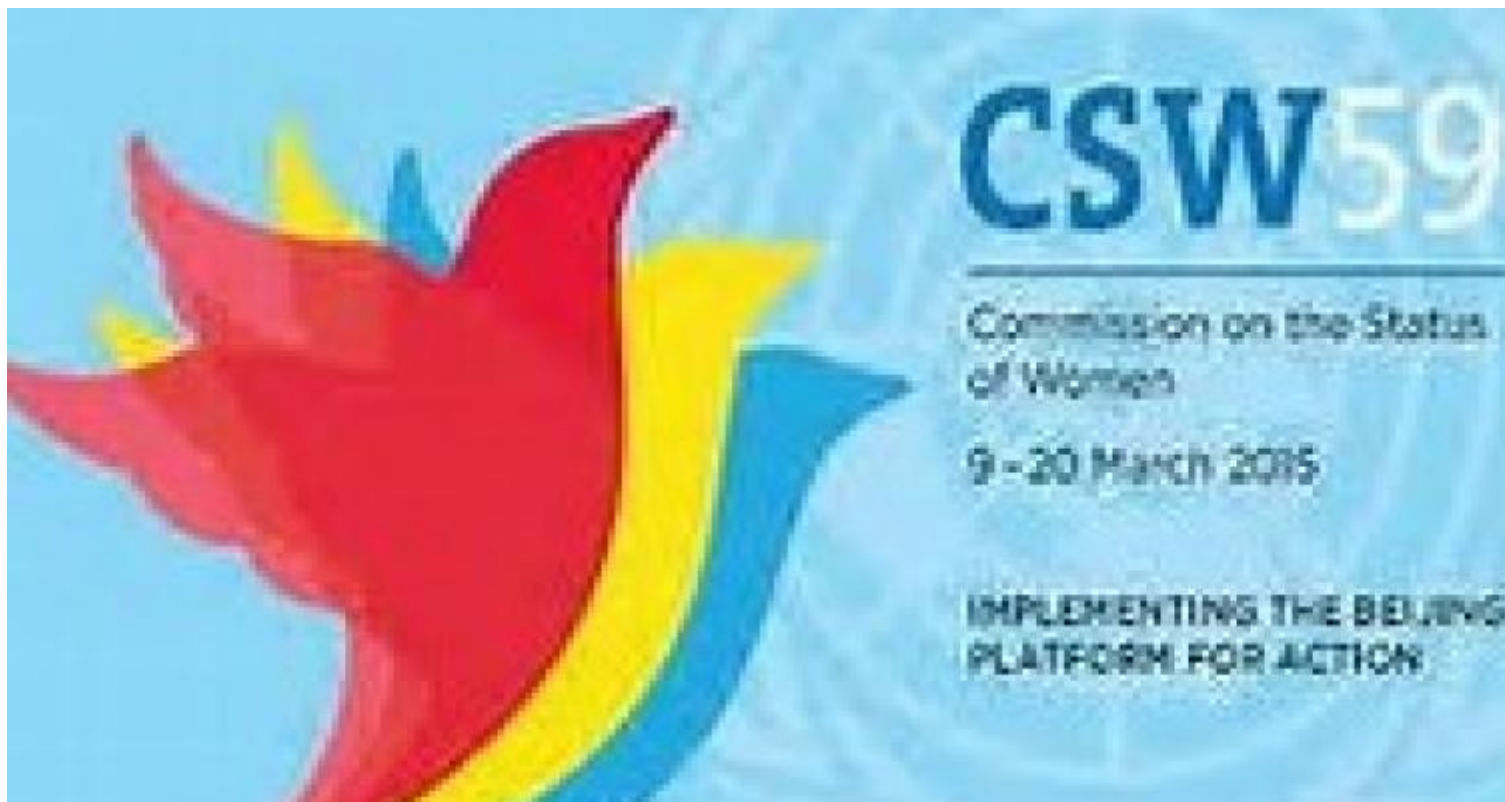


Cuba Defends at UN Empowering of Women



Havana, March 10 (RHC) — Cuba demanded at the United Nations more global commitment to gender equality and the empowering of women, in tune with the goals agreed to 20 years ago on the Beijing Declaration and Plan of Action.

Addressing the opening of the 59 Session of the Commission of Women, the general secretary of the Cuban Women's Federation, Teresa Amarelle, acknowledged the progress made since the Beijing conference but she said they are still far off from the objectives proposed by the international community in the Chinese capital.

We have noticed evident advancement in discussions and in the laws and mechanisms, but the dreams about equality continue to be aspirations and goals to be reached by millions of women around the world, said the Cuban representative.

For Amarelle, it is now time to meet the commitment made two decades ago, when 12 priorities were identified for gender equality, such as the fight on poverty and violence, access to education and healthcare, and the participation of women in political, economic and social life of society.

The problems facing women have worsened with the current world economic crisis, wars and increasing deterioration of the natural environment, said the Cuban representative.

As to the situation of Cuban women, Amarelle stressed that they represent 48 percent of state workers and 46 percent of company executives. She added that the women's unemployment rate in 1995, the year of the Beijing Conference, was 13 percent and in 2013 that indicator fell to only 3.5 percent.

Amarelle also said that at present 49 of Cuban parliamentarians are women, while the country's Council of State counts on 13 women, with two of them being vice-presidents of the Council of State, which has five members.

The Cuban women's leader said that every result achieved constitutes a starting point to face new challenges in terms of gender equality and empowering.

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