

# **Gender Human Development Report in Bolivia 2003**

## **Synopsis**

### **Introduction**

This report deals with gender and human development, and the way in which human development approach can contribute to advancing women's progress and achieving gender equity through conceptualizing women, not only as reform beneficiaries, but mainly as active agents in the process of transformation of their lives. This way of approaching the problem implies the development of gender policies leading mainly to build and develop women's capacity of hope, the capacity of exercising their rights to pursue their own freedom, and the capacity of participating actively in the collective processes of change.

This approach implies also broadening the center of attention of gender public policies from governments' "political will" to women's political capacities, understood as those through which women are capable of building individual and collective forces to affect the fundamental decisions concerning the lives of all women and future generations.

The internationalized feminist movement is a vivid example of how women's capacities and power is put into action, although this movement strength is not automatically transferred to local spaces where most of women do not have access to the movement, which they do not know, do not understand or do not feel like their own. The great question, to which today is essential to find an answer for : How can you lay bridges between that internationalized feminism, prolific in providing the metaphors and rhetoric, the political spaces and the new values for women emancipation; and the women who do not have access to internet, who are not connected to the web, who do not participate of feminist encounters, who do not feel called to the feminist movement or who, finally in most cases, do not know how to read or write?

This report holds that one of those roads is made of public policies, when they are participative, pluralistic and democratic. When they promote deliberative mechanisms of active participation, and when they accomplish mutual agreement and search of concrete results.

National Human Development Reports in Bolivia have dealt with these issues from various perspectives, which have also included a gender approach.

In 1998, the Bolivian Human Development Report raised that, indicators of human development had developed positively in the last 30 years, nevertheless they were much differentiated between regions, social and ethnic groups. The gaps tended to remain or even grow wider inside the country, among regions, among urban and rural areas and among cities, among ethnic groups and among men and women. Gender inequities were considered very critical, concluding that women have lower levels of human development than men and their education and income levels are below those of the masculine population. These gender inequities are intensified in areas (departments) with lower level of social indicators.

This report also accounted for lower socio-economic women's conditions, compared to those of men, at any level of desegregation and at any place of the country. However, differences within each of the groups appeared larger than the differences among the groups, inferring that the inequities of gender were transversal to social inequities.

The mentioned report concluded that in order to close the existing gaps it was required, among other things, that people were aware of them and that they took action to overcome them. Equity, as a goal or as a way of recovery, requires that people reject inequities and consider them as possible to modify.

Based on those conclusions, the Human Development Report in Bolivia 2000 emphasized the subjective dimensions of development, as an essential part of options for development centered in human beings. This subjective dimension applies to the values and expectations of people and the links they have or could have with social capital and quality of life, and to their mobilization in a country's dynamic.

In this second report, it is put into consideration that, in order to transform values and expectations of people into a dynamic mobilization of the country, they must be strengthened through a culture of democratic deliberation leading to favorable agreements for human development. In this regard, the chapter referred to Women and the Family in Human Development puts into consideration the uneven conditions of men and women for deliberation, sustaining that "one of the most rooted components in collective deliberation is the subordination of women, in public as well as in private spaces. This practice is present within a context of inequity, based on the systematic negation of the other self, linked also to the patriarchal system of the Bolivian Society".

In spite of these strong limitations, the report concludes that the various groups of women and also men, encountered spaces of confluence around concrete problems, such as the public rejection to family violence. It also concludes that, from the human development perspective, it is basic to promote agreements leading to achieve equity in gender in order to make day-to-day family and society relations more democratic, which mean new values and a critical attitude based on emancipating considerations that make gender relations and interpersonal relations a demand for political freedom.

These spaces of reflection open their way through profound changes in the composition of the nuclear family, enlargement of women employment, as well as changes in subjectivity related to universal demands of gender relations' democratization, public rejection to family violence and the need for greater political participation of women.

