

UNITED NATIONS

**ECONOMIC COMMISSION
FOR LATIN AMERICA
AND THE CARIBBEAN - ECLAC**



Distr.
LIMITED

LC/L.1654(MDM.33/4)
8 February 2002

ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: SPANISH

**REPORT OF THE THIRTY-THIRD MEETING OF THE PRESIDING
OFFICERS OF THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON WOMEN
IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

(Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, 9-11 October 2001)

CONTENTS

	<i>Paragraph</i>	<i>Page</i>
A. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK.....	1-7	1
Place and date of meeting	1	1
Attendance	2-6	1
Chairperson and rapporteur.....	7	2
B. AGENDA.....	8	2
C. SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS	9-52	2
D. AGREEMENTS ADOPTED	53	12
Annex - LIST OF PARTICIPANTS	-	15

A. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

Place and date of meeting

1. The Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean held their thirty-third meeting from 9 to 11 October 2001 in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.

Attendance

2. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following member countries and associate members of ECLAC: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Jamaica, Mexico, Netherlands Antilles, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Puerto Rico, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Trinidad and Tobago, and Venezuela.

3. Representatives of the following programmes and bodies of the United Nations system also participated as observers: United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

4. The following specialized agencies of the United Nations were represented at the meeting: International Labour Organization (ILO), World Health Organization/Pan American Health Organization (WHO/PAHO), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Telecommunications Union (ITU).

5. The following intergovernmental organizations participated in the meeting: Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Inter-American Commission of Women of the Organization of American States (OAS) and Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA).

6. The following special guests were present: Violet Barriteau, Head, Centre for Gender and Development Studies of the University of the West Indies in Barbados, Virginia Guzmán, Consultant; Denise Noel-Debique, Regional Program Coordinator for the Canadian International Development Agency and Juliet Solomon, Associate Expert with the Gender Advisory Services Unit of the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women.

Chairperson and rapporteur

7. The meeting was presided over by the representative of Peru. The duties of rapporteur were performed by the delegation of Mexico.

B. AGENDA

8. The Presiding Officers adopted the following agenda:
1. Adoption of the agenda
 2. Review of activities relating to poverty eradication carried out by the Presiding Officers and the ECLAC secretariat since the thirty-second meeting of the Presiding Officers
 3. Evaluation and follow-up of provisions and resolutions adopted at the eighth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean (Lima, Peru, 8-10 February 2000) and at the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century" (New York, 5-9 June 2000)
 4. Report on activities relating to poverty eradication carried out by specialized agencies and other bodies of the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations
 5. High-level seminar on gender mainstreaming in public policies in Latin America and the Caribbean (**one and a half days devoted to special panel sessions**)
 6. Planned activities of the Presiding Officers and the ECLAC secretariat
 7. Other matters

C. SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

9. At the opening session of the meeting, statements were made by the Deputy Executive Secretary of ECLAC, Mr. Reynaldo Bajraj; the acting Chairperson of the Presiding Officers, Mr. Antonio Garcia Revilla; the Director of the UNFPA Latin America and Caribbean Division, Ms. Marisela Padron; and the Director of Gender Affairs of the Ministry of Community Empowerment, Sport and Consumer Affairs of Trinidad and Tobago, Ms. Aileen Clarke.

10. In his opening statement the Deputy Executive Secretary of ECLAC took note of the overarching importance of the thematic focus of the thirty-third meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean. Poverty was one of the greatest obstacles to the Latin American and Caribbean region's progress towards a more just society. Contrary to popular belief, poverty not only hurt the poor, but instead undermined the development of all peoples in the region because it deprived society as a whole of the participation and contributions of large sectors of the population. History had shown that any attempt to maintain or develop islands of wealth in a sea of poverty were doomed to failure. ECLAC had recently completed a long-term retrospective analysis of the

social situation in the region during the 1990s as a basis for drawing lessons for the future. The figures demonstrated that although poverty had decreased in relative terms during the 1990s, it had actually increased in absolute terms. They also showed that, while in economic terms the 1980s were viewed as a “lost decade” because it had taken the region 10 years to regain the position it had held prior to the debt crisis, when the situation was viewed from a social perspective, the region had needed a full two decades to regain the ground it had lost since 1980. When the “hard data” provided by such research was viewed from a social perspective, it became clear how the conditions existing in poor households set the stage for the inter-generational perpetuation of poverty.

11. If the region were to fulfil the objective established at the Millennium Summit of halving poverty by 2015, its economy would have to grow at an average rate of around 4% per annum until then. The region had not managed to achieve that rate during the 1990s, even though it had started from such a low basis of comparison. What was more, income distribution had deteriorated since then in a majority of cases and, although overall population growth had declined, the working-age population was still expanding owing to the lagged effect of the decline and to the increase in the number of women entering the labour force. The end result was a stagnation of productivity growth especially in the informal sectors where most of the poor population was employed. Consequently, a large sector of the region’s population was not only poor, but had little access to opportunities for escaping poverty. The Governments of the region had mounted a remarkable effort to cope with the situation by raising social expenditure levels quite sharply, and ECLAC was now working to determine how those various trends would shape the situation in the coming decade. Two main factors in that analysis —social capital and financing for development— were particularly influential in the case of women. Indeed, if the region were to succeed in redressing gender imbalances, it would succeed in all the spheres of action being pursued for the benefit of its people. That was why the experiences that the countries would share at the meeting were so important, and ECLAC stood ready to collaborate in every way possible as they moved forward in the struggle against poverty.

