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COMMONWEALTH OF PUERTO RICO

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Department of Puerto Rican Community Affairs

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IN THE UNITED STATES

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DATE

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TO

Ofic. de la Primera Dama

ATTN:

Sra. Mimosa Capera

FROM

Nydia M. Velázquez

SUBJECT:

Invitación sobre discursos  
"Annual Conference Latin America"

NUMBER OF PAGES

4 + COVER

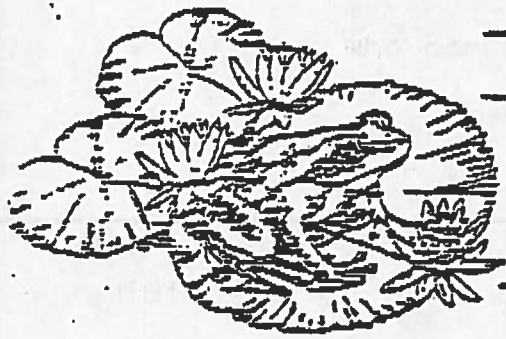
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COMMENTS



EL COQUI

Statement of the Dona Lila Mayoral de Hernandez, First Lady of Puerto Rico -On the occasion of the Region II Displaced Homemakers Network, Annual Conference Gala Luncheon - October 19, 1990 - Taj Mahal, Atlantic City, New Jersey.

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, honorees, guests and friends.

First and foremost, I wish to thank the Conference organizers and the sponsoring agencies -- for inviting me to be a part of this experience to share and to strengthen the ties among women's organizations. I am delighted to be in an atmosphere where we can reaffirm the significance and importance of women in the work force and where we can prepare the groundwork for the challenges women will be facing in the coming century.

Second, as the first lady of Puerto Rico, I am proud to be here on behalf of the women of Puerto Rico, who represent more than half of the total population on the island and who are the most affected by public policies in employment, education and social programs.

Notwithstanding the obstacles faced by women in all societies, the Puerto Rican woman is representative of the enduring strength and courage found in all women: the nurturers, the educators, the healers, and the soldiers who combat the indignities of social injustice.

As survivors of discrimination, sexual harassment, the social ills of poverty, poor education and lack of political representation and access to economic progress, women continuously demonstrate an incredible ability to excel and contribute considerably to the fabric of our society.

For the most part, women are considered the unsung heroes, the anonymous inventors, and the dedicated followers. In our society, people are reluctant to accept women as leaders. There is a resistance

to changing ill-informed expectations in the light of new evidence that clearly demonstrates that women are desirous and extremely capable of managing their lives.

Yet we must advocate, through public policy and legislation, for the recognition of women as officers, administrators, managers, authors, and engineers and full participants in all institutions and organizations.

The creation of governmental agencies such as the New York State and New Jersey State Divisions for Women, the Women's Affairs Commission of the Office of the Governor of Puerto Rico, exemplify the initiatives that can be undertaken to begin the laborious process of reeducating our society to encourage and support women to fulfill their objectives.

There are clearly barriers that impact tremendously on the ability of women to assume more responsibility in leadership roles. Through our Women's Affairs Commission, the objectives of education, empowerment and development characterize its daily work. These objectives are interdependent, as development and empowerment are products of the education process.

In the last few years, the Commission has focussed its educational priorities in the areas of domestic violence, educational equity, sexual harassment and affirmative action.

These efforts, at diverse levels and in multiple directions, has as its prime objective, the education of a whole community in those issues that impact on women and their ability to advance their position in Puerto Rican society. As Puerto Rican women, our fate is largely tied to that of our families. Our culture does not allow us the luxury of ignoring the needs of our community for our own personal

gains.

To achieve these goals, the Commission has utilized mass

communication, and the publication of educational materials for distribution; the coordination of activities with a massive impact such as regional conferences and symposia, workshops with diverse groups; training sessions with professional groups and workers in the public and private sectors. The Commission, through direct services to women, has also realized its educational objectives.

Without a doubt, this indicates the spectra of opportunities that are available to influence public opinion on women, and consequently on all members of our society.

Our future is also linked with our ability to influence the political process. To ensure that we make the necessary gains in education and employment we must improve our participation in the political system.

As women, we face a special challenge. Rather than join the ranks of the unemployed and undereducated, we must ensure that women become a political force to ensure the delivery of goods and services -- whether it's enhanced bilingual education, new job opportunities or improvements in a health care delivery system.

As well as registering to vote and participating at the ballot box, we are encouraging women to actively work in political campaigns and to develop the technical expertise necessary to fully participate in the political process. We must prepare ourselves to learn the nuts and bolts of political organization. We must move from being merely petition carriers to political strategists and election lawyers.

Just as important is encouraging women to enter the political

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The future of my people is as much in the hands of our women as in the hands of our men. The Government of Puerto Rico is committed to developing the women of our society so that the totality of our

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collective talents and resources are utilized to maximize our ability to face the challenge of the 21st century.

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