The Human Development Report in Bolivia 2002 puts into consideration the existence of a synergic and reciprocates relation between equity and will to deliberate. If people feel discriminated and excluded, or victim of social and economic inequity, its debating capacity will be diminished. In this regard, factors of social, economic, generational or gender exclusion, constitute enormous barriers for deliberation as a potential of political transformation. However, on the other hand, this report puts into consideration that the more the poor, the indigenous women compromises in debating instances, the more equity will be in actions and decisions surging from such instances. This leads to consider the importance of a strong and legitimate and based in equity values institutionalization, as promoter of debating processes.

In spite of the importance of these statements, the reports have treated the gender issue softly. This first Human Development Report in Bolivia centered in gender issues, gathers the statements of national reports, builds upon them and deepens into the problematic of women's political capacities as an expression of the stage of strength and legitimacy of institutionalization of gender within the State and, in a fundamental way, of the democratic values that direct those policies and its capabilities to promote deliberative processes.

The aim of this report is to accomplish a balance for the situation of gender issues in Bolivia at the beginning of the new millennium, and to establish some of the main challenges that the country has to face in the mid-term respecting women progress and equity in gender.

It is meant to be an analytic report in which emphasis is put in the political processes of management and implementation of public gender policies, their outcomes and the scenarios in which gender policies will be played the next decade.

The report is divided into two parts. In the first part, an analysis of the of gender reforms policies the last 10 years (1992-2002) trajectory is made, and particularly the processes which led to the promulgation of the Family Violence Law, the Quota Law and their implementation.

In the second part of the report, an analysis of the gender problematic situation in Bolivia is made on a comparative perspective of the region and the world, as well as a ten year term analysis of results of gender policies at national, departmental and municipal levels.

The analysis is mainly based on in depth interviews with some of the actresses and institutional representatives of the processes which made possible gender policies in the nineties, as well as a wide process of compilation, processing and analysis of statistical information, building of human development indicators related to gender, as the Gender Development Index (GDI), Gender Potentiality Index (GPI), as well as a gender equity index and its departmental and municipal desegregation.

The main goals of the approach, conclusions and proposals raised in this Report are to serve as instrumental for reflection and debate based on contributed empiric evidences.

Below are presented the main report's findings and conclusions and some outlines that, as means of proposals, surge to plan policy actions for gender in the next future.

## **Conclusions**

1. **The modernization processes in progress, as well as women actions have produced significant changes in the basic women's capacities in the last 10 years. These changes configure new scenarios, different to those of ten years ago, making the present scenery more complex in relation to changes expected in the next future.**

- In the last 10 years, Bolivia has improved the basic conditions, as well as the position of women in society. These advances have to do with two

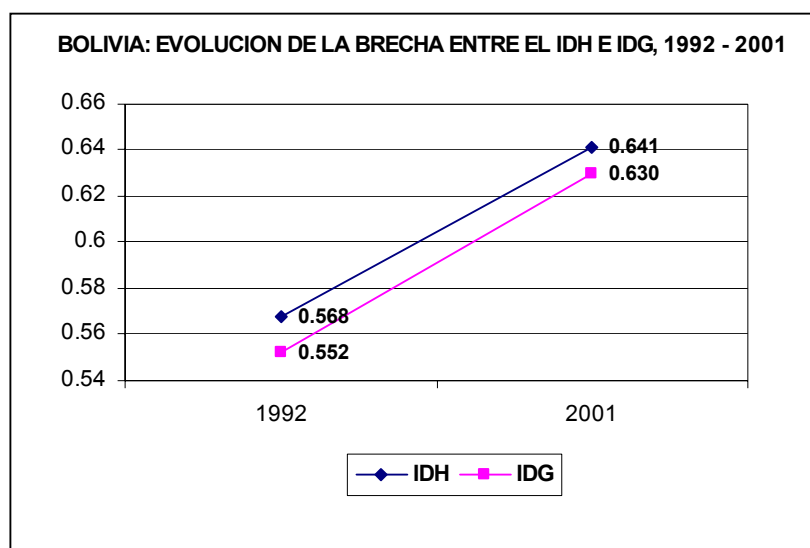
kinds of processes: the first is referred to changes in the economy and the employment structure with incorporation of a growing number of women to mercantile jobs, to increasing educational opportunities for women and to social and institutional reforms carried out in the country; and other, referred to public policies, which have aimed positively to balance some inequities of men and women's positions in society, as the one referred to the 30% share of political women's participation.

