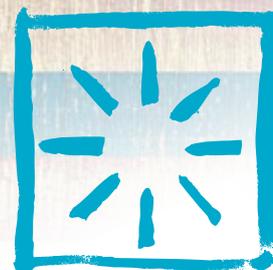


Briefing paper



2016

Social Panorama of Latin America



UNITED NATIONS

ECLAC

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Social Panorama of Latin America



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ECLAC

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This document contains a summary of the 2016 edition of *Social Panorama of Latin America*, which is prepared each year by the Social Development Division and the Statistics Division of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), under the supervision of Laís Abramo and Pascual Gerstenfeld, respectively, and with participation by the Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE)-Population Division of ECLAC, directed by Paulo Saad, and the ECLAC Division for Gender Affairs, directed by María Nieves Rico.

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Explanatory notes:

- Three dots (...) indicate that data are not available or are not separately reported.
- A dash (-) indicates that the amount is nil or negligible.
- A full stop (.) is used to indicate decimals.
- The term "dollars" refers to United States dollars, unless otherwise specified.
- A slash (/) between years (e.g. 2013/2014) indicates a 12-month period falling between the two years.
- Figures and percentages in tables may not necessarily add up to the corresponding totals owing to rounding.

Contents

Introduction.....	5
Chapter I	
Inequality in Latin America: a key challenge for sustainable development	7
A. Inequality in income distribution	7
B. Functional income distribution.....	9
C. Inequality in the ownership of physical and financial assets	11
D. Challenges with regard to understanding inequality	12
Chapter II	
Social spending: trends and challenges in policy financing.....	13
A. Public and social spending in 2000-2015	13
B. Present and future social spending as budgeted in the 2015-2017 period.....	15
C. Conclusions	16
Chapter III	
The social inequality matrix: age as an axis of social inequalities	17
Chapter IV	
Time distribution: a key element of the inequality analysis	23
A. Time distribution and inequality	23
B. The valuation of unpaid work and the System of National Accounts.....	25
C. The contribution of time-use data to equality policies	26
D. Conclusions	28
Chapter V	
Afrodescendent populations: guaranteeing rights through a broader approach to inequality	29
A. Afrodescendent populations in Latin America and the framework for action	29
B. Who are Afrodescendent people, what are their numbers and where are they?	30
C. Intersecting inequalities: gaps in the exercise of economic and social rights	30
D. Institutional framework and policies for the Afrodescendent population	33
E. Conclusions	34
Bibliography.....	35

Introduction

While concerns about equality have been a historically constant element in the thinking of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), they have moved to the fore since 2010, as established and explained in the set of documents known as the equality trilogy (ECLAC, 2010, 2012 and 2014a), and in 2016 were expanded with the analysis of the main challenges that the region faces in accomplishing the Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Significantly reducing inequality is a commitment assumed by all the countries of the region (reflected in Sustainable Development Goal 10 of the 2030 Agenda, to “reduce inequality within and among countries”), and is clearly expressed in the commitment “to leave no one behind”.

Economic and social development analysis conducted by ECLAC have determined that the Latin American and Caribbean economies have historically been defined by sharp structural heterogeneity, which is largely responsible for the high levels of social inequality found in the region’s countries. Their scantily diversified and highly heterogeneous production structures, within which low-productivity sectors account for approximately 50% of all jobs, are a key determinant of social inequality. The labour market is the essential link between that production structure and high levels of income inequality between households, which are associated with a highly differentiated distribution of the fruits of productivity and with highly stratified access to good-quality employment and social protection (ECLAC, 2010, 2012, 2014a and 2016a).

There is growing recognition that inequality is a multidimensional phenomenon caused by many factors. The notion of equality used by ECLAC is not therefore constrained to economic or income equality alone. This is clearly a central dimension of equality, which refers both to the distribution of the monetary incomes people and their families have for ensuring their well-being and developing their capacities, and to the functional distribution of income between capital and labour and the distribution of ownership of financial and non-financial assets.

The ECLAC definition of equality also covers equality in the exercise of rights and the development of capacities (understood as the set of abilities, knowledge and skills that individuals acquire and that allow them to pursue life plans they deem valuable), the reciprocal recognition of actors and gender, ethnic and racial equality, among other fundamental aspects (Bárcena and Prado, 2016).

Equality of rights is, as ECLAC sees it, the basic axis of equality, covering the full realization of economic, social and cultural rights as the regulatory and practical horizon for all persons (without distinctions on the grounds of sex, race, ethnicity, age, religion, origin, socioeconomic situation or any other condition) and the inclusion of all citizens in the dynamics of development, which implies a genuine belonging to society and full exercise of citizenship. In contrast, inequality means that not all individuals can fully exercise their civil, political, economic, social and environmental rights and, consequently, that the principle of universality is violated.

Analysing social inequalities requires paying attention to how assets, means and opportunities, income and other outcomes, power and influence are distributed. Thus, inequality refers to asymmetries in the capacity to appropriate resources and productive assets (income, goods, services, etc.) that represent or create well-being among different social groups. It also refers to exclusion and to the unequal distribution of political and economic power, which empowers a reduced segment of society to take decisions that affect the majority and that enable or constrain the exercise of rights and the development of capacities of all. Inequality is, therefore, essentially relational in nature and, in addition, it is a phenomenon inherent to relations of power at the

individual and collective levels. A multidimensional approach to inequality therefore implies analysing its economic, social, political and cultural aspects and taking into consideration the different structuring axes that shape social, political and economic relations in Latin American societies.

The central theme of this edition of *Social Panorama of Latin America* is social inequality, seen as a fundamental challenge and obstacle to sustainable development. Some of the axes and aspects of social inequality are addressed, drawing attention to how they intersect with and reinforce one another. The different chapters will examine inequalities in the distribution of income (personal and functional) and property; inequalities over the course of the life cycle; time-use inequalities between men and women; and the situation of Afrodescendent populations as an example of ethnic and racial inequalities. Recent trends in the amount of public resources available to finance social policies capable of tackling poverty and inequality and of promoting inclusive social development are also analysed.

Chapter I

Inequality in Latin America: a key challenge for sustainable development

This chapter analyses changes in certain aspects related to resource inequality and socioeconomic strata as the central axis of social inequality in Latin America. Analysis of income distribution among individuals and among households carried out in previous editions of *Social Panorama of Latin America* was expanded to include the functional distribution of income and recent developments in that regard. The chapter also covers the topic of concentration of ownership of financial and non-financial assets, based on a study of Mexico, which yields results that can be applied to other countries in the region.

A. Inequality in income distribution¹

In Latin America, the level of income distribution inequality in 2015 was similar to that seen in 2014. Nonetheless, taking into account the entire period since the global financial crisis, the income distribution gap narrowed between 2008 and 2015 in most of the region's countries. During this period, the income of the lowest income quintile increased more than that of the highest. This occurred generally across the various sources of household income, but mainly in labour income (both for wage jobs and self-employment), retirement and transfers.

1. Level of inequality and changes in the distribution of personal and household income

The Gini coefficient, which ranges from 0 (complete equality) to 1 (complete inequality), is 0.469 for Latin America, according to data available for 2015, practically unchanged from 2014, when the average stood at 0.473.² Most countries saw a decline in the Gini coefficient, mainly between 2008 and 2012, while variations were smaller between 2012 and 2015. In the regional average, the Gini coefficient fell only half as quickly between 2012 and 2015 (-0.6% per year), as it did between 2008 and 2012 (-1.2% per year) (see figure 1).

Income distribution can also be analysed on the basis of the ratio between the average per capita income of households in the highest income quintile (quintile V) and the lowest income quintile (quintile I). Between 2008 and 2015, the average ratio for 14 countries of the region fell 16.8%, from 14.7 to 12.2. Despite the decline, the differences remain very large; on average, in 2015, for every 100 monetary units received by each member of quintile I, each member of quintile V received 1,220 monetary units. This drop in the ratio in the 14 countries under review reflects an improvement in income distribution.

¹ The values of the inequality indicators presented in this edition of *Social Panorama of Latin America* correspond to an updated series and differ from those presented in previous editions of this publication. The process of updating the measurement included a conceptual and operational review of the different income items and the manner of imputing non-responses. It also meant putting aside the income adjustment process for the national accounts surveys.

² Average for 15 countries, excluding Costa Rica, Guatemala and Nicaragua.

Figure 1

Latin America (17 countries): Gini coefficient, around 2008, 2012 and 2015^{a,b}

A. Around 2008 and 2012



B. Around 2012 and 2015



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of Household Survey Data Bank (BADEHOG).

^a Data refer to 2008, 2012 and 2015, except in the cases of Argentina (2009-2014), Bolivian Republic of Venezuela (2008, 2012 and 2014), Chile (2009, 2011 and 2015), Colombia (2009, 2012 and 2015), Costa Rica (only 2012 and 2015), El Salvador (2009, 2013 and 2015), Guatemala (only 2014), Honduras (2009, 2013 and 2015), Mexico (2008, 2012 and 2014) and Plurinational State of Bolivia (2008, 2011 and 2014).

^b The average for Latin America includes the 15 countries with information available for both subperiods. It does not include Costa Rica, Nicaragua or Guatemala.

The fall in inequality between 2008 and 2015 was linked, in general, to a higher relative increase in income for quintile I than for quintile V.³ This occurred in the main sources of household income, that is, income from wage jobs and self-employment. In terms of the averages for a set of 14 countries, the real variation in per capita wage income in quintile I was 3% per year, compared to 2.3% per year in quintile V. There

³ An improvement in distribution does not automatically result in better well-being. In Honduras, for example, the improvement in income distribution between 2008 and 2015 came about within the framework of an overall decline in household income, which had a greater impact on quintile V households.

was a similar trend in income from self-employment, which grew at an annual rate of 2.8% (in real per capita terms) in quintile I, compared to an average variation of -0.3% in quintile V. Total retirement benefits and other transfers reflected the same pattern of differentiated increases benefitting quintile I households (up 6.4% per year, compared to 0.1% in quintile V). Transfers were very low in several countries in 2008, so although they posted strong growth over the period, their share of total per capita income of quintile I did not change significantly.