12. The Chairperson of the Presiding Officers characterized the eradication of poverty as the foremost challenge for contemporary society. Social groups were called upon to play a key role in the effort to meet that challenge, since it was neither technically nor politically feasible to implement any poverty reduction programme without their involvement. There was no one formula that would resolve the problem of poverty, but experience had shown that sustainable economic growth and investment were two important elements in any effective strategy. Paradoxically, however, the impact of the cowardly attacks of September 11th on world growth would be enormous, especially in developing countries. In fact, a recent World Bank report estimated that the September 11th attacks would increase both poverty and child mortality. The resulting state of affairs called for redoubled efforts to galvanize regional and international agreements aimed at eradicating poverty, promoting social integration and strengthening human security. Clearly, the gender dimension of strategies for achieving those aims was fundamental, given women’s disproportionate representation among the ranks of the poor. A stronger democratic society based on principles of social and gender equality and the inclusion of all social groups were the only foundation upon which sustainable development could be achieved.

13. In March 2000, Peru had been chosen to chair the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean for the period following its eighth session. That honour had given Peru the opportunity to reaffirm its commitment to the principle of equality of conditions and opportunities for women as a core element in human development. The exchange of experiences that would take place during the present meeting could be drawn upon in order to enhance the effectiveness of sectoral efforts in the countries. In the specific case of Peru, after having taken office as the President of Peru, Mr. Alejandro Toledo had recognized the dramatic situation existing in the country and had announced that a

frontal attack on poverty would be his Administration's main line of action in its effort to achieve modernization, economic growth and inclusive development based on decent employment, quality education and integral health care. The new Administration was working for the empowerment of women in all spheres of society and, as part of that effort, Peru had ratified the optional protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Although a great deal remained to be done, the key elements in the social agenda of President Toledo's Administration were oriented towards combating poverty and, within that context, were devoting special attention to children, women, the elderly and indigenous peoples.

14. The Director of the UNFPA Latin America and Caribbean Division said that she was pleased to be speaking on behalf of the cooperation agencies of the United Nations system that were working alongside the delegates attending the thirty-third meeting of the Presiding Officers. The theme of poverty, which had been chosen for detailed consideration during the meeting, was of the utmost importance, and the data provided by the ECLAC secretariat on poverty in the region were extremely useful and greatly appreciated. Poverty had been on the public agenda since the 1980s, but in those early years, the countries' poverty reduction strategies had focused primarily on compensatory social measures designed to offset the impact of economic adjustment and had, for the most part, had little more than a palliative effect. More recently, the World Bank and other lending institutions had taken up the issue and had begun to offer resources for poverty reduction initiatives because they had come to view poverty as a multi-faceted obstacle to development. United Nations agencies were convinced that the eradication of poverty should be viewed from the perspective of human rights, rather than solely in terms of its negative economic impact, because poverty effectively prevented people from exercising their basic rights. Achieving the poverty reduction targets established at the Millennium Summit was a formidable challenge for the region, since it would have to attain higher growth rates than it had managed to achieve in the preceding decade, but it was nevertheless a challenge from which the region must not turn away. It was extremely gratifying to hear Ambassador Garcia's assurance of the Toledo Administration's political will to achieve a reduction in poverty and its inclusion of community participation as an important component of its strategy.

15. The work being done by women's offices in the region to reduce poverty needed to be focused on strategic efforts that would have a longer-term impact. Compensatory policies having an immediate effect were important, but they needed to be combined with longer-term policy efforts. It was clear that poverty could not be addressed solely from a social policy stance, since poverty reduction measures also needed to be part of an economic policy aimed at galvanizing the economy and its formal-sector job creation capacity. Mainstreaming the gender perspective in poverty reduction measures was a pending task in the region and was part of a broader challenge to be faced by United Nations agencies. At another level, the control of budget formulation and the monitoring programme outcomes, albeit eminently political activities, remained an important area of the work of the agencies in view of their commitment to protecting the rights of men and women. The development of gender indicators was a highly important initiative; such indicators would be a very valuable means not only of measuring progress in fulfilling international commitments, but also as an advocacy tool. ECLAC and its Women and Development Unit had done extremely productive work in that field, and the agencies had decided to form a task force to assist in that effort. One of the most important aspects of the work outlined was to identify differentiated indicators which would provide greater scope for exercising political pressure and for mobilizing civil society and resources.

16. The Director of Gender Affairs of the Ministry of Community Empowerment, Sport and Consumer Affairs said that it was an honour and a privilege to welcome the delegations participating in the thirty-third meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Commission to the islands of Trinidad

and Tobago. The tasks before them were enormous, but not impossible. They had the opportunity to build a path that would lead the region forward in its struggle to eradicate poverty. The challenges were not new ones. On the contrary, they had been engaged in the process for many years. Yet renewed attention was now being paid to the situation of men and the disparities in their life experiences. Governments were becoming aware of the differential impact of policies on men and women and were beginning to formulate approaches for addressing those differences. However, although some strides had been made, the countries needed to renew their commitment to combat all elements that impinged upon the holistic development of the region. Within the context of the current meeting's special emphasis on poverty eradication strategies, it was important to recognize that economic globalization and structural adjustments continued to have a negative impact on the population, and especially on the least economically developed strata of the region's societies.

