

Women's autonomy in changing economic scenarios



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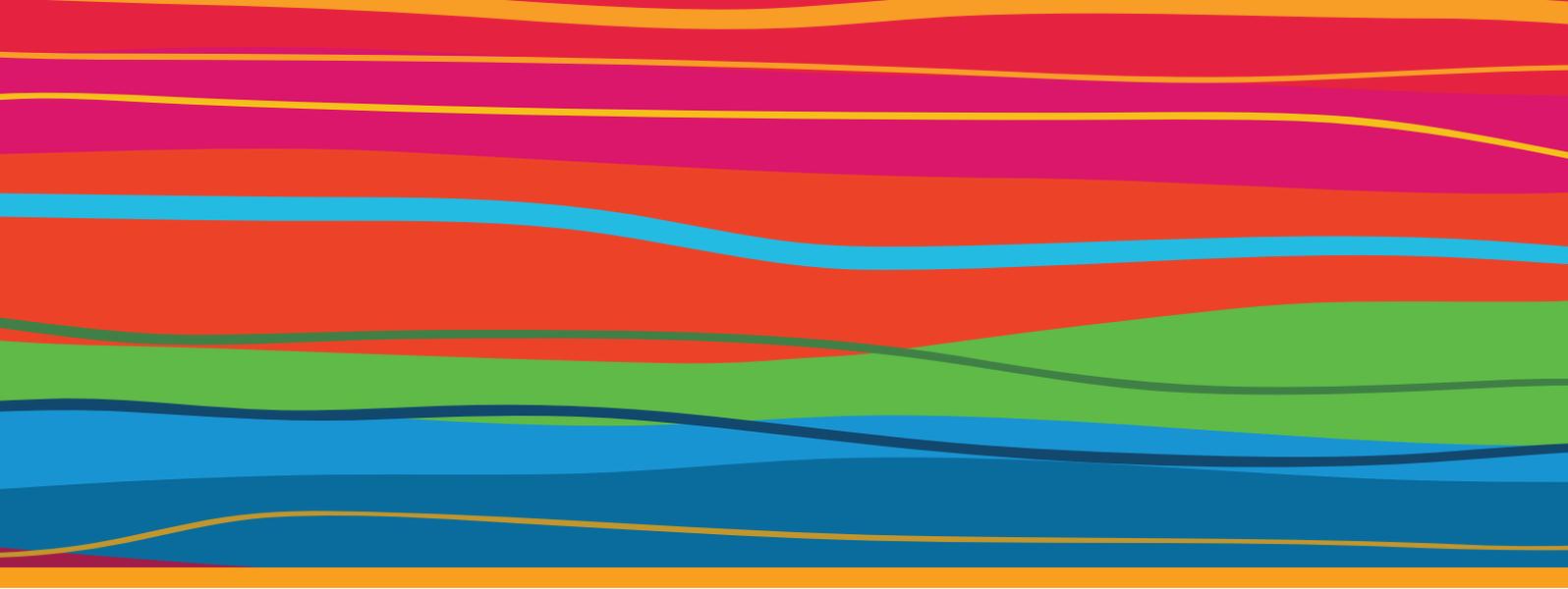
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Foreword

The fourteenth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean will take place at the same time as the commemoration of a number of important milestones for different regional and global agendas on gender equality and women's rights. This session of the Regional Conference will coincide with the fortieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace, and is being held five years after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and three years after the adoption of the Montevideo Strategy for Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda within the Sustainable Development Framework by 2030.

In the current regional context, progress towards the commitments set out in the Regional Gender Agenda and the 2030 Agenda must be accelerated as a matter of urgency, in order to face the many challenges posed by an economic scenario that is constantly changing due to economic, technological, demographic and climate changes. There is an international asymmetry among economic agents, in international trade, and in the capacity to innovate and generate new technologies, as well as between the main greenhouse-gas-emitting countries and those that are most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. The region's economy is growing less, while levels of inequality and poverty are increasing. This complicates the picture for social spending and, above all, policies that impact the lives of women. The persistence of the structural challenges of gender inequality requires governments to redouble their efforts to overcome them and honour their commitments in that regard.

The first part of this document evaluates the progress made towards achieving higher levels of gender equality and women's autonomy. On the one hand, countries have made significant progress with regard to the construction and hierarchy of institutional structures for the design and coordination of gender equality policies. This has led to the consolidation of a solid normative framework to address gender-based violence against women and to bring about the more equal participation of women in decision-making processes, as well as the construction of information systems that draw attention to the situation of women and the multiple types of discrimination they suffer. On the other hand, the economic and distributive performance of Latin America and the Caribbean has not been sufficient to overcome gender inequalities. In addition, the region's structural, economic and social heterogeneity remains an obstacle to efforts to guarantee the rights of all women and girls.

The second part analyses the processes of economic and financial globalization, the digital revolution, the care economy and climate change, and their main effects on women's lives in a shifting economic context. By implementing public policies that are fit for purpose, these trends can offer a great opportunity to move towards a new development model that puts gender equality at the centre. However, inequality in the region is largely determined by the production structure and, if it is not modified, these changes could make it difficult to close gaps and could even lead to the emergence of new threats to equality between men and women.

First, the benefits of economic and financial globalization are not being distributed equitably, and the differentiated impacts of trade, financial and fiscal policies could widen the aforementioned gaps. Secondly, disruptive digital technologies are transforming society by revolutionizing communication, how information is generated and accessed, and the economic system, as they alter the forms of production, management and governance. These technologies have enormous potential to accelerate the attainment of commitments related to gender equality and to move towards the structural change proposed by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). However, international asymmetries, gender-based labour segmentation and segregation, and the lack of capacities to meet the demands of the digital age are unresolved obstacles to the region's ability to take full advantage of the technological revolution. Meanwhile, the care economy also has enormous potential to contribute to the diversification of the region's production structure, job creation, economic growth and sustainable development. This sector's contribution is currently hidden and underpinned, on the one hand, by the unpaid work of women and, on the other, by the paid work of women in precarious jobs that are seen as having less economic and social value. Care-related challenges are exacerbated by the different impacts of the demographic changes that the region is experiencing, including ageing and migration. Lastly, the discussion on climate change has focused on economic and social aspects, but that analysis has not given sufficient consideration to the situation of women and the gender inequalities that are perpetuated and exacerbated by this global phenomenon.

In the light of these trends that threaten the sustainability of life, it is imperative to question the basis of the global economic system and effect change aimed at creating the necessary conditions for equality. Proposals for addressing these challenges include the formulation of a new generation of comprehensive public policies that address the three dimensions of women's autonomy —physical, economic and decision-making— and the relationships among them.

A global commitment is needed with a focus on common but differentiated responsibilities in order to promote a new and renewed multilateralism that strengthens collective action for the provision of regional and global public goods. Steps must also be taken to increase resilience to financial, trade, technological and climate shocks; to balance the multiple international interests and prevent the concentration of capital, skills and technologies; and to ensure universal social protection and the human rights of all people. This document addresses the need to generate investment in sectors that will bring about structural change, promote economic growth and foster innovation, taking into account the characteristics of the countries of the region and women's potential to transform society.

Lastly, in order to accelerate implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda and address emerging challenges, there is a need for timely and relevant data, statistics and indicators, that show how macroeconomic, technological, demographic and climate changes can affect various population groups differently. To that end, national coordination mechanisms are needed that take an intersectoral approach, ensuring the mainstreaming of the gender perspective across the national statistical systems' output. To achieve this objective, partnerships between the producers and users of information should continue to be promoted, by overcoming institutional mistrust, strengthening capacities —with regard to both the gender approach and the production, analysis and use of statistical information— and ensuring the necessary budget for the production of information.

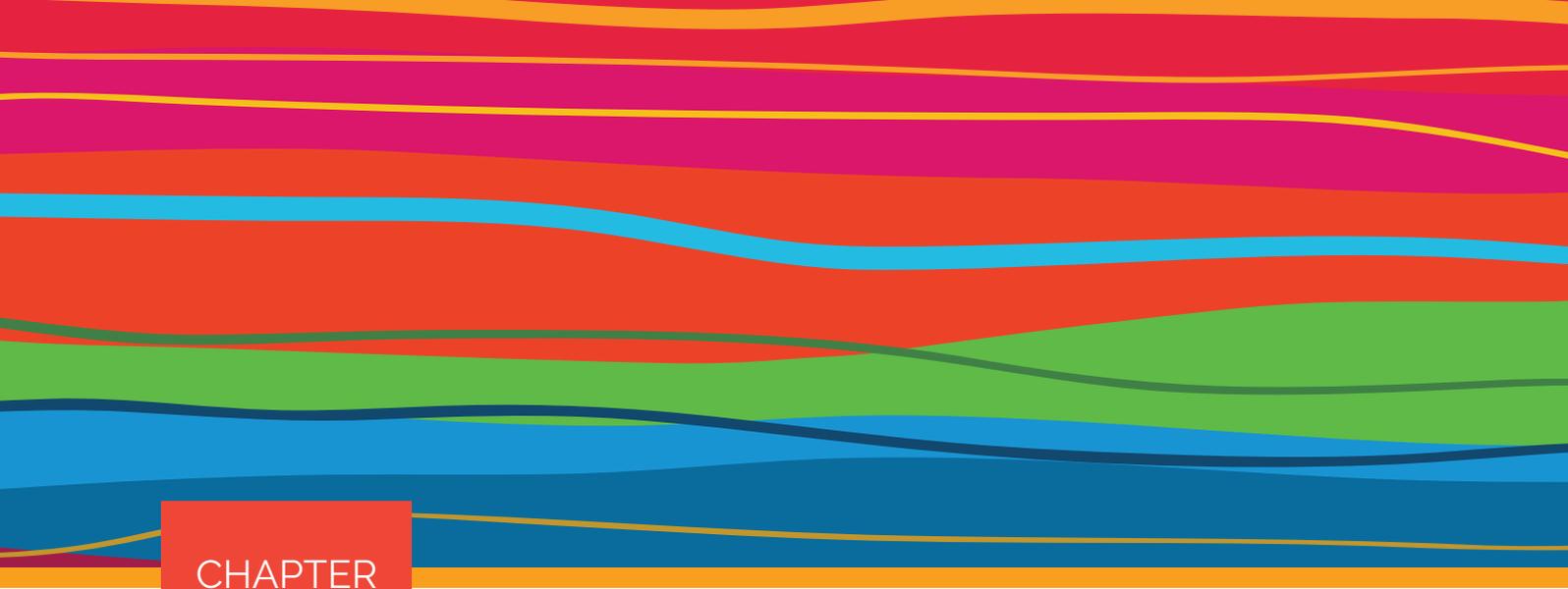
Gender inequalities are an obstacle to sustainable development and the shifting scenarios that the region faces are proof of the urgent need for a decisive step towards development models that include gender equality and women's autonomy at their core, as well as guaranteeing the rights of everyone without exception.

Alicia Bárcena

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Economic Commission for Latin America
and the Caribbean (ECLAC)

Gender (in) equality in Latin America and the Caribbean



CHAPTER

I

Advances in gender equality and women's autonomy in Latin America and the Caribbean

Introduction

- A. More than four decades advancing towards gender equality and women's autonomy
- B. Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda
- C. Challenges for gender equality and women's autonomy in the region

Bibliography

Introduction

In a region of persistent socioeconomic and gender inequalities, where new economic, political and social scenarios are unfolding, equality is crucial, and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) continues to affirm the central role it plays in development. This is especially important as the region remains the most unequal in the world, with still significant levels of poverty and large sectors which are highly vulnerable to the economic cycles (ECLAC, 2019a).

Against this backdrop, equality is considered in a broad sense; it is not limited to economic and distributive equality, but also entails the exercise of rights, capacity-building and mutual acknowledgement among social stakeholders (ECLAC, 2018c).

The importance of addressing the situation in the region from a development perspective that places equality at the centre is also reflected in the attention paid to gender inequality and its structural nature, which must be resolved in order to achieve sustainable development. Although progress has been made worldwide in terms of gender equality, as recognized in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, women and girls continue to suffer discrimination and violence in every part of the world (ECLAC, 2018d).

Similarly, progress is indisputable at the regional level, but contrasts with persistent discrimination against Latin American and Caribbean women and girls. Therefore, it is essential to systematically analyse progress in gender equality in the region, and thus, to understand the importance of autonomy, which is defined as people's, particularly women's, capacity "to take free and informed decisions about their lives, enabling them to be and act in accordance with their own aspirations and desires, given a historical context that makes those possible" (ECLAC, 2011, p. 9). Autonomy is linked to progress in control over material goods and natural resources, and the ability to make decisions regarding income, family assets and time; respect for physical integrity, decisions on sexuality and reproduction; and parity in decision-making (ECLAC, 2010).

Gender inequalities are reflected in the absence or limitation of autonomy in its three dimensions: economic, physical and decision-making, and the linkages among them. They are also influenced by macroeconomic, production, institutional and sociocultural determinants. First, poor diversification of production and vulnerability to external shocks hinder equality because they stifle the labour market, restrict the dissemination of skills and result in an unequal distribution of the benefits of growth and the costs of economic adjustments. Second, the persistence of gender-based violence, the excessive burden of unpaid work and the gender wage gap are barriers to women's full participation in economies, impede the closing of structural gaps and inhibit innovation, the creation of more diverse work environments and more complex and equal production structures.

This chapter reviews the context and progress made in the implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean and analyses advances on the institutional front and with regard to women's autonomy and the mechanisms needed to avoid backsliding.

A. More than four decades advancing towards gender equality and women's autonomy

1. Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean: building the Regional Gender Agenda

In line with international commitments and demands from women's and feminist movements, Latin American and Caribbean States have implemented institutional initiatives to achieve gender equality and women's autonomy in the region. These efforts have resulted, for example, in the establishment of an intergovernmental forum, the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, which has developed consensus, agreements and commitments that have shaped a shared agenda for gender equality for all the countries.

Latin America and the Caribbean is the only region in the world where, for more than four decades without fail, countries have been holding regular meetings to discuss and make a political commitment to eradicate discrimination against women and girls and gender inequality, and to advance towards the guarantee of full enjoyment of women's and girls' autonomy and human rights (ECLAC, 2017b). Already in 1977, at the first Regional Conference on the Integration of Women in the Economic and Social Development of Latin America, participating governments adopted the first Regional Plan of Action for the Integration of Women into Latin American Economic and Social Development. From then on, the governments gave ECLAC the mandate to convene —at intervals of no more than three years— this intergovernmental forum, which has been known as the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean since its eighth session in 2000, and which will celebrate its fourteenth session in 2020.

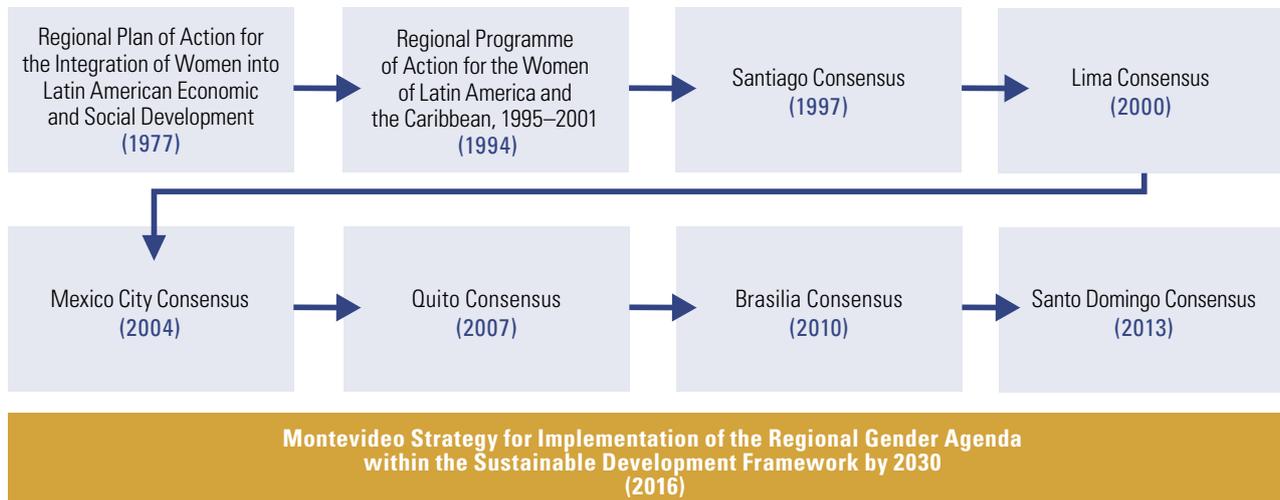
The Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean is one of the subsidiary bodies of ECLAC that convenes the countries of the region in order to examine the status of women's autonomy and rights at the regional and subregional levels, present recommendations regarding public policies on gender equality, undertake periodic assessments of the activities carried out in fulfilment of regional and international agreements on the subject, and provide a forum to discuss gender equality and women's rights. For more than 40 years it has been the main forum for the negotiation of the regional agenda, bringing together high-level government authorities responsible for women's affairs and public policies for gender equality in the countries of the region, and involving the active participation of various United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies, non-governmental organizations and civil society organizations.

The commitments of Latin American and Caribbean countries, from the first Regional Conference on the Integration of Women in the Economic and Social Development of Latin America, held in Havana in 1977, to the thirteenth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Montevideo in 2016 (see diagram I.1), have shaped a Regional Gender Agenda that recognizes women's rights and equality as central and cross-cutting elements of all government efforts to strengthen democracy and ensure inclusive and sustainable development (Bidegain, 2017). These agreements are the result of the political will and coordinated efforts of member States and the active contribution of women's and feminist movements, as well as the support of the United Nations system and the Inter-American system for the protection of human rights (ECLAC, 2017b), and are cumulative: each new negotiation process and document recognizes the valuable contribution to policies and programmes made by its predecessors, resulting in a collection of adopted texts embodying a wealth of policy and technical content (ECLAC, 2017a).

In 2016, at the thirteenth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, ECLAC member States recognized this wealth of policy and technical content and adopted the Montevideo Strategy for the Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda within the Sustainable Development Framework by 2030, which aims to guide the implementation of this Agenda and ensure that it is used as a road map to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development from the perspective of gender equality and women's autonomy and human rights.

Diagram I.1

Regional commitments and consensuses within the framework of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, 1977–2016



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) (2017a), *Montevideo Strategy for Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda within the Sustainable Development Framework by 2030* (LC/CRM.13/5), Santiago, 2017.

2. Montevideo Strategy: from a commitment to gender equality to transformative public action

The Montevideo Strategy for the Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda within the Sustainable Development Framework by 2030 is a policy and technical instrument designed to guide the full and effective implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda (ECLAC, 2017b). Thus, it includes a series of measures to overcome the main obstacles to institutionalizing gender equality and women's rights, guiding "sectoral and cross-cutting public policies aimed at eliminating gender inequalities and fostering sustainable development" (ECLAC, 2017b, p. 13).

The Regional Gender Agenda sets high standards for the guarantee of human rights, against the backdrop of more complex global negotiations and agreements relating to gender equality, and threats of backsliding or stalling. It complements and expands on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by encouraging, for example, the promotion of care as a right, the building of parity democracy and economies that take unpaid work into account, and the guarantee of the sexual and reproductive rights of all people without discrimination (ECLAC, 2016a). This Agenda consolidates regional agreements among ECLAC member States that embody their commitment and will to advance towards greater gender equality and women's autonomy. The Regional Gender Agenda is also open to emerging themes and new social demands made by women's and feminist movements.

The Montevideo Strategy is targeting the same horizon set for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as it aims to allow the governments of the region to analyse their progress and to identify challenges and priorities relating to the achievement of the SDGs. Specifically, it contributes to the fulfilment of the Regional Gender Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by helping to create institutional environments in the States to achieve the proposed goals relating to gender equality and women's rights and autonomy.

B. Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda

In the past few years, progress has been made in achieving greater gender equality and women's autonomy in the region, particularly in regulatory and institutional frameworks that foster the design and implementation of policies addressing the three dimensions of women's autonomy. The leadership of machineries for the advancement of women has played a central role in the implementation of gender mainstreaming strategies in different sectors and levels of States, through national gender equality policies and plans as well as their coordination with development plans and the creation of legislative, programmatic and operational initiatives at the national level.

Although the Montevideo Strategy serves as a guide for public gender equality policies in the region, these policies are influenced by complex national and international processes in which political and social transformation shapes and puts pressure on their formulation and implementation. In addition to the inherent difficulties of designing and implementing public policies in all institutional contexts, equality policies involve other obstacles and barriers deriving from the structural dimension of gender inequality, with cultural, social and political characteristics that penetrate the institutional order and sustain the gender order and hierarchies. Thus, these policies require a strong push from States, which also run into cultural and institutional resistance.

One of the contributions of the Montevideo Strategy has been the strengthening and repositioning of the State's role in public equality policies, as its scope encompasses the entire State structure and recognizes the leadership of machineries for the advancement of women (ECLAC, 2017b, p.14). In that regard, it gives new impetus to gender mainstreaming policies in the region, in keeping with the commitment made by governments 25 years ago in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women, to ensure that a gender perspective is reflected in all policies and programmes (United Nations, 1995).

However, this push to redefine the State's role has not been easy for the countries of the region. Public gender policies have systematically faced obstacles given the lack of consensus on and recognition of gender inequality as a public issue. In the first fifteen years of this century, the State took on an expanded role in some of the region's countries, resulting in the broadening of rights and progress in equality policies. However, in the past three years, this progress has been hampered by uncertainty about the meaning of the public domain, the State's role as a guarantor of rights and the importance of public and social policies, and by the serious questioning of gender equality and risks of backsliding on that front.

The various accomplishments in the implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda can also be linked to the different dimensions of women's autonomy. In recent years, a focus on women's autonomy in three dimensions and on the interrelations between them has been proposed as a conceptual framework for equality policies: (i) economic autonomy, which concerns the possibility of controlling assets and resources; (ii) physical autonomy, which refers to the capacity to freely decide on issues of sexuality and reproduction, and to the right to live a life free of violence; and (iii) decision-making autonomy, which means full participation in the decisions that affect the lives of women, their families, their communities and society at large (ECLAC, 2016a).

The following are some of the major institutional and regulatory advances and other initiatives geared towards greater gender equality in the region.

1. Institutional advances to achieve gender equality

Significant progress has been made in recent years. The institutionalization of machineries for the advancement of women has yielded substantial results in the implementation of gender mainstreaming strategies in various sectors and levels of State. The consolidation of national equality plans and the harmonization of development plans with agreements relating to equality between men and women represent a significant step forward on the institutional front.

Different modalities are reflected in the preparation and implementation of gender equality plans in the region, from those established as a management tool by the responsible entity, with no greater administrative action than launching them, to instruments adopted by executive decree or based in legislation (ECLAC, 2019e, p.20). The influence of the Montevideo Strategy is also evident in the gender equality plans adopted recently in some of the region's countries and others in the process of being updated. Since 2016, nine countries in the region —Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Panama, Paraguay and Uruguay— have adopted new gender equality plans framed by the Montevideo Strategy, and, in some cases, expanded the horizon to coincide with that of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (see table I.1).

Table I.1

Latin America (9 countries): national instruments for gender equality adopted since 2016

Country	Instrument	Period
Argentina	National Plan for Equal Opportunities and Rights	2018–2020
Chile	Fourth National Gender Equality Plan	2018–2030
Costa Rica	National Gender Equality Policy	2018–2030
Dominican Republic	Third National Plan on Gender Equality and Equity (PLANEG III)	2019–2030
Ecuador	National agenda for women and the LGBTI population	2018–2021
El Salvador	National Equality Plan	2016–2020
Panama	Plan of Action for Equal Opportunities for Women	2016–2019
Paraguay	Fourth National Equality Plan	2018–2024
Uruguay	National Gender Equality Strategy 2030	2018 ^a –2030

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of national progress reports on the application of the Montevideo Strategy for Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda within the Sustainable Development Framework by 2030.

^a Although Uruguay's National Gender Equality Strategy 2030 does not include a start date, this is considered to be the year it was adopted.

In Mexico, the National Programme for Equal Opportunities and Non-discrimination against Women (PROIGUALDAD) is being developed for 2019–2023. This programme will establish objectives, strategies and lines of action, and will involve the three branches and levels of government and autonomous entities to consolidate the national equality policy.

In addition to the progress in plans for equal opportunities between men and women, the region is seeing advances in other gender equality policies. In Caribbean countries for which follow-up information is available, some progress has been reported on the institutional front, specifically in the formulation of policies, plans of action and national strategies. For example, countries and territories such as Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, the British Virgin Islands, Grenada and Guyana have developed or are developing a national gender equality strategy or plan of action. Suriname is currently preparing a 2021–2035 gender policy and a gender action plan for 2019 and 2020.

Cuba is currently updating its National Action Plan for Follow-up of the Beijing Conference, which includes specific measures across all sectors, to be implemented by the different central government agencies. Moreover, several ministries and other State entities have established their own gender strategies with defined targets, deadlines and stakeholders, in collaboration with the Federation of Cuban Women.

2. Advances in economic autonomy

Women's economic autonomy involves the possibility of controlling assets and resources and has been included in gender equality policies in Latin America and the Caribbean. Progress towards the achievement of women's economic autonomy depends on the existence of regulatory frameworks governing paid and unpaid work; an institutional framework incorporated in the development of specific policies and plans on care, shared responsibility, labour rights or employment; databases on paid and unpaid work and time use; and communication initiatives, including campaigns to raise awareness and promote the social co-responsibility of care.

Some countries in the region have begun to discuss and implement national care systems that bring together different institutions to provide comprehensive care with a rights-based approach, with the aim of not only improving the quality of life of populations in need of care but also facilitating women's labour market participation. Uruguay established an integrated national care system by means of Law No. 19353 of 2015. Costa Rica established a care system comprising the National Child Care and Development Network and the Progressive Comprehensive Care Network for Older Persons. In Paraguay, work was done to formulate a national care policy with the establishment, pursuant to Decree No. 1783 of 17 May 2019, of an inter-agency steering group for the development of care policy in Paraguay. The group is made up of 12 public social institutions. Argentina launched its national early childhood plan in 2016 to effectively promote the recognition, redistribution and reduction of unpaid domestic work and to foster shared responsibility and work-life balance.

One of the factors that has been instrumental in the formulation of policies on care co-responsibility is the increased statistical visibility of women's excessive burden of unpaid work, which acts as a barrier to their participation in decision-making spaces, paid work and community life and to their economic autonomy. The Regional Gender Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development both refer to the importance of recognizing and valuing unpaid work as well as the need to develop instruments for measuring time use of men and women. To date, 19 countries in the region have already carried out at least one time-use measurement and the data collected have played a key role in gender analysis, the measurement of all forms of work, the analysis of the link between income distribution and time distribution, the follow-up of national, regional and global commitments on the distribution of unpaid work, and the creation of satellite accounts for unpaid work in households.

Table I.2

Latin America (11 countries): surveys, modules or questions for measuring time use, 2014–2018

Country	Year	Type of survey
Argentina	2016	Survey of time use in the City of Buenos Aires
Brazil	Since 2016	Module in the Continuous National Household Sample Survey (Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicílios Continua or PNAD-C)
Chile	2015	National time-use survey
Colombia	2017	National time-use survey
	2018	Questions in the Comprehensive Survey of Households
Costa Rica	2017	National time-use survey
Cuba	2016	Section on time use and care in the National Survey on Gender Equality
Dominican Republic	2016	Module on time use in the National Multipurpose Household Survey
El Salvador	2017	National time-use survey
Guatemala	2014 and 2017	Module in the National Survey of Employment and Income
	2014	Module in the National Survey of Living Conditions
Mexico	2016	Questions in the national household income and expenditure survey
	2014	National time-use survey
Paraguay	2016	Time-use survey

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of Repository of information on time use in Latin America and the Caribbean [online] https://oig.cepal.org/sites/default/files/2019-10_repositorio_uso_del_tiempo_eng.pdf.

3. Advances in physical autonomy

Physical autonomy has been defined as the capacity to freely decide on issues of sexuality and reproduction, and the right to live a life free of violence (ECLAC, 2011) and has been at the core of equality policies in Latin America and the Caribbean. The development of various laws to prevent, punish and eradicate violence against women—in particular, comprehensive laws on gender-based violence against women—has contributed to progress towards women's physical autonomy.

The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women defines violence against women as “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.” In general recommendation No. 35 on gender-based violence against women, updating general recommendation No. 19, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women notes that “the term ‘gender-based violence against women’ is used as a more precise term that makes explicit the gendered causes and impacts of the violence. The term further strengthens the understanding of the violence as a social rather than an individual problem, requiring comprehensive responses, beyond those to specific events, individual perpetrators and victims/survivors” (United Nations, 2017).

Comprehensive laws aimed at overcoming violence against women have been called “second generation” laws, because they cover violence in interpersonal relationships; draw attention to different forms of violence (physical, psychological, sexual, economic, property-related, symbolic, femicidal); and adopt a comprehensive approach to the different manifestations of violence (domestic, institutional, workplace, obstetric and media violence, violations of reproductive freedom, and trafficking and sexual exploitation). These laws have been enacted to address the lack of legislative consistency or any gaps in domestic legislations. By mid-2019, 13 countries had passed comprehensive laws on violence against women which identify the many dimensions of such violence.

Map I.1

Latin America: countries with comprehensive laws on gender-based violence against women, 2019



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean [online] <https://oig.cepal.org/en>.

Note: The boundaries and names shown on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

^a Peru passed a hybrid law, insofar as it covers various forms of violence against women and also covers violence perpetrated against members of the family group. It is also comprehensive because it encompasses the violence that takes place in the community and acts of violence tolerated and committed by agents of the State.

Comprehensive laws on violence provide for the creation of systems or mechanisms for coordination between different government agencies to enable sectoral institutions to cooperate at the central or decentralized level in order to prevent, respond to, penalize and eradicate violence against women. In most countries, the machinery for the advancement of women acts as the governing body responsible for applying these laws, with the exception of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, where the Ministry of Justice and Institutional Transparency has that role.

Comprehensive violence laws differ in a number of significant aspects across the region: the forms of violence covered, the comprehensive approach (involving the judiciary in various capacities or just the criminal justice system), and the position adopted on the use of alternative means of conflict resolution. There are also differences in the scope of application and the bodies responsible for the application of such laws.

An analysis of the comprehensive laws in force shows that they do not always include concrete measures to ensure their application, monitoring and evaluation. In more than half the countries of the region, there is a need to harmonize legislation with public policies, increase legislative coherence, build capacity for public officials and provide more resources for the implementation of the law. It is also important to strengthen the cooperation and coordination of all sectors of the government to provide an appropriate response in the light of social and political contexts dominated by patriarchal cultural patterns that often resist the regulation and application of existing laws.

In the Caribbean, there have been advances in regulatory frameworks aimed at achieving women's physical autonomy and, in particular, ending gender-based violence against women. In this regard, significant progress has been made in the establishment of regulatory frameworks to eradicate gender-based violence against women in countries and territories such as Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, British Virgin Islands, Grenada, Guyana, Suriname, and the Turks and Caicos Islands. Specific frameworks addressing trafficking in women and girls have also been developed in Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Grenada, Guyana, Suriname and the Turks and Caicos Islands. With regard to institutional architecture to combat violence, a sexual offences model court has been established in Antigua and Barbuda; the Domestic Violence Unit was formed in the Division of Gender and Family Affairs under the Ministry of Social Development, Housing and Community Empowerment of Grenada; and in Suriname, the Minister of Justice and Police established a national domestic violence council with a three-year mandate to update the National Policy Plan: Structural Approach to Domestic Violence and develop a work plan for a comprehensive approach to domestic violence.

In addition to legislative advances, national plans to combat violence against women have been developed in 30 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. These reflect the policy concern of States and Governments with regard to formulating long-term strategies that are in line with national gender equality policies and adopt comprehensive and intersectoral approaches, as well as defining strategies for prevention, care, punishment and reparation. They are all consistent with the international regulatory framework and define mechanisms for implementation, monitoring and follow-up.

4. Advances in autonomy in decision-making

Progress in terms of women's autonomy in decision-making relates to actions to expand opportunities to participate fully in decisions which affect individual and collective life. Policy goals are equal representation in decision-making forums, fostering actions to promote the recognition of diversity, and the creation of spaces for debate and political and social coordination in various spheres of public policy (ECLAC, 2011). In this regard, the countries of the region have progressed both in the formulation of regulatory frameworks that recognize and apply the principle of gender parity and quotas and in carrying out other affirmative actions to promote women's political participation.

Regional agreements have played a significant role since the inclusion of political participation and gender parity as one of the central issues of the tenth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Quito in 2007. At that session, countries recognized that parity is one of the key driving forces of democracy, that its aim is to achieve equality in the exercise of power, in decision-making, in

mechanisms of social and political participation and representation, in diverse types of family relations, and in social, economic, political and cultural relations, and that it constitutes “a goal for the eradication of women’s structural exclusion” (ECLAC, 2017a).

More than 28 years after the enactment of the first quota law in Latin America, several countries have some type of regulation on affirmative action, quotas or parity. This could help to strengthen the principle of parity democracy, which means working towards a social contract in which men and women assume shared and equal responsibilities in all aspects of development. Two Caribbean countries currently have laws in these areas. In 2001, Guyana established a quota according to which women must make up at least 33% of the lists presented by political parties for national and regional elections; and in Haiti, the Constitutional Law of 2012 amending the 1987 Constitution stipulates a quota requiring that women hold at least 30 percent of government jobs and political party positions (see table I.3).

Table I.3
Latin America and the Caribbean (19 countries): quota or parity laws

Country	Latest law or amendment	Year	Level at which legal quotas apply
Argentina	Law No. 27412 on gender parity in political representation	2017	National parliament and MERCOSUR Parliament
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Law No. 26 on the electoral system	2010	Elected offices, positions in political parties and other public offices
Brazil	Law No. 9504 establishing election regulations	1997	Chamber of Deputies, state legislative assemblies and municipal councils
Chile	Law No. 20840	2015	Candidate lists for parliamentary elections (temporary measure applicable from the 2017 elections to the 2029 elections)
Colombia	Law No. 1475 enacting regulations for the organization and functioning of political parties and movements and electoral processes and other provisions	2011	Candidate lists for election to governing bodies
Costa Rica	Law No. 8765, Electoral Code	2009	Elected offices and positions in political parties
Dominican Republic	Law No. 12, amending the final part of article 268 of Electoral Law No. 275-97	2000	Candidate lists for elections for deputies, nominees and proposals to the Central Electoral Board, and political parties and groups
Ecuador	Organic law on electoral processes and political organizations of the Republic of Ecuador	2009	Elected offices, positions in political parties and other public offices
El Salvador	Political parties Act	2013	Political parties (temporary application for five legislative assembly and municipal council elections and four Central American Parliament elections)
Guyana	Representation of People's (Amendment) Act 2001 (Section 11B, Articles 5-7)	2001	Political parties in national and regional elections
Haiti	Constitutional law amending the Constitution of 1987	2012	Public office and political parties
Honduras	Decree No. 54-2012	2012	Primaries (internal party elections), elections of deputies and alternates of the National Congress, the Central American Parliament, mayors, deputy mayors and councillors.
Mexico	General law on electoral institutions and procedures	2014	Candidate lists for elected office to both chambers, local congresses and legislative assembly of Mexico City
Nicaragua	Law No. 790 amending Law No. 331 the Electoral Act	2012	Candidate lists for municipal, parliamentary and Central American Parliament elections
Panama	Law No. 54	2012	Party primaries (internal)
Paraguay	Law No. 834/96 of the Electoral Code, art. 32 modified by Law No. 1830/01, para. r	2008	Party primaries (internal)
Peru	New article 191 of the Constitution	2005	Candidate lists for mayoral, municipal and regional government elections
Uruguay	Law No. 19555 on the equal participation of both sexes in the composition of elected bodies of political parties at national, departmental and leadership levels	2017	Primary elections for national, departmental and municipal leadership positions in political parties
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Special regulation of 2015 to guarantee the rights of equal political participation in the election of deputies to the National Assembly	2015	2015 election of deputies to the National Assembly

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean [online] <https://oig.cepal.org/en>.

Despite existing legislation on the matter, policies aimed at increasing the presence of women have not been designed from an intersectional perspective, with the sole exception of the electoral law of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, which provides for the political participation of indigenous women. As a result, decision-making continues to be one of the main scenarios of exclusion for indigenous women, Afrodescendent women, LGBTI persons, young women and those belonging to groups whose rights are violated, whose voices have not been recognized and represented, and who cannot participate fully in the economic, political, social and cultural life of their countries.

C. Challenges for gender equality and women's autonomy in the region

Although the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean have made significant progress in terms of gender equality, women's autonomy and rights, they have also identified a number of issues that the countries of the region must still face to overcome the challenges of gender inequality identified in the Montevideo Strategy. The challenges considered priorities to progress towards greater gender equality and women's empowerment are summarized below, grouped by aspects that are common to the various subregions.

In the Caribbean countries, common challenges include strengthening machineries for the advancement of women, in terms of allocating greater budgetary and institutional resources, formulating national policies and plans, and strengthening institutional capacities to move towards greater gender equality and women's autonomy. At the same time, it remains difficult for the subregion to build information systems and statistical and administrative records that can provide sex-disaggregated data and develop gender statistics that help to quantify inequalities.

One of the main challenges facing Latin American countries is moving towards the effective implementation of legislation already adopted in countries that have modified their regulatory frameworks, as well as guaranteeing women's effective access to justice. It is crucial to provide public resources to the different State agencies for the effective implementation of recently approved legislation. Some countries also need to harmonize national legislation with the international framework promoting women's rights and to link national legislation with subnational levels such as provinces, states and municipalities.

Furthermore, in some countries there is a clear need to strengthen machineries for the advancement of women, in terms of granting them greater human, political and financial resources, increasing their hierarchical level and guaranteeing their sustainability over time, mainly by means of stable public financing that allows for the continuity of policies, programmes and other actions. A common challenge in this regard is strengthening systems for monitoring the allocation of resources for gender equality, as well as developing mechanisms for evaluation and accountability. Another identified difficulty is incorporating the gender perspective in national planning instruments and in development strategies and plans.

The production, processing and analysis of statistics is key to the design of informed public policies with a gender perspective. Producing systematized and disaggregated statistical information through an intersectional approach remains a challenge for all countries in the region. Likewise, the implementation of training and training programmes on gender equality aimed at public institutions, especially justice systems, is still needed.

With respect to economic autonomy, the unequal distribution of unpaid work and care remains a challenge, reinforcing the need for greater co-responsibility between men and women, and between households, society and the State. It is also essential to promote comprehensive education that overcomes sexist stereotypes and stimulates a culture of equality between women and men, in order to break down patriarchal, discriminatory and violent cultural patterns.

In relation to physical autonomy, violence remains a challenge despite the advances made. In addition, regulatory frameworks governing violence must be expanded and enhanced in order to address several forms of violence, such as political harassment of women, harassment in streets and public places and cyber harassment.

As regards autonomy in decision-making, women's participation remains low despite the existence of laws on quotas or parity in decision-making bodies. It therefore remains necessary to increase their participation in legislative branches and to create the conditions to ensure the participation and effective impact of civil society in the drafting and follow-up of public policy on gender.

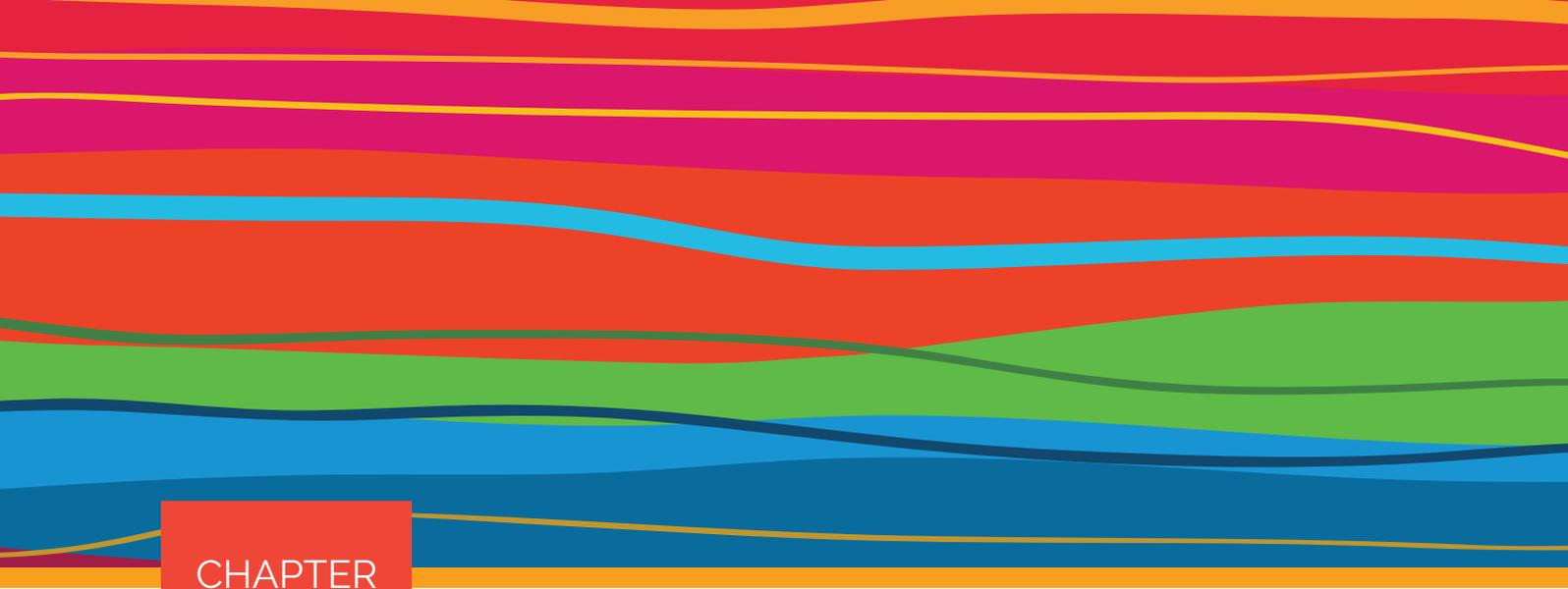
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CHAPTER



Regional heterogeneity: intersectionality poses a challenge to gender equality in Latin America and the Caribbean

Introduction

- A. The overall decrease in poverty levels is not reflected among women
- B. Inequality from childhood to old age: a woman's life cycle
- C. From rural to urban areas: how territory can worsen gender inequality
- D. Indigenous and Afrodescendent women are overlooked
- E. Heterogeneity in machineries for the advancement of women

Bibliography

Introduction

Heterogeneity is an unavoidable characteristic of Latin America and the Caribbean, which is reflected in the cultural, social, political and economic spheres. For ECLAC, heterogeneity is a structural feature of the region's production systems, which is closely linked to existing inequalities. Thus, "gaps in productivity, incorporation of technical progress and access to expanded markets are forged into inequality in education and knowledge, income, career paths, engagement in the knowledge society and access to social protection systems" (ECLAC, 2018c, p. 28). This heterogeneity is also evident among subregions, as well as among and even within countries.

In the past few years, the region as a whole has made great strides in reducing inequalities, but also faces the risk of this progress stalling or even backsliding. Positive steps were taken in the first decade of the twenty-first century, such as reducing inequality and unemployment, improving income distribution, consolidating democracies and building macroeconomic stability (ECLAC, 2014c). This progress is not irreversible, however. As the second decade of the century comes to an end, considerable resistance towards furthering equal rights and deepening social reforms has emerged in the region (ECLAC, 2018c, p. 30).

Progress in the guarantee of women's rights in the region has also been uneven and vulnerable to setbacks, with national characteristics often resulting in differences of pace in the implementation of public policies to achieve gender equality and women's autonomy. Although women's rights in the region have advanced significantly, patterns within the countries are also mixed. Some groups of women face multiple forms of discrimination and inequality, including gender inequality, that overlap and are mutually reinforcing. Failing to consider these complexities inhibits the effect of implemented policies.

The current barriers and resistance to initiatives for gender equality and women's autonomy pose a major challenge at the regional level. The recognition of women as rights-holders has so far involved complicated scenarios of progress and setbacks revealing stubborn obstacles that limit women's economic, physical and decision-making autonomy, while at the same time "new female leadership is emerging and broad sectors of society are recognizing the importance of an agenda for equality" (Guzman and Montaña, p. 8). In particular, the region has recently seen a resurgence in discriminatory practices and discourses that "restrict the full exercise of women's rights" (ECLAC, 2018a, p. 2) and call into question the advances in gender equality policies and the progress made. Guaranteeing the sustainability of achievements to date is crucial. New feminist movements led by younger generations are also emerging in the region, and they are sustaining the social demands for gender equality and for women's rights and autonomy.

Against this backdrop, it is crucial to address the different dimensions of inequality, including gender inequality, that overlap and are mutually reinforcing, resulting in even greater inequality and discrimination for various groups of women. These dimensions add another layer of complexity to the interlinkages between the structural challenges of inequality identified by the governments of the region in the Montevideo Strategy for Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda within the Sustainable Development Framework by 2030. Therefore, the Regional Gender Agenda has incorporated the recognition of the diversity of women in Latin American and Caribbean countries and their specific needs, in addition to taking account of "the ways in which the different categories, positions or situations (cultural, identity-related, social, age-group, ethnic, racial and others) produce specific forms of discrimination or combine to aggravate or deepen existing inequalities" (ECLAC, 2016a, p. 21).

The experiences of Latin American and Caribbean women are mixed. Progress must reflect this diversity among women and gender inequalities must be addressed from an intersectional perspective, with the recognition of different realities of oppression or privilege. Although intersectionality was initially used to denote "the various ways in which race and gender interact" (Crenshaw, 2012, p. 89), it is now applicable to different intersections between gender and other categories and social hierarchies, such as age, territory, ethnicity, race, social class or socioeconomic condition.

The challenges are diverse, and the progress made to date is influenced by this heterogeneity. For example, despite stronger representation of women in national parliaments (up from 15.2% in 2002 to 31.2% in 2019 in the region), their participation remains lower than that of men, and does not necessarily reflect the diversity of Latin American and Caribbean women or cover all areas of representation. Meanwhile, although the number of women without income of their own decreased, from 41.0% in 2002 to 28.1% in 2017, countries where poverty declined recorded an increase in the feminization of poor households, indicating that women are overrepresented among people living in poverty, and that the strategies to resolve this issue do not necessarily include a gender perspective.

Country-specific progress with regard to normative frameworks and the institutionalization of machineries for the advancement of women and the participation of civil society account for the differences in the pace at which gender equality commitments have been implemented in the region. Factors such as social norms, economic and political contexts and exposure to external conditions also play a role. One specific example is the Caribbean subregion, where vulnerability to the impacts of climate change and to extreme weather events determines States' priorities for action and affects women's autonomy.

Therefore, this chapter will address regional heterogeneity as a crucial consideration for gender equality policies, both from the perspective of analysing progress and of understanding the challenges, which involves breaking down the structural constraints of inequality and increasing the autonomy of women in all their diversity, in a changing global context. Specifically, it will examine the challenges faced by the different countries to guarantee the rights of all women living in the region, as well as some of the dimensions affected by regional heterogeneity, including institutions—expressed in machineries for the advancement of women—, socioeconomic status, age, life cycle, territory, ethnicity and race, which embody various forms of inequality for women in the region. Although the dimensions addressed do not cover all possibilities of the intersectionality of gender inequality with other forms of discrimination and exclusion, the recognition of these dimensions shows that the differences between women and men produce social hierarchies that overlap, worsen the inequalities experienced by women and influence gender equality policies.

A. The overall decrease in poverty levels is not reflected among women

In the region, there is a clear and growing trend towards the overrepresentation of women living in poverty, reflected in the femininity index of poor and extremely poor households,¹ which rose in the first decade of the twenty-first century, and has remained relatively stable over the past few years. In 2002, the regional average of the femininity index of poor households in Latin America, which included 18 countries, stood at 105 women for every 100 men, and rose to 113 women for every 100 men in 2017. With respect to extreme poverty, the indicator recorded 108 women for every 100 men in 2002, and rose to 116 women for every 100 men in 2017.

This index shows mixed trends across the region. The differences based on geographic zone are noteworthy: in 2017, the femininity index of extreme poverty stood at 121.8 in urban areas and at 111.7 in rural areas, while the femininity index of poverty was 115.6 in urban areas and 110.2 in rural areas. This reflects a difference in geographic patterns, as although the highest poverty indices were recorded in rural areas,² women living in cities faced specific barriers to economic autonomy and were overrepresented among people living in poverty and extreme poverty.

¹ This index shows the disparities in the incidence of poverty and extreme poverty among women and men. A value greater than 100 indicates that poverty (or extreme poverty) has a larger impact on women than on men, while a value lower than 100 indicates the opposite.

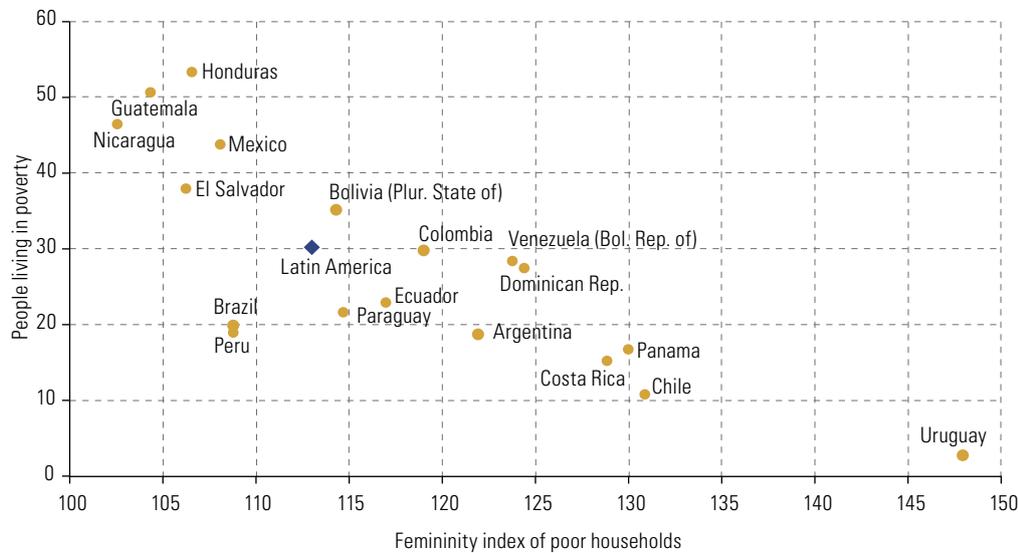
² On the basis of information for 18 Latin American countries, the poverty index stood at 46.4% in rural areas and 26.3% in urban areas in 2017. The extreme poverty index was 20.4% in rural areas and 7.8% in urban areas.

Also worthy of note is the inverse relationship between this index and national poverty levels. In countries with high poverty rates (Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Mexico), the femininity index of poor households is among the lowest in the region (see figure II.1). Moreover, in countries that recorded the largest decreases in the percentage of income poverty in recent years (Argentina, Chile and Paraguay), the femininity index increased, which implies that although the number of poor households in the country has declined, women represent a larger proportion of poor household inhabitants than men.

Public poverty eradication policies must be redesigned to address this specific group of women who, owing to various barriers, are unable to escape this situation and remain outside the reach of social policies and programmes, which fail to incorporate the gender perspective.

Figure II.1

Latin America (18 countries): people living in poverty and femininity index of poor households, around 2017^a
(Percentages)



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

^a National data, except in the case of Argentina, where data refer to 31 urban agglomerations. The data refer to 2017, except in the case of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Guatemala and Nicaragua, where they refer to 2014, and the Dominican Republic, Honduras and Mexico, where they refer to 2016.

Moreover, the percentage of women without their own income is higher than that of men in the same situation. According to data from the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean (OIG), around 2017, the weighted average of women without their own income in Latin America came to 28.1%, compared with 13.2% for their male counterparts. This implies that close to one third of women in the region depend totally on others for subsistence. In countries such as El Salvador, the percentage of women without their own income stood at 41.6% in 2017. The highest percentage was recorded in Guatemala, where 51% of women had no income of their own in 2014 (last year for which data are available).

The socioeconomic status of women in the region is not necessarily in keeping with their level of education, as the latter is often higher. In the past few decades, women have had greater access to different levels of education, which is borne out by their higher average years of schooling. However, this has been insufficient to overcome gender inequalities in the labour market. Therefore, public policies must incorporate a gender perspective and intersectionality to overcome the specific barriers faced by women in all their diversity.

B. Inequality from childhood to old age: a woman's life cycle

Age determines the distribution of well-being and power within the social structure and is “one of the foundations of social organization and its allocation of responsibilities and roles” (ECLAC, 2017a, p. 23). Thus, the intersection of age and gender inequality implies different life experiences for women. Gender can be considered crucial “in the biographical development of individuals throughout their life cycle” (Sanchez, 2011, p. 52) and for women, it means facing different forms of inequality based on life cycle stages.

In Latin America, the recognition of girls and adolescent girls and the discrimination that they face warrants an intersectional approach. “[E]arly experiences of discrimination hamper the full exercise of rights in early childhood, and throughout the life cycle, perpetuating and reproducing inequalities” (Céspedes and Robles, 2016, p. 17). This is reflected in the higher incidence of poverty among the youngest population segments and of sexual violence among girls and adolescent girls, the strong prevalence of child and adolescent pregnancy and the persistence of early or child marriage, for example.

In 2017, the poverty rate was 46% among children and adolescents up to the age of 14 years and 32.5% among those aged between 15 and 24 years, while for persons aged 55 or over it did not exceed 18% (ECLAC, 2019a, p. 94). Between 2012 and 2017, the poverty gaps between the age groups widened. Among children and adolescents up to the age of 14, the poverty rate increased by almost 3 percentage points, while poverty among those aged over 65 fell by 2 percentage points. Thus, the ratio between children and young people living in poverty and older people in the same situation rose from 2.5 to 3.0, and in the case of extreme poverty the ratio jumped from 2.6 to 3.7 (ECLAC, 2019a, p.94).

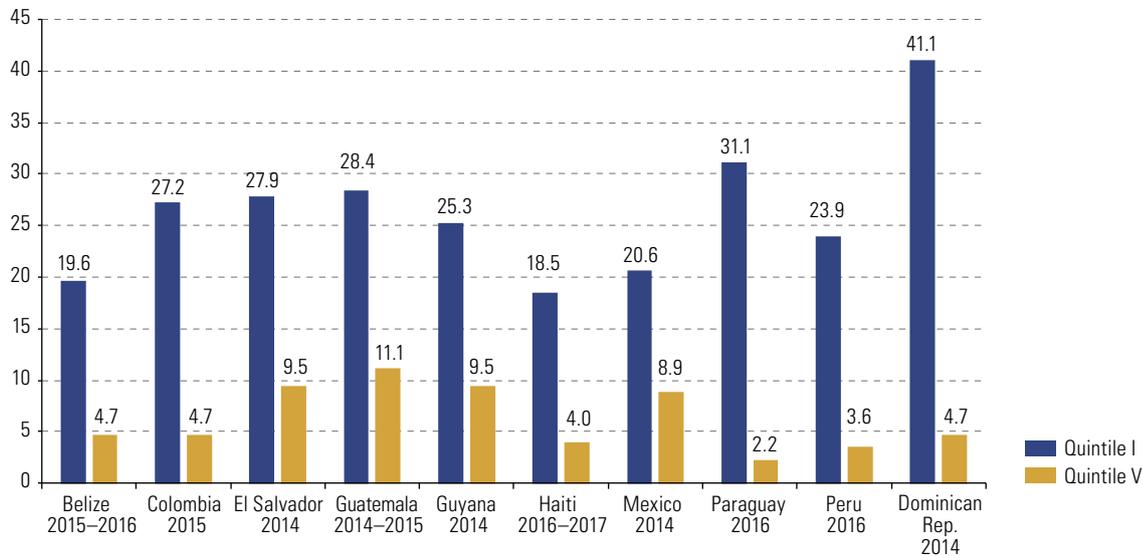
With regard to violence, 4 out of 10 adolescent girls between the ages of 15 and 19 have experienced violence at the hands of their partners, and 1.1 million adolescent girls between the ages of 15 and 19 have suffered sexual violence or a forced sexual act, with 80% of the aggressors being members of the family group or known to the victims (UNICEF, 2018b). The information available indicates that “64% of children under 15 years old regularly experience violent discipline (emotional aggression or corporal punishment)” and almost one out of two is subject to physical punishment (UNICEF, 2018a, p. 1).

“Child and early marriage is closely bound up with inequalities, gender norms and stereotypes and the invisibility of sexual violence in these types of arrangements” (ECLAC, 2016a, p. 89). Four out of 10 adolescent girls between the ages of 15 and 19 who are in some form of union have experienced violence at the hands of their partners (ECLAC, 2019b, p. 125).

Pregnancy and motherhood in girls and adolescent girls is another major obstacle to women's autonomy in the early stages of their life cycle. This problem is rooted, among other things, in the cultural patterns that associate women with motherhood and the resulting search for social approval or inclusion by having children; countries' lack of policies on sexual and reproductive health education; scarcity of specialized health services adapted to the needs of adolescent girls; and difficulties in addressing the power relationships in couples and making informed decisions about contraception. Pregnancy at a very young age is also linked to dropping out of school, early marriage and early assignment of care responsibilities, which encourages the intergenerational reproduction of monetary and time poverty. Figures representing motherhood among adolescents aged 15 to 19 in Latin America and the Caribbean put socioeconomic inequality into sharp relief. In most countries, the percentage of adolescents who are already mothers or pregnant for the first time is between 2.5 and 14 times higher in the poorest socioeconomic quintile than in the richest (see figure II.2).

Figure II.2

Latin America and the Caribbean (10 countries): adolescent girls aged 15 to 19 years who are mothers or pregnant for the first time, by socioeconomic quintile, latest year available (Percentages)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), *Draft first regional report on the implementation of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development (LC/CRPD.3/3)*, Santiago, 2018.

Another regional challenge is insufficient satisfaction of demand for family planning,³ which reopens the debate on weak public investment in contraception and the economic burden of reproduction being placed mainly on women's shoulders. The extent to which demand for family planning has been met has increased slightly in the past decade, with the average for Latin America and the Caribbean rising from 81.6% in 2010 to 82.8% in 2017.

Moreover, girls begin doing unpaid domestic work at an early age. The available data indicate inequality in time use from childhood: girls and adolescent girls under the age of 18 spend four to nine hours per week more than their male counterparts doing unpaid work. Meanwhile, boys and adolescent boys under the age of 18 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 (ECLAC, 2017a).

The greater burden of domestic and care work for women lasts throughout their life cycle. Household surveys show that in nine countries in the region, on average, 70.2% of women between the ages of 20 and 59 cite family (care for children or dependent persons, domestic work or prohibition by members of the household) as the main reason for not actively seeking employment or carrying out paid work. Thus, the unequal distribution of domestic and care work, to the disadvantage of women, acts as a barrier to participation and reproduces inequalities in the labour market (Vaca Trigo, 2019, p. 12).

Longer life expectancy, lower fertility rates and ageing populations are resulting in an increase in the proportion of women among older persons. According to the projections of the Population Division of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), the regional average of the total fertility rate is 2.04 live births per woman, and the percentage of persons older than 60 is 13% (United Nations, 2019). However, the demographic transition varies from one country to the next: figures for 17 countries are below the regional average of the fertility rate, and populations are also ageing at different rates.

³ The concept of unmet family planning needs refers to the gap between a woman's reproductive intentions and her contraceptive use. Women with unmet family planning needs are those who are fertile and sexually active, who use no contraceptive methods, and who say that they do not want more children or wish to delay their next pregnancy.

Gender inequalities last throughout the life cycle. Inequalities in the labour market in terms of access, employment, horizontal and vertical segregation, participation in the informal economy and wage levels, among other discriminatory factors, carry over to the pension system and have a decisive impact on the exclusion of women from these systems (ECLAC, 2019c). Older women are in a precarious situation as, “on average, women are less likely to be enrolled in retirement and pension schemes and draw amounts that are almost one fifth less than those received by men” (ECLAC, 2016a, p. 68).

Women’s situation in pension systems is a clear reflection of the gender inequality that affects them in old age. In terms of coverage, women are in a worse situation than men, both as active system members—that is, during the periods they are contributors—or during the passive phase in which, as older people, they draw their pensions. Women are also worse off in terms of the adequacy of benefits, in that they invariably receive less than men and are overrepresented among the beneficiaries of non-contributory or social pensions, which are worth less than their contributory counterparts. The conditions that older people face, particularly older women, stem from “a series of significant events and specific practices affecting each sex from youth until old age. These conditions can improve or worsen an individual’s quality of life, and expose them to specific risks” (Sánchez, 2011, p. 50). Therefore, addressing social policies relating to old age as well as childhood, youth and adulthood requires the consideration of the disadvantages experienced by girls, adolescent girls, adult women and older women owing to their position in the gender order, which undoubtedly translates into lower levels of well-being and development that worsen specific inequalities faced throughout the life cycle.

C. From rural to urban areas: how territory can worsen gender inequality

Inequalities are also evident at the territorial level in Latin America and the Caribbean, where there are wide development gaps between rich territories and poor territories (ECLAC, 2019d). This territorial heterogeneity is caused by “uneven settlement patterns and major disparities in the distribution of wealth and of opportunities for material well-being” (ECLAC, 2016b, p. 59), which entails a strong urbanization trend resulting from the concentration of economic and sociocultural opportunities in urban areas and “the forces driving inhabitants away from rural areas, which remain active and operate in both scenarios of production lag and production modernization” (ECLAC, 2019d, p. 155). As a result, a large percentage of the population—around 80%—lives in urban areas.

Territory is considered one of the axes of social inequalities because it plays a determining role in their depth and reproduction in different areas of social development (ECLAC, 2016b, p. 60). However, combined with the gender dimension, it gives rise to discrimination and exclusion specifically for women, in both urban and rural areas. Women and men have different needs, aspirations and opportunities to use and access goods and resources where they live, owing to the sexual division of labour and the different roles they play in the private and public spheres, and in the reproductive and productive work environments (ECLAC, 2016c). This shows, from the gender perspective, that territory is not a neutral concept and that it can favour the exclusion of women or transform situations of inequality.

To incorporate the diversity of territories into the analysis of gender inequalities, the approach adopted must address a multiplicity of variables that intersect and are mutually reinforcing, and must combine the territorial approach and gender-based approach to development (ECLAC, 2016a, p. 72). The territorial dimension can be reflected in different forms of gender inequality experienced by women living in rural and urban areas. Although the percentage of the population living in rural areas is considerably smaller than the urban population, rural women’s specific experience of inequality warrants an examination of the territorial dimension from a gender perspective.

It has been argued that the axes of gender and of rural territories —especially the most isolated ones— intersect. There is a link between the lags and more limited opportunities seen in rural areas and those experienced by women, owing in part to structural elements of territories or the gender order, such as access to and control over production assets (Cliche, Ranaboldo and Serrano, 2015). Many women living in rural areas “are forced to stay or migrate owing to situations of poverty and violence,” which is aggravated by “the overburden of domestic and care work, weak participation in formal labour markets and limited access to goods and services” (Nobre and others, 2017, p. 4).

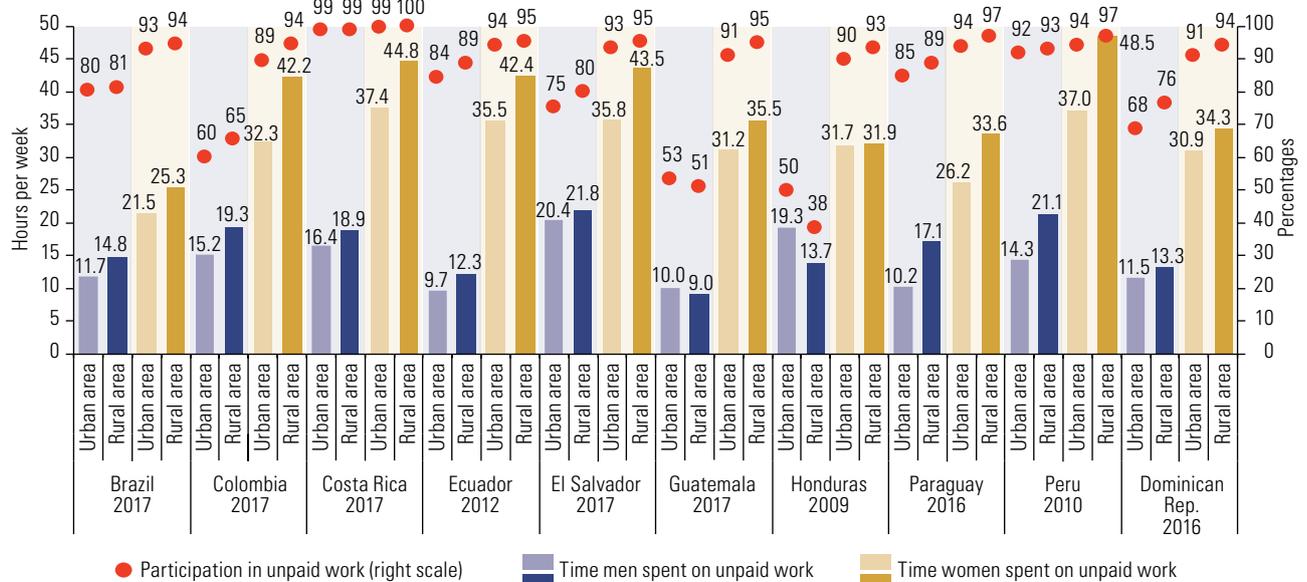
Rural women also have diverse experiences, which is evident in the activities they carry out (farming, harvesting, fishing, wage employment or even non-agricultural activities in rural areas) and in the cultural and territorial interlinkages that define them (Nobre and others, 2017). Some of the manifestations of gender inequality that affect rural women are low labour market participation, unequal time use and higher poverty levels. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in Latin America and the Caribbean, a total of 59 million women live in rural areas, of which 20 million are included in the economically active population and 4.5 million are agricultural producers and earn 24% less than men (FAO, 2017).

A crucial aspect of the territorial dimension of gender inequality is the statistical invisibility of the work done by rural women. Time-use surveys in the region have shown that “most of the rural women who are classified as inactive in traditional employment surveys undertake work that is invisible to official statistics” as unpaid workers or producers for household consumption (ECLAC, 2016a, p. 74). “[T]he roles of rural women include production, community-based and care work, representing a fundamental pillar of families’ survival” (Laguna and Del Ponte Flores, 2019, p. 7), which translates into a heavy load of unpaid work, reflected recently in regional statistics. Data from 10 Latin American countries show that rural women spend more time on unpaid work (see figure II.3). Therefore, rural development with a gender perspective should take into account women’s diverse needs and especially consider “the data on time distribution and allocation in addition to identifying changes in the sector, technology modernization and necessary sociocultural transformations” (ECLAC, 2017a, p. 197).

Figure II.3

Latin America (10 countries): time spent on unpaid work and participation in unpaid work, by gender and geographic area

(Hours per week and percentages)



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

Meanwhile, women living in urban areas also face inequality that is strongly determined by where they live. In particular, questions have been raised about the neutrality of gender in the urban space, both in terms of planning and of “perception, use and symbolization” (Rico and Segovia, 2017, p. 41), as gender inequality is also expressed in how territory is used and inhabited.

One example is assault and harassment in the transport system, which affects mainly adolescent and young women, and female students and workers from low- and middle-income households, who use public transport on a daily basis (Rozas and Arredondo, 2015). This affects women’s relationship with territory given that, out of fear, “they withdraw from the public space, reduce their mobility radius, diminish their use of urban offerings, change their routes and fear the city at night” (Rico and Segovia, 2017, p. 56). Urban inequalities are manifested in the concentration of income, resources and opportunities in some population groups, and also in terms of spatial segregation which “in Latin American cities [...] is linked to differences in access to services and their quality” (Scuro and Vaca Trigo, 2017, p. 130).

Lastly, time use in the urban context is an indicator of gender inequality. In that respect, “women who live in slums spend between 4.1 and 9.7 hours per week more on unpaid domestic and care work than those living in higher income households, which widens the gender gaps” (Scuro and Vaca Trigo, 2017, p. 131).

D. Indigenous and Afrodescendent women are overlooked

In Latin America and the Caribbean, the predominance of the culture of privilege reflects the legacy of colonialism and of slavery, and the “social relations produced by [their] practice and the multiple discriminations that persist to this day have a crucial impact on ethno-racial⁴ inequalities in the region” (ECLAC, 2018c, p. 219). One example of this is the failure to consider indigenous and Afrodescendent women in the discussion about gender inequalities and ethno-racial inequalities. In addition to exposing them to double discrimination, it places them at the intersection of both types of exclusion, as referred to in the original definition of the concept of intersectionality proposed by Crenshaw (2012).

One of the most obvious forms of exclusion affecting the indigenous and Afrodescendent population has been “the statistical invisibility to which it has traditionally been subject, and which breaches a basic and fundamental tenet of public policy design, that of knowing which population the planned actions are aimed at, where that population is located, what specific needs are being addressed and what rights are supposed to be guaranteed” (ECLAC, 2016b, p. 25).

