

Regional report  
on the review of the  
**Beijing Declaration and  
Platform for Action**  
in Latin American and  
Caribbean countries,  
**25 years on**



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This report was prepared jointly by the Division for Gender Affairs of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the Americas and the Caribbean Regional Office of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women). The preparation of the document was coordinated by María Lucía Scuro, Social Affairs Officer of the Division for Gender Affairs of ECLAC, and was carried out on the basis of comprehensive national reviews of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean regarding the application of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) in the context of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace and the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

Special thanks are extended to Cecilia Alemany, Nicole Bidegain, Laura González, Iliana Vaca Trigo and Alejandra Valdés for their contributions. Paula Aghon, Amparo Bravo, Carolina Muñoz, Vivian Souza and Belén Villegas are also thanked for their contributions.

United Nations publication

LC/CRM.14/4

Distribution: L

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Printed at United Nations, Santiago

S.19-00911

This publication should be cited as: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), *Regional report on the review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in Latin American and Caribbean countries, 25 years on* (LC/CRM.14/4), Santiago, 2019.

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## INTRODUCTION

This report was prepared on the basis of the 27 national reports submitted by the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995), in the context of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 1995 (Beijing+25).<sup>1</sup> The national reports provide a comprehensive review of the progress made in the past five years, the obstacles encountered by women and girls and the main challenges to achieving substantive equality.

At the international level, this twenty-fifth anniversary has been seen as an opportunity to reinforce the actions envisaged in the Beijing Platform for Action, and to ensure they are included in the implementation of other global commitments, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals, United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions on women, peace and security, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (2015), and the Paris Agreement on climate change (2015), among others (UN-Women, 2018).

The results of the national reports will be included in a global summary report that the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) will prepare for the sixty-fourth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, which will be held in March 2020,<sup>2</sup> as well as for a high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the occasion of Beijing+25.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, the twenty-five year review of the Beijing Platform for Action coincides with the fourteenth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, whose theme is women's autonomy in changing economic scenarios. In that regard, the process of implementation, follow-up and review of the Beijing Platform for Action in the region is reinforced by the commitments undertaken in the framework of the Regional Gender Agenda.<sup>3</sup> Notably, practically all the countries of the region report institutional efforts to link the commitments made in the framework of the Beijing Platform for Action with the commitments of the Montevideo Strategy adopted at the thirteenth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean in 2016, and the efforts to advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Beijing Platform for Action is organized around 12 critical areas of concern, in which it identifies challenges, principles, strategic objectives and actions. The comprehensive reviews carried out at the national, regional and global levels every five years since 1995 have analysed the achievements and remaining obstacles and led to renewed commitments to action in this framework.

This report is organized into five chapters, partly taking up the structure of the questionnaire sent to the member States of Latin America and the Caribbean for the national reports prepared for Beijing+25 (UN-Women, 2018a). The first chapter presents the priorities and the main achievements that the region has identified regarding the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action during the period 2014–2019. The second chapter addresses progress in critical areas of concern of the Platform for Action since 2014 and groups these areas of concern into the following categories: (i) inclusive development, poverty eradication and decent work; (ii) social protection and social services; (iii) the eradication of violence and stereotypes; (iv) women's participation and representation in decision-making; (v) peaceful and inclusive societies; and (vi) conservation and protection of the environment.

