



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DES FEMMES DES CARRIERES JURIDIQUES

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BUREAU MEETING

On May 2nd and 3rd 2013, the Bureau of the International Federation of Women in Legal Careers (IFWLC) met in Coimbra, Portugal, in the office of the Orden de Abogados del Consejo Distrital de Coimbra (Order of Lawyers of the District Council of Coimbra).

The agenda of the meeting, which was convened in accordance with Articles 5, 6, 8, 9 y 20 of the Internal Regulations, was as follows:

- 1) Absences and representatives;*
- 2) News;*
- 3) Review and approval of the concluding document of the preceding bureau meeting;*
- 4) Preparation for the Enlarged Council (Rome, Italy); update from the Organizing Committee;*
- 5) Plan of Activities for the three year term;*
- 6) Applications for new associate organizations;*
- 7) Visit to the International Criminal Court;*
- 8) Concluding Remarks.*

The following members of the Bureau were present: Teresa Féria, María Elena Elverdín, Norma Graciela Chiapparrone, Aysen Onen, Liisa Kiiainlinna, Neomi Landau, Fatoumata Dembélé Diarra, Jocelyne Milandou, Anna La Rana and Isabel Charneco.

Maria Imaculada Melo, Heidi Rançon-Cavenel, Osvalda Joana, Gabriela Van Marrewijk and Laura Balart, who are also Bureau members, sent their apologies and alternative representatives. They were represented at the meeting, respectively, by: Teresa Féria, Françoise Assus Jutner, Ema Maria Chicoco, Norma Chiapparrone and María Elena Elverdín.

In addition, the following members also participated in the meeting: Fiorenza Betti, Françoise Assus Jutner, Odile Sicard, Isabelle Guillaume, Ema Maria Chicoco, Maria Rite Puglia, Luigina Giansante, Caterina Flick, Vania Cirese, Domingas Damião, Mireille Ksentine, Isabel Estrela, Josefina Gomes, Rosa C. Valentino, Maria Luisa Jaus Richello, Maria Das Gracias Barbosa Soares and Maria Gláucia Barbosa Soares.

The President of the IFWLC, Dr. María Elena Elverdín, called the session to order and greeted the Federation members in attendance. Next, she presented the President of the Orden de Abogados del Consejo Distrital de Coimbra, Dr. Mário Diogo, whom she greeted and thanked for his presence, as well as for the invitation to hold the bureau meeting in his organization's offices.

Then, she turned the floor over to the President of the Orden de Abogados, who expressed his satisfaction in hosting the IFWLC, and offered all of the support in his power for the successful evolution of the meeting. He presented the medal of the Orden de Abogados de Coimbra as a gift to Dr. María Elena Elverdín, President of the IFWLC.

The President expressed gratitude for Dr. Diogo's presence and for the kind welcome he had given the IFWLC, as well as all of the efforts he had made to assure the successful realization of the meeting. Next, she returned the gesture of the President of the Orden de Abogados by awarding him a pin from the IFWLC. Dr. Diogo thanked her, and wished the group a good day's work. Dr. Elverdin accompanied him to the exit.

Subsequently, the legitimacy of the alternative representatives was verified under the guidelines provided by Article 15 of the Internal Regulations.

The President of the IFWLC noted that the meeting brought together 15 bureau members, representing 70% of the total members. Accordingly, the meeting counted with the quorum required by Article 12 Section 2 of by-laws.

Following the agenda, the group preceded to review the Concluding Document of the previous bureau meeting, which took place in Dakar, Senegal from November 12th to 16th, 2012. The bureau members having already received a copy of the document, conveniently sent by email, it was accordingly approved.

The Organizing Committee of the next Enlarged Council, which will take place in the city of Rome, Italy from October 14th to 19th 2013, presented updates regarding the event.

These updates prompted an important exchange of opinions among the members present, and it was decided that the central theme of the Enlarged Council in Rome would be, "The Empowerment of Women. The Power of Decision and the Role of Women in Crisis Resolution."

Additionally, it was decided that the official languages of the Enlarged Council would be English, French, Portuguese and Italian.

On the topic of the visit to Pope Francisco in Vatican City, the possibility of including the visit within the official agenda of the Enlarged Council was ruled out. Because the IFWLC is a lay organization, the activity will instead be voluntary and will take place outside of the official agenda.

The Working Plan presented by the Presidency was approved with one condition, proposed by Dr. Teresa Fêria, that a section be added regarding the post-2015 development agenda which will be released by the United Nations in the near future.

In this way, the theme for the three-year term of 2012-2015 remains established as: "The Empowerment of Women." The rest of the Working Plan was approved.

With regards to the Work Commissions, the following proposals were made:

- a) The possibility of developing a project with the participation of the Language Secretaries or with the Vice Presidents;*
- b) The creation of a Work Commission on reproductive health, education about health, prevention and training; and about policy on neonatal health or children's health. Vania Cirese will direct this commission.*
- c) Separation of the themes of rehabilitative punishment and torture in the relevant Work Commission; Dr. Jocelyne Milandou volunteered to integrate this commission.*

It was determined that the Presidents of the Work Commissions should present their working plans before the opening of the Enlarged Council in Rome.

