

WOMEN IN PARLIAMENTS GLOBAL FORUM (WIP)

WORLD BANK/IFM ANNUAL MEETING 2014

WORKING SESSION

OCTOBER 10, 15:00 -17:00 HOURS

**MAKI ORTIZ DOMINGUEZ, MEMBER OF THE SENATE OF MÉXICO**

It is a great honor and privilege for me to be here with leaders sharing the challenges and achievements that guide us and encourage us to continue to work for women's empowerment and development.

Every woman who has the opportunity to lead a community or serve in government can transform high-impact policies. Many of us here can certainly understand the needs of women and family members.

Unintentionally and because it is our nature to be supportive, we take care of our children, parents, husbands, and vulnerable people, and have make links and collaborative actions in every position we are. Women are advancing in the world. Increasingly, we are more women in political and decision making positions, more female presidents and global leaders, more deputies, senators, judges, entrepreneurs and professionals; we all are transforming our societies.

But, how did we as women advance in society and to get leadership? I think that, fortunately, all of us come from families who believed in the equal access of women and men to education and social participation. An important part, at least in my case, has been to be involved with people's social needs through non-government organization and charity work. My work has been focused on achieving access to healthcare for all.

Even more, you recognize that we all need each other's contribution to get things done, either in private enterprise, civil society or government. Incidentally, you are championing a cause. In so many cases, we realize that decision making helps us advance in our role and responsibility. In my case, I decided to work in politics in order to improve the health conditions of my country.

I did it first, locally and then at the state and national level. It is through my work and career in politics that I realized that unlike men, many of my opponents, I had a social support gathered by previous community work with children, the elderly, women, migrants, the sick and disables and many of my colleagues: doctors, nurses and health professionals.

Since I have decision making roles, I became aware of the importance of solidarity between women, and each other's support. Women have occupied at least half of positions on my staff and I am always looking for talented women in each state of my country, and wherever they are.

As a legislator, I supported and passed laws with a gender perspective. For instance: the National Women's Law Institute (2001); the General Act on Equality between Women and Men (2006); the General Law on Women's Access to a Life Free of Violence (2007); and the Law on the Protection of the Rights of Children and Adolescents (2000 and 2014).

Although, we all have faced exclusion, marginalization and barriers to achieve full integration. But, with our strength and determination, we have overcome those challenges and allowed us to transform people's lives.

Just a few decades ago, the number of women in decision making roles were very limited. They were only a few women participating in politics, and much less occupying power positions. In Mexico, in 1952 there was only one woman in the Deputy Chamber, today there are 187 representatives. In 1964 there were only three senators, at the present time, we are 44 women in the Senate today. Twenty years ago only five percent of representatives in the deputy chamber were women,

today thirty seven percent are women, and due to a recent reform, it will be close to gender parity in Mexican Congress.

Certainly, we have used affirmative action such as quotas, especially in the legislature. Although I personally believe that talent must prevail instead of gender, quotas have been useful in in this transition period.

Let me share with you some data. In Mexico, in nineteen seventy (1970), more than twenty five percent of women were illiterate; today it is only eight percent. In two thousand twelve (2012) fifty five percent of college graduates were women. Our universities now have an enrollment of 1.7 million women, whereas 20 years ago it was only 600,000, that makes us more competitive and help us to advance in more positions. I know that, in a short period we will have a female president in Mexico.

In nineteen ninety five (1995) the participation of women in economic activities was thirty six percent, in to two thousand thirteen (2013) is forty four percent, which means more economic influence.

As a medical graduate, I was always interested in helping the disadvantaged and supported vulnerable groups in various ways. This desire and concern to help others led me to get involved in community work and politics.

As examples, I have approved federal funding for the larger social program in Mexico called "Opportunities" focused on helping poor families in rural and urban communities to invest in *human capital*, education, health, and nutrition of their children, by providing cash transfers to households, linked to regular school attendance and health clinic visits. It is important to mention that girls attending middle school and high school receive a 15% higher scholarship. Also, I recognized other women who have promoted other programs and affirmative actions, such as production options, credits and direct benefits for women.

As parliamentary and as Undersecretary of Health, I had the opportunity to improve healthcare conditions for many people. My concern has not only been to deal and

manage everyday activities, but to transform institutions, thinking on a future perspective.

At the beginning of this century, half of Mexican population, roughly about fifty million people, lacked health care access and healthcare insurance coverage. As a member of the Deputy Chamber, I participated reforming the law necessary to create what is now known in Mexico as “Seguro Popular”, a public insurance coverage system.

Nowadays, the Seguro Popular covers fifty six million people, almost half of Mexican population. But most importantly, 54 percent of them are women and in 75.6 percent of the registered families, women are the head of the household. It was an important public health policy that helps a large number of women.

