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Fortieth meeting of the Presiding Officers of  
the Regional Conference on Women in  
Latin America and the Caribbean

Santiago, Chile, 3 and 4 October 2006

## **WOMEN'S CONTRIBUTION TO EQUALITY IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

**Draft annotated index**

## I. BACKGROUND

Pursuant to agreement 5 adopted by the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean at their thirty-ninth meeting (Mexico City, 11 and 12 May 2006), the secretariat of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) presents the annotated index of the position paper for the tenth session of the Regional Conference on Women (Quito, Ecuador, 6 to 9 August 2007).<sup>1</sup>

The ECLAC secretariat proposes that the paper be given the following title: “The contribution of women to equality in Latin America and the Caribbean”. The paper will be made up of two main sections, corresponding to the two subjects proposed by the member States at the thirty-ninth meeting of the Presiding Officers: “analysis of the contribution of women to the economy and social protection, especially in relation to unpaid work performed by women” and “political participation and gender parity in decision-making processes at all levels”.<sup>2</sup>

## II. ANNOTATED INDEX

### Introduction

First, reference will be made to international agreements relating to unpaid work by women and participation in decision-making, in particular the Beijing Platform for Action, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the agreements of the International Labour Organization, which contain clauses relating to gender equality and paternity and maternity rights, and the decisions adopted at other United Nations world conferences and summits. Similarly, reference will be made to the incorporation of these mandates within the constitutional and legal framework of the countries of the region.

Second, the Presiding Officers’ substantive grounds for considering these two issues in particular will be outlined.

Third, the central theme of the analysis will be described, namely, the importance of the unpaid work performed by women as a contribution to development and as a factor which accounts for their mode of participation in the economy and in democratic decision-making processes.

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<sup>1</sup> See ECLAC (2006). In agreement 5, the member countries serving as Presiding Officers decided to “request the Secretariat to formulate a position paper on these subjects: -political participation and gender parity in decision-making processes at all levels” and “analysis of the contribution of women to the economy and social protection, especially in relation to unpaid work performed by women”.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

## Part one

## **ANALYSIS OF THE CONTRIBUTION OF WOMEN TO THE ECONOMY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION, ESPECIALLY IN RELATION TO UNPAID WORK PERFORMED BY WOMEN**

### **1. Conceptual framework**

The concepts of unpaid work as performed by women, the care economy and time use will be introduced and the rationale given for the study on the specificities of paid and unpaid housework done by women, the links between reproductive and productive work, the importance of such work for economic and social development and women's participation in decision-making. The concepts of "public" and "private" will be explored from the gender perspective.

### **2. Assessment**

It will be demonstrated that access by women —especially domestic workers— to the labour market is affected by their reproductive work; the specific features of their access to social protection in the context of globalization and transformations in the labour world will be highlighted.

The authors will review the main aspects of the care economy in the sphere of the home and its extension to some areas of public life, including activities relating to health care, child care and care for the elderly.

Available empirical data drawn from household and time-use surveys conducted in the region will be systematized. Attention will be paid to the relationships between access to the labour market, the wage gap, labour market segmentation and sex-differentiated rates of domestic activity.

### **3. Current status of information**

The status of statistical information collection and use will be examined together with the methodological and institutional arrangements required for strengthening the production of information for use in public policymaking.

### **4. Public policies**

The study will include an analysis of public policies existing in the countries of the region, both those that are geared explicitly to reconciling the needs of family life with work demands and those that have an undesirable effect on motherhood and shared family responsibilities.

### **5. Unpaid work in the areas of health, child care and care for the elderly**

The preliminary results of research into the care economy, carried out with financial support from the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation (AECI) in three selected countries, will be reviewed.

### **6. Conclusions and policy recommendations**

## Part two

## **POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND GENDER PARITY AT ALL LEVELS OF DECISION-MAKING**

### **1. Conceptual framework**

The following concepts will be introduced: democracy, participation in decision-making, affirmative action, quotas and parity, and the way they interact in Latin America and the Caribbean.

### **2. Assessment**

Women's participation in decision-making will be reviewed and a status report will be provided on their advancement at the parliamentary level, with special emphasis on their role in the Executive and in municipal governments.

Up-to-date statistical information will be presented on the pace and stability of trends towards women's participation in public office. Special emphasis will be placed on the status of indigenous and Afro-descendant women and, where possible, an attempt will be made to draw attention to the existing age-related divide and divide between territories.

### **3. Current status of information**

The focus will be on the analysis of available information sources, methodology and problems relating to analysis and dissemination.

### **4. Case studies**

Representative cases of good legislative, political, organizational and other practices which reveal the diversity of situations in countries of the region will be analysed. Possible examples include the quota system in Argentina, which was the first country in the region to apply them; gender parity in the executive branch in Chile, given its pioneering role in the region and the world; the levels of women's participation in the legislative power in Cuba, and the case of Colombia, the only country that has quotas at the level of the Executive.

### **5. Conclusions and recommendations**

## **III. INFORMATION SOURCES**

The document will be based on the following sources:

1. Specific contributions by Governments on good practices and sources of statistical information relating to the subjects dealt with in the position paper.
2. Studies by the Women and Development Unit of ECLAC and organizations within the United Nations system on the two issues under consideration.

3. Specific studies conducted within the framework of the project relating to the contribution of the care economy to social protection, financed by the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation (AECI).
4. Recommendations of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

#### **IV. PREPARATION OF THE DOCUMENT**

The position paper will be prepared in the following stages, with a view to its presentation at the tenth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean (Quito, Ecuador, 6 to 9 August 2007).<sup>3</sup>

1. Presentation of the annotated index at the fortieth meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean (Santiago, Chile, 3 and 4 October 2006);
2. Survey of member States to complete the information required for the preparation of the substantive contributions (third quarter 2006);
3. Incorporation of the comments received at the fortieth meeting of the Presiding Officers (October 2006);
4. Preparation of substantive contributions for the development of the subjects covered in the paper (September to November 2006);
5. Incorporation of the contributions received from member States and preparation of the preliminary version of the paper (December 2006 to March 2007);
6. Editing and translation of the preliminary version (March and April 2007);
7. Presentation of the preliminary version at the subregional preparatory meetings for the tenth session of the Regional Conference on Women, which will be held in the Southern Cone, Central America and the Caribbean (May 2007);
8. Incorporation of the comments received at the subregional meetings (June 2007);
9. Editing and translation of the final version (July 2007).

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<sup>3</sup> See attached schedule.

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