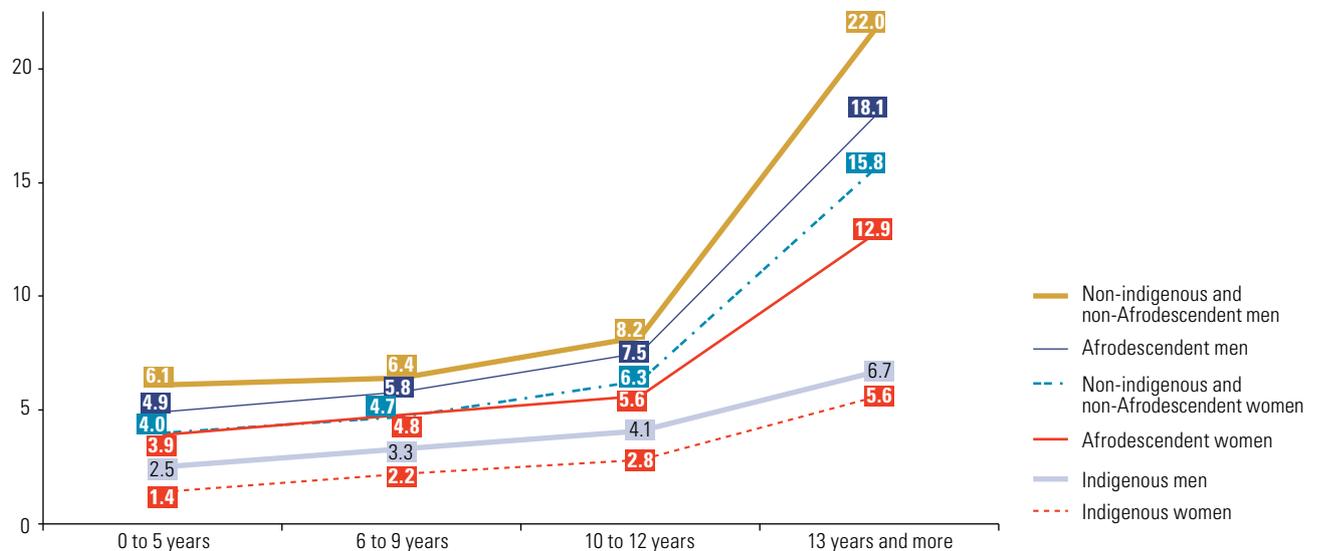
Despite limitations, ECLAC has sought to include the ethno-racial dimension in the analysis of regional data from household surveys. Although disaggregation is not always possible, statistical data for some countries show the inequality that affects indigenous and Afrodescendent women specifically. On the basis of an analysis of hourly labour incomes by ethnicity and race, and years of schooling, the data from four countries of the region around 2017 show that indigenous women are systematically lower on the income scale, regardless of their education level (see figure II.4).

Therefore, the intersection between gender, race and indigenous background translates into different levels of income for women and men with the same level of education, given the different positions they occupy owing to their gender and ethnicity. Figure II.4 shows a bigger difference between the wages earned by the most highly educated women and those of their male counterparts, which is even more pronounced when ethno-racial status is factored in: with 13 years of schooling or more, men who are neither indigenous nor Afrodescendants earn the highest incomes, reflecting their privileged position. They are then followed, in descending order, by Afrodescendent men, non-indigenous and non-Afrodescendent women, Afrodescendent women, indigenous men and lastly, indigenous women, who are the most disadvantaged.

⁴ Although the concepts of ethnicity and race have been the subject of complex theoretical and public policy debate, in Latin America and the Caribbean, “ethnicity” is most commonly used with reference to indigenous peoples and “race” primarily for Afrodescendants (ECLAC, 2016b).

Figure II.4

Latin America (weighted average of four countries^a): hourly income of the employed population aged 15 years or older, by years of schooling, gender and ethno-racial status, around 2017 (International dollars)^b



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

^a The countries examined are Brazil, Ecuador, Peru and Uruguay.

^b Calculations are based on the International Monetary Fund (IMF) implied PPP conversion rate, which indicates the relation between local currencies and the international dollar [online] https://www.imf.org/external/datamapper/PPPEX@WEO/OEMDC/ADVEC/WEO_WORLD.

This clearly shows that although academic achievement guarantees higher incomes, other factors play an influential role, including gender, which is not simply another dimension, but a form of inequality that intersects with other types of exclusion: income levels are systematically higher for men than for women, which is a symptom of the unequal gender order. Moreover, among Afrodescendants and indigenous peoples, women are in a worse situation than men. This reflects how the structural challenges of inequality overlap and link the different dimensions of inequality and exclusion.

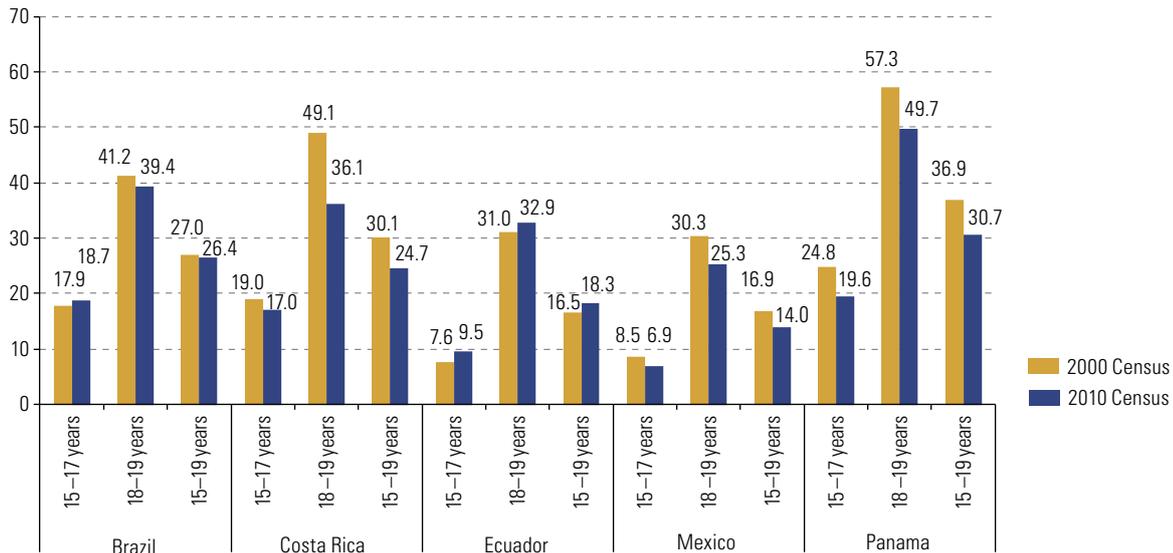
Available data for Latin America show there are over 800 indigenous peoples, with a population estimated at no less than 48 million as of 2015, and an Afrodescendent population over 125 million. Both groups present great demographic, social, territorial and political diversity within and between countries. Nonetheless, there is a common denominator: higher levels of material poverty and exclusion as a result of long historical processes, which meant that “indigenous peoples and Afrodescendants occupied a secondary position and that the inequalities affecting them were accumulated during the creation of nation-States and have been carried over to the present day” (ECLAC, 2019d, p. 38).

Indigenous women are not “a homogenous group, but instead embody a wide range of realities, needs and demands” (ECLAC, 2013, p. 17). Although the different indigenous groups reflect a cultural complexity that makes it difficult to generalize the situation and social position of indigenous women, the social and cultural organization of indigenous peoples—which governs gender relations—directly influences contraceptive use, patterns of union and family formation, among other factors (ECLAC, 2014b). The available data show some of the most visible inequalities, for example those linked to adolescent pregnancy, maternal mortality or the lack of access to quality health services.

Indigenous women are part of a population which is much younger than the non-indigenous population, although recent data indicate that “the base of the indigenous population pyramid is clearly narrowing, [...] owing to lower fertility rates among indigenous women” (ECLAC, 2014a, p. 10). Nonetheless, differences between indigenous and non-indigenous women remain. For example, although the most recent censuses reveal that early motherhood has diminished in all countries, it is higher among indigenous adolescents, and its decline has been limited (see figure II.5).

Figure II.5

Latin America (5 countries): young indigenous women aged 15–19 who are mothers, by age group (Percentages)



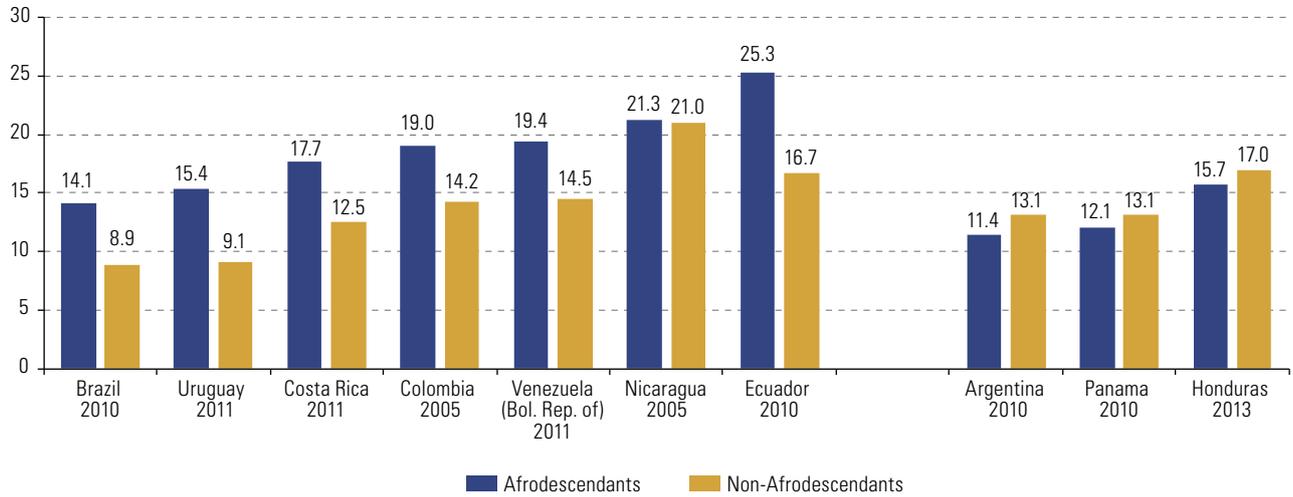
Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), *Mujeres indígenas: nuevas protagonistas para nuevas políticas* (LC/L.3842), Santiago, 2014.

Adolescent pregnancy is a complex phenomenon which is compounded by ethno-racial inequalities. The percentage of Afrodescendent mothers aged 15 to 19 years is higher than the percentage of adolescent mothers of the same age who are neither Afrodescendent nor indigenous in all but three countries (Argentina, Honduras and Panama) (see figure II.6).

There are also differences based on ethnicity and race among young people aged 15–29 who are in neither education nor employed in the labour market. The data for five countries of the region show that, on average, the percentage of young Afrodescendent women in that situation is higher than that of non-indigenous and non-Afrodescendent women, as well as that of men in both groups. Specifically, the percentage of Afrodescendent women who are neither in education nor doing paid work is 2.6 times higher than that of non-Afrodescendent and non-indigenous young men, who are, on average, in the most favourable position (see figure II.7). This situation is strongly determined by unpaid domestic and care work carried out at home, which falls mainly on these young women (ECLAC, 2019a).

Figure II.6

Latin America (10 countries): adolescents aged 15–19 years who are mothers, by race, latest year available (Percentages)

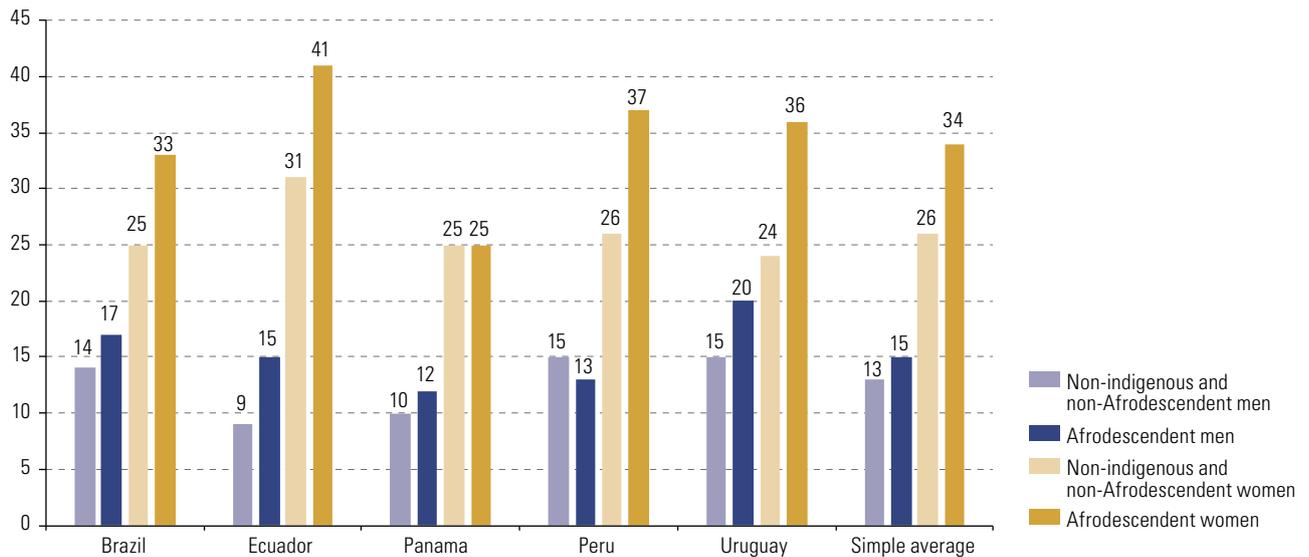


Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) “Afrodescendent women in Latin America and the Caribbean: debts of equality”, *Project Documents* (LC/TS.2018/33), Santiago, 2018.

Note: Does not include the indigenous population or cases in which ethnicity or race is unknown.

Figure II.7

Latin America (5 countries): young people aged 15–29 who are in neither education nor employment, by ethnicity and gender, around 2016 (Percentages)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), *Social Panorama of Latin America, 2018* (LC/PUB.2019/3-P), Santiago, 2019.

Furthermore, indigenous and Afrodescendent women are still underrepresented in elected and appointed political positions, in the upper echelons of political parties, and in the executive, legislative and judicial spheres of the State at the national and subnational levels” (ECLAC, 2018b, p. 71). In that regard, Afrodescendent women’s participation remains very limited and contrasts with their active presence in regional, national and subnational organizations and networks (ECLAC, 2018b). And despite the encouragement of political participation by indigenous people at the local level, more indigenous men become candidates, and more frequently, than indigenous women (ECLAC, 2014b).

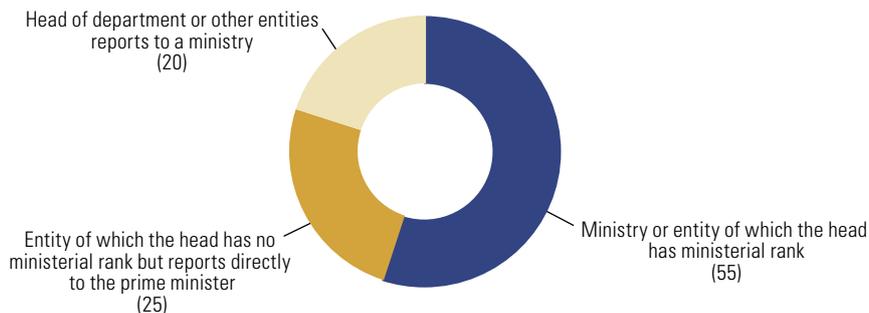
E. Heterogeneity in machineries for the advancement of women

National machineries for the advancement of women are the main components of States' institutional architecture for gender equality in the region. These institutions are the governments' central policy coordination bodies, and their main task is to provide support for mainstreaming the gender perspective in all policy areas and at all levels of government. They were created as a result of the international commitments arising from the Third World Conference on Women, held in Nairobi in 1985, and the Fourth World Conference of Women, held in Beijing in 1995. However, their establishment has been uneven in the region (ECLAC, 2016a), and their implementation has produced different outcomes and achievements.

According to the Gender Equality Observatory, the hierarchical level of these mechanisms is a qualitative indicator of the status that countries have formally conferred on gender-equality issues. There are three hierarchical levels: high, intermediate and low. The differences between countries and subregions are considerable. In 2019, on the basis of data from 20 Latin American countries, most machineries for the advancement of women were classified as high level: in 55% of countries, the mechanism has a ministerial status or its head has ministerial rank, and participates fully in cabinet meetings. This is the case in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru and Paraguay (see figure II.8).

Figure II.8

Latin America (20 countries): hierarchical level of machineries for the advancement of women, 2019
(Percentages)



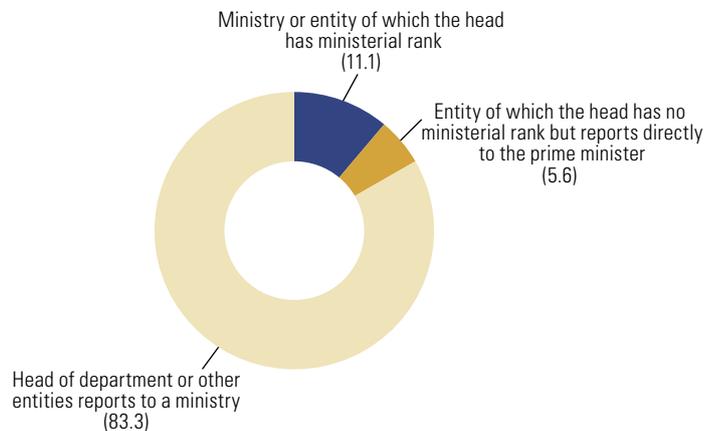
Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean [online] <https://oig.cepal.org/en>, on the basis of official sources.

In 25% of Latin American countries, the machineries are classified as intermediate level, meaning that they report to the office of the president (offices attached to the office of the president, secretariats, national institutes, councils, etc.), but their heads do not attend cabinet meetings. This is the case in Argentina, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala and Puerto Rico. Just 20% of Latin American countries classify these machineries as low level, meaning that they report to a ministry or a lower ranking authority (vice-ministries, institutes, boards or other bodies). This is the case in El Salvador, Panama, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Uruguay.

The situation in Caribbean countries is different. According to data for 18 countries in 2019, most machineries for the advancement of women are classified as low level: in 83.3% of countries, these mechanisms report to or depend on a sectoral ministry. This is the case in Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Suriname. Meanwhile, Haiti and Trinidad and Tobago have high level mechanisms, of which the heads have ministerial rank, and those in the British Virgin Islands can be classified as intermediate level, with heads that have no ministerial rank but report to or depend on the head of government (see figure II.9).

Figure II.9

The Caribbean (18 countries): hierarchical level of machineries for the advancement of women, 2019
(Percentages)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean [online] <https://oig.cepal.org/en>, on the basis of official sources.

The different hierarchical levels of machineries for the advancement of women determine the ease with which gender-equality policies are developed and the progress they can ensure at the national level. The predominance of high level machineries for the advancement of women can be seen as positive because they are “an established institution within the State, despite instances of political and ideological resistance that can generate setbacks in terms of hierarchy and responsibilities” (ECLAC, 2019e, p. 29). However, in 45% of Latin American countries and 89% of Caribbean countries, these mechanisms are classified as intermediate and low level, and for most Caribbean countries this situation continues to pose a challenge.

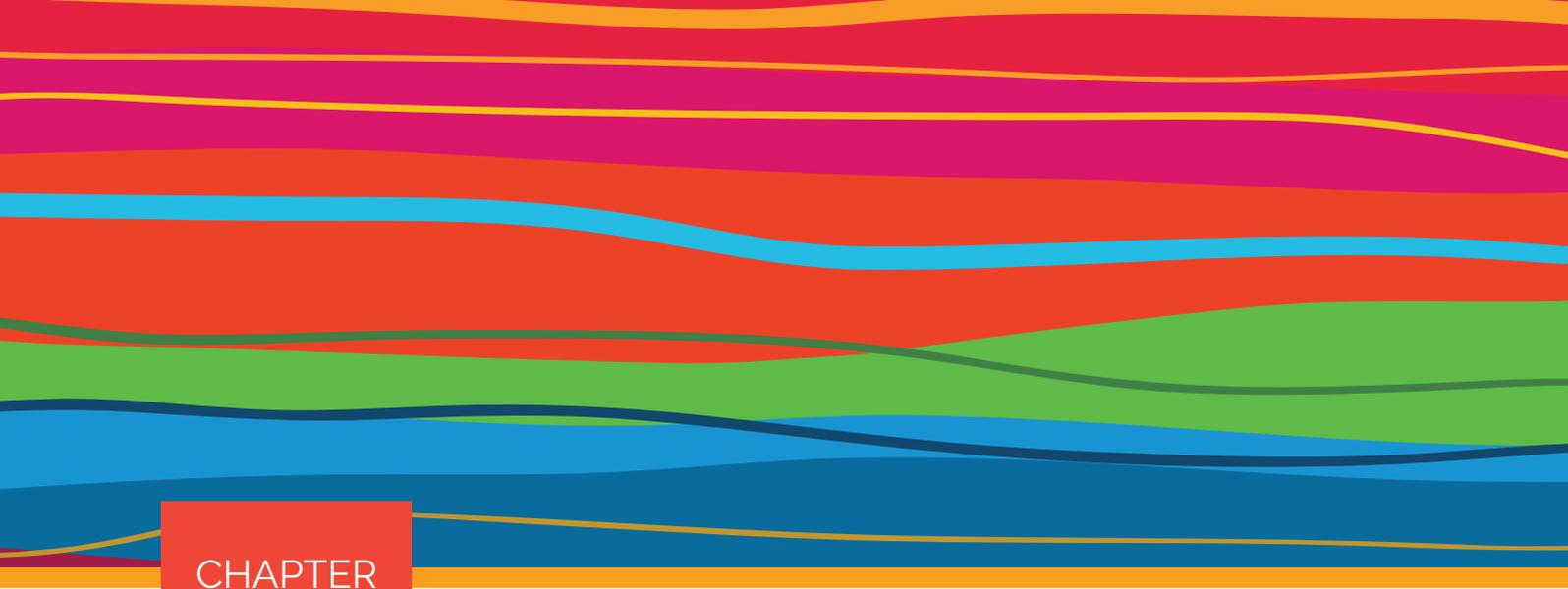
Although high level classification of these machineries is important, it is not enough to guarantee progress in equality policies, as they can also be affected by the political and institutional context. Machineries for the advancement of women in the region are not only heterogeneous in terms of hierarchy, but also with regard to the particular characteristics they reflect in their specific institutional context.

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Changing economic scenarios



CHAPTER



Economic and financial globalization: impact on the economic autonomy of women in Latin America and the Caribbean

Introduction

- A. International trade and gender equality
- B. Financial systems and women's economic autonomy
- C. Fiscal policy and gender equality

Bibliography

Introduction

The global economy is highly interconnected as a result of trade, investment, credit and technology, as well as the dissemination of ideas and behaviour (ECLAC, 2019b). Even though the world is now more interconnected than in past decades, the benefits and costs associated with the economic and financial globalization process have not been distributed fairly among countries, regions or sectors, or between men and women. Men and women are affected differently by globalization trends and, in particular, by trade, financial and fiscal policies, because they occupy unequal positions as economic agents, whether they are workers, consumers or entrepreneurs and whether or not they are responsible for unpaid and care work.

The trade globalization process has changed significantly in recent years. First, world trade has been slowing down and this trend is expected to deepen in the wake of trade and geopolitical tensions (ECLAC, 2019a). Second, China has become a key international player and is one of the main trading partners for Latin America and the Caribbean. This means that the evolution of China's economy and its gradual growth slowdown are having a major impact on the region. In particular, they affect the prices of the raw materials on which many Latin American economies depend for both their exports and tax revenues. Third, the concentration of power and profits arising from this stage of globalization has led to discontent among various actors and caused them to question the strategy of trade and financial liberalization. This has resulted in increasing protectionism and fragmentation of trade governance, as well as the promotion or renegotiation of bilateral and plurilateral trade agreements that incorporate provisions on labour, environment or gender equality.

Furthermore, in recent decades, the financial sector (banking, insurance, real estate) has expanded globally, has increased in complexity, concentration and interconnectivity, and has become disconnected from the real economy and from people's needs. Financialization refers to the growing importance of markets, institutions and financial elites in the functioning of economies.¹ There has also been a proliferation of financial instruments and growth in the shadow financial sector.² This has resulted in progressive financial and economic volatility, coupled with increasing interdependence between countries, hence a growing potential for systemic risk (ECLAC, 2018c). It is a context in which unequal conditions of access to credit for men and women persist.

In fiscal matters, revenue collection and distribution are particularly important challenges in the current scenario of widespread economic slowdown, decreasing commodity prices and fiscal consolidation processes to adjust public spending. While capital expenditures are still recognized as the main adjustment variable, pressure on social spending is increasing (ECLAC, 2019d).

This chapter discusses some of the main dimensions of the process of trade and financial globalization and its implications for gender equality and women's autonomy. The first section discusses the existing links between trade policy and gender equality. It examines the pattern of trade specialization in countries in the region and women's employment, as well as some initiatives to support the internationalization of women-led companies. It also reflects on the opportunities and challenges posed by gender mainstreaming in trade agreements. The second section defines the main gender gaps in access to and use of financial services and products, describes the potential of financial technology for closing these gaps and discusses the role that development banks might play in moving towards providing women with accessible financing under conditions appropriate to them, taking into account their diversity. The third and final section examines fiscal policies, describes the main features of tax systems and advances in gender-responsive budgeting in the region, and highlights the need to mobilize the maximum available resources to guarantee women's rights, even in a context of fiscal consolidation and adjustment.

¹ According to Epstein (2015) and Krippner (2012), the concept of financialization is defined by four characteristic components: (i) ascendancy of a form of corporate governance centred on valuing the actions of companies, leading to a short-termism tendency in investment decision-making (Lazonick and O'Sullivan, 2000); (ii) growing political and economic power of the rentier class and financial capital (Crotty, 1990; Chesnais, 1996; Duménil and Lévy, 2004; Palma, 2009; Pollin, 2007); (iii) shift in the capital appreciation rationale to a specific pattern of accumulation based heavily on financial channels (Krippner, 2005); and (iv) an increase in financial trading, reflected in the emergence of a variety of new products (Abeles, Pérez Caldentey and Valdecantos, 2018, page 16).

² Intermediation activity involving entities and activities outside the regulated financial system.

A. International trade and gender equality

Links between gender equality and trade depend, among other things, on the intersection between macroeconomic conditions, production specialization, international integration strategies, occupational gender segregation, and social protection systems and public services in different countries and regions.

Trade liberalization processes bring about changes in countries' production and occupational structure. While some sectors expand through exports, others that are sensitive to international competition shrink. Opportunities are created in certain economic zones and territories, while others may lag behind. The relative weight of sectors (agriculture, industry and services) changes, with specific effects on each country in terms of the creation or destruction of women's and men's employment and job quality. In addition, sectors and employment become more vulnerable to fluctuations in international prices and to changes in the global economy.

The pattern of countries' international integration and, more precisely, trade and investment policies, have gender impacts because they affect not only labour market conditions but also the relative price of products, government revenue, access to public services and the policy space available to regulate in favour of women's rights (UNCTAD, 2017). The gender impact of international trade may be analysed by examining: changes in working patterns and conditions, including paid and unpaid work; gender pay gaps, patterns of ownership and control over assets; changes in consumption patterns and technology use by men and women; and public provision of services (through taxes and expenditure) and their differential impact (Elson, Grown and Çağatay, 2007). Indeed, trade policies can have a simultaneous but differential impact on different groups of women. While the removal of tariffs may benefit women consumers by making an imported product less expensive, it may harm women farmers or women employed in sectors that will face competition from international companies (Goff, 2018).

When analysing the links between gender equality and international trade through employment and economic opportunities, it is necessary to determine how gender inequalities impact on women as "a source of competitive advantage" or as "achievers of competitive advantages of international trade" (Elson, Grown and Çağatay, 2007). Women are a source of competitive advantage when they participate in international trade as unpaid family workers, home-based workers, or wage-earners in low-quality jobs with poor protection. Women are able to seize the opportunities of international trade when they can expand their businesses into international markets. However, this does not happen automatically; gender gaps in access to productive resources, financing, information, technology and markets must be closed first.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, structural heterogeneity is being reinforced and affects an occupational structure where women are overrepresented in the sectors lagging farthest behind, in which there is greater precariousness and less contact with technology and innovation (ECLAC, 2016a). In addition, the region's export specialization is based on static comparative advantages, such as raw materials and low wages. What is more, export patterns in some countries of the region based on natural resource-intensive sectors have created little employment, especially women's employment, related to foreign trade (Durán Lima and Castresana, 2016). In other cases, women have entered jobs in the most precarious or least value-added segments of global value chains. Low wages have been considered a "comparative advantage" for locating some value chain segments in Latin America and the Caribbean (Giosa Zuazúa and Rodríguez Enríquez, 2010).

At the international level, there is a trend towards a deceleration and structural weakening of international trade, coupled with escalating trade tensions between the United States and China. As a consequence, commodity prices (on which many economies in the region rely for their export earnings and tax revenues) are expected to be lower than in 2018. At the regional level, foreign trade is losing momentum and the trade surplus has shrunk markedly, to practically zero in GDP terms for 2019. The slight increase in export volume from the region is expected to be offset by a 2.5% drop in export prices, in line with the downward trend in commodity prices (ECLAC, 2019a).

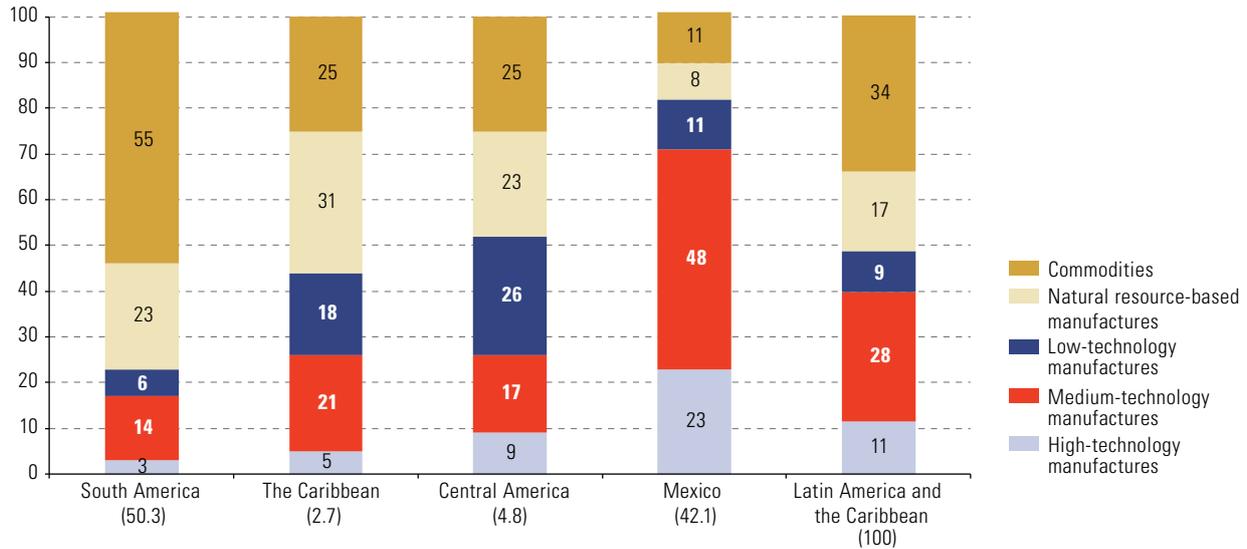
1. Some of the linkages between production structure, export pattern and occupational gender segregation

It is important to highlight the heterogeneity of Latin America and the Caribbean both in terms of the degree of production diversification and macroeconomic dynamics, and in terms of the functioning of institutions and markets. However, production and export specialization in natural resources or labour-intensive goods (static

comparative advantages) has impacted on the quantity and quality of employment and has had distributional consequences. In recent decades, the region has been unable to transform its production structure and diversify its export basket into sectors more intensive in knowledge, technology and quality job creation (see figure III.1). This has also led to stagnating earning potential for women.

Figure III.1

Latin America and the Caribbean (Mexico and subregions): export pattern by technology intensity, 2017
(Percentages)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), *International Trade Outlook for Latin America and the Caribbean, 2018* (LC/PUB.2018/20-P), Santiago, 2018

There are major differences between trade structures in the different subregions of Latin America and the Caribbean. In South American countries, while the commodity price supercycle that occurred between 2003 and 2012 had a positive impact on economic growth rates, level of exports and terms of trade, but at the same time it heightened the reprimarization of economies. Export specialization in commodities and natural resource-based manufactures is characterized by few production ties and low direct job creation (ECLAC, 2016b and 2018a). South America's export basket is intensive in commodities and natural resource-based manufactures, which make up 78% of the total export value.³ High-technology manufactures account for only 3% of total exports from this subregion.

An analysis of women's employment in these sectors shows that levels are low and, therefore, these trade strategies have not helped to create job opportunities for women in tradable sectors.⁴ At present, only 17.6% of working women in South America are employed in tradable sectors (in the case of men employed in these sectors, the figure rises to 29.7%).⁵ Women's employment in the subregion is concentrated in the service sector, where women are overrepresented in the education, health and domestic work subsectors.

An analysis of men's and women's employment in the manufacturing industry by level of technological intensity, while not limited to employment in international trade, gives an idea of their role in sectors that are key to structural change and export diversification.

The data show clearly that, in the case of South America, women's participation in manufacturing is lower than men's (9.6% of employed women compared with 12.5% of employed men) and women are concentrated mostly in low technology-intensive jobs (78%) (see figure III.2). In the manufacturing sector, the wage ratio for women is equivalent to 88.1 monetary units for every 100 monetary units for men.⁶

³ In the case of the Caribbean, they account for 56% of exports.

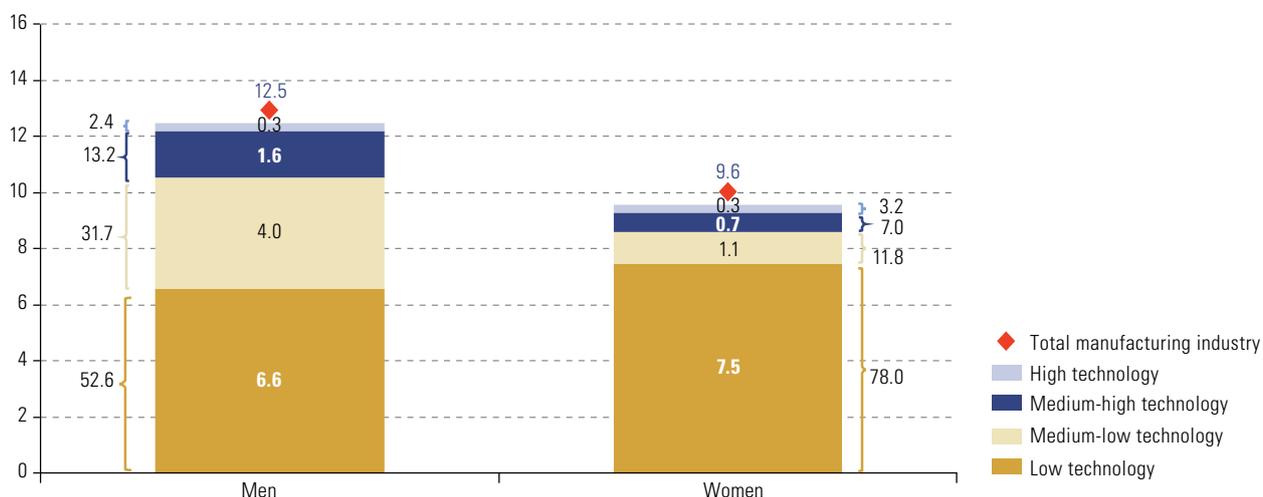
⁴ Tradable sectors are those that trade products internationally. In contrast, products from non-tradable sectors can be consumed only in the economy where they are produced, either for reasons inherent to the good or service in question or because of transport costs or the existence of entry or exit barriers.

⁵ Data collected through the processing of household surveys available in the Household Survey Data Bank (BADEHOG) of ECLAC.

⁶ Weighted average of nine South American countries around 2017, on the basis of their respective household surveys. The calculation corresponds to the ratio of average urban wages of men and women aged 20–49 years working 35 hours or more per week.

Figure III.2

South America (weighted average of 9 countries): distribution of the population employed in manufacturing by sex and level of technology intensity, around 2017^{a b}
(Percentages)



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

^a The technology level of manufacturing activities was determined in accordance with the categories proposed by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in "ISIC Rev. 3 Technology Intensity Definition" for countries with International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC), Rev. 3 or similar, and the categories proposed in "OECD Taxonomy of Economic Activities based on R&D Intensity" for countries with International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC), Rev. 4 or similar.

^b Data for Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Uruguay relate to 2017 and those for the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela relate to 2014.

Furthermore, Central America, Mexico and some Caribbean countries have specialized in export-oriented manufacturing, such as *maquila* or assembly industries (textiles and clothing, electronics). These sectors tend to be labour intensive, particularly in women's labour. Transnational corporations have seen Central America and the Caribbean Basin as a convenient location for reducing production costs and accessing the United States market (ECLAC, 2018b). The desire of companies to increase their competitiveness by reducing costs has contributed to the feminization of the workforce.

Given the low barriers to entry, these sectors have been key in creating employment for women. However, they do not appear to have helped to alter occupational segregation in labour markets or to improve women's working conditions or their access to social protection. Demand for women's employment in the export manufacturing industry is linked to sectors that do not require a high level of education and that seek skills associated with female stereotypes. Women have predominated in labour-intensive export industries (such as clothing) but working in poor-quality, low-paid jobs with limited opportunities for skills development (UNCTAD, 2017). The "feminization of work" is a globalization trend that can also be seen in other regions of the world, such as Southeast Asia (Standing, 1999). This stems not only from a rise in women's labour force participation but also from a precarious type of labour insertion concentrated in certain sectors of activity, in countries with a high level of labour market segmentation.

In recent years, in addition to manufacturing, the electronics and service industries have been developed in the Central American subregion. The electronics industry is particularly important in Honduras and Nicaragua, while the export of services is important in countries such as Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic and Panama. This sector includes call centres and other business services (including legal and accounting services). In the case of Costa Rica, it also includes research and development centres. The growth of services, such as call centres and tourism, has created job opportunities for women. However, occupational gender segregation and the pay gap between women and men employed in these sectors persist (Scuro and Bercovich, 2014; ECLAC, 2018b).

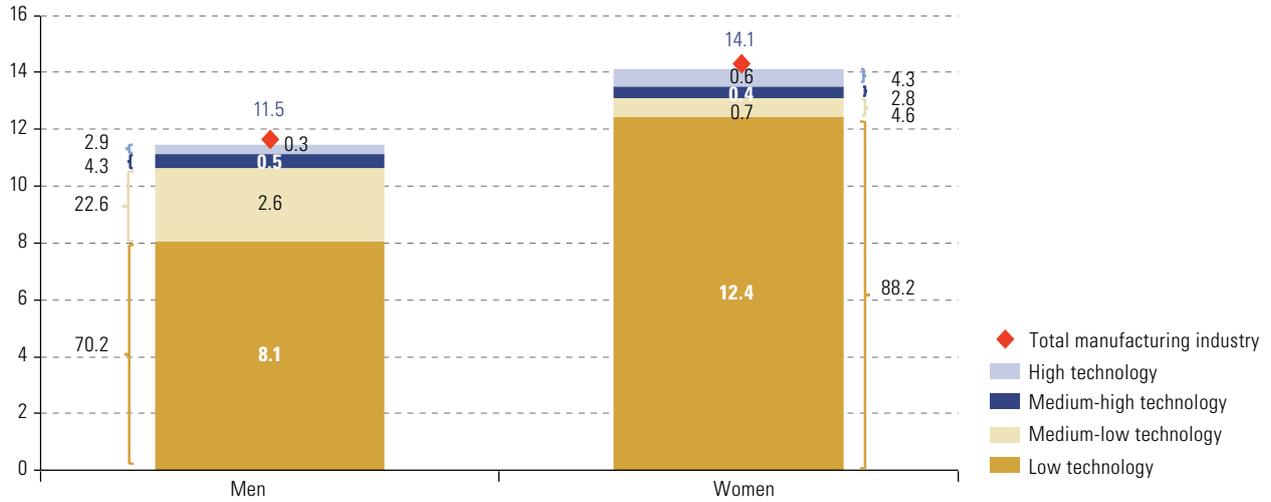
In the Central American subregion, women's participation in manufacturing is higher than that of men (14.1% and 11.5%, respectively). In addition, 88.2% of women are employed in low-technology sectors. The strong presence of women in the *maquiladora* industry could explain this employment characteristic (see figure III.3).

In the case of Mexico, the data on manufacturing employment show a high concentration of women in this sector. Men's and women's employment is concentrated in low technology-intensity sectors. Another finding

is that, as technology intensity increases, the gap between the pay of men and women also widens. While women in low-technology sectors earn 89.5 Mexican pesos for every 100 earned by men, in high-technology sectors, women earn 70.2 Mexican pesos for every 100 earned by men (see figure III.4 and box III.1).

Figure III.3

Central America (weighted average of 6 countries): distribution of the population employed in manufacturing by sex and level of technology intensity, around 2017^{a, b}
(Percentages)



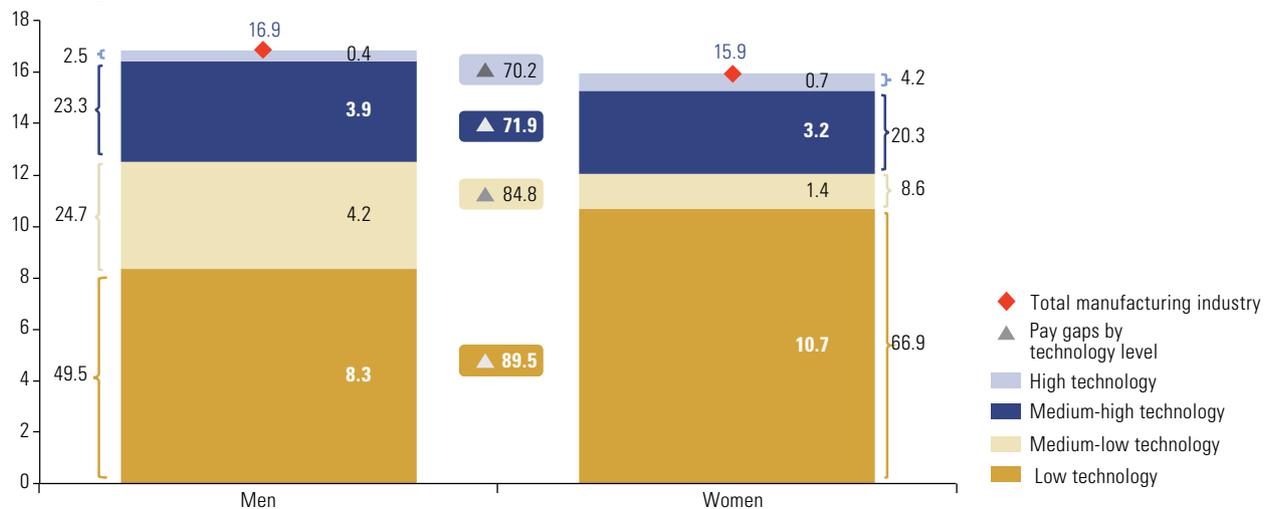
Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of Household Survey Data Bank (BADEHOG).

^a The technology level of manufacturing activities was determined in accordance with the categories proposed by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in "ISIC Rev. 3 Technology Intensity Definition" for countries with International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC), Revision 3 or similar, and the categories proposed in "OECD Taxonomy of Economic Activities based on R&D Intensity" for countries with International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC), Revision 4 or similar.

^b Data for Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic and El Salvador relate to 2017, those for Honduras relate to 2016 and those for Guatemala and Nicaragua relate to 2014.

Figure III.4

Mexico: distribution of the employed population and urban wage ratio in the manufacturing industry by sex and level of technology intensity, 2016^{a, b}
(Percentages)



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

^a The urban wage ratio was calculated on the basis of the employed population aged 20–49 years working more than 35 hours per week.

^b The technology level of manufacturing activities was determined in accordance with the categories proposed by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in "ISIC Rev. 3 Technology Intensity Definition" for countries with International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC), Revision 3 or similar, and the categories proposed in "OECD Taxonomy of Economic Activities based on R&D Intensity" for countries with International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC), Revision 4 or similar.

Box III.1**Risk from automation and reshoring to women's employment in export industries**

Two factors are marking a trend shift in international trade and may impact on women's employment. On the one hand, the slowdown in world trade growth in recent years may stem from a shortening of global and regional value chains. This is explained, in part, by the maturation of these chains, based on the geographical fragmentation of production processes initiated in the 1990s (ECLAC, 2018b). In China, factors that have influenced these trend changes are the domestic production of inputs that formerly needed to be imported and the application of local content requirements in recent years. This means that, while exports from Latin America to China comprise raw materials and natural resource-based manufactures, China's transition towards a consumption- and services-oriented model may be helping to reduce demand for these products and to shorten value chains.

In the case of Central America, the growth in both services and export manufacturing has been based mainly on the availability of cheap labour. Faced with competition from Asia, the recent trend would suggest that the countries with the highest labour costs (Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic) are abandoning the sector, while the countries paying the lowest wages (Nicaragua and Honduras) are gaining ground (ECLAC, 2018b).

On the other hand, continuous advances in technology and automation could slow down world trade in the coming years. As incentives to offshore production to developing countries (in pursuit of lower labour costs) decrease, this would tend to slow the growth of global value chains and the trade linked with them (ECLAC, 2018b).

For this reason, automation poses a risk for Central American industries and could contribute to the "de-feminization of jobs". For example, in the clothing and textile sector, robots manufactured by the firm SoftWear Automation are the closest to being produced on an industrial scale. Taking into account the current cost of these robots and assuming an annual increase of 8% in their performance, it is possible to estimate the point at which they would reach cost parity with labour in countries in the region, assuming an annual 3% increase in labour costs. While parity in this sector is already very close in countries such as Brazil or Mexico, it is still a long way off in Honduras, which is the largest exporter of clothing and has one of the lowest wage levels in the region (ECLAC, 2018b, p. 158).

At the same time, a process of "de-feminization" of employment is taking place in countries that are advancing in industrial sectors with higher value added and the incorporation of technology. This is because the relative advantage of labour costs is diminishing, meaning that relative demand for women's employment is shrinking (Tejani and Milberg, 2016; UNCTAD, 2017). This can contribute to an increase in female unemployment, as well as the exclusion of women from knowledge-intensive sectors, which are key to progressive structural change in the region.

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of ECLAC, *Foreign Direct Investment in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2018* (LC/PUB.2018/13-P), Santiago, 2018; S. Tejani and W. Milberg, "Global defeminization?: industrial upgrading and manufacturing employment in developing countries", *Feminist Economics*, vol. 22, No. 2, 2016, and United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), "The gender dynamics of inclusion and exclusion: a macro perspective of employment", *Trade and Development Report 2017. Beyond Austerity: Towards A Global New Deal*, Geneva, 2017.

2. Export promotion initiatives for women-led companies

Businesswomen and women producers can benefit from the new opportunities offered by trade liberalization as long as they are able to participate in international markets on an equal footing with men. Elson, Grown and Çağatay (2007) argue that, for women to capitalize on the competitive advantages of international trade, gender gaps in access to productive resources, financing, information, technology and markets must be bridged. The expansion of business beyond national borders is more difficult for women entrepreneurs, who tend to be concentrated in smaller businesses with lower equity, revenue and profitability.

In the region, women employers account for only 3.5% of total female employment, while men employers account for 6% of total male employment. According to the information available, the average percentage of firms whose chief executives are women is no more than 19.9% in Latin America and 23.9% in the Caribbean (World Bank, cited in Vaca Trigo, 2019). Countries show a marked negative correlation between the size of

companies and the proportion of women in senior management positions. In Latin America, the highest concentrations of firms where women are in the senior management of large companies are in Paraguay (19.7%) and the Dominican Republic (18.1%). The only case where there is a concentration of the majority of firms with female chief executive officers is in the Caribbean subregion, in large companies in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (52.9%) (Vaca Trigo, 2019).

Trade liberalization has tended to penalize small and medium enterprises (SMEs), which are often owned or managed by women. Furthermore, women-led SMEs face obstacles arising from patriarchal and discriminatory cultural patterns that limit their opportunities to participate in international trade. Some studies have found that businesswomen face discriminatory practices by foreign trade officials, as well as potential buyers. Such practices include lack of recognition (ITC, 2017; Frohmann, 2018).

In order to reduce these barriers, some initiatives have been supported by export promotion agencies in different countries in the region. At least five countries (Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, El Salvador and Peru) have a specific programme to promote exports by women-led companies. These programmes combine trade promotion, training and international business consulting activities to increase the participation of women entrepreneurs in international trade (Frohmann, 2018). In the case of Uruguay, information disaggregated by sex is available on people who have benefitted from the main export support programmes.

In El Salvador, in 2015, the Export and Investment Promotion Agency of El Salvador (PROESA) established a gender unit that has promoted a process of gender mainstreaming in its activities. On the one hand, it has approved guidelines for the use of non-sexist language in institutional communication (PROESA, 2017a). On the other hand, it has implemented protocols aimed at eradicating workplace harassment and discrimination on the basis of gender and at promoting equal pay within the programme itself (PROESA, 2017b). In addition, it has an agenda for promoting women's export entrepreneurship. El Salvador's National Commission for Micro and Small Enterprises (CONAMYPE) is implementing a women's entrepreneurship programme that includes specific support mechanisms, such as one-stop shops for women's entrepreneurship, which provide not only information, training and technical assistance to ensure the growth and sustainability of their enterprises but also support the process of internationalization of women-led companies (CONAMYPE, 2019).

In Chile, in 2016, the export promotion agency (ProChile) established the Women Export (*Mujer Exporta*) programme to boost women's participation in international trade. In 2018, the programme benefitted 1,087 Chilean women with export capacity-building activities, participation in international fairs and other initiatives (Undersecretariat for International Economic Relations, 2019). According to the agency's data, exports from 343 women-led companies were recorded in 2017, which is equivalent to 4.2% of the export volume of all companies. Exports by women-led companies are concentrated in the food sector. In terms of export value, shipments by this group of companies accounted for 1.5% of the country's exports. Latin America is the main export destination (44%), followed by Asia, Oceania and the Middle East, with 23%, and North America with 19% (DIRECON/ProChile, 2018). According to a study by the General Directorate for International Economic Affairs (DIRECON), one of women's main obstacles to entering into international trade is the need to combine their reproductive tasks of unpaid work with the development of their businesses. This is more problematic for women with the lowest educational level (DIRECON/ProChile, 2019).

In Peru, 291 women-led companies were identified in 2016, which exported a total worth US\$ 1.5 billion. They were predominantly microenterprises (PROMPERÚ, 2017, cited in Frohmann, 2018). As a trade promotion agency, in 2017 the Commission for the Promotion of Peruvian Exports and Tourism (PROMPERÚ) established its She Exports (*Ella Exporta*) programme, which organizes training and grants specific support for export activities, in addition to business plans and digital marketing activities to promote the internationalization of women export entrepreneurs. "Women-led companies" are defined as those that are at least 51% owned by women, where women are the legal representatives or hold decision-making positions (chief executive officer, business manager, administrator), or where at least 51% of the staff is female. Further requirements are taken into account, including having a strategy aimed at addressing gender-based violence in the workplace and an internationalization strategy (Alarcón, 2017). In 2018, the programme benefitted at least 70 businesswomen from Lima, Cusco and Arequipa (PROMPERÚ, 2018).

The Argentine Investment and Trade Promotion Agency (AAICI) has a programme aimed at companies where women have 51% ownership, where the chief executive officer or chairperson of the firm is a woman

or where 51 % of managerial positions are held by women. They may be Argentine micro, small and medium enterprises or single tax system (*monotributo*) taxpayers wishing to enter or increase their participation in international markets. The programme includes training, business intelligence activities, access to international market platforms and contact with potential buyers (AAICI, 2019).

The Foreign Trade Corporation of Costa Rica (PROCOMER) runs the Women Export initiative, aimed at boosting the exports of women entrepreneurs. It includes support and mentorship for women-led companies exporting for the first time and another for companies wishing to access new international markets. One of the programme's requirements is that companies must have participated in the domestic market for at least two years. As of 2018, a total of 20 companies had benefitted from this internationalization programme (PROCOMER, 2019).

In Uruguay, the trade promotion agency Uruguay XXI promotes the internationalization of companies and analyses from a gender perspective who benefits from its various instruments. In 2016, the Proexport programme, aimed at promoting the internationalization of micro, small and medium enterprises, benefitted 225 companies employing a total of 2,400 people. Of this total, 633 were women, of whom 130 held decision-making positions. The women beneficiaries of this programme reflect the regional trend: as the size of the company increases, women's participation in decision-making positions decreases. The highest percentages of women in decision-making positions are found in microenterprises (55%), followed by small enterprises (25%) and medium enterprises (15%) (Uruguay XXI, 2017).

While countries such as Chile and Peru have made progress in producing information on women's participation in the export sector, methodological challenges remain in disaggregating data by sex in the majority of export companies, which would enable the scale of their participation to be gauged more accurately (Frohmann, 2018) (see box III.2).

Box III.2

Gender mainstreaming in the Pacific Alliance and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum

As part of the process of regional integration of the Pacific Alliance, it was agreed to include gender mainstreaming as a work area. As a result, in 2015, the heads of State of Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Peru requested the creation of a Pacific Alliance technical group on gender (GTG). The group began work in the same year, based on the development of a strategy to mainstream gender into the Pacific Alliance, which includes general and specific actions and initiatives that take into account the areas of expertise of Pacific Alliance technical groups.

Priority has been given to working in coordination with the various Pacific Alliance technical groups (including the working groups on SMEs and promotion agencies) in order to create synergies, raise stakeholder awareness of the importance of mainstreaming gender into their projects and find concrete ways to influence their work and mandates.

The Pacific Alliance Leading Women Entrepreneurs Forum, aimed primarily at promoting the economic empowerment of women in Pacific Alliance member countries, was established under the leadership of Mexico and with the support of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). This virtual space facilitates direct contact among businesswomen to explore business opportunities, exchange relevant information on how to build their entrepreneurial and leadership skills, and obtain information about events and online courses. The community operates within the IDB ConnectAmericas platform and currently has 1,140 registered businesswomen. The profile of participants is of legally constituted women's companies and entrepreneurs from the four member countries of the Pacific Alliance. The community is seeking to become a benchmark for trade facilitation among Pacific Alliance member countries and to help increase the foreign trade participation of businesswomen in the Pacific Alliance.

Within the plurilateral framework, although the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) has been promoting gender mainstreaming in the trade agenda for decades, for the first time in its history it is including "women, SMEs and inclusive growth" as one of its three priorities for the upcoming summit. In this regard, Chile is spearheading the development of an initiative called "Understanding and bridging the digital literacy gender gap in APEC economies". As part of this initiative and as input for discussion, a report has been prepared, in conjunction with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), on the use of education to reduce the digital literacy gender gap. It is also expected that APEC member countries will adopt a roadmap to promote women's participation in leadership positions, reduce obstacles to their participation in the economy and international trade, bridge the digital divide and foster their participation in non-traditional sectors such as mining and transport.

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of contributions by the Governments of Mexico and Chile to the annotated index of the position document of the fourteenth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean.

3. Gender equality and trade agreements: tensions and synergies

In recent decades, analysis of gender inequalities in the field of trade policy and agreements, has been undertaken, although the emphasis that analysis has differed at the regional and international levels. References to gender equality and women's rights have been incorporated into the preamble of agreements, as well as into chapters and sections on labour, capacity-building and development and other issues.⁷ In recent decades, such references have been included in trade agreements driven primarily by the European Union and the United States.

Over the past three years, Latin America has been a pioneer in mainstreaming the concept of gender equality into trade policy through the inclusion of specific chapters. In particular, the Government of Chile has promoted the incorporation of gender chapters and provisions into free trade agreements, both in new negotiations and when updating existing agreements (see diagram III.1). The objective is to ensure the adoption of a gender approach in international trade and to address the potential negative impacts that affect women disproportionately. In 2016, Chile and Uruguay signed Economic Complementarity Agreement No. 73, which marked a milestone as the first ever trade agreement to contain a specific chapter on gender and trade. In this chapter, the parties undertake to implement the international conventions on gender equality in fields such as equal pay, maternity protection and work-life balance. They also agreed to implement cooperation activities and establish a gender committee (Government of Chile/Government of Uruguay, 2016). In addition, Chile negotiated chapters on gender issues when updating its free trade agreement with Canada, and in agreements with Argentina and Brazil. It is also engaged in negotiations with the European Union and, through the Pacific Alliance, with its candidate associate States (Australia, Canada, New Zealand and Singapore).

Diagram III.1

Examples of trade agreements and negotiations relating to Latin America that contain gender provisions, 2016 onwards

Economic Complementarity Agreement No. 73 between Chile and Uruguay <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 14 on gender and trade. General provisions for both countries. Cooperation activities on gender equality. Creation of a gender committee. 	Canada-Chile Free Trade Agreement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter on gender added to the update. General provisions: comply with regulations in Sustainable Development Goal 5. Creation of a cooperation committee on gender and trade. 	Trade Agreement between Chile and Argentina <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter on gender and trade in the additional protocol to the Chile-MERCOSUR Economic Complementarity Agreement (ACE 35). 	Chile-Brazil Free Trade Agreement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 18 on trade and gender. 	Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement between Chile and Indonesia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 9 on cooperation. Area of cooperation: gender (article 9.4). 	Free Trade Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Chile and the Government of the Kingdom of Thailand <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 11 on cooperation. Area of cooperation: gender (article 11.3).
Chile-European Union Association Agreement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under negotiation for updating: process of drafting a chapter on gender and trade. 	Economic Complementarity Agreement between the Republic of Chile and the Republic of Ecuador <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under negotiation: provisions on gender and trade in the updated Economic Complementarity Agreement (ACE 65). 	Free Trade Agreement between Chile and Central America <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under negotiation for updating: provisions on gender and trade. 	Additional Protocol to the Pacific Alliance Framework Agreement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under negotiation: gender provisions in the development chapter. 	Free Trade Agreement between the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR) and Canada <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under negotiation: proposed chapter on gender and trade. 	Pacific Alliance-Canada <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under negotiation: proposed inclusion of gender, indigenous peoples, small and medium enterprises.

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of A. Frohmann "Género y emprendimiento exportador: iniciativas de cooperación regional", *Project Documents* (LC/TS.2018/4), Santiago, ECLAC, 2018, and information from the Undersecretariat for International Economic Relations of Chile, Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) and Government of Canada.

At the international level, links between international trade and gender equality have also seen a resurgence in the agenda. At the eleventh Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in Buenos Aires, in 2017, a total of 120 countries signed the Joint Declaration on Trade and Women's Economic Empowerment (WTO, 2017). In 2018, the European Parliament passed a resolution calling for the inclusion of gender

⁷ For example, the Partnership Agreement between the members of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States of the one part, and the European Community and its Member States of the other part (Cotonou Agreement) refers to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in its preamble. It also includes provisions for mainstreaming gender equality into all areas of cooperation and for promoting women's access to productive resources, the labour market and basic social services in article 31, under the section on thematic and cross-cutting issues (ACP-EU Partnership Agreement, 2000).

equality provisions in the new generation of trade agreements to be negotiated by the European Union. It proposes that relevant international standards and legal instruments be promoted, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (European Parliament, 2018).

It is important to highlight that this trend is taking place within a specific context. The deadlock in WTO Doha Development Round negotiations has prompted the negotiation of plurilateral and bilateral trade and investment agreements and the establishment of *de facto* global standards in areas such as electronic commerce (ECLAC, 2018c). These agreements are not confined to the negotiation of tariffs and market access fees, but also include issues referred to as “WTO-plus”, covering such matters as intellectual property, public procurement, services, electronic commerce and dispute settlement mechanisms. As part of this “new generation” of trade agreements, a growing number of agreements negotiated by Latin American countries have included references or chapters on gender equality.

Given that such agreements clearly state their intention to contribute to achieving the SDGs and implementing commitments to women’s human rights, it is necessary to analyse policy coherence between trade agreements and WTO rules, and States’ commitments under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Regional Gender Agenda and the SDGs themselves. It is also necessary to examine not only the substance of the chapter on gender and trade but also the coherence between its objectives and the other chapters covering critical areas for gender equality, such as those relating to services and public procurement. The mechanisms established for monitoring agreements and accountability must also be considered.

One precedent is the European Union’s initiative to include labour clauses in association agreements, including those negotiated with countries in the region, such as the agreement with Caribbean Forum of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (CARIFORUM) and with Peru and Colombia. Trade agreements that include labour aspects refer to ILO conventions (Olmos, 2019). Some studies demonstrate that the inclusion of such clauses in a separate chapter from other trade provisions would have limited their enforcement and, in particular, their effectiveness in reversing the negative consequences of the agreement on labour rights (Harrison and others, 2018 and 2019).

A key concept for analysing the coherence between trade agreements and commitments to women’s rights is that of non-discrimination. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women defines discrimination as “any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women (...) of human rights and fundamental freedoms (...)” (United Nations, 1979, art. 1). To this end, States Parties may adopt temporary special measures aimed at accelerating *de facto* equality between men and women (United Nations, 1979, art. 4). They may apply affirmative measures, such as establishing access quotas for women in public procurement and granting specific support to strengthen women-led export companies or protect women’s SMEs from external shocks or international competition. These would be concrete ways of supporting women and moving towards substantive equality.

However, trade agreements do not conceptualize non-discrimination in the same way as human rights treaties do: WTO understands it as non-discriminatory treatment of foreign investors and service providers. This restricts, for example, the ability of States to protect local SMEs from foreign competition, as “national treatment” must be accorded to foreign companies. Some of the aforementioned measures to promote women-led companies could be interpreted as a “restriction to trade” or non-tariff barriers that distort international trade flows.

According to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) of 1947, national treatment means that imported products must be made subject to the same regulations and tariffs as products of national origin. In other words, international services and service providers should be accorded treatment no less favourable than that accorded to national providers. In addition, most-favoured-nation treatment means that providers of goods and services from the country signing the agreement should be accorded treatment no less favourable

than that accorded to providers of goods and services from any non-party country. As a result, these principles may conflict if asymmetries between the different trading partners are not recognized and if international trade is not established as a means for achieving sustainable development and equality.

In trade agreements, countries may reserve the right to adopt or maintain any measure relating to given sectors. Studies of sectors sensitive to the guarantee of women's rights are required to be able to take specific measures. Furthermore, agreements under WTO may include provisions on special and differential treatment for developing countries. For example, longer time periods for implementing agreements may be allowed and measures to increase trading opportunities for developing countries can be taken (WTO, 2019a). It is thus necessary to analyse each particular agreement to determine whether there are reservations to liberalization and whether, by applying negative or positive lists of regulations, it is possible to help protect key sectors for women and countries' development.

For example, access to basic services and social services and, in particular, to affordable, high-quality care services, is essential to promoting women's autonomy and gender equality. Trade negotiations on the liberalization of services may therefore have implications for equality. In the chapter on cross-border trade in services in the agreement between Chile and Uruguay, Uruguay reserves the right to adopt or maintain measures relating to law-enforcement agencies in the case of social services established or maintained for a public purpose. This refers, for example, to rehabilitation and social reintegration services, pensions and unemployment insurance, social welfare, State education, public training, health, child protection, assessment and monitoring of early childhood educational institutions, and early childhood development assessment (Government of Chile/Government of Uruguay, 2016, annex II).

(a) Non-discrimination and public procurement

Public procurement has been one of the more contentious issues addressed by the trade liberalization agenda. Some plurilateral and bilateral agreements establish provisions for opening up the public procurement market. From the perspective of trade liberalization, some trade agreements prohibit preferential access to local SMEs so as not to discriminate against foreign companies. However, the European Union identifies the liberalization of public procurement as an area in which European companies could expand their exports outside that region. Nevertheless, some countries in Latin America and the Caribbean are reluctant to liberalize public procurement because it would imply giving up policy space to regulate in favour of national companies that need specific support. Countries such as Uruguay and Chile have specific policies to promote women's access to public procurement at the national level and their bilateral trade agreements exclude public procurement.

In Mexico, the Public Sector Acquisitions, Leases and Services Act promotes the participation of women-owned companies in public procurement processes. When evaluating suppliers, additional points are awarded to companies that have applied gender equality policies and practices, in accordance with the relevant certification issued by the authorities and authorized bodies (Government of Mexico, 2014). Mexico agreed, in principle, to modernize its trade agreement with the European Union. Under this framework, Mexico will open up its public procurement market to European companies on better terms than those agreed with other trading partners. According to the European Commission, Mexico has also committed to enter into negotiations with subnational governments to allow European companies to tender for contracts at the state level once the agreement is signed. This will be the first time that Mexico will have opened its subnational public procurement to non-Mexican firms (European Commission, 2018).

Generally, agreements' chapters on public procurement set thresholds, or minimum amounts, below which liberalization does not apply. Reservations excluding SMEs or specific sectors from the provisions of that chapter may also be lodged. Countries that have special regulations to favour women in public procurement could include this as a reservation or nonconforming measure in trade negotiations.

Preferential access to public procurement by domestic firms has been a public policy instrument to promote more inclusive economies and compensate for asymmetries among economic agents. In particular, women-led SMEs face barriers to accessing markets. For this reason, several governments of the region have

given preferential access to companies led by women as public procurement suppliers. In the region, countries such as Chile, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico and Uruguay have specific policies in this regard. From a women's rights perspective, these actions could be considered temporary special measures to narrow gender gaps.

Since 2015, the Government of Chile has implemented initiatives to increase the number of women as public procurement suppliers. Public procurement regulations were amended to include criteria to evaluate the social impact of procurement processes, such as those that facilitate women's participation in public procurement. Moreover, a specific directive (Public Procurement Directive No. 20) calls for the gender perspective to be incorporated into the process of awarding public procurement contracts. To facilitate the implementation of this directive, the Women's Business Seal was created, which allows public procurement agencies to identify businesses 50% or more of which are owned by one or more women, or whose legal representative or general manager is a woman. This has been reinforced with training activities for suppliers and buyers on how to apply the gender approach and the relevant tools available on the ChileCompra platform. As a result of these initiatives, there has been a significant increase in female suppliers' share of sums involved, from 21.9% at the end of 2013 to 27.4% at the end of 2017 (ComunidadMujer/ChileCompra, 2018).

(b) Accountability or dispute settlement?

Another issue where there are differences between human rights law and the international trade framework is accountability. States must protect, respect and fulfil women's human rights, including beyond their borders. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women found that States parties' obligations apply extraterritorially. "States parties are responsible for all their actions affecting human rights, regardless of whether the affected persons are in their territory" (United Nations, 2010, art. 12 and 2013, art. 8). In addition, States must ensure that non-State actors, such as the business sector, respect human rights and act with due diligence. In the case of transnational corporations, all States must cooperate to ensure that those corporations respect human rights abroad.

In recent years, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women has made general recommendations that address extraterritorial obligations and coherence between trade and investment policies and women's rights. For example, it recommended that Canada "ensure that trade and investment agreements negotiated by the State party recognize the primacy of its international human rights obligations over investors' interests, so that the introduction of investor-State dispute settlement procedures does not create obstacles to full compliance with the Convention" (United Nations, 2016a, para. 19 (d)). According to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, States are responsible for guaranteeing women's rights within and beyond their borders. However, it would not be desirable for trade agreements to include provisions for imposing economic sanctions in this regard as trade penalties or sanctions could exacerbate countries' economic, technological or trade asymmetries and could even intensify gender inequalities.

In the field of international trade, dispute settlement mechanisms are established to ensure compliance with the agreements' provisions. These may impose economic sanctions on the parties involved. The inclusion in trade agreements of provisions and chapters on gender has provoked a discussion about what is the appropriate mechanism for accountability in gender equality issues and whether it should be binding or not. Can one trading partner sue another for breaching women's rights or gender equality issues? Can gender inequality be a barrier to a country's international trade? Can a dispute in this matter be resolved through a dispute settlement mechanism and involve economic sanctions?

These issues are part of a broader debate on the need to reform the investor-State dispute settlement system, and to review investment promotion and protection agreements and the investment chapters of trade agreements that allow foreign companies to sue States in international tribunals, but not vice versa.⁸ As a result of the broad interpretation of the terms "investment", "indirect expropriation", "fair and equitable treatment" and "legitimate expectations", investors can sue States, even if the contested legislation is designed to protect the

⁸ The International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID), which is part of the World Bank Group, is one of the most widely used international tribunals.

public interest. Globally, between 1987 and 2018, the total number of investor-State dispute settlement claims reached 942. To date, 117 countries have been respondents to one or more investor-State dispute settlement claims. Around 70% of the arbitral decisions in 2018 were in favour of the investor. As some arbitrations can be kept confidential, the actual number of disputes filed is likely to be higher (UNCTAD, 2019a). This can also lead to a “regulatory chill” as it discourages countries from adopting pro-equality public policies for fear of being sued and facing economic sanctions.

A resolution adopted by the European Parliament calls on the European Commission to put an end to the investor-State dispute settlement system. It also underlines that any dispute settlement mechanism should be designed to guarantee the capacity of individual governments to regulate in the public interest and to serve public policy objectives, including measures that promote gender equality as well as stronger labour, environmental and consumer rights (European Parliament, 2018).

The free trade agreement between Chile and Uruguay states that no party may have recourse to dispute settlement for any matter arising under chapter 14 on gender and trade (Government of Chile/Government of Uruguay, 2016). Disputes arising from the interpretation, scope or application of the agreement can be resolved through dialogue or consultation.

Lastly, within the WTO framework, countries have recourse to the Trade Policy Review Mechanism for which they prepare and submit reports for review. The Joint Declaration on Trade and Women's Economic Empowerment promotes voluntary reporting during the WTO trade policy review process (WTO, 2017). This mechanism occupies a middle ground between a purely voluntary WTO notification process and a binding process with sanctions under the dispute settlement mechanisms (Goff, 2018).

Since 2017, twelve Latin American and Caribbean countries have conducted trade policy reviews.⁹ Only five of them detail gender considerations in their reports: Colombia, Paraguay, Costa Rica, Suriname and Mexico (WTO, 2019b; UNCTAD, 2019b). While these observations are uneven in nature and depth, they help to mainstream the dimensions of gender inequality into trade policy. There are also technical support programmes to develop national capacities to prepare reports with a section on gender, so it is expected that the Trade Policy Review Mechanism will be strengthened over time. However, there are those who question the effectiveness of this mechanism to analyse gender equality issues as part of a broader reflection on the importance of reforming multilateral trade governance to help reduce asymmetries among countries.