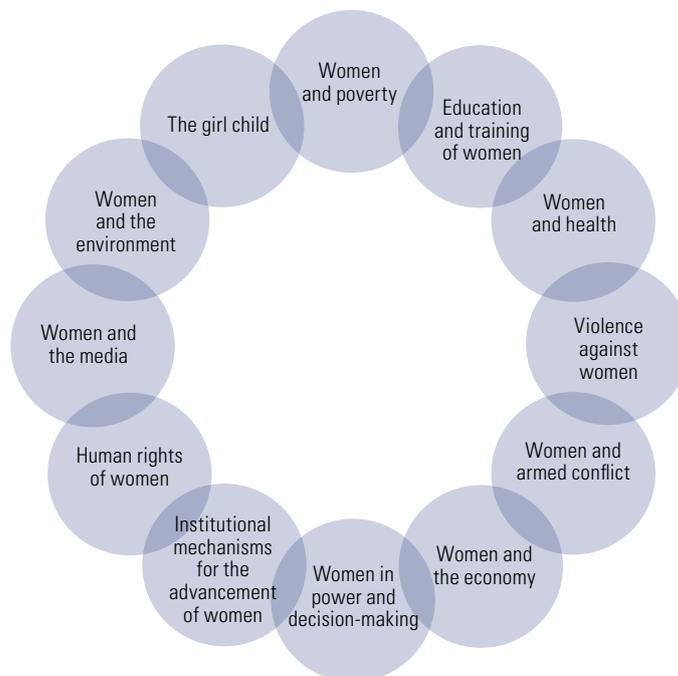
<sup>1</sup> National reports are available [online] <https://www.cepal.org/es/areas-de-trabajo/asuntos-de-genero/plataforma-beijing>.

<sup>2</sup> Economic and Social Council resolution 2018/8.

<sup>3</sup> The Regional Gender Agenda encompasses commitments made by the governments of Latin America and the Caribbean on women's rights and autonomy, and gender equality, at the sessions of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, from the first Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean (Havana, 1977) to date. In turn, the Regional Gender Agenda links up with agreements adopted by other subsidiary bodies of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), in particular the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development, which was adopted by the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean. (ECLAC, 2017).

**Figure 1**

Twelve critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action



**Source:** United Nations, "Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action", 1995 [online] [https://beijing20.unwomen.org/~media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/pfa\\_e\\_final\\_web.pdf](https://beijing20.unwomen.org/~media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/pfa_e_final_web.pdf).

The third chapter analyses the institutional framework and linkages between national mechanisms for the advancement of women and the implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The fourth chapter presents the main progress made by the countries in the production of statistical data that is relevant for gauging the progress of the Beijing Platform for Action. Finally, the fifth chapter summarizes a set of challenges for the implementation of the Platform at the national, regional and international levels on the road towards 2030, from a rights-based approach.

## CHAPTER I

# Priorities and achievements in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action in the context of Sustainable Development in Latin America and the Caribbean

### A. The Beijing Platform for Action and its synergy with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Twenty-five years on from the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995, efforts by the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean to move towards fulfilling the commitments assumed on that occasion have clearly found synergies with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development —the key global agreement achieved in the last five years. At the same time, and thanks to the efforts made by States Members of the United Nations and especially the Governments of Latin American and Caribbean countries, the contents of the Beijing Platform for Action have been reflected in the debates and in the formulation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that guide the Agenda agreed upon in 2015. Moreover, the permanent drive of women's and feminist organizations has been crucial in underpinning the validity of the Platform and in positioning the principles and objectives agreed upon in each of the areas of negotiation, at both the global and regional levels.

The gender perspective and the commitments set out in the Platform for Action were embodied in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, both in its preamble, which assumes a rights and non-discrimination approach, and in the targets of Goal 5, which aim to guarantee the rights of women and girls and promote their empowerment. The 2030 Agenda establishes measures and means of implementation that stress equality between men and women for all 17 Goals, thereby activating regional and global synergies and pooling efforts in pursuit of a paradigm that places people at the centre. The 2030 Agenda also reinforces what was agreed upon in 1995, in terms of the Platform representing a programme to create the necessary conditions for the empowerment of women in society (United Nations, 1995).

