

Commemoration of the International Women's Day 2014

“Empowerment for women is progress for all”

Dra. Margarita Cedeño de Fernández

Dominican Republic Vice-President

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Achieving gender equality is a milestone on the road to social justice. Women are amongst the most vulnerable groups of society, however, they are powerful agents of change for creating better families, communities and professional environments. Women deserve to live in a society that understands their values, respects them, and protects them. A society that allows women to develop their talent and grow as individuals.

Climate change is one of the biggest challenges of the twenty-first century, affecting social and economic development around the world, especially in developing countries. As a Small Island Developing State (SIDS), the Dominican Republic is highly vulnerable to its effects. In recent years, the intensity and frequency of extreme climatic events (such as hurricanes, tropical storms, inland and coastal flooding, and droughts) have increased detrimentally affecting our economy, health and everyday life. Poor and vulnerable communities, including women, are most at risk.

Climate change is a challenge, but it also represents an opportunity to advance towards green, low-emission and climate-resilient development. Nevertheless, this will require a cultural change. We need to transform our behaviors, and consumption and production patterns, while promoting the use of renewable energies and green technologies.

We believe that green development is possible. That is why the Dominican Republic has set a target to cut its greenhouse gas emissions by 25% by 2030 while doubling its GDP. Our National Development Strategy established climate change and education as priorities.

In addition, combating climate change is in our Constitution, and in 2008 the creation of the National Council for Climate Change and Clean Development

Mechanism was established as a platform to coordinate inter-sectoral and inter-institutional actions on climate change.

In 2012 we launched the “National Strategy to Strengthen Human Resources and Skills to Advance Green, Low Emission and Climate Resilient Development” as part of a United Nations supported project. With this Strategy we have created a solid framework for strengthening our education system and giving our girls and young women opportunities to acquire skills and knowledge required for green jobs.

In this growing process, women need support from their partners, to walk with them by their side and not to be diminished. Women deserve workplaces where their talent and professionalism are appreciated and taken into account. Workplaces that encourage professional growth.

The National Council for Climate Change and Clean Development Mechanism and the Ministry of Education have initiated a long-term process to systematically integrate climate change learning into the curriculum. We have trained more than 400 teachers on climate change and we are enhancing the implementation of adaptation and mitigation solutions in our schools.

Women deserve political arenas where they can promote and fight for the needs of their communities, and which empower them to tackle against the problems of society. In the Dominican Republic, women are already taking action to combat poverty and to address climate change. Women are implementing local adaptation projects and creating sustainable enterprises. Young educated women can create transformational change in their communities. Their innovative ideas and solutions inspire actions on the ground.

If girls are educated and women are empowered, they will transform our country in a more sustainable and peaceful society. Women deserve more. We are convinced that with empowered women, society will progress. Today we have the responsibility to create a better world for our children and future generations. “Equality for women is progress for all”, therefore we will continue working in the Dominican Republic to increase learning and development opportunities for our girls and women.