B. Financial systems and women's economic autonomy

Financial systems can help to channel savings towards investment and meet the financing needs of different actors. Through products and services such as savings accounts, loans, transfers and insurance, financial systems have an impact on the distribution of resources and opportunities among sectors and economic agents, and between men and women. Depending on the criteria and conditions of access and quality of services, financial institutions can either contribute to women's economic autonomy or, on the contrary, encourage circles of over-indebtedness and instability or higher levels of poverty.

Historically, women have been excluded from the formal financial system and the strategies directed towards them have been mainly focused on microcredit programmes. In addition to granting small amounts, sometimes at high cost, microcredits have not been sufficient to cover the financing needs of productive activities and medium- and long-term investments of women in all their diversity. ECLAC defines financial inclusion as a set of public and private initiatives aimed at responding to the financing needs of individuals, households, small and medium-sized enterprises that have traditionally been excluded from formal financial services. Thus, financial inclusion involves providing an affordable choice of financial services and products

⁹ The countries are: Mexico (April 2017), Belize (April 2017), Brazil (July 2017), Jamaica (September 2017), Paraguay (September 2017), the Plurinational State of Bolivia (November 2017), Colombia (June 2018), Uruguay (June 2018), Ecuador (March 2019) and Trinidad and Tobago (May 2019), Suriname (September 2019) and Costa Rica (September 2019).

(transactions, payments, savings, credit, insurance). It constitutes a public good aimed at responding to the differentiated needs of people, contributing to equality, productive diversification and technological development of the different agents within the framework of efforts to move towards sustainable development pattern (ECLAC, 2018c).

Women's financial inclusion cannot be addressed without considering the trends of the current phase of financial globalization. In this sense, the global financial sector is increasingly concentrated and interconnected. On the one hand, global liquidity is oriented towards developed countries, on the other, unequal conditions for women's access to credit and significant gaps in the financing of equality policies persist.

1. Gender gaps in access to and use of financial services and products

The literature has described the barriers that hamper women's access to the services and products of the formal financial system from both the supply and the demand side. On the supply side, the following are identified: (i) legal and regulatory barriers, such as the requirement of traditional collateral and documents to open an account or apply for credit; (ii) weaknesses in the financial infrastructure, such as the lack of information from potential borrowers; (iii) gender biases and discriminatory attitudes in the practices of financial institutions; and (iv) financial products, market strategies and service offerings that are not adapted to the different needs of potential female clients (Roa and Carvallo, 2018).

Legal and regulatory barriers impact women's eligibility to access credit. In some countries, existing rules limit women's access to productive and financial resources on the basis of their marital status.¹⁰ In addition, the conditions for accessing services and products in the formal financial system are found to have implicit gender biases. For example, the criteria used to measure "risk" and establish "eligibility" —such as income and resource levels and the existence of traditional collateral— disproportionately disadvantage women. Gender inequalities in the labour market (access to and participation in the labour market, and the wage gap) have an impact on women's careers, which are interrupted as a result of various factors, such as bearing the brunt of care work or precarious employment. Thus, women are considered to be a "risky" population or "without sufficient guarantees," since the evaluation parameters do not take into account the unequal positions and different realities faced by men and women.

In turn, the documentation required to open an account or apply for a loan includes credit history, minimum amount requirements and reference letters, among other things. The costs associated with financial products and their usage fees (costs for opening and maintaining accounts or for conducting financial transactions) are often an accessibility barrier for women as well (Roa and Carvallo, 2018).

Likewise, certain implicit biases are identified in relation to the fact that —as in the rest of society— the staff of financial institutions may be conditioned by gender stereotypes in the processes of evaluating credit applications, which is expressed, for example, through a lack of confidence in women's abilities to promote and manage successful businesses. Marital status, fertility or household structure can also act as grounds for discrimination against women when accessing financing (Azar, Lara and Mejía, 2018). However, despite all this, women are more creditworthy and have fewer rejected cheques when using checking accounts than men, as shown in the report of the Superintendency of Banks and Financial Institutions (SBIF, 2016, 2017 and 2018).

On the demand side, structural factors stand out, such as: (i) women's limited access to labour income and to resources means that they have fewer guarantees or traditional collateral to obtain credit; (ii) gender stereotypes, which undermine incentives for women to request financial services; (iii) time poverty and mobility restrictions; (iv) low levels of financial education and poor access to information and networks.

¹⁰ In Chile, a bill regulating the marital property regime, as recommended by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, is currently under parliamentary consideration, in order to grant women the same powers of administration as their husbands, in order to make it easier for both spouses to share roles (Government of Chile, 2019a).

As the indicators of the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean show, women are overrepresented among people without their own income, in lower-wage jobs and smaller enterprises. This limits their ability to access credit in the traditional financial system.

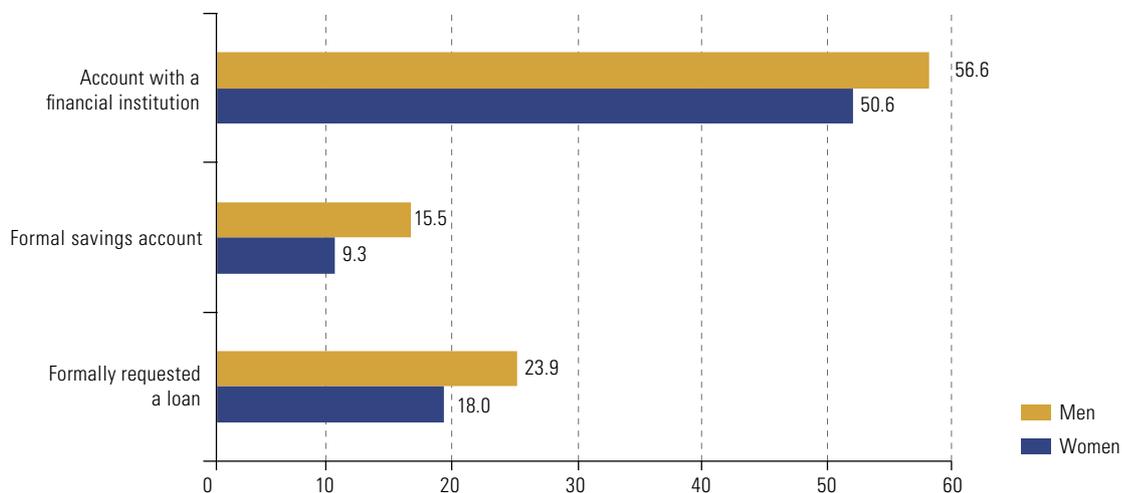
Meanwhile, the persistence of gender stereotypes —particularly the ongoing association of masculinity with the world of finance, money management and investment— means that women are not valued as economic agents capable of making autonomous decisions about how to dispose of their money. Although women tend to have little familiarity with and exposure to the formal financial system, they are largely responsible for managing households' resources. According to data from Mexico's national financial inclusion survey of 2018, 31.1% of women surveyed said they had some type of credit or credit card from a financial institution, compared to 35.4% of men.¹¹ Regarding the type of services women are provided with, the majority of these women (66.9%) obtain credit through department or self-service store credit cards, that is, financial products offered by large department stores, while 54% men have such credit cards. Likewise, only 29.1% of women had a credit card issued by a bank, while 34.6% of men said that they had at least one.

Moreover, as a result of their excessive burden of unpaid work, women have less time and resources to go to financial institutions, to wait for the credit approval process or to establish the information networks needed to undertake a business venture. Lastly, the population's financial education levels are generally low in the region, and some surveys have indicated that women have lower levels of financial literacy compared to men and limited access to information and networks (Azar, Lara and Mejía, 2018). For example, in Mexico, 6.7% of women who do not have financial services said that the main reason they did not have a card or bank account was because they did not know what it was or how to use it, compared to 5.6% of men who said the same.¹²

In Latin America and the Caribbean, only 50.6% of women have an account with a formal financial institution, compared to 56.6% of men (see figure III.5). In addition, only 9.3% of women have a savings account with a formal financial institution and 18% have formally applied for loans, compared to 15.5% and 23.9%, respectively, of men (Demirgüç-Kunt and others, 2017).

Figure III.5

Latin America and the Caribbean (weighted average of 18 countries): participation in formal financial activities, by sex, 2017^a
(Percentages)



Source: Global Financial Inclusion Database (Global Findex), 2017.

^a The regional average includes data from Argentina, Belize, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, and the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

¹¹ Data from the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of special tabulations of data from INEGI/CNBV (2018).

¹² Ibid.

The Superintendency of Banks and Financial Institutions of Chile has been producing and disseminating systematic information since 2001, allowing trends to be analysed. Although gender gaps in access to and use of financial services have been steadily narrowing, they do still exist. One trend that has been detected is that women save more in the medium and long term, especially for housing. Women are more creditworthy and have a lower proportion of bounced cheques and a lower default rate. They also owe and save less and, in some cases, access credit by paying higher interest rates than men (SBIF, 2019).

Like Chile, financial system regulators in countries such as Costa Rica and Guatemala have also taken steps to identify how gender gaps are expressed in the financial system by analysing data on the granting of savings and credit services. The latest data show that there is a gender gap in access to credit, both in the number of loans and in total amounts.¹³ For example, in Chile, the female debtor base is 5 percentage points lower than that of men; the difference is 22 percentage points in Costa Rica and 28 percentage points in Guatemala. The total amount of credit extended to women is 43 percentage points lower than the amount incurred by male debtors in Chile, 32.9 percentage points in Costa Rica and 41 percentage points in Guatemala. Not only is the total amount of loans granted to women lower than that of men, but women's average debt is also significantly lower than men's. The average debt of women is equivalent to 60.3% of men's average debt in Chile and 86% in Costa Rica.

Data from Guatemala show differences in the credit conditions applied to men and women, with average interest rates for transactions made by women of 20.6%, while for men it was 19.1% (SIB, 2017). The data from the 2015 report on gender in the financial system by SBIF also warned that these inequalities in interest rates have a greater impact on productive financing granted to natural persons and, secondly, on consumer loans (SBIF, 2016).

Data from the region show that women are more likely to repay their loans on time, for example, in Guatemala, 2.6% of women had loans in arrears, while 3.8% of men did. Similarly, data from Chile show that 0.49% of women were less than 90 days in arrears, while 0.56% of men were, and 2.8% of women were more than 90 days in arrears compared to 3.99% of men. Data for Costa Rica indicate that more women are up to date with their payments and fewer have been in debt for more than a year, reinforcing the idea that women are more creditworthy than men (see box III.3).

Box III.3

Gender inequalities in access to and use of financial services and products: a look at demand in Mexico and Peru

Through financial inclusion surveys, which have been conducted in some countries of the region, it is possible to identify the differences between men and women in terms of access to and links with the financial system. In general terms, there are differences both in access to financial services and in the purpose for which these services are used, specifically loans. At the same time, there are differences between those who access formal credit through a bank or financial institution and those who access credit through informal mechanisms.

In Mexico, 29.9% of women who obtained a formal loan use it to buy or repair assets (housing, land, vehicles, household appliances), compared with 38.4% of men who reported using their credit for that purpose (see figure 1). The second most frequent reason for taking out a loan among women was to pay business or company expenses, with 25.1% of women using credit for this purpose compared to 18.5% of men. A high percentage of women use credit to pay off outstanding debts (11.5%), education expenses (11.3%) and health costs (9.3%), compared to 8%, 5.9% and 8.9% of men, respectively. The main difference is in education spending, where women tend to invest and borrow more than men.

Meanwhile, the use or purpose of loans differs depending on whether the loans are taken out through the formal or informal market. Informal market loans tend to be used to prioritize more immediate needs linked to daily life. For example, in Mexico, informal loans are most likely to be used to cover food, personal, clothing or services expenses. The second most common purpose is health expenditures, with 23.1% of women using informal loans for that purpose compared to 14.3% of men. This may be linked to the sexual division of labour and women's greater responsibility and concern for their own health and that of members of their households.

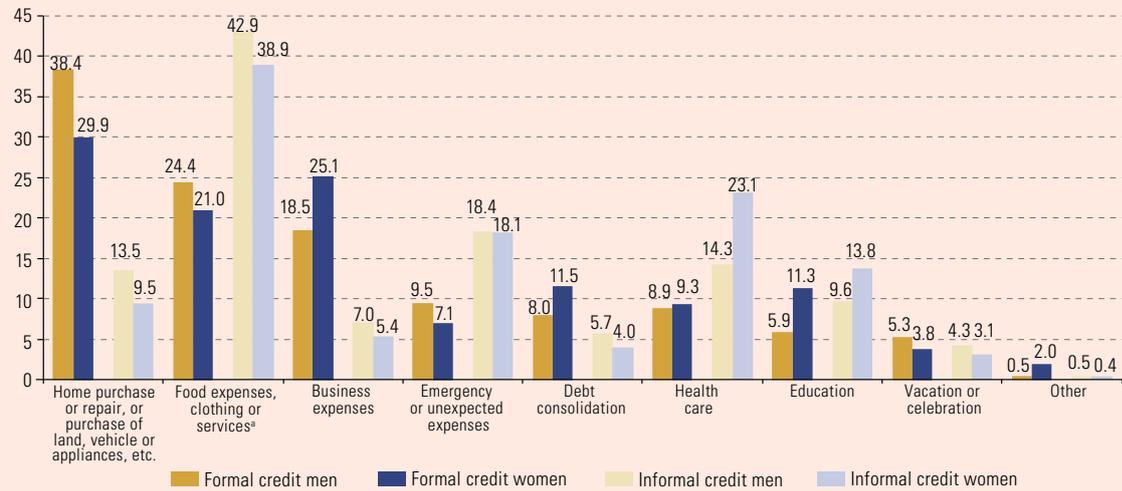
¹³ The data presented in this section are taken from the report *Género en el Sistema Financiero* of the Superintendency of Banks and Financial Institutions of Chile, with data as at 31 March 2018 (SBIF, 2018); the quarterly bulletin of financial inclusion of the banking system of Guatemala, with data as at 31 May 2017 (SIB, 2017); and the report on financial gaps of women in Costa Rica produced by the National Women's Institute, the Superintendency General of Financial Institutions and the Costa Rican Development Banking System, with data as at December 2018 (INAMU/SUGEF/SBD, 2019).

Box III.3 (concluded)

Figure 1

Mexico: purpose of loans, by sex and type of loan, 2018

(Percentages)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI)/National Banking and Securities Commission (CNBV), "Encuesta Nacional de Inclusión Financiera (ENIF) 2018", 2018 [online] <https://www.inegi.org.mx/programas/enif/2018/default.html#Microdatos> [accessed on: 22 August 2019].

* Includes personal expenses.

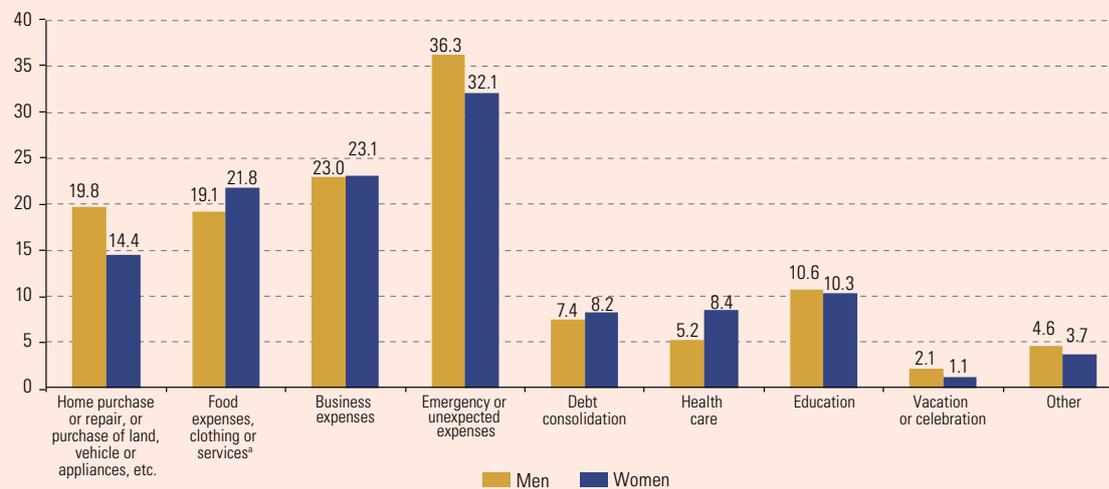
In Peru, the trends follow similar patterns to those seen in Mexico. Although most people use loans to cover emergencies or unforeseen events, there are gender differences with respect to the acquisition of assets and expenses. Loans were used to buy or repair assets (housing, land, vehicles, household appliances) by 19.8% of men, compared to 14.4% of women (see figure 2), while 8.4% of women use the loans to cover health costs, 3.2 percentage points more than men.

The data for these countries also coincide with the results presented by Deere and Catanzarite (2017) on the trends in Ecuador's credit market, which reveal that while men tend to borrow productively, that is, to invest more in assets, women borrow more to cover expenses or repay debts, which would increase the probability of falling into a debt trap (Deere and Catanzarite, 2017).

Figure 2

Peru: purpose of loans, by sex and type of loan, 2016

(Percentages)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of Superintendency of Banking, Insurance and Private Pension Funds Administrators, *Resultados 2016: Encuesta Nacional de Demanda de Servicios Financieros y Nivel de Cultura Financiera en el Perú, 2016* [online] <http://www.sbs.gob.pe/Portals/0/jer/ESTUDIOS-SOBRE-INCLUSI%C3%93N-FINANCIERA/Informe-de-Resultados.pdf> [accessed on 22 August 2019].

* Includes personal expenses.

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of C. D. Deere and Z. B. Catanzarite, "Who borrows to accumulate assets?: class, gender and indebtedness in Ecuador's credit market", *CEPAL Review*, No. 122, August 2017; National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI)/National Banking and Securities Commission (CNBV), "Encuesta Nacional de Inclusión Financiera (ENIF) 2018", 2018 [online] <https://www.inegi.org.mx/programas/enif/2018/default.html#Microdatos> [accessed on: 22 August 2019]; and Superintendency of Banking, Insurance and Private Pension Funds Administrators, *Resultados 2016: Encuesta Nacional de Demanda de Servicios Financieros y Nivel de Cultura Financiera en el Perú, 2016* [online] <http://www.sbs.gob.pe/Portals/0/jer/ESTUDIOS-SOBRE-INCLUSI%C3%93N-FINANCIERA/Informe-de-Resultados.pdf> [accessed on: 22 August 2019].

Microcredit programmes have met the financing needs of low-income women and small and medium-sized enterprises excluded from the formal system. In the region, at least 13 countries¹⁴ have developed policies and programmes in this regard with varying approaches, coverage, target groups and economic sectors.¹⁵

The Regional Gender Agenda has stressed the need to move towards financial systems that can overcome the specific demand and supply barriers faced by women, underpinned by an appropriate regulatory environment. Some countries of the region have adopted national financial inclusion strategies that are moving in the right direction by promoting access to and the use of financial services by traditionally excluded population groups; however, there is still a long way to go before the existing gaps are closed definitively.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, 11 countries¹⁶ adopted a financial inclusion act or a national financial inclusion strategy, with work plans focused on the development and use of digital media, the generation of new information and the development of financial education programmes to advance financial inclusion (Trivelli and Caballero, 2018). Five of these strategies make some mention of the situation of women or gender gaps in the financial system (Haiti, Jamaica, Mexico, Paraguay and Peru). Only two of them consider women as a special interest group for their initiatives (Haiti and Peru) and none designate an institution to oversee the implementation or coordination of specific actions to close the gender gap, or set a budget allocation for the implementation and monitoring of actions (Trivelli, 2018).

In Costa Rica, the high degree of indebtedness and financial illiteracy of the population has prompted the government to launch a national financial education strategy. The objective is to train citizens on the importance of saving, how to manage personal finances and the family budget, and the use of financial tools, such as credit cards and loans, among other things. The first activities are aimed at the most indebted populations: women, young people, civil servants and small businesses (Ministry of the Presidency and Ministry of the Economy, Industry and Trade, 2019). Financial education is vital to ensuring that women's financial inclusion is informed, it therefore needs to be a central component of national financial inclusion strategies.

Efforts have been made in recent decades to boost development banking within the region's financial systems. Historically, development banking has focused on mobilizing public and private savings to finance certain objectives within a strategic vision of development, but this has now given way to a broader set of activities (Pérez Caldentey and Titelman, 2018).

Although these initiatives have different modalities, coverage and costs, they show that development banks could help to achieve the objectives of gender equality and women's economic autonomy. They also indicate that States are looking to take innovative steps to create links, in particular, among mechanisms for the advancement of women, financial system regulators, banks and financial institutions, and initiatives to support productive development.

2. Financial technology: opportunity or risk?

Financial technology (or fintech for short) refers to activities and companies using digital technologies to provide financial services to both individuals and financial institutions. It includes domestic and international electronic payments, crowdfunding loans, financial advice and cryptocurrency investments. It entails the entry of new actors, instruments and platforms into the financial system. The disruptive potential of fintech is that it alters business, consumption and production models, both in the industry where it arises and in the possible combinations it establishes with pre-existing industries (ECLAC, 2018c).

¹⁴ Countries that report on women's access to financing programmes are: Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

¹⁵ Programmes' target groups include: rural women (Crédito Solidario para la Mujer Rural in Honduras, Programa Mujer Agro emprendedora of the Banco de Desarrollo Agropecuario in Panama); indigenous women (Programa de Fomento de la Economía Indígena y Rural in Chile); young women (Juventud Emprendedora in Paraguay); women heads of household (Crédito Jefa de Hogar of the Banco de Desarrollo Productivo in the Plurinational State of Bolivia); and women living in poverty (Fondo Mujer in El Salvador). Other programmes are aimed at women in specific economic sectors (CRISSOL Café and CRISSOL Granos Básicos in Nicaragua).

¹⁶ Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay.

The leading fintech companies are from the United States and China. Although the largest number of companies are from the United States, Chinese companies far outweigh them in terms of market value (ECLAC, 2018d). There are currently 703 fintech companies in Latin America. The vast majority are found in Brazil (230), followed by Mexico (180), Colombia (84) and Chile (65). These five countries account for almost 90% of Latin America's fintech business. Fintech companies have grown exponentially in the region in recent years, with 65% established in the period between 2014 and 2016 (IDB/Finnovista, 2017).

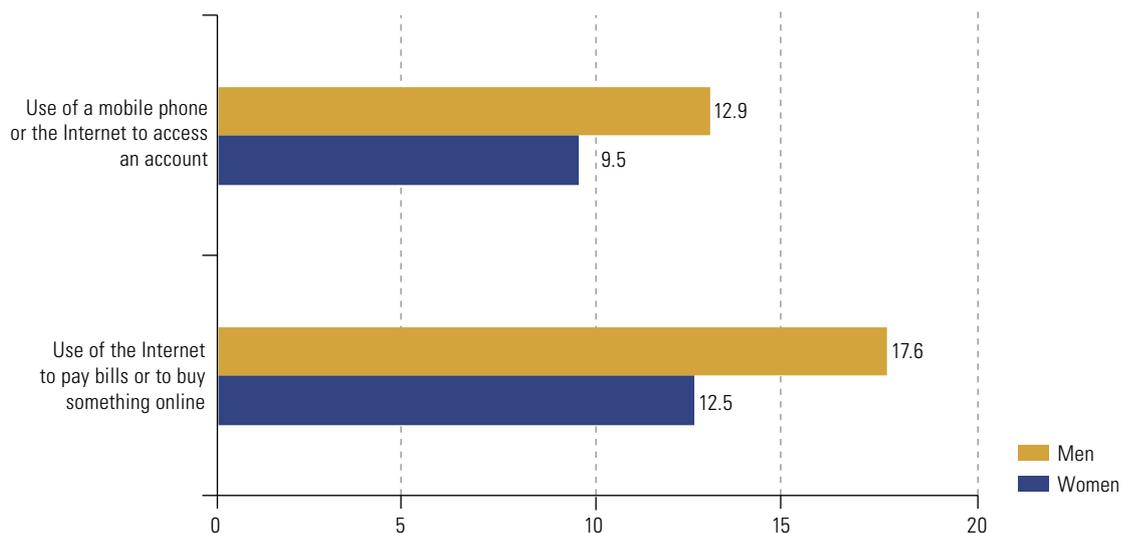
Digital technologies have reduced transaction costs and helped to overcome geographical barriers (ECLAC, 2018d; Hernandez and Roberts, 2018). Mobile banking has provided a large segment of people and companies with access for making payments, transfers or loan renewals using mobile applications.¹⁷ This opens up an opportunity to reduce gender gaps in access to financing and to various financial services, especially for women-led SMEs.

According to a study analysing SMEs active on Facebook, women SME owners in the region are 27% less likely than men to secure a bank loan to start a business. Latin America is the region where the highest number of women micro-entrepreneurs set up their business with start-up capital from their spouse. This creates a vicious circle: women are unable to obtain (or fail to seek) the financing they need for their businesses because these are judged to be low-growth, precisely because they lack funds (McGorman and others, 2018).

However, data on the use of digital technologies, such as the Internet or mobile phones, to conduct financial activities reveal that such opportunities are not widely available to women. As figure III.6 shows, only 9.5% of women in the region use a mobile phone or the Internet to access a bank account, compared with 12.9% of men. The same applies to use of the Internet to pay bills or shop online: only 12.5% of women have done so, compared with 17.6% of men.

Figure III.6

Latin America and the Caribbean (weighted average of 18 countries): use of digital technologies to conduct financial activities, by sex, 2017^a
(Percentages)



Source: Global Financial Inclusion Database (Global Findex), 2017.

^a The regional average includes Argentina, Belize, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and Plurinational State of Bolivia.

¹⁷ For example, mobile banking infrastructure has been developed through WhatsApp, with query tools that can be used without a network connection (See Fundación Microfinanzas BBVA, 2018).

Policies for reducing women's gaps in access to and use of technology are key to providing women with greater opportunities for accessing financing. Various studies on women's financial behaviour have shown that they are less likely than men to seek financial advice and that they tend to have less financial knowledge, putting them at a disadvantage. This makes it essential to develop gender-sensitive financial and technological education to maximize the potential advantages of such technology and minimize the risks.

There is a growing number of financial services based on platforms or applications that claim to improve the financial inclusion of certain segments of the population, particularly women. However, such services operate under weak regulatory frameworks, with few protection measures for their users. This can have undesirable consequences, such as financial instability, over-indebtedness or misuse of personal data. This calls for a precautionary approach.

On the one hand, the ability of people seeking loans to connect directly with lenders through fintech leads to new forms of access to credit without intermediation. Increasingly, crowdfunding platforms, peer-to-peer lending initiatives and fundraising directly from creditors (direct financing) through electronic platforms have emerged, with no need for traditional collateral. This has considerable potential to reduce gender gaps in access to financing.

On the other hand, fintech companies have ventured into the analysis of alternative data to ascertain the creditworthiness of individuals. In some instances, they offer online loans based on a large number of variables and data to determine the probability of default. In the past, lenders used data from just a few companies, such as eBay or PayPal, but now they are incorporating data from an ever-larger number of companies, including United Parcel Service (UPS), Amazon, QuickBooks, Yodlee, Yelp, Facebook, LinkedIn and many others. Such data were largely unavailable five years ago but nowadays they can be collected and processed in seconds, quickly establishing an applicant's "solvency status" and the probability of payment (Belatrix, 2016). For instance, financing platforms use algorithms to create sophisticated risk profiles based on data on loan applicants, obtained from their mobile phones, computers, software or applications.

This might seem attractive, especially to women, many of whom face more barriers to accessing loans from traditional banking or financial institutions. Instead of being assessed solely on the basis of their income, other factors are taken into consideration, such as location, behaviour on the web and in social networks and online shopping habits. However, such methods of data use pose challenges for data privacy. Companies can build profiles of potential customers based on a set of factors relating to their personal lives. Not only are people unaware of the use that might be made of their online data but there is a regulatory gap with respect to the use of private data obtained from social networks to delineate a credit profile. The information could also be used without permission for other commercial purposes.

Even though these companies are changing patterns of entry to the financial system by including new actors, this process has gone hand in hand with the growing power of major leading companies, not only with respect to other competitors within the same sector but also in terms of their traditional leadership positions in the economy. Large technology companies have consolidated a growing share of financial services (such as Apple Pay, Amazon Pay, Facebook Payments and Google Wallet), while dominating the international market of companies serving as Internet platforms (ECLAC, 2018d).

In a context characterized by a concentrated market, 35% of fintech companies in the region were either started by a woman or have women in their founding team. This is well above the estimated global average of 7%. In addition, 30% of the staff of fintech companies are women. Uruguay, Peru and Colombia head the list of countries with the highest proportion of fintech companies with at least one woman in the founding team. According to the IDB/IDB Invest/Finnovista (2018) study, once women participate in these industries, they tend to generate financial services for traditionally excluded sectors, such as SMEs. Indeed, 38% of women-led fintech companies seek to improve services for consumers and SMEs that are underserved or excluded from the financial system, which is 7 percentage points higher than men-led fintech companies (IDB/IDB Invest/Finnovista, 2018).

The growing economic importance of fintech companies therefore poses challenges ranging from the regulation of competition to data use and privacy, the concentration of resources and wealth, and taxation

(ECLAC, 2018d). Also, given that fintech companies blur the boundaries between software, financial intermediation and financing, it would seem that regulatory and oversight efforts should focus on the risks associated with the type of financial activity rather than the type of institution driving it (United Nations, 2019a).

In turn, digital technologies have contributed to the expansion and deepening of the financial system. In the context of Latin America and the Caribbean, peripheral financialization refers to the specific form in which the expansion of international finance takes place and affects the economies of the region. According to dependency theory and Latin American structuralism (Prebisch, 1949; Furtado, 1962; among others), the region is subordinate to an international monetary and financial system that is built on asymmetric positions. Financialization influences the way in which the financial system operates in the region and the behaviour of economic actors (central banks, commercial banks, firms, households and individuals) in response to changes in cross-border capital movements. It exacerbates volatility, external vulnerability and the exposure to risks and to international liquidity cycles, and restricts States' room for manoeuvre (ECLAC, 2018c).

Significant manifestations of financialization in the region include the volatility of capital flows into and out of the region, the procyclical and short-term nature of foreign investment—which tends to be concentrated in high-yield assets—and the continuing rise in public and private borrowing, particularly by households.¹⁸

Bearing in mind that economic scenarios are changing, it is important to analyse the possible impacts of financialization on socioeconomic and gender inequality. While such an exercise would entail analysis of specific data in various contexts concerning the links between the macro, meso and micro levels of the economy, a few hypotheses can be put forward. First, financialization makes countries more vulnerable to external shocks and financial crises. History has shown that in the absence of macroeconomic policies addressing the overrepresentation of women among the poor, the rigid sexual division of labour and discrimination in the labour market, women may end up having to absorb economic shocks during periods of crisis, instability or recession, primarily through the excessive burden of unpaid work they bear (Montaño, 2011; United Nations, 2016c).

Second, financialization has contributed to the rise in economic inequality. The share of the financial sector in incomes has grown exponentially while the wage share has declined. The characteristics of the labour market are such that women are underrepresented at the highest levels of income, particularly in the financial sector, and overrepresented at the lowest levels of income distribution.

Financialization is associated with growing indebtedness among waged employees who, at times of falling real incomes, tend to supplement their wages by borrowing (Boyer, 2000; Hein, 2012; Stockhammer, 2012, cited in CEPAL, 2018c). This phenomenon has been evident in developed countries but can also be observed in countries of the region. Household borrowing levels are high: for the period 2013–2017, the average share of household debt in relation to total national debt stood at 25.9% in Chile, 23.8% in Colombia and 20.7% in Mexico (ECLAC, 2019d). Although this trend could facilitate women's access to credit from a microeconomic perspective, the implications of borrowing in terms of costs and risks of over-indebtedness and its effect on bargaining power dynamics within the family cannot be ignored.

C. Fiscal policy and gender equality

The design and implementation of fiscal policy affects the ability of States to fulfil their obligations to guarantee the human rights of women and ensure gender equality. Tax revenues, tax structures, and budget allocations and execution have an impact on socioeconomic and gender inequalities, as they affect the distribution of income and economic resources, the provision of public goods and services and the mobilization of resources to finance policies that promote gender equality and women's autonomy. Fiscal policy also influences economic trends, by promoting growth or curtailing it. Consequently, it can help to shape a macroeconomic context conducive to creating jobs and economic opportunities for women and maintaining their incomes.

¹⁸ For example, in recent years the region has seen a reduction in external financing flows and an outflow of capital towards developed countries.

To identify the gender implications of fiscal policy, and particularly tax policy, gender inequalities in paid and unpaid work and in access to resources and property must be analysed, and differences in consumption patterns must be identified and examined (Grown and Valodia, 2010; ECLAC, 2012). Analysing fiscal policy from a gender perspective also requires an understanding of what types of activities and economic actors are promoted, and even what household structures and family arrangements are included in or excluded from tax schemes, benefits, and public spending.

Looking beyond the heterogeneity among the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, the region is characterized by a narrow tax base, a moderate tax burden, regressive tax systems, high levels of tax evasion and tax avoidance, and limited tax coordination at the regional level (ECLAC, 2018c and 2019e). These characteristics hamper mobilization of the national and international resources needed to fulfil the commitments of the Regional Gender Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Moreover, the redistributive capacity of fiscal policy in the region (and especially of tax systems) remains limited. Estimated Gini coefficients before and after direct taxes and cash and in-kind transfers indicate that fiscal policy produces a smaller reduction in the Gini index in Latin America (9 percentage points) than in the OECD countries (23 percentage points) or the European Union (26 percentage points) (Hanni, Martner and Podestá, 2017). It should be borne in mind that the effects of tax structures on the distribution of wealth are underestimated, due to a lack of sources of information and instruments to accurately capture trends.

In the current context, countries are undergoing fiscal consolidation. Although capital expenditure remains the main variable employed in adjustments, there is increasing pressure on social spending (ECLAC, 2019d). Estimates suggest primary expenditure in Latin America is set to fall from 18.6% of GDP in 2018 to 18.4% in 2019. The case of the Caribbean is different, as public spending is expected to accelerate (driven by primary current expenditure and capital expenditure), reaching 29.2% of GDP in 2019, compared with 28.2% of GDP in 2018 (ECLAC, 2019a).

With regard to tax revenues, projections for Latin America indicate that the level seen in 2018 will be maintained (15.6% of GDP). However, changes are expected in the revenues from the main taxes: value added tax (VAT) and income tax. Since 2016 there has been a gradual slowdown in VAT revenues, and the trend has continued into 2019, mainly in countries such as Argentina, Brazil, El Salvador, Mexico and Peru. The patterns in income tax collection are more varied. Although average revenues from this tax show a slowdown, in countries such as Chile, Colombia and Costa Rica income tax revenues have increased as a result of changes in tax schemes (ECLAC, 2019a).

1. Some features of the region's tax systems: regressivity and gender biases

Over the past decade, Latin America and the Caribbean has implemented tax reforms and policies to increase and maintain public spending. Income distribution has improved, mainly owing to public spending and, to a lesser extent, to taxation. Tax policy plays a key role in generating government revenue, but it can also play a redistributive role if it takes into account the form of collection and the economic agents to which it is applied to. While gender analysis has focused mainly on public expenditure, the effects of tax policy on gender inequalities have also been explored.

There are significant differences between the tax systems of the countries in the region. Nonetheless, considering the relative level of development and the financing needed to achieve the 2030 Agenda and the Regional Gender Agenda, the tax burden remains low. The region's average tax burden is half the average reported in 15 countries of the European Union and 13.5 percentage points of GDP below the OECD average. This difference is mainly a result of lower collection of direct taxes on income and property in the region (ECLAC, 2018c).¹⁹

¹⁹ Direct taxes are levied on the sources of wealth, property and income of individuals or companies, while indirect taxes are levied on economic activities such as consumption, or the use of a good or service.

Therefore, when considering the impact of taxes on consumption and the effect of other indirect taxes on total tax revenues, there is an evident regressive bias in tax structures in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.²⁰ Indirect taxes are levied on economic activities, without taking into account individuals' tax capacity. As a result, the least well-off have to devote a greater portion of their income to paying taxes such as VAT to purchase basic goods and services than higher-income people. This leads to a disproportionate tax burden in sectors with lower tax capacities (ECLAC/Oxfam, 2016). Since women are overrepresented among those with lower incomes and resources and living in poverty, this type of tax also shows an implicit gender bias.²¹

A study of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras determined that a rise in the VAT rate from 13% to 15% would lead to an increase in poverty that would be larger in female-headed households (Figueroa and Peña, 2018). Some studies analyse other biases relating to the existence of differentiated consumption patterns between men and women and its intersection with other categories such as age, income and household structure (Grown and Valodia, 2010; Almeida Sánchez, 2018).

Analysis of income taxation reveals implicit gender biases resulting from different treatment according to the source of income. A study on Guatemala concluded that there are gender biases in taxation of income, as a consequence of different treatment according to whether the income is from wage employment, capital or own-account work. These biases come from a combination of the design of the tax framework and the characteristics of women's participation in the labour market, since women are over-represented in self-employed and informal work. According to the simulation, women pay a higher effective tax rate on their income (5%) than companies (2.5%) and wage earners (2.6%) (Oxfam, 2019).

In general, no explicit gender biases have been identified in the region's tax structures. However, there have been some cases where discriminatory treatment of women has been remedied. One example is Colombia: as part of the discussion of a tax reform, a proposal was made to raise VAT on sanitary towels and tampons from 16% to 19%. As a result of the social mobilization against VAT on these products through the campaign by Grupo Género y Justicia Económica entitled "Tax-Free Menstruation," the rate was cut from 19% to 5%. However, even with VAT reduced to 5%, an explicit bias was identified in the taxation of items required by women every month that represent expenses throughout their reproductive cycle. Ultimately, the Constitutional Court of Colombia declared the tax levied on sanitary towels and tampons at VAT rate of 5% to be unconstitutional and ruled to include these products in the list of goods exempt from value added tax (Constitutional Court of Colombia, 2018).

2. Tax expenditures: potential and challenges for equality

The collection capacity of the region's tax systems is being eroded by benefit schemes, tax incentives and special tax treatments such as exemptions, tax deductions and reduced rates. Tax expenditures entail foregone fiscal revenue that affects the horizontal and vertical equity of systems.²² The justifications offered for using these instruments include attracting foreign investment, promoting certain economic activities and fostering employment. However, transparent periodic information is needed to analyse the fiscal cost and economic and social impact by sector and type of taxpayer, to assess the use of such instruments and their contribution to sustainable development and equality priorities.

According to data available for 13 countries in the region, tax expenditures average 3.7% of GDP. Tax expenditures in Jamaica are in line with the average for the region (3.6%). However, in countries such as Brazil (4.1% of GDP in 2017), Costa Rica (5.5% of GDP), the Dominican Republic (6.2% of GDP), Ecuador (4.7% of GDP) and Uruguay (6.4% of GDP) the amounts of foregone fiscal revenues are very significant. In Colombia and the Plurinational State of Bolivia the cost of these preferential tax treatments is less than 2% (ECLAC, 2019e).

²⁰ On average in the region, less than one third of tax revenue comes from direct taxation, with the bulk of the burden found in consumption and other indirect taxes (ECLAC, 2018c).

²¹ Implicit biases are those that occur when a tax law or regulation treats men and women in a similar way, but produces an unequal impact or effect. For more information on explicit and implicit gender biases in tax policy, see Stotsky (1996).

²² Tax expenditures are resources foregone by the State for the existence of benefits and incentives that reduce the tax burden of certain taxpayers, in order to achieve certain economic- and social-policy objectives (CIAT, 2011 in ECLAC, 2019e).

In the region, the predominant means of foregoing fiscal revenue is preferential VAT treatment, which exceeds 2% of GDP in five countries: Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Honduras and Uruguay. Deductions, exemptions and reduced rates for the basic basket of goods make up the largest amount of forgone VAT revenue. The amount of foregone income tax revenue is also significant in countries such as Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Uruguay. In Chile, most tax expenditures associated with income tax relate to preferential treatment for retained business earnings and the investment income of pension funds, while in Costa Rica the largest items are certain tax-exempt activities in free zones, as well as some tax benefits for natural persons. In Uruguay, foregone income tax revenue largely relates to the corporate income tax exemption of activities in free zones and the personal income tax exemption of interest accrued on retirement savings accounts (ECLAC, 2019e) (see box III.4).

Box III.4

Uruguay: initiatives to redirect investment towards equality and sustainability

In Uruguay, the provisions of the law on investment promotion were amended in 2012, allowing total or partial exemption from taxes if projects contribute to clean production, innovation, increased exports, territorial decentralization or the generation of quality employment —especially for women, rural workers or people under 24 years of age and over 50 years of age.

Companies may be exempted from the payment of business activities income tax, wealth tax, import duties and taxes and VAT. The benefits are defined according to a score obtained in an indicator matrix.

In the commerce and services sector, benefits are also given for hiring workers who have participated in social or sheltered employment programmes (women with children, Afrodescendants, trans women, among others). It also includes continuing training of workers and promotion of labour agreements that contain clauses on matters such as special leave for the care of dependents. This contributes to the redistribution of unpaid and care work.

Between January 2013 and December 2016, 1,297 investment projects were recommended for an amount of US\$ 5.93 billion. In total, the recommended projects generated some 9,333 new jobs. The provisions of the act also provide incentives for job creation in specific segments of the population. Hence 3,197 jobs for women were expected to be created through this instrument (34% of the total generated in the period) and 2,340 jobs for people under 24 or over 50 (25%) (UnASeP/Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance, 2017b).

In 2017, the companies that received this benefit committed to creating 2,102 new jobs, of which 60% would be positions requiring a moderate level of qualification, 19% a moderate-high level, 17% a low level and 3% a high level. In addition, women are to be hired in 39% of the jobs to be created (UnASeP/Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance, 2017a). Of the 2,139 new jobs that have been committed to by 2018, 54% require a moderate level of qualification, 25% a moderate-high level, 16% a low level and 4% a high level. It was estimated that 35% would entail hiring of women (UnASeP/Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance, 2018).

In 2018 there was an amendment to the provisions, relaxing and reducing some of the requirements for granting benefits. For example, the calculation of the employment generation indicator was simplified, evaluating the number of hirings, without considering their quality. In addition, for the commerce and services sector, the measure to promote hiring of workers who have been part of specific work programmes was eliminated, as was the measure to promote employment agreements that contained special clauses endorsed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, on issues such as care leave and study leave.

However, additional benefits and extended deadlines for income tax deductions were established for micro- and small enterprises. Furthermore, the process for evaluating the initiative was refined. Companies have four months after the end of each financial year to submit information on the implementation of the investment, information on tax benefits enjoyed and information on the levels committed to in the indicators. In addition, if at the end of the indicators schedule a score higher than that committed to in the project has been shown to have been reached, the corresponding exemptions may be requested (UnASeP/Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance, 2019).

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of Private Sector Support Unit (UnASeP)/Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance, *Guía del Régimen General de Promoción de Inversiones. Decreto N° 143/018*, Montevideo, June 2019; UnASeP/Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance, "Inversión recomendada e indicadores asociados: diciembre de 2018", Montevideo, December 2018 [online] <http://unasep.mef.gub.uy/innovaportal/file/26278/1/unasep---proyectos-recomendados-en-diciembre-2018.pdf>; UnASeP/Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance (2017a), "Inversión recomendada e indicadores asociados: diciembre de 2017", Montevideo, December 2017 [online] <http://unasep.mef.gub.uy/innovaportal/file/23652/1/unasep---proyectos-recomendados-en-diciembre-2017.pdf>; and UnASeP/Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance (2017b), *Evaluación del funcionamiento del Decreto 002/012*, Montevideo, June 2017.

To understand the distributive impact of tax expenditures, their composition must be analysed. In addition to being regressive, tax exemptions and deductions that benefit higher-income sectors and individuals have implicit gender biases as they benefit a greater proportion of men, who are overrepresented among those with greater financial resources who can access the benefits. In addition, they entail foregoing fiscal revenue that could be used to fund policies aimed at closing inequality gaps.

In contrast, tax expenditures related to VAT exemptions for basic needs or tax deductions for personal expenses related to care for dependent people can have a positive effect on gender equality. Such tax exemptions can benefit women, given their overload of unpaid work and their greater representation in precarious jobs and in the poorest quintiles of taxpayers.

Countries such as Ecuador, Guatemala and Uruguay apply criteria that take into account household structures and care burdens to analyse tax capacity. These include personal income tax deductions for dependent children who are minors or children with disabilities. In Cuba, there is a rebate on monthly payments on account of personal income tax for women in own-account work who have two or more children under the age of 17. In addition, there is a rebate for own-account workers who are assistants for the care of children, the sick, persons with disabilities and older persons.

However, a large proportion of the region's women are in informal employment, meaning that the majority of these tax benefits are concentrated in a small number of workers (ECLAC, 2019e). Furthermore, these deductions may mean that certain household structures are favoured over others, and that the effective tax rate paid by a self-employed woman with dependent children is ultimately higher than that paid by a salaried man who is the sole breadwinner for a nuclear family. This situation could affect equity and be biased against single-parent households, generally headed by women (ECLAC, 2012; Oxfam, 2019).

Preferential tax treatments exist in some countries to explicitly promote women's labour force participation. For example, Brazil's Citizen Enterprise Programme grants an income-tax credit for the total remuneration paid to female employees during the 60-day maternity-leave extension or the 15-day extension allowed for paternity leave in the case of male employees. To make use of this scheme, companies must join the programme (Ministry of the Economy of Brazil, 2019). In Colombia there is a tax credit in respect of payroll contributions for firms that hire workers in certain categories, including women over 40 years of age who have been without an employment contract for the past twelve months (Constitutional Court of Colombia, 2018; ECLAC, 2019e).

These initiatives are regional examples of tax expenditures that align investment with gender equality goals. However, transparent information is needed on all tax instruments and incentives and preferential tax treatments, in order to assess their impact and their contribution to the goals set and particularly to fiscal sustainability and redistribution. In addition, any incentives that do not contribute to the priorities of sustainable development, gender equality and diversification of production and exports must be reviewed and reformulated (ECLAC, 2019e).

3. Tax evasion, tax avoidance and illicit financial flows: a loss of resources for public policies

In addition to having a low tax burden and regressive biases, Latin America and the Caribbean has high levels of tax evasion and tax avoidance. Tax evasion in Latin America is estimated to have amounted to US\$ 335 billion in 2017, equivalent 6.3% of GDP. VAT evasion accounts for 2.3% of this tax non-compliance, and the remaining 4% relate to income tax evasion (ECLAC, 2019e). In this regard, central government spending in Latin America on social protection amounted to 4.1% of GDP in 2016. Therefore, tax evasion and tax avoidance amount to more than 150% of social protection spending in the region (ECLAC, 2019c).

It is also important to analyse the international dimension of tax evasion and tax avoidance. The most recent ECLAC estimates indicate that in 2016 the Latin American and Caribbean region as a whole lost US\$ 85 billion—or 1.5% of regional GDP—in illicit financial flows as a result of misinvoicing in international trade in goods in 2016 (ECLAC, 2019e). Although this figure is lower than the estimates of previous years, it

remains a worrying trend that erodes the tax base of the countries of the region. Tax evasion and tax avoidance result in losses of the resources needed to expand the fiscal space, which could be used to close the financing gap for different public policies, especially those on gender equality and women's rights.

Financial and trade globalization has resulted in a proliferation of links in transnational conglomerates. Transnational corporations use tax havens and offshore financial centres as means of intermediation between the parent company and subsidiaries in the region for profit shifting and tax avoidance. A distance is created between companies and their ultimate beneficiaries, concealing the commercial links between companies and thus diverting dividends through financial transactions, royalty payments and service fees.

These tactics affect the degree to which the region's tax systems are regressive. When the capacity of States to control illicit financial flows and tax evasion is limited, tax structures tend to compensate for the lack of resources through higher taxes on small and medium taxpayers (Ritter, 2015). Consequently, if States rely more heavily on regressive taxes, they ultimately benefit the wealthiest individuals to the detriment of the general public and especially low-income and poor women (Grondona, Bidegain Ponte and Rodríguez Enríquez, 2016).

In response to these challenges, at the thirteenth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, Governments agreed to strengthen regional cooperation to combat tax evasion and avoidance and illicit financial flows, and improve tax collection from the wealthiest and highest-income groups by introducing corporate income, wealth and property taxes, among others, in order to have greater resources for gender equality policies (ECLAC, 2017, measure 5.h).

4. Mobilization of public resources and their contribution to gender equality

When States mobilize resources to achieve higher levels of well-being for citizens, while taking into account specific actions to eradicate inequalities—particularly gender inequalities—such schemes can be considered “progressive expenditure schemes”. Alternatively, if upon analysing how expenditure is allocated, it is found that schemes favour the interests of segments of society with greater economic and social advantages, they can be considered “regressive expenditure schemes” (Espino, 2019).

As regards progressive expenditure schemes, in recent years governments have approved equality and women's rights plans that are aligned with the Regional Gender Agenda and the 2030 Agenda. At the same time, several countries in the region have adopted gender-responsive budgets, raising awareness of the costs of equality policies and advancing in allocation of the resources needed to reduce inequalities. The mobilization of regional and international cooperation resources has also played a strategic role in boosting resources in key areas of women's rights and gender equality.

However, major challenges persist in the financing of equality policies. The state of affairs is characterized by an uncertain macroeconomic context, a slowdown in the redistributive improvements achieved in recent years, a drop in capital expenditure and a tightening of the fiscal policy space, at both central and subnational government levels (ECLAC, 2019e). Faced with a regional context of fiscal consolidation and an international context of falling financial flows in the region, mitigation measures must be formulated to prevent these trends from widening the financing gap for gender equality and women's rights policies.

(a) Domestic resources for the guarantee of women's rights and gender equality

The governments of the region have agreed to promote and adopt progressive fiscal policies and allocate budgets with a gender perspective to ensure sufficient, non-transferable, sustainable resources that cover all levels and areas of public policy aimed at reversing gender inequalities and guaranteeing women's rights (ECLAC, 2017, measure 5.c). Gender-responsive budgeting experiences in the region have been mixed. According to the national reports on implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the

Montevideo Strategy for Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda within the Sustainable Development Framework by 2030, at least 16 countries and territories have taken steps to incorporate the gender perspective into their budget processes.²³

Some countries and territories have formulated guidelines and regulations to include the gender perspective in the budget cycle (Anguilla, Brazil, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines). For example, in 2016, the Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines approved a results-based budget structure that, since 2018, has enabled budgetary allocations for gender development to be disaggregated. In addition, since 2018 Anguilla has included a specific public budget item for "Gender Affairs and Human Rights." The Ministry of Finance of El Salvador included in the general rules for formulating budgetary policy an instruction to strengthen the budgetary structure of programmes and projects aimed at incorporating cross-cutting approaches: human rights, gender and the life cycle (Ministry of Finance of El Salvador, 2017). In Mexico, since 2012, there has been a requirement for the federal expenditure budget to include a cross-cutting annex on gender equality. In addition, for the 2018 fiscal year, guidelines were drawn up for monitoring programmes that employ resources for gender equality, with the aim of supporting agencies, entities and organizations in incorporating the gender perspective in the monitoring stage.

Other countries have made progress in defining or refining methodologies for disaggregating budgets and identifying their contribution to gender equality (Argentina, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Uruguay). In Ecuador, the State has a monitoring tool called the Expenditures Classifier, whose use is mandatory and which provides information on the budget allocated by institutions and the budget accrued for gender equality policies. In Guatemala, the Gender-Based Budget Classifier System was launched in 2013, and over the 2016–2019 period the system's manual was updated. Over the same period, the process was consolidated in central government, decentralized entities and local governments for categorizing resources to meet the needs of women. Other countries have been moving in this direction more recently. For example, in the case of Argentina, one of the commitments included in the National Plan for Equal Opportunities and Rights produced by the Ministry of Finance relates to development of a gender-responsive budget measurement methodology. To this end, a dialogue with civil society, academic institutions and national bodies was initiated in 2018, for combined validation of the methodology.

Similarly, other countries and territories have made efforts in capacity building and in strengthening the institutionalization of mechanisms to promote and monitor gender-responsive budgets. In the British Virgin Islands and Turks and Caicos Islands, progress has been made in incorporating the gender perspective into budgets, through specific civil service capacity development initiatives. In the case of Honduras, the National Institute for Women has been included in the Steering Committee and Technical Committee on Budgetary Policy. With a view to incorporating the gender perspective into public planning and budgeting, in 2016 Guatemala established the "Inter-institutional committee on the budget for equity between men and women," comprising the Secretariat for Planning and Programming of the Office of the President (SEGEPLAN), the Ministry of Public Finance, the Presidential Women's Secretariat (SEPREM) and the Group for the Defence of Women's Rights in Guatemala (CODEFEM).

In the case of Peru, according to reports submitted in the framework of the Equal Opportunities for Women and Men Act (Law No. 28983), 17 budget programmes are linked to closing gender gaps. However, Law No. 29083 amending article 47 of Law No. 28411 on the national budgeting system, which required public institutions to include a gender policy impact assessment in their evaluations of public budget execution, was repealed in 2018.

With regard to budget allocations for gender equality policies, at least eight countries have reported an increase in the budget for machineries for the advancement of women or for specific policies (Argentina, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Peru and Uruguay), while in Ecuador there was a decrease over the past year, owing to a fiscal deficit. Progress has also been made in making equality policies visible

²³ The countries or territories are Anguilla, Argentina, Brazil, British Virgin Islands, Chile, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Turks and Caicos Islands and Uruguay.

in the budget and particularly policies to end gender-based violence (for example, in Chile, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay). However, quantifying the volume of resources allocated remains a challenge.

Lastly, gender inequalities are still very widespread in the region. States' investment efforts should therefore be aligned with the commitment to fully implement the Regional Gender Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

(b) Cooperation for gender equality in a context of change

The proportion of official development assistance (ODA) flows received by Latin America and the Caribbean has declined steadily over the past few decades in relation to other developing regions. ODA flows currently represent 0.17% of regional gross national income (GNI), which is lower than the 0.4% seen in previous decades (ECLAC, 2018e). It should be noted that ODA has been key in promoting countries' fulfilment of the Regional Gender Agenda and of the international commitments related to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Beijing Platform for Action, and the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (Convention of Belém do Pará). In a context of weakening multilateralism, the governments of the region have urged countries to meet their official development assistance commitments and to ensure that such assistance is public, non-conditional, additional and predictable (ECLAC, 2017).

The region's governments also called for promotion of cooperation and support for middle-income countries, particularly highly indebted and vulnerable Caribbean countries, by defining comprehensive methodologies for classifying countries based on structural development gaps in order to evaluate levels of development and gender inequality more accurately and comprehensively (ECLAC, 2017, measure 8.f). This is fundamental as countries in the region move towards higher income levels, which bring with them new development "traps" and increasingly complex challenges. (ECLAC/OECD and others, 2019). This is why per capita income should not be the main or sole criterion for allocating ODA. In some countries of the region, higher levels of economic growth have not brought about automatic improvements in indicators of gender equality and women's economic autonomy. Regardless of their income levels, no country in the region has achieved gender equality or has fully implemented the Regional Gender Agenda.

As shown in the first part of this document, progress towards gender equality is not a linear or constant; there are setbacks in women's rights, as well as improvements in other dimensions of women's autonomy and gender equality, while emerging challenges appear. There must be a deeper understanding of how the structural constraints preventing gender inequality take different shapes in countries that are moving towards higher levels of income. Forms of cooperation must be fostered that take into account the heterogeneity in the region and promote strategies that reflect the multidimensional nature of the processes, considering gender equality in the three dimensions of sustainable development.

In recent years, cooperation modalities and stakeholders have diversified. Within the framework of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, countries have promoted regional, South-South and triangular cooperation. According to available information, over the past five years, countries such as Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay have participated in cooperation activities and exchanged experiences on gender equality and women's rights policies. However, in the Montevideo Strategy, governments emphasized that South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation complement but do not replace North-South cooperation (ECLAC, 2017). ECLAC and the funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system have supported countries in these processes.

Several initiatives demonstrate the importance of this type of cooperation in closing inequality gaps and reducing their repercussions at different levels. Mexico participates in different multilateral, South-South and triangular cooperation schemes. The Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation (AMEXCID) has supported 47 cooperation projects relating to gender equality in areas such as social protection, labour, social and justice policies.

Chile is another of the countries that has strengthened its South-South cooperation in gender equality. It has collaborated with the Government of Peru in strengthening information systems on violence against women. The Government of Peru, through its public prosecution service, has cooperated with the Salvadoran Institute for the Development of Women (ISDEMU) to establish a unified registry of femicide victims.

Paraguay established a project to strengthen care policies with technical cooperation from the Uruguayan Agency for International Cooperation (AUCI). Furthermore, the Spanish-speaking Central American and Caribbean countries have cooperated to jointly address policies for investigating and prosecuting trafficking in persons, and for assisting and protecting victims.

Forty years after the adoption of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (BAPA), Latin America and the Caribbean must advance in measuring the impact of cooperation initiatives on gender equality policies and women's rights, as well as promoting regional integration initiatives to jointly address the gender equality challenges posed by recent trends in globalization of trade and finance and by climate change. Notably, at the second High-Level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation, the governments stated: "We recognize the contribution of South-South and triangular cooperation in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in sustainable development and encourage further efforts to mainstream gender perspectives in these modalities of cooperation" (United Nations, 2019b, para. 19).

Lastly, it is important to bear in mind that from a gender perspective, economies can be analysed as structures that are rooted in gender relations and comprise the spheres of finance, production and social reproduction (Elson, 2010). This chapter has addressed the different trends of economic and financial globalization and its link to women's economic autonomy, focusing on the area of production and finance. Based on the evidence in this section, the final chapter presents public policy proposals with a multi-scale perspective.

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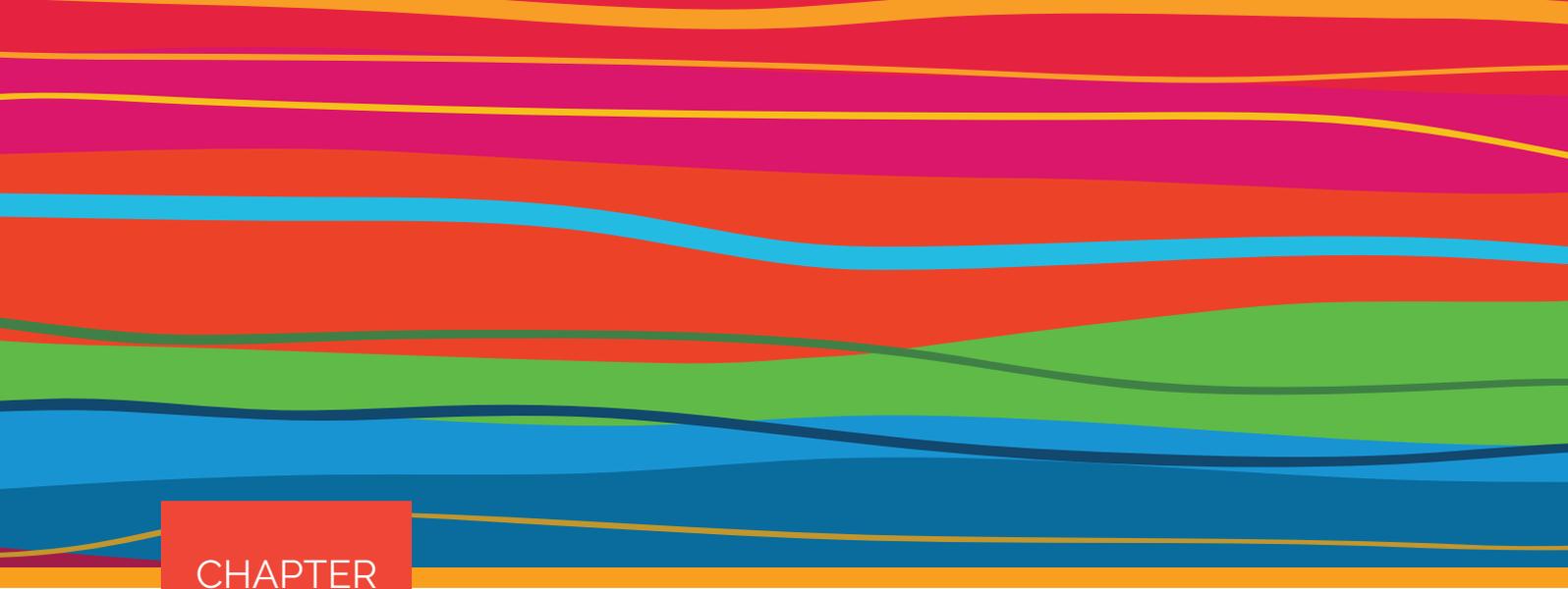
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CHAPTER

IV

Digital revolution: trends and impacts on women's lives

Introduction

- A. Effects of the digital revolution on women's employment
- B. Education for the future of work
- C. The information society and its impact on women's lives
- D. Violence against women in digital media: old patterns, new challenges

Bibliography

Introduction

Technological changes are occurring at an exponential rate, with effects that have spread across the economy and society, transforming entire production, management and governance systems (ECLAC, 2018a). This is reflected in the central role that the development of digital technologies has played in reorganizing economic structures and modes of production and consumption, by making it possible to create digital goods and services; adding value by incorporating digital features to products that, in principle, are not digital; or enabling the use of digital platforms (ECLAC, 2016b). The digital technology revolution has generated new business models based on digital platforms, which offer possibilities for innovation, while also expanding business opportunities, transforming communications and altering traditional modes of employment. These models are also strengthening the economic and social power of certain digital enterprises and higher-income countries (ECLAC, 2018b; OECD, 2017; Gurumurthy, Chami and Billorou, 2018), in a transition that causes the traditional and the digital economies to collide, posing new regulatory challenges to governments.

It has previously been noted that inequality in the region is a reflection of its production structure. Accordingly, the production paradigm shift implied by the Fourth Industrial Revolution (or Industry 4.0)¹ offers opportunities; but it can also threaten the closing of gaps or foster the emergence of new disparities in the region. For example, firms based on transnational digital platforms (or platform enterprises) are emerging with a data extractivism logic and tools that enable them to monopolize markets and generate economic dependency. It is therefore necessary to take steps that allow technology to serve as a means to sustainable development and gender equality, as proclaimed in the Montevideo Strategy for the Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda within the Sustainable Development Framework by 2030 and in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Digital technologies have the potential to foster gender equality if harnessed to promote structural change with equality. However, in the absence of policies that are consistent with the digital economy, there is a risk of accentuating the lack of diversification of production and services, while also perpetuating the structural obstacles that underlie gender inequality. For this reason, the tidal wave of innovation that is being spearheaded by digital platforms and Industry 4.0 provides an opportunity to tackle structural change with equality from a gender perspective. Furthermore, new job opportunities can be opened up for women through the transformation, diversification and creation of new economic activities, while technologies can also be instrumental in eliminating the obstacles that perpetuate inequality between men and women.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, technological changes pose a number of challenges, since barriers to the absorption of these innovations still persist, which means that new technologies and technological platforms are spreading more slowly there than elsewhere in the world. The region has a shortage of the necessary capacities and skills; and this mismatch between the demand originating in the technological revolution and the supply of capacities acts as a brake on the adoption of new technologies. Moreover, the prevalence of smaller firms, compounded by the relationship between the cost of the technologies and the low wages that still persist in some occupations in the region, are a further disincentive to innovation.

¹ The term “Industry 4.0” refers to the ability to use the Internet to control elements in the physical world by synchronizing equipment, processes and people in an industrial environment; and it also references changes in traditional manufacturing models that emerge in the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Schwab, 2016; Castillo, 2017).

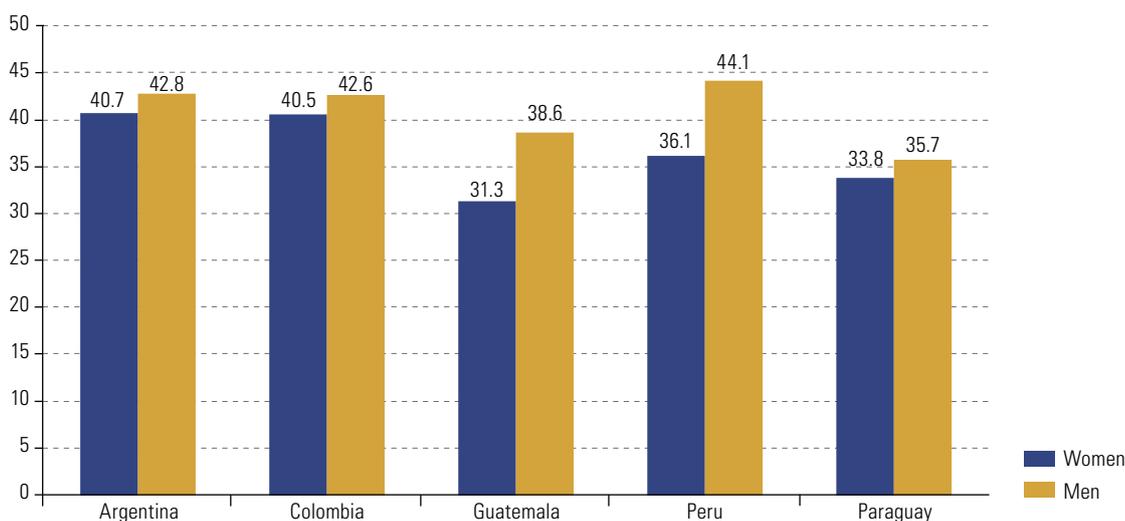
A. Effects of the digital revolution on women's employment

Achieving sustainable development in the region requires a progressive structural change that would allow men and women to make the best use of their capacities and skills (ECLAC, 2016a). The technological revolution generates concerns and uncertainty about its effects on employment and labour relations, and also about the differentiated impacts it may have on the individual countries of the region and on specific population groups (ECLAC, 2017b and 2018a). In particular, two very clear trends stem from the diffusion and use of new technologies in firms and production systems, which will have consequences in the labour market: (i) the platform economy, which arises from the consolidation of business models based on digital platforms, and is generating a new way of buying and selling goods and services; and (ii) the speeding up of automation processes, in the framework of the digital transformation, through the adoption of from Industry 4.0 technologies, to achieve productivity improvements, efficiency gains and cost reductions (Vaca Trigo, 2019).

In addition, a work paradigm is emerging that leaves those who do not have the digital skills needed to adapt and integrate into the jobs of the future marginalized from the digital revolution. There is a clear gender digital divide, which could threaten equal participation in these new work modalities. Data from the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) show that Latin America is the only region in which the proportion of men who use the Internet is no greater than that of women (ITU, 2017). Nonetheless, despite this relative advantage in access to information and communication technologies (ICTs), the region still has digital gender gaps in terms of the intensity and objectives of use and in technological skills. This leaves women excluded from this model, which depends increasingly on the information and knowledge society, as shown in figure IV.1 (Scuro, 2014).

Figure IV.1

Latin America (5 countries): ICT index, by sex, 2017
(Percentages)



Source: A. Sey and N. Hafkin (eds.), *Taking Stock: Data and Evidence on Gender Equality in Digital Access, Skills and Leadership*, United Nations University Institute on Computing and Society/EQUALS, 2019.

Note: The ICT index is constructed from a simple average of eight standard ICT indicators related to mobile phone and Internet use: smartphone ownership, mobile phone usage experience, mobile application use, mobile banking and e-commerce use, Internet usage, Internet use experience, Internet devices and online activities.

In addition, life chances are diminished for people who still find it difficult to access technological services, or for sectors of the population in which connectivity problems persist. This is likely to especially threaten people living in poverty, more than half of whom are women, along with the rural population or indigenous

people —population groups that still lag behind in terms of access to technological services or that face connectivity problems, and even difficulties in access to electricity. The challenge for Governments is to stop employment from becoming even more polarized and prevent gender and socioeconomic gaps from widening as new “digital elites” form alongside a “digitally excluded” population group (Madariaga and others, 2019; Scasserra, 2018).

There is still time for the region's countries to plan their economic, productive and social future, and thus make the most of this ongoing revolution. As the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) has pointed out, the effects that these changes may have on the labour market will depend on macroeconomic dynamics and the ways in which work is organized, as well as a number of political and institutional factors, including State and public institution action, existing labour regulations, trade union organization and the ability to create spaces for collective bargaining and social dialogue between stakeholders in the world of work (governments, the private sector and trade unions)” (ECLAC, 2017b, p. 114).

The reorganization of economic structures resulting from the technological revolution may provide an opportunity for women in the region to achieve more equal participation in production processes. However, if the unfolding transformations are not approached with a view to eliminating the structural obstacles that perpetuate gender inequality, the changes in question will have differentiated and unequal effects, and the chances for women to take advantage of the opportunities offered by technologies will be threatened. In the absence of suitable public policies, women could face new obstacles to their labour market participation under decent working conditions, and they could be excluded from the benefits of the jobs of the future. For this reason, some countries in the region are implementing transformative policies that seek to reduce inequalities and bring technologies closer to the entire population (see box IV.1).

Box IV.1

Costa Rica: National Policy for Equality between Women and Men in Training, Employment and the Enjoyment of the Products of Science, Technology, Telecommunications and Innovation 2018-2027

The Ministry of Science, Technology and Telecommunications (MICITT) of Costa Rica, as the country's lead agency in this sector, with support from the National Institute of Women (INAMU), set itself the challenge of developing a policy to equalize the number of women and men attracted to training, skill development, quality employment, permanency and research in the different fields of science, technology and innovation, in order to foster the harnessing of scientific-technological advances. The policy is consistent with Costa Rica's commitments to human rights and effective equality between women and men.

