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Cuban women: words translated into actions

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The National Program for the Advancement of Women (PAM), governing body for the implementation of policies in favor of Cuban women, is already translating printed words into actions as measures to economically empower Cuban women and guarantee their rights have been analyzed.

The Cuban president stated so last Friday in his official Twitter profile, where, in different posts, he made reference to the equal rights of women in Cuba.

PAM is intended as the *“Agenda of the Cuban State to the advancement of women”* and it comprehends, as a single document, the actions and measures in favor of the equality among Cuban women in correspondence with the principles and tenets recognized in the Constitution of the Republic of Cuba, consistent with this new scenario of updating the economic and social model in our nation.

The goal, in coherence with what was endorsed in the Constitution of the Republic, is to foster the advancement of Cuban women as well as the equality of rights and opportunities; and in line with the Presidential Decree 198/2021, it aims at taking a closer look and acting over the objective and subjective elements that still persist in our society such as discriminatory behaviors.

Similarly, PAM also aims at strengthening the mechanisms and professional competence of public officials and civil servants in order to incorporate gender issues into policies and programs, and into the provision of services.

It was last March 8th, on the International Women’s Day, when PAM was officially launched in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Cuba, approved by the Presidential Decree 198/2021, on February 2021.

This Governmental Program, agreed with the involvement of the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC) includes, among its several strengths, the fact that it promotes and guarantees the actions of monitoring, assessment and control, being the latter a responsibility of the Council of Ministers. Consequently, steps are taken to ensure consistent actions in this regard.

Areas such as employment, social communication, education, prevention and social work, as well as the access to decision making, legislation and law, sexual and reproductive health care, among others, have been included in this crucial text.

Henceforth, it would be great to popularize the full breadth of its content. This way, citizenship could support it and demand compliance, which results in concrete matters such as the economic empowerment of women.

Women's employment is vital; so much so that at present, there are one million economically inactive women in Cuba. In the words of Teresa Amarelle, secretary general of FMC, among the most common reasons that lead to this figure we have that a great deal of the ageing population in the nation are women, plus another lots of women working as caretakers of older adults.

In this panorama, it should be also included the questioning to those sexist advertisements that request only young and pretty women for certain jobs.

As part of the strategy planned in this economic order, Marta Elena Feitó Cabrera, minister of Labor and Social Security, pointed out in a recent meeting of the Executive Committee of the Council of Ministers that:

-Regular assessments will be carried out on the employability in each territory and in the different sector of the economy, targeting potential unemployed women, especially young women.

-Employers will be requested to create conditions favoring the women's engagement in working activities without discrimination of any kind in both, the hiring and the exercise of their working functions, with a special care for pregnant women.

-Regular assessments on the women's involvement in the private sector will be carried out, aimed at providing a much better attention, so that the Labor Code can be successfully accomplished in both the state and private sectors, monitoring —with special attention in the private sector— the rights of women: specially the compliance with the standard working hours, vacations, and maternity leave.

-Training and retraining programs for women will be designed, including those labeled as untraditional trades for Them.

-The participation of female peasants, especially young peasants, in different source of employment for women, given the need to increase their involvement in the sector.

Other major subjects such as combatting violence against women can be found in this document, which do not raise enough awareness because people do not know their nuances, as it is usually viewed only as physical violence.

In this regard, as PAM states, it is necessary to foster education with gender approaches in both families and communities.

Although PAM is a major Governmental Program as governing document, it is well known that actions in favor of Cuban women are not new in the island.

Since the triumph of the Revolution in 1959, the legal basis and many others were laid to build an inclusive model of society, based on equity, social justice and the full emancipation of women.

So much so that, in the last national assessment carried out in 2013, the Action Plan of the Republic of Cuba, following the 4th UN Conference on Women, has recognized the development and achievements whilst identified the challenges and unresolved issues.

Hence, the approval of the *“National Plan for the Advancement of Women”* can be labeled as continuity process, a pivot in which all Cuban men and women can hold on to, so we can keep on dreaming and building the country we deserve.