17. The Director urged the participants to strive, in the course of their deliberations, to keep uppermost in their minds the need to establish a regional framework that would empower people to live in solidarity and would ensure sustainable development for the good of all. The struggle for gender equality should be seen as a key instrument and strategy for lifting millions of people out of poverty and as a central component of the wider struggle for human rights for all.

Review of activities relating to poverty eradication carried out by the Presiding Officers and the ECLAC secretariat since the thirty-second meeting of the Presiding Officers (agenda item 2)

18. The representative of the ECLAC Population Division - Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE) gave a presentation on sociodemographic vulnerability in Latin America and the Caribbean. The concept of vulnerability was defined in a variety of ways, but as used within the context of population and development by CELADE, the concept was understood to refer to the combination of a set of sociodemographic risks and an inability to cope with the adverse social impacts of the materialization of those risks. The progress made in preparing the study on sociodemographic vulnerability, which had been entrusted to ECLAC at its twenty-eighth session and for which generous substantive support was being provided by the UNFPA Latin America and Caribbean Division, had given rise to a number of *idées-force* relating to the risks entailed in demographic lags, the risks involved in the ageing of the population seen in the latter stages of the demographic transition, and persistent yet qualitatively evolving risks.

19. A number of very informative graphs and tables were presented in order to illustrate the data that had been compiled on differing situations in the region with regard to infant mortality, the burden represented by child-rearing responsibilities, changes in fertility rates among adolescents, ongoing differentials between desired and observed fertility, initiation of the reproductive cycle, changes in rates of fertility and childbirth outside of marriage, discontinuities associated with the modernization process as it related to demographic trends, and the identification of a secondary stage in the demographic transition involving more independent choices with respect to marriage and childbirth based on individual life decisions. The policy inputs generated by the study referred to means of controlling sociodemographic risks, the differing degrees of feasibility of averting different types of risks and the duality of sociodemographic risks in the region.

20. The Chief of the ECLAC Women and Development Unit presented a paper on policies for empowering women as a poverty-reduction strategy. The author of the document noted that most poverty indicators currently in use were aggregate measurements that used the household as their unit of analysis and were therefore not gender-sensitive. That approach constituted a major constraint for efforts to

analyse the phenomenon because it did not provide all the information needed to understand the relevant economic, social, political and cultural issues. Studies conducted from a gender perspective, on the other hand, furnished information on poverty's differentiated impacts on men and women, as well as providing incontrovertible evidence that poverty generated greater problems of vulnerability and exclusion for women and their families and reduced women's opportunities for escaping poverty even more than it did in the case of men.

21. The debate concerning poverty went far beyond the discussion of tools for measuring its implications for women, however. One of the most interesting concepts that was emerging was the idea of *social exclusion*, which afforded a view of poverty as the deprivation of capacities rather than simply as a deprivation of income or as a set of unmet basic needs. That concept had sparked interest in ascertaining to what extent society was equipping women to act as full-fledged citizens and to become fully involved in building a democratic society in which their rights would be upheld and wealth would be redistributed on an equitable basis. The foregoing considerations underpinned an appreciation of poverty's multi-dimensionality and a recognition of the need to analyse the *relational* aspects of exclusion and the specific ways in which they were linked to power relations at the household and community levels. By itself, however, the concept of exclusion did not provide a sufficient basis for an understanding of the gender dynamics of poverty; it needed to be used in conjunction with the concept of *empowerment* in order to arrive at a fuller understanding of the avenues by which people can gain greater control over their lives. In fact, it could be defined as the means by which authority and empowerment were won, developed, seized or facilitated as part of a process that was the very antithesis of paternalism and the essence of autonomous action.

22. The concept of exclusion, when linked with those of empowerment and autonomy, provided a means of arriving at an understanding of the complexity of poverty while maintaining the essential distinction between the component aspects of poverty and those aspects that played an instrumental role in the empowerment of women. The author had therefore asserted that the formulation of anti-poverty policies should be based on a perspective of universality, equity and efficiency and should focus on investments in education that would equip poor women to enter the labour force. The equitable distribution of opportunities for gaining access to the labour market and to the institutional structure and the endowment of women and men with similar opportunities for achieving competitiveness were the two mainstays of the effort to combat poverty and thus superseded palliative, short-term measures. The struggle to overcome poverty and to attain gender equity called for cross-cutting, integral, decentralized policies based on empowerment as the only avenue for the convergence of rights and opportunities.

23. Presentations on poverty eradication were made by the following countries, which also submitted written reports to the Presiding Officers: Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, and Venezuela.

24. In their statements, the representatives of the above-mentioned countries unanimously voiced their concern about the phenomenon of poverty and discussed how its differential impacts on men and women had given rise to anti-poverty policies, programmes and projects tailored to women. Those initiatives had, in turn, paved the way for the establishment of national mechanisms for women which were playing an active role in increasingly intersectoral efforts. Poverty and the steps being taken to eliminate it had come to be recognized as cross-cutting, cross-sectoral and multidisciplinary spheres of action. Another serious impediment to women's participation in the labour force was the problem of providing care for their children. The shortage of daycare facilities and other services of this kind was a structural obstacle to the integration and long-term participation of women in paid activities owing, in part, to the lack of visibility of the burden of work they shouldered within the home and the lack of

financing for disseminating the relevant information. Hence, it had not been possible to influence, in a more precise way, public policy on reproduction; as a result, the proportion of the cost that that implied for women had not changed or had even increased.