The guidelines and the general objective of this policy were developed through a participatory methodology that involved women in the fields of science and technology, along with administrative and technical staff of educational institutions, human rights organizations, and firms and institutions that promote women's participation and employment in these domains. In addition, five strategic pillars were defined to guide the actions proposed in the ten years covered by the policy:

- (i) Pillar 1: Attraction of women into science, technology and innovation.
- (ii) Pillar 2: Training and retention of women in careers in science, technology and innovation.
- (iii) Pillar 3: Promotion of women's research and employment in science, technology and innovation.
- (iv) Pillar 4: Social ownership of science with a gender perspective.
- (v) Pillar 5: Sustainability and follow-up.

With a view to inter-agency policy coordination, a high-level commission has been set up with participation by the Government, the private sector, academia and civil society, tasked with defining commitments and establishing strategic partnerships. It will also appoint an inter-agency technical commission to facilitate the implementation of the policy and its plan of action.

Source: Ministry of Science, Technology and Telecommunications (MICITT), *Política Nacional para la Igualdad entre Mujeres y Hombres en la Formación, el Empleo y el Disfrute de los Productos de la Ciencia, Tecnología, las Telecomunicaciones y la Innovación 2018–2027*, San José, 2017.

The following section reviews the characteristics and scope of the platform economy and automation processes in the region, focusing on the situation of women and potential opportunities for achieving gender equality, or obstacles to this.

1. Platform economy

Organizations in the online platform economy have succeeded in connecting groups of people and businesses, allowing them to share access to their assets, resources, time and skills on a scale that was previously impossible. The digital platform economy can benefit consumers by offering new services, wider choice and lower prices. The use of digital platforms can also foster greater sharing of assets and more efficient resource use. In terms of employment, digital platforms act as intermediaries between those who consume or use the services and those who provide them.

Digital platforms have been classified according to various criteria, such as the physical presence, or otherwise, of the service providers, or the specialization of the services offered. Although employment on digital platforms is expected to grow exponentially, the share of these new work modalities is as yet incipient, so information on the employment impact of the digital revolution remains scarce, as described in box IV.2.

Box IV.2

Challenges in measuring work in digital platform enterprises

The platform economy includes emerging business models that have yet to be incorporated regularly into official statistical systems. As the traditional definitions used in labour force surveys do not envisage these new forms of employment, labour statistics currently render jobs in digital platform enterprises invisible, by classifying them unsystematically in a non-wage employment category. This makes it difficult to gauge the importance of the platform economy in terms of its impact on the labour market and the economy at large.

An alternative to employment statistics based on labour force surveys consists of data from administrative records. However, digital platforms are mostly private, and there is still no regulation to access information on their businesses. Many of them are not listed on the stock exchange, which precludes the possibility of using stock market data. On the other hand, in many cases the incomes earned from digital platform enterprises still represent a complementary or secondary source for individuals that is not declared to the tax authorities.

Some studies have attempted to characterize and quantify employment mediated by digital platforms. However, these have used experimental criteria and, in many cases, definitions, time horizons and disaggregations that do not allow for comparison and linkage with other sources. These studies are often based on smaller surveys, which calls into question the accuracy of the estimates and does not make it possible to delve below national averages. The size of the samples makes gender and intersectoral analysis impossible, which in turn constrains any assessment of the impact of the digital revolution on specific groups of workers, particularly women living in poverty, and migrant, indigenous or Afrodescendent women, who have traditionally faced the greatest challenges in terms of labour participation.

Some studies have used data provided directly by digital platform enterprises; however, these contain a potential bias, because the information could be used to explicitly inflate a firm's positive characteristics in relation to the opportunities it offers. On the other hand, studies based on big data analysis generally tend to overestimate employment in the platform economy, the size of which is made harder to measure by the fragmentation of tasks and their global distribution.

Currently, there are few regional studies on the share of digital platform jobs in total employment, or on the benefits and impacts that these new work modalities have on job quality and gender equality. The resolution on labour relations statistics adopted by the twentieth International Conference of Labour Statisticians, held in October 2018, establishes a series of standards that will make it possible to generate up-to-date statistics on labour relations using criteria that allow for international comparability. These statistics deal with relationships of authority between workers and the economic units in which, or for which, they work, and the economic risks arising from the contractual situation or other conditions under which the work is performed.

In this connection, the hope is that these standards will facilitate the production of official national statistics on the various types of employment arrangement, which will make it possible to more accurately quantify and characterize work in the platform economy, and also provide inputs for the formulation of public policies to address these new employment modalities and ensure gender equality in this new domain of paid work.

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of A. Hunt and E. Samman, "Gender and the gig economy", *Working paper*, No. 546, London, Overseas Development Institute (ODI), January 2019 and International Labour Organization (ILO), *Resolution concerning statistics on work relationships* (CIET/20/2018/Resolution I), Geneva, 2018.

Despite shortcomings in the information needed to characterize this phenomenon in the region, the studies that are available worldwide reveal the existence of gender gaps in jobs in digital platform enterprises. A study conducted by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 2018, based on a survey of 3,500 workers employed on micro-tasking platforms in 75 countries, found that employment in digital platform enterprises is an urban phenomenon, and that women represent just 33% of their employees worldwide. In developing countries, the gap is even wider, as only 20% of those employed on these platforms are women (Berg and others, 2018). In Argentina, women represent just 26.4% of persons working in digital platform enterprises (Madariaga and others, 2019).

Globally, the main reasons for choosing to work in digital-based enterprises are the possibility of earning extra income (32%) and the possibility of working from home (22%). According to a study conducted in Argentina, the main reasons for working in digital platform enterprises are the chance to earn extra income (30.2%), the flexibility in working hours offered by platforms (29.1%) and the difficulty of finding other jobs (17.3%) (Madariaga and others, 2019).

Nonetheless, 13% of women justified their employment in this type of work in terms of only being able to work from home; whereas just 5% of men used this justification—a clear gender disparity. It was also found that many women combined work with care responsibilities, spending an average of 20 hours per week working on the platform, only five hours less than the sample as a whole; and most of them worked in the afternoons and evenings (Berg and others, 2018). In addition, on average, women are more likely to quit jobs in the platform economy, and they earn less than men. Pay differences between workers from developing and developed countries have also been detected (Hunt and Samman, 2019; Berg and others, 2018).

Digital platform enterprises offer the chance to work for different clients or projects without the need for large investments—an important factor for women, who are overrepresented among the lower-income population. Linkage between these platforms and other digital technologies enable job seekers to engage with job offers efficiently and effectively; and it allows small and medium-sized enterprises to expand their business capacity. It also provides greater opportunities to increase skills, knowledge flows, networking and access to information, all thanks to the huge amount of data and the development of artificial intelligence, which makes it possible to optimize processes through the use of algorithms.² However, this is an area that also requires monitoring and, in the future, regulation, to avoid situations of precarious employment and the replication of gender inequalities stemming from the use of algorithms that operate in a non-neutral manner (or do not consider measures to reverse the gaps), but instead absorb the characteristic biases of the labour markets that in their operational logic (Vaca Trigo, 2019).

In the region, the structural obstacles that perpetuate gender inequalities are manifested in various barriers that make it difficult for women to participate fully in paid work. These include the disproportionate amount of time women spend providing unpaid care and doing domestic work, compared to men. Moreover, cultural mores restrict women's mobility and increase their risk of being harassed or suffering gender-based violence and discrimination in the labour market. It is sometimes claimed that women ought to benefit from work through digital platforms, since it would make it easier for them to operate from home and thus overcome these barriers. However, these arguments do not propose changes to current structures, but instead suggest that women should seek alternative means of mitigating the discrimination to which they are subjected, while undertaking paid activities that keep them physically in their homes. Thus, the problems traditionally associated with working from home, such as isolation, precarious employment conditions, difficulties in organizing and unionizing, and the lack of labour regulation and oversight (Hunt and Samman, 2019), remain unresolved.

It is undeniable that the availability of jobs with more flexible working hours can make it possible to reconcile income earning with other activities, such as vocational training, political participation and care responsibilities. The chance to reconcile employment, career and maternity might even increase birth rates in countries where population ageing is well advanced. However, it is important not to reinforce traditional gender roles, by insinuating that this is an exclusive benefit for women, who, in addition to taking on all the responsibilities of unpaid work, also have the opportunity to gain employment. Without a real transformation

² An algorithm is an ordered and detailed set of operations, rules or systematic instructions that make it possible to solve problems, perform calculations, process data, optimize outcomes and predict behaviour, among other operations.

in the allocation of household and care tasks, such jobs could blur the line between work in the labour market and personal life, overburdening women even more, putting them under greater pressure and leaving them less time to engage in other activities (OECD, 2017).

One might also ask whether this additional flexibility is equally beneficial to both men and women and the digital firms that operate as intermediaries between customers and suppliers of goods and services. In other words, are digital platforms really a mechanism that affords workers, men and women alike, greater agency over where and when to work for the market and for the home? Or, on the contrary, is it a question of giving firms greater flexibility to respond to fluctuations in the demand for products or services without incurring high transaction costs (Hunt and Samman, 2019)?

For example, in the case of firms that operate passenger transportation services through a virtual platform (Uber,³ Cabify⁴ and DiDi,⁵ among others), offering their drivers flexibility and autonomy to choose when, where and how much to work, these conditions are not always applied as proclaimed. A key constraint is the need to own a vehicle, which has resulted in the practice of those with capital investing in transport fleets and subcontracting drivers who are sometimes subject to strict working hours and have to pay fees to use the vehicles in question. As a result, new sectors of the informal economy are generated, in which neither the productivity nor the working conditions of those employed in them are improved, despite exploiting new technologies. In Mexico City, 60% of Uber drivers do not own the vehicles they use (Eisenmeier, 2018); and the figure may be even higher among women, who generally have lower incomes and less access to credit for vehicle purchase.

The benefits of flexibility are measured in terms of the greater autonomy it affords, the employment benefits it provides, and the opportunities it offers for closing gender gaps. However, in practice thus far, these factors do not seem to have aligned to the benefit of women.

The emergence of new non-traditional work modalities implies greater responsibilities and risks for those who offer their goods or services. The platform economy has developed within a framework that has generated weaker links between employers and the employed (often without access to traditional social protection mechanisms); and it has given rise to a number of atypical forms of work, including new definitions of workspaces and shifts (including intermittent and zero-hour working arrangements, in which, on the basis of a flexible agreement, the employer does not guarantee a minimum number of hours of work and the employee is not obliged to work a minimum number of hours (Novick, 2018). Despite creating new employment opportunities, jobs mediated by digital platforms are developing beyond the remit of the existing regulations, so the individual working in them do not have access to the labour and social rights established by current legislation (ECLAC/ILO, 2019). This, in turn, raises serious risks for the sustainability of social security systems. In Argentina, for example, only 55% of workers in digital platform enterprises make pension contributions in respect of their activity on the platform (almost 90% of them do so through the monotax regime), and only 40% have health insurance associated with their job (Madariaga and others, 2019).

Algorithm-managed processes of selection and performance appraisal also pose new challenges to gender equality. On the one hand, the parameters that define a person as possessing greater skills for the labour market are generally based on conditions that reward the length of time spent in the labour market, speed of career advancement and availability of time—all of which are characteristics that in general are likely to put women at a disadvantage, since family responsibilities and labour market discrimination mean that they tend to have more interruptions in their careers, occupy lower ranks in the hierarchy and have less free time.

³ Uber is a digital platform enterprise, based in the United States, which supplies transportation services and has a presence in 63 countries around the world.

⁴ Cabify is a firm based on a Spanish digital platform that provides transportation services and operates in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Portugal, Spain and Uruguay.

⁵ DiDi is a digital platform transportation firm that was created in China in 2012.

On the other hand, while appraisal systems integrated into digital platforms continuously monitor employee behaviour, they make it hard for workers to move to another platform. They also limit human interaction by automating performance evaluation processes, thereby ruling out opportunities for feedback, discussion and negotiation (Berg and others, 2018; Hunt and Samman, 2019). Thus, individuals employed on digital platforms would see control over almost every aspect of their work experience under threat, including remuneration and work organization, leaving all of this control in the hands of algorithms in which the main objective is, in general, to maximize the firm's profits. As a consequence of patterns of violence against women, evaluations in digital platform enterprises generate a new form of exposure to negative comments loaded with violent and discriminatory messages of which women are a more likely target than men (Scasserra, 2018).

While the platform economy could be an opportunity for women to enter the world of work and generate their own income—as in the case of self-employment, which is the main income source for 25.1% of employed women—this new form of self-employment (or entrepreneurship) often disguises what in practice functions as a form of outsourcing or independent contracting (Scasserra, 2018). In general, this offers payment for the work performed as the only benefit, which sometimes remains a survival income or a supplementary income. Without adequate public policies, these new working arrangements could lead to precarious, unstable and low-quality labour market participation for women.

Gender inequalities in terms of the accumulation of assets and skills, and the greater responsibility assigned to women in caring for children and other family members, could also be transferring the gender inequalities that prevail in the traditional labour market to labour markets in the digital economy. The number of hours devoted to paid work is often set by the market and not by the worker. Some digital platform enterprises offer economic incentives to workers who are available at times when the platform is most in demand, which is clearly economically detrimental to women, who have greater care responsibilities and therefore have less freedom to organize their time

Some studies performed in other regions of the world show that employment on digital platforms is segmented, with a higher concentration of men on platforms associated with transport activities, while women are relatively more numerous on platforms associated with domestic work and care (*Madariaga and others, 2019*). A study in Argentina found a significant difference between men and women according to the skill level required to perform the tasks on each platform: 8 out of 10 men say they perform operational or technical tasks, while 7 out of 10 women say they perform unskilled tasks. If the same analysis is performed without including the employees of Zolvers⁶ (which employs domestic workers), the proportion is reduced to 4 out of 10. Moreover, some platforms were identified where male participation is above 90%: IguanaFix⁷ (90%), Cabify (97%), Rappi⁸ (97%), Glovo⁹ (95.5%) and Uber (91%) (*Madariaga and others, 2019*).

The information available on the main digital platforms that offer transportation services in Latin America reveals that the proportion of female employees is small. Figure IV.2 shows that the proportion of women in these platforms does not exceed 5.6% in Mexico, 6.0% in Argentina, and 16.7% in Brazil. The reasons for this gender gap in employment in digital platform enterprises providing transport services are structural differences such as access to the necessary assets, commuting, safety factors and long working hours. Studies also show that, while there is no difference in the pay offered to women and men, there is a gap in the income actually received, because of other reasons linked to accumulated experience in working on platforms, preferences about where to work and preferences in terms of driving speed (Cook and others, 2018).

⁶ Zolvers is a firm with a presence in Argentina, Chile, Colombia and Mexico through which it is possible to hire domestic workers, carers for elderly people, electricians and plumbers. The company offers 300,000 active workers the possibility of finding work close to home, access to microcredit, financial training and a free bank account, vocational training and preferential-price health plans (*Madariaga and others, 2019*).

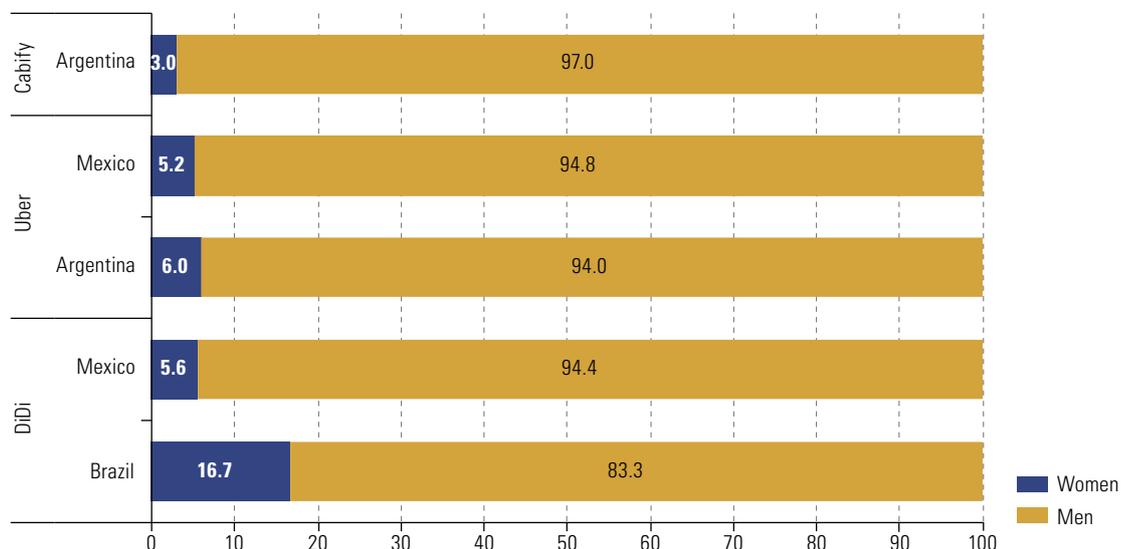
⁷ IguanaFix is a platform created in Argentina, but also present in Brazil and Mexico, which connects users with professional services for the home and services related to automobiles.

⁸ Rappi is a Colombian on-demand product delivery firm with presence in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay.

⁹ Glovo is a Spanish firm that provides services enabling the purchase, collection and delivery of products ordered through a mobile application.

Figure IV.2

Argentina, Brazil and Mexico: women's share of employment on digital platforms offering transport services, by firm, around 2018^a
(Percentages)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of International Finance Corporation (IFC), *Driving Toward Equality: Women, Ride Hailing, and the Sharing Economy*, Washington, D.C., 2018 y J. Madariaga and others, *Economía de plataformas y empleo ¿Cómo es trabajar para una aplicación en Argentina?*, Buenos Aires, Centre for the Implementation of Public Policies Promoting Equity and Growth (CIPPEC)/Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)/International Labour Organization (ILO), 2019.

^a The data for Argentina correspond to 2018 and those for Mexico (Uber) to 2017. The DiDi data are of unknown date.

Digital platforms could also be providing domestic and care workers with a more direct link to clients and greater integration into the labour market. However, absent the necessary regulation, this greater participation in many cases entails renouncing labour rights.

The high turnover of workers, especially female ones, in digital platform enterprises could be associated with a lower quality of employment or the unscrupulous establishment of atypical work arrangements. Perhaps because of this, these forms of employment are being seen as a stopgap until jobs offering better conditions and greater stability can be obtained (OECD, 2017). This in turn generates more frequent shifts between occupational categories, in which people change from being independent contractors to self-employed workers, and in which there are even periods without formal employment ties. In addition, this job instability is likely to make it difficult for firms to accumulate skills; and it would increase labour market volatility and generate poor economic performance (ILO, 2016).

Jobs in the platform economy will pose challenges for existing social protection systems, which are generally linked to continuous, wage-earning, formal and full-time work. This will result in gaps opening up in protection for those working in the platform economy. In most cases, the individuals in question do not have the right to organize, the right to strike or the right to collective bargaining; nor do they have paid holidays, sick leave, health insurance, maternity protection or unemployment insurance. Moreover, by their nature, these types of jobs do not guarantee a fixed income, and they do not offer possibilities for training or career advancement (Vaca Trigo, 2019).

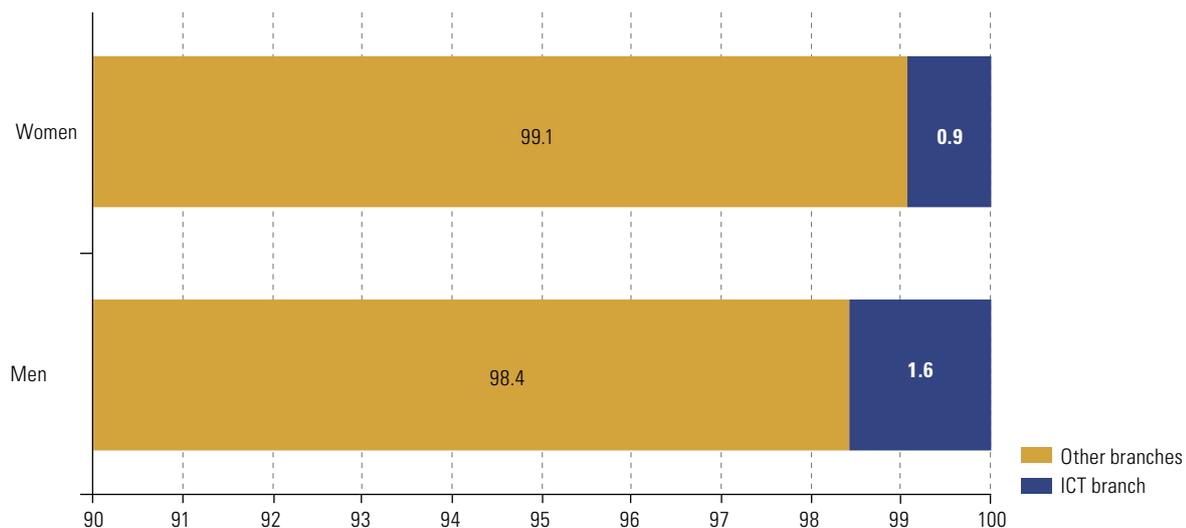
2. Automation processes

Industry 4.0, which represents a convergence between the Internet of Things (IoT) and industrial automation technologies, will have far-reaching implications for the labour market. Not only does it involve connecting objects and machines to coordinate operations and creating smart optimization networks, but it also opens up the possibility of building autonomous systems for the first time in human history. The current situation, characterized by simple and repetitive automated processes and by isolated robotization, will evolve through more complex and flexible processes with collaborative robotization towards intelligent, adaptive processes and, most importantly, autonomous robots. (ECLAC, 2018b).

The software, semiconductor and hardware industries are driving the convergence of the digital ecosystem. Information and communications technology (ICT) services and products constitute one of the most technology-intensive industries, measured by the ratio of investment in research and development (R&D) to sales volume. In 2017, the ICT services industry invested nearly US\$ 76 billion in R&D activities, representing 14.1% of the global investment made by the top 2,500 international firms; and the ICT products industry invested nearly US\$ 114.2 billion in R&D, representing 23.7% of global investment. Both sectors employed more than 10 million workers in these activities (Hernández and others, 2018). The international spread of the software industry in recent years has been led by the United States, followed by India and China; and global software value chains have been established, allowing the ICT services industry to internationalize. Nonetheless, women's participation in the software industry has not kept pace with the sector's growth (see figure IV.3). In Latin America, employment in this sector is still very sparse, accounting for 1.6% of total male employment and just 0.9% in the case of women. Moreover, the gender wage gap in ICT jobs is wider than in other sectors (17 versus 8 percentage points).¹⁰

Figure IV.3

Latin America (13 countries): share of employment in information and communications technology (ICT) branches, weighted average, around 2017^a
(Percentages)



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

Note: The classification by ICT branch membership was based on the categorizations proposed in the International standard industrial classification (ISIC) Rev. 3 and Rev. 4, as applicable to each country. These classifiers include in the ICT sector all production activities of goods and services of industries whose purpose is to facilitate information and its communication through various media.

^a The data correspond to 2017 in the cases of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Peru, Plurinational State of Bolivia and Uruguay; 2016 in the case of Honduras and 2014 in the case of Nicaragua.

A similar process of convergence between digital services is also unfolding among the various segments of the advanced manufacturing ecosystem, as a result of the reorganization of value chains. This involves the addition or elimination of activities and consolidation through mergers and acquisitions, or the expansion of actors throughout the ecosystem. Segments of traditionally separate industries, such as machinery, electronics, semiconductors, software, data processing and telecommunications, are now closely interrelated and offer integrated and bundled cyberphysical products and services.¹¹

The acceleration of automation processes in the context of Industry 4.0 will require new approaches to labour reskilling in sectors of the economy in which job automation is more likely. Advances in robotics and artificial intelligence will have a significant labour market impact. The available information shows that the

¹⁰ Simple average of 2017 data from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Peru, Plurinational State of Bolivia and Uruguay, together with 2016 data from Honduras and 2014 data from Nicaragua, based on the household surveys of the respective countries. Household Survey Data Bank (BADEHOG).

¹¹ Cyberphysical systems are mechanisms that connect physical components controlled by algorithms and integrated with the Internet.

automation of tasks—both routine and non-routine—has caused the average wages of workers in developed countries to flatline, while the pay of highly skilled professionals has grown (Kearney, Hershbein and Boddy, 2015). There is also worry about the unemployment that could result from the extraordinary progress that has been made in artificial intelligence technologies, which, through deep learning make it possible to automate various cognitive tasks that until recently could only be performed by highly skilled individuals.

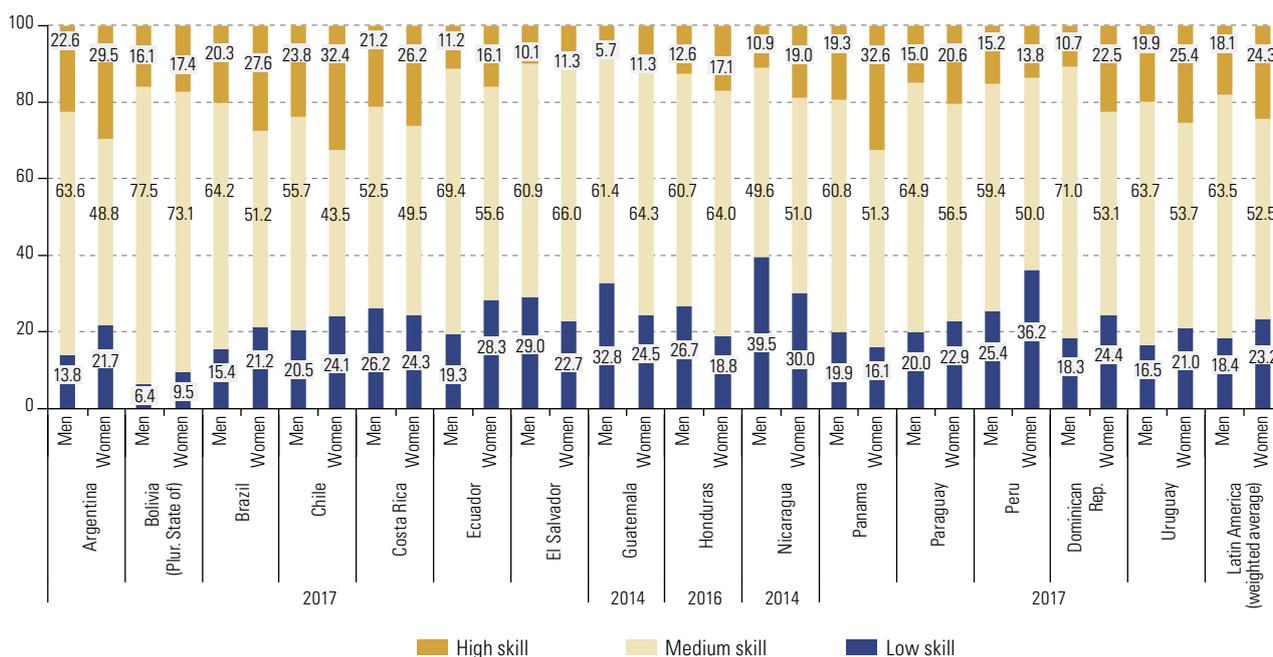
Although it is complex to analyse the potential employment effects in the region in the medium and long terms, what is beyond doubt is that technological transformations will render the current functioning of the labour market obsolete in many dimensions. They could have profound consequences for the dynamics of job creation and destruction, on the characteristics of future jobs, the skills required for them and the ways in which work will be organized.

There is broad agreement that new technologies will displace many low-skill routine jobs, and that human resources with new and different skills will be required to manage and administer them. This provides an opportunity not only to boost productivity, but also to create new jobs with higher skill requirements that involve less routine and repetitive tasks. The challenge for the region is to take advantage of these opportunities in order to improve the quality of the jobs in which women participate. The new technological revolution not only increases the automation of routine tasks, but also generates radical disruptions in other types of activities, owing to the execution of tasks through artificial intelligence (robots and machines).

The Central American countries display a higher concentration of men in low-skill occupations, where the risk of automation is greater; while in South American countries these occupations employ mostly women (see figure IV.4). In most countries, except Peru, women are relatively more numerous than men in highly skilled occupations (with less risk of automation). Nonetheless, given the lower female labour market participation rate, this does not mean that women have more jobs in these occupations in absolute terms.

Figure IV.4

Latin America (15 countries): distribution of the working population, by skill level and sex, around 2017
(Percentages)



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

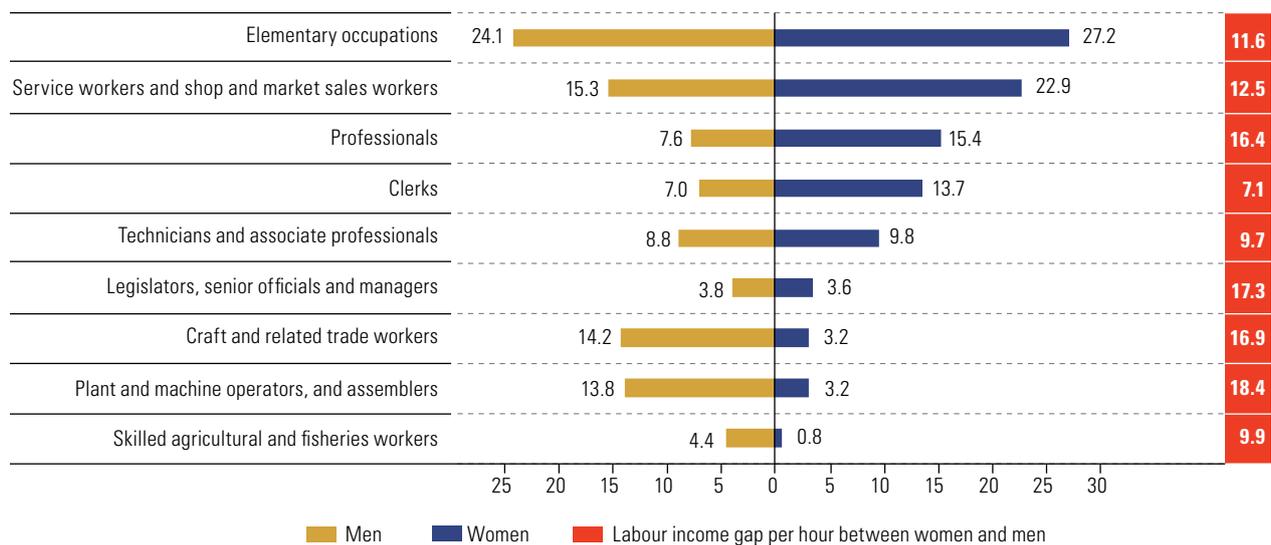
Note: The classification by skill level is based on that proposed by International Standard Classification of Occupations 08 (ISCO 08), which defines four skill levels. For this exercise the levels were regrouped around three categories and adapted for ISCO 88, a classification used by most of the countries analysed. The "Low skill" category includes occupations corresponding to: Unskilled workers (Group 9, ISCO 88). The "Medium skill" category includes occupations corresponding to: Office workers; Service workers and shop and market sales workers; Farmers and skilled agricultural and fisheries workers; Craft and related workers; and Plant and machine operators and fitters (Group 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8; ISCO 88). The "High skill" category includes occupations corresponding to: Members of the executive and legislatures and managerial personnel in the public administration and firms; Scientific and intellectual professionals; and Mid-level technical and professional workers (Group 1, 2 and 3; ISCO 88).

There are many studies that estimate the effects of the spread of automation on employment, including Frey and Osborne (2017), Cadena and others (2017) and OECD (2017). Although their quantitative results differ, all show that there will likely be a significant impact that will change labour market conditions in multiple sectors or activities. These studies do not consider the lag in the implementation of new technologies in Latin America and the Caribbean compared to the more advanced countries. However, a study undertaken by the World Bank (2016) for a group of Latin American countries, which takes into account the lag in the adaptation of new technologies, found that about 50% of jobs would be susceptible to automation.

The effects of automation on male and female employment will depend on its distribution across different occupations and economic sectors. The sexual division of labour is expressed in the labour market through occupational gender segregation, which is manifested in two ways: a high concentration of women in lower-skill professions and occupations, and the lower pay received in occupations where women are relatively more numerous. Over half of all women are employed in low-skill jobs: they are highly concentrated in elementary occupations (27.2%) and service workers and shop and market sales workers (22.9%) (see figure IV.5). In the case of men, there is greater dispersion across the different occupational categories.

Figure IV.5

Latin America (16 countries): distribution of the working population and income gap by type of occupation and sex, weighted averages around 2017^a ^b
(Percentages)



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

Note: The left panel of the graph refers to the total employed population aged 15 or over. The right panel refers to wage-earners. The income gap is the difference in labour income between female wage-earners aged 20 to 49 who work 35 hours or more per week in urban areas and men with the same characteristics.

^a The data refer to 2017, unless a different year is indicated. The countries included are: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala (2014), Honduras (2016), Mexico (2016), Nicaragua (2014), Panama, Peru, Paraguay, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Uruguay.

^b The occupations were aligned the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-88).

The low wages that women are mostly paid can reduce economic incentives to invest in automation processes that are technically feasible but may be highly capital-intensive. Therefore, in all cases, it is important to distinguish between technical feasibility, economic profitability and the political and social acceptance of each specific automation process. It is highly likely that activities involving a high concentration of routine tasks will be undertaken in jobs that pay wages that are so low as to make automation unprofitable. On the other hand, although the digital revolution may not result in job losses for women, it could have the effect of compressing their incomes and making their livelihoods much more precarious (Gurumurthy, Chami and Billorou, 2018). There is also concern that automation processes will have adverse effects on emerging economies by relocating industrial production or putting pressure on wages.

The estimations made jointly by OECD, ECLAC and the Development Bank of Latin America (OECD/ECLAC/CAF, 2016) forecast 3.38 million net job losses by 2030, concentrated mainly in manufacturing. The data available on developed countries show that automation processes in the context of Industry 4.0 have initially been concentrated in manufacturing industry and have mainly affected men. In the region this sector accounts for an average of 11.3% of all women in employment. Compared to the regional average, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and Nicaragua have a larger percentage of women employed in manufacturing; and in these countries (with the exception of Mexico) the percentage of women employed in manufacturing, relative to the total number of women employed, is higher than the percentage of men in manufacturing.

The incorporation of new technologies affects not only the manufacturing sectors, but also service activities, including a number of jobs in which women have a significant presence. Women are likely to face more difficulties in accessing the new jobs that will be created from new technologies because they are now underrepresented in the potential growth sectors.

Frey and Osborne (2017) find that much of the commerce sector consists of occupations that have a higher risk of automation (47% of jobs), such as cashiers, telesales and call services. This sector accounts for 22.1% of female employment in Latin America and the majority are in occupations classified as service workers and shop and market sales workers (68.2% of women in the commerce sector).

On the other hand, occupations related to care tasks are less likely to be automated, as they require high social intelligence skills, such as emotional support and empathy (Frey and Osborne, 2017; Cadena and others, 2017; OECD, 2017). Nonetheless, despite the low likelihood of automation, a large proportion of employment in this sector is female, so the absolute number of women workers at risk of being displaced remains high.

The study by Weller, Gontero and Campbell (2019), proposes a change in the method for estimating the risk of technological substitution of human labour developed by Frey and Osborne that takes labour segmentation into account. This difference means that a large proportion of people employed in low-productivity segments undertake their economic activities far removed from the technological domain. To this end, the study assigns a 0% probability of substitution to activities undertaken in segments with lower productivity and greater informality, where women are overrepresented (one in every two employed in the region). Nonetheless, although these jobs are still far from automation, they are low-wage jobs, with higher levels of vulnerability and meagre labour and social benefits. Accordingly, the productive transformation may not be changing women's employment, since most of them would remain concentrated in highly precarious sectors.

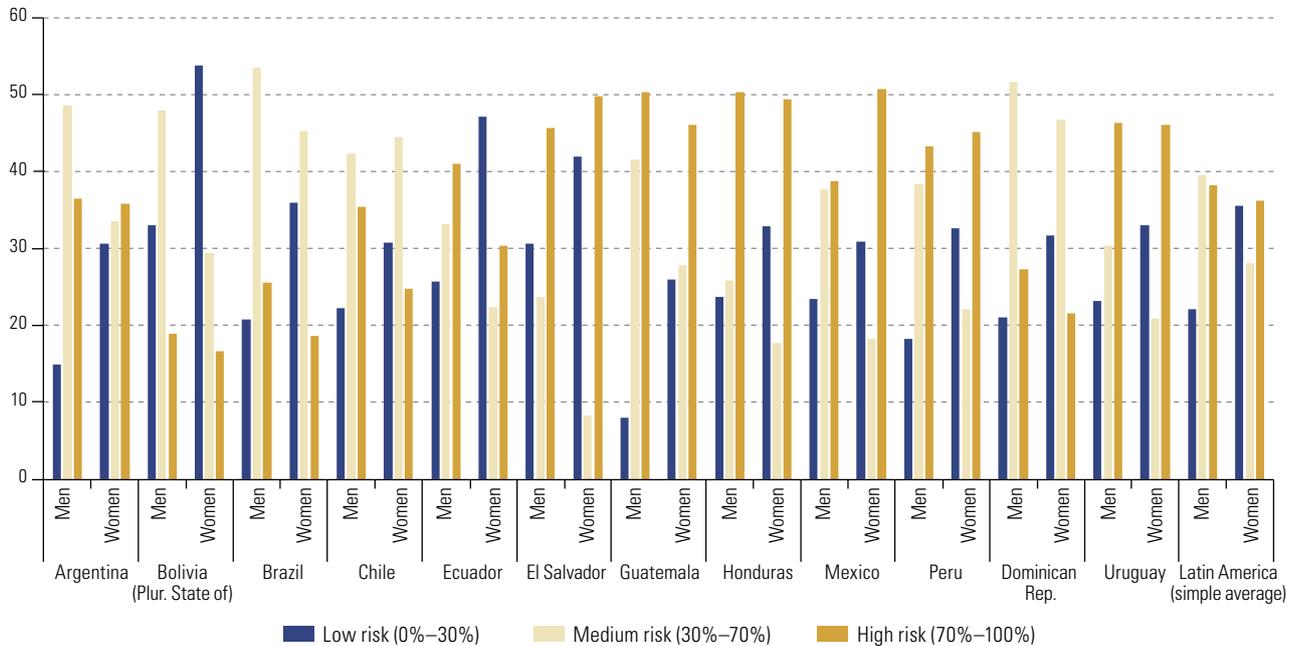
The results for 12 Latin American countries show a higher proportion of men than women in jobs of high- and medium-substitution risk (see figure IV.6). Although in all countries the proportion of women in jobs with a low risk of technological substitution is higher than that of men, the situation varies between countries in terms of the proportion of employed persons subject to high technological substitution risk. In El Salvador, Mexico and Peru, a larger proportion of employed women are at high risk of substitution than men, while in Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Guatemala and the Dominican Republic, the opposite is the case.

For Latin America, there is a high risk of jobs being rendered precarious by technological change, owing to the structural inequalities that characterize the region's labour markets and high rates of informality, which could even increase as a result of job losses caused by automation (Weller, 2017; ECLAC, 2017b). It is important to analyse not only the effects on job displacement, but also the jobs that could be created at the same time as a result of technological, demographic and environmental changes (Weller, Gontero and Campbell, 2019).

Reskilling for reintegration into the labour market could generate an improvement in the quality of employment, a reduction in repetitive and routine tasks and an opportunity for people in future to be employed in tasks that foster productivity and economic growth, while allowing for a fairer distribution of the associated gains. However, this requires a paradigm shift in the rationale of production to allow for continuous training to be incorporated into the value chain (Bensusán, Eichhorst and Rodríguez, 2017).

Figure IV.6

Latin America (12 countries): composition of employment in high- and medium-productivity sectors, by technological substitution risk and sex, around 2016^a
(Percentages)



Source: J. Weller, S. Gontero and S. Campbell, “Cambio tecnológico y empleo: una perspectiva latinoamericana”, *Macroeconomics of Development*, No. 201 (LC/TS.2019/37), Santiago, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), 2019.

^a The data refer to 2016 in all countries, except for Brazil, Chile, Mexico and the Plurinational State of Bolivia, where they correspond to 2015, and Guatemala, where they correspond to 2014.

In this connection, the region's social protection systems need strengthening, based on a gender and life cycle perspective, to offer alternatives to persons who fail to adapt or are unable to reintegrate, in the context of the changes that may occur in employment as Industry 4.0 unfolds. For example, some individuals could find themselves in very different occupations from those they pursued during their professional career—especially women who could be made redundant by automation and, owing to their current stage of life, or for other reasons, are unable to find a new work space.

The analysis of the effects of technological changes on labour market opportunities and working conditions, both in general and those of women in particular, is an urgent and largely pending task in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.

B. Education for the future of work

Given the pace of technological change and its implications for production systems, one of the key challenges for the future of work in the region is to provide the population with the skills and abilities needed to operate in a context involving both change and uncertainty. While the right to education has always been considered a key element of development and a fundamental condition for full participation in economic, political and social life, in the context of technological change it is a key factor as one of the main policy responses to the potential effects of automation on employment (ECLAC, 2018a).

The technological revolution will inevitably produce changes in working arrangements, in the organization of jobs and in the execution of tasks (Weller, 2017), which will imply increasing demand for new and more advanced skills, and will also hasten the obsolescence of existing skills (ILO, 2017), which could either present an opportunity or else pose new barriers for women.

Technological change needs to be addressed in school, higher education and continuing education systems. In particular, it is important to prioritize regular training in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM disciplines) as well as the development of skills to undertake the tasks that are least susceptible to automation (ECLAC, 2018a). Here it is essential to address the situation of women in STEM disciplines, especially the obstacles and gender barriers that are hindering their training to face the challenges of technological change, barriers that even precede the current technological revolution and are at the base of social, economic and political systems. If not explicitly addressed in the education system, the process of technological change could reproduce gender inequality, or even widen existing gaps.

According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), women and girls are 25% less likely than men to know how to use digital technology for basic purposes, four times less likely to know how to program computers and 13 times less likely to file for a technology patent (UNESCO, 2019a). This is also reflected in women's small share of high-tech jobs, as technology is traditionally viewed as a male domain. Such jobs involve non-routine and cognitive tasks that are in demand in the digital economy, where employment expansion and real wage increase is much faster (Gurumurthy, Chami and Alemany Billorou, 2018). Moreover, the three Latin American countries among the 20 countries with the largest volume of artificial intelligence activities (Argentina, Brazil and Mexico) are also among the five with the largest gaps between men and women in these activities (Weller, Gontero and Campbell, 2019, p. 57).

In addition to low rates of participation in technological jobs, women are underrepresented in the world of research, where they have more restricted access to funding, and they are underrepresented in prestigious universities and among tenured university professors, which puts them at an even greater disadvantage in terms of high-impact scientific publications (UNESCO, 2015). For example, between 2011 and 2015, women represented 38% of authors of scientific articles in Chile, 39% in Colombia and 38% in Mexico. Brazil had the highest percentage of female authors at 49% (López-Bassols and others, 2018).

Women are also underrepresented in key sectors of science related to technological change—and also to climate change—whether as skilled workers, professionals or decision makers; and although they are fairly well represented in some scientific fields, including health, agriculture and environmental management, they are a minority in areas that are vital for technological change and for the sustainability of development, such as energy, engineering, transportation, information technology and computing (Huyer, 2015).

1. Gender gaps in the area of science, technology, engineering and mathematics

Significant progress has been made globally in terms of women's access to education, especially in the gross enrolment rate, where gender parity spans preschool to secondary school level. In Latin America and the Caribbean, gender parity has been achieved in the gross enrolment rate for 2018 at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels (UNESCO, 2019c).

However, parity in enrolment does not guarantee greater gender equality in education, since inequality persists even in the presence of larger numbers of women. For example, women tend to be over- or underrepresented in certain sectors of the labour market, as a consequence of the segmentation that exists in education. The persistent underrepresentation of women in STEM careers is a reflection of this segregation.

(a) Gender gaps in education in STEM disciplines

Gender gaps in the area of science, technology, engineering and mathematics can be seen throughout the educational process, including entry, progression, retention and re-entry into education (UNESCO, 2018b). In the case of science, the gap between women and men widens significantly in the transition from bachelor's to postgraduate levels (such as master's and doctorate degrees) and then into research and professional careers (UNESCO, 2019b).

It has been claimed that girls' participation in scientific areas dwindles over the life cycle, as a result of the predominance of stereotypes and gender biases, reflected in family pressures, expectations and lack of role models (López-Bassols and others, 2018). While girls tend to do better than boys in mathematics at primary school third grade, this advantage is lost when they are in sixth grade (UNESCO, 2016). The results of international standardized measurements reflect the gender gap between boys and girls in education systems, in terms of different levels of confidence and interest in areas of skill and knowledge development, such as mathematics, science and reading (OECD, 2019).

The gap is accentuated by the choice of subjects to study at the secondary level, where girls are progressively less represented in STEM subjects. This also reduces their likelihood of advancing to tertiary or higher education programmes in the same field (UNESCO, 2019b). This progressive alienation from, or apparent loss of interest in, STEM disciplines among girls reveals the predominance of stereotypes in education. Rather than representing an individual decision, it is the result of an environment that does not facilitate or contribute to the development of the same type of skills in women as in men. Gender stereotypes are transmitted through society and within the education system, by teachers, the hidden curriculum and the scarcity of models, and by the underrepresentation of women in science and technology and in positions of power (UNESCO, 2016).

In addition, interactions within the educational environment, and in the family and among friendships, compounded by family beliefs and expectations, educational and socioeconomic level, and peer influence, all contribute to girls' low rates of participation. This is also manifested in the form of internal barriers, reflected in the lack of self-confidence, stereotyped beliefs that dissociate women from science and technology, given that the stereotype of technology as a male domain is generalized in many contexts (UNESCO, 2019a; ECLAC, 2014).

The future work scenario requires rethinking the education system and contemplating changes in both the explicit and implicit curricula. On the one hand, the perpetuation of the exclusive care responsibilities of women and the transfer to the Internet of violent gender behaviour towards girls, boys and women, require profound curricular changes. On the other hand, it is necessary to prepare girls to increase their digital skills and their capacity to solve problems creatively and collaboratively. These resources are necessary for all careers, even more so in these constantly changing scenarios. This requires the incorporation of information technology as a central and cross-cutting part of curricula at all levels.

While training in STEM disciplines has been linked primarily to traditional or academic courses, it also includes technical or vocational education or training. UNESCO has recently reported that technical and vocational training programmes account for 22% of enrolment in upper secondary education and have a majority male enrolment (UNESCO, 2019c).

In 2015, the Regional Forum for Latin America on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) recognized the need to strengthen the links between the teaching of science, technology, engineering and mathematics, and technical and vocational education and training, noting the relevance of the former for the latter, as it facilitates both horizontal educational progressions (with other disciplines) and vertical ones (with higher educational levels). In addition, the importance of promoting STEM education among women was highlighted, in order to encourage their future participation in technical specialties linked to technological disciplines that offer better economic returns (OREALC, 2015). However, women in the region face gender inequalities in technical and vocational education, which intersect with barriers in the educational and labour domains (see box IV.3).

Box IV.3**Technical and vocational education and training for the future of work**

Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) (or technical-vocational education) is a field that is beginning to gain strength in a context of technological change and innovation; however, the region still faces challenges due to gaps and inequalities in social development, which leave it ill-prepared for technological changes and make the transition from the education system to the labour market more difficult.

In the field of education, it has been shown that women who pursue technical careers in traditionally male areas face acute gender discrimination. The gender stereotypes present in the education domain condition their vocational choice and the range of courses offered by the institutions. This then reproduces gender segregation and generates training environments that are hostile to women. Discrimination is manifested both in their educational trajectories and in the transition to paid work, where they face even higher levels of unemployment.

The segregation of careers and trades is also present in the courses offered and in work practice. It is also linked to the gender socialization exercised by both the family and actors in the school system, and to the burden of domestic work and care, which serves as a barrier in the training, transition to work and integration of young women students and graduates in technical education.

Hierarchical relationships are also present in educational settings, particularly in male-dominated teaching and management roles, and in work environments with the unequal valuation of the technical capacities of women and men. With the same training, treatment and opportunities are unequal, and in many cases women's technical knowledge or the authority they exercise in the public sphere or in positions of power is questioned, merely because they have flouted their subordinate gender role and have broken stereotypes.

For this reason, with a view to the future of work, it is crucial to strengthen and promote gender mainstreaming strategies in technical and vocational education, whether in public governing bodies or programme executors. This requires increasing incorporation of the gender perspective as an integral dimension in the planning, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of technical-vocational education policies, applying a gender perspective when evaluating the programmes and policies that are implemented around technical-vocational education, as well as the impact that this type of training has on young people, especially women, and the improvement of their employment opportunities.

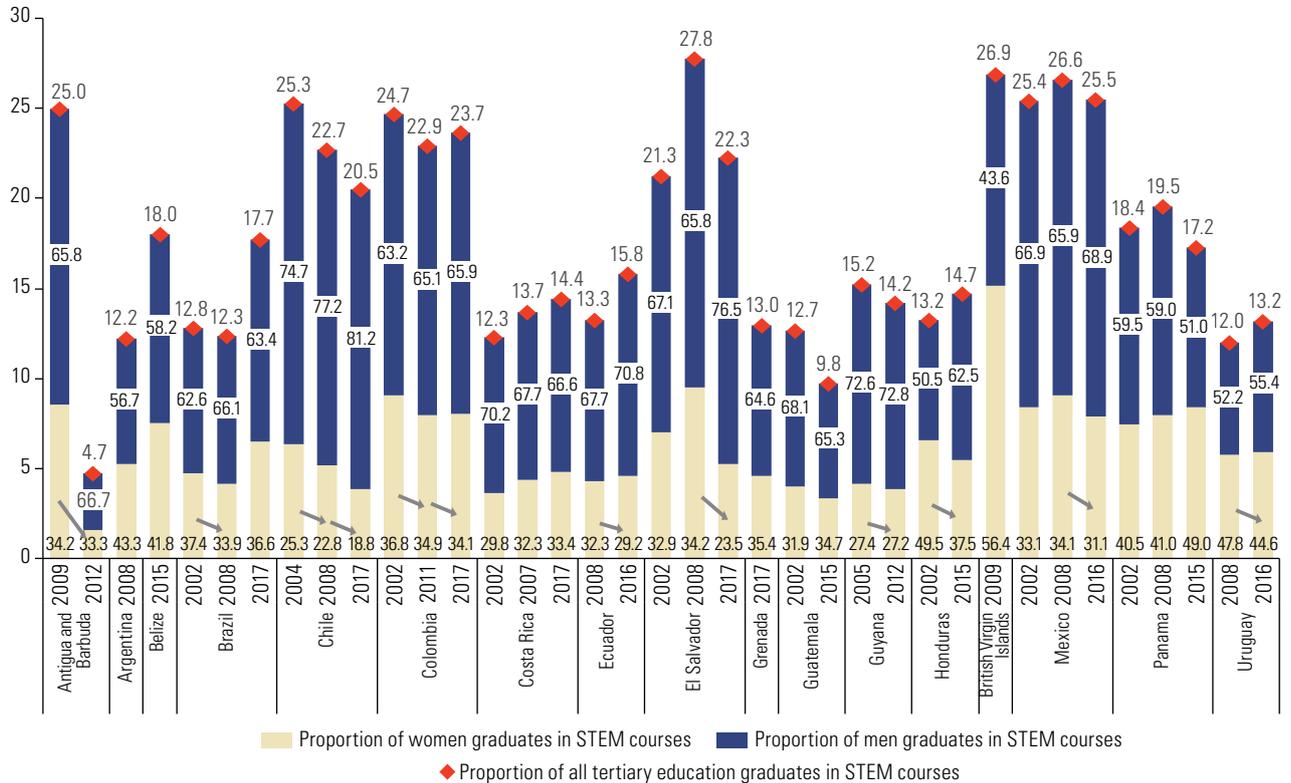
Source: C. Muñoz, "Educación técnico-profesional y autonomía económica de las mujeres jóvenes en América Latina y el Caribe", *Gender Affairs series*, No. 155 (LC/TS.2019/26), Santiago, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), 2019; S. García, "Trayectorias de mujeres educación técnico-profesional y trabajo en el Ecuador", *Gender Affairs series*, No. 156 (LC/TS.2019/28), Santiago, ECLAC, 2019; C. Bloj, "Trayectorias de mujeres: educación técnico-profesional y trabajo en la Argentina", *Gender Affairs series*, No. 145 (LC/TS.2017/25), Santiago, ECLAC, 2017, April; A. Buquet and H. Moreno, "Trayectorias de mujeres: educación técnico-profesional y trabajo en México", *Gender Affairs series*, No. 146 (LC/TS.2017/35), Santiago, ECLAC, 2017.

In higher education, men account for the majority of enrolments in courses related to engineering, manufacturing, construction, technologies and communication sciences, while women are the majority on courses such as education, arts, health, welfare, social sciences, journalism, business and law (UNESCO, 2019b). In more than 120 countries, the proportion of female students in tertiary education programmes in the fields of engineering, industry and construction and information and communication technologies (ICTs) is just over 25% (UNESCO, 2019c).

In countries such as Chile, Colombia and Mexico, women enrolled in STEM courses at the tertiary level did not exceed 35% of the total enrolment in 2015; and, at the postgraduate, specifically doctorate, level, women's participation was around 40% in general, but drops to 20% in computer science (López-Bassols and others, 2018). It should be noted that in some of the region's countries, the percentage of women graduating in STEM disciplines at the tertiary level has been declining (see figure IV.7).

Figure IV.7

Latin America and the Caribbean (17 countries and territories): graduates in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), by sex, between 2002 and 2017 (Percentages)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), *Social Panorama of Latin America, 2018* (LC/PUB.2019/3-P), Santiago, 2019.

(b) Occupational transition in the STEM area

Although there are more female than male graduates overall, women graduates are a minority in STEM disciplines (see figure IV.7). The underrepresentation of women in these disciplines translates into underrepresentation among information and communication technology specialists worldwide: in OECD countries, 5.5% of male workers are employed in an ICT-related specialty, compared to just 1.4% in the case of women; although these workers are a small group, these specialties involve well-paid jobs in high-demand and with good career prospects (OECD, 2016).

Gender gaps in the STEM areas are deepening in the transition from tertiary or higher education to the labour market, and there is a heavy loss of women, particularly during the transition from education to the early stages of the career, but also throughout career progression to more senior positions (UNESCO, 2018b). In countries such as Chile and Mexico, the female share in STEM-related occupations does not exceed 40%, with a predominance of women in health areas and underrepresentation in science and engineering (López-Bassols and others, 2018).

The underrepresentation of women in occupations in the STEM area, and particularly in the sciences, in general is not always explained by differences in their training, experience or abilities; but it is linked to cultural patterns and stereotypes that are detrimental to women's chances of professional success and their ability to assume positions of power (Albornoz and others, 2018).

An analysis of women's participation in research activities in seven countries of Latin America and the Caribbean and in Spain highlighted the persistence of barriers to access at higher levels, which affects the professional careers of women scientists. It also revealed the relative scarcity of women in the decision-making spheres of national science and technology systems, either in academic institutions or

in research centres. There are also persistent negative gaps in the remuneration of women in scientific careers that are not always explained by differences in training, experience or skills. Women researchers who do succeed in pursuing a professional career in Latin America are mainly concentrated in government and higher education institutions, where they reach levels close to parity, but to a lesser extent in private organizations (López-Bassols and others, 2018).

In Latin America, the main gender gaps and barriers in scientific production are manifested in the absence and invisibility of women in science, inequality in access to training and research, and obstacles to entering and remaining in scientific careers, research groups and senior positions (Albornoz and others, 2018). Data from the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) on 12 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean relating to women's share in patenting activities in 2007–2016 show that, on average, 27.8% of patents in the region include at least one female inventor (López-Bassols and others, 2018).

2. Challenges for education in STEM disciplines

Critical aspects of women's participation in STEM careers include those related both to accessing the education system and to remaining in it, as well as their employment in jobs involving those disciplines, which affects the situation in which women find themselves to meet the challenges of technological change.

As regards access, one strategy to eliminate gender inequalities has been to encourage women, especially younger ones, to break stereotypes in the educational and occupational spheres and to enter more prestigious and traditionally male courses, for example in the STEM disciplines. Although this could broaden their employment prospects, it does not necessarily transform the sexual division of labour or the unequal valuation of productive and reproductive work. Women scientists continue to face the same gender barriers in employment as those who work in other occupational fields. On the other hand, Montúfar (2018) warns that if the female labour force moved to these highly valued professions, there would be a tendency to abandon other occupations or tasks centred on social reproduction; however, this trend would only involve one group of women, since the tasks in question continue to be performed by other women —migrants, rural women, Afrodescendent and indigenous women, who face greater entry barriers in STEM-related occupations and remain in more precarious occupations of lower prestige and value.

With regard to the permanency of women in the field of science and technology, the metaphor of a “leaking pipe” has been used to illustrate women's progressive abandonment of scientific careers and of their research trajectories. González (2018) questions the use of this expression because it suggests that it is women themselves who abandon those careers, without considering the fact that the structures of scientific institutions and the dynamics of research careers are responsible for this situation, and ignoring the structural dimension of social inequality between men and women.

According to studies in the field of technical and vocational education, women who study and graduate from traditionally “male” careers also have difficulties in finding a job because their technical knowledge is called into question (Bloj, 2017; Buquet and Moreno, 2017; García, 2019). A similar situation could occur in the scientific and technological domain. For this reason, an expression that goes beyond the “leaking pipe” metaphor is the “Matilda effect”¹² which alludes to the lack of recognition given to women's work in science. Therefore, for the future of women's work, it is essential to strengthen education in STEM disciplines, by addressing the obstacles that exist in the educational domain, but also in the sphere of paid work where women will be participate. In this connection, the role of the public sector is crucial, to regulate the new forms of work that are emerging in the context of technological change, as also is the private sector's role in promoting jobs that contribute to gender equality and women's autonomy.

¹² The “Matilda effect” refers to the social prejudice that causes women's scientific achievements to be ignored and often attributed to men.

C. The information society and its impact on women's lives

In 2017, more than half of the world's population was using the Internet and 56% did so through mobile subscriptions. In early 2018, more than 5 billion individual mobile phone users were registered, representing a penetration rate of 66 per cent of the world's population; of these connections, 57 per cent were smartphones (ECLAC, 2018b). In addition, firms that operate digital platforms are becoming part of all sectors of the economy. On the other hand, the use of social networks has intensified and the proportions of active users in the population over 13 years of age are 83% in South America, 81% in Central America and 59% in the Caribbean. The rates in Argentina, Aruba, Curaçao and Peru are above 90% (Kemp, 2019).

Huge amounts of data of multiple origins and characteristics are produced, stored and exchanged at every moment: data from economic transactions mediated by computer systems, IoT data, data from firms and Governments, including health services and census records, data from public and private surveillance devices, data from smart phones and satellites, and data from non-commercial activities, which are part of everyday life, such as those generated by doing Internet searches, using communication platforms, accessing applications to monitor health, among others.

As more and more data are generated as by-products of the use of technological devices and services, multiple aspects of the world, such as events, objects, processes and people become visible, knowable and shareable over the Internet: the world is being reborn through data (Abreu and Bailur, 2018; Zuboff, 2015).

This constant generation of data opens up a great opportunity to bridge the information gaps needed to make the situation of the different groups of women visible and to monitor the countries' progress towards greater gender equality. Although big data, a by-product of the digital revolution, have not been intentionally produced with criteria that guarantee their statistical reliability, they offer the opportunity to have data in almost real time, disaggregated and for various aspects that affect gender inequality. The integration of these non-traditional data sources with information from administrative records, surveys and censuses has enormous potential for the production of detailed, relevant and timely information (Abreu and Bailur, 2018).

For example, the data captured by employment intermediation platforms allow for large-scale information, low costs and high levels of disaggregation of the jobs that are being generated, the skills most in demand and the profiles of jobseekers, and for identifying the existence of gender discrimination in job offers (Abreu and Bailur, 2018; Zuboff, 2015; Vaca Trigo, 2019).

Moreover, the large amount of data that is generated in a georeferenced manner also makes it possible to know the situation of women at very precise geographical levels. This is undoubtedly a valuable tool that can be used in situations where information is needed on the number of victims following extreme weather events and natural disasters, among other possible uses.

In an increasingly interconnected and globalized world, social networks have revolutionized communications, allowing people to stay connected to family, friends, professional networks, sports, recreation, and even emotional support. Its widespread use in different population groups has transformed the way news, information, opinions and other phenomena are produced and disseminated (see box IV.4).

In addition, the easy access and real-time global reach offered by social networks, has made them an indispensable tool enabling the women's and feminist movement to connect and have greater impact. The use of social networks has served as a channel to denounce gender-based violence against women and to disseminate campaigns to raise awareness on gender equality issues.

Box IV.4

Digital platforms at the service of migrant women: the case of "Mujer Migrante" in Mexico

The increased connectivity available to migrants thanks to the development of digital technologies has improved women's migratory experience. Having greater flows of information about the host country helps them make a somewhat more informed decision, as the possibility of sending and receiving messages, making video calls, or transferring money enables them to stay in touch with their families on a daily basis, thus transforming the distant relationship into one of proximity and everyday life.

In order to provide reliable and timely communication and information services for migrant women and their families and to reduce the risks they face due to their gender or migratory status, the Government of Mexico has been running the *Mujer Migrante* (Migrant Woman) Programme since 2013. This programme is targeted on the national population—both in Mexico and in the United States—as well as the foreign population—particularly from Central America—whether settled in Mexico or transiting through it.

The programme operates through a multimedia platform that includes infographics, tutorials, videos, courses and images in animated gif format. These deal with migration issues, procedures, services, support programmes, inclusive language, health, risks when migrating, tips for adapting to a new country, workers' testimonies and migrant care manuals, among many other resources.

As part of this initiative, the following set of free downloadable applications have been developed to enable women to receive assistance and information on their rights through a mobile device. For example, the *Mujer Migrante* chat service, for iPhone and Android, provides access from a mobile device to the online support service of the www.mujermigrante.mx portal. It receives migrant women's questions and doubts and directs them to institutions and organizations that can provide them with support. In addition, *iAyuda!* for Android, presents standard questions about emergency situations. The answers offer the functionality of direct call to the phone number at which the emergency can be attended to; and *Manos Amigas* for Android, contains a database for each state, with the telephone numbers and addresses of shelters, hospitals, location maps and migrant support centres, among others. The *Guía legal pro-mujeres* (Pro-women Legal Guide) for Android provides clear and simple information on the laws that protect the rights of migrant women in Mexico, together with contact information should they need support to defend those rights.

The Programme also has a Facebook page (4,582 followers) and a YouTube channel that has over 150 videos lasting between two and 12 minutes that provide useful information for those who intend to migrate, have already started the process, are in a foreign country or intend to return. Many of these videos have been produced in indigenous languages (Mixtec, Mazahua, Purépecha, Nahuatl, Otomí among others).

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of National Institute of Women (INMUJERES) *Informe nacional exhaustivo de México en cumplimiento de la Plataforma de Acción de Beijing*, 2019 [online] https://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/informe_beijing25_mexico_final.pdf.

The digital revolution also enables countries to develop technological tools that facilitate access to State services, increase communication with users and the availability of information, increase coverage, reduce associated costs and improve the quality of public services. The availability of safe transport services, integrated medical and care services, timely information on formalities and tax payments, and online care improves people's quality of life while at the same time reducing the burden of unpaid work.

The future presents complex and contradictory dynamics in which technologies open new windows for more efficient use and greater social ownership of information, while firms seek to consolidate their market dominance by controlling the data.

The digital economy heralds a new logic of capitalist accumulation whose business model is based on data extraction, concentrating economic power in the hands of a few global firms, located mainly in the United States and China, in a process that has serious economic, social and political implications (Gurumurthy, Chami and Alemany Billorou, 2018). This model involves providing individuals with products or services online, which, being free of charge, require as a counterpart the condition that the firms have control and use of the

information generated by the users. In most cases, the ownership of this information, how it will be used, and its control and governance mechanisms are not clearly established in advance.

In this sense, the data revolution has significant implications for people's privacy, security and freedom. It triggers an alert because, in many cases, both the private sector and the State process, store, use, sell and exchange information about individuals without their free, explicit and informed consent to hand over their data. According to a survey conducted by Statista in 2018, 59% of Internet users in Mexico, as well as 55% in Brazil and Colombia, believe their data is being misused (Kemp, 2019).

This situation gives rise to legitimate concern over the enhanced "capacity of Governments, companies and individuals to undertake surveillance, interception and data collection, which may violate or abuse human rights, in particular the right to privacy," (United Nations, 2018a). The violation of this basic human right, which is included in the United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and a number of other international commitments assumed by States, may affect the enjoyment of other human rights, in particular the right to freedom of expression and to hold opinions without interference.

The issue of privacy was addressed from a gender perspective in the resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 17 December 2018, noting that "violations and abuses of the right to privacy in the digital age may affect all individuals, with particular effects on women" (United Nations, 2018a). These include body tracking through technological tools that provide certain services in exchange for sensitive real-time data on their health and location, for example.

Applications in the health and wellness category that can be obtained from application stores include those that enable women to track their menstrual periods. These tools have the capacity to collect a wide range of information, ranging from perceptible physiological patterns and associated symptoms, to moods, types of food, sexual behaviour, the consumption or otherwise of substances such as alcohol and tobacco, as well as online shopping habits and Internet browsing patterns. The data entered in these tools can be traded with other firms, without the user's full knowledge, in order to generate personalized market strategies.

Concern about the issue of privacy in a world of big data, from a gender perspective, is not focused solely on how States or private firms may use the information. In fact, for many women, the first concern emerges from their own inner circle. Smartphones and social network accounts, to mention a few examples, represent new frontiers that are being crossed by couples, relatives, co-workers, political opponents and other subjects who seek to exert control over women.

States face a major challenge in the management of sensitive data and the public policies focused on securing them. Recently, ECLAC has identified information management as a significant challenge in the process of forming unified registers of violence against women in the countries of the region. The technological platforms that host them must make it possible to integrate data obtained from the different State agencies to which women victims of violence turn —police, and organizations in the areas of health, justice, social protection, among others— while ensuring their data are protected. Data anonymity must be preserved vis-à-vis State users unless it is absolutely necessary to identify the women victims. This requires, among other things, generating differentiated credentials for access to information according to the role and hierarchy of those who intend to access it. In addition to privacy violations, the misuse of these records can lead to other serious violations of women's rights, exposing them, for example, to arbitrary discrimination at work, at school or in the community because they have been victims of gender-based violence.

Cyberattacks targeting government information systems are being reported increasingly often. In Chile, for example, in June 2019 alone, the Computer Security Incident Response Team of the Ministry of the Interior and Public Security recorded almost 500 cyberattacks on computer networks, most of them targeted on State systems (Chile, Ministry of the Interior and Public Security, 2019). The main threats to the public sector include data hijacking, or the use of ransomware, where sensitive information can be captured by third parties in exchange for large sums in cryptocurrencies. This type of incident, in addition to entailing high costs for States to recover their databases, also compromise the integrity of the databases themselves and generate enormous risks to individual privacy.

Given this complex scenario, there is no doubt that “the promotion of and respect for the right to privacy are important to the prevention of violence, including gender-based violence, abuse and sexual harassment, in particular against women and children.” (United Nations, 2018a). The right to privacy must be based on existing international and national obligations, including international human rights law. In this regard, States should consider “developing, reviewing, implementing and strengthening gender-responsive policies that promote and protect the right of all individuals to privacy in the digital age” (United Nations, 2018a). Private firms, in turn, should inform their users “in a clear and easily accessible way about the collection, use, sharing and retention of their data that may affect their right to privacy and to establish transparency policies, as appropriate (United Nations, 2018a).

It is urgent to take steps to reconcile the use of technologies with the strategic development interests of the countries of the region. The data revolution must move from the logic of data extraction to one of information generation for the citizenry. The benefits of big data cannot be left solely in the hands of technology giants, but instead should be exploited under a public goods rationale, in which there is greater transparency and control by citizens. States should promote actions that stimulate non-commercial applications of connectivity and information and serve as the basis for services that enhance women’s autonomy, by promoting women’s technological association and agency and holding institutions accountable (Gurumurthy, Chami and Alemany Billorou, 2018).

D. Violence against women in digital media: old patterns, new challenges

The rapid spread of information technologies in recent decades has led to substantial changes in lifestyles and in the way people relate to each other. It has also reorganized the ways in which power relations are manifested in society, fostering the global propagation of discourses and images that reinforce traditional gender stereotypes and roles, while at the same time creating a powerful scenario for the articulation of women’s and feminist movements that challenge and confront these patriarchal, discriminatory and violent cultural patterns.

The United Nations Human Rights Council defines online violence against women as extending “to any act of gender-based violence against women that is committed, assisted or aggravated in part or fully by the use of ICT, such as mobile phones and smartphones, the Internet, social media platforms or email, against a woman because she is a woman, or affects women disproportionately” (United Nations, 2018b). Similarly to what happens in spaces outside the Internet, violence against women through digital media manifests itself in multiple, interrelated and, in many cases, recurring forms, with the specific feature of transcending national borders in the contemporary globalized world (United Nations, 2017a). At the same time, it also feeds on the intersections between gender inequality and other inequalities present in society which are linked to socioeconomic status, ethnic and racial affiliation, age, place of residence and physical and mental capacities. This problem has been addressed at the global and regional levels in various instruments and regulations, as described in box IV.5.

Box IV.5

International and regional framework on gender-based violence perpetrated against women through digital environments

Internet access and use is increasingly seen as a fundamental human right (United Nations, 2016), so States must ensure that the digital space is safe and accessible to all. In this regard, there is an urgent need to raise awareness of the existence and seriousness of digital violence and its clear gender bias, for its subsequent treatment through public policies aimed at prevention, protection and reparation for victims, punishment of the perpetrators and the eradication of all forms of gender-based discrimination and violence against women (United Nations, 2018b). There is also a need for clear and effective institutional policies regarding internet governance, its regulation and the responsibilities of private intermediaries in ensuring that the rights of women and girls who use their services are safeguarded.