- Today, women's situation in the country is not the same as the one ten years ago. Today there are more women claiming for their rights and exercising them with their voice and their action, compared to those of ten years ago. They exercise their rights when they denounce the violence with which they are affected, when they denounce not having registered in candidate lists of town councilors correctly, when they denounce pressure and maltreatment as municipal councilors, and when they assume a political site in local governments, although they are conscious of the significance of those responsibilities and the enormous challenge and learning they imply for them. And they also exercise their rights when they integrate new organizations and claim for leadership.
- In the last decade, Bolivia has advanced, not only increasing the basic capacities of women, but also in equity of the basic capacities distribution among men and women. This can be seen reflected in the

Graphic 1

**Bolivia: Evolution of the gap**

**Between HDI (IDH) and GDI (IDG), 1992 – 2001**



fact that the gap of the GDI in respect to the HDI has been reduced compared to the one ten years ago. Educational opportunities of women have been improved, their political participation has advanced considerably, women's economical participation is practically similar to the men's, and the access of women to economic levels of decision making is much greater today than ten years ago.

- New women's organized political participation spaces have been generated and also new feminine leadership that claims for participation in decision making in women's organizations. In this regard, the women's movement has been enlarged in the last ten years, new women's organizations in the fields of action and influence have surged, such as the Political Forum for Women and the Bolivia Town Council Association. This way, from the perspective of the enhancement of the women's capacities for action and human development, women's movement is going through a series of transformation that, although they do not end fully suiting, they aim to their renovation and strengthening.
- Today, action capacity of women seems to have been enlarged. Today, political women, town councilors, women in parliament, and also many other women in the professional, economic and business areas begin to feel as genuine change agents with regard to equity in gender and the patriarchal culture.
- At the same time, actions of gender public policies are facing today diverse scenarios, and mostly more complex than those of ten years ago. While some municipalities and regions in the country require "basic" actions to close inequity gaps, other have reached such achievements that it becomes necessary to think about more complex policies, of greater local specialty, which require, much more than before, participation of all local actors and actresses.
- Last years' experience show the importance the "second generation" reforms have had, as the popular participation, the educational reform as well as institutional reforms on gender policies. Actually, it ends up to be practically impossible to think about gender reforms in the last decade out of the social and State reforms context carried out in this period.

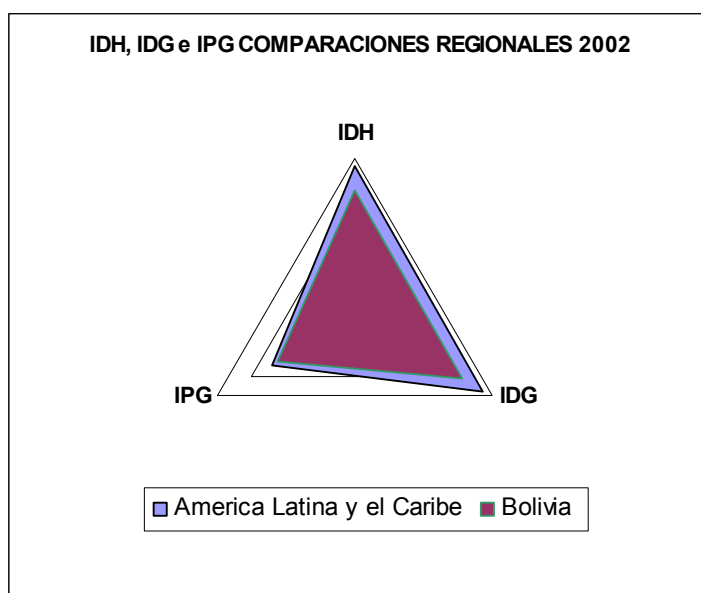
2. **In spite of advances that can be accounted for as a result of the last decade, it is much left for the future, if the problem to be faced is considered in all its magnitude. In this regard, a hard limit is the persistence almost unalterable of patriarchal and patrimonial features in the Bolivian society, which hardly can be changed through a reformist path. These hard limits are, above all, of cultural nature, which only can be reversed through a conscious and reflexive action, mainly of women, in all areas of action.**

