



Beijing + 15 Conference
Mesa por la Vida y la Salud de las Mujeres - Colombia

(<http://www.despenalizaciondelaborto.org.co>)

New York, 1 – 12 of March, 2010

In Colombia, abortion is illegal except in three extreme and particular circumstances: an imminent threat to life or health of the women; malformation of the fetus; and pregnancy resulting of rape. Currently, the Government does not keep updated statistics on the impact of unsafe abortions in the lives of women, and on maternal mortality. Additionally, the Government lacks any public policy aimed at reducing unsafe abortions and maternal mortality.

Consequently, the Colombian state has failed to meet the international commitments established in the Beijing Platform for Action, which seeks to further enhance **the advancement and empowerment of women all over the world**. This platform is part of a set of commitments and treaties that the government has signed in the subject of public health, in particular regarding the promotion and protection of the *right of all women to control all aspects of their health, in particular their own fertility*. This has been made evident by:

A. The actions set in motion by the Superintendent-General, Alejandro Ordóñez, in order to obtain the annulment of the Constitutional Court's Decision T-388/2009, which demands major information campaigns on sexual and reproductive rights, including the right to have a VIP in the three cases that were de-criminalized by the same Court. The Superintendent-General argues that in Colombia abortion is not a right but a crime with a few exceptions, which is detrimental to the commitment to *Provide more accessible, available and affordable primary health-care services of high quality, including sexual and reproductive health care, which includes family planning information and services*.

B. The establishment of a special supervising committee by the Special Superintendent on Family and Women, and authorized by the Superintendent-General Alejandro Ordóñez, to oversee that the *Women's Clinic* from Medellín does not practice procedures related to the Voluntary Interruption of Pregnancy (VIP), even in the three cases de-criminalized by the Constitutional Court (Decision C355/06), which are: an imminent threat to life or health of the women; malformation of the fetus; and pregnancy resulting of rape, which is hostile to Strategic Objectives C.1, *increase women's access throughout the life cycle to appropriate, affordable and quality health care, information and related services*, and C.2., *strengthen preventive programs that promote women's health*.

C. The lack of control over and slow resolution of the cases concerning individual and collective conscientious objection regarding the provision of the VIP, and the promotion of conscientious objection itself by the Superintendent-General (see Memorandum No. 30 of May 13 2009), objecting to the commitment to *Ensure that all health services and workers conform to human rights and to ethical, professional and gender-sensitive standards in the delivery of women's health services aimed at ensuring responsible, voluntary and informed consent; encourage the development, implementation and dissemination of codes of ethics guided by existing international codes of medical ethics as well as ethical principles that govern other health professionals*

D. Not renewing an agreement of technical advice for civil servants from the Superintendent-General's Office about the implementation of the Constitutional Court's Decision on the de-criminalization of abortion (Decision C355/06), which the previous Superintendent-General had signed. This is a clear setback in the area of institutional development toward the promotion of *gender equality and the empowerment of women in all ministerial sectors*.