Box IV.5 (concluded)

International women's human rights instruments, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, predate the development of the Internet and current information and communication technologies. Consequently, they also predate the new forms of violence against women perpetrated "through technology-mediated environments, such as contemporary forms of violence occurring online and in other digital environments " (United Nations, 2017a). However, these same instruments, complemented by those of a regional nature, clearly establish obligations on States to combat all forms of discrimination against women, even those that are not explicitly mentioned.

The conclusions agreed to at the fifty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women urged Governments and invited civil society "to Support the development and use of information and communications technology and social media as a resource for the empowerment of women and girls, including access to information on the prevention of and response to violence against women and girls; and develop mechanisms to combat the use of information and communications technology and social media to perpetrate violence against women and girls, including the criminal misuse of information and communications technology for sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, child pornography and trafficking in women and girls, and emerging forms of violence, such as cyberstalking, cyberbullying and privacy violations that compromise the safety of women and girls" (United Nations, 2013).

In addition, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women has formulated a number of general recommendations and concluding observations on the subject, such as general recommendation No. 35 on gender-based violence against women, which states that the Convention is fully applicable to technological environments, such as the Internet and digital spaces (United Nations, 2017a); and general recommendation No. 33 on women's access to justice, which recognizes the important role of digital spaces and information and communication technologies in empowering women and transforming cultural and social stereotypes (United Nations, 2015).

At the same time, the Regional Gender Agenda, which identifies the right to a life free from all forms of violence and discrimination as a critical dimension of gender equality and women's autonomy, explicitly mentions cyberviolence as one of its manifestations. The Santo Domingo Consensus (ECLAC, 2013b), the most comprehensive in this area, establishes the commitment of Latin American and Caribbean States to design mechanisms, including legislation, and sanctions that aim to combat the use of information and communication technologies to commit violent acts against women and girls, and to promote knowledge and analysis of the risks that exist in relation to cybersecurity, sexual exploitation, human trafficking, child pornography and harassment in the technological media.

In the Montevideo Strategy for the Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda within the Sustainable Development Framework by 2030 (ECLAC, 2017a), States assume a number of commitments aimed at implementing public policies that contribute to eliminating gender inequalities and guaranteeing the human rights and autonomy of women in all their diversity. Among the agreed measures, States undertake to "Design and carry out periodical ex ante and ex post assessments of the effects of technologies with respect to gender equality in such areas as [...] harassment and violence through technological means..." (ECLAC, 2017a, Measure 7a).

Meanwhile, the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM) and the Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention (MESECVI), through their delegates and experts, issued the Declaration of Pachuca, in which they expressed their commitment to "Foster the self-regulation of media—including ICTs—and their oversight through autonomous bodies that include citizen participation and, similarly, promote the fulfilment of international norms, respecting both freedom of expression—including the right of women and girls to information and communication—and the right to non-discrimination;" (CIM/ InterAmerican Commission of Women/Committee of Experts of the Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention, 2014).

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of United Nations, *The promotion, protection and enjoyment of human rights on the Internet* (A/HRC/32/L.20), 2016; *Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences on online violence against women and girls from a human rights perspective** (A/HRC/38/47), 2018; *General recommendation No. 35 on gender-based violence against women, updating general recommendation No. 19* (CEDAW/C/GC/35), 2017; *Elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls. 2013 Commission on the Status of Women Agreed Conclusions* [online] <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/57/csw57-agreedconclusions-a4-es.pdf?la=es&vs=1948>; *General recommendation No. 33 on women's access to justice* (CEDAW/C/GC/33), 2015; ECLAC, "Santo Domingo Consensus", *Report of the Twelfth Session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean* (LC/L.3789), Santiago, 2013; *Montevideo Strategy for Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda within the Sustainable Development Framework by 2030* (LC/CRM.13/5), Santiago, March 2017 and InterAmerican Commission of Women/Committee of Experts of the Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention (CIM/MESECVI), "Pachuca Declaration", 2014 [online] <https://www.oas.org/en/mesecevi/docs/DeclaracionPachuca-EN.pdf>.

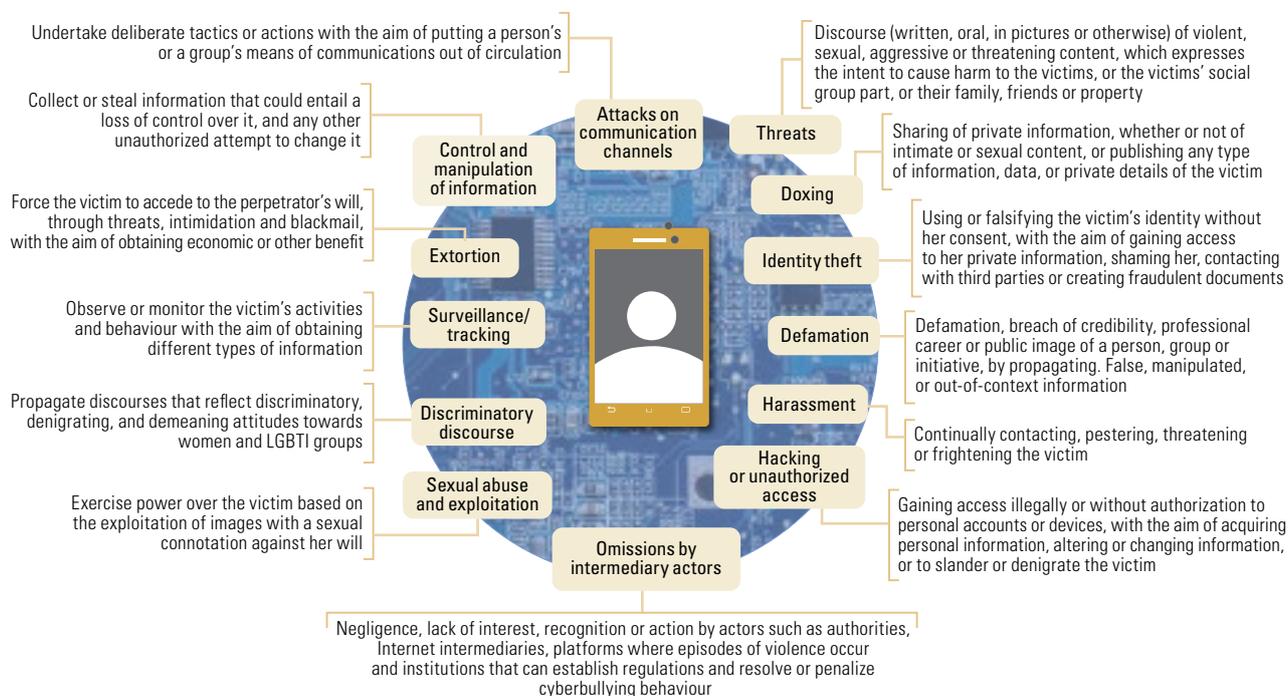
Digital media have the potential to facilitate the spread of violence that occurs online into real life, and to replicate online violence that occurs outside the Internet. In this sense, violence against women by digital means should not be understood as essentially a new phenomenon, but instead as the manifestation of the continuum of violence that characterizes the current patriarchal power structure, in a new setting adapted to the context of the digital revolution (APC, 2015).

A key factor in perpetrating virtual violence in cyberspace is the anonymity with which individuals can operate, since electronic media make it easier to act covertly. The use of technologies has also facilitated the massification and speed of the attacks, as well as coordination between perpetrators who may be geographically dispersed. These features hinder the investigation of this type of attack, which often requires coordinated cross-border actions. Moreover, online forms of violence often generate digital records that are difficult to eliminate.

Cyberviolence encompasses a broad spectrum of conducts, ranging from online harassment to statements on the web that incite physical violence, sexual assault and suicide, through the non-consensual disclosure of intimate images, illegal access to personal information and identity theft, among others. Diagram IV.1, while not aiming to exhaustively list the forms of violence perpetrated against women through digital media, profiles the multiplicity of potential formats. It also highlights acts of omission by intermediary actors as a form of revictimization that cuts across the different forms of violence that women can suffer in cyberspace.

Diagram IV.1

The different manifestations of violence against women through digital media



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of International Telecommunication Union/United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ITU/UNESCO), *Cyber Violence Against Women and Girls: a World-Wide Wake-Up Call*, 2015; ITU, *Cyber Violence against Women and Girls - A report by the UN Broadband Commission for Digital Development Working Group on broadband and Gender*, 2015; and Luchadoras/SocialTIC/Association for Progressive Communications (APC), "13 Manifestations of Gender-Based Violence Using Technology", 2018 [online] <https://www.genderit.org/resources/13-manifestations-gender-based-violence-using-technology>.

Technology-mediated violence has enormous psychological, physical, sexual, economic and other consequences, and causes other harm to the victims. These often display symptoms of anxiety, depression, fear and reduce their use of ICTs and public spaces. Victims can also suffer physical damage motivated by hate speech on social media; economic cost as a result of reputational damage (which many may cost them a job

or the possibility of future hiring); and in extreme cases may even lead to suicide. Moreover, discriminatory campaigns and discourses on social media reinforce violent attitudes against women and girls.

In response to this, some women's and feminist organizations, as well as private firms, have developed applications related to women's safety, such as those that make it possible to map occurrences of street harassment and other forms of violence reported by the victim; or those offering taxi services exclusively for women, of which Sara (Argentina) and Pinkcar (Chile) are examples.

In recent years, mass campaigns organized by activists in the region, including those identified by the hashtags #NiUnaMenos, #YoTeCreo, #MiPrimerAcoso, have drawn attention to serious social problems, such as femicide, the discrediting of victims of sexual harassment and the sexual harassment of girls and adolescents. These organizations have made a fundamental contribution by generating information on the subject. Many of them, with collaboration from academics, have helped close the gaps in information on the subject, by designing and conducting studies and surveys which, although limited, enable an initial approach to the phenomenon.

In addition, women's and feminist organizations have also promoted initiatives that focus on women's digital literacy as a factor of self-protection and informed use of digital media, such as a practical guide to strategies and tactics for feminist digital safety (*Guia Prática de Estratégias e Táticas para a Segurança Digital Feminista*) published by the Brazilian organizations *Blogueiras Negras*, CFEMEA, MariaLab and *Universidade Livre Feminista* (CFEMEA, 2017).

While social networks have been a strategic channel for warning against gender inequalities and other social injustices, they have also been used to exert pressure and violence against social activists, human and environmental rights advocates, journalists, politicians, researchers, artists and other women with a public profile.

1. What is known about violence against women in digital media in the region?

Statistics on violence against women through digital media are still very incipient, particularly in the region, even though a growing number of countries have conducted surveys on violence against women. An estimated 73% of women worldwide have been exposed to or experienced some form of violence online (ITU and UNESCO, 2015).

In 2017, the third edition of Mexico's National Survey on the Availability and Use of Information Technologies in Households (ENDUTIH) contained a module on cyberbullying, which showed that 17.7% of women and 16% of men in the country between the ages of 12 and 59 had experienced cyberbullying in the last twelve months. In some states, the figure rose to one in every four women (INEGI, 2017).

As for the different types of cyberbullying, Mexican women are most exposed to situations of sexual harassment: 30.8% of those who declared having experienced cyberbullying in the last 12 months had received sexual insinuations or proposals, and 23.9% of them had received photos or videos with sexual content. The data obtained from the module also revealed some of the characteristics of the perpetrators: while men account for 80% of perpetrators in situations that refer to cyberbullying of a sexual nature, women tend to be more involved in cases related to impersonation and to criticisms or mockery of appearance or social class.

In Brazil, a survey on violence against women conducted in 2019 by *Foro Brasileiro de Seguridade* (Brazilian Safety Forum) shows that 27.4% of Brazilians aged 16 or over had suffered some form of violence in the past 12 months. Among these, nearly 1 in 10 (8.2%) reported that the most serious episode had occurred over the Internet. The figure is significantly higher than that recorded in the 2017 survey, when only 1.2% of women who had experienced some form of violence mentioned that the episode had been on the Internet. An analysis by level of schooling of the women who reported having suffered violence through the Internet, shows that this phenomenon is more frequent among women who have higher education (11.3%) and less among those who have only basic schooling (4.9%) (FBSP, 2019). The 2019 version of the Brazilian survey investigated, for the first time, whether women had suffered physical harassment during journeys in private transport hired through applications such as Uber, Beat, Cabify, 99 Taxi and others, and found that 4% of those interviewed had experienced this type of situation.

In Colombia in 2018, the Ministry of Information and Communication Technologies (MinTIC) published the results of a survey on women's access, use and ownership of ICTs. These showed that 15% of Colombian women have experienced some form of violence through the use of ICTs, and 41% of them have suffered at least one form of violence through ICTs (MinTIC, 2018). The main forms of violence against women perpetrated through digital media in Colombia, have been the revision and control of email (9.2%) and the receipt of offensive messages (6.4%). Respondents also reported that episodes of discrimination on the Internet were primarily driven by their physical appearance and sexual orientation (MinTIC, 2018).

In the Caribbean, a study conducted in Jamaica in 2015 by the University of the West Indies with a group of 909 people over the age of 18 showed that two thirds of them had seen other people being abused online, and one in four said they had experienced some form of gender-based abuse (Thakur, 2018). Jamaica's figures also show that young women are most exposed to online violence: women between the ages of 18 and 23 are 13% more likely to be sexually harassed online than men of the same age. They also have a 16% chance of experiencing sustained levels of bullying over time, compared to 3% of men in the same group (Thakur, 2018).

A global mapping of technology-related violence against women shows that those with a public profile and who participate in the media, such as journalists, researchers, activists and artists, represent a group that is especially targeted through digital media (APC, 2015). Cases involving the dissemination of intimate photos of women with a public profile and systematic attacks on content producers with major influence in the digital world have turbocharged the discussion on gender-based violence on the Internet in the public agenda, and generated reactions from legislators.

Girls and young women are particularly vulnerable to online gender-based violence. A survey conducted in Mexico by INMUJERES revealed that 4.5 million children and adolescents aged 12 to 19 had been victims of cyberbullying. In the states with the highest prevalence of cyberbullying, up to 42% of young women in this age group reported having been victims of this type of violence compared to 38% of young men (INMUJERES, 2016). Among the 10 types of cyberbullying analysed in the survey, girls were proportionally more affected than boys in nine of them, with wider gaps in cases of sending videos or images of sexual and/or aggressive content, sending intimidating or disturbing messages containing insults or threats, and the publication of embarrassing, false or intimate personal information.

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women has emphasized that cyberbullying causes "a wide variety of effects on adolescent girls including: emotional effects which can be mild or extreme; feelings of being unsafe and frightened; and, in some instances induced not only suicidal thoughts but actual suicides" (United Nations, 2017b). With this in mind, the Committee recommends, in addition to legislating to define and sanction all forms of online harassment against women and girls, the development of comprehensive programmes in the school context to inform teachers, parents and students about the different forms of cyberbullying and their potential consequences, and to provide guidance and support to the victims.

A 2015 study conducted in Paraguay by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) with children and adolescents ranging from 9 to 17 years of age found that 18% of them had maintained contact with unknown persons through social networks for some time. Among these, about 3 in 10 received requests to meet the person in question; and 65% of those who did so discovered that the person who contacted them was not who they claimed to be. However, the most serious finding of the study is that 14% of children and adolescents who had an encounter with an unknown person were harassed or sexually abused, or else suffered attempted harassment and abuse —most often by adults (Galeano, 2016).

2. Varied responses from the countries

Given the huge extent to which digital technologies have permeated everyday life, the boundaries between the online world and the world outside the Internet are becoming increasingly blurred. Thus, violence against women in digital media also has severe social and economic consequences, as noted in the report of the Working Group on Broadband and Gender of the Broadband Commission for Digital Development (ITU/UNESCO, 2015). In economic terms, the psychoemotional impacts of this type of violence put pressure on

countries' health, social service and justice systems; and they also correlate strongly with student and labour absenteeism and low productivity. All of this should encourage States to prevent, legislate to set sanctions, and exercise greater control over the risks of violence through digital media.

However, the violence against women that takes place through digital media poses a number of legal and legislative challenges. Requests to remove content from networks, for example, may create tension between a woman's right to a life free of all forms of violence and other rights, such as the right to freedom of opinion and expression. The Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression noted that any restriction of content imposed by the State must be provided for by law, pursue one of the purposes set out in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights¹³, and respect the principles of necessity and proportionality (United Nations, 2011a).

Regulations in this regard in the countries of the region currently vary. While some have managed to consider the different manifestations of violence against women through digital media within the framework of their comprehensive laws on violence against women, others have regulated in a general manner and without a gender perspective, targeting certain behaviours, while ignoring others that could pose risks. Many countries still do not have specific laws or regulations, despite the widespread emergence of case law on the subject.

In the Caribbean, some countries and territories, such as Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, the Cayman Islands, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago have laws that criminalize cyberbullying, the dissemination of intimate images without consent, dissemination of knowingly false information, or electronic exchange of third parties' personal data. However, none of them incorporates a gender perspective or is included in specific legislation on violence against women.

In Latin America, of the 13 countries with comprehensive legislation on violence against women, eight mention violence through digital media, either including it as a modality, type or form of violence, conceptualizing it in terms of the environment in which it takes place, or even naming it as a means for committing crimes in articulated on specific types of behaviour. In spite of this lack of uniformity, it is of the utmost importance that violence against women through digital media is dealt with in a comprehensive law which goes beyond the exclusive penalization approach, and includes provisions for prevention and to protect and provide redress for victims.

In the region, one of the few specific pieces of legislation on online violence that has a gender perspective—institutionally recognizing a type of violence that afflicts women simply because they are women—is Brazil's Law 13,642. The regulations include in the investigative powers of the Federal Police crimes committed through the worldwide web of computers that broadcast misogynist content, defined as those that propagate hatred or aversion to women, without prejudice to the responsibility of state-level public security agencies. The case of Brazilian activist Lola Aronovich, who has maintained a feminist page online since 2008 and who for years was the victim of harassment, hacking and threats by extremist groups on the Internet, was decisive for the passing of this law in 2018. In the same year, Brazil passed Law 13.772, which alters the framework law on violence against women (the Maria da Penha Law) to recognize that the violation of women's privacy constitutes domestic and family violence, and to criminalize the unauthorized registration of content that includes scenes of nudity or intimate and private sexual acts.

Legislative Decree No. 1.410 of Peru (2018) is another regulation that explicitly recognizes that acts of harassment, in all its forms, including sexual harassment and sexual blackmail; as well as the dissemination of images, audiovisual or audio materials with sexual content (...) mainly affect women throughout their life cycle. In addition to defining the various forms of violence included in the Criminal Code, the law also establishes as aggravating circumstances the fact that the perpetrator maintains or has maintained a relationship with the victim, or that social networks or any other means are used to generate mass dissemination.

¹³ Article 19 (3) of the Covenant, which entered into force on 23 March 1976 provides that "The exercise of the rights provided for in paragraph 2 of this article carries with it special duties and responsibilities. It may therefore be subject to certain restrictions, but these shall only be such as are provided by law and are necessary: (a) For respect of the rights or reputations of others; (b) For the protection of national security or of public order (*ordre public*), or of public health or morals."

The role of governments in tackling violence against women in digital media must go beyond legislating on the subject. It is crucial to have more knowledge about the magnitude and features of this phenomenon, in order to promote actions to prevent and eradicate it. To that end, it is essential that governments consider the design and implementation of instruments to better measure and understand the characteristics of online gender violence.

At the same time, the formulation of public policies that contribute to prevention, focused mainly on young people, is of special relevance; and the use of social networks for the dissemination of initiatives of this type should be considered strategic. Examples of initiatives could include the development of guides on preventing the various types of digital violence in digital media, the development of interactive websites or installation of phone lines where women in situations of violence can obtain information on their rights and on the judicial steps that should be taken.

3. The role of private intermediaries

Given the specific features of the cyber environment, private firms and Internet platforms have key responsibilities in generating responses to violence against women in digital media, beyond any role that Governments may have.

Although the “Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights: Implementing the United Nations ‘Protect, Respect and Remedy’ Framework”, are not binding, they are highly relevant in a context in which economic power has been concentrated in the hands of a few firms that operate digital platforms. Among these principles, Nos. 13 and 19 which direct companies to “Avoid causing or contributing to adverse human rights impacts their own activities, and address such impacts when they occur; and (b) Seek to prevent or mitigate adverse human rights impacts that are directly linked to their operations, products or services by their business relationships, even if they have not contributed to those impacts” (United Nations, 2011b).

Although several widely accessible platforms in the region have community standards or terms of service that expressly prohibit content that violates privacy, damages dignity or threatens the integrity of their users, women’s and feminist organizations have denounced systematic gaps in the implementation of these rules and a lack of clarity in the criteria for evaluating complaints of their violation. Generally speaking, platforms are perceived to be inefficient in protecting users who have been victims of abuse in different ways, including the dissemination of intimate images without consent.

Peña and Vera (2017) show that, although a significant variety of platforms, such as Google, Yahoo, Bing, Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, Tumblr and Blogger, offer specific solutions for cases of non-consensual pornography, denouncing this type of content is often not an easy task. It requires high educational skills and a combination of legal expertise to, firstly, understand the terms of service; and, secondly, evaluate the tool and, using legal judgment, choose the option that seems most appropriate, which is especially critical in cases where multiple channels of complaint are offered Peña and Vera (2017).

Another problem that has serious consequences for women’s autonomy in digital spaces and is particularly relevant in the Latin American context, is the limited supply of specific information in Spanish and Portuguese on what to do and how to report cases of terms of service violations that affect women’s rights. Many broad-scope platforms in the region do not offer sufficient standards to provide solutions to Spanish- or Portuguese-speaking victims; so the victims need at least an instrumental command of the English language, which, in the region, generally means educational and socioeconomic levels above the national averages (Peña and Vera, 2017).

An example of this is a guide published by Facebook to report and delete intimate personal photos shared without consent,¹⁴ a practice that contravenes community standards. Initially, the guide was available only in English and failed to specify the actions that a person who had had their image affected should take to

¹⁴ “Not Without my Consent: A guide to reporting and removing intimate images shared without your consent” [online] <https://fbnewsroomus.files.wordpress.com/2017/03/not-without-my-consent.pdf>.

report the case and request its withdrawal from circulation on the platform. More recently, the social network launched a page, available in the language of the user's preference, which offers a more complete overview of the problem of intimate images shared without consent and directly gives the community the tools to denounce not only the facts of this type actually perpetrated, but also cases of blackmail or threats to share photos of a sexual nature.¹⁵

In response to criticisms of the opacity of criteria for evaluating alleged violations of community norms, in early 2018 Facebook published the internal guidelines regulating the application of its standards, which are available in the three main languages spoken in Latin America and the Caribbean: Spanish, English and Portuguese (Facebook, 2018). According to these, any statement of intent to commit acts of violence, or supporting violence, against a vulnerable person (identified by name, title, photo or other reference), including activists and journalists, or against groups of people or specific anonymous individuals, is prohibited if credible by their standards.

An example of platform policy that has an intersectional gender perspective is that relating to abusive behaviour and hate speech on Twitter. The policy recognizes that "some groups of people are disproportionately targeted with abuse online," and mentions among them "women, people of color, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual individuals, marginalized and historically underrepresented communities." It also notes that "for those who identify with multiple underrepresented groups, abuse may be more common, more severe in nature and have a higher impact on those targeted" (Twitter, 2018).

The platform is committed "to combating abuse motivated by hatred, prejudice or intolerance, particularly abuse that seeks to silence the voices of those who have been historically marginalized," which would apply to cases of violent threats, unwanted sexual advances, incitement to fear or hatred in relation to a specific group, and racist or sexist slander or allusions, as well as any kind of repeated or non-consensual content used to degrade another person. Lastly, the platform also specified the sanctions to which those who engage in these practices are liable (Twitter, 2018).

Nonetheless, the platforms' institutional policies to restrict content that does not comply with their operating rules are not without contradictions. The exponential increase in user-generated content has led leading firms to develop algorithms for automated moderation. However, like any other socially formulated code, algorithms reflect hegemonic social norms, and do not themselves have the power to combat discrimination or inequalities, unless they are specifically designed for this purpose. In relation to violence against women, the existence of biased algorithms or those that reproduce gender inequalities could aggravate the lack of protection, and reduce the platform's effectiveness in restricting the circulation of material with denigrating and misogynistic content. To avoid this and ensure that users and women's and feminist organizations working on women's rights in digital spaces can monitor existing standards, there are a number of initiatives available to the firms. These include publishing, or sharing with civil society consultative groups, information on the algorithms they develop to perform automated content moderation, so as to ensure a process of checks and balances and their constant improvement from a gender perspective.

Firms are also required to "ensure that respect for the right to privacy and other international human rights is incorporated into the design, operation, evaluation and regulation of automated decision-making and machine-learning technologies and to provide for remediation of the human rights abuses that they have caused or to which they have contributed" (United Nations, 2018a).

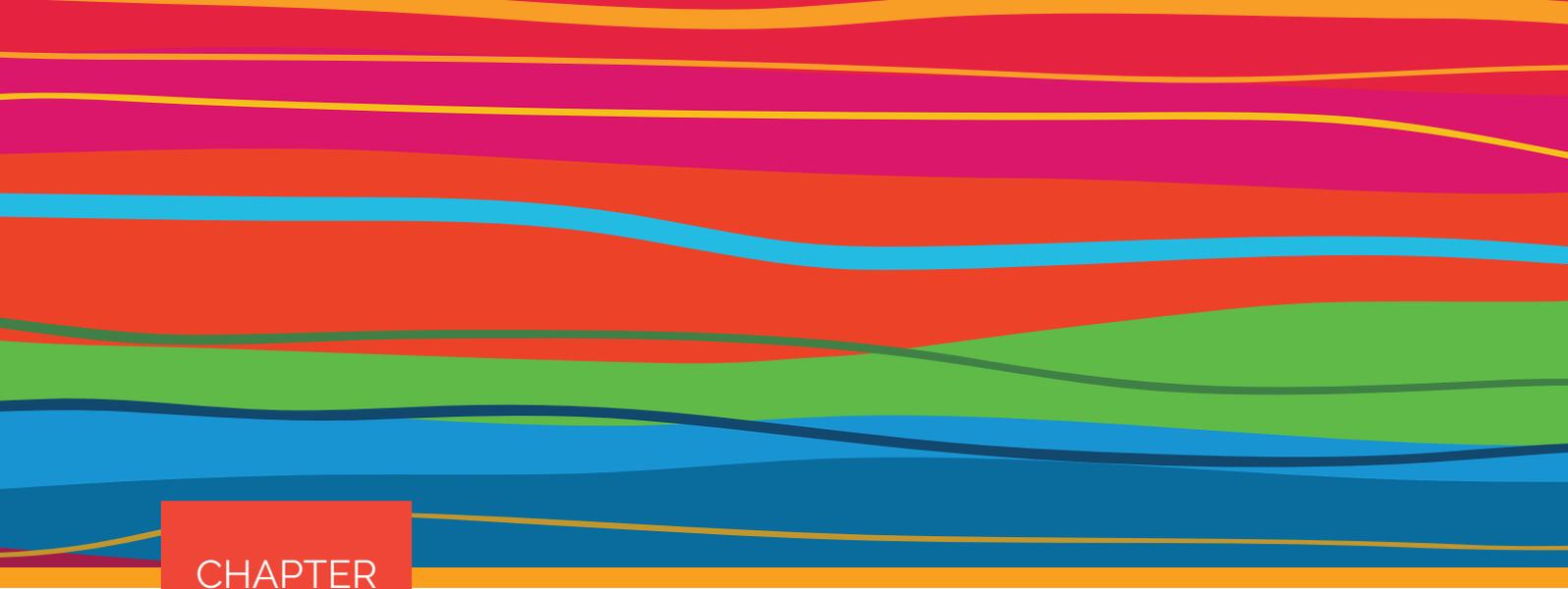
¹⁵ "Report Blackmail, Intimate Images or Threats to Share Intimate Images" [online] <https://www.facebook.com/help/contact/567360146613371>.

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CHAPTER

V

The care economy: trends and impacts of demographic change

Introduction

- A. The demographic transformations and trends facing Latin America and the Caribbean
- B. Women in the care economy: how are the demands for care being met in the region?
- C. The care sector in the labour market: another form of occupational segregation for women
- D. Women's migratory movements: impacts on the care economy
- E. Debates on the accounting of care in Systems of National Accounts (SNA)

Bibliography

Introduction

One of the structural obstacles underlying inequality identified by the Montevideo Strategy (ECLAC, 2017) is the sexual division of labour and the unfair social organization of care. This hinders women's autonomy and impedes progress towards equality. Women's excessive work burden persists despite the progress made in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, especially in the last decade, and notwithstanding the increasing and more systematic availability of information on the use of time and unpaid work.

The contributions of feminist economics make it possible to analyse the different aspects of care work, and how it embraces the public and the private, the formal and the informal, the paid and the unpaid, among other dimensions (Daly and Lewis, 2000 in Borderías, Carrasco and Torns, 2011). In this way, the crosscutting and interactive perspective from which feminist economics analyses care in modern capitalist societies makes it possible to address its impacts on women's economic autonomy and lay the foundations for its transformation.

The "care economy" concept makes it possible to analyse care at the micro level, by observing the tasks undertaken in households and communities that are fundamental for the reproduction of the labour force. It also facilitates analysis of the dynamics of care as regards markets and employment, or in the delivery of public services, the provision of infrastructure and the formulation of public policies.

Understanding and analysing the various factors that comprise the care economy contributes to diversification of the production structure, to economic growth from a perspective of life sustainability and to the design of public policies for fairer and more egalitarian societies.

Studying the ways in which the region satisfies care demands in the face of changing demographic scenarios will make it possible to consider both the distribution of paid and unpaid work time between men and women, and also the segregation of care occupations in markets and the informal and precarious contexts in which these activities are carried out.

Many Latin American and Caribbean women form part of global care chains which, in the absence of male participation, consist of transferring care tasks from some woman to others, based on power relations defined by sex, class and place of origin (ECLAC, 2017). Moreover, the current sexual division of labour and dominant cultural patterns influence and aggravate environmental problems and the consequences of climate change on the lives of women and members of their families.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) refer to the need to alter the current sexual division of labour. This is crucial for reducing poverty and for underpinning health services and well-being, quality education, decent work and gender equality, as well as addressing migration issues and acknowledging the value of unpaid work as part of a country's wealth.

This chapter will analyse the care economy, the various impacts on women's lives of the demographic changes occurring in the region, and how they relate to the global care chains that interact with the phenomenon of women's migration. It will also review possibilities for valuing women's unpaid work and integrating it into national wealth estimations.

A. The demographic transformations and trends facing Latin America and the Caribbean

1. Declining fertility and increasing life expectancy

Until the second half of the twentieth century, Latin America and the Caribbean was a young region, with low life expectancy and high fertility and birth rates. Since the 1970s, however, the region has undergone changes that have transformed its demographics. One of the phenomena with the greatest implications for its population structure is the decline in fertility rates, in which the regional average dropped from 5.8 to

3.1 children per woman in the space of 25 years (between 1960–1965 and 1990–2005) —a steeper fall than in other regions of the world. Today, the region's fertility rate is even lower (2.05 children per woman) and is now below the replacement rate (2.1 children per woman) (United Nations, 2019).

This phenomenon has occurred unevenly in the countries of the region in terms of when it started, the periods of most rapid change and the moment when the population replacement level is reached (ECLAC, 2018b). Fertility decline began relatively earlier in the Caribbean and in South America, where in most countries the process had already begun in the late 1960s. In contrast, in some Central American countries, such as Belize and Guatemala, fertility rates did not start to fall until the 1980s. In all three subregions, there were some countries where fertility fell rapidly. Barbados and Cuba were the first to reach replacement level between 1975 and 1980. The phenomenon then spread to Aruba, Martinique, Puerto Rico and Trinidad and Tobago in the 1990s and to Antigua and Barbuda, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Jamaica, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago at the start of the twenty-first century.

In the coming decades, the region as a whole will have to prepare for many countries with low fertility rates: all countries will have rates below or very close to replacement level in the five-year period 2040–2045. However, the different national trends generate significant time lags in terms of their stabilization, as well as considerable heterogeneity between subpopulations in each country. National realities conceal internal differences, especially between urban or rural areas, different socioeconomic strata and ethnic-racial affiliation.

Fertility rates in Latin America and the Caribbean have fallen much more steeply in sectors with higher education and income levels. In most Latin American countries, the average number of children borne by women of less schooling is more than double the number for women with higher education (Rossel, 2016, p. 43). This disparity is particularly marked among indigenous populations, Afrodescendants and, in particular, adolescent girls. These high fertility rates, especially when unplanned, reflect the constraints these women and their partners face in obtaining sexual and reproductive health information and services (ECLAC, 2016b).

Another phenomenon that is germane to the demographic transition in the region has been the decline in mortality and increased life expectancy. This is explained by socioeconomic and cultural changes, higher levels of education, higher rates of urbanization and improvements in access to basic services, all of which have improved the living conditions of the Latin American and Caribbean population (ECLAC, 2019).

The process of increasing life expectancy that began in the last century has continued to the present day. On average, the population has gained 17 years of life over the last 55 years, or 1.5 years in each five-year period. Progress in this regard has been made in all countries, but very significant differences persist between them and between the individual subregions (United Nations, 2019).

As life expectancy has increased and mortality rates have declined, especially in the case of maternal mortality, the gap in life expectancy between men and women has widened. On average in the region, women can expect to live nearly seven years longer than men (United Nations, 2019); and in some countries (the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Uruguay) the difference is greater than the regional average, ranging between 7.05 and 9.43 years.

Despite the significant increase in women's life expectancy, cases of risky pregnancy and complications in childbirth continue to be life-threatening. Maternal mortality remains high in some countries, mostly among indigenous women and those living in rural areas where there is less access to health services.

2. Transformation of the population structure

The main consequences of the progressive increase in life expectancy and decline in the total fertility rate are a reduction in population growth and the transformation of the population age structure. The latter is perhaps the most important consequence, both at present and in the medium- and long-terms.

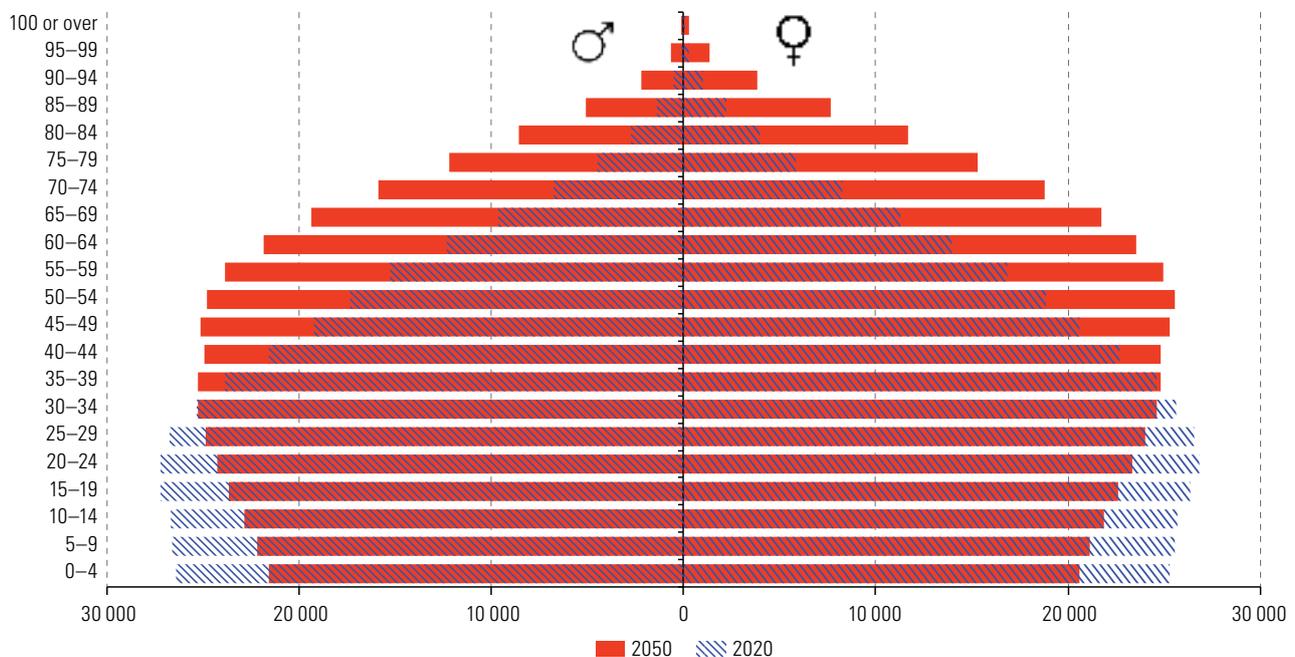
The sustained process of population ageing is increasing the proportion of older people and reducing the proportion of children. At the regional level, people aged 60 years or over are expected to outnumber children and adolescents under the age of 15 for the first time by around 2037; and their number will continue to rise until 2090 (United Nations, 2019). The region has shifted from a young population structure in 1950 to an

ageing population today. This can be illustrated as a gradual narrowing of the base of the population pyramid, which is set to become more accentuated in the coming decades (ECLAC, 2018c).

Between 2020 and 2050, the number of individuals aged 60 or over in Latin America and the Caribbean is expected to reach 108 million, and the population aged 20–59 is forecast to reach 37 million. In contrast, the population under 20 years of age will have lost 26 million by 2050 compared to 2020 (see figure V.1). The share of older people in the population can be expected to grow very rapidly. The 60-or-over age group in Latin America and the Caribbean is forecast to increase by 4.1% per year in 2020–2050, compared to growth of just 0.3% per year in the 20–59-year-old population, while the under-20s group is set to shrink by 0.3% per year.

Figure V.1

Latin America and the Caribbean: population distribution by age group and sex, 2020 and 2050
(Thousands of people)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of United Nations, World Population Prospects 2019 [online database] <https://population.un.org/wpp/>.

In Latin America, the transition in the population age structure is occurring in a specific sequence. The youth population (0–19 year-olds), which historically has been the predominant population group in the region, started to decline before 2000. The young society in the region is projected to end in 2023, when the 20–39 age group becomes the largest segment.

The population aged 40–59 is expected to outnumber 20–39-year-olds by 2045, thus establishing an adult society. Seven years later, in 2052, the population aged 60 or over will become predominant, thereby initiating the period of an ageing society (see map V.1).

Along with small island developing states, Latin America and the Caribbean currently has the world's fourth largest population share of persons aged 65 or over (8.7%). By 2100, the proportion is projected to reach 31.3% making it the world's oldest region (United Nations, 2019).¹

¹ To obtain this indicator, the Population Division of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs made its projections based on the following definitions of regions and subregions: Sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa and West Asia, Central and South Asia, East and South-East Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, Australia and New Zealand, Oceania, Europe and North America, Least Developed Countries, landlocked developing countries (LLDCs), small island developing states (SIDS) (United Nations, 2019).

Map V.1

Latin America and the Caribbean (38 countries): population projections by age structure, 2015, 2030, 2045 and 2060

A. 2015



B. 2030



C. 2045



D. 2050



■ Young society
■ Young adult society
■ Adult society
■ Elderly society

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of United Nations, World Population Prospects 2019 [online database] <https://population.un.org/wpp/>.

Note: The boundaries and names shown on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

The greater longevity in the region will also have an impact on the “ageing within ageing” process, in other words an increase in the number of individuals aged over 80. The growth of this age group has outpaced that of all other age brackets between 1950 and 2100. This group, whose annual growth rate is currently 4%, is the only one that is expected to continue growing until the end of the twenty-first century (ECLAC, 2018b). By 2075, more than 10% of the population is forecast to be over 80 years of age, outweighing even the under-15 population. The number of women aged 80 or over is set to increase even faster—at a projected 7% per year from 2020 to 2050.

3. Different stages of the ageing process and the feminization of old age

The variable pace of the ageing process in the region gives rise to five groups of countries, defined by the relationship between the total fertility rate and the percentage of the population aged 60 or over. Guatemala and the Plurinational Republic of Bolivia in Latin America, and French Guyana and Haiti in the Caribbean are at an incipient stage of ageing, with total fertility rates exceeding 2.7 children per woman and older persons representing less than 10.5% or 11% of the population.

Twelve countries (Belize, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guyana, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and Suriname) are in a moderate stage of ageing, with total fertility rates ranging from replacement level to 2.5 children per woman. In these countries, people aged 60 or over represent between 7% and 12.5% of the population, respectively.

Eight countries (Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Brazil, Colombia, El Salvador, Grenada, Jamaica and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines) have total fertility rates below replacement level—between 1.7 and 2.08 children per woman—and older persons representing from 10% to 14% of the population. These countries are at a moderately advanced stage of ageing.

Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, Saint Lucia, and Trinidad and Tobago have fertility rates below replacement level (maximum of 1.76 children per woman, except for Argentina, which has a total fertility rate of 2.2) and people aged 60 accounting for between 15% and 17%. These countries are at an advanced stage of ageing.

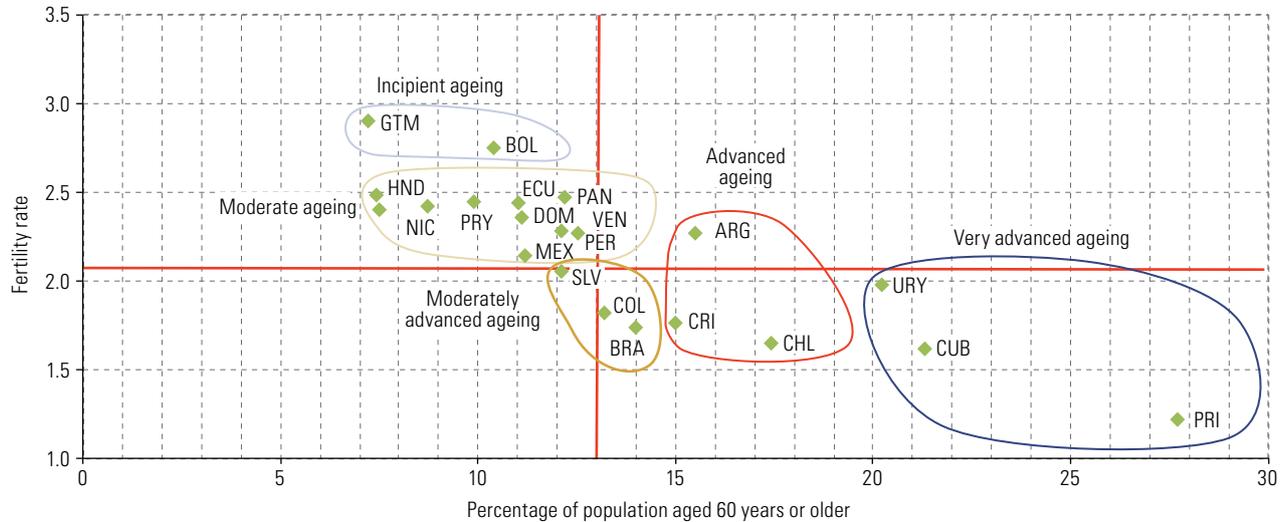
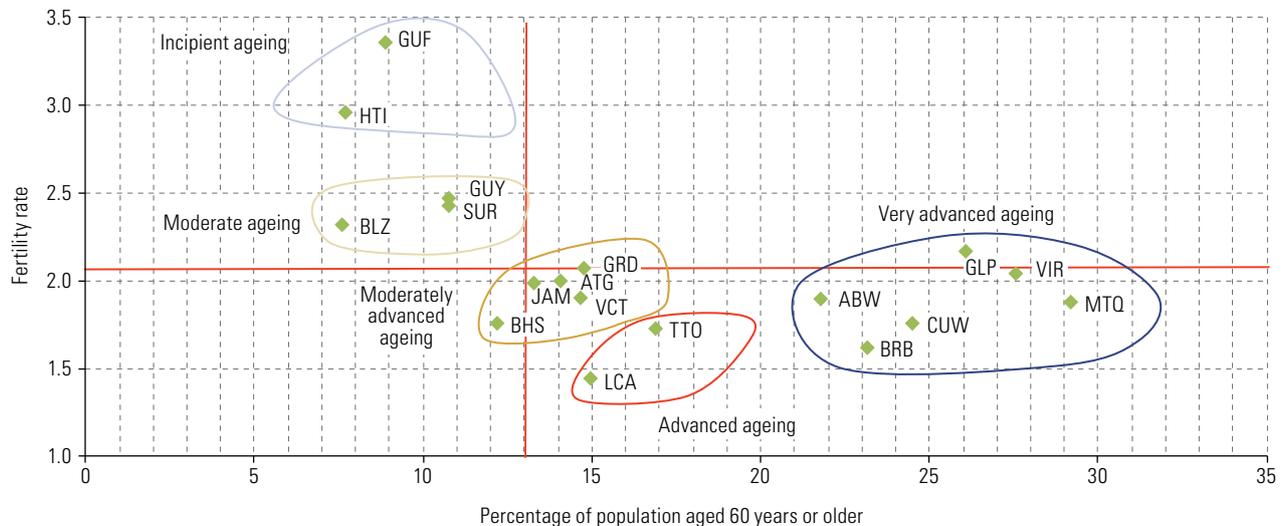
Aruba, Barbados, Cuba, Curaçao, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Puerto Rico, the United States Virgin Islands and Uruguay are at a very advanced stage of ageing; although these countries and territories are following the previous group's trend in terms of total fertility rates around replacement level, the most salient feature is that more than 20% of their populations are older persons (see figure V.2).

In Latin America and the Caribbean, male excess mortality has increased steadily. This phenomenon, together with gender differentials in life expectancy, contributes to the feminization of the population ageing process.

For every 100 men aged 60 or over, there are 123 women in the same age group; while in the case of persons aged 80 or over, the ratio is 159 women to 100 men. Today, feminization in old age is highly accentuated in several countries. In Uruguay, there are 144 women for every 100 men aged 60 or over, and 246 women for every 100 men aged 80 or over. Similarly, in El Salvador there are 140 women for every 100 men aged 60 or over, and 143 women for every 100 men aged 80 or more. In the Caribbean, Puerto Rico and Curaçao have 138 women for every 100 men aged 60 or over and more than 164 women for every 100 men aged 80 or more. Thus, the feminization rate in the population aged 80 or over is 165 in South America, 139.7 in Central America and 141.2 in the Caribbean.

Figure V.2

Latin America and the Caribbean (38 countries): total fertility rate and percentage of the population aged 60 or over, 2015–2020, and regional average
(Number of children per woman and percentages)

A. Latin America (20 countries)^aB. The Caribbean (18 countries)^b

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of United Nations, World Population Prospects 2019 [online database] <https://population.un.org/wpp/>.

^a Latin America includes Argentina, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Puerto Rico and Uruguay.

^b The Caribbean includes Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Curaçao, Grenada, Guadeloupe, French Guiana, Haiti, Jamaica, Martinique, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, and the United States Virgin Islands.

4. Opportunities and challenges of demographic change

Although Latin America and the Caribbean is entering a rapid ageing phase, in half of the countries of the region the process is still incipient. The concentration of the population in potentially active age groups is the predominant characteristic of the age-group transformation and will remain so until the 2030s at least. In the countries lagging furthest behind in the demographic transition, this economically favourable situation will last until the fifth decade of the century or even beyond. This is highly relevant for public policy making, since these countries still have a window of opportunity (demographic dividend).² During that period, the conditions for coping with population ageing could be more favourable if demographic changes are accompanied by policy planning that prioritizes the population's well-being going forward.

The demographic dividend is characterized by demographic dependency.³ This occurs when there is a larger proportion of persons of working age, which is positive for economic growth, since the potential labour force grows faster than the dependent population.

During the demographic dividend period, a reduction in the dependency ratio of the under-15 population means a decrease in the burden of caring for this population group. It represents an opportunity to forestall the pressure that the ageing process will exert, by forging a new social covenant that reconsiders gender roles within households, as well as between families, the State and the market.

In contrast, in countries where the demographic transition is further advanced, the rise in the old-age dependency ratio means a decrease in the number of potential care providers. The dissipation of the demographic dividend, in conjunction with the ageing process, pose major challenges for pension systems in terms of their financial sustainability, coverage and adequacy of benefits. For example, they involve an increase in demand for care and a decrease in its supply (ECLAC, 2018b).

Although this indicator highlights the consequences of the demographic transition for care provision, it does not take into account the differences that this shortage of potential care providers can generate among women, since it is they who have historically been responsible for care, whether paid or unpaid, as can be seen in the proportion of the day devoted to domestic chores and unpaid care (see figure V.3).

In the context of the decline of the 15–64 age group and the end of the demographic dividend, some studies claim that countries can benefit from increased female participation in the labour market, in order to prolong the dividend at least temporarily and boost labour force and economic growth (ECLAC, 2018b). While significant progress has now been made in closing the gender gap in terms of employment opportunities, and it is true that women today have greater access to the labour market than ever before, it is also important to recognize that women continue to face difficulties in entering the labour market and consolidating their participation in it, and also in obtaining the same working conditions as men.

The changes in age structures in Latin America and the Caribbean represent major transformations in the demand for care in the region. From this perspective, population ageing and declining fertility rates mean a change in the age distribution of those needing care. This implies that, in the total number of people who will require more care, there will be a progressive shift from children to the elderly. On the supply side, the shrinking working-age population will represent a reduction in the number of potential care providers relative to those needing care. In the balance between this supply of and demand for care, women will continue to be affected the most, because they are society's main caregivers.

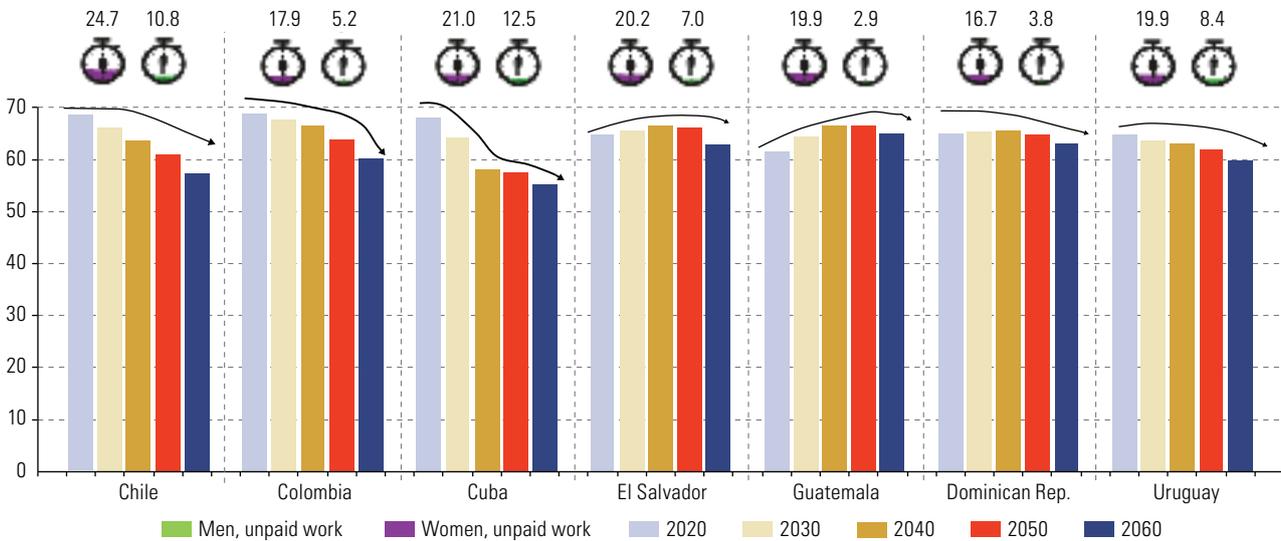
In addition, as the number of older persons increases and the population of working age diminishes relatively, governments are faced with the problem of financing the cost of social protection systems. Given this situation, they will have to review the benefits granted to persons of retirement age and/or the tax burden imposed on the active population.

² The demographic dividend period has ended in Bahamas, Barbados, Chile, Cuba and Trinidad and Tobago. Between 2020 and 2030 the window of opportunity will close in Antigua and Barbuda, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Jamaica, Panama, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Uruguay.

³ This indicator establishes the relationship between the population of potentially inactive age (consisting in this study of individuals under 15 and over 64 years old) in the numerator, and the population of potentially active age (those between 15 and 64 years of age) in the denominator.

Figure V.3

Latin America (7 countries): potential caregivers^a and proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex (SDG indicator 5.4.1), 2020–2060
(Percentages and hours per week)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of time-use surveys from the respective countries; United Nations, World Population Prospects 2019 [online database] <https://population.un.org/wpp/>.

^a Potential caregivers are defined as persons aged from 15 to 64; their percentage is calculated relative to the total population, male or female, as appropriate.

Moreover, the changes in family structures (which have not been accompanied by new ways of distributing care) and the larger presence of children in poor homes, pose additional challenges for the organization of care. This section will review the challenges that demographic changes impose on demands for care and women's autonomy.

The population cohort aged 60 or over is expected to have tripled in size by 2070; and by the end of the twenty-first century it will have reached 254 million people. One of the challenges of population ageing concerns the financial sustainability of social security, public health and elderly care systems. In this situation, the State will need to play an active and leading role in counteracting the effects of rapid population ageing on social protection systems and, in particular, on pension systems, with the aim of guaranteeing the well-being of older persons (ECLAC, 2018c).

Longer life expectancy means that the old-age phase is prolonged; and families have to take care of their older members for longer. Women will be the most affected, because it is they who will need more care during old age (they live longer, have less income of their own and higher rates of widowhood). They also bear the burden of care work themselves, owing to the social structure based on an unequal sexual division of labour, compounded by the reluctance of most men to fulfil social reproduction functions.

A study on this subject for Chile indicates that of the total population aged 65 or over living in a situation of dependency, 80% have a caregiver who lives in the same home, 34.2% have a care provider outside the home and are also cared for by a relative, 16.1% have care provided exclusively outside the home, and 4.5% do not receive any third-party care (Comunidad Mujer, 2018). This not only reveals the work burden that would fall mainly on households in the face of increases in the size of the dependent population. It also increases the importance of the debate on how this care can be provided outside the home, and the need to design policies for the care of older persons that give households of all socioeconomic levels ways to satisfy their care needs.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, women are primarily responsible for meeting the care needs of older adults. Moreover, it is often older people themselves (aged 60 or over) who, as sons and daughters, provide even older people (aged 80 or over) not only with monetary and maintenance assistance, but also help with household chores, companionship and emotional support. Consequently, if States do not provide adequate public benefits and services, families, and in particular women, will have to meet these demands individually, often at the expense of their labour market participation, well-being and personal fulfilment (Huenchuan, 2013).

Differential ageing is characterized by the fact that women have higher rates of widowhood than men, partly because of the larger number of conjugal unions in which women are the younger partner. According to data from the 2010 round of population censuses in Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Honduras, Panama, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Uruguay processed at the Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE–Population Division of ECLAC), beyond the age of 60, the rate of widowhood among women is double and in some cases triple the rate among men. This can often lead to situations of loneliness and abandonment.

Furthermore, older women generally have fewer years of schooling than men, receive lower incomes than men during their working lives, and enter old age with economic and social disadvantages. Nonetheless, many continue to play an important role in the family, as heads of household or as carers of dependent children. Even in old age, they can be the only source of economic resources and care in situations of illness and disability.

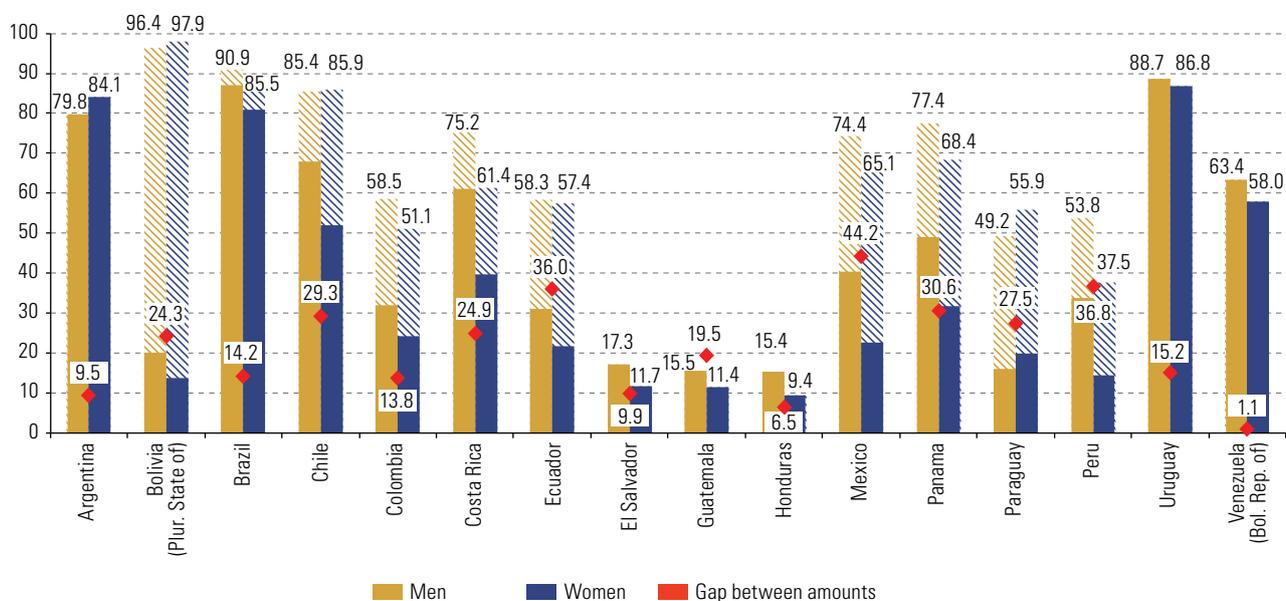
The higher rates of female widowhood, coupled with women's lower economic participation rates and, therefore, the lower coverage of contributory social protection, mean that many older women, who live longer than men on average, are living close to or below the poverty line. The vulnerability to which they are exposed may arise from difficulties in maintaining stable employment throughout their working lives (Begum, 2009).

Thus, even before considering the demographic trends discussed above, the starting line for social protection in old age is unequal. Consequently, as shown in figure V.4, non-contributory pension programmes end up having a greater impact on female coverage rates. Pensions of this type tend to be smaller than contributory pensions, which may explain part of the gaps between the amounts received by women and men. Similarly, individuals who receive non-contributory pensions are more vulnerable than those receiving contributory ones, since the former have less social legitimacy and tend to suffer modifications and cuts in adverse contexts more frequently.

The relationship between coverage levels and gender gaps between the pension benefits received is not linear but varies according to the characteristics of each country and the presence or absence of non-contributory pensions. Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador Mexico, Panama, Paraguay and Peru, have average overall coverage levels but lower coverage levels for women (except Paraguay), as well as a greater presence of non-contributory pensions among women who are covered, and wide gaps between the amounts received by men and women. Argentina and Uruguay, which have a broader tradition in social security policies, have higher levels of total coverage and a moderate gap in amounts. In the case of Argentina, this reflects the fact that most women took advantage of the social security moratorium and took a minimum retirement pension. Although Chile and the Plurinational State of Bolivia have similar coverage rates, the composition of pensions is very different. While for Chile the contributory component associated with an individual's labour market history has a greater weight, in the case of the Plurinational State of Bolivia most pensions are related to a non-contributory or poverty relief component.

Figure V.4

Latin America (17 countries): proportion of individuals aged 65 or over receiving contributory or non-contributory pensions, by sex, around 2017^a
(Percentages)



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

Note: The gap between the amounts represents the difference between the average income obtained from contributory and non-contributory benefits for women aged 65 or over and for men in the same age group. The striped areas represent the additional coverage of non-contributory pensions; individuals who receive both types of pension are included in the darker areas. The solid areas include survivor pensions in cases where they can be distinguished in the source of information.

^a The data for Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Plurinational State of Bolivia and Uruguay refer to 2017; those for Honduras and Mexico refer to 2016; and the date for the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Guatemala correspond to 2014.

In contrast, El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras have much smaller gaps, but very low overall coverage and even lower for women. Thus, although these gaps seem less, they are not representative of the income inequality of the population in this age group.

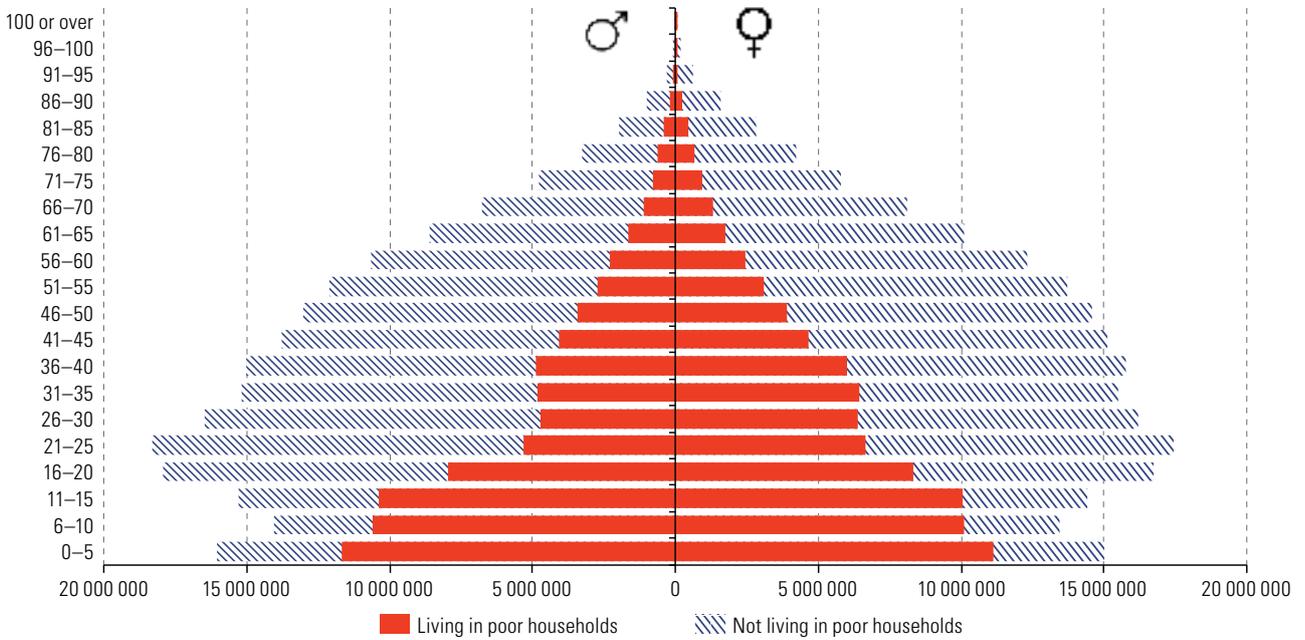
For all the foregoing reasons, it is essential to incorporate a gender perspective in the design of public policies for old age and also in the reforms of pension systems (in the years of active working life) in order to avoid situations in which women are unprotected.

One of the results of high fertility rates among women from lower socioeconomic strata and with lower levels of education is that poor households tend to have more children than wealthier ones. Poverty is increasingly associated with younger generations and is more prevalent in households with larger numbers of children. Despite some improvements in overall poverty levels, this situation is not being reversed (see figure V.5).

The greater presence of children in poor households generates an excess of care work for the women in these households, thereby reducing their opportunities for greater participation in the labour market. As the data for nine countries in the region show, domestic and care work is the main barrier preventing women from participating fully in the labour market (see figure V.6).

Figure V.5

Latin America (18 countries): people living in poor households by sex and age, around 2017^a
(Number of persons and percentages)

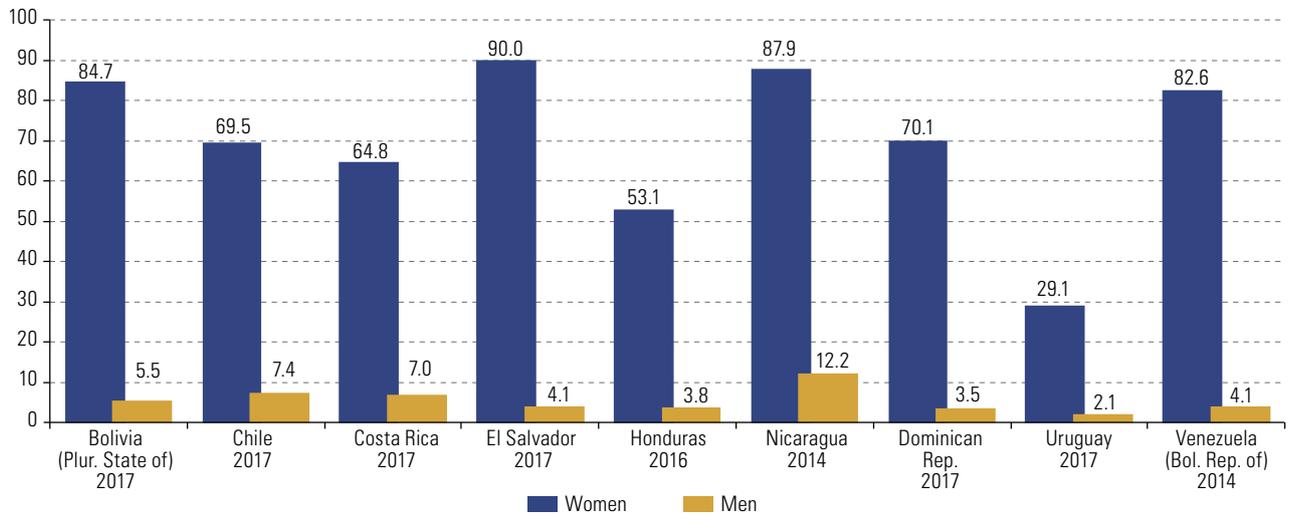


Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of Household Survey Data Bank (BADEHOG).

^a The data for Argentina, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay refer to 2017; those for Honduras and Mexico relate to 2016; and the data for Guatemala, Nicaragua and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela correspond to 2014.

Figure V.6

Latin America (9 countries): population aged 15–64 outside the labour market for family reasons, around 2017
(Percentages)



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

More than half of the women who are not participating in the labour market cite family responsibilities as the main reason. In some countries the proportion exceeds 80% (the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, El Salvador, Nicaragua and the Plurinational State of Bolivia). In the case of men, the rate is around 6% for countries that have information available.

B. Women in the care economy: how are the demands for care being met in the region?

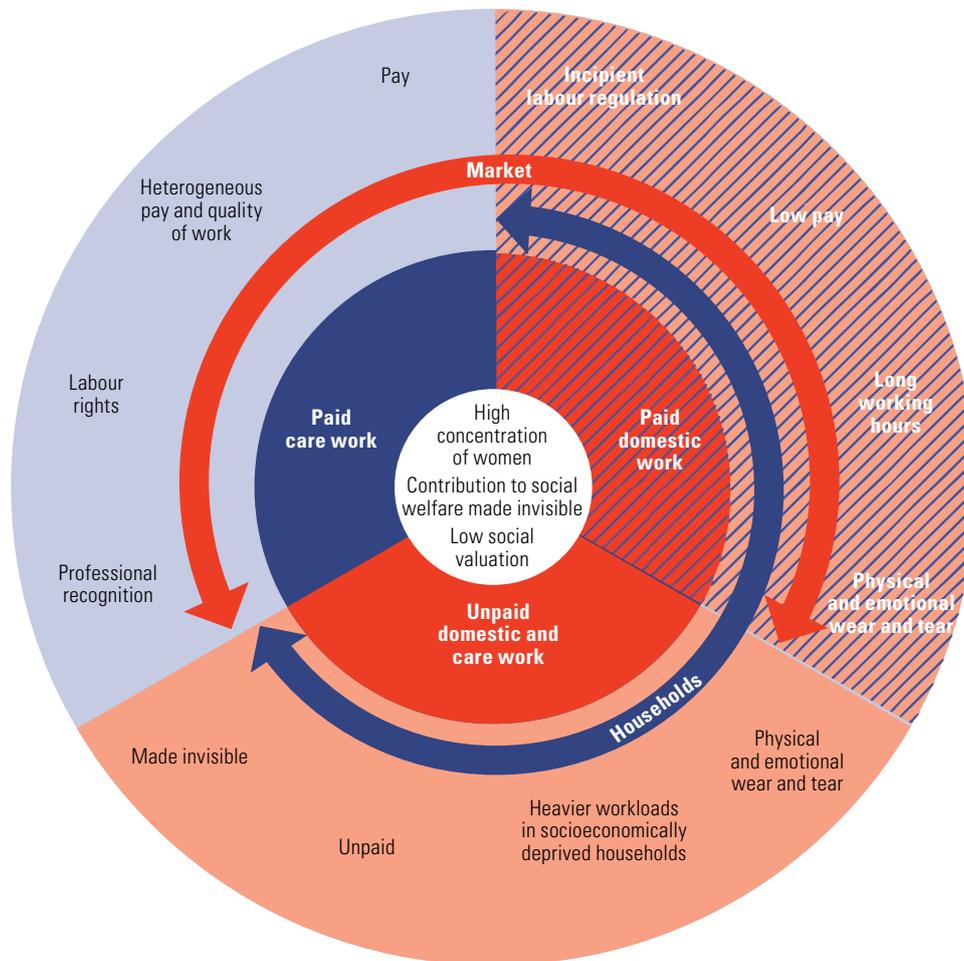
Everyone relies on care from another person during most of their life, so the analysis of care must encompass the characteristics of those who receive care and also of those who provide it. This should serve to improve the availability and quality of care, but also the conditions in which it is provided and the quality of life of the caregivers. Care can be defined as anything done to maintain, continue and repair the immediate surroundings, so that it can be lived in as well as possible. Those surroundings include body, being and environment, as well as everything that is needed to weave a complex, life-sustaining web (Fisher and Tronto, 1990).

