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AND THE CARIBBEAN - ECLAC**



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**REPORT OF THE TENTH MEETING OF SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND OTHER BODIES  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM ON THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN IN  
LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

(Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, 8 October 2001)

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## **A. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK**

### **Mandate**

1. The Tenth Meeting of Specialized Agencies and Other Bodies of the United Nations System on the Advancement of Women in Latin America and the Caribbean was convened by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in compliance with the provisions of the Regional Plan of Action as adopted at the first session of the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America, held in Havana, Cuba, in 1977, and in accordance with the commitments made at the United Nations inter-agency coordination meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean (Santiago, Chile, 6 May 1999), at which the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations asked the Commission to assume responsibility for general follow-up on new cooperation and coordination mechanisms in the region.

### **Place and date of the meeting**

2. In compliance with the above-mentioned mandates, the Tenth Meeting of Specialized Agencies and Other Bodies of the United Nations System on the Advancement of Women in Latin America and the Caribbean was held in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, on 8 October 2001.

### **Attendance**

3. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following United Nations bodies, funds and programmes: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). The following specialized agencies of the United Nations were also represented: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Pan American Health Organization-World Health Organization (PAHO-WHO) and International Telecommunication Union (ITU). Also present at the meeting were representatives of the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters in Mexico, the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, the Inter-American Commission of Women (IACW/OAS) and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA).

## **B. AGENDA**

4. The participants adopted the following agenda:
  1. Adoption of the agenda
  2. Review of the implementation of the agreements adopted at the Ninth Meeting of Specialized Agencies and Other Bodies of the United Nations System on the Advancement of Women in Latin America and the Caribbean
  3. Activities relating to poverty eradication and gender equity carried out or planned within the framework of the United Nations system since the thirty-first meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean
  4. Analysis of contributions made by participating organizations to the implementation of the inter-agency project on the use of gender indicators in public policy-making and a review of progress made by ECLAC in the area of coordination
  5. Follow-up to resolution 3(VIII) on activities of ECLAC relating to regional cooperation for gender mainstreaming as adopted by the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean at its eighth session
  6. Priority tasks and cooperation strategies for regional inter-agency cooperation
  7. Other matters

## **C. SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS**

5. After welcoming the participants, the Deputy Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) said that the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system had made considerable progress and that the present meeting formed part of a process in which coordinated action took on particular importance. The need for such action was reflected in the agenda for the meeting. The Chief of the ECLAC Women and Development Unit noted that the current meeting would also lay the groundwork for the activities scheduled over the next few days during the thirty-third meeting of the Presiding Officers. Their main tasks would be to analyse the activities carried out in recent months, review the work being done by the project on gender indicators in public policy-making and appraise the work being done to combat poverty, which would also be examined during the meeting of the Presiding Officers.

Review of the implementation of the agreements adopted at the Ninth Meeting of Specialized Agencies and Other Bodies of the United Nations System on the Advancement of Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, and activities relating to poverty eradication and gender equity carried out or planned within the framework of the United Nations system since the thirty-first meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean (agenda items 2 and 3)

6. The representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) said that the focus on gender mainstreaming in her organization's programme of work for 2001-2002 was reflected, *inter alia*, in its food security programme in Central America—an initiative which placed special importance on participation by women and for which consultants from the region had been recruited—and in its project on gender mainstreaming in Brazil's agrarian reform effort. FAO had recently instituted a requirement that all proposed projects must specify how the gender perspective was being incorporated. In addition, focal points were being designated in all FAO divisions for the sensitization of staff members. FAO was also working on a project on gender indicators in Costa Rica and on another dealing with indicators relating to the status of rural women for the National Women's Service (SERNAM) of Chile.

7. The representative of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) said that great strides had been made in the region. Domestic violence was no longer invisible; men's role in determining both men's and women's health was being recognized; and some countries were beginning to take the gender perspective into account in their health care policies. Serious problems remained, however. PAHO was aware that striking differences were to be found between men's and women's access to health services. Those differences were unjust and evitable, and PAHO was committed to reducing them. The organization's current objectives included an increase in development resources and the dissemination of indicators, research on the effects of health-sector reforms and activities aimed at putting an end to domestic violence. Work was also to be undertaken during the next few years in the area of mental health.

