

Committee: UN Women

Topic: Women in Government

Country: Colombia

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UN Women is the organization created by the United Nations to promote gender equality and empower women. It also tries to increase the number of women in parliament.¹ This is really important because they have different mentalities, ideas and they can contribute with experiences. They can give other points of view and represent other women citizens better, as they are more similar and have alike opinions. Colombia is affected by this issue because the situation there is not entirely good. Nowadays in this country there are 19.9% of women in parliament.² When women get to the parliament, they could be in danger, as it is not well seen to have them in government and they can be threatened.

Women have evolved through history in Colombia. They have obtained rights and have gained more respect from the population. This country was the first which had democracy in Latin America. However, women got the right to vote in 1954, when they also got the right to stand for election.³ Although they have formed part of the parliament since 1958, Colombia has not had a woman president yet. Even though in this country, there are more women than men (51%), only 12% of the electoral positions are occupied by women.⁴ Women constitute the 19.9%² of the parliament, which puts Colombia in the 76th position in the world ranking.

Since 2000, there have been quotas in place for women in Colombia. The law of quotas says that at least 30% of the candidates running for parliament of each political party must be women.⁵ If this law isn't met, the party is rejected from elections. Also, there are some agreements to solve this issue. For instance, in 2005, the "Agreement for the Effective Inclusion of Women in Politics" was signed.⁶ Nevertheless, as we could see in the elections of 2006, only one party respected the agreement. Besides, as women in Colombia suffer a lot from violence, some women have got together to defend each other. These groups aren't recognized by the government but, the UN Women has

¹ www.unwomen.org/en/about-us

² www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm

³ womensuffrage.org/?page_id=69

⁴ colombiareports.co/women-peace/

⁵ www.quotaproject.org/uid/countryview.cfm?country=48

⁶ www.humanas.org.co/archivos/AudienciaCIDH-127.pdf

reported that there are more than 16 nationally active networks and hundreds of social groups working for reducing violence in women.⁷

Colombia participates in many organizations to try to increase women in politics. Colombia is part of the “Action Program of the Beijing Declaration” which is an agreement made in 1995 by almost all member states of the UN to promote women's economic rights and to help them to get a good employment.⁸ Likewise, it has some agreements with other countries, such as the “Clinton Giustra Enterprise Partnership”. This project tries to empower women in the developing world and helps ensure they get an education. In addition, it provides access to the training courses to help women get a job. This partnership has been created with Peru and Haiti. Thanks to this agreement, women feel more comfortable and braver to get the job they want.⁹

Colombia needs some help to solve this issue. Colombia urges the United Nations to provide them with some money to give speeches, create programs and perform other methods to increase the presence of women in parliament. Besides, Colombia is receiving some ideas to solve this problem. For example, one idea is to create NGO's in order to encourage women into politics by giving speeches, courses, TV programs and by creating debates and forums so that women can express their opinions. Also, this NGO will help women to get prepared for the job they want. In the same way, Colombia believes that creating a political party mainly formed of women can be a great option so that people can see their capacities and get identified with their ideas. This party will encourage women to participate in politics and give their opinion. To carry out this aim, women from all Colombian areas should meet together and discuss about politics giving their points of view. To sum up, Colombia wants to show that women can do the same things as men.

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⁸ www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/index.html

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