The foregoing implies that care is a social function that involves both recipients and providers and should be understood as a right (to provide care, to be cared for, not to provide care and to self-care). The care provider takes responsibility for the other person and makes different kinds of physical, mental, and emotional efforts. Fulfilling this responsibility creates an emotional bond between the caregiver and the care recipient.

Despite the importance of care for sustaining life, the traditional economy views it as an externality of the economic system (Carrasco, 2004) and makes its contribution to the economy and societies invisible. The way in which households, communities, the market and States satisfy care needs is relevant not only from the standpoint of social reproduction and individual well-being, but also for production, employment and sustainable development. In this regard, feminist economics has contributed to the debate on the economic role of domestic and care work and has conceptualized the care economy as a space of goods, services, activities, relations and values associated with the most basic and important needs for people's existence and reproduction (Montaño and Calderón, 2010). The care economy comprises all unpaid work within households, as well as paid care work in the labour market. By relating the way in which societies organize the care of their members and the economic system, the concept of care is linked to the economic value it generates (Montaño and Calderón, 2010). Thus, care is made visible for better decision-making on how to organize resources and redistribute the benefits generated both in the commercial sphere and in households.

The availability of care services and their quality are directly related to employment levels and working conditions in the paid care sector, which mostly employs women (ILO, 2018). In turn, the provision of public or private services that are accessible and of high quality, influences the redistribution of responsibilities from households to the State and the private sector, which frees up women's time and helps to improve their economic autonomy. In this sense, the care economy comprises relations between paid and unpaid care work. This includes, in particular, the provision of goods and services for households by paid female domestic workers, whose employment conditions, as will be discussed below, continue to reflect the undervaluation of care tasks carried out in the commercial sphere (see diagram V.1).

Diagram V.1
The care economy



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

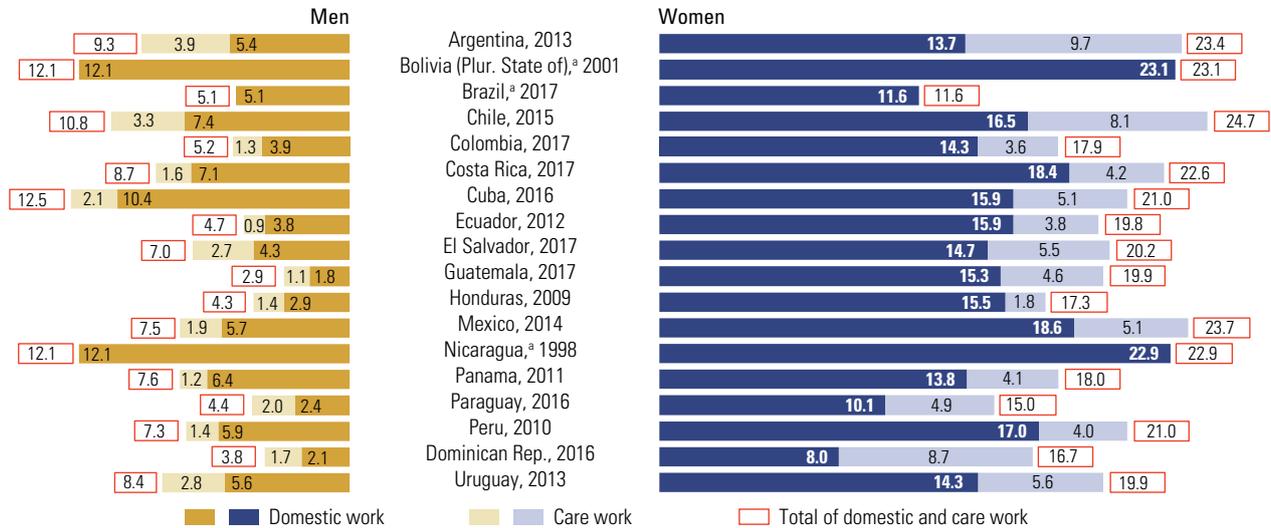
Latin America is characterized by an unfair social organization of care. Responsibilities for providing care are unevenly distributed, reflecting a family model, with limited State participation, sparse and segmented market supply, and insufficient and segregated community provision. Moreover, within households, the sexual division of labour means that women assume the role of caregivers or have this imposed on them.

Information from the region's use-of-time surveys provides a very clear picture, although their methodologies are not comparable. Every day, women in the region spend three times as long on unpaid domestic and care work as men (see figure V.7).

Unpaid work activities include a wide range of tasks, including household cleaning and maintenance, food preparation, shopping, support in personal hygiene tasks, education, companionship, and others. Because of the simultaneous nature of human activities, it is difficult to distinguish rigorously between time spent on domestic activities or indirect care and those specifically devoted to direct personal care. In addition, care activities are often done passively; or else, owing to the way questions are ordered in use-of-time surveys, in practice people distinguish household activities more clearly. Moreover, not all households have direct care needs, while indirect care needs are common to all.

Figure V.7

Latin America (18 countries): time spent on unpaid household chores and care, by sex and type of unpaid work, latest available year
(Percentages)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, Repository of information on time use in Latin America and the Caribbean [online] <https://oig.cepal.org/en/infographics/repository-information-time-use-latin-america-and-caribbean>.

Note: The heterogeneity of the data sources does not allow for comparability between countries. The aim of this graph is to show the trends within each country. Domestic work refers to the activities of producing goods and services for consumption by members of the household or other households. Care refers to all activities of direct support to members of the household or other households. The population considered is 15 years of age or over, except in the case of Argentina, which considers the population of 18 or over, and Cuba, which considers the population aged between 15 and 74.

^a Does not allow for domestic work to be distinguished from care work.

For this reason, the metric chosen to monitor ODS indicator 5.4.1 (see figure V.7) reports a larger proportion of time spent on domestic work than on care giving. Other studies have shown that in households requiring direct care, although women continue to bear the greater burden of domestic work and care, men distribute their unpaid work time by participating more in care tasks than in domestic work, which tends to be more routine and less recognized (ECLAC, 2017).

Women's excessive burden of care work is rooted in a false belief in their natural care-giving abilities, so these responsibilities tend to fall on them. In addition to patriarchal cultural patterns, the region's socioeconomic stratification and the lack of quality public services mean that this reality has more of an impact in lower-income households. These find it more difficult to organize care as they cannot buy goods and services on the market to alleviate the burden of domestic work and care.

The data show that, on average, women in the lowest income quintile devote about 39% more hours per week to unpaid work than those in the highest quintile (see figure V.8). Women seem to work a minimum of about 20 hours per week unpaid, even in households from the highest-income quintiles. In the case of men, the differences in the time spent on unpaid work between households from different income quintiles do not appear to be significant.

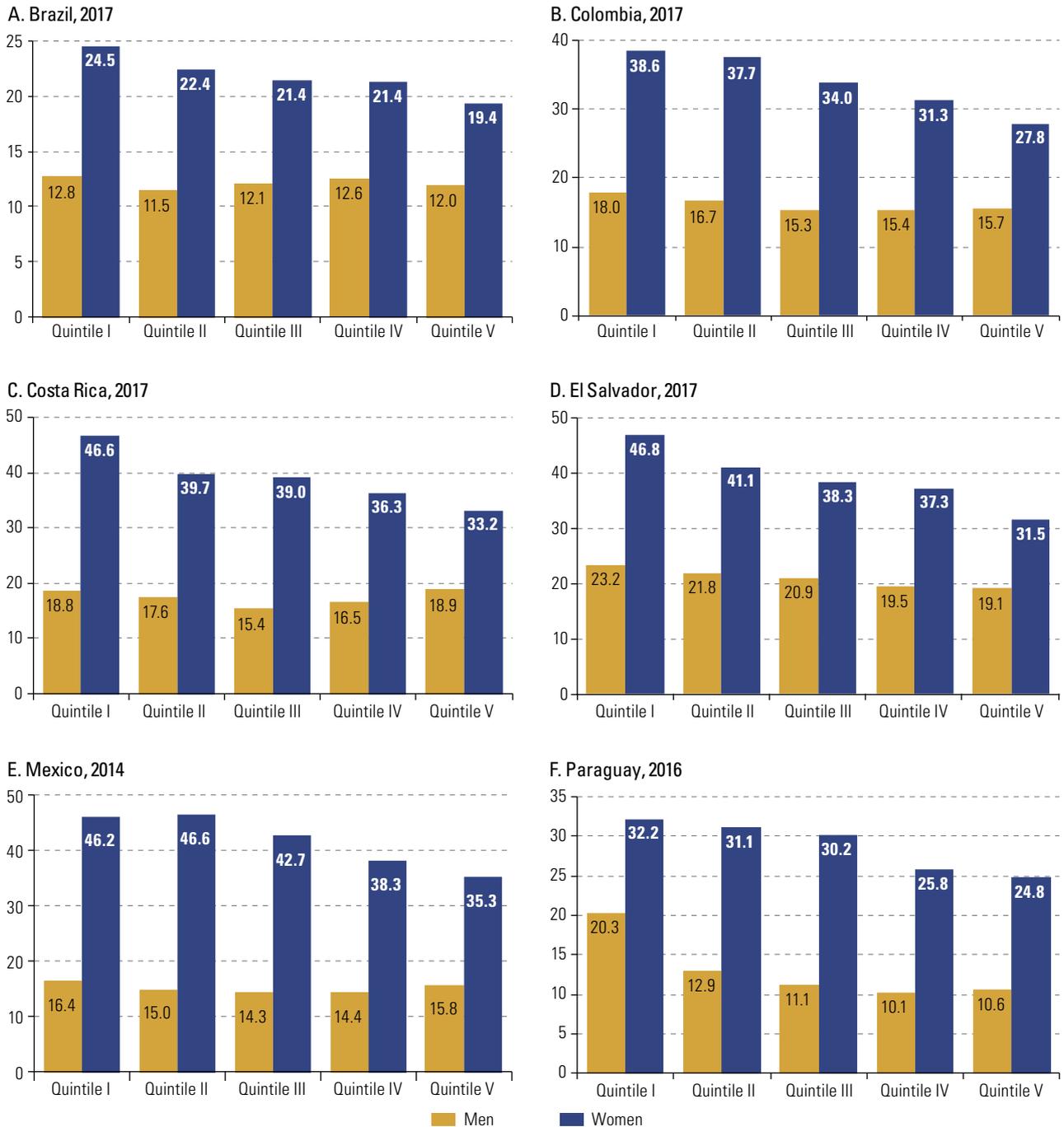
The presence of children or persons with disabilities or permanent dependency increases the burden of care. In the absence of quality public pre-school and childcare services, as well as social protection benefits that include care services, and given the high cost to the family budget of paying for these services at market prices, many households have to take care of children without outside help.

The presence of children under five years of age increases women's unpaid work time by between 20% and 200% (see figure V.9). Although the presence of minors also increases men's unpaid work time, the panorama is very far from achieving co-responsibility in the home. Even when care-giving tasks are shared,

they continue to respond to certain gender roles. While women assume responsibilities that require adherence to daily timetables and are unavoidable (such as food, sanitation, health care), men opt those tasks that do not demand strict schedules and in general tend to be more rewarding (Batthyány, 2011). Even in households without children, gender gaps persist.

Figure V.8

Latin America (6 selected countries): unpaid working time of the population aged 15 or over, by income quintile (Hours per week)

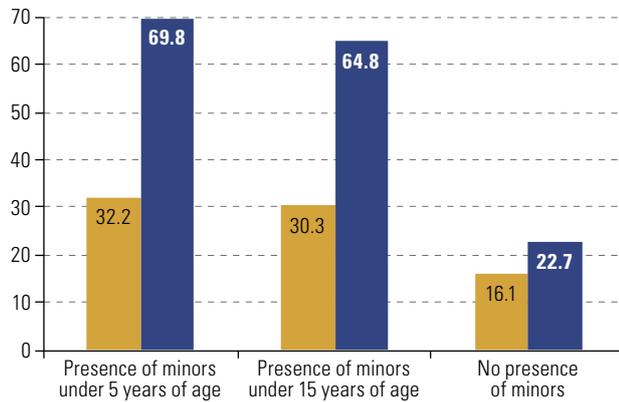


Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, Repository of information on time use in Latin America and the Caribbean [online] <https://oig.cepal.org/en/infographics/repository-information-time-use-latin-america-and-caribbean>.

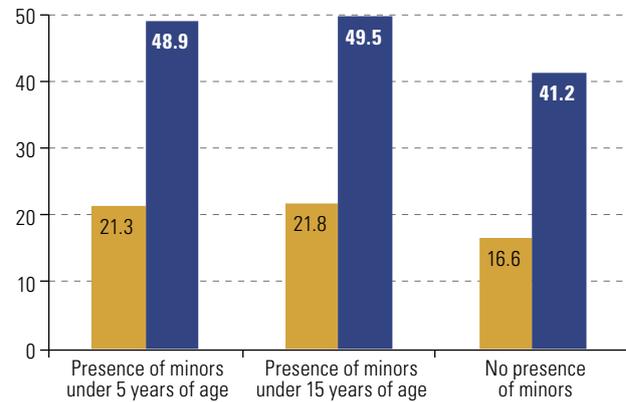
Figure V.9

Latin America (6 selected countries): time spent on unpaid domestic work and care, according to the presence of minors in the household and by sex
(Hours per week)

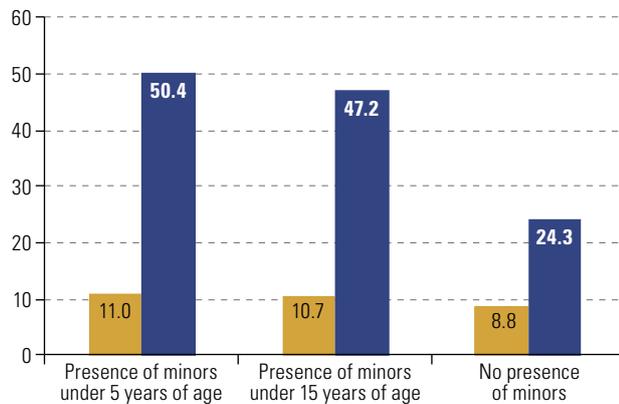
A. Argentina, 2013



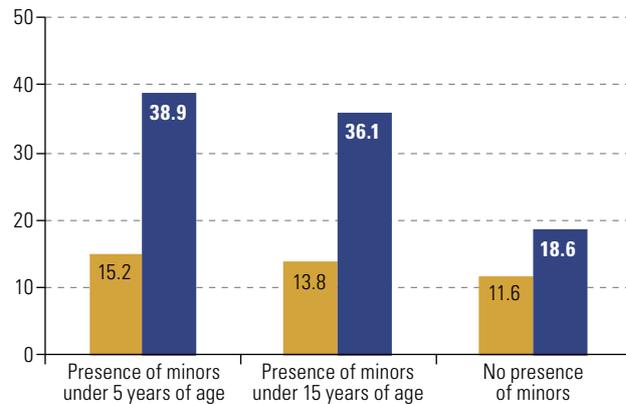
B. Chile, 2015



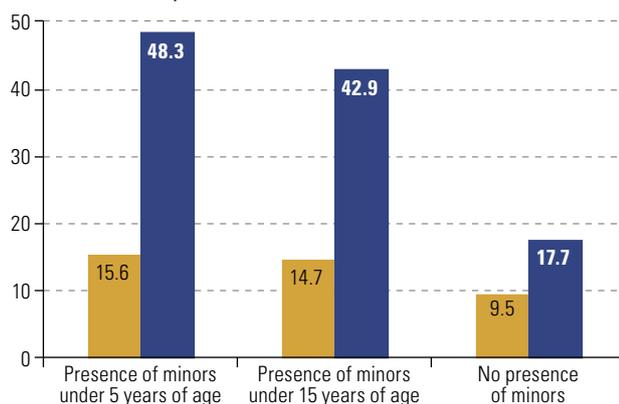
C. Ecuador, 2012



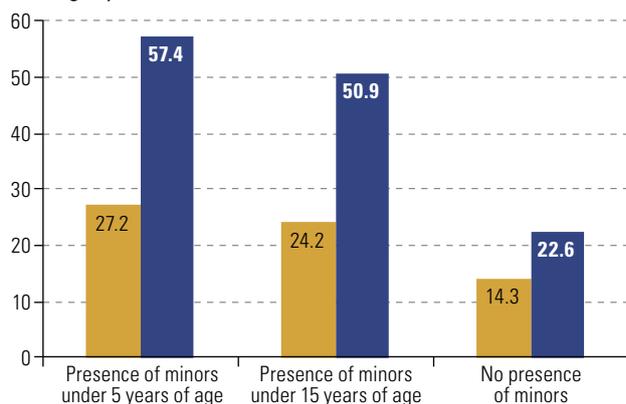
D. Panama, 2011



E. Dominican Republic, 2016



F. Uruguay, 2013



Men

Women

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, Repository of information on time use in Latin America and the Caribbean [online] <https://oig.cepal.org/en/infographics/repository-information-time-use-latin-america-and-caribbean>.

Viewing care activities as naturally a woman's obligation makes it harder to recognize the tasks in question as work. Domestic and care work is undervalued, as it takes place in the private sphere of homes and demands personal relationships, often emotional and affective interactions, and within an economic model that does not recognize these qualities as generating value. This has a significant effect on both those who perform care tasks on a paid basis and those who perform them without pay, as will be discussed further below.

Because they are undervalued, domestic work and care-giving are not counted. Economies have therefore organized themselves on the assumption that there is, and always will be, "an invisible hand" that sustains social reproduction and prepares the labour force for the market. In turn, this market also displays biases, as women's salaries have traditionally been seen as secondary, complementary, or as an adjustment variable in households. Nonetheless, and despite all the discriminations present in the labour market, women continue to participate in it, without abandoning "their care responsibilities"

The data show that, for all countries with information available, employed women's total working time exceeds that of men (see figure V.10). Men and women distribute their time between paid and unpaid work very differently. Regionwide, employed women spend 40% of their time on unpaid domestic and care work, while employed men devote only about 20% of their total working time to these unpaid activities. This excessive burden of unpaid work is a major obstacle to women being able to devote more time to the labour market, earn higher incomes and also be more highly valued.

Figure V.10

Latin America (15 countries): total time worked (paid and unpaid) by the employed population aged 15 or over, by sex
(Hours per week)

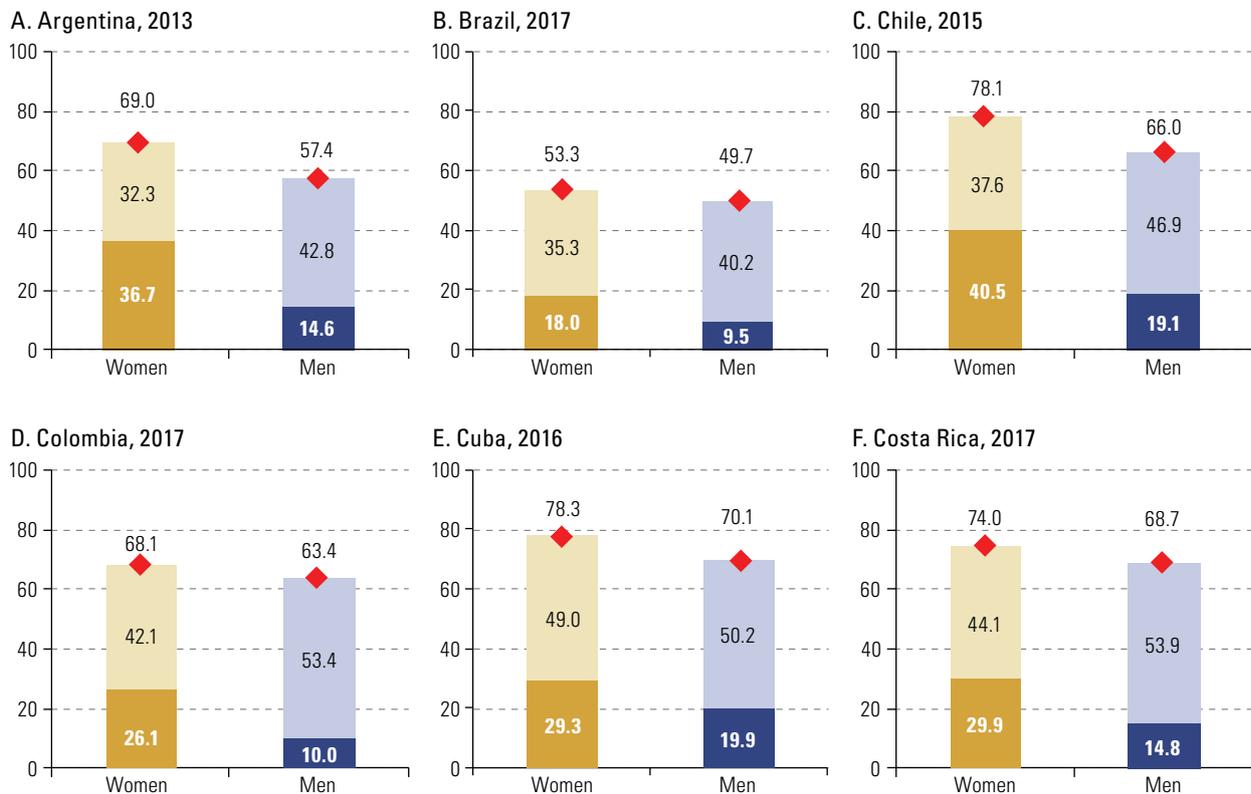
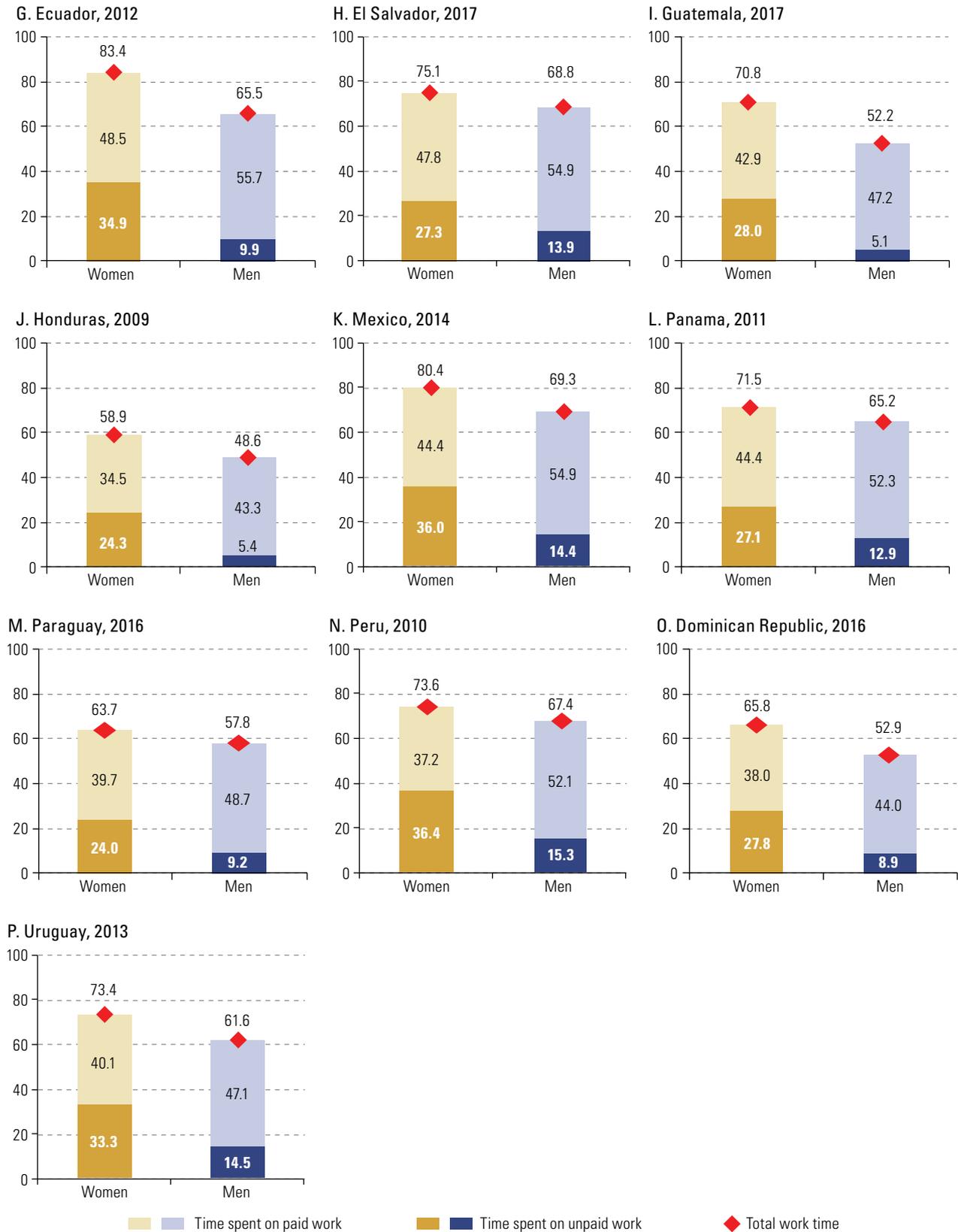


Figure V.10 (concluded)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, Repository of information on time use in Latin America and the Caribbean [online] <https://oig.cepal.org/en/infographics/repository-information-time-use-latin-america-and-caribbean>.

In the absence of adequate public policies, the demographic, socioeconomic and environmental changes that may increase the demand for care could also increase gender inequalities and even exacerbate the care crisis. The current model of the social organization of care, which is based on families and maintained through unpaid work done by women, is no longer sustainable.

The effects of climate change, including disasters and phenomena such as desertification, deforestation, persistent drought and extreme weather events, influence paid and unpaid work and pose new challenges for achieving gender equality (ILO, 2018). Water or energy shortages can cause women, particularly rural or indigenous ones, to spend additional time in domestic work as they have to go further to fetch water or firewood. In addition, diseases linked to the effects of climate change increase the need for care, and thus disproportionately burden the women who spend their lives caring for household members (ILO, 2018; ECLAC, 2017).

Although demographic trends constitute a phenomenon with its own process, it is important for the countries of the region to be able to anticipate the increasing demands for care through comprehensive policies that include caregivers' rights and gender equality perspectives, in order to avoid adding further to women's unpaid work burden (ECLAC, 2017).

C. The care sector in the labour market: another form of occupational segregation for women

The sexual division of labour persists in the region as one of the structural obstacles that undermine women's autonomy; and it manifests itself not only in the household domain, but also in the labour market.

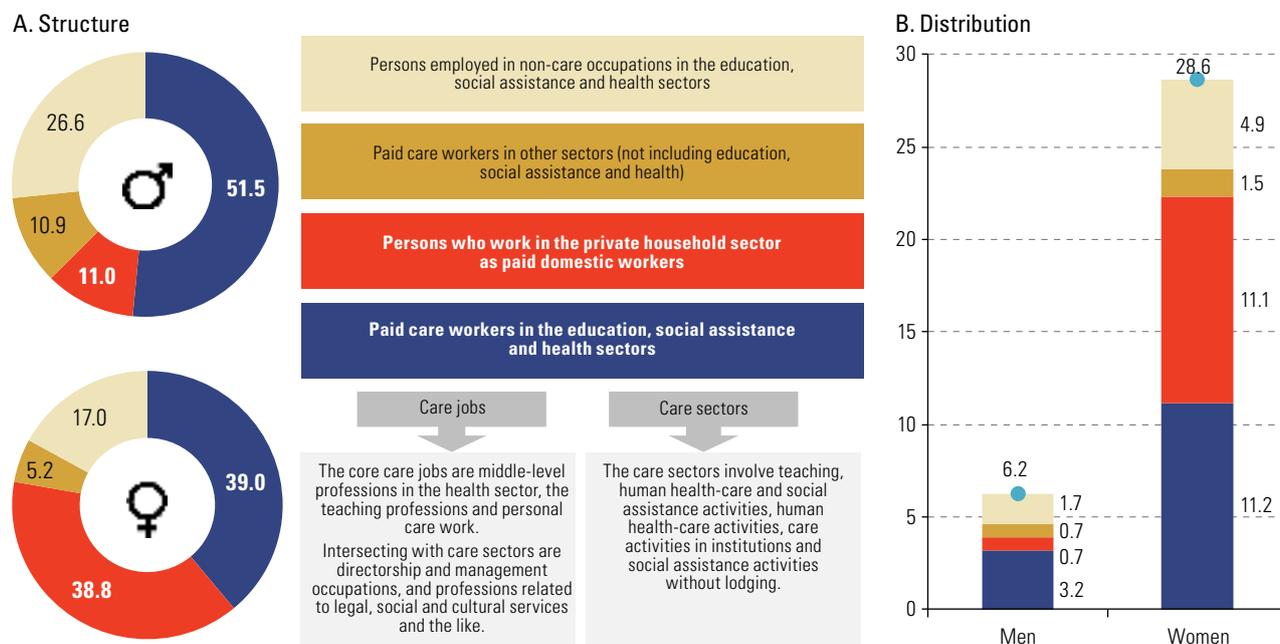
Studies of the paid care sector are generally done with people working in the education, social assistance and health sectors and in the provision of services to households. This broad group differs in terms of the occupations they perform, the skills required, the associated pay and the quality of the job. Care work in the labour market closes the circle between the provision of unpaid care and paid work. The activities associated with this definition of care are seen as an extension of women's work within households, and they are associated with skills generally attributed to women's "natural" status; as such, they are generally viewed as low-skill activities. It is therefore no coincidence that the equivalent jobs in the labour market are mostly performed by women and are characterized by low wages (ILO, 2018).

Paid work in the care economy can be divided into four categories of workers (ILO, 2018) (see figure V.11):

- (i) **Paid care workers in the education, social assistance and health sectors.** This category corresponds to all occupations as managers in the education, social services and health sector; middle-level health professionals and technicians; middle-level education professionals and technicians; professionals in law, social and cultural affairs working in the health or education sector; and also personal care workers. This category, which is linked to tasks requiring direct care, employs 11.2% of employed women and 3.2% of employed men.
- (ii) **Persons employed in non-care occupations in the education, social assistance and health sectors.** These workers contribute to care provision as administrative staff, cooks or cleaners, for example; and although their occupations do not involve providing direct care, their work is necessary for the care economy (ILO, 2018).
- (iii) **Persons working in private households sector as paid domestic workers.** The Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) of the International Labour Organization (ILO) defines it as "any person engaged in domestic work within an employment relationship" (ILO, 2011); and it defines (paid) domestic work as "work performed in or for a household or households" (ILO, 2011). This may include tasks such as cleaning the house; cooking; washing and ironing clothes; caring for children, elderly or sick people; gardening; housekeeping; driving for family members and even taking care of household pets. In the case of women, this category represents 38% of paid jobs in the care economy.
- (iv) **Paid care workers in other sectors (not including education, social assistance and health care).**

Figure V.11

Latin America (15 countries): structure and distribution of the employed population aged 15 or over in sectors and occupations related to the care economy, around 2017^a
(Percentages)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of Household Survey Data Bank (BADEHOG); International Labour Organization (ILO), *Care Work and Care Jobs for the Future of Decent Work*, Geneva, 2018.

Note: The categories were constructed on the basis of the classification proposed by ILO (2018) for the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08) and the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC4), adapted to the country-specific classifications of occupations and branches of activity. The core care occupations include ISCO-08 codes 22, 23, 32 and 53. Occupations that are added when they intersect with care sectors correspond to ISCO-08 codes 13, 26 and 34. Care sectors correspond to ISIC 4 codes 85, 86, 87 and 88. The category of core care occupations in non-care sectors is constructed by taking the two health-related occupation groups 22 and 32 of ISCO-08 excluding workers in the veterinary activities sector, along with the two occupation groups related to education and personal care (ISCO-08 23 and 53).

^a The data for Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Peru the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Uruguay refer to 2017; those for Honduras and Mexico correspond to 2016; and the data for Guatemala and Nicaragua relate to 2014.

When considering the working conditions of persons employed in the care sector, the traditional forms of measurement pose a major challenge, because they do not consider a fundamental and characteristic feature of these tasks, namely the emotional involvement and interpersonal relationships that the care-giving activity entails. Nonetheless, even when analysed with traditional metrics, the indicators used in care jobs reveal situations of inequality and discrimination that negatively affect women in the labour market. Given the proportion of women employed as care workers in the health, social assistance and education sectors, and also in households as paid female domestic workers, these categories will be analysed in greater depth.

1. Paid care workers in the education, social assistance and health sectors

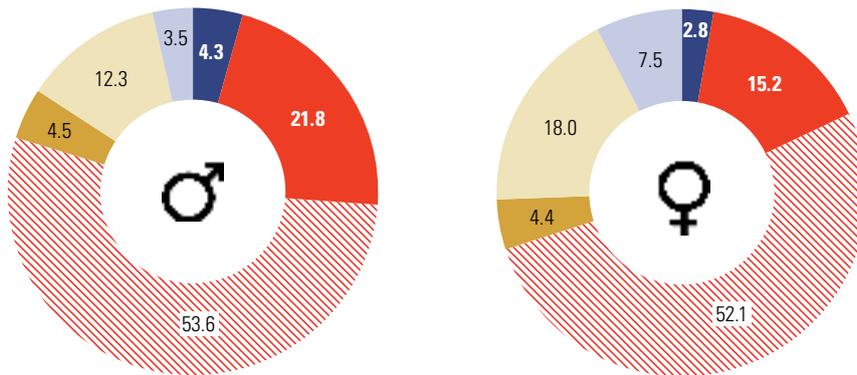
Care jobs in the education, health and social assistance sectors are highly feminized, with over 10 million women thought to be employed in these sectors in the region. In Uruguay and Argentina, more than 17% of women are employed in care jobs in the care sector, and in Brazil 14% of working women are paid care workers (see figure V.12). However, even in a category of workers in which women are the majority, gender gaps to the detriment of women are still present. For example, in health-care activities, 21.8% of men are employed as

health professionals, 12.3% as associate technicians, and just 3.5% as personal care workers. In contrast, women are relatively more numerous among associate professionals (18.0%), professionals (15.2%) and personal care workers (7.5%).

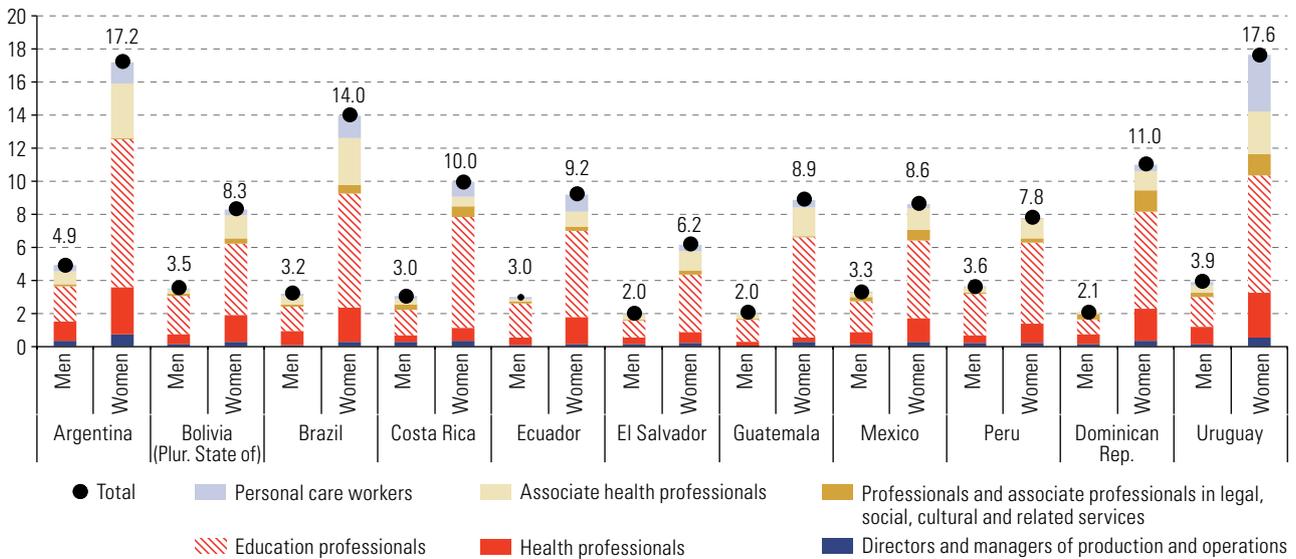
Figure V.12

Latin America (11 countries): structure and distribution of the population aged 15 or over employed in care work in the education, social assistance and health sectors, around 2017^a
(Percentages)

A. Structure



B. Distribution



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of Household Survey Data Bank (BADEHOG); International Labour Organization (ILO), *Care Work and Care Jobs for the Future of Decent Work*, Geneva, 2018.

Note: The categories were constructed on the basis of the classification proposed by ILO (2018) for the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08) and the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC4), adapted to the country-specific classifications of occupations and branches of activity. The occupational breakdown for the education, social assistance and health sector corresponds to core care occupations (health professionals, teaching professionals, associate health technicians and personal care workers; ISCO-08 codes 13, 26 and 34 respectively), and to those that are classified as care occupations when intersecting with care sectors (production and operations managers and directors; professionals and associate professionals in legal, social, cultural and related services; ISCO-08 codes 13, 26 and 34, respectively).

^a The data for Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Uruguay refer to 2017; those for Mexico relate to 2016 and the data for Guatemala correspond to 2014.

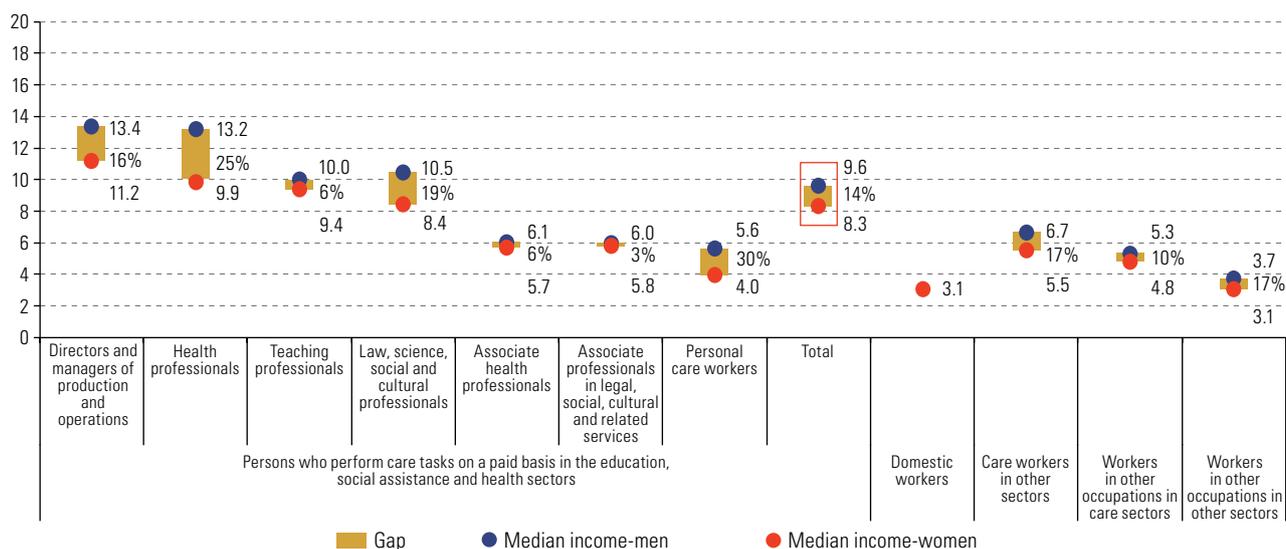
In Uruguay, women account for a larger proportion of personal care jobs (19.2%), probably as a result of the National Care System, which makes it possible to address the problem of care from a social co-responsibility perspective, generating job opportunities in particular for women in this sector.

In higher ranking occupations linked to management, there are proportionately fewer women: in this small care sector only 2.8% of women hold these positions compared to 4.3% of men. Occupational segmentation thus has repercussions on income, even in a sector with high female participation rates.

Pay levels vary widely, since in the care economy there are high-status jobs, for example, certain professional occupations in health care which, thanks to the ability to obtain licences, educational credentials or unionization, can restrict labour supply and keep wages high (ILO, 2018). The widest pay gaps between men and women clearly occur in the high-level professionals group and between persons occupying managerial positions. This also shows how, despite having the same qualifications, men and women do not enjoy the same opportunities to earn wages in accordance with their professional profiles (see figure V.13).

Figure V.13

Latin America (simple average of 11 countries): median hourly labour income by sex and type of occupation, around 2017^a
(International dollars)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of Household Survey Data Bank (BADEHOG); International Monetary Fund (IMF), "Implied PPP conversion rate" [online] <https://www.imf.org/external/datamapper/PPPEX@WEO/OEMDC/ADVEC/WEO/WORLD>.

Note: The calculations were based on the implied PPP conversion rate, which is an indicator of the relationship between local currencies and the international dollar, published by the IMF in 2019.

^a The data for Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Uruguay refer to 2017; those for Mexico relate to 2016 and the data for Guatemala correspond to 2014.

The widest wage gap is that between personal care workers. This is a clear demonstration of discrimination which, by assuming women's care-giving skills to be natural, they assign lower pay to women who provide care. Women who provide personal care, together with paid domestic workers, are the group who earn the lowest income from their jobs (11.2% of women in paid personal care and 15.7% of women in paid domestic work earn incomes below the poverty line). In fact, 25.8% of women employed in domestic service and 7.3% of women employed as personal caregivers live in poverty-stricken households.

In Latin America, women in paid domestic work are less able to exercise their rights to free unionization, association and collective bargaining. At least three factors combine to generate this reduced bargaining power. Firstly, the women in question cannot easily quit their jobs, as their accommodation and food are often tied to the household in which they work. Secondly, they cannot easily measure the value of their contributions, as care involves an intangible affective dimension that has so far not been reflected in employment contracts or

pay. Thirdly, the addition of migrant women to the existing supply of labour in this sector often puts downward pressure on wages. Although some countries have imposed regulations on the subject, the specifics of the sector do not lend themselves to providing the necessary legal protection to effectively uphold these freedoms (Bastidas, 2014 in Salvador and de los Santos, 2016).

In addition to less bargaining power, there are other explanations for low wages. One is that by not sharing a daily physical workspace with their peers and being in contact only with their employers, the exchange and generation of dialogue, as well as the formation of employment networks, become much more difficult and distant (see box V.1).

Box V.1

Care as a profession

In Brazil, care activity is institutionally recognized as a professional job. In 2002, the activity of "Professional female caregiver" was included in the new Brazilian Occupational Classification (CBO). The activity includes persons who "take care of babies, children, young people, adults and elderly persons, based on objectives established by specialized institutions or those directly responsible, looking after the well-being, health, nutrition, personal hygiene, education, culture, recreation and leisure of the person being cared for".

According to the CBO, this work can be performed in homes or institutions, under a range of working conditions: self-employed or wage-earning and with some form of supervision. It establishes the possibility of a variety of work schedules (full-time, shifts or fixed-term), and notes that, care providers working with persons with behavioural disorders have to deal with situations of aggression. It notes that "this [occupational] family does not include nursing technicians and assistants, which remain in the field of "Nursing" rather than "Professional care", and thus involves different regulations in terms of access to training, certification and pay.

The inclusion of the "Caregiver" occupation in the CBO led to a growing recognition of the occupation and triggered lobbying for special regulations. Recognition of the home-carer profession has not been immune from tension and has met resistance from representatives of the health professions (mainly in the nursing sector). Caregivers, for their part, have mobilized to regulate the professional exercise of care work, establish rights and rules of protection that differentiate them (especially those working in households) from other paid domestic workers, which was their original occupation in most cases.

In February 2018, the Social Affairs Commission of the Federal Senate approved a proposed regulation for the exercise of the profession of "care-giver of older persons, children, persons with disabilities and rare diseases", establishing that the activity may only be exercised by "graduates of basic education (that is, persons who have completed the minimum eight years of schooling) with a qualification course in the area, in addition to a minimum age of 18, a clean criminal record and a certificate of physical and mental aptitude". It states that the caregiver "must work to enhance the autonomy and independence and ensure the well-being, health, nutrition, personal hygiene and recreation of the person being supported and assisted". This regulation, which has already been approved by the Chamber of Deputies, will enter into force following its approval by the plenary of the Senate.

Source: Prepared by the authors, on the basis of N. Guimarães, "Los circuitos del cuidado: fronteras y actrices en las relaciones de trabajo. Reflexiones a partir del caso brasileño", document presented at the XXXVII International Congress of the Latin American Studies Association (LASA), Boston, 24–28 May 2019.

2. Female paid domestic workers

Paid domestic work has traditionally been a major source of employment for women in Latin America, especially those from poor households, indigenous women and Afrodescendants. Increasingly, migrant women are also entering this workspace.

Just over 11 million women are currently employed as domestic workers in Latin America—a figure that has remained broadly constant since 2005. However, the weight of paid domestic work in total female employment has declined—from 12.9% in 2000 to 10.5% in 2017—despite increased demand as a result of the care crisis.

The regional averages conceal major regional heterogeneity. Data for 2013 show that Costa Rica is currently the country with the highest proportion of paid domestic work in total female employment (18%), while the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has the lowest (3.4%). In three countries (Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic and Mexico) there has been an increase in this proportion among employed women.

Women in paid domestic work perform both household maintenance (cleaning, meal preparation, shopping, pet care, among other activities), as well as child and elderly care. Paid domestic work continues to be undervalued socially and is perceived as being associated with social groups that have low levels of schooling. Owing to the stigma attached to this type of work, young women are seeking other employment options. As a result, the average age of paid domestic work rose by nearly eight years in less than 20 years (from 34.5 years in 2000 to 42.2 in 2017). At present, almost three quarters of paid female domestic workers (73.8%) are in the 30–64 age group.

Female paid domestic workers have also increased their average level of schooling from 6.4 years of study in 2000 to 7.4 years in 2017. Those with secondary education (between 10 and 12 years of schooling) currently represent only a slightly smaller percentage (26.7%) than those with very low schooling (30.4%). This is very different from the situation in 2000, when over half of paid female domestic workers (51.5%) had very few years of schooling, and those with secondary education (10–12 years) were a minority (12.0%).

In addition to changes in the personal characteristics of female paid domestic workers, there have been major changes in the way this work is performed. There has been a significant decrease in the proportion of those working as live-in maids (who sleep at their employers' homes). While in 2000 nearly a quarter (22.6%) worked in this modality, today the figure is just 7.3%.

The working hours of female paid domestic workers are now shorter and closer to those of other wage earners. The proportion of women working part-time (up to 24 hours per week) has increased, reflecting an increase in the number of women working on 2 or 3 days per week and in hourly work split between several households. The proportion of women working up to 44 hours has also increased, reflecting greater respect for legal working hours (which in some countries is 44 hours). On the other hand, the proportion of female paid domestic workers with long working hours (45 hours or more) has decreased significantly from 53.4% to 37.8%.

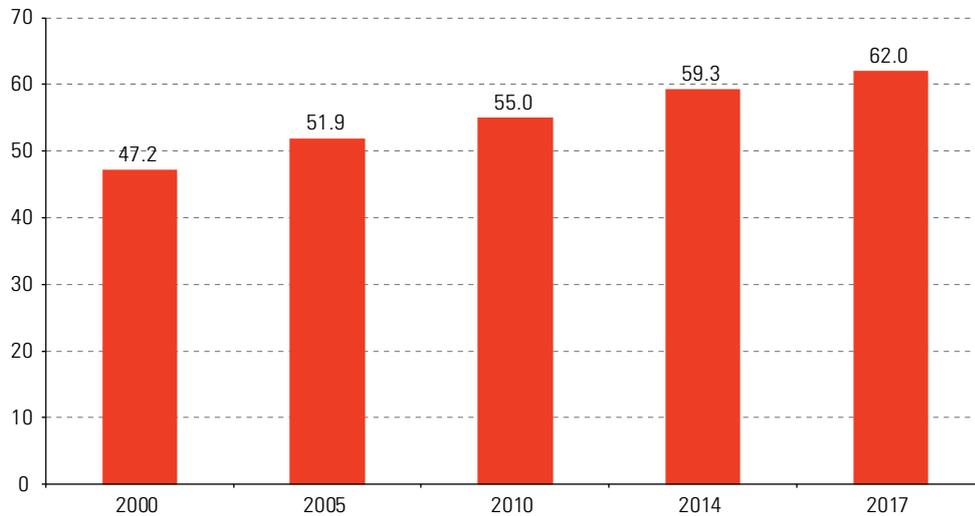
The combined effects of public policies (including minimum wage policies and legal reforms), together with market demands, have raised the wages of female paid domestic workers. Even though their wages are still below the average for employed women as a whole, the gap has been closing. While their hourly earnings represented less than half the average for all employed women in 2000, the level had risen to 62% in 2017.

There is a deep-rooted prejudice concerning the lack of skills required for domestic work and care-giving. Despite the growing demand for these tasks and their inherent complexity, care is still viewed as an extension of women's "natural" domestic functions. Moreover, the wide variety of skills and specialization currently required by domestic work (including care work) is not recognized. Persons employed in this sector are expected to perform multiple tasks, some of which —such as cleaning and ironing— are relatively simple; but others are more complex —tasks such as handling household appliances with multiple functions, helping children with school homework, caring for the elderly, disabled or sick. With the ageing and longevity of the population and the increasing number of people in need of long-term care, outpatient care at home is becoming more important. Many female paid domestic workers take on responsibilities that in other contexts would correspond to skilled health-care workers or teachers. These include administering drugs, monitoring vital signs (for example, blood pressure, blood oxygen level, etc.), taking care of hygiene and transporting elderly people who are not independently mobile, among other duties.

Although it is difficult to strictly distinguish "care" work from general domestic tasks, there is increasingly a demarcation between the two, with consequent differentiations in terms of occupation prestige, which in some countries translates into higher wages and social prestige.

Figure V.14

Latin America (weighted average of 18 countries): ratio between the average hourly incomes of women employed in domestic service and all other employed women, around 2000, 2005, 2010, 2014 and 2017
(Percentages)



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

3. Workplace violence in the care economy

Violence in the labour market is a threat to the dignity, safety, health and well-being of all women workers. ILO's Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190) defines workplace violence and harassment as "a range of unacceptable behaviours and practices, or threats thereof, whether a single occurrence or repeated, that aim at, result in, or are likely to result in physical, psychological, sexual or economic harm, and includes gender-based violence and harassment" (ILO, 2019b).

Paid domestic work is one of the occupations most at risk of experiencing violence and harassment at work, owing to a variety of factors, such as the fact that:

- it takes place in a private space (the employer's home);
- it is carried out in the framework of asymmetric power relations (labour relations marked by extreme inequality and verticality);
- it is characterized by isolation (without the presence of other workers);
- it is undervalued and under-recognized; and
- despite legal advances, there is still an insufficient level of effective legal protection.

Violence is a consequence of discrimination and relations of power and subordination that naturalize inequality and social hierarchies. Paid female domestic workers not only suffer the effects of gender inequality; they also work in an occupation with low social recognition associated with their class and their ethnic, racial or national origin. Historically, labour relations in the paid domestic work sector have been marked by an intersectionality of inequalities and hierarchies.⁴ Socioeconomic level, ethnicity or race, gender, country of

⁴ The intersectionality approach makes it possible to simultaneously address the interconnections between different social markers such as ethnicity, race, class, place of origin and gender. These markers generate identities that arise from diversity; but they can also contribute to the reproduction of inequality and structural systems of power. The violence experienced by female paid domestic workers is not immune from situations of xenophobia, racism and other forms of discrimination.

origin or migratory status are differences which, in societies with a high degree of discrimination and racism, place women in a position of high vulnerability in terms of their rights. These systems of oppression are determining factors in the normalization of violence, which comes to be seen as a normal or unquestionable part of daily work. This situation is also conditioned by the life histories of the workers themselves, who have generally also experienced situations of violence within their families.

Both the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) and the recently adopted Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190), both of ILO, refer to this situation. Article 5 of the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) calls on States to “take measures to ensure that domestic workers enjoy effective protection against all forms of abuse, harassment and violence” (ILO, 2011). The Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190), for its part, calls on States to identify “the sectors or occupations and work arrangements in which workers and other persons concerned are more exposed to violence and harassment” (article 8) and to adopt “laws, regulations and policies ensuring the right to equality and non-discrimination in employment”, including those “that are disproportionately affected by violence and harassment in the world of work” (article 6) (ILO, 2019b). The Violence and Harassment Recommendation, 2019 (No. 206), which complements the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190), goes further and identifies paid domestic work as one of the occupations most exposed to violence and harassment (article 9) (see box V.2).

There are no quantitative studies that measure the prevalence of violence and harassment in paid domestic work in the region. The high degree of heterogeneity from one country to another in terms of the working conditions of female paid domestic workers means that the incidence of violence and harassment is likely to vary from place to place. However, a study on paid domestic work in five of the region’s countries (Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico) found that nearly all of the women participating in the research had experienced various types of workplace abuse, such as stalking, violence and harassment (Zaragocín and others, 2018, p. 35).

Female paid domestic workers who have accommodation provided by their employers are subject to increased risks of abuse, violence and harassment. Many of them face excessive workloads, lack of privacy and unsuitable sleeping spaces. They are also less able to put an end to abuse, since not only their wage but also on their accommodation depends on their employment. The vulnerability of female domestic workers is even greater if they are migrants, because, in addition to their lack of knowledge of the local culture, scarcity of networks and the need to send remittances home, they often have no housing rights at all. Another group that is highly vulnerable to violence and harassment consists of adolescent female paid domestic workers. Generally living far from their families, they are often victims of physical, emotional and sexual abuse. Some of them work in exchange for accommodation and food and the promise to be able to continue their education, which is only occasionally fulfilled.

Female paid domestic workers face various types of violence and harassment at work, which put their dignity, safety and health at risk and constitute a violation of their human rights.

Some studies have found that female paid domestic workers face the greatest insecurity and risk of violence in spaces within the household in which they work; but they also mention situations of risk on the journeys between their place of work and where they live. They stress that workplace accommodation can be unsafe, because the employee can be accused of theft when personal property is lost, and they are at risk of being abused by family members.

Violence perpetrated against female paid domestic workers has multiple effects. Depending on the type and frequency of situations of violence and harassment they have faced, phenomena have been documented such as post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, irritability, anxiety, feelings of nervousness, insecurity and social isolation. Psychosomatic problems have also been observed, arising from exposure to violence, such as sleep disturbance, headache, musculoskeletal pain and muscle tension, nausea and gastric problems (see box V.3).

Box V.2

Adoption of the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190), including gender-based violence and harassment. Resolution of the 108th session of the International Labour Conference, Geneva, June 2019

The 108th session of the International Labour Conference adopted the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190). This is the first Convention adopted by the International Labour Conference since the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) in 2011. It is important to note that the conventions are international instruments that are legally binding on ILO member countries.

Convention No. 190 states that violence and harassment in the world of work refers to "range of unacceptable behaviours and practices, or threats thereof, whether a single occurrence or repeated, that aim at, result in, or are likely to result in physical, psychological, sexual or economic harm, and includes gender-based violence and harassment" (ILO, 2019b).

In article 1(b), it states that "the term 'gender-based violence and harassment' means violence and harassment directed at persons because of their sex or gender, or affecting persons of a particular sex or gender disproportionately, and includes sexual harassment" (ILO, 2019b).

The Convention is complemented by the Violence and Harassment Recommendation, 2019 (No. 206). Article 9 of this non-binding Recommendation mentions the occupations in which exposure to violence and harassment may be more likely, including domestic work; article 10 calls for the protection of migrant workers; article 18 calls for measures to mitigate the impacts of domestic violence in the world of work; article 23 recognizes that some gender norms support violence and harassment and calls for the development and dissemination of gender-responsive guidelines and training programmes to assist public officials, as well as employers and workers' organizations, in fulfilling their mandates.

It is important to highlight certain contents of the Convention that are crucial for gender equality and the right to a life free of violence:

- It applies to the different spaces and fields of the world of work and includes the possibility of harassment and violence through work-related communications, including those enabled through information and communication technologies. This is an absolutely crucial issue in the twenty-first century in the context of the digital revolution and the predominance of Industry 4.0 in all spheres of people's daily lives (article 3(d))
- It recognizes that certain groups and sectors are particularly vulnerable to situations of violence and harassment, including some with a strong predominance of women (health, social services, domestic work, education, among others). In particular, there are elements that are highly relevant to the sphere of paid domestic work, with explicit reference to situations of employer-provided accommodation (article 3(e)); and it calls for appropriate measures to identify sectors or occupations and work arrangements in which workers and other persons are more exposed to violence and harassment (article 8(b)).
- It establishes that easy access to remedies and redress in cases of violence and harassment must be ensured (article 10); this in turn is strengthened and becomes of fundamental importance in combination with the Convention's recognition of risk factors such as gender stereotypes, multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and abuse of power relations, since the combination of these risks with the lack of guarantees, remedies and redress are substantially more frequent and serious among women. In addition, the Convention addresses the effects of domestic violence and its impact in the world of work (article 10(f)).

The Convention was adopted by a wide margin (439 in favour, 7 against and 30 abstentions). The countries of Latin America and the Caribbean voted as a bloc for its adoption, and it is currently being ratified by the different countries. The Convention will enter into force 12 months after the date on which the ratifications of two countries have been registered with the ILO.

It seems crucial to recognize the contribution made by this Convention to international standards to achieving gender equality and ensuring the physical and economic autonomy of women worldwide.

Source: Prepared by the authors, on the basis of International Labour Organization (ILO), *Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190)*, Geneva, 2019; *Violence and Harassment Recommendation, 2019 (No. 206)*, Geneva, 2019.

Box V.3**Workplace violence perpetrated through social networks**

Although social networks can help forge links between women workers, they can also be used as a vehicle for violence. In May 2017, a female Colombian employer published an accusation on her Facebook wall alleging the theft of a piece of clothing by someone who had previously been employed at her home. The employer made negative comments about the worker and invited her contacts to comment on and share the information. The employer included the worker's full name and a photo. The employer received numerous comments on this posting, which reinforced the social stigmatization of paid domestic work and created an environment of hostility towards the worker.

The case went to the Constitutional Court of Colombia, which ruled that in this case there had been a violation of the worker's fundamental rights and that the statements made by the employer affected the worker's reputation and her value in the community. The Court classified the employer's expressions as offensive and insulting and considered the accusation of theft to be false or erroneous, since there was no judicial sentence to support it. The Court also considered relevant the fact that the publication was seen by anyone who accessed the employer's account, with the possibility of adding new comments. For these reasons, the Court found that the employer had overstepped the constitutional scope of freedom of expression, and it ordered her to publish a rectification on the same page as that on which she had published the defamation. The ruling also stated that "the Colombian legal system prohibits the creation of negative lists for employers, which is understood as the dissemination of information about their ex-employees which imply a subsequent restriction of their access to the labour market" (Núñez and Lima, 2019).^a

Source: Prepared by the authors, on the basis of E. Núñez and A. Lima, "Violencia de género en el trabajo remunerado del hogar en América Latina y el Caribe: experiencias, voces, acciones y recomendaciones de las organizaciones de trabajadoras para eliminarla", International Domestic Workers Federation (IDWF), 2019, unpublished.

^a See Constitutional Court of Colombia, "Sentencia T-243/18" [online] <http://www.corteconstitucional.gov.co/relatoria/2018/t-243-18.htm>.

D. Women's migratory movements: impacts on the care economy

Recent years have seen a significant increase in the proportion of women migrating in pursuit of work opportunities. Situations such as poverty, lack of jobs, violence, and the different manifestations of gender inequality are the main reasons why they leave their countries of origin.

Many of these women find employment as domestic workers in the destination country, which, while affording them relatively quick access to a paid job, also prevents them from developing a career project. This is because they lack support networks and their skills are not recognized; and even because of the stigma attached to having entered that labour activity.

In various Latin American countries, care needs that are not covered by national policies or local labour are being satisfied by immigrant women. Intra-regional migration for the provision of care has increased significantly since the end of the twentieth century, in the context of major changes in migration patterns.⁵

The employment of female migrant workers in paid domestic and care work is seen as an expression of the "mutually complementary" nature of the labour markets of the countries of origin and destination. The women workers enter an occupation that the local labour force had started to abandon, in a society that requires services of this type but cannot find available labour (Acosta, 2015).

1. Global care chains

The concept of global care chains has been widely used to explain female migration from lower-income countries to assume reproductive tasks in higher-income ones. Along with the flows of capital, information

⁵ Census data shows that the overseas immigrant population has been declining gradually since 1970 (when it represented 76.1%); and it became a minority in 2010 (37.2%). In contrast, in the same year people from countries of the region accounted for almost two thirds of the total number of immigrants in Latin America and the Caribbean (62.8%) (Martínez and Orrego, 2016; ECLAC, 2018a).

and goods that circulate in globalization, there are also international circuits of caregivers that underpin social reproduction in destination countries (Ehrenreich and Hochschild, 2003; Salazar, 2001).

International migration poses a new challenge for the analysis of care. Women migrate to fulfil tasks deriving from the externalization of reproductive work in the destination countries. At the same time, they also assume the burden of economic provision for their homes and fulfil care tasks at a distance —transnational care— within the framework of a new social organization of family life imposed by their absence. Female migration thus triggers major changes in households: there is a redistribution of the work of caring for family members who remain in the country of origin; and transnational households develop in which, despite the fact that their members live separated by national borders, they maintain frequent relations with each other, which strengthens the link between the origin and destination societies (Leiva, 2015). The transnational family gives rise to transnational care practices, and distance motherhood has become one of the most widely studied practices.

2. Formation of migratory corridors for care in Latin America

The formation of migratory corridors for care is closely associated with the emergence of development poles around urban centres that have generated high-income occupations in specialized services.⁶ This is fuelling a significant increase in the demand for care support services. Workers in these areas require help in housecleaning, meal preparation, child and elderly care, to be able to participate as much as possible in the labour market. This demand is met by low-cost labour, increasingly consisting of migrant women, given the absence of available national labour.

One of the effects of this phenomenon is a widening of inequality gaps within and between countries, greater labour market segregation and the transfer of tasks that are underappreciated by the local population to women from other countries who are willing to accept them for a minimum wage (Soto and others, 2016).

Despite its importance, care has not been a priority on the migration and development agenda. The relationship between migration and development has instead focused on the impact of remittances and the consequences of migration on growth and human capital, on the contribution of the migrant population to social security systems, or on the costs they represent for social policies. There has been no assessment of the economic contribution of the care work provided by female migrant workers, or of their contribution to the well-being of families and broader social reproduction. Valuing the economic and social contribution of the care work provided by migrant workers in the countries of destination remains a pending task.

Most female paid domestic workers who are migrants come from neighbouring countries. Geographical proximity is an important factor in the decision to migrate, especially when they leave their family behind in the country of origin. Through migration the worker acquires greater independence and assumes the role of a provider, which gives her greater authority when making decisions regarding her home.

(a) Migrant female paid domestic workers: a heterogeneous group

Migrant female paid domestic workers come from a variety of social sectors and situations that have motivated their migration project. In many cases their previous work histories are not related to domestic work. In general, they are younger workers with more education than their national peers. In Chile, the age difference between local and migrant female domestic workers is almost 11 years and in Costa Rica almost four years. Furthermore, in Chile, migrant female domestic workers tend to have higher levels of education. In Argentina they are concentrated in the intermediate age brackets and in Costa Rica, with a more heterogeneous migration, there is a larger proportion of female migrants among workers with very low schooling, but also among those with post-secondary education.

⁶ According to ECLAC data based on household surveys in the respective countries, the labour participation rate in Latin America of women with post-secondary studies (13 years or more of schooling) is 72.7%.

Not only are female migrant workers entering an occupation that nationals increasingly reject, but they also tend to occupy positions within paid domestic work that nationals do not want to take on. They are over-represented among those working in the “live-in” mode, which means that their place of work is also their place of residence. In Costa Rica, 16% of migrant female domestic workers are live-in maids, while only 1% of national workers do so. In Chile, 17% of women migrant workers reside in their employers’ home, compared to just 6% in the case of nationals.

For many migrant workers, above all those who have travelled alone, leaving their children behind in their country of origin, their first employment is in paid domestic work with accommodation in the workplace. This type of employment has the advantage of offering a higher wage and at the same time guaranteeing maximum savings, as there are no housing, transportation or living expenses. Thus, women migrant workers can accumulate a larger sum of money, either to send back to their families in the country of origin or to hasten family reunification. Some of them also associate this situation with greater personal safety in an environment that is alien and unknown to them. The live-in work modality is generally transitory and its duration depends on the worker’s migratory project (see box V.4).

Box V.4

Paid female migrant domestic workers in Brazil

Brazil has a relatively small migrant population, totalling just over 735,000 people in 2017 (0.35% of the national population), according to official data. The migrants in question are mostly male (54%), with a large contingent of Portuguese (24%), followed by Japanese (8.4%). Migration from neighbouring countries is less prevalent (6.7% from Paraguay and 6.5% from the Plurinational State of Bolivia).

Despite the low rate of immigration, a qualitative study conducted in the city of São Paulo by the Centre for Immigrant Human Rights and Citizenship (CDHIC) together with the Labour Solidarity Centre and in collaboration with the Domestic Workers Union of São Paulo (STDMSU) revealed the presence of migrant workers in domestic service.

Traditionally, the migration of workers from neighbouring countries to São Paulo was associated with their participation in sewing workshops. The situation has now changed to the extent that paid domestic work has become a more attractive occupation as a result of wage increases, better working conditions and a higher level of formalization, as a result of policies targeting this sector of the economy.

Brazil amended its migration legislation through Complementary Law No. 105/2015, which entered into force in 2017. The previous Foreigner Statute, adopted in the 1980s during the period of military dictatorship, viewed migration as a security problem and prevented migrants from participating in political and trade union activities. The new Migration Law (No. 13.445) puts an end to this restriction by allowing migrant workers to organize, which is claimed as an important achievement by trade unionism.

The study also confirmed the presence of women of various nationalities employed as paid domestic workers, including women from Angola, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Haiti, Paraguay, Peru and the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

Slightly more than half of the workers interviewed had completed secondary education at least, and the remainder had incomplete secondary education. Most of them did not work in paid domestic service in their country of origin. The vast majority of female workers are employed informally (without a work contract), despite their having regular migratory status; so non-compliance by their employers cannot be justified by a lack of documentation. The study also showed that most women workers were unaware of the laws on domestic work in Brazil and were uninformed about their rights.

The lack of mastery of Portuguese is a barrier identified by most migrant workers (with the exception of Angolans). The study found that women migrant workers who work as live-in maids do not have time to attend Portuguese language courses, carry out formalities or take other steps that would enable them to integrate more quickly in the destination city. Not knowing the language and living at the workplace generates heightened feelings of isolation and loneliness, due to lack of socialization; and it hinders integration into the country and restricts possibilities for changing jobs.

Source: Centre for Immigrant Human Rights and Citizenship, *Mulheres migrantes e refugiadas trabalhadoras domésticas na cidade de São Paulo e Região Metropolitana*, São Paulo, 2018; interview with immigrant worker, member of the Domestic Workers Union of São Paulo.

(b) Migrant corridors

(i) Argentina-Paraguay-Peru migrant corridor

According to data from household surveys conducted in the region, an estimated 5% of the Argentine population, or just over 2 million people, are migrants. The largest groups come from neighbouring countries: 32.5% from Paraguay, 20% from the Plurinational State of Bolivia, 10% from Chile and 9.4% from Peru (ILO, 2017).⁷ As in the rest of South America, migratory flows are feminized, with women estimated to account for more than half. In addition, 30% of migrant women are employed in domestic service. This figure contrasts with the 12% of national women who perform paid domestic work.

Argentina's current migration policy is based on Migration Law No. 25.871, which has been in force since January 2004. This is supplemented by Decree No. 616 of 2010 and the *Patria Grande* regularization program, which is intended for citizens of countries that are members of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) and associate states. Argentine law allows MERCOSUR citizens and those from associate countries to enter Argentina with their national identity document, and to apply for temporary residence for two years with no requirement other than their entry through legal channels and a police record. At the end of the two years, they obtain permanent residency by virtue of settled status. Persons from countries outside MERCOSUR may apply for a one-year temporary residence (renewable) if they satisfy the requirements established for each category of residence.

Paid domestic work is an occupation mostly done by workers from Paraguay and Peru (69% of Paraguayan women immigrants and 58% of those from Peru are employed in this sector, although qualitative studies indicate that some Peruvian female workers see it as a job they hope to move out of (Jaramillo, 2019). The contingent of paid migrant domestic workers in Argentina is heterogeneous and includes women with varied migratory and labour histories and different levels of education and vocational training.

Paraguayan female paid domestic workers come mainly from rural areas, are young and tend to have low levels of education. Many of them were domestic workers before migrating. Argentina is chosen by Paraguayan women workers as a destination because of its easy access and the opportunities for economic and social advancement that exist there. For example, they find not only greater job opportunities than in their country of origin, but also higher wage levels and easier and lower-cost access to essential public health services (and education when they can bring their children). Women workers especially value good health care and the fact that their children have access to an education system which they consider to be of good quality. They also value the social policy measures applicable to them (even though a minimum number of years of residence is required to qualify for these benefits) and the possibility of retirement (through Law No. 26.970) when they reach retirement age (Messina, 2015; Dobrée, González and Soto, 2015).

Peruvian migration currently represents the fourth largest group of migrants in Argentina, and is heavily concentrated in paid domestic work. Peruvian women workers have higher levels of education, many of them with full secondary schooling and even post-secondary studies (Rosas, 2010). Before migrating, many had skilled or semi-skilled jobs (such as secretaries, nursing technicians, or occupations in the beauty sector), and a large proportion were in commerce. There are also migrant female domestic workers with tertiary and university degrees (such as social workers, graduates in nursing or obstetrics, teachers, among others) who, however, were unable to choose other career paths. Difficulties in gaining recognition for their qualifications appear to be one of the main factors preventing them from practising their profession in the destination country.⁸

Argentina has launched major initiatives to improve the situation of paid domestic workers. In 2013, a new law was adopted⁹ that in nearly all respects equates them other wage-earners, which was complemented by a policy of promoting labour formalization targeting both national and migrant workers.