25. The gradual maturation of concepts and theories about poverty had led to the adoption of various models for anti-poverty actions, the promotion of education as a tool of paramount importance, and a special concern for specific groups, most notably young people, indigenous peoples, and women living in rural areas. There was a danger of lapsing into attitudes that associated poverty with pregnancy and sexual freedom and that relegated the defence of sexual and reproductive rights to a secondary level of importance; that type of perspective led, in some cases, to the introduction of purely palliative, welfare-based programmes.

26. The link between poverty and violence, both within the home and in society in general, was also being studied. Most of the country presentations referred to the passage of laws on the subject and the implementation of educational programmes that had been specifically designed for different types of individuals and groups in society. All the countries had compiled a great deal of information on those phenomena which could serve as valuable inputs for the development of indicators.

27. At the institutional level, consultative mechanisms had been established for use by a wide range of actors. In the labour market, special importance was being placed on vocational training for women, and particularly the most marginalized groups of women. A number of delegations reported on the implementation of training programmes designed to facilitate entry into the labour market for women who were unemployed or who had never worked outside the home.

28. Problems identified by the countries included difficulties associated with the prevailing economic model and the social exclusion that was so often a consequence, especially in small economies, of weak institutional structures, the lack of a culture of citizenship, corporatism and paternalism, scarce resources and limited management capacity, and differing stances regarding the concept of participation.

29. Each of the countries reported on compelling examples of ongoing poverty reduction initiatives. The corresponding activities were quite varied in nature and represented major undertakings that were, at one and the same time, focused on poverty and linked to efforts to combat violence in all its forms. Those activities, which were being led by women's offices and being executed in collaboration with national and international agencies, were geared to the specific needs of each society and were part of the overall gender mainstreaming effort.

Evaluation and follow-up of provisions and resolutions adopted at the eighth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean (Lima, Peru, 8-10 February 2000) and at the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century" (New York, 5-9 June 2000) (agenda item 3)

30. The representatives of Costa Rica and Paraguay reported that during the period under consideration their countries had ratified the optional protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Paraguay had signed the protocol in December 1999, but had now enacted it into law.

Report on activities relating to poverty eradication carried out by specialized agencies and other bodies of the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations (agenda item 4)

31. Representatives of the following specialized agencies, programmes and bodies of the United Nations system made statements regarding the main theme of the meeting: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Inter-American Commission of Women of the Organization of American States (OAS) and Pan American Health Organization (PAHO).

32. One of the key elements addressed by the above organizations in their statements on poverty eradication activities in the region was education. The steps being taken to promote education ranged from highly institutionalized measures to innovative initiatives for providing young people with new types of training that would prepare them for the job market, provide them with a sense of belonging to their community and raise their self-esteem. Given the multidimensional nature of the problem, it was being addressed by the various organizations through activities falling within their respective mandates, but they were all pointed in the same direction. That was why, for example, FAO was focusing on the status of rural women, since one of the consequences of globalization, especially in the Caribbean, had been a deterioration in the living conditions of women campesinos and increased migration by them to the cities.

33. Other points of common ground among the participating organizations were the fundamental importance they placed on the exercise of sexual and reproductive rights and their understanding of poverty as a violation of basic human rights that obstructed the development of future generations. It was also felt that the State should continue to play an important role in this area, although civil society, organized in defence of its interests, could and should make a valuable contribution as well.

34. In recent years all of the above organizations had been working on gender mainstreaming by providing their staff with appropriate training, requiring that proposed projects be analysed from a gender perspective and taking steps to raise the awareness of sectoral ministries. A wide range of efforts were also being carried out to bring about legislative reforms in various areas having an impact on the status of women and to promote the incorporation of the gender perspective in policy-making.

35. Collaboration and coordination among all of the organizations were also seen as a highly valuable area of endeavour in combating poverty in the region. No programme, no women's office, no institution within the United Nations system and no non-governmental organization could address a problem of such enormous proportions on its own. That was why those organizations formed alliances in order to accomplish specific tasks and why they cooperated on projects and programmes aimed, either directly or indirectly, at eradicating poverty.

High-level seminar on gender mainstreaming in public policies in Latin America and the Caribbean (one and a half days devoted to special panel sessions) (agenda item 5)

36. The High-level seminar was attended by Mr. Manohar Ramsaran, Minister of Community Empowerment, Sports and Consumer Affairs of Trinidad and Tobago, Ms. Len Ishmael, Director of the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, and Mr. Reynaldo Bajraj, Deputy Executive Secretary of ECLAC.

37. The Minister of Community Empowerment, Sports and Consumer Affairs of Trinidad and Tobago said that the task of gender mainstreaming in public policy was a complex one because it involved reshaping entrenched attitudes and practices and thus required policy-makers to redefine the policy development and implementation process. CARICOM had endorsed that approach and had identified six priority areas for its implementation: poverty, decision-making, violence, health, education and institutional mechanisms. Although some improvements in those areas had been identified since that time, no significant progress had been made towards achieving the economic, political and personal empowerment of Caribbean women. An examination of labour statistics for Trinidad and Tobago clearly illustrated the differential impact of economic realities on men and women. Unemployment among women remained consistently higher than male unemployment rates, and the fact that most jobs available to women were concentrated in the generally lower-wage services sector was a direct indication of the gap between men's and women's potential earnings. The Government of Trinidad and Tobago was cognizant of the fact that traditional gender relations hindered equity and equality in national development and that economic and social justice, human rights and the fundamental freedoms of both sexes, of all ages, were pivotal in that process. There was a long road ahead, but if the people of the region persevered, they would reap the fruits of their labour sooner than they thought.