The region of Latin America and the Caribbean has been a pioneer in promoting a Regional Gender Agenda which, since 1977, has embraced the commitments assumed by the region's Governments on women's rights and autonomy. This has made it possible to coordinate the commitments assumed at the national and regional levels and has also been a key factor influencing global agendas. The Regional Programme of Action for the Women of Latin America, approved in Mar del Plata in 1994, was a key contribution from the governments of the region to the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

The Montevideo Strategy, which was adopted by the countries of the region in October 2016, has accelerated the implementation of the agreements embodied in the Regional Gender Agenda and also in the Beijing Platform for Action. This political-technical instrument seeks to bridge the gap between *de jure* and *de facto* equality, by strengthening public policies that guarantee women's autonomy. The structural obstacles underlying inequality, which were analysed by the Montevideo Strategy, are aligned with the spirit of the Platform, which states, for example, "that the principle of shared power and responsibility should be established between women and men at home, in the workplace and in the wider national and international communities" (United Nations, 1995), in synergy with the region's recognition of the persistence of the sexual division of labour and unfair social organization of care (ECLAC, 2017a).

The Declaration of Santo Domingo<sup>1</sup> and the Declaration of Buenos Aires,<sup>2</sup> approved by the Ministers and Senior Officials of the National Machineries for the Advancement of Women, prior to the sixty-second and sixty-third sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), in 2018 and 2019, respectively, contribute to global discussions.

## B. Priorities for speeding up implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action

An analysis of the 27 national reports submitted by the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean makes it possible to establish a set of priorities that governments have reported as hastening the advancement of women in the region. Although there are characteristics and emphases that are shared by all countries, this section provides a timely analysis that identifies the specific priorities pursued in each of the subregions. These reflect the geographical, economic and political characteristics of each group of countries, and have different impacts on women's daily lives.

For Latin America and the Caribbean as a whole, the priorities reported during this period were as follows:

1. Issues related to critical area of concern D, "Violence against women," where priority in the last five years was given to actions to eliminate violence against women and girls, and to promote non-discrimination legislation and access to justice;
2. Actions to increase political participation and representation relating to area of concern G, "Women in power and decision-making"; and
3. Issues in area of concern F, "Women and the economy," on women's labour rights to work and the redistribution of care work.

Other priorities and nuances arise in the subregional analysis. For example, in the Caribbean, in addition to prioritizing actions against violence, as the entire region has done, priority in this period was also given to actions to improve access to health services, including sexual and reproductive health services. These were supported by actions on quality education, training and lifelong learning for women and girls.

The national reports filed by the Central American countries mainly prioritize violence, highlighting actions to eliminate discrimination in legislation and access to justice. Central America's particular focus was on policies and programmes to promote women's entrepreneurship and enterprise.

In South America, there are a number of differences, since, in addition to matching the regional priorities described above, the Andean countries emphasize actions to eradicate poverty and enhance productivity, linked to processes aimed at improving agricultural production, as well as more equitable distribution of food and improved nutrition patterns, in accordance with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In the Southern Cone countries, the specific focus is on policies and programmes promoting the right to work and rights at work, highlighting initiatives and debates on care systems and on paid and unpaid domestic work.

Although the countries of the region are prioritizing areas that are fundamental for achieving equality between men and women, the economic and political situation threatens to reverse the achievements of recent decades on women's empowerment and autonomy. Instruments such as the Beijing Platform for Action, supported by the permanent participation of women's organizations, make it possible to confront the resurgent impulses that prevent women from enjoying their rights in all spheres of life.

<sup>1</sup> See [online] <https://www2.unwomen.org/-/media/field%20office%20americas/documentos/publicaciones/2018/2/eng%20decl%20sto%20domingo%20version%20fina%20aprobada%20li%20logos%20y%20fotocompressed.pdf?la=en&vs=3958>.

<sup>2</sup> See [online] <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/63/preparations/declaracion%20de%20buenos%20aires%202018%20eng%20final.pdf?la=en&vs=4744>.

## C. The validity of the Beijing Platform for Action 25 years after its approval and its main achievements

With regard to the region's achievements in relation to the Platform, several countries have made significant progress in the last five years. This report highlights achievements in at least four areas.

