have to include 30% women in position of popular election. In 2009, Electoral National Power abolished this practice, even not having the authority to do so, and when the National Assembly approved the new Organic Law of Electoral Process (2009) this positive action to avoid discrimination against women in politics disappeared without no reference or regulation about gender parity The consequence: 17% of women in

National Assembly, just two (2) governors elected (less than 10%) and 24 mayors (7.21%). Women representation in National Assembly is below Latin American and the Caribbean standard (24.5%) and World standard (20%)

### 3. Access to paid work.

Limited access to decent and well paid works is still a limitation for women in Venezuela. Empirical evidence supports the tendency to informality of women's jobs as a structural one, with all the disadvantages that it conveys. Among them, condition of the activity: the inactive condition conceals their work as housewives; occupational category: wage less work is the only category where the women's percentage is higher than men; place: houses or streets like in a stall; and size of enterprise where one works, usually companies of just one employee.

In Venezuela, equal wages for men and women has not been reached yet, and the gap is still there. The gender gap with years of studies is as follows: 0-5 years of studies 79,3%; 10-12, 87,8% and 13 or more, 89%. (ECLAC. 2011). The smaller gender gap is between men and women with 13 years of schooling or more. Wage differences increases in less educated people.

Conclusion: Goal No. 3 should develop to one of gender equality and empowerment based on the principles and rules of Human Rights, with explicit reference to the elimination of Violence against women and girls.

### **Goal # 4 Reduce Child Mortality**

The target was to reduce by 2/3, the under-five mortality rate, between 1990 and 2015,

In 2010, official data set child mortality rate in 18.98 for every 1.000 child born alive. For 2012, according to the Epidemiological Weekly Newsletter (48) published by Health Ministry, the preliminary statistics have shown an increase on IMR in 19.2% in contrast with 2011, with 5,517 death in children bellow one year of age. These statistics have an important under registration. Some Venezuelan research organizations show that IMR (deaths/live birth) in 2011 was 20.18%

Conclusion: We can determine that this Millennium Goal is not going to be achieved by 2015 due to the slowness to achieve the necessary changes or results.

## **Goal # 5 Improve Maternal Health**

The MGDs target is to reduce by three quarters, from 1990 to 2015, the maternal mortality ratio and also to achieve universal access to reproductive health. According to a preliminary data from XIV National Population and Habitat CENSUS (20011) Venezuelan population is 28.946.101 and 50.3% are women. Women households increased from 24% to 39% in a country where 31.6% is poor (CISOR, 2011).

By 2010, maternal mortality rate was 54.92 death/100000 live births, a total of 348 mothers dead. From this total, 15.8% correspond to mothers in the age group between 15-19 years old; 19.83% were between 20 and 24 years old; the highest percentage was between ages 25 to 29 with 24.71%. However, UNICEF shows a different data for Maternal Mortality Rate in the same year: 92/100000, with a risk of death for the mother of 416. Prenatal care is on 94% for the group of at least 4 checks-ups, attention during delivery in health centers are 95%, same as Venezuelan Government data. On the other hand, proportion of deliveries attended by skilled health personnel is not registered or reported as well as contraceptive prevalence rate during 2007-2012.

The Goal is not going to be reached. The tendency is to maintain a MM rate of 55 death/100000, 5 times bigger than the target of 2/3 of reduction contemplated in the MDGs.

Teen Pregnancy: 14% of MM belongs to teen adolescents, in a country with 6 million of young people and 31, 6% in poverty (XIV, CENSUS). In this order of ideas, Health Ministry reports 23.4% (more than 100000) of child born alive from teens between 10-19 years old. In 2009, INE also offer a global fertility rate of 2.52 with a fertility rate for ages 15-19 of 89.40 x 1000, locating us over the average of the region.

Conclusion: Government must offer more women health care including dotation of medical equipment as well as variety of medicine, including contraceptives treatments depending on age and beliefs. Also have to improve the physical conditions of Hospitals and other Health Centers, focus on emergency obstetric care and pre and post natal care. National Policies in Women Health Care have to include programs regarding cycles of life, social condition, race and sexual orientation. Also have to attend the factors involved in our high Maternity Mortality Rate, actually Venezuela Government have many social programs and with high budgets but low results.

## **Goal # 6 Combat VIH-AIDS, Malaria and other diseases**

Venezuelan Health situation shows a non-fulfillment of MDGs in this sector.

Instead of reversed the spread of VIH/AIDS, National Program of SIDA/ITS reports 11000 new cases every year (2011) and don't supply enough antiretroviral therapy for people living with VIH/AIDS. Multilateral Agencies like UFPA and OPS informed that the majority of women infected in the past 3 years were heterosexual women with stable partner.