2. Income inequality from a gender perspective

Women's autonomy, in particular their economic autonomy, is a cornerstone of efforts to reduce inequality. There is ample empirical evidence that women's greater participation and labour income have a significant effect on reducing poverty and income inequality. In general, women have less access to production and financial resources, as well as to money, training and different technologies. Meanwhile, because they bear the brunt of unpaid domestic work, women have less time for their own use, which undermines their ability to train and maintain an unbroken presence in the labour market.

Low-income households contain a higher proportion of women of ages at which productive and reproductive demands are greatest. Without exception among the countries considered, women are overrepresented in the first two or three income quintiles. In particular, women aged between 20 and 59 are overrepresented in the poorest income quintile by up to 40% compared to men. This is because women tend to receive lower incomes, as a result of the difficulty of reconciling unpaid work in the home with labour market participation. Moreover, they generally work in typically low-wage occupations and are often overrepresented among the heads of single-parent households.

Meanwhile, the percentage of women who receive income from the labour market or in the form of pensions or other transfer is considerably lower than the percentage of men who do. An average figure for 15 countries shows that 44% of women in quintile I lack their own income, compared to just 23% of men.

With regard to the composition of personal income, transfers account for 16.8% of women's total income but less than 10% of men's income, whereas self-employment income accounts for 23.3% of women's total income compared to 33.7% of men's. The main source of income for both men and women is wages and salaries, accounting for 54% of all personal income. However, only one in two working-age women in the region are employed or seeking employment, and women's pay is still only 83.9% of men's.

In short, both the overrepresentation of women in the lower income quintiles and the higher proportion of women without their own income, especially in those quintiles, mean that a large group of women face deprivation and inequity. While progress has been made in recent years, the income gaps that women face, together with the differentiated composition of that income, remains a distinctive feature of inequality in all the countries of the region.

B. Functional income distribution

The most commonly used approach to analysing income distribution in the region has been inequality between individuals or between households. The original concept of functional income inequality, which is reflected in aggregate indicators such as the wage share of gross domestic product (GDP), has received little attention at either the global or regional level. However, functional income distribution analysis provides very

valuable information for understanding the dynamics of labour income and capital yields and can be considered in conjunction with personal income inequality.

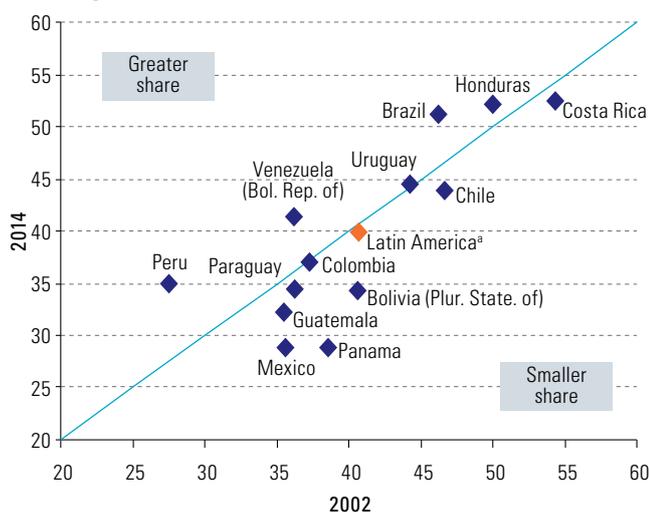
A long-term series of the relationship between the wage bill and GDP in Latin America between 1950 and 2011, built by Alarco Tosoni (2014), shows that wage shares were highest in the late 1960s and early 1970s. They were also relatively high in the 1990s, albeit with lower values than the first cycle in the 1960s and 1970s. Smaller wage shares were identified during the 1980s and the first five years of the twenty-first century. In recent years, the wage share of GDP has risen in the regional aggregate, owing to an improvement in functional income distribution, chiefly in Argentina and Brazil.

It is useful to study changes in the wage share in conjunction with changes in personal income inequality, measured using the Gini coefficient. Personal income distribution inequality has decreased in the vast majority of Latin American countries between 2002 and 2014; the Gini coefficient declined in 12 of a total of 14 countries, with reductions of more than 10 percentage points in Argentina and the Plurinational State of Bolivia and of between 7 and 10 percentage points in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Peru and Uruguay. However, in the same period, out of 13 countries for which up-to-date data are available, only 5 (the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Honduras, Peru and Uruguay) saw increases in the wage share of GDP (see figure 2). This indicates that the distributive improvements achieved in that period were not primarily linked to a more equitable distribution of the returns on capital and on labour.⁴

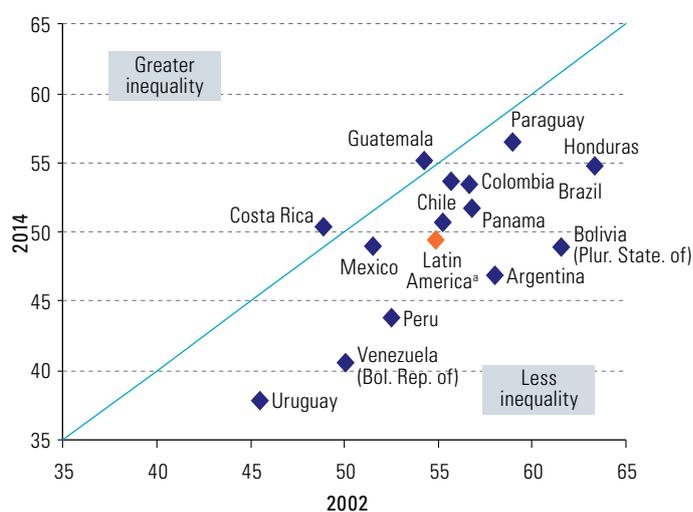
Figure 2

Latin America (14 countries): wage share of GDP and Gini coefficient, 2002 and 2014
(Percentages)

A. Wage share of GDP
(Percentages)



B. Gini coefficient



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of information from CEPALSTAT, National Institute of Statistics and Censuses (INDEC) of Argentina, Central Bank of Costa Rica and Central Bank of Uruguay.

Note: The Gini coefficients correspond to the previous series of inequality estimates produced by ECLAC, on the basis of income aggregate that included the adjustment to the national accounts.

^a Simple average for the countries.

⁴ National accounts provide information on the wage bill (remuneration of wage workers), but do not usually cover mixed income. This refers to the remuneration of self-employed workers and implicitly contains an element of return on labour and an element of return on the capital involved in productive activities.

Sectoral-level analysis is also important for a better understanding of functional income inequality. The differences in the aggregate wage share of GDP between countries or variations in this ratio over time in a particular country may be due to changes in how value added is distributed between labour and capital in the different economic sectors, or to changes in the relative scale of value added among sectors. Analysis of the eight Latin American economies selected shows that the wage share of value added increased in four of them (Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica and Honduras), decreased in three (Chile, Guatemala and Mexico) and stayed practically the same in one (Colombia). It also reveals shifts in the returns on labour and capital within sectors had stronger effects than changes in the relative size of the different sectors within the economy. For example, more than 70% of the total change in the wage share of income was due to the intrasectoral effect (changes in the returns on labour and capital) in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica and Guatemala, while the structural change effect (changes in the weight of different economic sectors) was greater in Chile, Costa Rica and Honduras.

C. Inequality in the ownership of physical and financial assets

Putting efforts to combat inequality at the heart of government thinking will mean moving towards measurements that take into account the ownership structure of physical and financial assets. The document *The social inequality matrix in Latin America* (ECLAC, 2016c) states that one of the major structuring axes of inequality is social class, or socioeconomic stratum, which means that general wealth must be measured.

The ownership structure is one of the key variables involved in perpetuating—and even increasing—social inequality. For that reason, empirical studies that measure wealth or asset inequality tend to agree that this inequality is greater, more deeply rooted and more persistent than inequality measured solely on the basis of income.

According to the *Global Wealth Report 2016* by Credit Suisse, global wealth is very poorly distributed: 0.7% of adults (35 million people) hold almost half (45%) of the world's physical and financial assets; 9% of global wealth is concentrated in the hands of just 123,000 high net worth individuals (those who are worth more than US\$ 30 million); and 1,722 people belong to the select group of billionaires.

The analysis below is based on a study of the situation in Mexico, but the finding may apply to other countries of the region. Between 2003 and 2014, the Mexican economy grew at an average annual rate of 2.6%. However, wealth grew at an average annual real rate of 7.9% over the same period. As a result, wealth in Mexico doubled between 2004 and 2014.

In addition, ownership of the physical assets held by production units listed in economic censuses is concentrated in very few hands, which demonstrates the high degree of structural heterogeneity in the Mexican economy: 10% of companies hold 93% of physical assets, while the remaining 90% have very few capital assets. As a result, the Gini coefficient of the distribution of physical assets is a record 0.93.

In 2015, the Government of Mexico managed 23% of assets, private companies 19%, autonomous public corporations 9% and financial institutions 5%, while 7% of financial assets were held by non-residents. Nevertheless, the largest share, 37%—equivalent to 280 billion Mexican pesos—is concentrated in the hands of families. Unfortunately, those 280 billion pesos are distributed very unequally.

Two thirds of these physical and financial assets are in the hands of the country's richest 10% of families and 1% of those families hold more than a third. By family, the Gini coefficient of total asset distribution (physical and financial) is 0.79. The distribution of financial assets is even more unequal: 80% is owned by the richest 10%.

D. Challenges with regard to understanding inequality

ECLAC affirms the need for a new development style centred around equality and sustainability, and has reiterated the importance of reducing the high levels of inequality in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. The recent experience of the countries in their efforts to reduce and eliminate poverty indicates that achieving this goal will only be possible by combating and decreasing inequality in its various and interconnected manifestations.

Although the region made significant progress in reducing inequality in personal income distribution early in the new millennium, a broader analysis indicates that this progress is relative. A functional approach to income distribution analysis shows an increase in the wage share of GDP in only a few countries in the region, which suggests that the improvement in personal income distribution was not directly linked to more equitable distribution of returns between capital and labour. Moreover, partial analysis of inequality in wealth distribution among families indicates that it is higher than inequality measured solely on the basis of income and that the ownership structure of financial assets is even more concentrated and this trend continues to deepen.