⁷ 2015 calculations based on data from the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) of the United Nations.

⁸ Difficulties in validating studies persist, despite the existence of a regional-scope regulation, the action plan of the MERCOSUR Citizenship Statute of 2010, which incorporates this topic and proposes to simplify the administrative procedures for obtaining equivalences in studies and higher education degrees (Rho, 2017, quoted in Jaramillo, 2017). This simplification has not yet been put into practice, however.

⁹ See Ministry of Justice and Human Rights (2013).

(ii) Chile-Peru Migratory Corridor

In 2017 there were an estimated 777,400 migrants living in Chile, representing 4.4% of the country's population. Estimates for 2015 indicated that the largest groups come from bordering or nearby countries: 38% from Peru, 15% from Argentina, 8% from the Plurinational State of Bolivia, 5% from Colombia and 5% from Ecuador (ILO, 2017). Recent data show that migration from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has become the most numerous (INE, 2019).

In Chile, 13% of migrant women are employed in domestic service,¹⁰ compared to 8% in the case of Chilean women.

Most migrants use the employment contract as a means of obtaining a temporary resident visa. This is granted for one year and is renewable for a second year, after which it is possible to apply for permanent residency. Persons who become permanent residents may opt for family reunification and bring their family members to Chile.¹¹

A large proportion of migrant women are concentrated in domestic work, an occupation that has a significant degree of labour protection, since Law 20.786 gives them in nearly all respects the same rights as provided to any other wage-earner. In Chile, a major effort has also been made to formalize domestic work, ensuring that over half of the workers in this sector have employment contracts and social security coverage. Migrant female paid domestic workers know that they require an employment contract to obtain the temporary visa. Obtaining that contract is a key element in the terms of negotiation when entering an employment relationship. For this reason, most migrant female domestic employees make social security contributions (65.2%) and the level of labour formality they achieve is higher than that of Chilean paid female domestic workers (see box V.5).

Box V.5

Circular migration: Bolivian women employed in domestic service in Chile

According to data from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Migration of Chile, migration from the Plurinational State of Bolivia to Chile has increased in recent years. Paid female domestic workers arrive in Chile with circular migration strategies, in other words temporary, repetitive and cyclical migration. They do not intend to settle in Chile permanently. This is a survival strategy in the face of the need to provide income to the household. They travel by land from various cities, mainly from the departments of La Paz, Oruro and Potosí, located along the 800km border with Chile; they concentrate in the northern part of Chile bordering the Plurinational State of Bolivia. This is a peculiar pattern as most women migrant workers from elsewhere move to the central part of the country, where sources of employment are more numerous.

The workers enter the country as tourists, with an identity card from the Plurinational State of Bolivia, which allows them to stay in the country for 90 days. At the end of that period they return to the Plurinational State of Bolivia, some for a few days and others for longer periods (a few months or a year), and then return to Chile again to work. Most of them are not covered by the Residency agreement for Nationals of the States Parties of MERCOSUR, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Chile, which would allow them to stay for one year; nor do they apply for a work permit. The explanation for this circularity strategy includes lack of knowledge of the regulations on the circulation of persons from MERCOSUR and the economic costs involved in regularization. The temporary visa costs US\$ 283 and the work permit costs US\$ 150. Another reason for not opting for the temporary visa is the fear that it will force them to stay in Chile for a year (as a condition for permanent residency), thereby preventing them from returning to their country of origin every three months to visit their children. As they do not have a work permit, the workers do not have a contract, and the work relationship is established under conditions of extreme vulnerability and risk of abuses and violation of rights. Given this situation, they do not feel able to complain (Leiva and Ross, 2016).

They generally prefer job opportunities that offer accommodation, as part of a strategy to save as much of their income as possible, to send back to their family in their country of origin. Wages in Chile can be twice as high as in the Plurinational State of Bolivia. These workers dedicate almost all of their wages to the remittances they send back to their family members. Despite not having a contract, their wages are similar to those of Chilean domestic workers. Due to the circular nature of their migration, their trajectories are fragmented and they have to seek work again each time they return to Chile.

Source: S. Leiva, M. Mansilla and A. Comelin, "Condiciones laborales de migrantes bolivianas que realizan trabajo de cuidado en Iquique", *Si Somos Americanos*, vol. 17, No. 1, Santiago, Arturo Prat University, 2017; S. Leiva and C. Ross, "Migración circular y trabajo de cuidado: fragmentación de trayectorias laborales de migrantes bolivianas en Tarapacá", *Psicoperspectivas*, vol. 15, No. 3, Valparaíso, Pontifical Catholic University of Valparaíso (PUCV), 2016.

¹⁰ Data obtained by processing household surveys available in the ECLAC Household Survey Data Bank (BADEHOG) database.

¹¹ One of the reasons for granting a temporary resident visa is the bond with a family member who has permanent residency. Other reasons to opt for a temporary visa are pregnancy, the need for medical treatment, MERCOSUR citizen status, being a foreigner with Chilean ties, including cases of civil union celebrated in Chile or abroad, regardless of the sex of the contracting parties.

(iii) Costa Rica-Nicaragua Migratory Corridor

Costa Rica has historically been one of the main destinations for migrants from Nicaragua, who come in search of jobs and better wages. According to the latest available data (2015) it is estimated that 71% of the migrant population living in Costa Rica comes from Nicaragua (421,697 people, representing 8.5% of the population) (ILO, 2016). Historic economic migration has recently been joined by a new type that is politically motivated. As of 2018, Costa Rica started to grant refugee status to people from Nicaragua who met certain requirements. According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), there were 46,000 such refugees in April 2019 (including those who have been granted refugee status and those who are in the process of obtaining it).¹²

In the wake of the recent political and social conflicts in their country, Nicaraguan immigrants with higher levels of education have started to arrive in Costa Rica, including some with technical and university studies. As these qualifications are not valid in Costa Rica and the migrants need to find employment in the short term, they have started to work as paid domestic workers, but especially in the area of more skilled home care (such as older adult care, for example). Immigrants from the health sector (doctors, nurses, auxiliaries) are entering a home care market that has a strong demand for skilled personnel, working both in shifts and in jobs with on-site accommodation. Despite the devaluation of their qualifications, their wages enable them to achieve a higher level of savings and send remittances to Nicaragua.

According to ECLAC data, 34% of employed migrant women in Costa Rica work in domestic service, while 16% of national women work in this sector.

In Costa Rica, the General Migration and Aliens Law (Law No. 8764) has been in force since 2010, and its role in development is highlighted. With the passing of this law, measures were adopted to make it easier for undocumented migrants to obtain regular status, which affected key sectors of labour migration (agriculture, construction and domestic service). The law also made affiliation to the national social security system a requirement for obtaining that status; and irregular stay fees were introduced that have to be paid before the regularization process begins.

Costa Rica's geographical proximity to Nicaragua facilitates the movement of female migrant workers. This generates two segments in the immigrant population: those who live permanently in Costa Rica and those who migrate temporarily, especially to engage in occupations such as paid domestic work (and in the case of men, construction). For some workers, this temporary migration becomes circular, as they alternate periods in each of the countries.¹³

As female domestic workers need formal employment to maintain their regular migratory status, this is a crucial issue in the negotiation of working conditions. The law requires that a worker be subject to a contract (either oral or written) and make social security contributions, regardless of the number of hours she works or the number of employers she has. This could explain why the proportion of migrant female domestic workers registered with social security (43.6%) is almost double that of their national peers (22.1%).

E. Debates on the accounting of care in Systems of National Accounts (SNA)

The set of activities, goods and services necessary for social reproduction is one of the main contributions made by the care economy, in which two dimensions of analysis can be identified: (i) the contribution that the care economy makes to current production arrangements, which is usually invisible; and (ii) the additional contributions that this sector could make to the region's economies if it were duly recognized, remunerated

¹² See UNHCR (2019).

¹³ Voorend and Robles (2011) note that temporary migration of this kind may not be captured adequately in surveys, and the numbers in question are being underestimated.

and redistributed. This latter exercise constitutes a growing field of study in which practical arguments can be made to advance the policy agenda to promote women's economic autonomy and vice versa. In this sense, the contribution made by care clearly embraces three of the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda: SDG 8 – Decent work and economic growth; SDG 5 – Gender equality; and SDG 10 – Reduction of inequality (Ilkharacan, Kim and Kaya, 2015).

1. Discussions on the accounting and modelling of care

(a) Accounting for care in the Systems of National Accounts

The lack of macroeconomic registration of unpaid care work done mostly in households affects women and men unequally in terms of the possibility of participating in the economy. The fact that is not included in the national accounts diminishes social recognition of the profession and, hence, the possibility for those who work unpaid to claim part of the wealth generated (Mellor, 2018).

In response to the historical argument that the unpaid work of households should not be counted because money is not exchanged, feminist economics notes that national accounts are merely a system of conventions and, as such, they can be modified according to needs and incorporate valuations for non-monetary transactions (Heintz, 2019). In fact, the system already does this when it imputes fictitious values for the rent of owner-occupied dwellings or for some services that are provided free of charge by the State, which are valued annually for inclusion in GDP (SNA 2008).

In recent decades progress has been made in creating satellite accounts that value the contribution of unpaid work by households. Nonetheless, as their name implies, these accounts are not included in the numbers analysed on a daily basis by decision-makers in the public agenda (ECLAC, 2017 and 2016a; Saunders and Dalziel, 2017). Accordingly, one of the innovations in this domain involves directly applying the calculation of an expanded domestic product, in other words officially recording and measuring the value of unpaid work. The value added by unpaid work can be included through any of the three methodologies used to construct GDP: by destination, by sector and by income. In the first case, it involves incorporating the consumption and investment of goods not produced in the market. In the second case unpaid work is incorporated as a sector at imputed value, including a value for depreciation and subtracting the intermediate goods used to perform it (from the price at which they were purchased). In the third case, it is considered as an income that families dispose of but is not obtained through the market. The method of GDP by sector remains the easiest to calculate, by using time-use surveys and by valuing hours according to wages adjusted by the caregiver's abilities (Rodríguez, 2015; Suh and Folbre, 2016; ECLAC, 2016a).

Lastly, it is also important to reconsider the way in which State resources allocated to care areas are accounted for. Insofar as they are recorded as expenses and not as investment, the fiscal space for those services is limited (Seguino, 2017). Spending on quality care services is actually a monetary and non-monetary investment that improves the living conditions and formation of societies in the medium and long terms. It should therefore be recorded as an investment. In view of this criticism and in order to place care at the centre of the economy, it would not only be necessary to change the way in which GDP is calculated, but also to modify the criteria used to record State expenditures in the savings-investment account (De Henau, Himmelweit and Perrons, 2017; Heintz, 2019).

(b) Macroeconomic models for assessing the impacts of care

Just as the incorporation of care into national accounts is important, so is its inclusion in macroeconomic models. Many of the relationships between the macroeconomic variables that guide public policy decisions are based on prior theoretical modelling of the economic behaviour of societies. Most of these models were constructed by excluding the essential care relationships in people's lives and thus omitting their potential contribution and impact on the rest of the economy (Braunstein, Van Staveren and Tavani, 2011). To reverse

this situation, recent years have seen a proliferation of academic projects to model the macroeconomy, so as to take account of the care economy, reflecting its centrality and impacts. The macroeconomic models that incorporate care make it possible to project alternative scenarios for a specific economy. Public policy makers can then use them to see the short-, medium- and long-term effects that various policies could have in the productive and reproductive spheres.

A first group of models predicts how closing gender employment and income gaps would fuel greater economic growth society as a whole. However, for these gaps to be closed without increasing time poverty among women, comprehensive systems are needed that socially distribute the care work that today is almost exclusively carried out by women (ECLAC, 2014). For this reason, a second group of models focuses on the macroeconomic impacts of implementing public care policies, in other words the partial or total implementation of a “diversity of instruments to respond to the needs of people requiring care and of those who provide it, and their articulation with sectoral policies on health, education, social security and employment, among others” (Rico and Robles, 2016, p.14).

Among other benefits, the models help in understanding the fiscal results of these policies over time. This is important because, with a mere short-term look, the fiscal cost of care policies tends to be a constraint for governments in implementing them (Chopra, Kelbert and Iyer, 2013). The models also show which of the possible ways of socializing care is the most efficient for the structural specifics of each society (Ilkkaracan, Kim and Kaya 2015).

In general, the models identify a “virtuous circle” (ILO, 2018) between: (i) the allocation of resources to care policies; (ii) the generation of jobs in feminized sectors and the consequent distribution of income in favour of women; (iii) a firm impact on consumption in low-income sectors and hence on the level of economic activity; and (iv) the generation of new fiscal resources through the revenue collected (Díaz and others, 2019; Ilkkaracan, Kim and Kaya, 2015). However, long term impacts are highly nuanced according to the region, the country and the specific context in which the policies in question are applied (Onaran, Oyvatt and Fotopoulou, 2019).

2. Inefficiencies of the sexual division of labour

Some models draw attention to the inefficiency of the sexual division of labour for the functioning of the economy. They make it possible to estimate the additional economic growth that could be generated if women's labour market participation and pay were similar to those of men. The McKinsey Global Institute (2015), evaluated the hypothetical GDP of the Latin American region if, by 2025, women and men had the same labour participation rate, worked the same number of hours and had identical productivity indices. It concluded that a complete closure of these gaps could raise Latin America's GDP by about 34% by 2025. Another estimate, made by ECLAC (2018b), showed that if women's labour participation rates increase by 1% annually until 2030, the contribution to the growth could be up to 2.14 percentage points of GDP in the last year (ECLAC, 2018b). If the increase in the participation rate were even greater, until convergence was attained in 2030, the contribution to growth would be higher at 6.93 percentage points. This currently foregone growth can be interpreted as the opportunity cost of sustaining the current sexual division of labour. However, other authors consider that the link between women's higher labour participation per se and economic growth is less linear in the long run, depending on the country's growth pattern and the global macroeconomic context (Braunstein, Bouhia and Seguíno, 2019).

The inefficiency of the current sexual division of labour is also seen in its impact on inequality; closing the gaps in participation and income would have a positive impact on reducing poverty and inequality. If women had the same participation rates as men, it is estimated that poverty in 18 Latin American countries could be reduced by between 1 and 12 percentage points depending on the country; and inequality —measured with by the Gini coefficient— could be reduced by between 1 and 4 percentage points. Closing the income gap would reduce poverty by between 1 and 14 percentage points and the Gini coefficient by between 2 and 8 points (ECLAC, 2014).

The sexual division of labour, which to this day continues to assign the greatest social responsibility for care to women without pay, is also inefficient in the long run, as it can undermine social reproduction, if the time and money it takes to invest, produce and sustain the work force is taken into account (Braunstein, van Staveren and Tavani, 2011). In countries with higher economic growth, where the same sexual division of labour is maintained and there is no public infrastructure that distributes care responsibilities, there is a high opportunity cost in women becoming mothers—in terms of the average income needed and foregone (Heintz and Folbre, 2019). Thus the positive effect of the growth of women's wages in isolation could cause problems in the care economy of the future (Braunstein, Bouhia and Seguino, 2019).

Some studies note that the sustainability of growth resulting from greater female participation depends on the flexibility that societies have in redistributing the care responsibility socially, economically and culturally (Braunstein, Van Staveren, Seguino and Tavani, 2011). Hence the importance of designing care policies to distribute this “opportunity cost” and prevent motherhood from posing a dilemma for women between reproduction and work and personal development. In other words, care policies also help prevent long-term growth from jeopardizing social reproduction itself.

3. Economic contribution and potentials of the care economy: employment, growth and sustainable development

(a) Contribution of the care economy to employment

In a context where demographic dynamics and work needs and formats are changing (ILO, 2019a), demands for labour in sectors linked to the care economy will tend to increase (Simonazzi, 2008). According to ILO estimates, if this demand is not met by the expansion of public policies, there is potential for a severe care crisis by 2030.

If this situation were addressed by expanding services in the education and health sectors, it is estimated that 475 million direct jobs directly linked to care could be created, along with 78.5 million other types of jobs in those sectors and another 38.4 million indirect jobs (ILO, 2018). In emerging countries, De Henau, Himmelweit and Perrons (2017) estimate that investing at least 2% of GDP in the health and care sector would generate an increase in overall employment of between 1.2% to 3.2%, depending on the country, which would represent 4.2 million jobs in Brazil and 63,000 in Costa Rica.

In particular, various models find a strong potential for job creation in the expansion of publicly provided child care and early-years education (De Henau, Himmelweit and Perrons, 2017; Ilkkaracan, Kim and Kaya, 2015; ILO, 2018). Similarly, demographic changes, including the trend towards population ageing, presage a growing demand for older adult care. New employment opportunities also exist there as these care needs are collectively addressed through well-regulated labour markets consistent with the provision of quality services (Simonazzi, 2008).

The virtuous circle generated by investment in care policies has a greater effect on employment than traditional public investment programmes in general construction (such as housing, roads, etc.). This comparison is important because public investment in construction has historically had a major role in the paradigm of economic reactivation policies. However, as this sector is highly masculinized, the jobs created by such programmes tend mainly to benefit men. In addition, expenditure in this sector has always had the advantage that the State records it as investment, whereas when it allocates revenue to care sectors it is mostly recorded as expense (De Henau, Himmelweit and Perrons, 2017).

Investment in the physical and social infrastructure of care generates employment for women, since they are habitually feminized sectors. Nonetheless, it also creates jobs for men insofar as the construction sector (involved in the construction of spaces) is masculinized (Ilkkaracan, Kim and Kaya, 2015). However, these investments do not need to reproduce the horizontal segmentation of the labour market. On the contrary, if as they are implemented on the basis of public policy, they represent an opportunity to reverse

stereotypes concerning the abilities of women and men, and in particular about men's abilities to provide care. The application of inverse quotas, in other words male quotas in highly feminized sectors, not only helps to modify social norms, but also raises the average wage in the sector (ILO, 2018). Similarly, to prevent jobs in this sector from becoming precarious (Montgomery and others, 2017), caregivers need to be given training and education in different spheres. This in turn will have a positive impact on the quality of service provided by those who receive the training (Simonazzi, 2008).

In the medium term, investment in the care sectors also positively influences the education level of the workforce and hence its productivity (Braunstein, Seguino and Altringer, 2019), since the provision of public and social care infrastructure reduces educational inequalities for girls and boys.

(b) Care in economic growth and sustainable development

Care work is a prerequisite for undertaking all other activities in any society. Although this work is invisible when it occurs in households, counting the time invested and valuing it at market prices reveals its direct contribution to growth. Following the satellite accounts methodology, unpaid work calculated according to replacement cost represents between 15.7% and 24.2% of GDP in Latin American countries (ECLAC, 2017).

Access to the care infrastructure through public capital investment promotes economic growth both directly and indirectly. Firstly, investment itself boosts domestic consumer demand and hence the level of activity (Díaz Langou and others, 2019). Secondly, it expands the possibilities for long-term growth and development by freeing up women's time and reducing the social time devoted to care, thereby enabling countries to escape the low-growth trap (Agénor and Agénor, 2019).

In the medium term, part of this investment in care returns in the form of tax revenue, insofar as investment in care boosts growth, and tax revenue—which depends positively on growth—increases with it. Depending on the economy and the policies applied, this “self-financing” can vary from 15% to 50% or even 77% (Díaz and others, 2019; Ilkkaracan, Kim and Kaya, 2015; Onaran, Oyvat and Fotopoulou, 2019). This positive relationship is made stronger to the extent that the design of public policy ensures that new vacancies for these spaces target families of lower economic strata (Manley and Vasquez, 2013). Thus, the policy will not only have an impact on total employment, by helping to close the gender participation gap, but also on overall inequality (Ilkkaracan, Kim and Kaya, 2015), poverty and income distribution (ECLAC, 2014). Both the effects of self-financing and the reduction of inequality could be further strengthened if accompanied by more progressive taxes (Onaran, Oyvat and Fotopoulou, 2019).

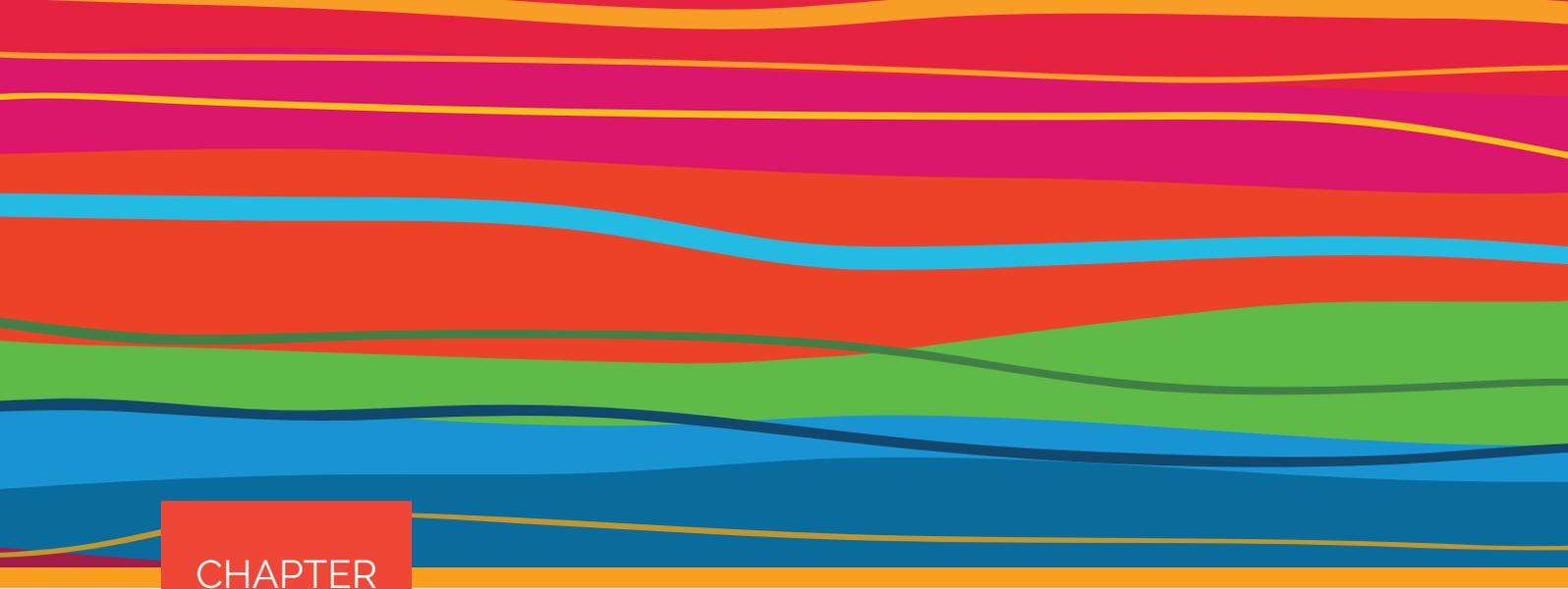
Lastly, in relation to sustainable development, the care economy is a point of interaction between growth, equality and energy efficiency. A society that invests more in the care economy and prioritizes this activity is also a society that cares more about the environment, because it spends more hours in activities that are less carbon-intensive (Onaran, Oyvat and Fotopoulou, 2019). Moreover, care has even deeper connections with the 2030 Agenda, and more meeting points with nature than the traditional economy. The care economy advances at a pace that is more sustainable for the planet, while other economic sectors need to be constantly growing in order to survive (Dengler and Strunk, 2018). For all of these reasons, investing in the care economy contributes to the diversification of the production structure without breaching ecological limits for the reproduction of life, which at the same time makes it possible to manage the natural heritage more efficiently (ECLAC, 2018c) and guarantee the sustainability of life.

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CHAPTER

VI

Climate change: trends, opportunities and challenges for gender equality

Introduction

- A. Policy and legal frameworks: tools for promoting gender equality while dealing with climate change
- B. The impacts of climate change and natural disasters: implications for women's lives
- C. Climate change mitigation strategies: gender equality opportunities and challenges

Bibliography

Introduction

The predominant development style has caused the pace of climate change to accelerate. Addressing this highly complex phenomenon is a global challenge, and the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean urgently need to deal with its effects and devise suitable adaptation and mitigation strategies. The discussion about climate change has mainly focused on its economic and social impacts, but some degree of attention has also been devoted to the status of women and to how gender inequalities are being perpetuated and heightened by this global issue.

The economic activities underpinning the world economy require energy and transport services and involve types of land use that generate greenhouse gases (GHGs) that then accumulate in the atmosphere and trigger an increase in global temperatures that is changing the planet's climate. In economic terms, climate change has been described as an externality whereby the countries that emit GHGs do not absorb all of the costs associated with the consequences of those emissions (Stern, Santos and Vilaltella, 2008). These costs are distributed and absorbed unequally by the different countries and also unequally by men and women. Although climate change affects the whole of the world's population, the most developed countries—the ones that have clearly reaped the benefits afforded by the present style of development—are the countries that are emitting the most GHGs and the ones that have the most resources for use in mitigating climate change and adapting to its consequences. By the same token, the countries that are emitting the smallest amounts of GHGs are the ones who are most vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change and the ones that have the fewest resources to devote to adaptation and mitigation actions.

This unjust dynamic is having an impact on the Latin American and Caribbean region, which accounts for less than 10% of global emissions of carbon dioxide (CO₂)¹ but is highly exposed to the effects of climate change. The region's particularly vulnerable position in this respect is attributable to a combination of factors, including its geographic location, its climate profile, its social, economic, demographic and institutional make-up and the highly climate-sensitive nature of many of its natural resources and assets (Bárcena and others, 2018).

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), if the current trend continues, the increase in global temperatures will exceed 1.5°C by 2030. In its 2018 Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C, the Panel examined the global effects of this temperature increase, which, in broad strokes, include changes in weather patterns, an intensification of natural disasters, the loss of ecosystems and a diminished likelihood of succeeding in overcoming poverty and inequality or of achieving sustainable development. The effects of rising global temperatures will be disproportionately borne by the world's most vulnerable population groups and will include food insecurity, higher food prices, losses of income and of livelihoods, health problems and population displacements. The greatest ramifications of climate change will thus be felt by people who depend on agriculture or coastal economic activities for their livelihoods, indigenous peoples, children and older adults, the poor and the populations and ecosystems of island countries such as those of the Caribbean (Roy and others, 2018).

The region's prevailing economic growth model has been based on natural resources, and those resources have been extracted without thought being given to considerations of environmental or social sustainability. This is the model that still predominates, and it has resulted in the region positioning itself within the global economy in a way that has negative implications for its economic resilience (ECLAC, 2018). The continuation of this "extractivist" model² in the region will have serious environmental consequences and will have ramifications for the communities that are directly affected by these activities. The expansion of extractive activities and monocropping has an impact on land use, results in a loss of biodiversity and may lead to health problems associated with the use of agrochemicals, among many other effects (Gudynas, 2015). It has also spurred social and environmental conflicts which lay bare the structural roots of inequality (ECLAC, 2018).

¹ Carbon dioxide (CO₂) is one of the main greenhouse gases (GHGs).

² Extractivism can be defined as an approach characterized by the large-scale or highly intensive extraction of natural resources chiefly for export as raw or minimally processed materials (Gudynas, 2015).

Climate change will not only alter the course of future events but is also leading up to a critical turning point for the current development model that casts doubt upon the validity of the very foundations of today's global economic system.

Given a state of affairs that threatens the very sustainability of life on Earth, a key challenge is to ensure that these changes will give rise to the types of conditions that are necessary for equality and that women, in particular, are not excluded from the search for solutions or from involvement in the effort to meet this global challenge.

The challenges that climate change poses for gender equality and autonomy for women in the region need to be analysed and understood in order for the region to be in a position to cope with the shifting economic conditions being witnessed today at both the global and regional levels.

A. Policy and legal frameworks: tools for promoting gender equality while dealing with climate change

Further commitments to action in the areas of gender equality and climate change are under discussion and present interesting opportunities. The Lima Work Programme on Gender, which was agreed to at the twentieth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), held in Lima in 2014, is coming to completion, while the second version of the UNFCCC Gender Action Plan, to be presented at the twenty-fifth session of the Conference of the Parties, is being debated. This will also coincide with the preparatory work on the updating of nationally determined contributions (NDCs) in 2020. In addition, the interlinkage of the 2030 Agenda and gender equality commitments relating to the implementation of the Paris Agreement³ offers an opportunity for the countries of the region to coordinate their efforts to promote gender equality.

Some countries of the region have made headway in mainstreaming a gender perspective into climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts. In order to consolidate those advances, however, a financial architecture that makes resources available for equality policies has to be in place.

Some of the global climate funds have mechanisms for allocating resources for gender equality policies. For example, under the Global Environment Fund (GEF), an approach that addresses gender equality issues is required for all processes involved in identifying, designing, executing and evaluating activities to be financed by the Fund.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes that climate change is one of the greatest challenges of the time and that its effects undermine the capacity of all countries to attain sustainable development. Increases in global temperature, sea level rise, ocean acidification and other climate change impacts are seriously affecting coastal areas and low-lying coastal countries, including many least developed countries and small island developing States (SIDS), as recognized in SDG 13.

Likewise, the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway (Samoa Pathway) recognizes the unique vulnerabilities of these States, given the negative impacts of climate change that compound existing problems and place an additional burden on their national budgets, hindering their efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals with equality. Indeed, the Samoa Pathway reaffirms the importance of engaging youth and persons with disabilities and that gender equality and the effective participation of women and indigenous peoples are important for effective action on all aspects of climate change (see United Nations, 2014, para. 40).

³ The twenty-first session of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Paris in 2015, concluded with the adoption of the Paris Decision and the Paris Agreement. The Agreement entered into force in November 2016 and will apply as of 2020. The goal is to hold the global rise in temperature to well below 2° C, to attain a greater degree of adaptability to the adverse effects of climate change and to promote climate resilience and low-carbon development. In order to achieve the agreed targets, the Paris Agreement establishes a reinforced transparency framework aimed at fostering mutual trust and promoting its effective implementation while facilitating the monitoring of progress. See [online] <https://observatoriop10.cepal.org/en/treaties/paris-agreement-framework-convention-climate-change>.

At the regional level, the Montevideo Strategy establishes the importance of making public resources available at the national level, along with additional cooperation assistance at the international level, in order to meet the financial demands involved in honouring regional and international commitments to the achievement of gender equality and sustainable development.

The Strategy also reflects a recognition of the challenges facing small island developing States and other vulnerable Caribbean countries and provides for special measures relating to financing, cooperation and climate change.

The signatory governments also agreed to explore debt relief options for highly indebted Caribbean countries and to promote solutions for addressing the debt overhang and guarantee the necessary resources for the implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda and the achievement of sustainable development (measure 8.i of the Montevideo Strategy). The coupling of this measure with the debt-for-climate-adaptation swap proposed by ECLAC, which provides for the creation of a resilience fund for small island developing Caribbean States, gives rise to a number of synergies. These proposals are of key importance for expanding fiscal capacity, easing the debt and debt servicing burdens and channelling resources into climate change adaptation and mitigation actions and efforts to reduce inequalities.

1. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCC)

UNFCC is one of three conventions adopted at the 1992 Rio de Janeiro Summit⁴ and serves as the leading international instrument for action to address climate change. As of mid-2019, UNFCC had issued 72 decisions and conclusions regarding gender equality. At the outset, there was only a single reference in the Convention to balanced representation in any subsidiary bodies that were to be established, and it was not until 2008 that gender equality was mainstreamed in all areas covered by the Convention.⁵ Thus far, adaptation is the area in which the most gender-related decisions have been incorporated, followed by financing and capacity-building (see table VI.1).

Table VI.1

UNFCC gender decisions and conclusions

Adaptation	17
Financing	16
Capacity-building	12
Mitigation	7
Technology	6
Gender balance and women's participation	5
Shared vision	3
Losses and damages	3
Response measures	1
Transparency	1
Compliance	1
Total	72

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of United Nations, Gender and Climate Change Documentation [online] <https://unfccc.int/topics/gender/resources/documentation-on-gender-and-climate-change>.

⁴ The other two are the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention to Combat Desertification.

⁵ At the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), held in 2007 in Bali, the Global Gender and Climate Alliance (GGCA) was formed, and an action strategy was developed for promoting a recognition of the importance of gender equality in the climate change debate. The Alliance now has 140 participating organizations, ranging from United Nations agencies to grass-roots groups.

The work of civil society organizations has made an important contribution to capacity-building in the analysis of climate change from a gender perspective through the development of numerous conceptual and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) tools. These tools have been progressively updated as negotiations on gender equality and climate change move forward.⁶

The Lima Work Programme on Gender, adopted at the twentieth session of the Conference of the Parties in 2014, has been one of the most concrete initiatives in this connection and constitutes a milestone in this respect, since this is the first time that a binding decision has been reached to move ahead with the development and implementation of gender-responsive climate policies within the framework of the Convention (Arana, 2017). The Lima Work Programme not only gave the UNFCCC secretariat a mandate for appointing a gender focal point but also identifies the actions and measures required to maintain coherence among the various units and groups involved in the negotiations.⁷ The Lima Work Programme has also served as a springboard for efforts to mainstream gender equality as one of the guiding principles for the implementation of the Paris Agreement and to develop the first Gender Action Plan, which was approved at the twenty-third session of the Conference of the Parties and is designed to support the implementation of UNFCCC gender equality decisions and mandates.

The Gender Action Plan covers five priority areas (see table VI.2). An analysis of the work undertaken within the framework of the first Gender Action Plan shows that the main focus was on negotiations, while fairly few of the activities were directed towards bringing about the necessary changes to achieve more just and inclusive forms of climate action. Accordingly, in recent international meetings, both the Lima Work Programme on Gender and the Gender Action Plan have generated a great deal of discussion among the signatory parties, observers, UNFCCC secretariat and interest groups. These stakeholders have now reached a consensus on the need to transition from a “negotiating mentality” —which was necessary at the start of this process— to an action-oriented approach. Thus, for a majority of the signatory countries that are suffering the devastating consequences of climate change, it is clear that the focus of the new Gender Action Plan must be on implementation (Aguilar, 2019).

Table VI.2

Priority areas of the UNFCCC Gender Action Plan

1. Capacity-building, knowledge sharing and communication	To enhance the understanding and expertise of stakeholders in the systematic integration of gender considerations and the application of such understanding and expertise in the thematic areas identified under the Convention
2. Gender balance, participation and women's leadership	To achieve and sustain the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in the UNFCCC process
3. Coherence	To strengthen the integration of gender considerations within the work of UNFCCC bodies, the secretariat and other United Nations entities and stakeholders towards the consistent implementation of gender-related mandates and activities
4. Gender-responsive implementation and means of implementation	To ensure the respect, promotion and consideration of gender equality and the empowerment of women in the implementation of the Convention
5. Monitoring and reporting	To improve the tracking of the implementation of gender-related mandates under the Convention and the reporting on those matters

Source: United Nations, “Gender Action Plan”, *Gender and climate change* (FCCC/SBI/2017/L.29).

⁶ For example, in 2014 the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) developed a broad-ranging reference and descriptive tool for tracking the gender-related decisions and conclusions reached by UNFCCC up to the time of the nineteenth session of the Conference of the Parties and for monitoring the implementation of policies and climate action measures that incorporate gender considerations at all levels (Burns and Patouris, 2014). WEDO has also developed a mobile Gender Climate Tracker application and platform (in English, French and Spanish) for use in monitoring progress at the international and national levels in the fulfilment of gender-related mandates in climate policies, compiling statistics on women's participation in climate policy and keeping track of the gender-related components of nationally determined contributions.

⁷ The text of the Lima Work Programme on Gender, approved at the twentieth session of the Conference of the Parties, held in Lima in 2014, invites the countries to promote gender balance and responsiveness in the formulation and implementation of climate policy and in the Convention process. It was also decided that the Parties should increase the representation of women in their delegations and in all the bodies established under the Convention. A two-year work programme (which was later extended to 2019) was also established for the promotion of a gender balance in efforts to address climate change.

2. Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (Escazú Agreement)

The objective of the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean, also known as the Escazú Agreement, is to uphold “the right of all persons to have access to information in a timely and appropriate manner, to participate significantly in making the decisions that affect their lives and their environment, and to access justice when those rights have been infringed.”

Adopted on 4 March 2018 in Escazú, Costa Rica, the Agreement had been signed by 21 countries and ratified by 5 (Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Guyana, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Uruguay) as of end-September 2019. The Escazú Agreement is the first legally binding environmental agreement to be adopted in the region and the first in the entire world to include specific provisions on the human rights of persons who defend the environment.

Some of its more notable provisions cover: (i) the right to have access to environmental information, particularly in the case of persons belonging to ethnic groups and indigenous peoples; (ii) the right to participate in the environmental decision-making process; (iii) the right to have access to justice in environmental matters; and (iv) the recognition, protection and promotion of all the rights of human rights defenders in environmental matters. The Regional Agreement also sets out the obligations of States parties in the areas of national capacity-building and inter-State cooperation for its implementation and establishes a common standard for that purpose.

The Escazú Agreement contains a specific provision that addresses the obstacles to public participation and the barriers to participation by women in this process. Article 7, paragraph 10 states that: “each Party shall establish conditions that are favourable to public participation in environmental decision-making processes and that are adapted to the social, economic, cultural, geographical and gender characteristics of the public” (United Nations, 2018a).

The existence of a safe, supportive and discrimination-free environment is a necessary condition for the full and effective participation of women. The Montevideo Strategy specifically sets out a role for civil society and, in particular, for women's organizations and feminist movements, in the design, implementation and follow-up to policies on gender equality, women's rights and sustainable development.

The measures provided for in the Montevideo Strategy include the establishment of effective institutionalized mechanisms for women's participation that are representative of their diversity; the promotion of free, prior and informed consent on the part of rural communities and indigenous peoples; and guaranteed access to public information so that civil society will be able to fulfil its role in monitoring the implementation of public policies.

The Montevideo Strategy and the Escazú Agreement therefore pave the way for the emergence of synergies in the promotion of participation by women's organizations and feminist movements in consultation mechanisms and in environmental decision-making processes (see box VI.1).

Box VI.1**Women leading the way in decision-making relating to climate change**

Women's participation in decision-making is essential not only as a matter of justice but also in order to ensure that policies on combating climate change are more democratic and are responsive to the needs of both men and women.

Since 2010, two Latin American women leaders have played a prominent role in the international negotiation of agreements on climate change: Christiana Figueres, of Costa Rica, and Patricia Espinosa, of Mexico. Together, Figueres, as Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and Espinosa, as President of the sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties, played a leading role in winning approval of the Cancún Agreements, whereby the Conference of the Parties proposed maintaining the mechanisms established under the Kyoto Protocol and called for more ambitious targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. The leadership of Christiana Figueres as Executive Secretary during the negotiations that took place at the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties in 2015 was also of key importance in the adoption of the Paris Agreement. The following year, Patricia Espinosa succeeded her as the Executive Secretary and, under her leadership, the Gender Action Plan identifies "gender balance, participation and women's leadership" as one of its priority areas and recognizes the "need for women to be represented in all aspects of the Convention process" (United Nations, 2018).

Women's participation in the Framework Convention process has been reflected in their increasing representation in the national delegations to the Conference. In 2008, 32% of the delegation members were women and, by 2018, that figure had risen to 40% (Cooper, Granat and Daniel, 2019). At the most recent session of the Conference of the Parties (the twenty-fourth), 44 of the 196 national delegations were headed by women. While this is certainly an improvement over the 15 delegations that had women as their heads in 2008, progress towards achieving parity has been slower than hoped. It should be noted that, historically, the sessions of the Framework Convention have had fewer women leaders than the intersessional meetings have had (Cooper, Granat and Daniel, 2019).

In 2018, around 40% of the members of the delegations sent to the negotiations by the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean were women. The two delegations that achieved full parity (50% men and 50% women) were those of Cuba and Trinidad and Tobago. In 2017, Uruguay and the delegations of a number of Caribbean countries (Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago) had done so (Cooper, Granat and Daniel, 2019).

According to statistics compiled by the secretariat of the Framework Convention on the composition of the mechanisms established under the Convention, the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement, on average 33% of the members of those mechanisms were women as of 2019. These mechanisms include, for example, the Adaptation Committee, the Standing Committee on Finance, the Katowice Committee of Experts on the Impacts of the Implementation of Response Measures, and the Clean Development Mechanism Executive Board, which counts but 1 woman among its 10 members (United Nations, 2019).

The Parliamentary Network on Climate Change (PNCC) is an example of women's leadership in decision-making processes in the region. The Network was established in 2016 within the ParlAmericas framework to promote parliamentary diplomacy on climate action and the exchange of effective practices for climate change mitigation and adaptation. Currently, 70% of the members of the PNCC Executive Committee are women, including Ana Belén Marín, a congresswoman from Ecuador who is its President, Paola Vega Rodríguez, a congresswoman from Costa Rica who is the Committee's Vice President for Central America, Ana María Choquehuanca, a congresswoman from Peru who is its Vice President for South America, and Jennifer Simons, Speaker of the National Assembly of Suriname and the Committee's Alternate Vice President for South America (ParlAmericas, 2019).

A notable example in the Caribbean is the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI), a network of civil society organizations headed by a woman, Nicole Leotaud, which seeks to promote and facilitate equitable participation and effective collaboration in the management of natural resources critical to development in Caribbean countries.

In order for women to participate more fully in decision-making processes concerning climate change, steps should be taken to promote capacity-building and leadership skills development for women in international, regional, national and local negotiations on climate change. The presence in such forums of indigenous and campesino women and women who belong to traditional communities is of key importance, as they can play a pivotal role in safeguarding the ways of life of their communities, protecting nature and the common good, and making the voice of their peoples heard in decision-making circles.

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of L. Cooper, M. Granat and T. Daniel, *Women's Organizations and Climate Finance: Engaging in processes and accessing resources*, Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO), 2019; United Nations, *Report of the Conference of the Parties on its twenty-third session, held in Bonn from 6 to 18 November 2017* (FCCC/CP/2017/11/Add.1), 2018; "Gender composition. Report by the secretariat (advance version)" (FCCC/CP/2019/9), 2019 [online] https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cp2019_9_adv.pdf and ParlAmericas, "About the PNCC" 2019 [online] <https://www.parlAmericas.org/en/climate-change/about-pncc.aspx>.

3. Policy tools and commitments at the national level

The policies, strategies and plans for addressing climate change of some of the countries in the region already incorporate a gender perspective, and some of them include specific directives on the importance of incorporating the gender perspective into national efforts to confront climate change. Examples include Paraguay's National Policy on Climate Change, in which the gender perspective is a cross-cutting component, and its National Gender Strategy on Climate Change, which plots out a road map for gender mainstreaming in response to climate change. On the basis of its stated objective of actively and effectively promoting gender mainstreaming in the adaptation, formulation, coordination, monitoring and evaluation of public policies on climate change, this strategy is underpinned by four pillars: institutional capacity-building; funding; education, communication and public participation; and knowledge management and technology. A number of other countries have also mainstreamed gender into their national plans or policies on climate change adaptation, such as Costa Rica (National Policy on Adaptation to Climate Change 2018-2030), Uruguay (National Plan for Adaptation in Cities and Infrastructure to Climate Change) and Guyana (National Adaptation Plan).

Of the 13 ECLAC member States in the English-speaking Caribbean, only 6 have a national gender policy; 10 countries have disaster risk reduction policies, seven of which address the situation of women. All these policies include elements related to climate change or disaster risk reduction in one way or another. The national gender policies of Belize, Guyana and Suriname emphasize the importance of women's participation in decision-making related to climate change and disasters. In response to the series of extreme weather events that affected Dominica, the government launched the National Resilience Development Strategy (NRDS) 2030. Dominica has a tradition of mainstreaming gender in policymaking; in fact, its Low-Carbon Climate-Resilient Development Strategy 2012-2020 includes a section on women and climate change. In 2014, Grenada adopted the Gender Equality Policy and Action Plan (GEPAP) 2014–2024, which includes a series of measures and actions to ensure inclusion and equitable participation of men and women in mechanisms for coping with and adapting to the adverse impacts of climate change, as well as targeted actions for post-disaster recovery and reconstruction process and the conduct of a gender impact assessment.

Two types of instruments for the promotion of gender equality in national policies on climate change that tie in with the international agreements on this subject are gender and climate change action plans and nationally determined contributions.

(a) Gender and climate change action plans

As the number of global mandates concerning gender-responsive forms of addressing climate change has risen, so have the number of government requests for assistance in finding ways of incorporating the gender perspective into climate change plans and programmes. In response to this need, the Global Gender Office of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has pioneered the development of a methodology for constructing gender and climate change action plans. The methodology is based on a participatory, multisectoral and multi-stakeholder approach that brings the government and civil society together in a joint effort to identify gender and climate change issues at the local level and to develop innovative ways of improving national climate change strategies or plans.

Gender and climate change action plans are also a valuable tool for responding to the needs of women and for linking up national and global policies while at the same time enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of the actions taken to address climate change and development issues (Pearl-Martinez and others, 2012).

Six of the countries in the region have developed national gender and climate change action plans: Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Panama and Peru (see box VI.2). Mexico has a gender and climate change action plan at the subnational level. These plans have been devised in close consultation with local civil society organizations, academia and government representatives (including representatives of mechanisms for the advancement of women and the government ministries that deal with climate change issues). These gender and climate change action plans identify the differentiated impacts of climate

change on women, plot out a road map for the inclusion of a gender perspective in policy development and implementation, and provide scope for the efforts of women who are already working to combat and mitigate climate change and promote means of adapting to its effects and for the sharing of experiences and solutions. In a number of cases, these plans were formulated before the corresponding countries had established their nationally determined contributions or other climate policy tools, such as national action programmes for climate change adaptation.

This means that not only do the countries in the region that do not yet have gender and climate change action plans still have an opportunity to develop them, but those that already have such plans have an opportunity to update them and bring them more closely in line with international accords on gender and climate change.

Box VI.2

National experiences with the development of gender and climate change action plans

Costa Rica

The process of gender mainstreaming in the National Action Plan of the National Climate Change Strategy of Costa Rica began in 2011. The Ministry of the Environment, Energy and Telecommunications invited the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and other organizations to provide technical and financial support, and nationwide consultations were held to obtain inputs in the form of recommendations and indicators that could be built into the Action Plan. The National Women's Institute also took part in this process.

The objectives of this mainstreaming exercise, in addition to obtaining specific proposals for ways of bringing women into the process, were to foster knowledge sharing, strengthen State institutions, identify stakeholders and find international donors to assist with the implementation of the Action Plan.

Cuba

In March 2014, a national workshop on gender-responsive strategies for climate change policies in Cuba developed proposed guidelines for gender mainstreaming in climate change action. The workshop was attended by representatives of government ministries, other government agencies, academia, civil society, foundations and other bodies. These proposed guidelines incorporate a gender perspective into seven priority sectors: agriculture, water resources, health, energy, forests, the reduction of emissions caused by deforestation and forest degradation (REDD). Objectives, activities and indicators for these sectors were defined, and women's contributions in these areas were highlighted.

The gender perspective is incorporated into these priority sectors by encouraging rural women to act as facilitators for theoretical and practical courses on gender and climate change in agriculture and by training women to work as plumbers and irrigation technicians and in other technical fields, with priority being given to members of the most depressed and vulnerable communities. Efforts are also to be focused on the creation of stronger linkages among the various social networks and structures in the course of awareness-raising activities and the promotion of participation in dealing with climate change issues and in incorporating the gender perspective into biodiversity and coastal management efforts. Priority will be placed on implementing the carbon credit mechanism for offset payments to forestry plantations run by women and on mainstreaming gender in all transport sector projects.

Dominican Republic

The Climate Change and Gender Action Plan of the Dominican Republic is the result of a consultative process carried out in 2016 and 2017 in which representatives of the public and private sectors, academia, civil society foundations, international agencies and other stakeholders took part. The Global Gender Office of IUCN and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) provided support during this process to the National Council on Climate Change and the Clean Development Mechanism. Following a review of the existing national and international policy frameworks and interviews and consultations with specialists, two workshops were held at which nine priority sectors were identified: energy, transport and infrastructure; agriculture and food security; waste; forest resources; water resources; health; marine coastal areas; tourism; and risk management. While clear-cut proposals and objectives were established, in the course of this work it also became clear that sex-disaggregated data are needed for all these sectors in order to improve the gender mainstreaming process.

Box VI.2 (continued)

The proposed actions include training women in rural areas how to install renewable energy systems; setting up a gender equality and development office within the National Ground Transportation and Traffic Institute (INTRANT); incorporating a course on gender and climate change into the university curriculum for a specialization in agronomy; promoting the establishment and consolidation of recycling enterprises run by women's and other associations; and formally designating institutional gender and climate change representatives to sit on the environmental committees tasked with reviewing forestry laws. Other proposals focus on setting up rainwater collection systems in drought-prone areas that provide for the participation of the community with a gender approach; making provision in the budget of the Ministry of Health for measures that will address the problem of climate change from a gender perspective; creating a revolving fund for vulnerable women in coastal areas for the purpose of promoting projects and activities that will improve their living conditions; and bringing in experts in the interrelationship of climate change and gender to develop a proposal for technical standards and regulations for the tourism sector.

Haiti

In 2012, Haiti was regarded as the country that was the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change owing to the environmental degradation of its territory and its high poverty rates. The tropical storms that sweep over the country leave death and devastation in their wake, destroy crops and infrastructure, exacerbate soil erosion and droughts, and trigger internal displacements of the population. The country's Gender and Climate Change Action Plan was developed at the request of the Climate Change Office, which collaborated with the IUCN Global Gender Office as lead institution and with the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) and the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity as strategic partners to undertake consultations in 10 departments in Haiti and provide technical support to develop the Action Plan. This national process was under way during one of the most difficult moments in the country's history, given the challenges involved in the reconstruction process following the 2010 earthquake and the expectation of increased climate change impacts in the coming years (Khan and Freitas, 2011).

The proposed adaptation and mitigation measures include the following: strengthen the implementation of the applicable international climate change and gender frameworks in the country's agricultural sector; introduce and consolidate a functional national platform for the integrated management of water resources, climate change and gender; establish a monitoring mechanism for integrating gender considerations into disaster risk reduction initiatives; and develop and implement a communication strategy on health, climate change and gender issues. Other proposals focus on training women to repair and expand components of photovoltaic solar energy systems and to produce more environmentally friendly stoves and heaters; involving communities, including women's groups, in setting up tree nurseries and planting seedlings on public land and in degraded forests; and building capacity in the design of green buildings by providing the corresponding training to men and women.

Mexico

In 2015, Mexico issued guidelines for gender mainstreaming in climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts in the Yucatan Peninsula, thereby creating a gender and climate change action plan at the subnational level. This initiative was presented to the Climate Change Department of the Secretariat of Environment and Natural Resources following the efforts of women's organizations and international cooperation agencies to have it included in the Special Programme on Climate Change. After a number of different steps were taken, such as the establishment of a working group to develop inputs for the General Act on Climate Change, eight lines of action that promote gender equality were incorporated into the Special Programme.

The Special Programme on Climate Change takes a gender-based approach to such areas as health, forests, energy, disaster risk reduction and biodiversity, among others. For example, it calls for the implementation of training programmes on climate change and forest resources in forest communities that will provide for the equitable participation of men and women; the design and implementation of educational and communications strategies at the municipal level that will highlight the health impacts of climate change as viewed from a gender perspective; the replacement of traditional open fireplaces with low-consumption wood-burning stoves in homes located in marginal and poor areas; the design of a national irrigation atlas that will include gender indicators; and the use of sustainable biodiversity management tools in priority areas of the Mexican portion of the Meso-American Biological Corridor that will promote equality of opportunities for men and women.

Box VI.2 (concluded)

Panama

Panama has begun to review its National Policy on Climate Change with a view to incorporating gender equality considerations into its National Climate Change Strategy. In 2011, the Global Gender Office of IUCN and other organizations provided technical support for the efforts of the Climate Change Unit of the Ministry of the Environment to mainstream the gender perspective into the Strategy.

The Strategy prioritizes such areas as water resource management, agriculture, food and health, land use and energy. The objectives in these areas include: building women's capacity to address climate change issues; empowering women as food producers by providing them with technical training in such fields as agroforestry and organic farming; providing training, in particular to indigenous and other women, in soil management and the conservation of forest ecosystems; and amending the Energy Act in order to incorporate the gender perspective into that legislation.

Peru

The Gender and Climate Change Action Plan of Peru, which was approved in July 2016, is the outcome of a participatory process that entailed the organization of a number of consultations and workshops with a wide range of stakeholders, including women's organizations, and a multisectoral coordination exercise that incorporated inputs from civil society. The Action Plan is a public management tool for guiding efforts in the country to diminish gender inequalities in the context of climate change mitigation and adaptation actions (Ministry of the Environment/Ministry for Women and Vulnerable Groups, 2015). The Plan's four main lines of action focus on gender, interculturality, coordination among the different levels of government and sustainable development.

Lines of action included in this plan involve initiatives such as the designation of a focal point for liaison between the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry for Women and Vulnerable Groups; training sessions on gender and renewable energy for women and men; and a pilot study on women's productive uses of energy that can serve as a basis for obtaining greater access to first-tier bank credit for women. The Plan also calls for incorporating climate change and gender equality content into teacher training programmes at the basic education, intercultural bilingual education and higher education levels; cataloguing local ancestral knowledge and practices of women and men for use in making up traditional medicinal kits for treating and preventing health problems associated with climate change; and promoting the appointment of women to management positions in formal waste collection associations and developing lending programmes to provide these associations with more seed capital.

Source: Programa de Innovación Agropecuario Local/International Union for Protection of Nature (PIAL/IUCN), *Lineamientos para la transversalización del tema de género en los esfuerzos por mitigar and adaptarse al cambio climático en Cuba*, March, 2014; R. Pearl-Martinez and others, *The Art of Implementation: Gender Strategies Transforming National and Regional Climate Change Decision Making*, Global Gender and Climate Alliance (GGCA), 2012; Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), "La transversalización del enfoque de género en las políticas públicas frente al cambio climático en América Latina", *Project Documents* (LC/TS.2017/19), Santiago; ECLAC/European Union, *Síntesis de políticas públicas sobre cambio climático. La transversalización del enfoque de género en las políticas públicas frente al cambio climático en América Latina*, 2017; Ministry of the Environment/Ministry for Women and Vulnerable Groups, *Plan de Acción de Género and Cambio Climático del Peru (PAGCC-Peru)*, (documento preliminar), 2015; M. Khan and S. Freitas, "Programme pour la généralisation de l'analyse selon le Genre dans les efforts de lutte contre les changements climatiques en Haïti", 2011 [online] https://portals.iucn.org/union/sites/union/files/doc/ccgap_haiti.pdf; Ministry of Environment, "Plan de Acción de Género and Cambio Climático" [online] <http://ledslac.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/PAGCC-WEBINAR.pdf>; International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), *Plan de Acción Género and Cambio Climático República Dominicana (PAGCC-RD) 2018* [online] <https://www.climatelinks.org/file/5783/download?token=MDWVC3PeR>.

Some countries of the region have included environmental and climate change considerations in their national gender equality plans or strategies. For example, the Gender Equality and Equity Plan of Honduras for 2010–2022 calls for the promotion of women's active participation in environmental decision-making at all levels as a means of mainstreaming gender into the design, execution and evaluation of environmental and sustainable development policies and programmes. The fourth National Equality Plan for 2018–2024 of Paraguay incorporates environmental considerations as a cross-cutting element.

Uruguay's National Strategy for Gender Equality 2030 is based on the premise that, in order to create sustainable environments for women, it will be necessary, among other actions, to address the causes and consequences of climate change that have a direct impact on women. Its strategic lines of action include promoting climate change adaptation measures and the use of environmentally friendly products by farming households; taking advantage of opportunities for narrowing gender gaps in low-emission economic and

production processes; identifying adaptive capacities and promoting climate-change resilience among women in cities and rural areas in ways that take into account the intersection of poverty with other sources of vulnerability; creating information systems equipped with gender-responsive indicators for climate change adaptation and mitigation; and mainstreaming gender into education and knowledge generation relating to climate change and resilient, low-emission development processes.

In the Caribbean subregion, Guyana's National Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Policy is designed to promote gender mainstreaming in climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies, including their disaster risk management components; to strengthen community land designation programmes that prioritize conservation areas; to promote conservation programmes that assist indigenous communities to develop production activities in the fishery, agricultural and mining sectors while at the same time raising their awareness about climate change; to raise the population's awareness of how climate change is affecting its access to drinking water; to promote sustainable forest management, sustainable production practices and forest conservation; to work with small-scale producers, especially women, to recover degraded mining and logging sites; and to promote the use of renewable energy in community-based agriculture and water treatment processes.

Grenada's Gender Equality Policy and Action Plan 2014–2024 focuses on promoting gender equality through its policies and programmes on disaster management, climate change, natural resource development and the construction of a green economy.

Suriname has also incorporated environmental and climate change considerations that are specifically related to gender equality in its Gender Vision Policy Document 2021–2035 and its Gender Action Plan for 2019–2020.

(b) Gender equality in nationally determined contributions

The signatories to the Paris Agreement have established their commitments to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and to undertake adaptation measures by defining their nationally determined contributions (NDCs). NDCs are a tool of critical importance in the effort to advance towards the ultimate objective of the Framework Convention. Although the main purpose of the NDCs is to encourage governments to make more ambitious commitments to mitigate GHG emissions, they have also served to clarify the general scope of many national climate change plans and policies, including those dealing with adaptation measures and methods of implementation involving such sectors and areas as fisheries, agriculture, disaster risk reduction, migration, health and food supplies, forests and coastal areas.

NDCs are submitted every five years to the secretariat of the Framework Convention. In order to ensure that these commitments become more ambitious as time goes on, the Paris Agreement establishes that NDCs are to represent “a progression over time” and may be adjusted at any time with a view to “enhancing its level of ambition”. The next review of NDCs, a process which some countries of the region have already embarked upon in 2019, offers an opportunity for those countries that did not do so during the first round to develop and mainstream an explicit link between climate change, human rights and gender equality.

Various international initiatives and organizations have evaluated the extent to which NDCs, both at the global and the regional levels, address the human rights of women and the links between climate change and gender. On the basis of these evaluations, a number of aspects of gender mainstreaming in the current NDCs of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean can be summed up as follows:

- Thirteen of the Latin American and Caribbean countries' NDCs mention “gender” or “women”, although they do not necessarily mainstream those concepts throughout all of their sections. These countries are: Barbados, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Costa Rica, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Peru, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.
- Within that group, the NDCs of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Costa Rica, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Peru and Uruguay include a specific gender-related objective, while those of Barbados, Guatemala, Haiti, Mexico, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines include aspects of gender within other objectives.
- The NDCs of the Dominican Republic, Honduras and Mexico describe women as “agents of change”.

B. The impacts of climate change and natural disasters: implications for women's lives

The Paris Agreement explicitly states that human rights, gender equality and the rights of indigenous peoples are to be taken into account in the measures adopted to deal with climate change (United Nations, 2015a). And, as noted by the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, “as the higher vulnerability and exposure of women and girls to disaster risk and climate change are economically, socially and culturally constructed, therefore, they can be reduced” (United Nations, 2018). By the same token, however, women have a fundamental role to play in mounting responses to these challenges.

Mainstreaming gender into the analysis of the multiple facets of climate change is important not only for an understanding of the challenges faced by women in the region. It is also of pivotal importance in mounting responses that take specific needs into account and in devising solutions that will take full advantage of the contributions that women can make to the effort to surmount the formidable challenges posed by climate change at the global level.

1. Agricultural activities and threats to food security

In economic terms, agriculture accounts for 7.3% of annual GDP growth for Latin America and for 2.4% of that aggregate for the Caribbean (ECLAC, 2019a). It is also an important source of jobs, as 18% of male workers and 8% of female workers are employed in that sector. Sharp gender-based differences are to be seen in terms of the quality of employment in agriculture, however. For example, if gender differentials are examined in this sector in three of the countries in the region with the highest agricultural sector employment rates (Ecuador, Peru and the Plurinational State of Bolivia), it turns out that the largest percentage of women workers are unpaid family workers or assistants.

The agricultural sector is extremely sensitive to climate change. According to some projections, climate change may reduce crop productivity by between -12.9% and -24.3% in terms of yield per hectare (Bárcena and others, 2018). Viewed from a gender perspective, the range of agricultural tasks performed by men and women are largely determined by local environmental and sociocultural conditions and have a very real impact on climate mitigation and adaptation capabilities. Generally speaking, differentiated access to inputs, farming technologies, land ownership and financial assets strongly influence people's ability to adapt to the effects of climate change. In many cases, women tend to have less access to the inputs and assets needed to engage in agricultural activities (Sellers, 2016). In Latin America and the Caribbean, women are clearly at a disadvantage, as they have less access to land ownership and run no more than between 8% and 30% of their countries' farms (FAO/CCAFS, 2013). This has implications not only for farm output but also for people's livelihoods and their ability to adapt to the effects of climate change.

An analysis of rural communities in Jamaica showed that following disasters caused by extreme weather events, women in farming faced high labour costs to rehabilitate their farms as they had to hire additional workers. Thus, although infrastructure damage had a severe impact on existing livelihoods of both men and women, women were more vulnerable as disaster also reduced their ability to re-enter agricultural production. Damage to roads and bridges also meant that men, women and children had to walk long distances instead of using transportation, posing particular risks to women's safety when they had to walk home at nights from work (Vassell, 2009, p. 25).

In order to cope with the effects that climate change is having on agriculture, women resort to a variety of survival or adaptation strategies that are influenced by their caretaking responsibilities and their limited economic autonomy. Women, more often than men, will respond to changes in food production, access to food and food prices by reducing their food consumption or switching to foods having a lower nutritional value (FAO/CCAFS, 2013). Food insecurity and undernutrition lead to an increase in disease and other deficiencies and this, in turn, gives rise not only to health risks but also to a greater demand on the time of the women who serve as unpaid caregivers.

2. Urban centres

Currently some 80% of the population in Latin America and the Caribbean lives in urban centres. The unrelenting expansion of the region's cities is changing land use patterns, requiring the expansion of public service coverage areas and leading to the degradation of ecosystems. While it is true that cities are the engine that drives the region's economies, they are also where energy consumption and GHG emissions are concentrated. It follows, therefore, that cities will play a key role in climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts (Bárcena and others, 2018).

The rate of urbanization in the Caribbean is expected to grow faster than in Latin America, rising from 70% in 2015 to 82.5% in 2050 (ECLAC, 2019c, p. 39). The rate of urbanization in the Caribbean exhibits a high degree of variability, however, ranging from 9% in Montserrat to 100% in the Cayman Islands or Sint Maarten. Eighteen of the 30 capital cities of the Caribbean are home to more than half the urban population of the respective country or territory, which may be a sign of urban compaction. Seven of these capital cities are home to the entire urban population of the country or territory: Saint John, Bridgetown, RoadTown, Willemstad, Saint George's, Brades and Philipsburg. Furthermore, only 6 of the 30 capital cities are home to more than half the country's or territory's total population. The entire population of Sint Maarten lives in its capital city, Philipsburg; 89% of Curaçao's population lives in Willemstad; in the Bahamas, 70% of the country's population lives in Nassau; and 67% of Puerto Rico's population lives in San Juan. In two Caribbean territories (Cayman Islands and United States Virgin Islands), around half the total population lives in the capital city (ECLAC, 2019c, pp. 41–42).

Caribbean cities differ from those of Latin America in two respects: proximity to the sea in most cases and a high percentage of the population inhabiting areas below 5 meters above sea level. Evidently, both factors increase the exposure of Caribbean cities to natural disasters. As regards the proximity of settlements to the sea, the Bahamas, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Jamaica have more than 100 km of urban coastline. In addition, their size means that, in most countries and territories of the Caribbean the entire population lives less than 25 km from the coast and, in several of these countries, more than 20% of the population lives in areas below 5 metres. This applies to Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, Bahamas, British Virgin Islands, Grenada, Guyana and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, as well as the extreme case of Suriname, where nearly 70% of the population inhabits areas below 5 metres. Flood risk is aggravated by complex water systems and countries' incipient adaptive capacity (ECLAC, 2019c, p.43).

Cities continue to be marked by spatial segregation and segmented access to quality services. The lower socioeconomic strata of the urban population tend to reside on the cities' outskirts, while higher-income groups tend to be concentrated in areas where there are fewer environmental risks and where services are plentiful. Slums and shanty towns are a manifestation of this phenomenon and are the site of a large number of intertwined inequalities. Public utilities are often lacking, physical access is difficult, and transportation services and other public goods are absent or in scarce supply. In some cases, these neighbourhoods are also located in areas where environmental risks are high. One out of every five members of the urban population in Latin America and the Caribbean lives in a slum or shanty town (ECLAC, 2019b). In the Caribbean, the risks facing the population, and especially groups living in informal settlements or substandard housing, are heightened by these countries' pronounced exposure and vulnerability to environmental hazards and climate change (ECLAC, 2019b). As an estimated 84% of the total Caribbean population lives in coastal areas, an increasing amount of critical infrastructure is sited close to the sea. In addition, in most Caribbean small island developing States (SIDS), economic activities such as tourism, fish exports and maritime trade account for a significant share of GDP and are also carried out near the coast (ECLAC, 2019c, p.39), which increases their vulnerability to climate change and extreme weather events.

One of the important aspects to be analysed from this perspective has to do with the implications of urban inequalities for the distribution of people's time. Substandard housing and restricted access to satisfactory transportation systems and public services generate additional costs in terms of the time that people need to spend to reach their place of work and the time that has to be devoted to unpaid domestic

work and caregiving tasks to make up for the lack of services (Scuro and Vaca Trigo, 2017). Time-use studies have made it possible to determine the relationship between the amount of time spent on unpaid work and the living conditions prevailing in women's homes. On average, women residing in slums or shanty towns spend 4.1 more hours per week performing unpaid domestic work and 9.7 more hours on caregiving tasks than women who do not lack public and residential services (Scuro and Vaca Trigo, 2017). In situations where climate change is putting additional pressure on public services and where extreme natural events and the associated damage to infrastructure and housing are a factor, men's and women's unequal time distribution patterns may become even more unequal.

3. Coastal zones and the pressure on water resources

The latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) *Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate*, approved on 24 September 2019 by the 195 member governments, provides new evidence on the consequences of warming oceans and rising sea levels, particularly on coastal communities and those that depend on marine resources for their survival. The report states that the low-lying coastal zone is home to 10% of the world's population—some 680 million people—and 65 million people in small island developing States who are exposed to the effects of these changes (IPCC, 2019, p. 3).

Small island States have been described as large-ocean States because the oceans and seas within their exclusive economic zones (EEZs) cover a much larger geographical area than the land surface of the associated territories. Caribbean economies' dependence on coastal and marine resources is among the highest in the world. In 2016 alone, the Caribbean travel and tourism sector contributed US\$ 56.4 billion to the subregion's GDP (14.9%) and 13.4% of total employment (ECLAC, 2018c, p.87). The Caribbean Sea plays an important role in this regard and is one of the busiest maritime corridors in the world (with more than 80,000 vessels navigating its waters every year and some 200 ports). The Caribbean region is the most visited destination, receiving around 60% of cruise ship passengers (ACS, 2016). In total, more than 70 ships from some 24 cruise lines operate in the Caribbean; after six straight years of growth in cruise tourism, passenger arrivals to the region surpassed 29 million.

Rising sea levels result in the salinization of the soil, smaller harvests, the degradation of drinking water due to saltwater intrusion into coastal aquifers, flooding and erosion in coastal ecosystems, the loss of fish habitats and a reduction in catches, damage to coastal infrastructure and the loss of land (Alam, Rukmani and Mawby, 2015). Under these conditions, women and men use and administer marine and coastal ecosystems differently. They have specific kinds of knowledge, capabilities and needs, and they are affected differently by changes in their surroundings brought about by climate change, pollution and globalization. Historically, women's contributions and their important role in conservation and disaster risk reduction in marine and coastal areas have been underappreciated. Sex-disaggregated information in marine and coastal areas is so lacking that, in many countries of the region, there are no national statistics on women's involvement in the fishery industry at all (Castañeda, 2019).

In the Caribbean, water availability depends largely on power generation because scarce freshwater sources make desalination necessary. Issues such as the lack of potable water, ageing water infrastructure, inefficient water use by core sectors of the economy, lack of wastewater management and lack of long-term planning hinder the long-term sustainability of water services. In addition, the provision of water services, its economic regulation and tariff definition are neither standardized nor updated. Failure to regulate and monitor the use of groundwater sources also exacerbates the problems of access to and conservation of drinking water. While private wells are used in many areas, unregulated well-drilling can lead to over-abstraction, damage to sources from poor building techniques and the consumption of contaminated or poor-quality water. As regards storage, water tanks are vulnerable to high winds (ECLAC, 2019c, p. 39). Consequently, water resources are overexploited and there is no major incentive for their conservation (GWP, 2014, cited in ECLAC, 2018c, p. 90).

Water shortages have major implications for how women spend their time. For example, in Guatemala, women living in rural areas spend six hours per week (nearly a full hour more than men) fetching water (ECLAC, 2016a).