38. The Director of the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean recalled that at the eighth session of the Regional Conference on Women, the member States had decided that one of the Presiding Officers' biannual meetings would be open to all members and would focus on a substantive issue of emerging significance. In the present case, that theme was gender mainstreaming, and it was significant that the Presiding Officers' first meeting of that type was being held in the Caribbean subregion. The Subregional Headquarters was cognizant of the need for a strong degree of complementarity between its research and its technical assistance efforts in order to remain responsive to changing socioeconomic and cultural realities in the subregion. In the area of gender mainstreaming, for example, technical assistance missions had been informed by a 10-country study, which had shown that many Caribbean States were creating or strengthening cross-sectoral mechanisms. The Subregional Headquarters had been working to ensure that gender analysis was functionally integrated into its work programme and was assisting member States to integrate gender-sensitive policies into the development planning framework and to draft appropriate legislation. In addition, work was proceeding on the development of a research and training programme on the differential impact of economic policies on men and women. There was still much work to be done in order to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women, but it was also necessary to name and claim the achievements made in confronting not only material deprivation and inequities, but also cultural practices that were oppressive to both women and men.

39. The Deputy Executive Secretary of ECLAC observed that the present meeting was not the first time that government representatives had met to discuss problems of gender equity, but it *was* the first time that Ministers responsible for women's affairs, economic and social affairs and human rights had gathered together within the framework of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean. Clearly, there were no ready-made solutions, but there were some elements that appeared to be essential for success. One such element was the acknowledgement of the political legitimacy of gender policies. A second element was the existence of institutions that pursued their work on the basis of technical, efficiency-based criteria and were endowed with the resources they needed to perform their functions. The machinery for the advancement of women should be an integral part of the State's institutional structure and should serve as a vehicle for democratic political aspirations that would ultimately give rise to public policies based on the broadest possible consensus. The region also needed to find new ways of articulating traditional sectoral policies with cross-cutting objectives. Gender equity

policies were of an interdisciplinary nature and therefore called for centrally positioned institutions situated close to the highest political decision-making levels, in conjunction with decentralized forms of interaction and implementation which were as close as possible to civil society, since the concrete results of that transversality were seen primarily at the local level.

40. The Chief of the ECLAC Women and Development Unit explained that the seminar had been organized in response to repeated requests made by Governments at United Nations meetings and in other forums for a more in-depth analysis of gender mainstreaming. The Unit's primary focus was on an exploration of how the gender mainstreaming process had taken shape. This was not a linear process but had instead advanced by stages over the past 25 years. During that period, a series of models had been adopted, starting with an adaptation of the welfare-State model used in the Scandinavian countries to conditions in the Latin American and Caribbean region. In the 1980s, a different type of debate had arisen concerning the institutionalization of newly created women's machineries and the institutional arena within which the struggle for equity could legitimately be waged. In most cases the participants in those new machineries opted for an autonomous stance which allowed them to remain somewhat removed from government authorities and to serve as spokespersons for that social movement. That approach contrasted quite markedly with current thinking, in which macroeconomic policy, budgetary issues and governance were major concerns.

41. One of the reasons why the Unit had organized the present seminar was to understand how changes conducive to women's advancement were coming about and to analyse how women's machineries had been dealing with the public policy-making challenges arising within their countries and communities. There was also a need to determine how the approach taken by women's offices to gender policies had evolved. Those policies were viewed by many as a manifestation of institutional development and progress, but in some quarters they were seen as entailing a risk of invisibility. If the transition now being witnessed extended to the political arena, it could be seen as a step forward, but the adoption of a new approach could also be nothing more than a mere formality. It would be extremely useful if means could be found to generate a dialogue among policy-makers of a type that had not been seen in the past. Unfortunately, no in-depth consideration of the work carried out by those offices had been undertaken. In fact, even though women were at the forefront of many processes of change, conceptual analyses of the processes now under way had been quite limited. The participants in the seminar could clearly assist those working in the field to ask themselves new questions that would help guide their work in the coming years, and the organization was therefore grateful to the attending authorities for having taken the time to participate.

42. The seminar was also attended by Mr. Milton Ray Guevara, Minister of Labour of the Dominican Republic; Mr. Alfredo Morales Cartaya, Minister of Labour and Social Security of Cuba; Ms. Carmen Vildoso, Deputy Minister for Social Advancement of Peru; Ms. Glenda Simms, Executive Director of the Bureau of Women's Affairs of Jamaica; Ms. Mariana Yepes, Public Prosecutor of Ecuador and Mr. Virgilio Bello Rosa, Minister of Justice of the Dominican Republic.

43. Upon the conclusion of the first session of the seminar, the Deputy Executive Secretary of ECLAC offered his views on the topics analysed. The discussions which took place during the seminar are to be presented in an ECLAC document to be published in the near future.

44. The seminar ended with a panel of experts convened to consider theoretical and methodological challenges to gender mainstreaming in the light of the contributions made by ministers and special guests. The panellists were Ms. Virginia Guzmán, Consultant, and Ms. Violet Eudine Barriteau, Head of the Centre for Gender and Development Studies at the University of the West Indies, Barbados. The

moderator was Ms. Lily Caravantes, Executive Secretary of the Women's Unit in the Office of the President of Guatemala. The experts presented a theoretical analysis of national experiences and posed new challenges in the area of knowledge and public policy for achieving gender mainstreaming.