The first area to highlight is the progress made in the formulation and passing of laws and regulations that define femicide or feminicide as a specific crime.<sup>3</sup> The second is the increase, albeit insufficient, in women's participation in decision-making spaces. The third achievement concerns the positioning of the issue of care and unpaid work performed by women on the agenda of the region's countries as an integral part of the design of social protection systems. Lastly, the gender perspective has been incorporated into States' institutional architecture, including for the follow-up of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the region.

As stated in the Beijing Platform for Action, violence against women is an obstacle to the achievement of the objectives of equality, development and peace; and it impairs or nullifies the enjoyment by women of their human rights and fundamental freedoms (United Nations, 1995). The main advances in guaranteeing to all women and girls in the region the right to a life free of all forms of violence and discrimination have been the passing of comprehensive laws on gender-based violence against women and the classification of the crime of feminicide or femicide. In 2014–2019, five countries defined feminicide as a specific crime (Ecuador and the Dominican Republic in 2014, Brazil in 2015, Paraguay in 2016 and Uruguay in 2017); and two others have reformed the laws that already treated the murder of women as aggravated homicide (the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in 2014 and Colombia in 2015) (see table I.1).

**Table I.1**

Latin America (18 countries): laws that criminalize femicide, by year of adoption

| Country  | Name of Law  | Year | Crime                                       |
|--|--|------|---|
| <b>Up to Beijing+20 (2013)</b>                       |  |      |   |
| Costa Rica   | Law No. 8.589  | 2007 | Femicide                                    |
| Venezuela (Bol. Rep. of)                             | Organic Law on the Right of Women to a Life Free of Violence   | 2007 | Aggravated homicide (partner or ex-partner) |
| Colombia   | Law No. 1.257 reforming the Penal Code   | 2008 | Aggravated homicide (for being a woman)     |
| Guatemala  | Decree 22-2008   | 2008 | Femicide                                    |
| Chile  | Law No. 20.480   | 2010 | Femicide                                    |
| El Salvador  | Decree 520   | 2010 | Femicide                                    |
| Argentina  | Law No. 26.791   | 2012 | Aggravated homicide                         |
| Mexico   | Decree amending and supplementing various provisions of the Federal Penal Code, the General Law on Women's Access to a Life Free of Violence, the Organic Law on Federal Public Administration and the Organic Law on the Office of the Attorney-General of the Republic | 2012 | Femicide                                    |
| Nicaragua  | Law No. 779  | 2012 | Femicide                                    |
| Bolivia (Plur. State of)                             | Law No. 348  | 2013 | Femicide                                    |
| Honduras   | Decree 23-2013   | 2013 | Femicide                                    |
| Panama   | Law No. 82   | 2013 | Femicide                                    |
| Peru   | Law No. 30.068   | 2013 | Femicide                                    |
| <b>Between Beijing+20 and Beijing+25 (2014–2019)</b> |  |      |   |
| Venezuela (Bol. Rep. of)                             | Law reforming the Organic Law on Women's Right to a Life Free of Violence  | 2014 | Femicide                                    |
| Ecuador  | Comprehensive Organic Penal Code (COIP)  | 2014 | Femicide                                    |
| Dominican Republic                                   | Law No. 550  | 2014 | Femicide                                    |
| Colombia   | Law No. 1.761, Rosa Elvira Cely Law  | 2015 | Femicide                                    |
| Brazil   | Law No. 13.104   | 2015 | Femicide                                    |
| Paraguay   | Law No. 5.777  | 2016 | Femicide                                    |
| Uruguay  | Law No. 19.538, amending articles 311 and 312 of the Penal Code  | 2017 | Femicide                                    |

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

<sup>3</sup> Countries that criminalize the gender-based violent deaths of women do so under the concept of femicide or feminicide, hence both concepts are used in this document.

