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DE LA FRANCE AUPRÈS DE  
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**Remarks by Ambassador Anne de la Blache,  
Permanent Observer of France  
To the Organization of American States**

Women's economic rights and empowerment in the post-crisis reconstruction

Washington D.C.  
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Speech delivered in spanish

**Check against delivery**

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Mrs. Ana García de Hernández, First Lady of the Republic of Honduras

Mrs. Mayra Jiménez, President of the CIM and Minister of Women's Affairs of the Dominican Republic

Dear Alejandra Mora Mora, Executive Secretary of CIM

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to share with you some comments on one of my country's main commitments in the international arena, which is also one a particular priority of mine: the economic rights and empowerment of women.

Women's economic empowerment is highly dependent on the social, cultural and entrepreneurial environments. This empowerment is only possible through access to education, training and opportunities.

It is not only in the labor sector that women face discriminations, they do as well in the fields of education, health or policy-making. Inequality between men and women is not only a matter of flagrant injustice it is also a factor in poverty as it represents a significant obstacle to economic and social development.

France has made the promotion of gender equality one of the major axes of its diplomacy.

Globally, poverty will more often affect women than men. Statistics show persistent income inequality, accompanied by greater job insecurity. It is not surprising that, in this context, the COVID 19 pandemic has had a much greater impact on women. Not only are they often in more precarious or poorly paid jobs, including in the key health

sector, but they have also had to work more domestically to care for children, the elderly, or the sick.

At the same time, unfortunately, violence against girls and women has increased in all countries. Femicides and impunity are major concerns.

The promotion of women's economic independence is not only a priority but also a very effective tool to increase the positive effects of national development plans and international cooperation actions.

As we talk about post-Covid crisis reconstruction, it is important to ensure, not only that women should not be left behind but that they should also play an active role in national and international recovery policies. There is now an opportunity not to be missed to make concrete progress towards women's economic independence embedded in an inclusive and sustainable development.

#### i) Forum "Generation Equality"

Seizing the opportunity of the post-crisis recovery to boost women economic empowerment and rights is indeed a key objective of France's diplomacy, an objective that we keep promoting bilaterally and internationally, in various multilateral forums with concrete initiatives and projects, such as the "Generation Equality" Forum that France organized this year along with Mexico.

This Forum concluded in July in Paris with the launch of a five-year global action plan to accelerate gender equality in the run-up to 2026.

This five-year plan is supported by more than \$4.4 billion in commitments from governments, civil society and the private sector to advance women's economic rights and promote real empowerment.

#### ii) AFD's action

The French development agency, AFD, has focused, for many years now, on three priorities that are now part of its operations worldwide: preventing gender inequalities, promoting women's empowerment, contributing to the evolution of societies on these issues.

AFD also decided to raise the level of its ambitions on this topic, in 2021-2022, by deciding:

- To bring a gender perspective to 50% of all its financing operations based on the criteria of the OECD.
- To allocate 700 million euros to projects whose main objective is to reduce gender inequalities.

AFD works on these issues in close coordination with other multilateral partners, such as the European Commission, the OECD, and of course international development banks like the World Bank and the IADB.

The first "Finance in Common" global summit organized by France brought together for the first time more than 450 public development banks, in October 2020. This summit highlighted the desire to intensify the fight against gender inequality. Twenty-six development banks adopted a declaration defining four priority areas of intervention focused on women empowerment:

- Specific institutional strategy to be designed by development banks;

- Increase of the amount of financial flows linked to operations with a high women participation;
- Gender perspective in climate change policies
- Strengthening collaboration on gender issues with all stakeholders including civil society.

The next edition of this digital summit will take place on 19 -20 October in Rome.

Examples of France's bilateral actions in favor of women's economic independence in Honduras

As Ms. Garcia de Hernandez has done us the honor to participate in this webinar, here are some concrete examples of French cooperation in Honduras aiming at supporting the country's efforts towards women's economic empowerment.

- Signing this month by the French Ambassador to Honduras of an agreement with the country's first private university on a \$35,000 project to support economic empowerment for women in vulnerable situations.

- i) In 2020 and 2021, the French Embassy in Honduras also provided financial support to Honduran NGOs for projects related to professional training and economic empowerment of vulnerable youth and women such as these two projects of USD23,000 each, to support vocational training for vulnerable youth, and entrepreneurial capacity of young women in the hospitality and catering sectors.

- ii) A USD 810,000 regional project dedicated to "the reduction of inequalities in Central America" is also worth mentioning. Within this regional framework, some \$35,000 will be granted to a Honduran small business-training project for young women from vulnerable communities, such as returning migrants or indigenous populations.

Before I conclude, allow me to specify that, as part of France's feminist diplomacy, each time we participate in the organization of an economic event or one related to our cooperation actions, we make sure that women's expertise is given a high visibility including in technical fields.

It is particularly important to communicate on the importance of women's participation in economic life in all sectors, whether it is at the village, city, or country level, so that young girls and young women become aware of the opportunities that are open to them today.

Thank you very much.