This reform was aimed to provide universal health coverage to Mexican population, but also to increase funds to the public health system. From two thousand four (2004) to two thousand fourteen (2014), the healthcare system received historical budgets. The public resources increased more than doubled, and added one point as percentage to GDP to total health care expenditure.

Also, the Seguro Popular has reduced the incidence of out-of-pocket health expenditure and catastrophic health expenditure. Out-of-pocket health expenditure decreased by 22% in two thousand twelve (2012) from two thousand two (2002). And catastrophic health expenditure dropped from 3.1 to 2.0 between two thousand (2000) and two thousand ten (2010). These benefits allow families to invest in other priorities, such as education and housing, in order to increase their human capital.

In Mexico, we are proud that finally health insurance is no longer seen as an employment benefit, but a right of any citizen, such as in many other countries in the world. Universal Health Coverage is a movement that in two thousand twelve (2012) prompted the United Nations General Assembly to call on governments to “urgently and significantly scale-up efforts to accelerate the transition towards universal access to affordable and quality healthcare services”.

To deal with the main health problems of women, as Undersecretary in The Health Ministry, I had the opportunity to launch many strategies to reduce maternal mortality. Also, during the implementation of the Seguro Popular we gave priority to pregnant women to enroll with their families in the System. Also, we signed an agreement between social security schemes and the Seguro Popular to provide emergency obstetric care to all women regardless of her insurance policy. Furthermore, we created a Mobile Health Program (Caravanas de la Salud) which worked closely with midwives in rural communities to ensure emergency obstetric care, which were provided when needed.

These strategies allowed us to reduce, in a decade, 34 percent the rate of maternal mortality. The most recent ratio was situated below 40 deaths per 100,000 live births, lower than the average of the Latin America region.

Mexico, as others countries, is progressing toward the Millennium Development Goals. Child mortality dropped from 32.5 in nineteen ninety (1990) to 13.3 in two thousand twelve (2012), close to the target of 10.8. Maternal mortality was reduced from 82.0 in nineteen ninety (1990) to 42.3 in two thousand twelve (2012). In this case, we need to do much more, to accomplish the target of 22.2 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births at the year two thousand fifteen (2015).

To fight against Cervical and Breast cancer, we gave free treatment to all women with a positive diagnosis through its inclusion in the Catastrophic Health Expenditure Fund, of the Seguro Popular. We also significantly increased the number of mammography devices available for breast screening, in order to diagnose breast cancer in its early stages. Breast cancer, as you know, is the most common type of cancer in women in developing countries.

I am still working to transform health institutions. Just last week, I presented in the Senate a project to reform our Constitution, to create an integrated national health system.

For this workshop, forum organizers have launched provocative questions: What do female leaders do that outshines the rest? What makes them leaders? And will female leaders be the ones to rebuild trust of citizens in political decision making?

Regarding the first question, female leaders are more assertive and persuasive, have a stronger need to get things done and are more willing to take risks than male leaders. Also, Women leaders were found to be more empathic and flexible, as well as stronger in interpersonal skills than their male counterparts, according to a new study conducted by Caliper, a Princeton-based management consulting firm, which has assessed the potential of more than two million applicants and employees for over 25,000 companies around the world, and Aurora, a London-based organization which advances women and comprises a 20,000 member businesswomen's network.

On the second question, I think many characteristics make female leaders. Women are perseverant, because they're always going to come across challenges. Now, we have more access to education which makes us more confident in our own abilities. Besides, we look for ways to give back to our community, trying to be generous, trustworthy and be willing to learn about ourselves and others. Also, women leaders take more care of their health. Even more, female leaders have vision and understand their role in the wider world. Their unique experiences and supportive natures make them more than capable of leading the future.

Finally, will female leaders be the ones to rebuild trust of citizens in political decision making? Certainly, I believe that women leaders can do it. Women are less likely than male to engage in corruption. Women are less likely to pay bribes but are more disadvantaged in corrupt systems, says Transparency International.

Still more, women, due to our sensitivity, are more likely to understand the suffering of others, we have the ability to listen, understand and comprehend the needs of others. In addition to this great gift, we assume responsibilities and commit ourselves to overcome adverse situations.

I think we are advancing, in part because most of us are mothers and we are educating new generations in full equality between men and women. In addition, because we realized that no one is going to give us what we are entitled.

Our strength as women comes from the fact of being ourselves, proud to make decisions based on knowledge but always keeping in mind our deep sense of womanhood.

Comprehension and understanding, responsibility and commitment allow us to visualize the different problems and encourage us to find many ways of solution.

My commitment is to work for a better health care system in my country, for the well being of vulnerable groups, as well as for empowerment and advancing of women in society.

To conclude, as a Senator in the Mexican Congress, this workshop will help me learn from all of you and from your experiences as leaders in order to create, adapt and innovate legislation and public policy in my country.

Thanks