4. Natural disasters associated with climate change

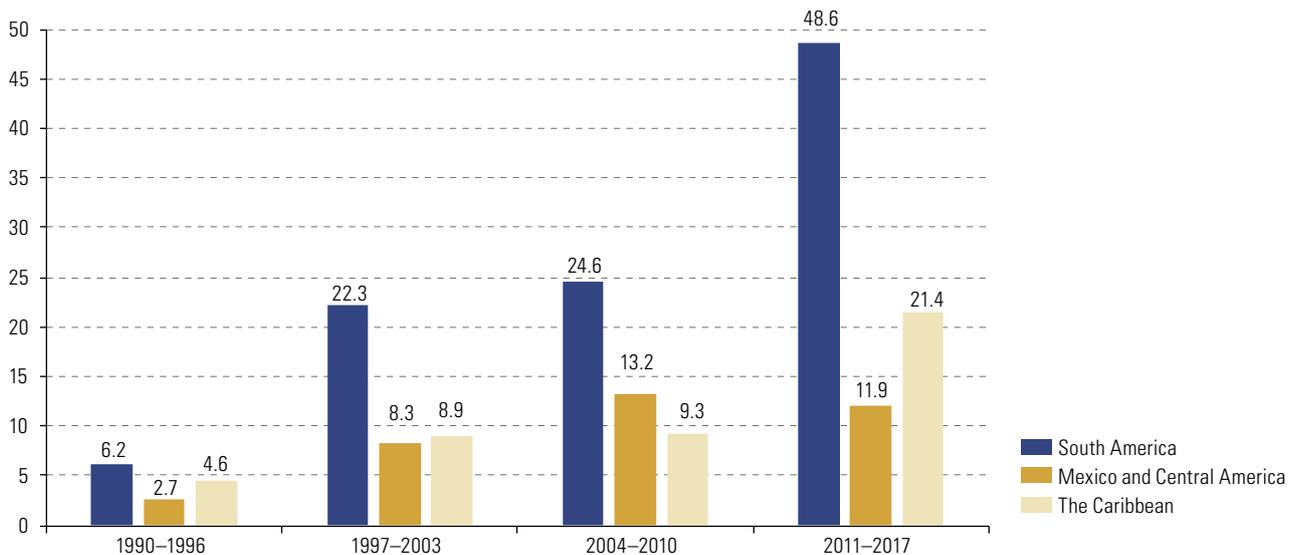
According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, climate change will trigger more frequent and more serious extreme phenomena, such as hurricanes, flooding and drought, thereby heightening both the risk and the impacts of disasters⁸ around the world. As the planet's temperature continues to rise, strong tropical storms, powerful hurricanes and large-scale forest fires will become both more common and more severe.

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 underscores “the need for improved understanding of disaster risk in all its dimensions of exposure, vulnerability and hazard characteristics; the strengthening of disaster risk governance, including national platforms; accountability for disaster risk management; preparedness to “Build Back Better”; recognition of stakeholders and their roles; mobilization of risk-sensitive investment to avoid the creation of new risk; resilience of health infrastructure, cultural heritage and work-places; strengthening of international cooperation and global partnership, and risk-informed donor policies and programs, including financial support and loans from international financial institutions” (United Nations, 2015b).

The Latin American and Caribbean region is especially prone to natural disasters. In the past 30 years, almost all of the countries in the region have been hit by a major natural disaster. Climate-related disasters accounted for 70% of emergencies between 1999 and 2011 (CELAC, 2018) and have had major repercussions for the population. The available figures point to an upward trend in the number of people directly affected by extreme weather events and disasters between 1990 and 2017 (see figure VI.1).

Figure VI.1

Latin America and the Caribbean (42 countries and territories^a): persons directly affected^b by extreme events and disasters, 1990–2017
(Millions of persons)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED), International Disaster Database (EM-DAT), [online] <http://www.emdat.be/database>.

^a The data correspond to 23 countries from the Caribbean: Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guadeloupe, Haiti, Jamaica, Martinique, Montserrat, Puerto Rico, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos Islands and United States Virgin Islands; 10 countries from South America (Argentina, the Bolivian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Uruguay); Mexico and 8 countries from Central America (Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama).

^b For this indicator, “persons affected” is defined as persons requiring immediate assistance to meet basic survival needs such as food, water, shelter, sanitation and urgent medical assistance during an emergency caused by a natural disaster.

⁸ A disaster is a “serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society at any scale due to hazardous events interacting with conditions of exposure, vulnerability and capacity, leading to one or more of the following: human, material, economic and environmental losses and impacts” (United Nations, 2016).

The situation in the Caribbean is of particular concern, as the large number of small island developing States in this subregion are highly exposed to sudden-onset weather-related disasters, and the number of persons affected per 100,000 population is much higher than in any of the other subregions. In the member nations of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the percentage of deaths caused by climate-related disasters in 2000-2012 was higher than it was in 1980-1989. These disasters are primarily linked to increased urbanization and changes in land use patterns (Andrewin, Rodríguez-Llanes and Guha-Sapir, 2015).

The Caribbean's territorial vulnerability to climate change is multidimensional and stems from a combination of factors associated with the location of human settlements and their relative fragility, together with related production activities, in areas prone to natural hazards. The recurrence of natural hazards and the fact that its population is concentrated at the coast makes the Caribbean one of the regions of the world where the impact of disasters is heaviest. Between 1990 and 2017, this subregion experienced 408 natural disasters, representing an average of 14.6 per year. While there were disasters every year during this period, the highest incidence was in 2004 and 2017 (30 and 29 disasters, respectively). The countries that suffered the greatest number of disasters were Haiti (90), the Dominican Republic (59) and Cuba (53). In the English-speaking Caribbean, Jamaica was the country that experienced the greatest number of disasters (26). During this period, 90.4% of disasters were caused by hydro-climatic events, such as floods, storms and tropical cyclones. One of the distinctive features of the Caribbean is that disasters can be nationwide and have a relative magnitude greater than in any other region. For example, during the 2017 hurricane season, the total cost of Hurricanes Irma and Maria in the British Virgin Islands and Sint Maarten exceeded 100% of their respective gross domestic product (GDP) (ECLAC, 2019c, p. 39). Thus, it is the size of the economic impact of certain disasters in relation to the size of the respective country's economy that distinguishes the Caribbean from other regions. The impact of the category 5 Hurricane Dorian on the islands of Abaco and Grand Bahama (Bahamas) in August and September 2019 illustrate the catastrophic damage with high loss of life caused by these extreme events. The archipelago, composed of more than 762 islands, is particularly vulnerable to climate change because of its geographical location in the corridor through which many Atlantic hurricanes and tropical storms pass. The country is also highly susceptible to sea level rise because of its small size and its low-lying islands. In fact, the majority of its land area is below 5 m (72.0%), and a big percentage of its population (46.5%) is also, therefore, living below 5 m (ECLAC, 2019c, p.54).

Dominica has experienced a series of extreme events that have affected the country's economy and women's autonomy. The damage and losses caused by Tropical storm Erica in 2015 amounted to 93% of GDP; Hurricane Maria, in 2017, caused damage equivalent to 226% of GDP. More than 90% of homes, hotels, businesses and public infrastructure were damaged and it claimed 74 lives.

In Grenada, in the aftermath of Hurricane Ivan in 2005, women faced particular challenges such as poor security and lack of privacy in shelters. Among other difficulties, schools were used as shelters, which delayed or disrupted the school cycle, and many women were unable to access support for the reconstruction of their homes as they did not have land title deeds (ECLAC/UNIFEM/UNDP, 2005). The hurricane caused damage equivalent to more than 200% of the country's GDP.

In addition to these vulnerabilities, Caribbean countries face major structural constraints, such as dependence on external financing, limited capacity to mobilize domestic resources, limited access to concessional financing because of their classification as middle- or high-income countries, and high levels of public debt. The accumulation of debt stems from a number of factors apart from fiscal excesses. They include the impacts of adverse external shocks, the effects of climate change and a decline in foreign direct investment in the subregion, which has limited the ability to sustain social spending to increase the resilience of the population (ECLAC, 2019c, p. 39).

Disasters associated with climate change have a disproportionate impact on women and girls. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 recognizes that, because of gender inequalities, climate change and recurring natural disasters such as droughts, floods, landslides and earthquakes have a greater socioeconomic impact on women and particularly rural women, given their greater reliance on access to natural resources for their survival and livelihoods (United Nations, 2015b).

The Cartagena Declaration, adopted at the Third High-Level Meeting of Ministers and Authorities and on the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 in the Americas and the Caribbean, recognizes the disproportionate impact of disasters on women and girls, children and youth and other vulnerable groups, and their importance as agents of change, as well as the need to apply an equitable, participatory and inclusive approach to disaster risk reduction in order to reduce social, economic and psychological impact of such events.⁹ The seventh Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas and the Caribbean, will be the first time the Regional Platform will take place in the Caribbean, being held in July 2020 in Montego Bay, Jamaica. The themes addressed will include the impact of disasters on women and other groups mentioned in the Sendai Framework.¹⁰

Over 50% of the persons in Latin America and the Caribbean who have been affected by disasters have felt the impacts of water-related extreme weather events (droughts and floods) (WHO/UNICEF, n/d). In 2017, 58.3% of the population living in rural areas did not use safe drinking water services. In Guatemala, for example, 50% of the rural population does not have access to drinking water, and it is common for women to have to walk substantial distances to obtain water for their families (FAO, 2017).

Disasters related to climate change adversely affect women's economic autonomy by interfering with their livelihoods and increasing the amount of time that they must devote to unpaid caregiving tasks (IPCC, 2014). In the Caribbean, many poor women work in the tourism industry, and their jobs are often threatened by the effects of natural disasters.

Natural disasters and environmental stress factors give rise to increasingly heavy burdens for women, as they are culturally defined as the main caregivers for dependent persons (ECLAC, 2017a and 2017b). Post-disaster support programmes are often based on an implicit assumption that women will devote their time and effort to provide unpaid caregiving services in the wake of a disaster.

Extreme events such as the earthquake that hit Haiti in 2010 do not only cause loss of life but also, because of collateral events such as flooding, lead to the propagation of water-borne diseases such as cholera and malaria and thus place an extremely heavy burden on women as caregivers to persons who have fallen ill.

C. Climate change mitigation strategies: gender equality opportunities and challenges

While adaptation strategies focus on dealing with the effects of climate change, mitigation strategies are directed at combating its causes. Greenhouse gas emissions can be reduced by transitioning towards renewable energy sources and using fossil fuels more efficiently, halting deforestation and expanding carbon sinks, adopting more efficient farming practices and altering consumption patterns and lifestyles, especially in industrialized countries, which account for the bulk of GHG emissions (Terry, 2009; United Nations, 2015a).

Research on the link between climate change and gender equality has gained ground in recent years and has chiefly focused on the impacts of climate change on women's lives (Castañeda, Aguilar and Rand, 2013). For the most part, the emphasis has been on women's involvement in adaptation initiatives, while the link between gender equality and climate change mitigation has been explored much less (WEDO, 2016c). This may be a result of the fact that few women are engaged in decision-making processes concerning climate change policies (Olson, 2014; Prebble and Rojas, 2016).

⁹ See [online] <https://eird.org/pr18/docs/cartagena-declaration.pdf>.

¹⁰ See [online] <https://eird.org/americas/pr2020/>.

1. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions: transitioning towards low-carbon economies

Electrical power generation systems are highly vulnerable to climate change. This means that a major effort will be required to deal with that vulnerability while at the same time transitioning towards more efficient energy systems that have a smaller carbon footprint (Bárcena and others, 2018). While climate change may have specific impacts on energy infrastructure that interfere with its distribution and transmission, the energy sector as a whole should be viewed as a socio-technological system whose transition to the use of cleaner forms of energy is a process that involves both the people who design and develop the associated systems and technologies and the people who make use of the energy that is produced (Miller, Iles and Jones, 2013).

It has been argued that, in view of the urgent need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the transition to low-carbon economies not only needs to be environmentally sustainable but also should encompass a social dimension that will help the world to move towards a form of sustainable development that is coupled with greater equality. This may also be an opportunity to create more quality jobs and to contribute to the attainment of a greater degree of social justice and to the elimination of poverty (ECLAC, 2016b). This transitional model, which assumes that there is a “public responsibility to facilitate and actively support a transition for the common interest” (ILO/ACTRAV, 2018), has been referred to as a “just transition,”¹¹ and it may provide a way of achieving greater gender equality, particularly with regard to the labour market. The International Labour Organization (ILO) argues that, if thought is given to this from the outset, it will be possible to stop occupational segregation from being perpetuated, to close wage and skill gaps, to engage in inclusive social dialogues, to provide greater social protection and to facilitate the formalization of informal forms of employment, in which women are overrepresented, by creating new job opportunities (ILO, 2017).

A joint study by ECLAC and ILO on the evolving employment situation in the context of a transition towards cleaner energy and a circular economy could, if global warming is held to under 2°C over pre-industrial levels, create over a million jobs in Latin America and the Caribbean by 2030, with most of those net increases being in Brazil (450,000) and Mexico (350,000). While those numbers are relatively small compared to total job creation in the region (2.5 million jobs were created in 2016–2017), the overall impact will depend on how the structure of the labour market is altered as workers move from one industry to another (ECLAC/ILO, 2018). This same study found that the sectors in which the most jobs may be created owing to the growing demand for energy efficiency are construction (750,000 jobs), renewable energy (100,000 jobs, more than half of which would be in solar energy generation) and the manufacturing of inputs (50,000 jobs), while another 150,000 jobs would be created in copper mining by the increased demand for electronic components. Job losses, on the other hand, would be concentrated in the oil, coal and electricity generation industries. Making the shift to a circular economy, which would entail the re-use of waste, process designs that would reduce the creation of waste, and the use of renewable energy sources, among other factors, would create a net total of 4.8 million jobs. This figure includes job creation in the reprocessing of materials such as wood, aluminium and other metals, whose value chains are longer and labour intensive (ECLAC/ILO, 2018).

(a) The energy sector as a crucial focus of GHG emissions mitigation

An analysis of the distribution of GHG emissions in the region by source shows that the biggest sources are energy generation (46%), agriculture (23%) and changes in land use and forestry (19%) (Bárcena and others, 2018). The energy sector is therefore of pivotal importance for climate change mitigation efforts.

¹¹ The first mention of the idea of a “just transition” is attributed to the United States trade union leader Tony Mazzocchi (1993), who pleaded for a “superfund for workers” to provide financial support and opportunities for higher education for workers displaced by environmental protection policies. Since then, the concept has evolved and has been expanded to include the idea that efforts to attain a just transition should not be limited to the provision of social assistance but should also entail the assumption of a “public responsibility to facilitate and actively support a transition for the common interest” (ILO/ACTRAV, 2018).

The cross-country differences in the distribution of GHG emissions is yet another reflection of the region's heterogeneity, however, as those patterns are determined by each country's economic profile and predominant energy sources.

In order to reduce GHG emissions as a means of helping to mitigate climate change, a number of countries in Latin America and the Caribbean have been striving to become more energy-efficient and to generate cleaner energy in a more sustainable way. This transition, and particularly the shift away from fossil fuels and towards renewable sources, opens up an opportunity for mitigating climate change while at the same time paving the way for the creation of new dynamic industries and new sources of employment.

The use of renewable energy sources has been on the rise as investment in these sources increases and production costs fall (ILO/The Green Initiative, 2016). The projections of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) indicate that, worldwide, employment in this sector jumped from 7.1 million jobs in 2012 to 10.3 million jobs in 2017. Solar photovoltaic energy has seen the most growth of all, and this industry, together with the bioenergy, hydroelectricity and wind power industries, are expected to become important sources of employment (IRENA, 2018, cited in IRENA, 2019).

Energy efficiency and renewable energies are especially relevant to the Caribbean since the subregion holds substantial renewable energy potential in relation to solar, wind and geothermal energy, but remains highly dependent on fossil fuel imports for its energy needs. The countries of the subregion are committed to the transition towards renewable energy, as evidenced by the installation of Antigua and Barbuda's first solar power plant, with similar initiatives already operational in Saint Kitts and Nevis, and Aruba. Wind farms already dot the landscape in Jamaica, Aruba and Nevis, while solar water heating is commonplace in Barbados, Saint Lucia and Grenada. The use of mini-hydro power plants is now a proven technology in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; while Dominica and Saint Kitts and Nevis are on the way to tapping their geothermal sources of energy. The application of ocean thermal energy conversion technologies is under consideration in the Cayman Islands, and other regional economies are already showing interest in developing this potential (ECLAC, 2016c, p.3).

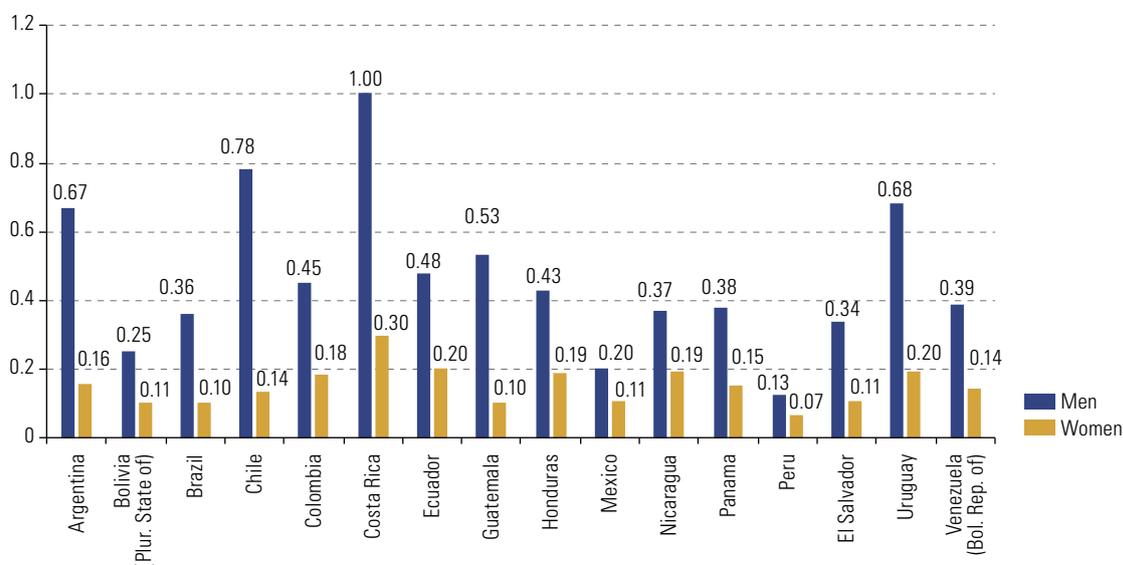
The relatively limited data that are available indicate that, for the most part, women are underrepresented in the energy (including renewable energy) industry. The results of a global survey recently conducted by IRENA show that 32% of the persons employed full time in the renewable energy industry are women, compared to an average of 22% in the oil and gas industry. A breakdown of the data on women employed in the renewable energy sector shows that there are more women in administrative positions (45%) and fewer in positions in the areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (28%) (IRENA, 2019).

Sex-disaggregated data on employment in the energy and renewable energy industries in Latin America and the Caribbean are scarce. Information from household surveys indicates that the electricity, natural gas, steam and air conditioning distribution sector employs just 0.4% of the male population and just 0.1% of the female population. The available information at the country level also reflects this gender-based segmentation, as there are fewer women than men employed in this sector in all the countries. The largest percentages of women employees in electricity, natural gas, steam and air conditioning distribution services are found in Costa Rica, Ecuador and Uruguay (see figure VI.2).

The degree of occupational segregation is also quite high within this sector in some countries, with a larger proportion of women being found in administrative positions, while there are generally more men employed as mid-level technicians or operators. In Brazil, Colombia and Mexico, for example, around half of the women who work in this sector are in administrative positions or are employed in other types of office jobs. Most of the men in this sector in these same countries are employed in technical professional positions (43.8% of those employed in this sector in Brazil, 30.8% in Colombia and 46.4% in Mexico) or as manual workers or machine operators (39.6% of those employed in this sector in Brazil and 34.0% in Colombia).

Figure VI.2

Latin America (16 countries): employment in the electricity, natural gas, steam and air conditioning distribution sector, by sex, around 2017
(Percentages)



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

Chile has one of the highest percentages of employment in this branch of industry, and enough information is available to permit an analysis of some of the characteristics of women employed in the energy sector,¹² which has a high level of productivity and pays its employees more than the national average (1.6 times the national average monthly income of an employed person), yet the percentage of women in the electricity, natural gas, steam and air conditioning distribution sector is low. The distribution of women by occupational category within this sector shows that they are concentrated (51%) in administrative areas. There are also fewer women employees at the higher corporate levels, with women accounting for 21% of professional and technical support staff, 16% of supervisory staff, 17% of assistant managers, 18% of managers and only 10% of senior managers. The proportion of women employed as operators and auxiliaries is also very low (9%). This pattern of occupational segregation is also repeated among outsourced, non-managerial personnel. The range of accessible positions is very limited for women and very broad for men, who are concentrated in production-related areas (analysts, engineers specializing in distribution and project works, field technicians, field operators and thermal power operators) (Deuman, 2019).

The male/female wage gap averages 23.4%, which, in the case of Chile, mirrors the overall wage gap in the labour market. An analysis of wage gaps by occupational category shows that the widest gap in base wages is found at the managerial level (38.2%) and in administrative posts (40%). These wide gaps indicate that, even when women succeed in obtaining managerial positions, they are paid less. In administrative positions—in which women are generally overrepresented—the size of this gap would appear to be pointing to a new form of occupational segregation that works to men's benefit or to indicate that men are being paid more for work of equal value (Deuman, 2019).

In Argentina, only 18% of jobs in the energy generation, transmission and distribution sector are held by women. A report of the National Securities Commission indicates that, based on a survey of the boards of directors of listed firms, only 10% of senior positions in companies whose shares are traded on the Argentine stock market are held by women and that only 3% of those firms are headed up by a woman (Balestro, Goldstein and Rijter, 2019).

¹² In 2018–2019, the Ministry of Energy of Chile undertook a baseline study on the situation of women in the country's energy sector in an effort to identify existing barriers and gender gaps. The findings of this study are to serve as a basis for the development of a proposal for promoting the entry of more women employees. The study is based on surveys administered to 41 private energy companies and over 11,500 employees.

In the Caribbean, women are over-represented in service and other low-skill industries and are disproportionately found in the informal sector, which means they tend to be less exposed to technological innovations. Notably, around 10% of employed persons in Barbados —half of whom are women— work in the green economy (ILO/Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies (2017)). Many unskilled women have, however, found employment in LED bulb assembly plants and in the main electric vehicle company in Barbados, which is run by a woman (ILO/Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies (2017)).

The available data for Argentina, Barbados and Chile on occupational segregation in the energy industry show how gender stereotypes are reflected in the labour market. The compilation of further data and the preparation of studies on gender inequalities in employment in the energy (including renewable energy) sector are needed in order to arrive at an in-depth understanding of the obstacles faced by women and to develop policies that can boost women's participation in this sector as the region transitions towards low-emission economies.

(b) Energy access and use: the challenges of energy poverty

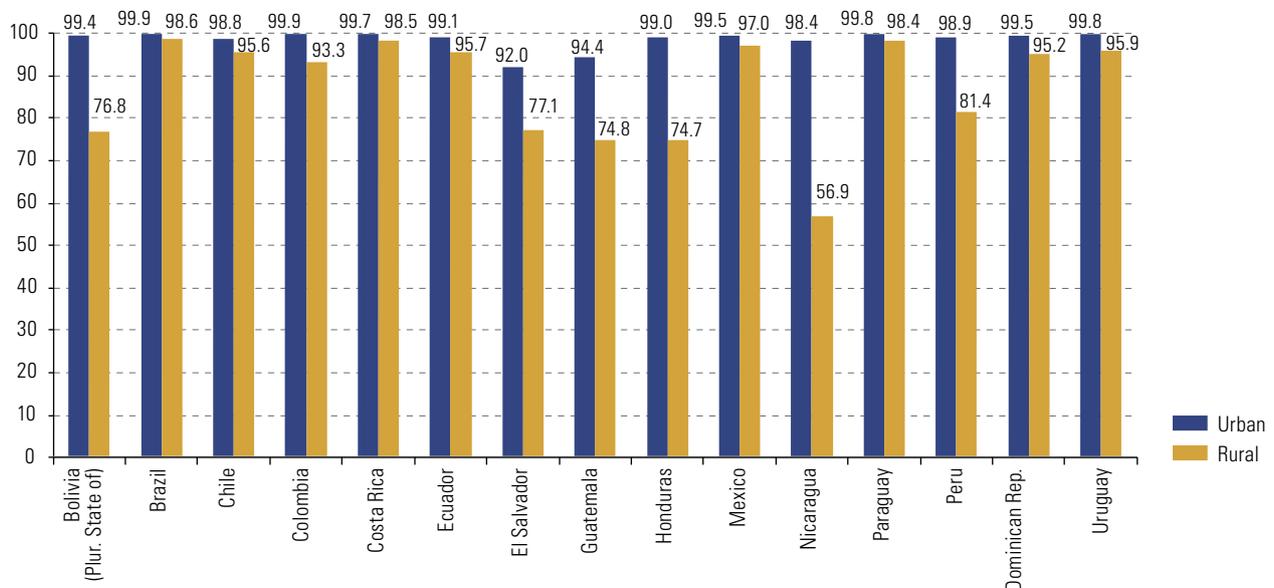
An analysis of the energy sector from the standpoint of access to energy and its use sheds light on some of the dimensions of inequality and how it is linked to climate change. The importance of having access to energy in a context of climate change is reflected in Sustainable Development Goal 7 on access to affordable, safe, sustainable and modern energy for all.

The inclusion of Sustainable Development Goal No. 7 in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development attests to the recognition that energy services are related to a wide range of activities that are a fundamental part of daily life and that access to clean, affordable sources of energy is a pivotal factor for the improvement of the population's quality of life and the reduction of poverty (García, 2014).

The Latin American and Caribbean region has made major strides forward in electrification, and an average of 98.5% of urban households and 87.3% rural households now have electrical power (ECLAC, 2019a). These are encouraging figures, but it should not be forgotten that differences are to be found across countries and geographic zones and that these differences are particularly stark in rural areas of Central America (see figure VI.3).

Figure VI.3

Latin America (15 countries): households with electricity in urban and rural areas, around 2017^a
(Percentages)



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

^a The data are for 2017, except in the cases of Guatemala and Nicaragua, where they correspond to 2014, and of Honduras and Mexico, where they correspond to 2016.

The fairly recent concept of “energy poverty” contributes to a fuller understanding of the various dimensions of energy access and use. This concept has been defined in various ways, one of which describes it in terms of the affordability of the energy needed to meet household needs (Dehays and Schuschny, 2018). The existence and degree of energy poverty in the region, whose impact differs by socioeconomic stratum, have important implications for gender equality. The use of dirtier sources of energy, such as kerosene and firewood, has repercussions in terms of both GHG emissions and people’s health.

The Caribbean relies on imported fossil fuel for more than 90% of its energy needs and energy costs in the subregion are among the highest in the world, which affects households (ECLAC, 2018c, p.37). Access to energy services is critical to lifting people out of poverty, particularly in the most remote areas of Belize, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica and Suriname. According to the Caribbean Development Bank, research suggests that single-parent households, headed mainly by women, are among the groups that are disproportionately represented among the poor, and that women and girls bear the brunt of energy poverty given traditional care and household roles. In addition, high upfront costs can make it very difficult for low-income households to invest in transition to more energy-efficient and renewable energy technologies. Small or medium-sized enterprises may be unable to give priority to investment in energy efficient and renewable energy technologies because of lower access to savings and credit due to low incomes and assets (Caribbean Development Bank, 2018).

According to information in the global database on household energy use maintained by the World Health Organization (WHO), large percentages of the households in most of the Latin American and Caribbean countries cook with clean fuels (see table VI.3). There are still a number of countries, however, in which the situation warrants a closer look. In Guatemala, for example, the WHO data indicate that just 36% of households mainly cook with clean fuels. This statistic is striking, given that 74.8% of rural households and 94.4% of urban households have electricity. Similarly, in Paraguay, around 98% of all households have electricity but only 64% use clean fuels for cooking. These inconsistencies may be indicating that, although electrical connections are in place, other more complex factors are at work, such as, possibly, the cost of electrical power relative to household incomes. This is particularly relevant for women, who are overrepresented in the lower-income population and in poor households. It is therefore clear that the statistics on electrical power supplies must not simply be taken at face value but that the multiple dimensions of energy poverty need to be analysed from a gender perspective.

Table VI.3

Latin America and the Caribbean (33 countries): households that primarily use clean cooking fuels
(Percentages)

Percentage of households	Countries
>95	Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)
93	Brazil, Jamaica
92	Dominica, Dominican Republic
91	Colombia, Suriname
87	Belize, Cuba
86	Mexico, Panama
83	El Salvador
79	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)
68	Peru
64	Paraguay
61	Guyana
49	Nicaragua
48	Honduras
36	Guatemala
9	Haiti

Source: World Health Organization (WHO), “Country data for household cooking fuels”, WHO Household Energy Database, 2016.

Access to electricity reduces the amount of unpaid labour (particularly the gathering of firewood) to be performed. If women have greater access to electricity, and with an increasing return to paid employment at the margin, they will tend to choose to buy fuel rather than gathering firewood and will use the time that this frees up to engage in paid employment (Pueyo and Maestre, 2019).

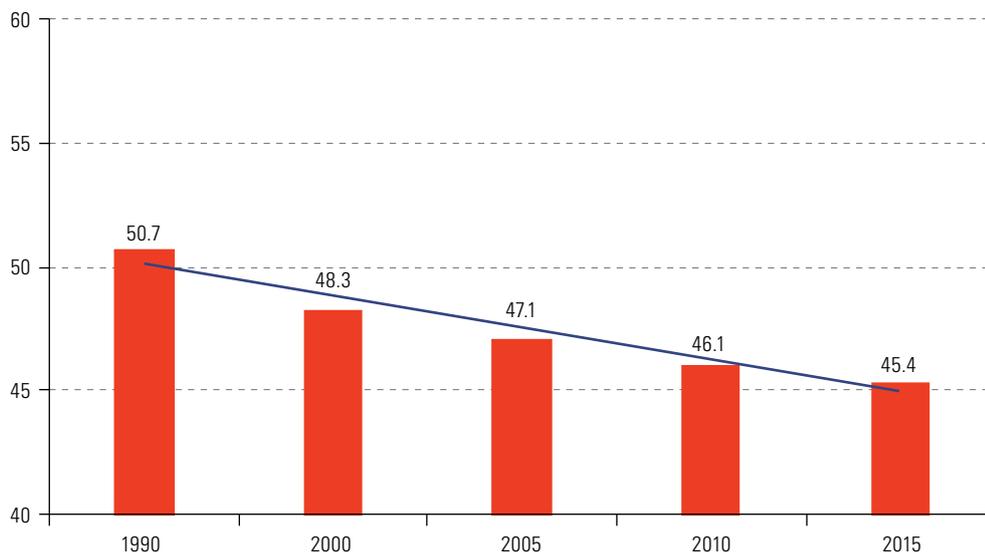
2. The importance of the region's forests for climate change mitigation

Forests play a fundamental role in the carbon and water cycles and in regulating the planet's climate. They are also essential for the communities that depend on them for their daily livelihoods and for peoples for whom they are expressions of their cultural identity. Together with the soil, forest systems are a crucial component of carbon sinks in land ecosystems and absorb around 2 billion tons of CO₂ each year (FAO, 2018). The continuing process of deforestation is therefore not only threatening the planet's ability to absorb this greenhouse gas but is also making its ecosystems more fragile and posing a threat to the survival of the communities that depend on the world's forests and that are being displaced by environmental degradation, which in turn triggers socio-environmental tensions and conflicts.

The Latin American and Caribbean region has vast forests, but its forested land area is shrinking. Between 1990 and 2015, the amount of territory covered by natural (primary and secondary) forests fell by 5.3 percentage points (see figure VI.4), for a reduction of 104.38 million hectares in just 25 years.¹³ The region has lost 96 million hectares of forests to the conversion of timberland for farming, the increased and growing demand for lumber, population growth and increased population density, among other causes (Bárcena and others, 2018; ECLAC, 2015).

Figure VI.4

Latin America and the Caribbean (44 countries and territories): natural forest cover, 1990-2015
(Percentages)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), CEPALSTAT on the basis of data from Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) 2015.

¹³ These figures are the result of calculations performed by ECLAC on the basis of data from the Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) 2015. [See http://estadisticas.cepal.org/cepalstat/WEB_CEPALSTAT/Portada.asp].

The shrinkage of the region's forests is not only an impediment to efforts to mitigate climate change, since it represents a reduction in its carbon sinks, but also has serious implications for the conservation of biodiversity and for the region's vulnerable population groups.

The main cause of deforestation and the environmental degradation of forests is the conversion of forested land to farmland and pasturelands. The prevailing economic system is putting entire ecosystems at risk by threatening valuable habitats, exacerbating soil erosion and the decrease in clean water supplies, releasing carbon into the atmosphere and posing a threat to the communities living in the region's forests (FAO, 2018). The wholesale conversion of forested land to other uses and the loss of biodiversity have resulted in the forced displacement of communities that have, as a result, seen their rights violated and become impoverished because they have been unable to continue to follow their ancestral ways of life or maintain their traditional cultures. The advance of transnational agribusinesses and the logging of native species and exotic trees introduced for commercial purposes have disrupted rural ways of life. Traditional modes of existence have been overturned by wage-based economic structures, and this has undermined entire communities, their history and their deeply entrenched forms of societal organization (Korol, 2016).

According to data compiled by FAO (2018), although the portion of Latin America's population living in or near tropical forests or savannahs is smaller, in absolute terms, than the segments of other world regions' populations living in those types of areas, the region has the largest percentage of forest inhabitants who are living below the poverty line (82%, as compared with 50% in Africa and 27% in Asia). The fact that so many of these forest inhabitants (many of whom are members of indigenous peoples) are living in poverty, in combination with the steady pressure being exerted on those forests, has placed these rural settlements in an increasingly vulnerable position, and they have reacted by offering resistance to this threat to their way of life while they try to retain and defend their territories and livelihoods.

The presence of extractive industries has injected new complexities into the already tense situation, further complicating the lives of the peoples living in these territories and interfering with their pursuit of their livelihoods. Logging companies have moved in, disrupting ecosystems, many of which are extremely fragile, but logging continues to be one of the most highly developed industrial activities in the region.

For indigenous women and their communities, their ties to the land and to its natural resources are of fundamental importance for their survival and are closely bound up in their culture and identity. The search for renewable sources of energy to replace fossil fuels and achieve GHG emission reduction targets may actually heighten the demand for wood-based fuels and thus pose an even greater threat to the living conditions of women who depend on the forests for their livelihoods (Alvarez, 2013).

In Iztapa, Guatemala, women farmers have joined together to form the International Reforestation Alliance (AIRES) to plant and cultivate trees as a means of preventing soil erosion and sequestering carbon. They have planted over 150,000 trees in Iztapa to reforest the mountain slopes in the area. The Association has also helped to build more than 800 brick ovens that use half as much firewood as conventional ovens, thereby helping to combat deforestation in yet another way and to prevent the lung diseases caused by traditional wood-burning stoves. Initiatives such as this not only help to build climate change resilience but also make a positive contribution to women's lives and the growth of local economies.

Women's roles as leaders and activists in the various forms of resistance put up by forest communities attest to their organizational capacity in the defence of their territories. The fact remains, however, that these communities are mired in substandard living conditions within a framework of discriminatory and violent patriarchal societies (see box VI.4).

Recognizing, protecting and promoting women's rights, including their right to participate in decision-making bodies and governance initiatives, are of fundamental importance in the region's conservation efforts, yet women are playing a much smaller role in decision-making in the forestry sector and in the governance of that sector than men are (Sunderland and others, 2014, cited in UNEP, 2016). Women also have less of a voice in the management of the region's forests, particularly in the Amazon basin, despite the important role that they play in efforts to protect those forests and conserve forest resources (Schmink and Arteaga, 2015).

Box VI.4**Violence directed at women environmental defenders**

Environmental and territorial conflicts in Latin America and the Caribbean have intensified in recent years. Various organizations have taken action to put a halt to projects that could be putting entire communities and biodiversity stocks at risk. Violence directed at people striving to defend the environment has also risen so sharply that, in percentage terms, more people have been killed for defending environmental causes in the region than anywhere else in the world. According to data compiled by Global Witness, more than half of the killings of environmental defenders in 2017 took place in Latin America, with most of those cases being linked to large-scale agriculture, followed by mining and oil operations, poaching and logging (Global Witness, 2017).

In 2016, the killing of environmental and human rights defender Berta Cáceres, in Honduras, in response to her campaign against the Agua Zarca hydroelectric dam in the Gualcarque River drew attention to the wave of violence and the persecution of women activists in the region.

Adelina Gómez Gaviria (murdered in Colombia in 2013), Lesbia Urquía (Honduras, 2016), Emilsen Manyoma (Colombia, 2017), Laura Vásquez Pineda (Guatemala, 2017) and Yamile Guerra Suárez (Colombia, 2019) are just some of the people who have been persecuted and ultimately killed for defending their land and the environment.

In 2018, the countries of the region met in Escazú, Costa Rica, and adopted the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean. The Regional Agreement contains the first binding provision in the world on human rights defenders in environmental matters and calls upon its signatories to take the necessary measures "to prevent, investigate and punish attacks, threats or intimidations that human rights defenders in environmental matters may suffer" (ECLAC, 2018).

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), *Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean* (LC/PUB.2018/8), Santiago, 2018; and Global Witness, *At What Cost? Irresponsible business and the murder of land and environmental defenders in 2017*, London, 2017.

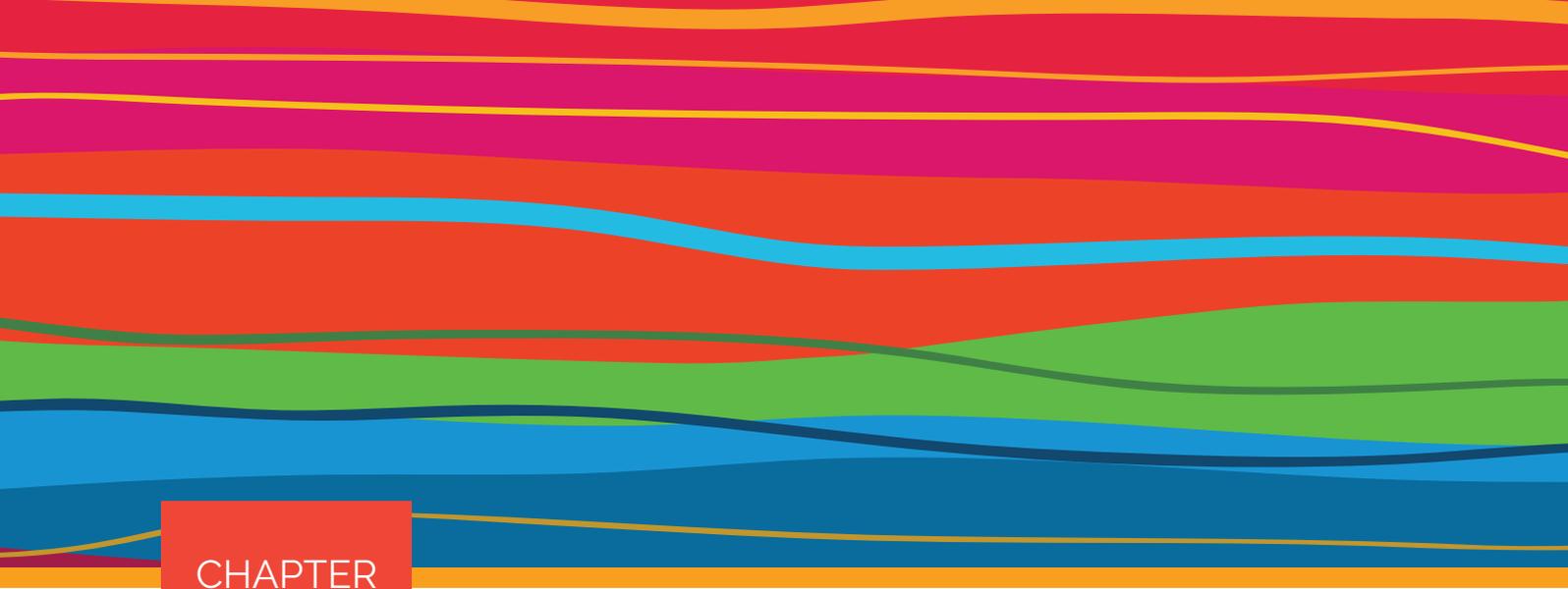
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Policies on gender equality and women's autonomy



CHAPTER

VII

Policy guidelines for comprehensive gender equality and women's autonomy in changing economic scenarios

Introduction

- A. Multilateral governance and an enabling international environment to achieve gender equality
- B. Comprehensive public policies for achieving women's autonomy and rights in changing economic scenarios

Bibliography

Introduction

This chapter aims to provide input in the discussion on moving forward in the implementation of the commitments under the Regional Gender Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the light of ongoing and imminent technological, geopolitical, demographic and climatic changes. It examines the need to design policies that not only respond to, but also anticipate disruptive societal changes and their effects on gender equality.

The Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean has played a fundamental role in promoting cooperation and the exchange of experiences among countries, as well as in the discussion and proposal of a regional approach for overcoming discrimination and gender inequalities through the adoption of a Regional Gender Agenda. The Regional Gender Agenda, a common regional denominator, not only assists in the design and implementation of policies at the national level but has also become a shared platform for the participation of Latin America and the Caribbean in multilateral forums on sustainable development, human rights and gender equality at regional and international levels.

The Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean represents the main regional forum for evaluating the progress made and the remaining challenges in upholding women's rights through the implementation of regional and international commitments regarding gender equality and women's rights. The fourteenth session of the Regional Conference is therefore particularly important, as it is being held at a pivotal moment. First, three years have passed since the adoption of the Montevideo Strategy for Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda within the Sustainable Development Framework by 2030, an instrument allowing countries to accelerate the implementation of the commitments undertaken and mobilize the different sectors of the State in advancing gender equality. Second, 2020 will mark 25 years since the Fourth World Conference on Women (held in Beijing in 1995) and 5 years since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This session of the Regional Conference also coincides with the fortieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the twenty-fifth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 25), during which the second gender action plan under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and new nationally determined contributions (NDCs) for 2020 are being discussed.

While governments have made commitments at different levels throughout the 40 years of work of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Montevideo Strategy includes in each of its implementation pillars the international, regional, national and local measures to be applied in areas such as financing, technology and cooperation. The chapter also considers public policies from a multiscale perspective, taking into account existing global asymmetries, the interdependence of countries and the interconnected challenges of sustainable development and gender equality. In addition to formulating public policy proposals, it focuses on the regional and global dimensions of gender inequalities and the need to provide coordinated responses and strengthen multilateral architecture to overcome the structural challenges of inequality and achieve the autonomy of all women while recognizing their diversity.

Section A examines the enabling conditions, the international environment that is conducive to gender equality and regional and global policy guidelines. Section B presents guidelines for designing public policy at national level to advance the achievement of women's autonomy in changing economic scenarios.

It is clear that gender inequalities are an obstacle to sustainable development, and the shifts in the regional landscape reflect the urgent need to take decisive steps towards development styles that are grounded in gender equality, women's autonomy, and the guarantee of the rights of all persons without exception.

Therefore, in the current context, a change in the prevailing development model in the region through progressive structural change—as proposed by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean—is urgently needed. This can help to transform gender power relations in the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development and guarantee substantive equality between women and men, without violating the ecological limits for the reproduction of life.

A. Multilateral governance and an enabling international environment to achieve gender equality

Since the different trends analysed in the document are transnational in nature, this section focuses on the enabling conditions, namely the regional and international policies and governance which are indispensable if the aforementioned trends are to be addressed. Growing inequality within many countries, the persistence of global financial imbalances, the impact of international migration and climate change cannot be addressed by national policies alone. Their very nature means they require international and regional cooperation (ECLAC, 2018b).

The increasing importance of negative externalities (such as climate change, financial instability or the political effects of migration) in international relations magnifies the need for global public goods (such as an open and balanced trading system, the diffusion and transfer of technology, the use of data and the free movement of people and ideas) which complement regional public goods and national policies. There is a need for a new multilateralism capable of strengthening democracy and correcting asymmetries (ECLAC, 2018b and 2019a).

1. Macroeconomics for gender equality: aligning finance, taxation and international trade to achieve equality and women's rights

Multilateralism and regional and international cooperation must be strengthened to correct the asymmetries in trade, finance and resources and to deliver a joint response to the challenges of achieving gender equality by 2030.

Latin American and Caribbean governments agreed to ensure that the position of countries of the region in international discussions on macroeconomic policy, and trade, investment and financial agreements, incorporates the commitments of the Regional Gender Agenda and their link with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and that relevant international norms are consistent with women's human rights (ECLAC, 2017). Consequently, in the context of the challenges that globalization poses to gender equality, it is necessary to ensure coherence between trade, financial and investment policies and women's rights.

(a) Trade policies as a tool for diversification, the creation of high-quality jobs and women's economic autonomy

Trade tensions have rekindled debate on the need to reform the World Trade Organization (WTO). While some submit that the outstanding issues of the Doha Development Agenda should be pursued, others are calling for WTO to adapt and respond to rapid transformations such as those brought about by the emergence and expansion of digital trade. Although interests may vary, this multilateral forum is particularly important for developing countries which would otherwise have to deal with major economic powers on a bilateral basis (ECLAC, 2019a). Regional cooperation is also necessary in order to project a common voice in multilateral forums at the global level.

The trading system, in particular, is essential for creating an enabling environment for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and the Regional Gender Agenda. International trade is an engine for inclusive economic growth and poverty reduction, and contributes to the promotion of sustainable development—as established in the 2030 Agenda—rather than an end in itself. With this in mind, the governments of Latin America and the Caribbean undertook in the Montevideo Strategy to ensure that trade and investment policies are consistent with women's rights (ECLAC, 2017). At the multilateral level, this implies coordinated action, avoiding a race to the bottom and predatory competition among countries so that wages would not become the key adjustment variable for increasing exports and attracting foreign capital (ECLAC, 2018b). International trade should help to reduce production and technological asymmetries between countries and create more opportunities for quality employment for women in sectors that are key to progressive structural change.

Regional integration can pave the way for production and export diversification, given the large share of manufactures with industrial and technological content in intraregional trade and the role of small and

medium-sized exporters. This seems to be a viable option in the context of slowing growth, capital outflows and mounting protectionism (ECLAC, 2018a). Increased intraregional trade could bring about progressive structural change. This would require a redoubling of efforts to create an integrated regional space for physical and digital goods and services. However, greater regional economic integration does not automatically enhance women's economic autonomy. Far-reaching transformations will be needed if international trade is to play a part in reducing inequalities among countries and gender inequalities. Consequently, absent efforts to diversify and deepen productive structures, boosting exports will not necessarily lead to more sustainable and egalitarian development models (Bidegain Ponte, 2017). It is important to examine how international and interregional trade affect the production diversification of countries in sectors with a high proportion of female workers in high-quality employment and, at the same time, there is a need to encourage female entrepreneurship in the export sector in the region.

At the national level, trade and investment policies must be assessed to determine their impact on gender equality and modified where appropriate. It is possible to have a set of policies that offset the potential negative effects of trade liberalization, external trade shocks and trends such as relocation and shortening global value chains on workers, producers and consumers. There is also a need to promote export diversification in the region in sectors with a high proportion of female workers in high-quality employment and to avoid the defeminization of employment as countries shift towards skill-intensive sectors, ensuring the full participation of women in the sectors that are key to progressive structural change.

With regard to trade agreements, it is important to identify the tensions and complementarities between trade provisions and the commitments made by governments on women's human rights. The generation of empirical data on the possible effects of trade agreements on gender inequality should be encouraged, and this information should be taken into account in the trade negotiation strategies of the countries of the region. For example, it is possible to determine which goods and services are of particular importance to women and negotiate deadlines for the reduction of tariffs.

(b) Stable financial systems that boost women's economic autonomy

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development calls on governments to undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws (target 5.a) and to adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels (target 5.c) (United Nations, 2015). It also includes commitments that aim to enhance policy coherence for sustainable development; respect each country's policy space and leadership to establish and implement policies for poverty eradication and sustainable development; and ensure enhanced representation and voice for developing countries in decision-making in global international economic and financial institutions in order to deliver more effective, credible, accountable and legitimate institutions (targets 17.14, 17.15 and 10.6, respectively). These elements are key for channelling finances, institutions and rules towards the achievement of the Goals pertaining to equality and sustainability and creating the enabling macroeconomic and institutional conditions for gender equality.

In that regard, under the Montevideo Strategy governments committed to harmonize regional norms consistent with women's human rights, and evaluate the extraterritorial effects of the legislation and policies adopted, with respect to transnational issues such as financial volatility, among others (ECLAC, 2017). They also undertook to promote the representation of Latin American and Caribbean countries, with delegations composed on the basis of parity, in global economic governance institutions that design and implement international norms on finance, trade and debt, and ensure that these norms are consistent with women's human rights (ECLAC, 2017).

Within the framework of these commitments, it is necessary to promote financial stability as a global public good, reduce the asymmetries in the representation of countries in the financial architecture at the global level and mobilize more resources for financing sustainable development and equality (ECLAC, 2018b). In addition, governments have the opportunity to design policies and instruments that reduce their exposure to volatile international liquidity cycles. Macroprudential regulation policies are indispensable to prevent

capital flight, limit the formation of asset and credit bubbles, and mitigate the potentially destabilizing effect of financialization on the real economy. Governments can implement countercyclical policies (ECLAC, 2018b) that are gender-sensitive to offset the effects on women of any crises and recessions that may arise. Some of the possible measures worthy of consideration include maintaining or expanding public social spending in critical areas for women, such as social protection; preventing an increase in job insecurity among women; and alleviating the effects of food price speculation on small-scale women farmers and women living in poverty.

At the national level, financial systems play a key role in mobilizing savings and channelling them towards investment in production and technological innovation and in facilitating access to financing on equal terms for economic actors. Non-discrimination is a prerequisite for financial systems to work in favour of sustainable and economic development of societies. This means that, to be sustainable in the long term, the financial system must not only focus on stability, solvency or profitability but must also incorporate inclusion and non-discrimination criteria and respond to the needs of the various economic actors. Progress must be made towards the development of financial systems that include a diversified set of institutions and instruments capable of providing access to multiple high-quality and affordable financial services that are non-discriminatory and offer equal access to savings and credit. This will require financial policies aimed at overcoming the supply and demand barriers that women face, strengthening regulatory institutions, among others, and fostering the creation of new instruments to conceptualize financial and economic risks in order to consider alternatives while taking into account the advantages afforded by the new digital era. However, in order to maximize the potential benefits of digital financial technologies (fintech) and minimize their risks, regulatory mechanisms must be strengthened and users of digital platforms protected to prevent the inappropriate use of personal data.

At the same time, in order to have quality financial services and products, costs, the protection of users and consumers and their specific needs must be taken into account. Overindebtedness among women is a trap to be avoided. Financial education is essential to ensure that women's financial inclusion is fair and informed and that access to credit is not at the expense of access to other sources of income and public services.

Furthermore, in the era of the digital revolution, the digital gender divide must be bridged if there is to be greater financial inclusion. Doing so will require policies aimed at ensuring access to and use of digital tools, combined with policies to improve digital literacy, bring about a cultural shift—breaking down perceptions and stereotypes that limit women's access to digital media—and enhance cybersecurity (OECD, 2018). It is important for the countries to work to increase and diversify the range of funding available for entrepreneurship through an appropriate regulatory framework to address various needs (ECLAC, 2018c). In this regard, development banks have an opportunity to promote financing that reduces inequalities by creating funds, credit lines and specific products and services. The conditions for access to credit can be made more flexible by establishing alternative instruments for assessing risk and credit history; new requirements for guarantees and setting preferential interest rates to boost productive sectors and specific segments of the population can be introduced.

(c) Fiscal policies that contribute to redistribution and equality

Fiscal policy plays a key role not only in macroeconomic stability but also in the provision of public goods and services, progressive revenue collection and attracting investment in strategic areas to encourage diversification and reduce inequalities. Fiscal policy, a means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda and which is also incorporated in the commitments of the Montevideo Strategy, is an enabling instrument for gender equality and a more equitable distribution of resources and income. Gender-responsive budgeting can also help to align budgets with governments' gender equality commitments by taking into account not only the allocation of specific spending but also total revenues, financing and the design of tax systems (UN-Women, 2015; United Nations, 2018).

Against the backdrop of an across-the-board slowdown and ongoing fiscal consolidation in several countries of the region, the fiscal space in countries could expand. Some avenues for increasing the levels of State revenue collection and allocating sufficient resources to policies on equality, rights and women's autonomy include: making tax systems more progressive; increasing the tax burden on higher-income sectors; reviewing harmful tax expenditure and gender biases in tax structures; and controlling illicit financial flows at the national level and through regional cooperation. It is also essential to speed up the implementation of a number of SDGs (Goals 5, 10, 16 and 17) by identifying synergies (Bidegain Ponte, 2017).

Because of the transnational nature of financial flows and the actions and global tax planning practices of multinational corporations, emphasis must be placed on the need for regional and international cooperation in tax matters to reverse the downward trend and harmful tax competition between countries. In addition, in the context of the digital economy, tax cooperation is necessary to establish standards for determining how different goods and services are taxed based on the company's tax jurisdiction and where it generates revenue.

On the spending side, it is important to ensure that the costs of fiscal consolidation do not affect women disproportionately. This is why governments agreed to ensure that fiscal adjustment measures or budget cuts aimed at addressing economic slowdowns are in line with the principles of human rights and non-discrimination, and should avoid worsening women's poverty rates, increasing their burden of unpaid and care work, and reducing financing and budgets for equality policies and machineries for the advancement of women (ECLAC, 2017). It is also essential to protect public social spending so as not to deepen gender inequalities. Countercyclical policies that drive the economy in sectors that are key to the goals of sustainability and equality must be encouraged. In this regard, promoting social infrastructure to provide systems of care can generate multiplier effects in terms of women's labour participation, the well-being of the population, redistribution, economic growth and higher tax receipts.

2. The digital revolution: multilateralism as a means of narrowing technology gaps and achieving gender equality

Technological and geopolitical rivalries highlight the need for an international governance system that can establish common technology guidelines. Worldwide, technological change is occurring at a dizzying pace and increasing exponentially. However, capacity asymmetries and the technology lag between Latin America and the Caribbean and the international technological frontier (external gap) have not been reduced in recent decades, which is one of the key factors in understanding variations in production. Coordinated efforts must be made to address the region's technology lag compared with technology-exporting regions, and progress must be made towards closing the technological gaps between the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean as well as the external gap.

In the area of digital technologies, for example, it is vital for the region to be plugged into international technology networks so that knowledge and skills in emerging areas such as technological devices, connectivity networks, software platforms and integration can be transferred to countries. The aim is to attract and localize the new technological and business skills through international cooperation instruments, training—primarily for women and girls—and the fostering of entrepreneurship networks. Technology transfer is also fundamental for climate change adaptation and mitigation in the region. In particular, the transfer of financial and technological resources to the countries of the region is a key element to aid the transition towards renewable energies.

Goal 5 of the SDGs includes a target (5.b) that aims to enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women. This target should be complemented by the other technology-related targets of the 2030 Agenda¹ and the commitments of the Montevideo Strategy which, in implementation pillar 7 (technology), covers a number of important issues for the region with a view to narrowing the gender and external gaps simultaneously. As agreed by Latin American and Caribbean governments in the Montevideo Strategy, "technology, as an implementation pillar of the Regional Gender Agenda, involves mechanisms for the development, transfer and dissemination of technology, as well as equal access and use" (ECLAC, 2017, p. 30). It is therefore necessary to progress towards the use of technologies that are "socially appropriate, safe and environmentally sustainable, and help eliminate gender inequality" (ECLAC, 2017, p. 30).

In the era of the digital revolution, a digital industrial policy that opens new technological and production paths based on a human rights, equality and sustainable approach is needed. For this to happen, the digital development strategies that have hitherto focused primarily on access infrastructure and digital agendas must be expanded. It is also necessary to adopt a regional approach, developing a Latin American and Caribbean digital

¹ See, for example, the targets under SDGs 9, 17 and 4.

market in order to leverage cross-border synergies and create scale and network economies. By facilitating the convergence of national regulations and regulatory frameworks, the regional digital market can become a public good and position itself internationally in a world led by global platforms.

Since information can be collected in one jurisdiction and processed, stored, analysed and used in others, regional and international cooperation in this area is essential (ECLAC, 2018c). The current system for data protection is highly fragmented, with diverging global, regional and national regulatory approaches. In some cases, various pieces of legislation are introduced that are incompatible with each other, and many developing countries still lack relevant legislation (UNCTAD, 2019). Developing regional and interregional systems for exchanging data is vital for formulating principles and standards governing data collection, content and use of compatible data between countries. Regulations concerning data must reconcile their potential effects on the innovation processes of countries and regions with their possible repercussions on the right to privacy (as enshrined in article 12 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and article 17 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights).

The digital revolution has spawned new forms of work and labour relations that require a rethinking of labour and social protection policies from a transnational perspective. Platform companies disrupt local markets and often operate outside national legislation on employment protection and taxation. With regard to the risks related to the growing precariousness of labour, there is a need for regional forums for dialogue to establish guidelines and cooperation mechanisms aimed at preventing a race to the bottom in terms of labour standards, agreements ensuring freedom of association rights, collective bargaining or the applicable minimum wage in workers' countries of residence. Given the high prevalence of informal employment in Latin America and the Caribbean, women's employment opportunities must be expanded by means of formalization and non-contributory social protection. Countries must ratify the conventions of the International Labour Organization to strengthen labour legislation and eliminate labour-market discrimination.

B. Comprehensive public policies for achieving women's autonomy and rights in changing economic scenarios

A comprehensive and transformative approach to public policy is required to advance the achievement of women's autonomy and rights in the current context. The interaction between macroeconomic, production, innovation, climate and employment policies and policies on care, education, migration, health and the eradication of violence against women must be analysed, in a move to overcome these challenges as a whole. One critical challenge is greater labour participation by women in sectors that are key to structural change and more equitable redistribution of care in the context of demographic and technological change.

There is also a need for information systems that bring to light the complexity of gender inequalities in view of ongoing transformations. In this regard, the production of information from traditional sources (surveys, censuses and administrative registers) as well as from non-traditional sources must be strengthened.

1. The care economy

In the framework of the Regional Gender Agenda, the governments of Latin America and the Caribbean have been world pioneers in undertaking commitments that seek to transform the sexual division of labour and promote a fair social organization of care. At the tenth Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in 2007, governments agreed on the right to care, which is now incorporated into various national normative frameworks and has been a catalyst for institutional frameworks and recognition and redistribution policies, benefits and services. While most of the countries of the region have made progress in this regard, more effort is needed to design public policies on equality that recognize women's contribution to the economy through unpaid domestic and care work and which promote co-responsibility and a more equitable distribution of workloads.

Various countries of the region have used economic valuation exercises for unpaid domestic work to shed light on women's contribution to the economy. However, policy decisions continue to be based primarily on macroeconomic models that do not take into account the work done in households and, as a result, the effects of public policies on production and social reproduction, as well as their linkages, are unknown. Further progress is needed in identifying the macroeconomic implications of care and its multiplier effects on the rest of the economy. Investment in the care economy spurs growth in the production sector, which is key to the sustainability of life.

A fresh perspective is therefore needed in which care is viewed not necessarily as social expenditure, but rather as an investment: it is an investment in present and future capacities and in the generation of quality employment; it is also a mechanism for reviving economies. The care economy helps to generate employment, particularly for women, and when care is linked with labour policies that enhance job quality, it can counter discrimination in the labour market and improve the conditions of labour, which in most countries is precarious. Promoting training in and the professionalization of care work, as well as participation in dialogue and collective bargaining mechanisms, would have a direct impact on the quality of employment.

Comprehensive care systems encompass a collection of interconnected policies on time, resources, benefits and services related to the many care needs of the population. Systems and policies can help to overcome the sexual division of labour and promote women's autonomy only if they are designed and implemented from a gender equality perspective that contributes to co-responsibility and the elimination of gender stereotypes. Some measures that could be taken to facilitate the construction of comprehensive care systems include: providing public, universal and quality care services; licensing of caregivers of dependent persons (with incentives for men to apply for them); or adjusting working hours (shorter or flexible hours, without increasing precariousness).

Action must be taken to not only meet the lifecycle needs and rights of persons in need of care but also to recognize the rights of caregivers, whether they are paid or unpaid. Valuing and recognizing the rights of care workers would improve employment opportunities and conditions for women in this sector and foster the participation of men in care work.

Social protection and care systems must adapt to the demographic changes that are occurring at different speeds in the region and the trend of the feminization of old age. Population ageing, in particular, is putting pressure on the demand for care and the financial sustainability of systems; it is therefore imperative to step up the coverage and the quality of health, education and social services currently being provided if the SDGs on poverty reduction, gender equality, health and well-being, quality education and decent work are to be achieved.

Social protection systems must take into account the differences in men and women's career paths and incorporate redistributive factors to offset the gender inequalities that affect women throughout their working life. They must also provide and expand benefit coverage to guarantee a minimum social protection floor for persons, irrespective of their family role or their participation in the labour market over the course of their lives.

2. The future of work

Both the digital revolution and the necessary energy shift for mitigating the effects of climate change open up opportunities for job creation in new sectors of the economy. Urgent action is required in at least four areas to ensure that women do not bear the costs of these changes disproportionately and that, on the contrary, they can benefit from potential opportunities. First, public policies must be designed to close the gender gaps in labour markets in Latin America and the Caribbean. Second, greater participation by women in education and jobs in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) should be encouraged. Third, retraining strategies must be developed for women affected by these trends. Lastly, regulatory frameworks must be established to ensure that non-standard and new forms of employment do not become more precarious and to guarantee the right of women to work and their rights at work.

Technological change poses regulatory and governance challenges to labour institutions, which were designed for an industrial and pre-digital era. Many of these new jobs will be generated in areas that do not yet exist

and the regulations associated with new sectors are just now beginning to be developed by the countries of the region (ECLAC, 2019a). In this scenario, labour regulations and laws will have to be aligned with the new labour context of the digital age, with respect for women's rights and gender equality. This will require the introduction of flexible work options and the extension of labour rights to all "new" workers, strengthening of social dialogue and collective bargaining, as well as employment protection measures, and tackling gender inequalities. The existence of dialogue mechanisms in which trade unions, workers, the business sector and the State participate is therefore vital (ECLAC, 2019b; Vaca-Trigo, 2019). National policies must be complemented by regional and international cooperation agreements on labour standards and women's human rights.

Technological changes in types and methods of work are generating new employment risks. Therefore, it is essential to reduce gender gaps in technology use so that women are not left behind in learning skills that are key for the future of work. One way of responding to the automation of jobs is to ensure women's inclusion and advancement in innovative sectors such as technology, energy and other emerging sectors by eliminating gender barriers to employment, which are especially pronounced in traditionally male sectors. It is also imperative to guarantee decent work in platform enterprises, especially for women, and remove barriers to their participation.

Technological change and the automation of production processes call into question the content and teaching methods used in primary, secondary and tertiary education and lifelong education and training. Girls' and women's participation in STEM education and their early, varied and sustained exposure to digital technologies (UNESCO, 2019) must be encouraged at primary level; the same is true for the development of social skills and critical and complex thinking skills which, moreover, are less likely to be automated.

3. Climate change

To combat climate change, the region must move towards new low-emission patterns of sustainable production and consumption. It will be necessary to replace activities that have a large environmental impact and create relatively little employment or production linkages with more diversified activities and sectors that have smaller environmental footprints and help to narrow the many equality gaps that exist (ECLAC, 2018b). States have a fundamental role to play in that regard. Specifically, there is a need to climate change adaptation and mitigation policies with gender equality policies. The plans of action on gender and on climate change adopted by some countries of the region are step in that direction. For them to be fully implemented, coordination between machineries for the advancement of women and the ministries of the environment, planning and energy, among others, must be strengthened.

Particular focus should be placed on the need to address women's unequal access to land, natural resources, financing, technology and basic services, which continues to limit their autonomy and capacity to adapt to climate change and its effects. Ensuring women's equal access to mechanisms for coping with financial losses incurred by natural disasters is also a must. Specific strategies are needed to ensure that women benefit from new job opportunities, infrastructure and environmentally sustainable technologies.

In addition, the conditions for the full participation of all women in the design and monitoring of public policies on climate change and comprehensive disaster risk management must be guaranteed. Pursuant to the Montevideo Strategy, governments agreed to encourage the participation of women's and feminist movements and organizations in the design, implementation, follow-up and evaluation of policies on the mitigation of and response to extreme weather events, risk management and resilience-building at the regional, national, subnational and local levels. These commitments go hand in hand with the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (Escazú Agreement), which guarantees the protection of the rights of environmental defenders. The participation of women from indigenous communities and local communities must also be guaranteed. Respecting, safeguarding and incorporating their knowledge of the use and management of land and natural resources can contribute significantly to the development of sustainable practices to mitigate the effects of climate change.

4. The information generation challenge

As can be seen in the Montevideo Strategy, data, indicators and statistics are needed at local, national, regional and global levels to monitor progress in meeting gender equality commitments. The gender perspective must be systematically mainstreamed in the planning, production, use and dissemination of data and statistics in order to shed light on situations that affect men and women differently and which are currently statistically invisible. A first step is to have sufficiently disaggregated data in several dimensions, including sex, age, geographic location, income, race, ethnicity, immigration status and disability. These data will enable governments to measure progress or detect signs of stagnation or regression in time, obtain important information for the efficient allocation of resources, and ensure transparency and accountability.

The 2030 Agenda also underscores the need for disaggregated data that are high-quality, accessible, timely and reliable to ensure that no one is left behind and to help to measure progress toward the SDGs. Governments should lead this process, in close collaboration with international organizations and stakeholders from civil society, academia, the private sector and the general public.

National statistical systems will have to update the way data and statistics are collected, integrated and disseminated in order to capture the multidimensional nature of issues and disseminate timely information for decision-making. This will imply making better use of traditional data sources, such as censuses, surveys, administrative records and vital statistics. It will also require harnessing the power of technology to leverage new sources of data. Efforts must therefore be made to strengthen national capacities in data disaggregation and to develop statistical standards and tools to ensure the quality and reliability of integrated data.

Although public policies are monitored primarily at the national and subnational levels, many challenges related to gender equality have regional and global components and, thus, can only be addressed through international coordination and follow-up. To mainstream gender in the production of statistics on international trade, migration patterns, the digital revolution and climate change, national efforts have to be complemented by coordinated regional and global initiatives. The indicators needed to bring to light how these trends affect women are more difficult to measure, since they require the development of concepts and methodologies. Furthermore, mechanisms for dialogue between the producers and users of information must be created.

International and regional organizations play an important role in the development of methodologies and standards to harmonize and ensure the coherence of data and statistics. Coordination between national statistical systems and international organizations is essential to ensure transparency and efficiency in the production of information and to avoid duplication. Joint efforts and the mobilization of resources are also required to strengthen national statistical production capacities, in particular for gender statistics. Latin American and Caribbean countries and the international community must cooperate and provide assistance, according to their capacities and resources, to support capacity-building. Modalities for regional, South-South and triangular cooperation complement—but do not replace—North-South cooperation, and are based on the principles of horizontality, non-conditionality and mutual benefit.

There remains a dearth of research in the region assessing the impact of the trends described in this document on women's lives. It is therefore urgent to conduct prospective studies that can anticipate any scenarios that jeopardize gender equality and women's autonomy, and to implement public policies that would help to counter the negative effects of these changes and maximize the opportunities that they may represent for gender equality and sustainable development.

With regard to climate change, information is needed on women's participation in decision-making on climate change adaptation and mitigation initiatives. There is still little research on the gender-specific impacts of climate-related disasters (IPCC, 2007). It is important to develop methodologies and to assess the effects of climate change and disasters on the various aspects of women's lives in order to determine, for example, to what extent gender-based violence, job losses or the burden of unpaid work are affected by these events.

With regard to the digital revolution, studies tailored to the realities of the countries of the region and designed with a gender perspective are needed to better identify which sectors will be most affected by automation,

what new forms of employment and labour relations will emerge, and how women will be affected in these new labour market scenarios. In addition to providing job opportunities, platform companies generate and store vast amounts of data on the profiles of employees, their income, working hours and the qualifications of service providers. This makes them a valuable source of timely, large-scale and highly disaggregated information that can be used to identify possible gender gaps in these new forms of employment (Vaca-Trigo, 2019).

Likewise, for the care economy to be a sector that drives economies, it is important to have job creation estimates in order to meet the growing demand for care, as well as estimates of the coverage and quality of services. More work must be done to create macroeconomic models that include the care economy, reflecting its importance and clarifying the fiscal effects of public policies on care.

To ensure that trade can help to achieve sustainable development with equality, relevant information is needed on the roles of men and women as economic agents (employees, producers, consumers and entrepreneurs). To this end, specific labour statistics must be strengthened to enable the identification of export-sector jobs and the working conditions of such employment. There is also a need for data to monitor the performance of women-led export firms, statistics on women's participation in trade negotiations and statistics on the existence of national, regional or global norms that incorporate gender equality and trade-related measures. Moving towards equality in fiscal and financial policy requires tax information disaggregated by sex and other relevant socioeconomic variables as this would make it possible to assess the distributive effects of taxation on men and women. Data on access to, use and knowledge of the financial system from both the demand and supply sides are also needed.

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In the current regional context, efforts to honour the commitments made under the Regional Gender Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development must be stepped up as a matter of urgency, in order to address the multiple challenges posed by the economic situation that is constantly changing as a result of the ongoing economic, technological, demographic and climatic transformations.

This document, prepared by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in the framework of the fourteenth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean (Santiago, 27–31 January 2020), assesses the progress made by the countries to attain higher levels of gender equality and women's autonomy. It also analyses the main effects of economic and financial globalization processes, the digital revolution, the care economy and climate change on women's lives in a shifting economic context.

Gender inequalities are an obstacle to sustainable development, and together with the changing scenario that the region is facing, are proof of the urgent need to move decisively towards development patterns that are rooted in gender equality and women's autonomy, in addition to guaranteeing the rights of every person without exception.