The group then reviewed the Secretary General's report regarding the application for incorporation by the professional group of female lawyers in Chile. The report favored the

incorporation of the applicant organization, considering that the application completed the relevant requirements. The question was put forward for consideration and the application was approved and thereby recommended for acceptance to the Council.

Additionally, the application of the Dr. Joilce Gomes Santana was presented; this application reiterated her request to become part of the Federation as an individual entity. The applicant has been a member of the Brazilian Association of Women in Legal Careers (ABMCJ) for many years.

Nevertheless, a report from the Secretary General on this application was not available, given that the notice required by Article 1 was received on April 24th 2013, which did not leave enough time for its review. Notwithstanding the lack of a report, the question was put to consideration, and after evaluating various opinions on the question, the group decided to request a report from the President of ABMCJ.

In addition, Vice Presidents Aysen Onen and Fatoumata Dembélé Diarra had both received applications for admission. The first case, those applications presented by Aysen Onen, consisted of a group of lawyers of Greek origin – who could organize themselves as a national entity in the future – and a lawyer of Algerian nationality. Dr. Dembélé Diarra presented an individual application from a colleague from Mali, given that the National Malian Association is not active. In conclusion, all of these applications were individual, and were received by the Secretary General.

These applications prompted a debate regarding the process of integration in the IFWLC. As the rules and regulations are established in the by-laws and internal regulations, the admission process, from the submission of the application to its conclusion, lasts a period of three years. Noting that this process lasts longer than should be necessary, the group discussed the need for a model that would accelerate this complex mechanism.

Various alternatives were considered. Honorary President Dr. Teresa Féria noted that on the request of more than a third of the active members – a number that was reached by the members present and represented in the Bureau – to the President of the General Assembly, it is possible to convene an Extraordinary General Assembly to address such an issue, in this case with the goal of accelerating the application process to become part of the Federation. The procedure cited by Dr. Féria is outlined in Article 17 Section 3 of the Internal Regulations.

Consequently, the assembled members decided to communicate to the President of the General Assembly, Dr. Maria Das Dores Gomes, that she should convene an Extraordinary General Assembly under the following terms:

“The undersigned, all actives members of the IFWLC, making use of the powers conferred by Article 17 Section 3 of the Internal Regulations, in agreement with Article 18 Section 2 of the same instrument, direct themselves to you in order to request the convening of an Extraordinary General Assembly to be realized in Rome in conjunction with the Enlarged Council, on October 18th, 2013. We will address the following theme as the order of the day: Processing of applications for membership in our organization; expediting consideration.”

The text was read, voted on, and unanimously approved. With the signature of the present members, the Secretary General will comply with the corresponding notice.

The meeting was then suspended until the following day, Friday May 3rd, 2013, when it was resumed in the same location, the offices of the Orden de Abogados del Consejo Distrital de Coimbra.

The President stated that, in agreement with Article 20 Section 2 of the Internal Regulations, she proposed Dr. Osvalda Joana as the Vice President who would serve as the

alternative for her office. Vice President Aysen Onen intervened, presenting her nomination to perform this role.

These nominations prompted a lively debate regarding the proper procedure to be followed, and if that procedure required any prerequisites that were not present in the proposed case. The different arguments centered on: a) whether question should be put to a vote, with the Vice President who obtained the most votes from the Bureau being selected as the alternate b) whether the non-application of this assumption, one not explicitly established in the by-laws, would be an improper modification. c) The possibility of reforming the norms in question in the future d) the pre-eminence of a proposal made by the President, with a decisive character.

After the preceding arguments were presented, the attendees could not arrive at any unanimous interpretation. The relevant norm does not contain any provisions detailing how it should be put in practice, nor does is such a provision provided in any other article. As such, lacking uniformity of criteria governing the meaning or the scope of the procedure that should be followed, the assembly preceded to vote on the two candidates, resulting in the election of Dr. Aysen Onen with 9 votes over Dr. Osvalda Joana, who received 6 votes.

Next, the President relayed that a visit to the International Criminal Court had been agreed upon. Dr. Elverdín thanked ICC Judge Dr. Fatoumata Dembélé Diarra, who was present at the meeting, for her help in the organization of this event. All of the members of the IFWLC were duly informed of the relevant questions of protocol. In accordance with the responses received, the list of those who would attend the visit to The Hague on May 7th 2013 was communicated to the CPI.

Finally, Dr. Teresa Féria proposed the realization of biannual Enlarged Councils and annual or semiannual meetings in the regions overseen by the Vice Presidents. This project will remain under consideration.

The President, Dr. María Elena Elverdín, called the meeting to a close.



Dra. Norma Chiapparrone
Secretaria General FIFCJ



Dra. María Elena Elverdín
Presidenta FIFCJ