The second noteworthy achievement is women's increased participation in decision-making mechanisms in all branches of government. The adoption of quota and parity laws has made it possible to speed up the increase in women's participation, mainly in legislatures, presidential cabinets, high courts and local governments. On average, women's participation in decision-making in the region is around 30%. This is making it possible to create a critical mass of women in institutions such as parliament or cabinets, in order to achieve greater equality between men and women.

With regard to the third area of achievement, several countries made significant progress during this period in the design and institutionalization of national care initiatives and systems as part of the evolution of social protection systems. In both Costa Rica and Uruguay, steps were taken at the national level on care policies and are currently in different phases of implementation. The approval of the Constitution of Mexico City, which proclaims care as a right, is also worth noting.

Progress is largely being made on two levels: first, in the promotion and adoption of legal frameworks on care, with initial progress being made in extending parental leave for mothers, fathers or guardians, following the birth of children or in their initial years of upbringing, and the public provision of care services in early childhood and for dependent population groups (Rodríguez Enríquez, 2017). Meanwhile, the need for a national system of public provision and financing are now on the agenda of most Latin American countries.

A fourth area of achievement is the incorporation of the gender perspective in States' institutional architecture. In most of the region's countries there is a greater political prioritization of women's rights and of mainstreaming the gender perspective in public action.

Similarly, most countries have made progress in planning for development and State policies, by incorporating the framework for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development or revising their development plans or strategies to make them consistent or aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals. This progress in State planning for gender equality, either with a medium-term perspective or else focusing on 2030, makes gender equality a cross-cutting theme in national development plans and, in some cases, a central pillar.

Major challenges include strengthening gender institutions in the region, and in particular, in the Caribbean. However, some countries have strengthened their institutional frameworks and coordination among the different levels of the State and among public stakeholders and civil society (Honduras, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Uruguay, among others). All the reports refer to progress made in coordination within the State apparatus, describing achievements and new mechanisms (for example, linked to the prevention of gender-based violence and care for victims). There are also pending challenges linked to the coordination difficulties among entities, among the branches of government and among the different territorial levels.

## Chapter II

# Progress in the 12 critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action

This chapter summarizes the main advances described in the national reports, arranging them according to the categories in the information-gathering questionnaire: (i) inclusive development, shared prosperity and decent work; (ii) poverty eradication, social protection and social services, including education and vocational training and sexual and reproductive health; (iii) eradication of gender-based violence and stereotypes; (iv) women's participation and representation in decision-making; (v) peaceful and inclusive societies; and (vi) environmental conservation and protection. Each section within the chapter presents the main regional trends for the period and a summary of the main advances in each area of concern.

### A. Inclusive development, poverty eradication and decent work

Twenty-five years ago, the Beijing Platform for Action established a set of areas of concern that are now central to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and proposed actions to promote economic growth with the aim of eradicating poverty and reducing gender inequalities (United Nations, 1995). Within this framework, it encourages the formulation and implementation of policies affecting workplace relationships between men and women, such as laws and regulations prohibiting harassment and discrimination, active employment policies with a gender perspective, the creation or enhancement of women's right to own, access and control land, improvements aimed at closing gender gaps in financial systems, and strategies to support the transition from informal to formal work, among other things. The aim of this set of actions is to achieve an impact in different areas where gender inequalities are manifested by means of concrete actions and policies involving the participation of the State, the private sector and civil society.

#### 1. Inclusive development and poverty eradication

The greater incidence of poverty among women is a regional characteristic that has persisted for decades. Data from the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) show the feminization of poverty to have risen at the regional level, with an increase from 117.4 women for every 100 men living in poor households in 2015 to 120.9 in 2017. Although results vary from country to country, poverty disproportionately affects women even in countries where it is lower overall (ECLAC, 2018b).