8. The representative of the Inter-American Commission of Women of the Organization of American States (IACW/OAS) said that IACW was striving to reach as many people as possible through its new web page, which provided information on current initiatives, including a project to combat violence against women, a study on trafficking in women and children in the Americas for purposes of sexual exploitation, a project for gender mainstreaming in labour programmes and policies, and gender training within OAS. IACW had also been very active in preparations for the third Summit of the Americas and was nearing completion of a proposal concerning the implementation of the mandates emerging from that Summit in relation to gender equity and the strengthening of women's role in society.

9. The UNDP representative thanked ECLAC for organizing the meeting and went on to note that gender equity was a priority that cut across all the issues involved in the Programme's overarching priority of human development and poverty elimination. Within the region, its focus was on mainstreaming the gender perspective in the core service lines of governance, environment, HIV/AIDS and information technologies. Within that framework, UNDP was working to build the capacity of country teams to take charge of the Common Country Assessments and United Nations Development Assistance Framework (CCA/UNDAF). A poverty module had recently been integrated into the capacity development initiative but the challenge of pulling all the various agencies' different gender mainstreaming modules together into a unified version for use in training resource persons and country teams remained to be met. At the regional level UNDP was working to eradicate violence against women through the inter-agency campaign formed for that purpose, to promote women's rights and to revise

UNDP tools for gender mainstreaming with a view to enhancing its partnership with the Governments and with national machineries for the advancement of women.

10. The Director of the UNFPA Latin America and Caribbean Division reported that the Fund was in the process of formulating and obtaining approval for 12 cooperation programmes in the region which would focus on gender violence; the sexual and reproductive health of women, men and adolescents; gender and poverty; and HIV/AIDS. Those programmes would address the countries' needs and would devote special attention to the design and implementation of poverty-reduction strategies and health-sector reforms. UNFPA continued to backstop women's networks in the region in their efforts to follow up on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Cairo Programme of Action. One of its most important lines of work was to provide support for legislative bodies, Governments and women's groups working to ensure ratification of the optional protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Within the framework of the programme of action formulated at the 2001 Symposium on Gender Violence, Health and Rights (Cancún, Mexico, May 2001), UNFPA was offering support for activities aimed at formulating and disseminating national legislation in this field. Backstopping was also being provided to women's institutes and offices in the countries which were working to defend women's rights, including their sexual and reproductive rights. A new direction of work was being reflected in projects designed to help members of the armed and police forces become agents of change and allies in initiatives to promote sexual health and responsible parenthood.

11. The representative of UNICEF felt that the convergence observed in the presentations given by the delegates could serve as a basis for developing greater synergies among the agencies, thus taking greater advantage of the scarce resources available to them. Doing so had become all the more necessary because, unlike past agendas that had focused on isolated, welfare-based issues, the interrelated challenges that they were now being called upon to address were growing increasingly complex. In particular, UNICEF was focusing on legislative and institutional reform in the region aimed at protecting the rights of the child, on gender mainstreaming and the promotion of gender equity, and on poverty reduction, which could be defined as a historical process involving a cumulative loss of opportunities. With regard to children, one of the areas of emphasis was early child development as a foundation for human development. In its work with adolescents, UNICEF was committed to a positive approach to improving adolescent health and development as a means of giving adolescents a genuine voice in society and policy-making. With regard to women, efforts were concentrated on women's identities as individuals under law and their role in the family, since a mother who had no rights had no ability to protect the children and adolescents under her care.

12. The representative of UNESCO said that one of its core mandates was the promotion of peace, which could not be separated from the issue of human rights. Consequently, in one sense or another, all of its activities related to poverty eradication and gender equity. One of the main goals of UNESCO over the past two years had been education for all, throughout life. Measures directed towards this end included activities designed to foster literacy, to promote non-formal education and to extend learning opportunities to the unreached, including abandoned children and children in foster care. When viewed as a lifelong process, education was a vitally important tool for the eradication of poverty, since it translated into a capacity to retool skills and to reeducate and re-engineer oneself. Ironically, just when girls were beginning to gain greater access to education—so much so, in fact, that in the Caribbean females were receiving a disproportionately large share of scholarships—it appeared that young men were beginning to suffer from problems of marginalization.

