

CSW62 - MULTI-STAKEHOLDER FORUM CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN ACHIEVING GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF RURAL WOMEN AND GIRLS

Intervention by the Permanent Representative of the Argentine Republic, Amb. Martín García Moritán

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- I would like to start by expressing our deep appreciation to UN-Women for organizing this multi-stakeholder forum in preparation of the upcoming 62nd session of the CSW. These consultations and similar exercises at regional level have proven very successful in previous years and we encourage the CSW Bureau and UN-Women to continue this practice.
- Argentina welcomes the priority theme of CSW62 in the understanding that the discussions to address the challenges faced by rural women and girls to achieve full gender equality need to be framed in the commitments of the Beijing Platform for Action, the 2030 Agenda and the protection and promotion of human rights for all.
- Rural women and girls are NOT essentially different to any other women or girl in urban areas. The main difference among them, thou, lies in the setting where they live, which in the case of rural women tend to include remoteness, lack of communications and limited accessibility.
- Therefore, we expect that the agreed conclusions of CSW62 will bring creative solutions and political will to address the specific challenges and obstacles faced by girls and women in rural settings in order to achieve the same rights and to have the same opportunities as any other women or girl in urban contexts.
- The Argentine Republic, in the framework of the 2030 Agenda, has been working on the promotion of the rights of women and girls in three key areas: 1) autonomy over their body and prevention of violence; 2) economic empowerment; and 3) participation in decision making and political processes.
- The prevention of all forms of gender-based violence is a priority of our government that has been highlighted in several occasions by President Macri, including in his speech at the General Assembly. This seeks to answer the growing public demand for a more equal society where women can live free of violence and harassment.

- In particular, the social campaign against gender-based violence "NiUnaMenos" (*not one less*) has gathered momentum, crossing our national borders and uniting Latin-American women voices, claiming for the end of "femicides" and all forms of gender-related killings.
- The synergies created by this social movement and the commitments of the government have allowed to engage civil society and all branch of government in exploring new ways to enhance the protection of women and girls from violence all around the country.
- In the case of rural areas, the first obstacle for our government, as a federal country, is the implementation of national policies in the whole territory, adapting them to the local realities. In this sense, the National Institute of Women is working to strengthening the local machineries for gender equality in order to provide them with the necessary expertise and tools to provide interdisciplinary assistance and support to victims of gender based violence.
- This program is implemented with the involvement of local women leaders and supported by media campaigns with a view of creating offices that are focal points of easy reference for victims of violence and their families.
- Since the adoption of the 2016 National Plan to prevent and combat violence against women, the National Institute of Women has been working together in a specific platform with the Ministry of Agro-Industry, the Ministry of Social Development, the Ministry of Health, the Secretary of Human Rights, the National Institute of Indigenous Issues, and provincial governments to raise awareness on the ground about violence against rural women and girls and implementing specific policies targeting vulnerable communities. Practical measures, like access to telephone services and online support in remote areas, are being implemented.
- Other experience that I would like to share today, in view of our work for the upcoming CSW, is a regional social media campaign launched by the Unit for Rural Change of the Ministry of Agro-industry together with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Specialized Meeting on Family Agriculture of MERCOSUR.
- The campaign seeks to give an account of the fundamental role of rural women towards sustainable rural development and the empowerment of their communities. With the hashtag "MujeresRurales" (*Rural Women*), the organizers invited participants to share stories, experiences and reflections related to the role of women who live or work in rural areas. The selected stories were presented in a conference in Buenos Aires in November 2017 under

the title "Rural Women, Women with Rights" to help changing the view of society towards those women and girls.

- The National Institute of Women is also in the process of developing a mechanism for access to justice for rural women and indigenous women in coordination with the Program of Community Access to Justice of the Public Prosecutor's Office. This project has the objective of creating local agencies responsible for receiving complaints, evacuating queries, providing access to judicial information, facilitating the alternative resolution of conflicts, generating mechanisms to prevent crimes and develop actions to promote rights to strengthen community ties.
- A very important issue related to the prevention of gender-based violence is the fulfillment of the sexual and reproductive rights of rural women. In our case, the Ministry of Health has been working with different Argentine provinces to adapt its policies to the local needs of rural population and developing specific programs covering sexual and reproductive health of rural women, including strategies to raise awareness on certain issues, like adolescent pregnancy.
- Addressing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination in rural settings is also key to prevent gender-based violence. Our gender policies in Argentina strive for reaching out to the full empowerment of all women, including older women, indigenous women, women with disabilities, lesbian, bisexual and trans women, migrant and refugees women, wherever they decide to live.
- To conclude, allow me to mention that this year, Argentina is holding the Presidency of the G20 and among the priorities it was decided to foster a gender mainstreaming strategy across the whole G20 agenda.
- Our government considers that the only way to achieve truly fair and sustainable development is by ensuring that women and men will benefit equally from it. Therefore, in the G20 Presidency, Argentina will boost women's empowerment, the elimination of gender disparities in employment, science, technology and education, and protection from all forms of gender-based violence.
- We consider that CSW62 will create a great opportunity to build on existing commitments in order to provide a better life for all rural women and girls. We look forward to have strong, ambitious and consensus-based agreed conclusions.
- I thank you.