- In Bolivia, as in most countries, the women's development rate respecting that of men, does not reach equality . Bolivia, with a Gender

Development rate of 0.630 and with a relative difference of almost two percent points in relation to its Human Development rate. It is a country which treats

Graphic 2

**HDI(IDH), GDI (IDG) and GPI (IPG)  
Regional comparisons 2002**



women unequally in respect to men and which is far from reaching an ideal degree of development.

- Disparity degrees in relation to alphabetization between men and women in Bolivia are yet high in comparison with other Latin American and world countries.
- An indicator of the magnitude of what remains to be done, is the fact that even though advances have been made in the last decade respecting opportunities for women, Bolivia is found still in a backward position in respect to women's advances in their capacities and gender equity in other countries of the world and also of Latin America, and even though they show a medium level of gender development, it's situation is still closer to the lower developed countries (African) than those of greater development relating gender (Nordic or even neighboring countries).
- In respect to distribution of power among men and women related to economic resources, participation in professional spaces and participation in economic and political decision making, the Bolivian situation is considerably less equitable than in countries such as Sweden or Norway, although it is closer to Latin American and the Caribbean

countries, where the average of feminine participation in economic and political spaces for decision making hardly surpasses the Bolivian level.

**3 Basic capacities in which women are more advanced are those relating to education, economic and professional participation, and the more back warded is the one related to income. That is to say, the largest backward feature in gender equity is related to income distribution. This feature is attributable almost strictly to cultural reasons, since women labor participation in the country is very high.**

- Analysis of the various components of the Gender Potentiality Index shows how the higher percentage of advancement was given in economic and professional participation of women (70%), and the lower, related to income distribution (2.5%). Advancement in political participation reached 16%. Thus, it can be concluded that in Bolivia the burden distribution and the economic responsibility fall, practically on an equitable way, upon men and women (without considering domestic

Chart 1

**Bolivia: GPI (IPG) evolution and its components 1992 - 2001**

**EVOLUCION DEL IPG Y SUS COMPONENTES 1992-2001**

	Valor	EDEP Participación Política	EDEP Participación Económica y Profesional	EDEP Ingresos
<b>IPG</b>	15.70%	15.50%	70.00%	2.50%

**FUENTE:** Elaboración Propia en base a datos Ine

labor), on the other hand, this effort's benefits are distributed mainly among men, among other things, because they still hold in their hands virtually all political decision making.

- Growth of economic participation of women is inversely proportional to evolution of the sexual labor segregation. This means that, although gender equity in economic and mercantile participation has positively evolved, equity related to quality of the economic insertion has otherwise tended to diminish.
- Respecting income distribution, gaps between men and women have tended to maintain themselves or become larger even though educational levels have tended to equalize.