Women have been largely excluded from the formal financial system by implicit and explicit barriers ranging from a lack of information and suitable financial products and services to gender biases and discriminatory attitudes in financial institutions. Similarly, women face greater obstacles when it comes to launching their own productive enterprises. One effect of these obstacles is that women are undervalued as economic agents (Roa and Carvallo, 2018). Women also face specific difficulties when it comes to increasing their participation in employment, such as discriminatory processes, workplace harassment and the absence or weakness of vocational training mechanisms that take account of the unequal distribution of unpaid work, among other manifestations of inequality. In this context, the consolidation of mechanisms and policies for these areas that have a direct impact on development with a gender perspective emerges as a matter of paramount importance across the region, especially in a regional scenario of growing fiscal constraints resulting from recent changes in much of the region's economic cycle.

As regards measures and programmes, significant progress has been reported with policies to combat poverty and foster women's economic autonomy. For example, a number of gender-sensitive vocational training initiatives have been formulated. These include efforts in Antigua and Barbuda to train rural women farmers in

the use of information technology, resilience-building and food security. Similarly, training for women owners of small businesses has been provided in Saint Lucia via support for the Network of Rural Women Producers and the Small Business Development Centre. Saint Kitts and Nevis has also implemented business and vocational training programmes, with mention being made of the first green energy school as an example of commitment to sustainable infrastructure.

A variety of initiatives have been implemented to promote women-led business ventures, including mechanisms for accessing credit and strategies to make information more accessible. For example, the Production Options Programme of Mexico's Secretariat of Welfare provides financial support for people below the welfare line to implement production projects, with women being the main beneficiaries. In the Dominican Republic, the Solidarity Banking programme makes almost 70% of its loans to female owners of micro and small businesses. Likewise, the Women Who Lead programme in Argentina grants loans to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that are at least 51% female-owned, or that are at least 25% female-owned and have at least one woman in their senior management. In the case of Honduras, the Solidarity Credit programme allocates 80% of loans to women, providing them with technical assistance and financial education. In Chile, the Urban and Rural Indigenous Economy Development Programme of the National Indigenous Development Corporation (CONADI) has financed enterprise subsidies with technical consultancy services for indigenous women.

In addition, specific business development training programmes for women have been created in Guyana, Saint Kitts and Nevis and elsewhere. Banking statistics have been broken down by sex in countries such as Chile, Costa Rica and Guatemala to obtain a better picture of disparities in credit access between men and women.

## 2. Paid and unpaid work

The evidence shows that an average of 29.4% of women in Latin America do not yet have incomes of their own, while the figure for men is about 10.7%.<sup>1</sup> In addition, gender wage gaps continue to be an obstacle to women's economic autonomy and have a perverse effect not only on their working lives but also on their incomes at retirement age and the amount of the pensions they will receive. These wage gaps are even greater for groups of women who face manifold discrimination in the region, such as indigenous, Afrodescendent and migrant women, and therefore need to be addressed from a cross-cutting perspective (ECLAC, 2018b).

Access to stable high-quality employment, the types of contingencies this employment covers and its relationship with care policies are some of the situations that need addressing if women are to have effective access to this social protection component.

Since 2015, the region has implemented a number of policies aimed at training women for employment, laws governing working conditions and access to employment, regulations and protocols to combat discrimination and harassment in the workplace, rules on shared responsibility for care work and reforms to employment systems.

Particular mention should be made of the processes involved in reformulating national employment policies and the codes constituting the gender approach. For example, in Mexico the Federal Labour Act was amended in 2016 to incorporate concepts such as substantive equality, equal pay, decent work, the prohibition of sexual and workplace harassment and bullying, non-discrimination, paternity and vocational training, among other things. Similarly, Guatemala's Ministry of Labour and Social Security formulated the National Decent Employment Policy 2017–2032, whose guiding principles include gender equity, to ensure that women have access to well-paid jobs.