Epidemiological Weekly Newsletter (week 33, August 11-17 2013) published by Health Ministry reports an increase of the 88.21% considering last year Malaria cases, with 52,093 infected. Venezuelan Society on Public Health considers this the highest rate registered in the past 70 years.

Regarding tuberculosis which was eradicated in the 60's, is turning around. 2012 ended with 3449 cases and until August 2013 official reports indicate 2166 patients affected. The weakness is in the whole Health system: prevention, attention and support to patients and their families.

Conclusion: A weak health system link to corruption and lack of governmental efficiency affect negatively the quality of programs and services.

## **Goal # 1 Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger**

Even though Venezuelan Government affirms that The MDG target has been met and poverty rates have been reduce, we propose an independent evaluation of the living conditions of the low income social sectors. They paid 48.5% more than 12 months ago. The annual increase of 65.2% registered in the food prices had a strongest impact of 48.55 in the lowest income sectors, over the national average of 45.4%. Since last February the increase of prices accelerated, specially of food, public transportation service (44% inter annual variation) and household equipment ( 34.3\$ inter annual variation).

The number of informal workers increased in July 2013 to 5, 22 million and the formal sector lost 205,647 positions. We conclude that the redistributive action, not accompanied by plans for successful creation of productive employment, in conjunction with the low quality of education and training for work, stops the transformation of structural causes of poverty, so that the goal is not going to be achieved because the results are not sustainable.

Next we are going to share some information regarding women poverty. The INE only uses global statistics in poverty and eventually showed an increase on women householder from 24% to 39% according to XYV CENSUS (2011) According to ECLAC (2011) by 2010 females as head of their poor houses was 27.3% and males 21.8%. These female, as heads of their households have a total income equivalent to 51%, compare to the total income of male head household. The fact reaffirms poverty prevalence in poor families with female heads compare to their male counterparts.

A study about distribution of contributors to the total household income, with respect to family head and poverty, based on gender, for urban areas, prepared by ECLAC 1994 to 2011, shows the following conclusions: In the total redistribution of the economic role at home, the children contribute more to their household income when the head of the family is a female; when the household head is a female, the spouses contribute less in percentage than women spouses do when the head of the family is a man. IN non- poor household income is more distributed between the members of the family while in poor households depends basically on the male head or in the female head and their children.

Another report from the same ECLAC's Study, establishes the relationship between households by sex of leadership, marital status and presence of children at the time series for the years: 1994, 2008 and 2010: those who are widowed, married or cohabiting share very similar characteristics in the percentages with and without children, whereas in the case of unmarried persons, separated or divorced, there is a big difference, the majority of the women are living with their children while the man is absent. As the trend remains the same through the time, we would mention only the situation in 2010: male separated or divorced with children 37.3 %, female separated or divorced with children 87.5 %; unmarried man with children 12.1 %, unmarried women with children 67.1 %.

It is regrettable that official information in Venezuela does not present data on wage differences which is reflected in the international indicators on the ILO, where Venezuela appears without data (ILO Labor Overview, the EC, 2008). The wage gap seems to be decreasing in the highest income sectors, but not in the formal and informal activities occupy especially by low-income women, with serious consequences in the largest increase in poverty among women in the country.

A study of the informal sector prepared with data from the household survey by sampling (Paredes, 2011) compares the situation of women between 2001 and 2008 hence we extract the following conclusions: the number of women in the informal sector has increased, in the same period women in head position or employing women decreased. There is an increase as employees, workers and as

unpaid family helpers, the only category in which the percentage of women is higher in relation to men.

In conclusion: Female poverty and gender inequality is associated with changes of roles inside families with single parenthood and divorced parents; irresponsible paternity; difference in income between man and women; having two and three jobs; the child care along with the care of the elderly and the sick in the family and teenage pregnancy, among others. The complexity of the phenomenon requires deepness analysis of statistical data that needs to be done. Adopting a gender perspective means recognizing that men and women experience poverty differently and that the likelihood of being poor is not randomly distributed throughout Venezuelan population.

Policies directed to eliminate economic inequalities have a restricted one-dimensional approach, only directed to the consequences and not the causes of inequalities between men and women. There is no plan for Equal Opportunities in the work place, or in the Ministry of Labor or The Ministry of Women, even though Venezuela has 54 of 189 ILO conventions ratified and 50 signed, including the one referring to equal opportunities between men and women. The issue of equal opportunities is not a part of the Government agenda, nor the doctrine of the ILO "Decent Work". Regulations for Labor Supervision applied by the Ministry of labor for the sector do not have a gender approach and do not follow the guidelines set by the ILO in the "ABC of Women´s Rights for working and gender equality".

### **GENERAL CONCLUSION:**

A sustainable development is the necessary framework of the Millennium Development Goals. These human goals must be done within a Human Rights perspective. Women: girls, adolescents, adults or elderly, are half of humanity; that is why we must include the mainstreaming of gender issues in all the Millennium Development Goals.

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