**4. Inside Bolivia enormous disparities exist in advancement degrees of women and equity in gender.**

- In none of the Bolivian departments women are treated in equal conditions as men. This becomes obvious by verifying that the Gender

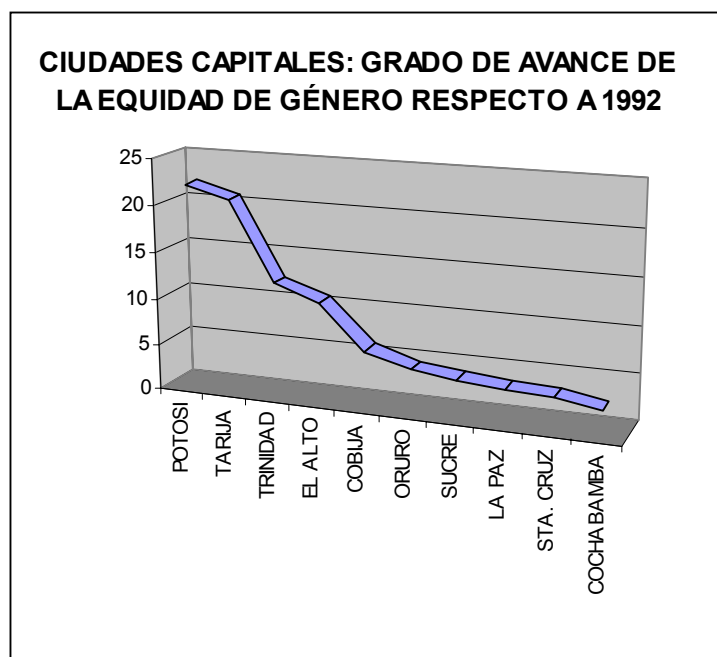
Chart 2  
**Bolivia: Gender Equity related  
to basic capacities, 2001**

EQUIDAD DE GÉNERO RELATIVA A CAPACIDADES  
BÁSICAS, 2001

	VARIACION RELATIVA IDH-IDG
<b>BOLIVIA</b>	<b>2.17</b>
Cochabamba	2.23
Chuquisaca	2.67
Tarija	2.99
Santa Cruz	3.24
Oruro	3.27
La Paz	3.29
Beni	3.33
Potosi	3.74
Pando	5.53

**Fuente:** Elaboración Propia

Graphic 5  
**Capital cities: Evolution of gender equity (1992 –2001)**





Development Rate value is smaller than the Human Development Rate value.

- Advancement shown in the country respecting the capacities increase of women, as well as in distribution of those capacities among women and men, show great departmental disparities.
- In the last decade gender development increased in all departments, even though improvement rhythms had been despair. Departments of the central axle: Santa Cruz, Cochabamba and La Paz are the ones with smaller advancement with respect to 1992; on the other hand, Pando, Potosí and Oruro had achieved a greater rhythm of advancement.
- Departments where basic capacities of women reach higher comparative levels are not necessarily those where gender equity is the highest. While the Department with the higher Gender Development Rate is Santa Cruz, being a question of equity in the capacities distribution among men and women, this department is found among the least equitable.
- Equity in gender conditions does not depend either on the income level. Departments with higher levels of income have, at the same time, the highest levels of gender inequity. This is for example the Pando case.
- There are not great differences among Departments respecting the evolution of economic and professional decision making levels of participation; on the other hand, disparities are great when it is a question of representation and political decision making participation. While one Department like Oruro could surpass its political participation level in more than 40% respecting 1992, other Departments like Beni and Pando suffered a rather regressive tendency.

**5. The fact that the Country shows today a clearer landscape of gender equity than ten year ago, does not signify that advancement have been lineal or homogenous.**

- Most of the municipalities in the country show a higher gender equity rate in respect to 1992; this allows to state that in their majority the tendency of the last ten years has been oriented to close the gap of gender inequities. However, this rate also shows that there exist municipalities where today is found the same equity level than ten years ago, while some have tended to step back in stead of going forward.
- These despair tendencies can not be explained through structural factors related to poverty or the municipalities urbanization degree. Municipalities with very high poverty rates have tended to improve in equity and vice versa, municipalities with very low poverty percentages have tended to move back in equity. In the same way, many