The study, analysis and measurement of wealth and of the ownership structure of physical and financial assets is a promising path to understanding the multidimensional nature of inequality and to achieving a more consistent analysis of the challenges to reducing it significantly in the region. Among the challenges of this research agenda is fine-tuning instruments and methodologies for measuring inequality. Improvements to household surveys to capture high incomes more accurately should be combined with analysis of other information sources, such as national accounts or personal tax records, to complement the findings of the surveys.

Chapter II

Social spending: trends and challenges in policy financing

One of the innovations of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is its focus on the means of implementation, with the explicit aim that this should be based on resources mobilized at the national and international levels. In this context, one of the most important tools for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals is social investment, which has been strongly associated with substantial progress in access to basic services such as sanitation, housing, education, health care and social protection systems, all areas in which the 2030 Agenda aims for guaranteed universal access. Social investment also includes spending on environmental protection and natural disaster prevention, essential for the progress towards environmental sustainability that is sought by the 2030 Agenda.

The chapter draws on the new ECLAC public social spending database and is divided into two sections. Section A uses the official data provided to ECLAC by the region's countries to describe recent trends in public social spending according to the functional classification, which considers the public resources allocated to policies associated with the following six functions: (i) environmental protection, (ii) housing and community amenities, (iii) health, (iv) recreation, culture and religion, (v) education, and (vi) social protection. Section B presents information on the social spending provided for in national budgets, describing the decisions that have been taken and the countries' plans for 2017.

A. Public and social spending in 2000-2015

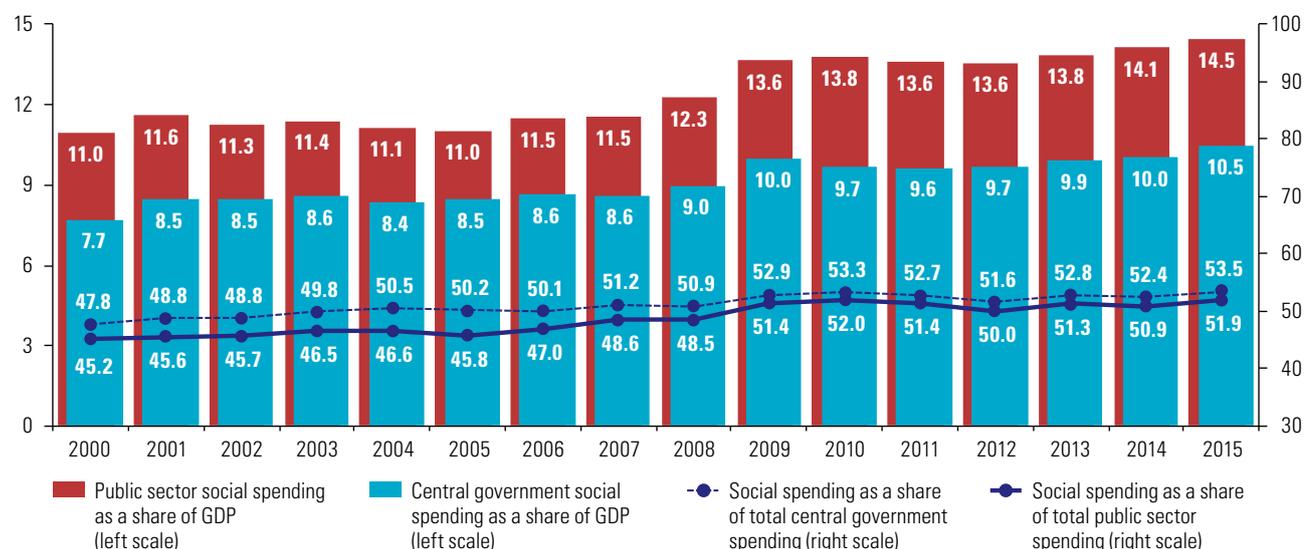
Central government and public sector social spending in the region's countries, calculated as a simple average, was worth 10.5% and 14.5% of GDP, respectively, in 2015 (see figure 3), the highest levels this century. For the first time, central government spending exceeded the level of disbursement in 2009 in response to the 2008 subprime crisis. Social spending in 2015 represented just over half of total public spending that year.

The countries spending most on social functions are Argentina, Brazil, Colombia and Costa Rica, at more than 20% of GDP, while the countries spending least are Guatemala and Haiti, at less than 8% of GDP. Taking the social functions separately, Argentina and Brazil spend most on social protection (over 13% of GDP in 2015), Costa Rica and the Plurinational State of Bolivia on education (over 7% of GDP in 2015) and Argentina and Costa Rica again on health care (over 6% of GDP in 2015).

When spending by social function at the public sector level is analysed, the official institutional coverage figures published by each country indicate that social protection, education and health are the top priorities in terms of resource allocation, at 5.0%, 4.6% and 3.4% of GDP, respectively, in 2015 (see figure 4).

Figure 3

Latin America (19 countries): central government and public sector social spending, 2000-2015^{a,b}
(Percentages of GDP and of total public spending)



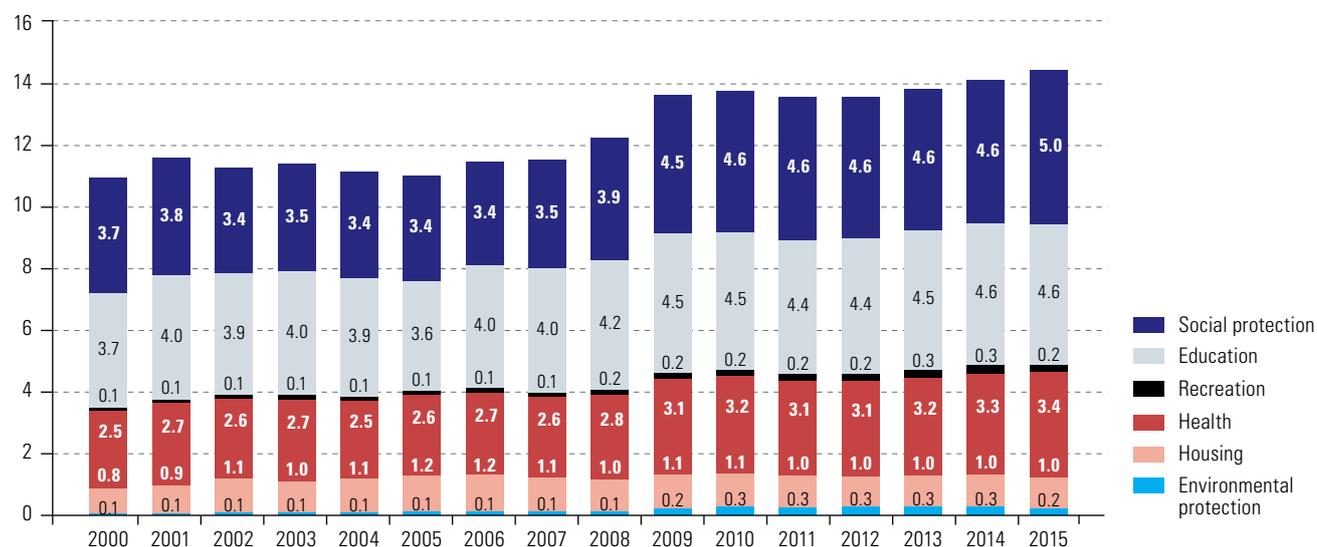
Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of official information from the respective countries.

^a Simple average for 19 countries: Argentina, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Plurinational State of Bolivia and Uruguay. Information is available up to 2009 for the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and 2014 for Panama.

^b The countries with coverage wider than central government are Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, Peru and the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

Figure 4

Latin America (19 countries): public sector social spending, by function, 2000-2015^{a,b}
(Percentages of GDP)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of official information from the respective countries.

^a Simple average for 19 countries: Argentina, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Plurinational State of Bolivia and Uruguay. Information is available up to 2009 for the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and 2014 for Panama.

^b The countries with coverage wider than central government are Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, Peru and the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

Comparing the 2014 social spending of the countries analysed in the region with that of the European Union countries and the United States reveals differences of 20 percentage points of GDP and almost 10 percentage points of GDP, respectively, in favour of the latter.

Central government per capita social spending averaged US\$ 728 at 2010 prices in 2015, an increase of about 60% from 2000 and of over 20% in five years. Official information for the public sector as a whole yields an average of US\$ 1,094 per capita for the region's countries, an increase of almost 50% from 2000 and almost 10% from 2010.

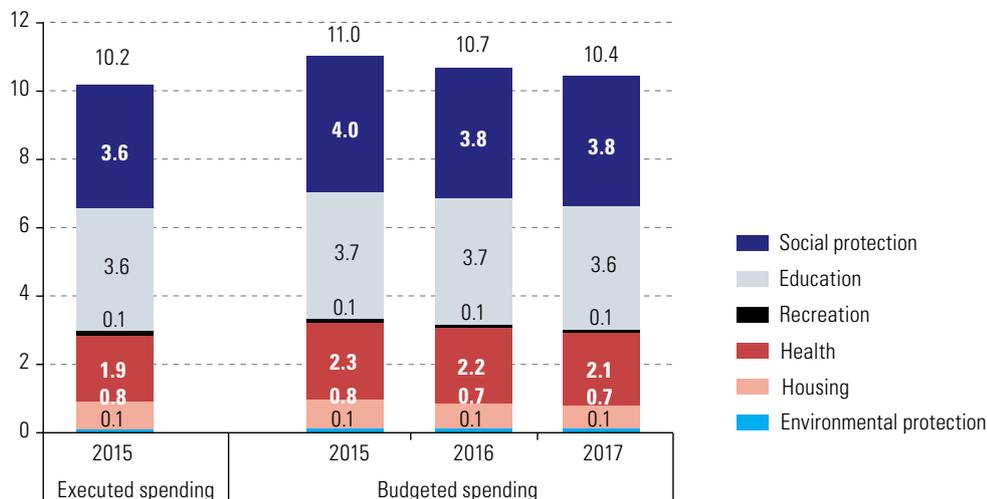
B. Present and future social spending as budgeted in the 2015-2017 period

Analysis of social spending executed in the 2000-2015 period is supplemented by a review of the information in the budgets of the Latin American countries with a view to assessing governments' social policy priorities. This edition of the *Social Panorama of Latin America* analyses budgeted central government expenditure for fiscal years 2015, 2016 and 2017, and results are shown for 13 countries in the region.