45. The moderator urged participants to make the strongest possible effort to foster a theoretical analysis which would afford insight into different experiences with gender mainstreaming. She also stressed the need for self-criticism to identify weaknesses and challenges in the context of the changes being experienced in the region.

46. The first panellist said that current approaches in the area of gender mainstreaming should be analysed in depth and an attempt made to identify the problems encountered at the practical level. In that regard, the important changes currently underway should be viewed as an extension of national practices beyond the level of the State and existing institutions, such as the family. The existing climate of change opened up opportunities but at the same time posed risks in terms of gender equity; in view of that climate, the principles of freedom and justice needed to be properly articulated. Agendas were being developed at the global, national and local levels, and women were bringing a fresh approach and new ways of forging public policy. It was necessary to strengthen the capacity of women as social actors who dialogued with the State, among other things, on the preparation of plans for equal opportunities. The factors underlying traditional institutional frameworks made it essential to effect a symbolic, regulatory and political transformations. Lastly, she reviewed the strategies used by women's bureaux for gender mainstreaming.

47. The second panellist agreed on the need for a new approach to gender mainstreaming. In her opinion, the experiences described demonstrated the existence of structural and conceptual obstacles as well as weaknesses in the implementation of undeveloped theories. Insufficient attention to the processes and excessive interest in the outcomes, which prompted the introduction of change without due concern for the patriarchal resistance and the values underpinning public policy, which were deeply entrenched in our society. Recognizing the tensions caused by such resistance was crucial, since that recognition was a prerequisite for a proper theoretic approach. Five main obstacles had emerged from the reports and discussions: the low level of awareness among civil servants, the wide gaps between men and women, the persistence of cultural barriers, the absence or low level of political will and the deeply ingrained patriarchal ideas and dominant male culture. Such obstacles resulted from a failure to integrate the concepts of power relationships and gender mainstreaming. The latter was a lengthy process which required patience and which could not be expected to yield results in the short term. The struggle to reverse a relationship of dominance deeply-rooted in history required, moreover, substantial financial, human and technical resources.

Planned activities of the Presiding Officers and the ECLAC secretariat (agenda item 6)

48. The Chairman of the Presiding Officers invited participants to consider the outstanding issues that had emerged during the meeting and to formulate recommendations for future activities in the light of the content of the discussions and, in particular, of the high-level seminar.

49. The participants presented a series of proposals, which are reflected in the agreements set forth in section D below.

50. The representative of Mexico reported on the Puebla-Panama Plan, which included Mexico and the countries of Central America and which sought to promote holistic and sustainable development. She

urged member States of the Presiding Officers to promote bilateral agreements to foster gender mainstreaming in the activities envisaged under the Plan. She also invited ECLAC member States to participate in the series of events —especially those designed to promote small and micro businesses— which were to be held concurrently with the forthcoming meetings of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (APEC) in Mexico in 2002.

51. The Chief of the Women and Development Unit recalled the commitment adopted at the earlier meeting on the design of indicators of violence and announced that a technical meeting for proposing indicators for measuring violence would be held in La Paz from 21 to 23 November 2001. The latter was part of a joint effort by the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC and the Regional Conference on Women and the participants would include statisticians who, as experts in the registry of indicators of violence against women, would be in a position to give technical guidance to all users.

52. In view of the proposal by some countries that the next meeting of the Presiding Officers should be postponed until the second half of 2002, the delegations were requested to explore new modes of communication, including teleconferencing. The secretariat offered to communicate in good time to Governments a proposal relating to communication among the Presiding Officers.

D. AGREEMENTS ADOPTED

53. At their thirty-third meeting the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean adopted the following agreements:

1. To call upon the member States of ECLAC to enrich and update their reports on the status of poor women in their countries, taking into account the contributions made during the present meeting, in order to provide inputs for the forthcoming session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women to be held in March 2002.
2. To invite the countries to address the issue of poverty from a gender perspective and to incorporate emerging topics, such as financing and institutional mechanisms for reinforcing the dialogue between Governments and civil society.
3. To secure a commitment by national machineries for the advancement of women represented at the present meeting of the Presiding Officers to share the content and findings of the analysis conducted of the issue of poverty with their countries' foreign ministries and permanent representatives to the United Nations as a means of contributing to the preparation of the directives to be submitted by each country to the Commission on the Status of Women.
4. To propose that the national delegations attending the twenty-ninth session of ECLAC (Brasilia, Brazil, 6-10 May 2002) should include authorities responsible for gender policy formulation in their countries.
5. To request the Chairperson of the Presiding Officers to submit the agreements adopted at their thirty-first, thirty-second and thirty-third meetings for the consideration of ECLAC at its twenty-ninth session.

