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**MAINSTREAMING THE GENDER PERSPECTIVE IN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT:
ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT BY THE SECRETARIAT OF THE ECONOMIC
COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN 2010-2013**

The twelfth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America has opened up an important area for substantive collaboration on economic issues between the Division for Gender Affairs and the Division of Production, Productivity and Management of ECLAC, with the position paper being drafted with another division for the first time. The theme of the Conference, “Gender equality, empowerment of women and information and communication technologies”, ties together two thematic and public-policy areas which have tended to have only weak linkages in the region. This presents major challenges and points to a future agenda—in both research and public action—that has the potential to both enhance women’s autonomy and contribute to countries’ development. This is in keeping the Commission’s work on an equality agenda in the region and discussion of a new development model in which gender equality and women’s autonomy are both aims in themselves and cross-cutting elements of other objectives.

ECLAC has embarked on a new stage in a gender-mainstreaming process that has been constructed over decades, based on the mandates conferred by the member States in 1986 and the United Nations Economic and Social Council in 1997, and strengthened by the new gender mainstreaming strategy launched by the Executive Secretary of ECLAC on 8 March 2013. This strategy includes a political commitment to gender equality, results-based management in this area, capacity-building and the involvement of men and women on a basis of parity across the whole institution. The Programme Planning and Operations Division performs a central coordination and follow-up role in this strategy, with the Division for Gender Affairs providing substantive support. Multiple activities have been carried out, including seminars, technical cooperation missions and specific publications, and sex-disaggregated statistics have been included in new publications.

As part of an ongoing process to increase coordination and develop synergies, ECLAC divisions and offices have deepened and broadened gender mainstreaming efforts, making varying degrees of progress in this regard. Notable work has been done in areas in which a significant level of institutionalization has been achieved in recent years, and in areas where gender affairs have been internalized by the subsidiary bodies of ECLAC, as is the case with the Statistical Conference of the Americas, the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean and the Conference on Science, Innovation and Information and Communications Technologies.

The Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE) - Population Division of ECLAC, in its capacity as technical secretariat of the recently created Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, treats the gender perspective as a cross-cutting issue in analysis and debates on various subject areas covered by the Conference, as well as in its own documents, while also approaching gender equality as an objective in its own right. The analysis carried out on ageing, reproductive rights, adolescent pregnancy, migration, indigenous women and other themes, contributes towards efforts in key areas in support of women’s autonomy. The first session of the Conference was held in Montevideo from 12 to 15 August 2013, with the collaboration of various divisions of ECLAC, including the Division for Gender Affairs, as well as the United Nations Population Fund and other stakeholders, including civil society.

The Statistics Division of ECLAC undertakes various actions to mainstream a gender perspective into the production and dissemination of statistics, which in turn form part of the plan of work of the Working Group on Gender Statistics of the Statistical Conference of the Americas. Central to the joint work carried out with the Division for Gender Affairs is the generation of basic information that supports an economic valuation of unpaid domestic work under the System of National Accounts. This has involved participation in meetings of experts and technical assistance missions in order to develop a satellite account on households’ unpaid work in several of the region’s countries. In the area of social statistics, the Division has itself produced a large part of the gender statistics disseminated by ECLAC

through CEPALSTAT, the *Statistical Yearbook for Latin America and the Caribbean* and the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean. In addition, since 2012 the Division has regularly produced indicators calculated on the basis of household surveys. The Division has, in addition, helped improve the dissemination of ECLAC gender statistics by developing new applications in the Gender Equality Observatory and in the country profiles that are published on CEPALSTAT along with national economic, environmental, social and Millennium Development Goal (MDG) profiles.

The balanced participation and contribution of women is crucial for mainstreaming the gender perspective and is one of the objectives of the new strategy. Notable efforts have been made in this regard by the Social Development Division and the Sustainable Development and Human Settlements Division, including gender-focused activities, studies and projects. The Social Development Division has drawn up public policy proposals to strengthen and universalize governments' capacity to formulate social protection policies and programmes, with a human-rights-based approach that includes gender equality in issues such as paid and unpaid work, the rights of indigenous girls and adolescents and those with disabilities, maternity and paternity leave, the entitlement to and exercise of economic, social and cultural rights, and the effects of cash transfer programmes on women and children.