Figure 5 shows that, on average, the region's countries have been cautious in preparing their 2016 and 2017 budgets, in that the total and social spending budgeted for is lower than in 2015. The chart also allows the spending implemented in 2015 to be compared to the amount budgeted for the year, and shows that actual total spending was 1 percentage point of GDP lower than planned (i.e. an average of 10% of the amount budgeted); furthermore, the shortfall was greatest for social functions.

Figure 5

Latin America (13 countries): executed and budgeted central government social spending, by function, 2015-2017^a
(Percentages of GDP)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

^a Simple average for 13 countries: Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama (budgetary data only), Peru and Uruguay.

The information in the countries' public budgets, and those of South America in particular, suggests budget cuts in social functions for 2017. This could have a direct impact on the population in a context of positive if low economic growth, compounding limitations in implementation, since budgets are not always executed as fully as they might be.

C. Conclusions

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development represents an ambitious attempt by countries to establish a broad global consensus for simultaneous progress with the social, economic and environmental pillars of sustainable development. Any substantial advance will depend, among other implementation measures, on each country's ability to mobilize sufficient domestic resources not just for aspects linked directly to inclusion and social welfare, but for strengthened environmental protection and sustainability. In this context, ECLAC is calling once again for social policy financing to be safeguarded and protected to ensure the sustainability of the progress made, deal with ongoing challenges and be able to advance towards the Goals agreed on in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Because of this, measurement of the resources invested in social policies and analysis of their composition and evolution over time, and likewise of their redistributive effect and efficiency, must form part of the implementation process for the Sustainable Development Goals. The effort made in this chapter to expand and improve social spending information in collaboration with the region's countries is a major step in this direction. Better measurement is bound to mean better analysis and decision-making by the countries.

Chapter III

The social inequality matrix: age as an axis of social inequalities

Age is one of the axes of social inequality, an underlying determinant of the organization of social institutions such as the family and the structures that organize education and work. As such, it is also a determinant of the distribution of well-being, power and authority in the social structure and one of the foundations of social organization and its allocation of responsibilities and roles (ECLAC, 2016a).

The life cycle perspective is helpful for studying the progression of different stages that people pass through over the course of their lives, from birth to death, owing to the interaction of biological, relational and social factors (Carr, 2009). This perspective facilitates an analysis that not only incorporates age and its interaction with other axes of inequality but that can help identify the concatenation of inequalities at each stage of people's life histories and the critical junctures that contribute to the reproduction of social inequality at these different stages. Four basic stages in the life cycle have traditionally been distinguished: childhood and adolescence, youth, adulthood and old age (Cecchini and others, 2015), but there also are very important divisions within each of these.

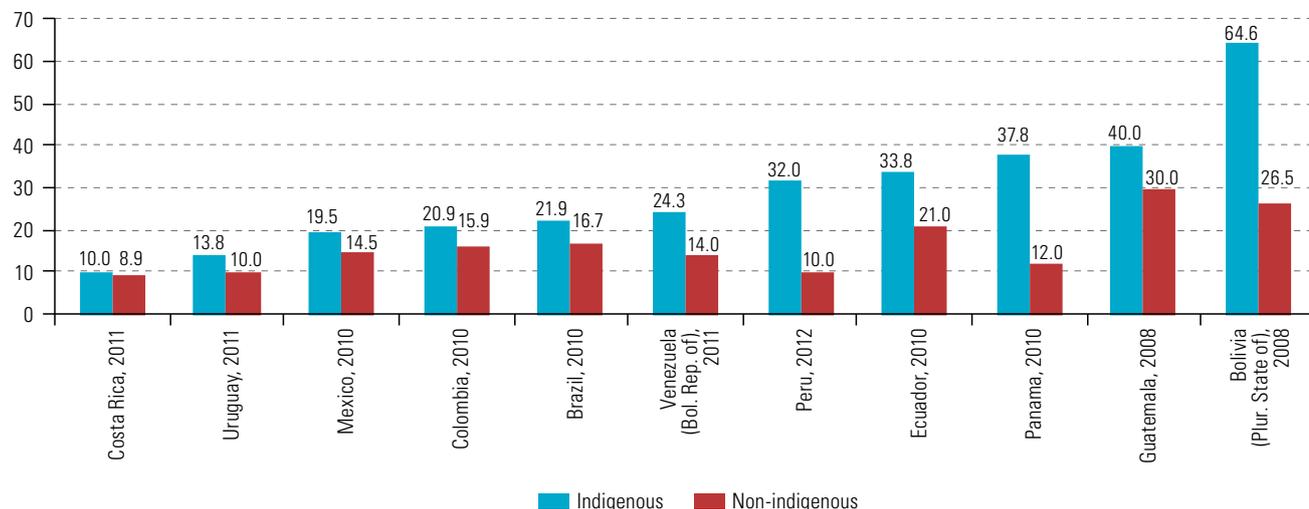
Analysing the relationship between inequality and the life cycle requires drawing a distinction between stratifications over the life cycle, within each of its stages and between these different stages in different sociohistorical contexts. Stratification over the different stages of the life cycle has to do with the way institutions and systems that distribute resources, such as the State, market and family, generate processes of social differentiation between population groups by virtue of the stage of life they are in. Besides inequalities between people at different stages of the life cycle at any given time, there are also large gaps between people at the same stage, particularly in relation to socioeconomic status, gender, ethnic and racial origin and territory. An important part of this approach is that inequality is conceived as the outcome of processes that take place over time, being the cumulative result of decisions, needs, advantages, events and experiences interacting with institutional arrangements and the social and economic context (Gibbs and Eaton, 2014). Chapter III explores intra- and intergenerational inequalities at the different stages of the life cycle, seeking to emphasize the concatenation of inequality over these stages. It also emphasizes the inequalities experienced over the life cycle by indigenous people, a population segment historically discriminated against. Lastly, it provides an overview of institutions dedicated to specific population segments over the life cycle, highlighting the challenges of coordination for public policies.

Each stage of the life cycle presents specific opportunities, challenges and risks. Childhood, and early childhood in particular, is a stage of particular importance for human development: it is the period when the foundations for future cognitive, affective and social development are laid (ECLAC, 2016a). It is a stage at which risk factors converge in such sensitive areas for development as health and nutrition, early stimulation and education, and the opportunity to grow and develop in safe family and community settings. Infringements of rights at this stage can have deep and lasting effects.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, inequality is pervasive from the earliest stages of people's lives. Poverty in childhood is particularly critical because of children's greater dependence, lack of autonomy and vulnerability to the economic and social conditions of their environment and their families. Children are more likely to have unmet needs than people at other stages of the life cycle. Furthermore, there are also large inequalities within the child population itself when other axes of social inequality such as socioeconomic status, gender, ethnic and racial origin and territory are considered, as illustrated in figure 6, which shows the gaps between the infant mortality rate of the indigenous population and that of the non-indigenous population.

Figure 6

Latin America (11 countries): infant mortality by ethnicity, around 2010
(Per 1,000 live births)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE)-Population Division of ECLAC.

Access to preschool education is another area that is critical to children's development. There is great heterogeneity here as well, with the gap between children in the different countries of the region being especially striking. Within each country, attendance at this level of schooling is usually higher in urban areas than in rural ones. Another major challenge is the quality of this level of education, on which its benefits largely depend. Consequently, as stated in target 4.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Ibero-American commitment signed in 2010 in relation to the Educational Goals for 2021, there needs to be progress towards universalization of preschool education to mitigate inequalities in the accumulation of capabilities and skills, with all the repercussions these subsequently have for people's opportunities and well-being.

Youth is another critical stage during which social inequalities may be either widened or reduced. During this stage, issues that will mark adulthood are defined: young people are expected to complete their studies, acquire work skills, begin their working lives under suitable conditions and, in many cases, start or consolidate a family of their own. In Latin America, however, these phases and transitions often do not follow a linear sequence, and during them inequality is reproduced and magnified.

Individuals' level of education is one of the most important determinants of their opportunities in terms of employment, income, health, housing and other individual and social benefits over their lifetimes (Espínola and Claro, 2010). Completion of secondary school, in particular, not only affects later stages in adolescents' life cycle but also plays a fundamental role in interrupting the transmission of poverty and inequality to future generations. The percentage of young people aged 20 to 24 (both male and female) completing secondary education has risen across the region, and this growth has been particularly striking in rural areas, with rates rising from 18.7% to 38.4% for men and from 20.4% to 42.2% for women. At the same time, while the secondary school completion rate among young indigenous people has risen strongly (by about 50%, as compared to some 20% for non-indigenous young people), there are still very large ethnicity gaps in this indicator, and closing them will require specific public policy action.

Another major challenge for young Latin Americans, and an obstacle to their emancipation, is the transition from school to the labour market. A group of special

concern are young people who are neither studying nor employed in the labour market. This situation is contributing to the reproduction of inequality down the generations and preventing the region from taking advantage of the window of opportunity represented by the demographic dividend. However, it is important to recognize and bring to light the great variety of situations within this group. It is a group composed mainly of women, as other studies have identified (ECLAC, 2016a; Trucco and Ullmann, 2015). Although the proportion of young people who were neither studying nor employed in the labour market dropped on average between 2002 and 2014 in the five countries of the region with information available on ethnicity (Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Guatemala and the Plurinational State of Bolivia), the decline was not uniform across the different population groups, being much more modest for women than for men, while indigenous women made the least progress.

Access to income and well-being in adulthood depends even more on the ability to participate successfully in the job market, which derives in turn from the skills and capabilities people have acquired during earlier stages in life (Rossel and Filgueira, 2015, cited in ECLAC, 2016a). Furthermore, access to contributory social protection is heavily dependent on participation in the formal labour market. This is also the stage when the pressures of care are felt most keenly because of the presence of young dependants (children) and, in some cases, of older persons as well (parents or other family members). The combination of these demands—the need to generate adequate income and to reconcile labour market participation with care responsibilities—creates a particularly challenging situation for adult women. Lastly, the way individuals engage with the job market during adulthood, and in particular their access to social protection and security mechanisms, have implications for their well-being when they enter old age.