13. The representative of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) explained that, although the nature of the Union's functional role was quite technical, ITU wanted to be a part of the United Nations system's effort to promote the advancement of women in developing countries. Accordingly, at the Plenipotentiary Conference held in 1998, ITU had recognized that equal access for men and women to communications services would permit better use to be made of human resources and thus add significantly to the pool of talent that would be needed in the new information society. It had also called for the mainstreaming of the gender perspective in all aspects of the Union's work. Since then, ITU had established a task force on gender issues aimed at ensuring that the benefits of telecommunications applications were made available to all women and men in developing countries on an equitable basis. As part of the preparations for the forthcoming World Summit on the Information Society, the Union planned to address the situation of all groups in society not benefiting from information and communications technologies, with special emphasis on women and, in particular, women in developing countries.

14. The representative of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) said that the Institute's approach to gender issues was closely related to women's role in rural development. The Institute was working very actively in the Caribbean to help create networks of women's groups as a means of promoting training and providing greater access to land. An integrated alliance of agricultural ministries, campesino groups and agroindustries had been formed which was serving as a basis for intensive advocacy work for the rural population at the policy level and for the promotion of competitiveness, especially for women.

15. The representative of the Social Development Unit of the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters in Mexico referred to three pivotal elements of its work. The first was the preparation of a document on school attendance and the employment situation of rural women in Central America as it related to the identification of priority public policy issues. This subject had been analysed at a meeting of experts held in January 2001 with the collaboration of FAO. The second was the organization of a series of in-house training activities in collaboration with various agencies. These activities were aimed at transmitting know-how regarding the gender perspective with a view to gender mainstreaming in the substantive work of ECLAC. The third was its participation in inter-agency coordination tasks. A baseline study had been conducted on institutional conditions for the introduction and deepening of the gender perspective in the work of agencies represented in Mexico. That study, which was regional in scope in terms of the areas represented by the relevant offices, had been conducted with a view to the development of a short- and medium-term cooperation programme.

16. The representative of the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean outlined the technical assistance it was providing in such areas as violence against women and macroeconomic policies and gender. Work was being done to support research on violence against women and, in collaboration with PAHO, on the development of a protocol for the collection and centralization of data on domestic violence. Once the draft protocol was completed, ECLAC would work collaboratively with other agencies to help Governments implement the protocol. On another front, a very stimulating meeting had been held in 2000 to look at the gender issues involved in macroeconomic policy-making, and research was moving forward to define those issues more clearly. The aim was to work within a rights-specific framework and to define what was meant by economic rights and what minimum standards of economic achievement were to be used. Another main focus was to understand current trends relating to certain groups of boys and certain groups of girls in the Caribbean.

17. The Chief of the ECLAC Women and Development Unit noted that the preceding statements bore witness to a growing convergence around a series of priority issues, which included domestic violence, poverty, human rights, the family, rural and indigenous women, and HIV/AIDS. One of the implications of that convergence, however, was a diversification of counterpart agencies. This situation was compounded by a lack of coordination and a failure to harmonize strategies. There were clearly areas—such as sexual and reproductive rights, the new economy, globalization and governance—in which deeper analysis and the further development of instruments and methodologies were required.

18. There was a growing awareness of the global changes that were occurring and, hence, of the linkages existing between the Beijing Platform for Action and the programmes formulated in other forums, especially the Millennium Summit. Those interconnections heightened the complexity of the objectives they set forth, yet, at the same time, the institutional framework for dealing with those issues remained fragile, and the resources for fulfilling those mandates continued to be in short supply. Another major problem was the weakening of the women's movement, and strategies for reinforcing it therefore needed to be devised.

19. She underlined the importance of seeking greater strategic convergence among the bodies of the United Nations system so as to take advantage of the thematic synergy that clearly existed. Two key objectives were more efficient resource use and the development of accessible tools. For all intents and purposes, there were three working groups in the region: one on gender indicators, one on violence and one on strategies for mainstreaming the gender perspective in the development process. Counterpart agencies needed to be diversified in all of these areas rather than being limited to the traditional actors, such as national women's offices and feminist groups.

20. The Chief of the Women and Development Unit of ECLAC explained that the activities conducted since the previous meeting had been addressed within the context of the trade liberalization and globalization processes. The Unit was keenly interested in aligning its work with the priority issues of the Commission, which included sustainable development and economic and social policy. More specifically, the Unit had been joining forces with UNIFEM and other bodies within the United Nations system to backstop the countries in the area through the provision of technical advisory assistance. In addition, the second stage of the gender mainstreaming project funded by GTZ had been completed, and a study was being undertaken on the implications of pension system reforms in the region. Work was also proceeding on the gender indicators project.