6. To address the question of the objectives and structure, functions, working methods and outputs of national machineries for the advancement of women, together with their impacts and difficulties, with emphasis on best practice and successful approaches, at the next meeting of the Presiding Officers.
7. To defer the ninth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean until 2004, taking into account agreement No. 3 as adopted at the thirty-second meeting of the Presiding Officers and the information provided by the Secretariat and endorsing the proposal to harmonize regional follow-up to the Regional Programme of Action for the Women of Latin America and the Caribbean, 1995-2001, with the ten-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action,
8. To ratify agreement No. 5 as adopted at the twenty-seventh meeting of the Presiding Officers, whereby they resolved to keep the Secretariat informed about meetings attended by member countries represented by the Presiding Officers in which women's issues were addressed.
9. To request ECLAC to inform the countries in a timely manner as to the agenda of future regional, subregional and international meetings relating to women's and gender issues so as to avoid any duplication of effort and facilitate planning.
10. To encourage the countries to apply the system of gender indicators developed by ECLAC in order to upgrade the statistical information available at the national level and to facilitate regional and subregional comparisons.
11. To urge ECLAC to carry forward its work in developing gender indicators and to broaden the existing system by incorporating qualitative indicators.
12. To request that ECLAC provide the countries with technical assistance in the field of macroeconomics and gender in order to enhance the capacity of their national machineries for the advancement of women to work with economic decision-makers and to contribute to economic policy-making.
13. To convene the thirty-fourth meeting of the Presiding Officers during the second half of 2002 in view of the fact that the twenty-ninth session of ECLAC is to be held during the first half of that year.
14. To take note of the future lines of inquiry proposed in the document entitled *Comparative analysis of the Lima Consensus and the document entitled Further actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.*

Annex

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

**A. Member countries represented by the Presiding Officers
Países miembros de la Mesa Directiva**

ARGENTINA

Representative/Representante:

- Julio Miller, Embajador de la República de Argentina ante el Gobierno de Trinidad y Tabago

Delegation/Miembros de la delegacion:

- Gustavo Stefanelli, Segundo Secretario, Embajada de la República de Argentina ante el Gobierno de Trinidad y Tabago

BRAZIL

BRASIL

Representative/Representante:

- Maria Aparecida Medrado, Consejera, National Council for the Rights of Women

Delegation/Miembros de la delegación:

- Maria Feliciano Ortigão de Sampaio, Consejera, Embajada de Brasil ante el Gobierno de Trinidad y Tabago

CHILE

Representative/Representante:

- Anita de Aguirre, Jefa de Relaciones Internacionales, Servicio Nacional de la Mujer

COSTA RICA

Representative/Representante:

- Xinia Carvajal, Ministra de la Condición de la Mujer

CUBA

Representative/Representante:

- Magalys Arocha, Secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores, Federación de Mujeres Cubanas

Delegation/Miembros de la delegacion:

- Alfredo Morales Cartaya, Ministro de Trabajo y Seguridad Social
- Ana Milagros Martínez, Federación de Mujeres Cubanas

DOMINICA

Representative/Representante:

- Rosie Browne, Director, Women's Bureau

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC/REPUBLICA DOMINICANA

Representative/Representante:

- Yadira Henríquez de Sánchez Barret, Secretaria de Estado, Secretaría de Estado de la Mujer

Delegation/Miembros de la delegacion:

- Virgilio Bello Rosa, Procurador General de la República
- Milton Ray Guevara, Secretario del Trabajo
- Nury Abreu, Vice Ministra, Secretaría de Estado de la Mujer
- Nora Nivar, Vice Ministra, Secretaría de Estado de la Mujer
- Jorge Luis Pérez Alvarado, Embajador, Embajada de República Dominicana ante el Gobierno de Trinidad y Tabago

ECUADOR

Representative/Representante:

- Miriam Alcívar, Directora Ejecutiva, Consejo Nacional de la Mujer

Delegation/Miembros de la delegacion:

- Mariana Yépez, Fiscal de la República
- Titiana Ordeñana Sierra, Directora Técnica, Consejo Nacional de la Mujer

GUATEMALA

Representative/Representante:

- Lily Caravantes, Secretaria Ejecutiva, Secretaría Presidencial de la Mujer

Delegation/Miembros de la delegacion:

- Julio Martini, Embajador, Embajada de Guatemala ante el Gobierno de Trinidad y Tabago

JAMAICA

Representative/Representante:

- Glenda Simms, Executive Director, Bureau of Women's Affairs

MEXICO

Representative/Representante:

- Patricia Espinosa, Presidenta Ejecutiva, Instituto Nacional de las Mujeres

Delegation/Miembros de la delegacion:

- Isabel Téllez de Ortega, Embajadora, Embajada de México ante el Gobierno de Trinidad y Tabago
- Patricia Wohlfres, Directora General de Asuntos Internacionales, Instituto Nacional de las Mujeres
- Angelina del Valle Fuentes, Directora de Asuntos Internacionales de la Mujer, Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores
- Hilda Angélica Mercado Espinos, Subdirectora de la Equidad de Género y Evaluación, Secretaría de Desarrollo Social

NETHERLANDS ANTILLES ANTILLAS NEERLANDESAS

Representative/Representante:

- Vivienne Leander-Da Flaar, Directora Interna, Department of Welfare, Family and Humanitarian Affairs

PANAMA

Representative/Representante:

- Vasco Delmar Huerta, Embajador, Embajada de Panamá ante el Gobierno de Trinidad y Tabago

PARAGUAY

Representative/Representante:

- Cristina Muñoz, Ministra de la Mujer, Secretaría de la Mujer

Delegation/Miembros de la delegacion:

- Ana María Medina, Directora de Relaciones Internacionales, Secretaría de la Mujer

PERU

Representative/Representante:

- Antonio García Revilla, Representante alterno del Perú ante la Organización de los Estados Americanos (OEA)

Delegation/Miembros de la delegacion:

- Zoila Henríquez Aguilar, Gerente de Promoción de la Mujer del PROMUDEH
- Carmen Vildoso, Vice Ministra de Promoción Social de Perú

PUERTO RICO

Representative/Representante:

- María Dolores Fernós López-Cepero, Procuradora de las Mujeres del Estado Libre Asociado de Puerto Rico