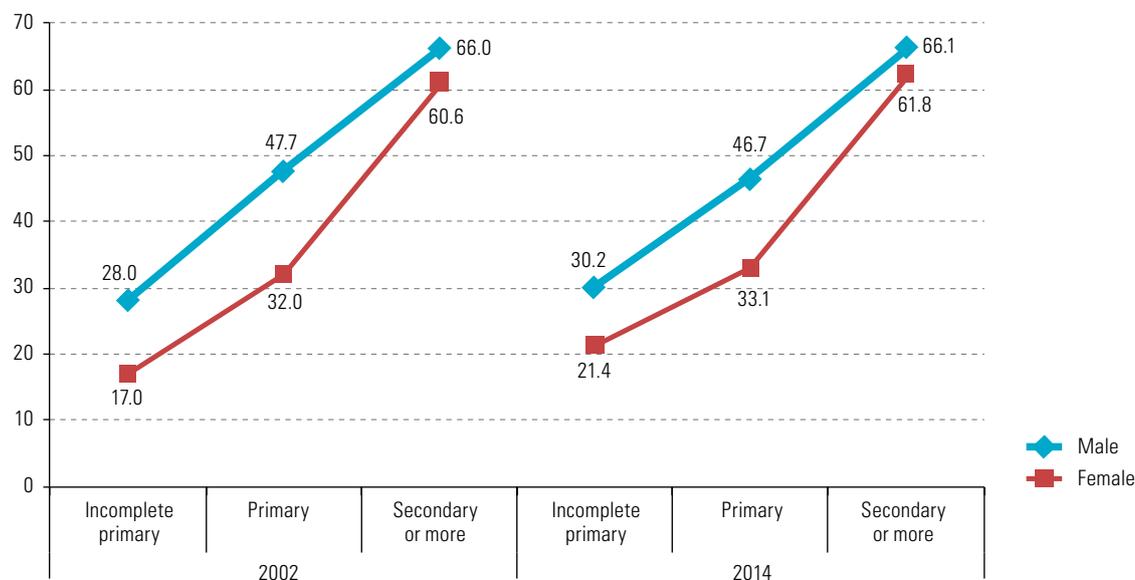
The region is undergoing a period of profound demographic transformation, characterized by steady population ageing (ECLAC, 2016a). The most notable inequalities in old age are associated with alterations in family living arrangements, access to a stable pension and retirement income and changes in health and in physical and intellectual autonomy. At the same time, divides between older persons reflect the disadvantages (or advantages) they have accumulated over a lifetime.

For example, educational attainments during adolescence and youth substantially affect people's long-term position in the labour market, which in turn affects access to contributory pensions. Generally speaking, the proportion of both men and women aged 65 and over receiving a pension increased modestly in almost all the countries between 2002 and 2014. However, there are very large differences in contributory pension eligibility by education level: taking the simple average for the eight countries with information available, just 30% of men aged 65 and over with incomplete primary education had a pension in 2014, while 66% of those with secondary education or more did; the figures for women were 21% and 62%, respectively, which reveals a gender gap stemming from the weaker position of women in the labour market (see figure 7).

There is a high degree of inequality in people's prospects of having to live with some disability during the final stage of life, related in turn to other factors such as educational attainment and socioeconomic status. People who had secondary or tertiary education in their youth have a lower prevalence of disability than those with lesser educational attainments. As ECLAC (2016a) argues, those who go through the stages of life in a context of economic vulnerability and lesser access to social protection mechanisms are at high risk of any health problem becoming a disability because they cannot afford the health and support services and the assistance they need to mitigate the impact of limitations acquired with age, particularly considering that health and rehabilitation services are tending to rise in price over time and may be unaffordable.

Figure 7

Latin America (simple average for 8 countries): persons aged 65 and over receiving a pension, by sex and education level, 2002 and 2014
(Percentages)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of special processing of census microdata using Retrieval of Data for Small Areas by Microcomputer (REDATAM) software.

As for indigenous people, their situation and the inequalities they experience over the life cycle are challenges for social inclusion in the region, despite the major progress made in recent decades. The inequality characterizing Latin America is manifested in the case of indigenous children and young adults by considerable disadvantages, particularly as regards health and education, two dimensions that are vital at this stage in the life cycle and that in turn have implications for later stages. Furthermore, this infringement of rights is compounded by interaction with other axes of social inequality (gender, socioeconomic, territorial and age inequalities), resulting in multiple forms of exclusion. These inequalities are manifested in spheres critical to the current and future development of indigenous children. In youth, indigenous people are affected by educational shortcomings and inequalities in health, including problems with mental health and substance abuse. In adulthood, indigenous women and men are faced with numerous difficulties, this being a stage in the life cycle when “productive” and “reproductive” decisions deriving from their social, cultural, environmental, territorial and spiritual environment have to be taken within a development paradigm characterized by a ransacking of natural, human and cultural resources that is categorically opposed to the indigenous concept of “living well”. Lastly, old age truly begins for many indigenous people when they can no longer carry out tasks or activities for the maintenance of their families or the material reproduction of the community. A person’s status and role in society may increase as they “age”, as a high value is usually set on the collective wisdom and memory that have to be transmitted to young people to ensure the cultural reproduction of the group. The way the different axes of social inequality interact and reinforce each other in the situation of indigenous people can be seen at different stages in the life cycle. It is thus vital to design policies that genuinely reflect current international standards regarding the rights of indigenous peoples, conjoining individual and collective rights and incorporating gender, generational and territorial outlooks.

The corollary of an increased awareness of the need to adopt policy approaches that are sensitive to people's lifelong needs is the emergence of social institutions devoted to specific population segments such as children and adolescents, young adults and older people. These institutions have spread throughout Latin America and the Caribbean and are anchored in all cases both in international commitments and instruments and in national laws and specialized government agencies. Their organizational diversity notwithstanding, these agencies share a commitment to mainstreaming the specific needs and guaranteeing the rights of these population segments in all public action. To achieve this, the region's countries need to overcome the shared challenge of constantly increasing their capacity for intersectoral coordination.

The aims of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development include not only ensuring that no one is left behind, but reaching the furthest behind first. To meet these aspirations, it is necessary to determine which population groups suffer most from marginalization, exclusion and infringements of their rights. These groups often experience a number of inequalities that overlap and compound each other, accumulating throughout their lives and across generations. Efforts to identify these groups are complicated by the statistical invisibility of certain populations and their needs and the limited potential to disaggregate information sources by multiple characteristics. Better information sources are urgently needed to look beyond national averages. In particular, longitudinal data, which are also lacking, are needed to better analyse trends and interrelationships in the different manifestations of social inequality over the whole of people's life cycles.

The life cycle approach places individuals at the centre of public action from birth to the end of life, recognizing that their needs change over a lifetime and that the individual is the starting and end point of social policy. From an institutional standpoint, this means recognizing and dealing with the specific needs and risks of each stage in the life cycle, while also coordinating policies focused on these different stages.

Chapter IV

Time distribution: a key element of the inequality analysis

Time is a finite resource that people use in different ways depending on a number of sociocultural factors that reflect social structure, power relationships and the prevailing gender order, among other things. The sexual division of labour in the region restricts some in using this time freely and autonomously, resulting in a lack of personal time. As occurs with income, the lack of personal time and of the ability to manage it freely is a significant contributor to gender inequality.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, the production structure, gender roles and family make-up have reinforced stark differences between men and women with respect to time distribution. This has led to inequalities in opportunities and outcomes for personal and professional development. In order to increase well-being and sustainable development, public policies must include time as a central element to guarantee better harmonization and balance between time spent on domestic, professional and personal activities. Just as the feminist movement's slogan "the personal is political" drew attention to domestic issues requiring public policies, advances in the region show that, now, time is political. It is essential to develop and implement public policies on the redistribution of time and work to foster gender equality and sustainable development (ECLAC, 2016b).

A. Time distribution and inequality

Ongoing discussions about the care economy and the sustainability of human life—from the perspective of feminist economics—clearly show that much of what is produced and what sustains people is neither considered nor accounted for in traditional economics (Carrasco and Tello, 2013). Social inequality in the region is strongly determined by the production matrix and ownership structure, as well as other structural determinants—like the prevailing gender system—which in turn intersects with factors such as life cycle stages, area of residence, ethnicity and race (ECLAC, 2016c).

According to ECLAC (2016b, 2016d), time use and the distribution of unpaid domestic work are a central element in the analysis of gender inequality. The achievement of women's autonomy depends heavily on the balanced distribution of unpaid domestic and care work between men and women, and between families, the market, the community and the State. For a complete and in-depth analysis of inequalities in Latin America and the Caribbean, more light must be shed on the distribution and use of time by men and women.