21. The activities being planned for the next few months included two meetings: a meeting of experts on globalization and technological change, which was being organized in conjunction with the Federal Women's Council of Sao Paulo and the University of Sao Paulo; and a meeting concerning the measurement of violence against women, to be held in Bolivia. Fourteen countries had already announced they were planning to attend the latter meeting, which was being organized in collaboration with the National Statistical Institute, UNFPA, PAHO, UNIFEM and the Government of Italy.

Analysis of contributions made by participating organizations to the implementation of the inter-agency project on the use of gender indicators in public policy-making and a review of progress made by ECLAC in the area of coordination (agenda item 4)

22. The Chief of the ECLAC Women and Development Unit reminded the participants that this agenda item had been included in recognition of the need to structure the pool of existing information that could shed light on different dimensions of the status of women in the region. In view of the need for



comparable data, in recent years the agencies and other bodies belonging to the United Nations system had intensified their efforts to develop gender indicators, and in some cases that work had been used by countries as a model for their own efforts in the field.

23. The fundamental objectives of the ECLAC project were to build national, regional and global capacities for compiling, processing and analysing gender indicators and to disseminate those indicators as a means of facilitating follow-up on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. Since so much remained to be done in that field, and given both the scarcity of sources and their relative lack of homogeneity, one of the main thrusts of the Unit's work was to foster a dialogue between the users and producers of such indicators and thus, by ensuring that the needs of all were taken into account, contributing to their development.

Follow-up to resolution 3(VIII) on activities of ECLAC relating to regional cooperation for gender mainstreaming as adopted by the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean at its eighth session (agenda item 5)

24. The Associate Social Affairs Officer of the ECLAC Women and Development Unit briefly outlined the structure of the Unit's web page and the wide range of information it provided. She then gave a more detailed description of the site, which provides a listing of all the programmes and projects executed in the Latin American and Caribbean region by components of the United Nations system in accordance with resolution 3(VIII) of the Regional Conference on Women, in which it had requested that ECLAC develop a database of that type with information broken down by country, executing agency and subregion. Ideally, the information on the countries should be updated at least once every two years, but in order to do so, the ongoing collaboration of the agencies of the international community would be required, as well as additional human and financial resources.

Priority tasks and cooperation strategies for regional inter-agency cooperation (agenda item 6)

25. The participants adopted the following agreements:

1. To create a regional working group on gender indicators which will be responsible for coordinating activities that facilitate the compilation, processing, analysis and dissemination of gender indicators and their harmonization across countries. The activities of the working group will be directed towards the development of technical recommendations in keeping with existing international standards.
2. To request ECLAC to continue coordinating the activities being carried out in this field. To that end, the Commission should request the relevant agencies to furnish the specialized information on gender indicators which they have compiled in accordance with their respective mandates so as to avoid any duplication of functions.

## Annex

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS****A. United Nations bodies  
Organismos del sistema de las Naciones Unidas**

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

- Isabella Waterschoot, United Nations Resident Coordination Unit
- Rosina Wiltshire, Designate Barbados and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)

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

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

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

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

**B. Specialized agencies  
Organismos especializados**

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

- Marcela Ballara, Oficial Principal Mujeres en el Desarrollo

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

- Sandra Gift, Subregional Coordinator, Associated Project Network

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

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

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

- Vera Lucía Zanetti, Administrative Officer

**C. Intergovernmental organizations  
Organizaciones intergubernamentales**

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

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

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

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

**D. Secretariat  
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Reynaldo F. Bajraj, Secretario Ejecutivo Adjunto  
Sonia Montaña, Jefa, Unidad Mujer y Desarrollo  
Nieves Rico, Oficial de Asuntos Sociales, Unidad Mujer y Desarrollo  
Diane Alméras, Oficial de Asuntos Sociales, Unidad Mujer y Desarrollo

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

Roberta Clarke, Social Affairs Officer

Sede Subregional de la CEPAL en México/ECLAC Subregional Headquarters in Mexico

Pilar Vidal, Programa Mujer y Desarrollo, Unidad de Desarrollo Social