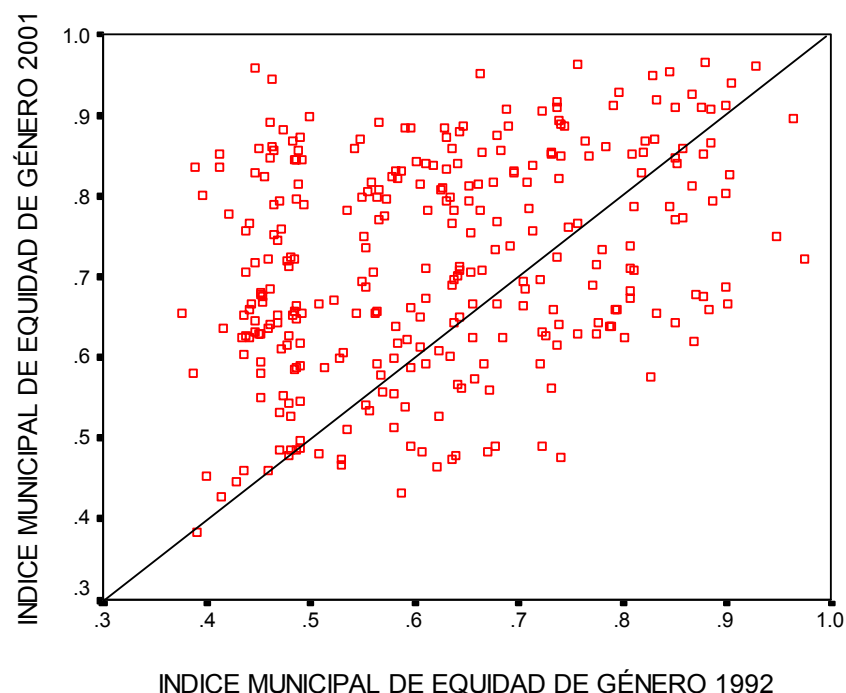
municipalities eminently rural have increased equity, and other, with high degrees of urbanization have become less equitable.

- Changes on political participation have direct relationship with the Quota Law, although an important advance like this depends upon factors that can determine divergent tendencies. As well as an increase in equity is appreciated, measured by the fact that municipalities where gender equity was equal to 0 in 1992 and that they turned to have medium and high equity rates, the contrary tendency has also been given, that is to say, municipalities with medium and high equity rates in 1992 have turned to have low, or even null, equity rates.

6. **Finally, gender policies, like those within the Family Violence Law and the Quota Law, based on strategies and actions widely concerted, that started recognizing and utilizing previously existing advancements and nets, that combined technique with politics and opened spaces to participation and leading roles in new women's "sectors", which could transcend formulation and approval of rules and regulations leading to the establishment of operational mechanisms, in spite of the fact of all its limitations, were successful policies.**