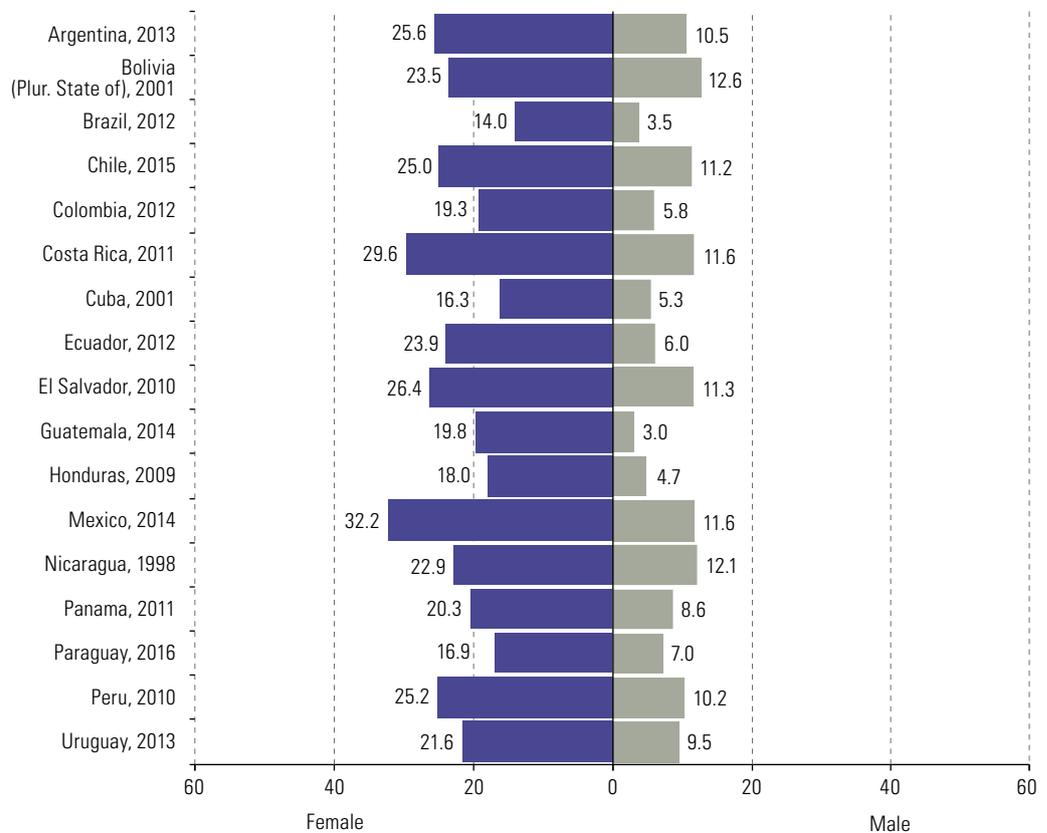
The Montevideo Strategy adopted by the governments of the region at the thirteenth Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean (2016) highlights time-use surveys as essential data-generating tools which provide input for the design of equality policies. These surveys are the ideal information source for the analysis of gender inequality; studies on the link between monetary poverty, income and time distribution and use; national, regional and international requirements for data on unpaid work and new labour statistics requirements. Nineteen countries in the region have already made at least one attempt to measure time use, mainly in the past 10 years. However, existing time-use surveys are not comparable owing to the different methodologies used in terms of the objectives, collection process, classification of activities, geographical scope and ability to disaggregate data. Nonetheless, it is

hoped that the adoption of the Classification of Time-Use Activities for Latin America and the Caribbean (CAUTAL) in 2015 will allow the region to move towards a common methodology that allows international comparability.

The analysis of the dimensions of inequality and how they interconnect is fundamental to the design of public policies that would allow society to achieve sustainable development and the Goals set forth in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (ECLAC, 2016e, 2016f). Sustainable Development Goal indicator 5.4.1 (Proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex, age and location) was proposed at the global level to monitor the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Although it is not one of the Sustainable Development Goal indicators that countries regularly produce (despite a clear concept and established methodology), the efforts of national statistical offices in Latin American to develop time-use measurement tools have made it possible to calculate this indicator in 17 countries, as shown in figure 8. According to these data, women in the region spend between one fifth and one third of their time each day or each week on unpaid domestic and care work, while men spend about 10% of their time on this work. Although indicator 5.4.1 offers a perspective of the situation at the national level, efforts should be made to shed light on the inequalities affecting specific groups, which are concealed by average figures.

Figure 8

Latin America (17 countries): time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex (Sustainable Development Goal indicator 5.4.1)
(Percentages)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of special tabulations from time-use surveys conducted in the respective countries.

Note: Figures take into account time spent on domestic and care work in one's own household, in other households, in the community and volunteer work, except in the case of Brazil, where the survey asks only one question relating to domestic work in one's own household, and of Honduras, which includes only information for members of one's own household. The data correspond to the national total except for Costa Rica (Greater Metropolitan Area) and Cuba (Old Havana). The population examined was 15 years and older, except in Argentina (18 years and older) and Nicaragua (6 years and older).

Time distribution varies during a person's life cycle. However, there is a common thread which is the greater burden of unpaid domestic and care work for women, in particular during their reproductive years.

The division of public and private spaces for men and women occurs from a very early age. Although data from time-use surveys are not designed to measure child labour, they do shed light on the early construction of gender roles by showing that male children and adolescents spend more time on paid work than girl children and adolescents. They also show notable differences in the time spent on unpaid work, which ranges from 6.6 to 15.2 hours per week for male children and adolescents, compared with 13.6 to 23.3 hours per week for girl children and adolescents, depending on the country. Data on how boys, girls and adolescents spend their time also allows the measurement of their well-being. They indicate that boys aged 18 and under spend two to seven hours per week more than girls in the same age group on social activities, including leisure, sports and recreational activities with family and friends.

Data on time use by young people aged 15 to 29 who are not in education or employment helps break the stigma that they are inactive or unproductive members of society. On average, women who are not in education or employment spend at least 40 hours per week on unpaid domestic work, which means that they do work, but receive no compensation (ECLAC, 2016b).

Lastly, time-use data help to analyse the care that older persons provide and receive. Some surveys in the region (for example in Mexico and Uruguay) show the care provided to older persons at home and take account of activities such as assistance with personal hygiene, feeding or medical care, including transportation to health centres, and support in the use of information technology. In households where older persons are present, women spend 18 hours per week caring for them, compared with 15 hours for men.

The data indicate that women aged 65 and older spend between 9.8 and 32.5 hours per week caring for members of their own or other households, generally younger generations, so that other women (daughters, daughters-in-law, nieces, neighbours) can go to work. This is a clear example of the unequal distribution of time in old age. It also shows that the situation is worse for women who may not have been as active in the labour market during their adult lives and thus receive fewer social benefits relating to employment, which then results in greater difficulties for them to access care services. This is a perverse logic that deprives people of the very services that they provided to others throughout the course of their own lives (Gómez, 2008).

B. The valuation of unpaid work and the System of National Accounts

Domestic and care work support societies and have a significant impact on countries' well-being and development potential. Nonetheless, the limited definition of the System of National Accounts (SNA) production boundary excludes the domestic and care services produced or consumed by members of a household from the central framework of macroeconomic analysis. This conceals the importance of these activities for the economy, and perpetuates economic and power relationships. Owing to the importance of national accounts in economic analysis, decision-making and policy formulation, the exclusion of these activities has repercussions for the distribution of resources and benefits stemming from that production. If this aspect of the economy is not recognized or its impact is not analysed, inequalities will persist or worsen.

The valuation of unpaid work in the framework of SNA provides a more precise measurement of what society produces (shedding light on a part of the economy that had remained hidden) and allows the contribution of this type of work to be incorporated into macroeconomic analysis and decision-making. Moreover, it aids the analysis of the interaction between the household and market economies. A revision of SNA carried out in 1993 introduced the possibility of adding satellite accounts to the central framework, in order to provide a comprehensive picture of a specific field of economic activity. This significantly expanded the analytical capacity of national accounting, without overburdening or disrupting the central system.

The countries that have determined the economic value of unpaid domestic work have shown that this type of work represents 15.2% to 24.2% of GDP and that there is a marked difference in the distribution of unpaid domestic responsibilities. In terms of the relative weight of men's and women's contributions to GDP, women contribute between 70% and 87%, depending on the country.

C. The contribution of time-use data to equality policies

Today's apparently gender-neutral public policies disregard distribution of time as a fundamental resource for the social and economic well-being of people and society as a whole. The failure to recognize the contribution by both men and women to families' well-being and to sustainable development through unpaid work widens gaps and reproduces inequalities. States must address this problem through innovative public policies designed around time distribution and unpaid work and geared towards transforming the existing sexual division of labour.

This chapter describes a non-exhaustive research and recommendation agenda for public policies that highlights the potential utilization of time-use and distribution data for equality policies from a gender perspective. Although some sectoral applications are suggested, it is important to establish inter-institutional and intersectoral coordination and synergies, and there is an urgent need for comprehensive policies, especially on redistributive measures aimed at working in a cross-cutting manner towards equality between men and women and the recognition of women's contributions to countries' growth, well-being and development.

Time-use data gleaned from surveys, for instance, generate empirical data for policies to expand water networks, sanitation and drinking water distribution, which could improve gender equality by reducing the unpaid work done by women. In rural areas of Peru, data show that 57.3% of women spend time fetching water, and in Guatemala women spend six hours per week on this activity, which is almost two hours more than men.

Time distribution is closely linked to the organization of space in each territory; making activities compatible is linked to distances and means and conditions for covering them, particularly in cities (ECLAC, 2016e). Data on the time that men and women spend each week commuting between home and work in the capital cities of five Latin American countries (Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay) show that they spend one hour more than the national average on this activity, and that women spend less time than men commuting, owing to the nature of their participation in the labour market. With a view to building cities that provide a better quality of life for both men and women, helpful measures include planning spaces and defining time use for urban services (for example, timetables, waiting times, attention to and management

of procedures and distances) so that women and men can perform their daily tasks of caring for family members and paid work more easily and quickly (Segovia, 2016).

Time-use indicators establish a link between unpaid work (for households) and paid work (for the market) as the amount of time spent on the former limits the availability of time to perform the latter. Time use by the employed population shows that people have double working days (paid and unpaid) and that women have a heavier overall workload in all countries (on the whole, they work 6 to 21 hours more than men each week). Women's overrepresentation in unpaid work and underrepresentation in paid work show the link between unpaid work and women's lesser engagement in the labour market, as well as the fact that, compared with men, women tend to have more informal and precarious jobs. Hence, it is crucial to consider time distribution in the formulation of policies which, when combined with other sectoral policies, incentivize the redistribution of domestic work and promote labour practices that offer alternatives for the organization of time spent on market activities (Marco, 2012). Moreover, the balance between paid and unpaid work with shorter working days would allow men to participate more in domestic and care work and would increase women's employment and income-generation options (Baththyány, 2009).