The key dimensions of sustainable development require a continued focus on gender inequality, discrimination and women's autonomy, as has been discussed in relation to the MDGs and in the process of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20). The Sustainable Development and Human Settlements Division advocated gender mainstreaming in the document "The future we want", in various reports on global processes and in national studies. It has also highlighted gender inequality in access to water, sanitation services and adequate shelter, and how this inequality is expressed through the low participation of women in environmental and development decision-making processes. Gender issues have also begun to be included in activities on climate change, for example in relation to agricultural household income, and their potential social impact is being considered in public policy design.

There are other thematic areas where gender aspects have been developed to a lesser extent, but which have seen significant recent progress. Gender analyses have been carried out in the sphere of international trade and inclusive development, especially on aspects related to trade policy, the export sector and value chains. Sex-disaggregated statistics on the export sector were also included in the publication *Latin America and the Caribbean in the World Economy 2011-2012*.¹ The Financing for Development Division included gender components in activities linked to resource mobilization and production development, especially micro-enterprises, and to social protection financing in studies on health and pension system reforms. Similarly, the Natural Resources and Infrastructure Division has been gradually mainstreaming gender perspectives into its research activities and public policy recommendations on transport, urban mobility and road safety, since existing policies usually intensify inequities and inequalities by not giving due consideration to the different characteristics of mobility and the impact of its absence on women.

ECLAC subregional headquarters and national offices have undertaken various activities which are increasingly integrating key aspects of gender equality. These activities include technical cooperation services for governments, inter-agency coordination within the United Nations system and participation in meetings of experts, in coordination with the Division for Gender Affairs, with presentations on gender issues.

Knowledge management and dissemination is important for promoting gender equality, and notable work has been carried out in this sphere by the Public Information and Web Services Section and the Documents and Publications Division, which highlight important issues and contribute to regional debate and

¹ LC/G.2547-P.

reflection. Also in this field, the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES) strengthened the review of course and training content in order to include the gender perspective.

The development and consolidation of the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, by the Division for Gender Affairs, represents a significant contribution to the promotion of public policies on gender equality. This inter-agency project has become the main reference point for gender indicators and statistics in the region. The Observatory offers an online instrument for monitoring gender equality policies and international commitments in Latin America and the Caribbean, and presents comparable data on women's economic, physical and decision-making autonomy. A set of indicators has been developed to measure progress and setbacks on gender equality in the region, and forms the only up-to-date regional database of its kind. In addition to the aforementioned statistics and indicators, the Observatory also publishes a compilation of relevant laws, and instruments such as the analysis matrix for identifying fair gender equality policies. Its annual report has been recognized by governments, civil society and international agencies as a reference point for the analysis of progress in overcoming gender inequality in Latin America and the Caribbean and the Iberian Peninsula. The Observatory also studies gender parity in decision-making, helps measure violence against women, contributes to visibility, discussion and proposals regarding the care economy through various research projects and publications, and provides support for the preparation of time-use surveys. In this regard, since 2007, eight countries have joined the ten original participants in measuring time use in Latin America, whether through independent initiatives, in conducting surveys, or by incorporating questions or modules into their household surveys.² In this new phase, a central challenge is to develop an economic information area, which requires data collection, processing and analysis using new sources. This information would underpin the design, implementation and evaluation of public policies for gender equality, addressing both economic and social aspects.

ECLAC has made an effort to meet the Observatory's coordination costs, significantly contributing to its financial sustainability. At this stage, important progress has been made on the basis of information taken from household surveys, censuses, time-use surveys and other sources, essentially in the area of social policy.

The Division for Gender Affairs undertakes analysis and makes public policy proposals for an equality agenda, bringing care and unpaid work into the Commission's sphere of activity and raising these issues in regional debate. Major contributions were also made to tracking the fulfilment of the MDGs and to the discussion on new sustainable development indicators from a gender perspective.

One of the Division's key lines of work is the technical cooperation service provided to the governments of the region in order to strengthen capacities, which is delivered face to face and through the e-learning platform developed jointly with ILPES. Demand from governments has been constant and is gradually extending to new thematic areas needed for the development of national capacities.

The gender mainstreaming process within ECLAC, and the work on an equality agenda that incorporates gender equality and women's autonomy, presents several challenges for the next few years, among them strengthening coordination and synergies on issues that involve different divisions and subject areas, such as care and the multiple dimensions of development. One related issue that remains to be addressed is that of achieving parity within ECLAC, especially in decision-making positions.

² These countries are Argentina, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Uruguay. In the Caribbean, a question on this issue was included in the census of Trinidad and Tobago.