SAINT KITTS AND NEVIS/SAINT KITTS Y NEVIS

Representative/Representante:

- Rosalyn E. Hazelle, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Community, Social Development and Gender Affairs

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO/TRINIDAD Y TABAGO

Representative/Representante:

- Manohar Ramsaran, Minister of Community Empowerment, Sports and Consumer Affairs

Delegation/Miembros de la delegacion:

- Margaret Farray, Chief Technical Officer, Ministry of Community Empowerment, Sport and Consumer Affairs
- Aileen Clarke, Director, Gender Affairs, Ministry of Community Empowerment, Sport and Consumer Affairs
- Terry Ann Atkins-Huggins, Planning Officer, Socio-Economic Policy Planning Division

- Marina Valere, Director, Division of Multilateral Relations, Ministry of Enterprise Development and Foreign Affairs
- Roanna Gopaul, Foreign Service Officer, Division of Multilateral Relations
- Anne Marie Anthony-Darneaud, National Co-ordinator, Women's Leadership and Enhancement Institute, Gender Affairs Division, Ministry of Community Empowerment, Sport and Consumer Affairs
- Deborah McFee, Project Officer, Gender Affairs Division, Ministry of Community Empowerment, Sport and Consumer Affairs
- Gerada Holder, Office Manager, Ministry of Community Empowerment, Sport and Consumer Affairs
- Beverly Samuel, Programme Co-ordinator, Ministry of Human Development, Youth and Culture

VENEZUELA

Representative/Representante:

- María León, Presidenta, Instituto Nacional de la Mujer

Delegation/Miembros de la delegacion:

- María del Mar Alvarez de Lovera, Instituto Nacional de la Mujer

Observers/Observadores

B. United Nations bodies/Organismos del sistema de las Naciones Unidas

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)/Fondo de Población de las Naciones Unidas (FNUAP)

- Marisela Padrón, Directora, División para América Latina y el Caribe (LACD)
- Jaime Nadal, Oficial de Programas, División para América Latina y el Caribe (LACD)

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo (PNUD)

- Hans Geiser, Resident Coordinator / Resident Representative, UNDP Trinidad and Tobago
- Isabella Waterschoot, Gender Specialist, United Nations Resident Coordination Unit, UNDP Trinidad and Tobago
- Rosina Wiltshire, Resident Coordinator / Resident Representative, Designate UNDP Barbados

United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)/Fondo de Desarrollo de las Naciones Unidas para la Mujer (UNIFEM)

- Joycelin Massiah, Regional Programme Director for the Caribbean

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)/Fondo de las Naciones Unidas para la Infancia (UNICEF)

- Gladys Acosta, Asesora Regional, Mujer y Equidad de Género, Oficina Regional para América Latina y el Caribe

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)/Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Educación, la Ciencia y la Cultura

- Sandra Gift, Sub-regional Coordinator, Associated School Project Network

C. Specialized agencies/Organismos especializados

International Labour Office/Oficina Internacional del Trabajo

- Willi Momm, Director, ILO Caribbean Office
- Roma Wong Sang, Information Officer, ILO Caribbean Office

World Health Organization-Pan American Health Organization (WHO-PAHO)/Organización Mundial de la Salud-Organización Panamericana de la Salud (OMS-OPS)

- Marijke Velzeboer-Salcedo, Coordinadora, Programa Mujer, Salud y Desarrollo

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations/Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Agricultura y la Alimentación (FAO)

- Marcela Ballara, Regional Officer

International Telecommunications Union (ITU)/Unión Internacional de Telecomunicaciones(UIT)

- Vera Lucía Zanetti, Administrative Officer

D. Intergovernmental organizations/Organizaciones intergubernamentales

Caribbean Community Secretariat (CARICOM)

- Gemma Tang Nain, Deputy Programme Manager, Caribbean Community and Women's Affairs, Directorate of Human and Social Development

Inter-American Institute for Co-operation on Agriculture (IICA)/Instituto Interamericano de Cooperación para la Agricultura (IICA)

- Marlene Antoine, Especialista en Administración de Microempresas, de la Agencia de Cooperación del IICA en Trinidad y Tabago

Organization of American States (OAS)/Organización de los Estados Americanos (OEA)

- Mercedes Kremenetzky, Especialista Principal de la Comisión Interamericana de Mujeres

E. Special Guests/Otros invitados

- Juliet Solomon, Associate Expert, Gender Advisory Services Unit, Division for the Advancement of Women, United Nations
- Denise Noel-Debique, Regional Program Coordinator, Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)
- Violet Barriteau, Head, Centre for Gender and Development Studies, University of the West Indies, Barbados
- Virginia Guzmán, Consultora, Chile

F. Secretariat/Secretaría

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)/Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe (CEPAL)

Reynaldo F. Bajraj, Deputy Executive Secretary
Daniel Blanchard, Secretary of the Commission
Sonia Montaña, Chief, Women and Development Unit
Nieves Rico, Social Affairs Officer, Women and Development Unit
Diane Alméras, Associate Social Affairs Officer, Women and Development Unit
Jorge Rodríguez, Specialist, ECLAC Population Division - CELADE

ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean/Sede Subregional de la CEPAL para el Caribe

Len Ishmael, Director
Roberta Clarke, Social Affairs Officer
Sonia Cuales, Social Affairs Officer
Lynette Brown, Research Assistant

ECLAC subregional headquarters in Mexico/Sede Subregional de la CEPAL en México

Pilar Vidal, Social Development Unit