Monetary poverty and lack of time sustain a vicious circle that is very difficult to break without policies focused on strengthening women's economic autonomy. An analysis of time-use data based on per capita income shows that women in the lowest-income households spend the most time on unpaid work. The differences are significant: women in quintile V households spend an average of 32 hours per week on unpaid work, compared with 46 hours per week for women in quintile I. For men, the difference between those in quintile V and quintile I households is generally not more than one hour per day. In order to eliminate poverty in all its forms, there is a need for public policies with a gender perspective that can eliminate the structural factors of the feminization of poverty in the lowest income households. In addition to monetary income redistribution policies, there is a need for policies targeting time redistribution, which is indispensable to eradicating poverty and achieving development.

Various studies on time use by beneficiaries of conditional transfer programmes (Gammage and Orozco, 2008; ECLAC, 2013 and 2016b) suggest that time spent on unpaid work and the workload itself increase for the women carrying out the activities required by these programmes. Time-use data should be taken into account to incorporate the gender perspective when designing poverty-eradication programmes or when evaluating the benefits of retaining conditionalities that represent an additional burden for those responsible for meeting them. They should also be used to encourage shared responsibility between men and women and between the State, the market and families (ECLAC, 2016b).

That fact that the macroeconomic aggregates in the national accounts lack indicators on health services provided within the household limits the measurement of the economic value of health care to that provided in public and private institutions. This is prejudicial to health policies and to countries' economic and social growth (Ferrán, 2008). Hence, the information provided by time-use surveys is crucial to the monetary valuation of domestic health services. In Mexico, for example, the estimated monetary value of unpaid domestic health care is 167,536 million pesos, which is equivalent to roughly 1% of GDP, or 85.5% of the value added of hospital services; women contribute 72.2% of this monetary value (INEGI, 2014).

In order to support appropriate provision of care, public policies must recognize care work as an essential development activity that must be guaranteed by society (Gómez, 2008), as well as meet the challenge of providing the care required by dependent individuals and of protecting and promoting gender equality. Time-use data shed light

on households' lack of autonomy to meet care needs and the debt the region owes to women who sustain the care economy. With respect to care for children under age 5, time-use surveys show that women in households with the means to send these children to day-care centres spend 3.2 to 7.6 fewer hours on care per week, compared with households that are unable to do so. In the case of men, there is no significant difference. The surveys that also provide information on the care of dependent persons with disabilities show that women are more involved in this activity and that they spend more time on average caring for this population segment (12 to 56 hours per week) than men. In households where a member has a disability of some sort, other members spend a significant amount of time meeting their care needs, given the demanding nature of the tasks required.

D. Conclusions

The region must take advantage of the progress made in the past few years in the production of statistics with a gender perspective. However, there is still much work to be done. On one hand, data collection instruments must be fine-tuned to provide information that can be disaggregated to reflect situations that affect men and women differently throughout their life cycles and in different socioeconomic situations and territories. Hence, planning by national statistical offices should include surveys such as those on time use, which must be adequately funded and conducted on a sufficiently regular basis. On the other hand, none of these advances in measurement will bring about real change unless the resulting data are used to guide the implementation of public policies for equality and unless they are supported by studies on the subjective well-being produced by the current time distribution. As well as stronger measurement tools, decision-makers need stronger analytical and statistical capacities to “transform data into information, information into knowledge and knowledge into political decisions”; in line with the Montevideo Strategy.

Chapter V

Afrodescendent populations: guaranteeing rights through a broader approach to inequality

A. Afrodescendent populations in Latin America and the framework for action

The existence of a large Afrodescendent population in Latin America and the Caribbean has a tragic and violent origin in the transatlantic trafficking of Africans carried out by the European conquerors for almost 400 years. It constituted the largest transoceanic deportation ever perpetrated. The economic interests of colonial metropolises gave rise to a growing demand for forced labour for a range of activities, with profound effects on the distribution of the Afrodescendent population that are felt even today in the countries of the region. Nonetheless, the magnitude of the Afrodescendent population in each country also reflects the relation between their demographic dynamics and political processes as, for example, when their numbers were decimated during the wars for the independence of the current Southern Cone countries.

Beyond the diversity of national and subregional situations and specifics, Afrodescendent people occupied a subordinate place in the hierarchical, class-based and racist structure of the colonial era and, together with indigenous peoples, suffered much greater poverty and social and political exclusion. The population descending from the African Diaspora remained in a disadvantageous position over the centuries, even after their release from slavery. This situation is perpetuated by the statistical invisibility and denial of the Afrodescendent presence in some of the region's countries, a process that was entrenched with the creation and consolidation of nation States that disregarded the Afrodescendent contribution to the social and cultural development of the Latin American nations.

In response, Afrodescendent communities have kept up a constant resistance and struggle, with collective action that has had impacts at different levels. A number of international steps and commitments have been made in this regard since the mid-twentieth century, especially under the auspices of the United Nations, most recently the proclamation of the International Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024). This initiative marks out a path towards meeting the commitments and obligations incumbent on States for resolving the structural problems that perpetuate the exclusion and discrimination of Afrodescendent populations in Latin America. In the region, the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development, adopted at the first meeting of the Regional Conference on Population and Development of Latin America and the Caribbean (Montevideo, 2013), contains a series of explicit priority measures for Afrodescendent populations. At the national level, the countries have undertaken constitutional reforms and applied policies and programmes in this regard. Nonetheless, although this progress is significant, large implementation gaps remain between these legal frameworks and the day-to-day life of Afrodescendent populations.

The inclusion of this chapter in the current edition of *Social Panorama* expresses the commitment of ECLAC to continue to support the region's countries in identifying actions to help progress towards equality in diversity, with a rights-based approach. Making the situation of Afrodescendent persons fully visible is necessary in order to achieve recognition, justice and development for these groups.

B. Who are Afrodescendent people, what are their numbers and where are they?

Statistical visibility forms part of the Afrodescendent demand for recognition, on the basis that information is a fundamental tool for promoting their rights and for designing and monitoring policies and actions to tackle the various forms of inequality and discrimination they suffer. Accordingly, a necessary requirement for identifying the condition of Afrodescendancy is to include ethno-racial self-identification questions in all data sources, which thus far has not happened in most of the region's countries.

Greater progress has been made in the case of population and housing censuses, mainly during the current decade: by 2020, 17 of the 20 Latin American countries will have included a question offering Afrodescendent self-identification in questionnaires. Conversely, few countries include questions of this nature in household surveys and, with the exception of Brazil and Uruguay, these groups are still underrepresented in the samples. The lag is even greater in the case of continuous administrative records.

On the basis of census information, the region's Afrodescendent population was estimated at 111 million in 2010, or 21.1% of the total population. These figures are considered to be low, owing to the limitations that persist with regard to quantifying the Afrodescendent population. Nevertheless, on this basis, the 2015 Afrodescendent population is estimated at 130 million.

Brazil is the country with largest number of Afrodescendent inhabitants, in both absolute and relative terms, since they represent over half of the country's population. Cuba follows with Afrodescendants making up 35.5% of the population, or just over 4 million people. Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Panama have relatively smaller Afrodescendent populations of between 7% and 10%. Aside from relative sizes, in Colombia the Afrodescendent population is estimated at around 5 million, in Mexico about 1.5 million, in Ecuador and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela around 1 million and in Peru over half a million.

A characteristic feature of Afrodescendent populations is that they are eminently urban. The degree of urbanization of Afrodescendent people in the 12 countries with data available varies from 59.2% in Honduras to 96.6% in Uruguay; it exceeds 70% in all the countries except Honduras. Although censuses also show that the Afrodescendent population is distributed practically throughout national territory of each country, there are specificities in settlement areas related to the slave-period territories of arrival in the colonial era that persist to the present day. The figures also show that Afrodescendent populations are at an intermediate or advanced stage of the demographic transition, owing mainly to falling fertility rates, but also to reductions in mortality and longer lifespans. This information is essential for steering the design of public policies and the associated investment.

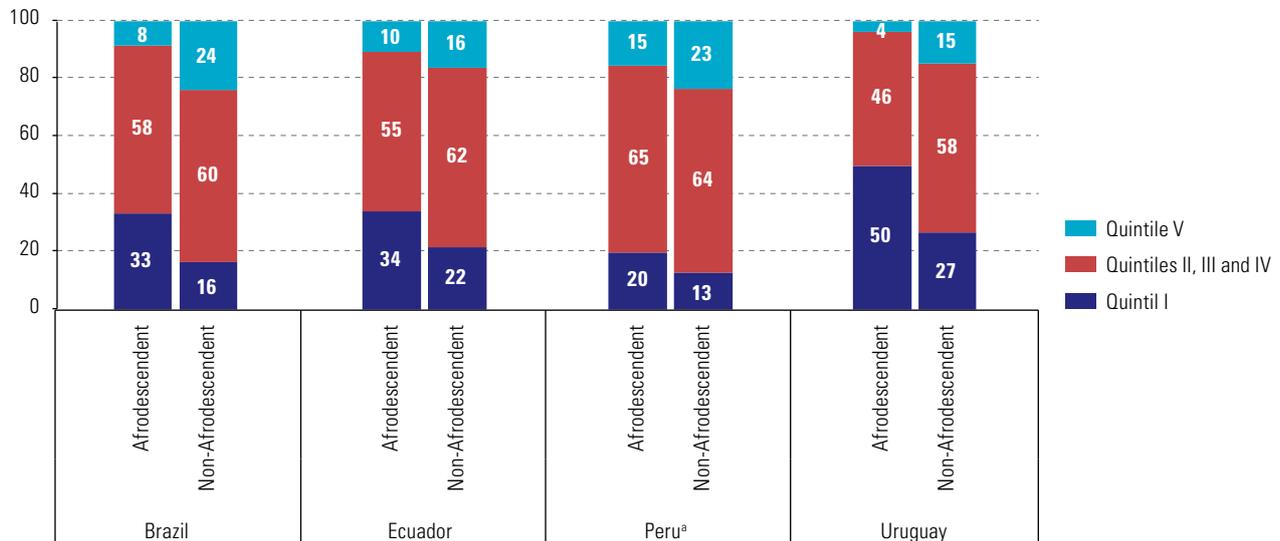
C. Intersecting inequalities: gaps in the exercise of economic and social rights

Ethno-racial and socioeconomic inequalities, together with those of gender, life cycle and territory, are axes of the social inequality matrix in Latin America. These inequalities are expressed in various spheres of social development, including socioeconomic status, health, education and employment, which are analysed in this chapter using a range of indicators.