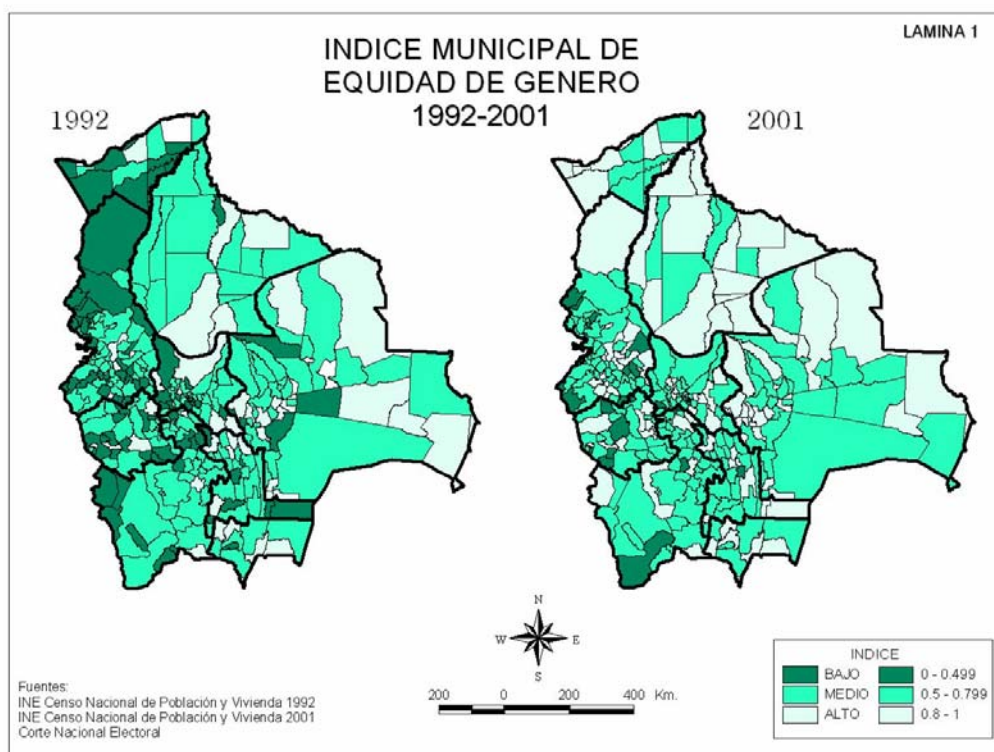
Graphic 5.1

**Municipal Rate of Gender Equity (1992 – 2001)**



They were successful mainly because they could transcend vicissitudes of institutional weakness characteristic of the country, and they were successful, above all, because they attained that organizations and women activity groups compromised with change were created around them, widening, this way, their capacity of agency.

Graphic 9  
Gender Equity Municipal Rate 1992-2001



### Looking to the future

- Everything induces to think that the possibility of leading effective gender policies in the future is played in ampler and more complex fields of action in respect to those configured ten years ago. Today, gender propositions and actions reforms go through diverse regions, diverse socio-economic and socio-cultural groups and through feminine representation, which are opening their space especially in the municipalities, and which require to be strengthen on deliberation and through pluralistic and concerted action.
- These new scenarios deal with the necessity of attaining ampler and stronger alliances; they deal with the necessity of deliberative and concerting capacities; they suggest the necessity of strategies and agendas built through deliberation, based on the idea of the common well being; they suggest the necessity of concreted agendas, of coordinated actions and shared responsibilities to contribute to strengthen also the

idea of agent capacity in its meaning of capacity of amplifying and deepening what has been achieved so far.

- Today challenges are more complex than ten years ago, and the fundamental role of the present State's gender instance will have to be one of facilitator, impelling and cohesion maker of reflection, proposals, strategies and actions toward a renewed women's movement.
- Situations like these raise new challenges, which, in many cases cannot be approached with the same strategies, centralized in a great scale of ten years ago. This new scenarios configuration, linked to the enlargement of agent capacity of women in diverse fields of action, suggest the necessity of decentralized policies, of variable geometry, highly participative and able to respond to diverse types of interests. Only in this way it will be possible to "capitalize" achievements of the last decade, oriented to amplify, deepen and strengthen changes and Bolivian women's capacities, so they can live the type of life they have reasons to value.
- Apparently, the policies executed from the more centralized higher levels require variable geometric strategies to get into more specific fields of action and in particular situations, given that, while in some places there are new and better scenarios for advancement of equity, in others the more basic processes are barely being initiated.
- In the future, those challenges appear to focus in articulate , from the public gender policies capacities, all these changes leading to attain a synergic larger degree in basic capacities for educational and economic participation of women and in their participation capacity and decision making on the Country's economic and political areas; and also as a constructive capacity oriented to women's rights, but also, fundamentally, as a factor for amplifying and getting deeper in those advancements which allow reaching an optimal degree of gender equity for the human development of the Country.

**Finally, and as a corollary, last years' experiences show that the road to an equitable gender development and women advancement and their liberty, does not fall in a single reformist option, neither in an excluding feminist option.** Human development is made by people as an end, but, above all, as a mean for development. Therefore, from this report's perspective, the political objectives of gender should be oriented towards equality of opportunities of agency and human development.