In the four countries for which information is available, the Afrodescendent population is more heavily concentrated in quintile I than the non-Afrodescendent population (see figure 9).

Figure 9

Latin America (4 countries): distribution of the population by income quintile, by ethno-racial status, 2014
(Percentages)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of data from the Household Survey Data Bank (BADEHOG).

Note: The non-Afrodescendent population does not include those who self-identify as indigenous or cases where ethno-racial status is unknown.

^a In Peru, the question on ethno-racial status is asked of persons aged 13 and older.

In the area of health, one of the most eloquent indicators is the inequality in child mortality rates between the Afrodescendent and non-Afrodescendent populations. In a group of eight countries for which this information is available, child mortality among the Afrodescendent population as estimated in 2010 varies from 10 per 1,000 live births in Costa Rica to 26 per 1,000 live births in Colombia. Irrespective of its magnitude, the chances that an Afrodescendent boy or girl will die before his or her first birthday are systematically higher than those of non-Afrodescendants, except in Argentina. The largest gaps occur in Colombia, Uruguay, Panama and Brazil, where the probability of an Afrodescendent child dying before his or her first birthday varies from 1.6 times to 1.3 times that of a non-Afrodescendent child. Moreover, these inequalities persist even after controlling by area of residence.

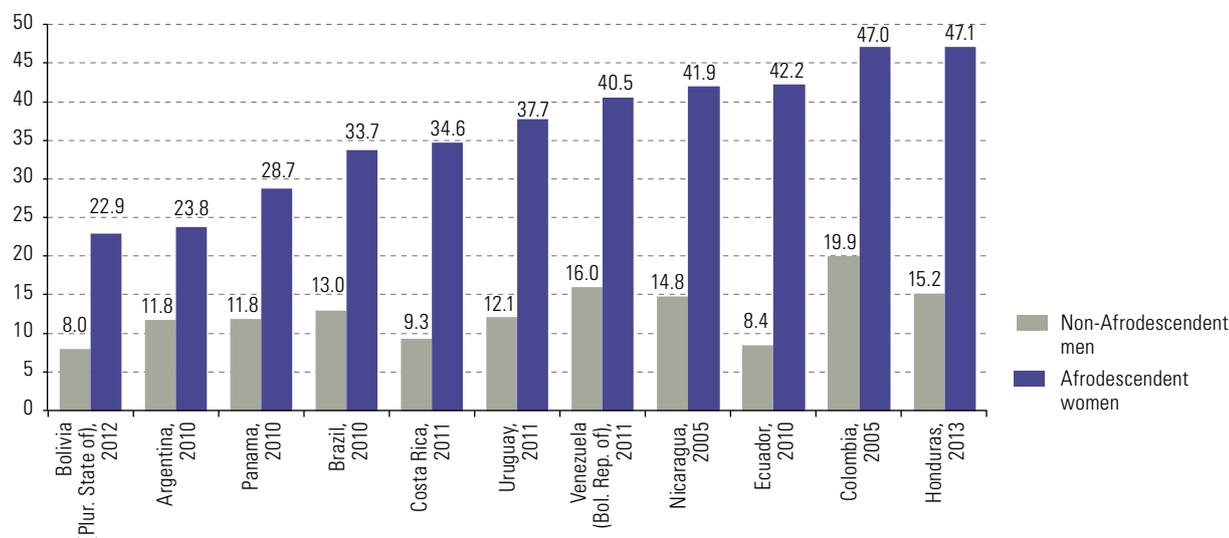
The conditions of poverty which Afrodescendent women endure in the region impair their health status, which is further compounded by limited access to and cultural accessibility of health services, including sexual and reproductive health. Pregnancy in adolescence is another manifestation of inequality to the disadvantage of Afrodescendent youth. Census figures show that the percentage of Afrodescendent mothers aged between 15 and 19 remains high and in 7 of 10 countries exceeds the figure for non-Afrodescendent adolescents. The largest disparities are seen in Brazil and Uruguay, showing that even countries that have implemented integrated and universal health services for youth care, including those aimed at reducing unwanted adolescent pregnancy, have not been able to eliminate the ethno-racial inequality.

Gaps are evident in the sphere of education, too, in most of the countries of the region. The proportion of young people aged 18-24 who are attending an educational establishment varies from 16.9% in Uruguay to 41.4% in Argentina and is lower than for non-Afrodescendent youth in most of the countries analysed. These gaps widen in tertiary education. In most of the countries, a larger proportion of Afrodescendent than non-Afrodescendent youth is neither in education nor employed in the labour market. Taking into account the intersection of gender and ethno-racial inequalities, it becomes evident that young Afrodescendent women are subjected to at least twice the exclusion that young non-Afrodescendent men are (see figure 10).

Figure 10

Latin America (11 countries): proportion of Afrodescendent women and non-Afrodescendent men aged between 15 and 29 not in education or employed in the labour market (Percentages)

(Percentages)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of special processing of census microdatabases using REDATAM.

Ethno-racial inequalities also arise in the labour market. Unemployment has been broadly documented to be one of the main indicators of labour market exclusion and affects women and youth disproportionately. Factoring in the ethno-racial dimension shows that Afrodescendants are worse affected by unemployment —again, women in youth in particular. Unemployment rates are higher among Afrodescendants than non-Afrodescendants in most of the countries analysed and, where the opposite is true, the gap in favour of Afrodescendants is smaller.

Work and education are essential for social inclusion and for reducing inequalities, but educational achievement does not translate automatically into successful labour market integration. Analysis of labour incomes, one of the most important indicators of employment quality, shows that Afrodescendent women, whose levels of schooling are significantly higher than Afrodescendent men, are systematically lower on the salary scale, even after controlling for level of education and hours worked. The data show how ethno-racial and gender inequalities intersect in the labour market and that the higher the level of schooling, the larger the gaps. For example, among the employed with tertiary education, per hour worked, Afrodescendent women receive on average 58% of the income of a non-Afrodescendent man, Afrodescendent men, 73% and non-Afrodescendent women, 75%.

Lastly, one of the most telling pieces of evidence of the intertwining of socioeconomic, gender and ethno-racial inequalities is the situation of waged female domestic workers. Domestic service is one of the largest sources of employment for women in Latin America, and one of the least valued socially and economically, with a large deficit from the perspective of decent work. The percentage of waged female domestic workers runs from 3% (among non-Afrodescendent women Colombia) to 20% (Afrodescendent women in Brazil). In Brazil and Ecuador double the proportion of Afrodescendent women, in relation to non-Afrodescendent women, are employed as domestic workers.

D. Institutional framework and policies for the Afrodescendent population

Since the turn of the century, and especially since the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, held in Durban (South Africa) in 2001, government machineries devoted to the Afrodescendent population have risen steadily in number in Latin America and now exist in 14 countries. This progress is the outcome of lengthy work by Afrodescendent movements, other civil society organizations, governments and international agencies.

These machineries function within a legal framework based on institutional and regional human rights instruments and national legislation. Some countries have extensive legislation aimed at combating racism or directed towards Afrodescendants; others have less legislation of this sort and some none at all. More than a dozen countries have constitutional provisions prohibiting ethno-racial discrimination, while other constitutions refer to equality and non-discrimination in general or on other grounds. Ecuador's constitution devotes an entire chapter exclusively to "black or Afro-Ecuadorian peoples" and Brazil's defines racism as a crime punishable by jail, with no right to bail and no statute of limitations.

The region's racial equality machineries occupy different places in the State hierarchy, which in turn defines their area of influence. This is crucial, considering that they work on cross-cutting issues that need to be linked across different government departments and bodies, both sectorally and at the national, provincial and local levels, as well as coordinated with civil society. The fact that the situation of these machineries remains somewhat unstable in the Latin American countries not only jeopardizes the protection of Afrodescendent rights, but also influences the resources allocated to them, and thus their scope of action. Giving them more authority within the State apparatus could enhance their coordination function and help to make racial equality policies more effective.

Several Latin American countries have adopted policies to combat racism and promote racial equality over the past few years, in response to the Afrodescendent movement and in follow-up to the commitments they have undertaken at the international level.

In terms of preventing and tackling racism, most of the countries not only have constitutional provisions against ethno-racial discrimination, but several have also adopted legislation prohibiting racial discrimination and even classifying it as a crime punishable by imprisonment. Some countries have developed more comprehensive policies aimed at eliminating racial discrimination and have passed local laws.

A number of countries also have affirmative action policies, consisting chiefly of reserved places for Afrodescendent persons at university and in employment, and provide grants in private tertiary education institutions. Many have also adopted appreciation policies such as official days celebrating Afrodescendancy and the teaching of African history and culture in schools, and some have implemented policies that integrate ancestral views and practices into health care and have focused on diseases that particularly affect Afrodescendent persons, among other measures. There has also been notable recognition of distinguished Afrodescendent figures in national education and of Afrodescendent cultural practices as part of national heritage.

In relation to policy efforts to strengthen traditional Afrodescendent communities, Brazil and Ecuador stand out for having recognized collective ownership rights. Lastly, in some case action is under way, albeit incipient, to promote participation by Afrodescendent persons and organizations in decision-making by linking up government machineries and Afrodescendent social movements.

E. Conclusions

In short, with the exception of only a few countries, such as Brazil, Colombia and Ecuador, Afrodescendants' disadvantages have been one of the least perceptible dimensions of social inequality in the region. Information is a key tool for ending that invisibility. Accordingly, national statistical systems need to be further developed to include self-identification of Afrodescendent persons and permit disaggregation of indicators.

While it is possible to identify, to a limited extent, systematic ethno-racial gaps that disadvantage Afrodescendent persons in different areas, including health, education and employment, in the few countries where the situation is the reverse, the advantage of the Afrodescendent population is very small. The intersection between ethno-racial and gender inequalities places Afrodescendent women at an even greater disadvantage.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with its commitment to “leave no one behind”; the International Decade for People of African Descent and regional agreements, such as the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development, make it all the more urgent to meet the challenge of ensuring the well-being of Afrodescendent persons and their full exercise of rights, by taking sustained action that is based on the recognition of equality in diversity.

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