In El Salvador, the Ministry of Labour and Social Security updated the instructions for preparing internal employment regulations in 2015 to ensure women could participate in the labour market on a basis of equality and non-discrimination. In Antigua and Barbuda, similarly, the National Labour Board is revising the Labour

<sup>1</sup> This average conceals specificities. Guatemala is the most extreme case, with 51% of women having no income of their own, while Uruguay has the smallest proportion of women in this situation, at 13%.

Code to implement workplace policies and practices that exclude discrimination in the recruitment, retention and promotion of women in the public and private sectors. For its part, Colombia has designed strategies for the territorialization and mainstreaming of the National Programme of Labour Equity with a Gender Differential Approach for Women, and has created the Gender Subcommittee of the Standing Wage and Employment Policy Coordination Committee. Honduras has approved the National Employment Policy 2017–2028 and the Honduras 20/20 national economic development programme, which enshrines the principle of gender equity.

At the same time, progress has been made with the approval of specific regulations and with training activities aimed at fostering a working environment free of harassment and discrimination. The Violence and Harassment in the World of Work Convention, 2019 (No. 190) of the International Labour Organization (ILO) defines violence and harassment at work 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, 2019). Several countries have been taking measures to prevent and combat harassment in the workplace. In Uruguay, for example, a Protocol of Action in Situations of Workplace Harassment or Discrimination has been approved, while training in workplace sexual harassment has been provided in private sector companies.

Access to labour rights and social protection mechanisms for paid domestic workers has traditionally been deficient in the region. However, significant progress has been reported in this sector, in which more than 10% of employed women work.

Several countries in the region have ratified the ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), while initiatives have been implemented to improve working conditions, regulation and remuneration for domestic workers. In Argentina, it was made compulsory in 2015 for domestic workers’ contracts to include coverage by an occupational risk insurer (ART). In El Salvador, the National Equality Plan 2016–2020 has prioritized the design of pension reforms to extend access to domestic, own-account and agricultural workers. In the case of Mexico, employers are required to enrol paid domestic workers in the compulsory social security system.

In addition, significant progress has been made with the approval and implementation of employment laws. The Bahamas and Guyana have passed laws regulating the minimum wage and working hours, while Honduras has passed Decree No. 27-2015 on equal pay for women and men.

Lastly, there have been important programmes to improve women’s employment conditions from a cross-cutting perspective. A particular case in point is the Plurinational State of Bolivia, where Law No. 977 on Employment and Financial Assistance for Persons with Disabilities stipulates that at least 4% of the staff of public sector institutions and 2% of staff in the private sector must be persons with disabilities or family members or guardians caring for disabled minors or persons with severe or very severe disabilities.

## B. Social protection and social services

### 1. Social protection

Most countries in the region continue to have gender gaps in the degree and type of protection and the amount of pensions. In general women have less access, are more dependent on non-contributory systems and receive lower benefits than men (ECLAC, 2018b).

The proportion of employed persons affiliated to a pension system varies greatly, being over 80% for men and women in Chile and about 20% in the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Nicaragua and Guatemala. The gap between men and women remains substantial in some countries, such as Peru, although it has narrowed in others. In any case, universalizing coverage remains a challenge for the region.

When measuring time spent on paid work and unpaid work, women are found to spend at least twice as long on unpaid work as men in all the countries in the region for which data are available.

Care is a key component of welfare systems, as are health, education and social security. Families, the market and the State are providers of such care. In practice, however, it is overwhelmingly provided by families, and there is a need to establish the idea that it is a public good which should be catered for by the State and the market. Policies need to be developed to regulate the supply of high-quality care and the licensing of care for children and dependent persons and the time allowed for it. Regulating care provision and employment quality means enhancing State capabilities, regardless of whether these services are provided by the public or private sector (ECLAC, 2017b). The lack of high-quality public services in this area affects society as a whole, but especially women, who are more likely to be given responsibility for these tasks. It also exacerbates poverty and socio-economic inequalities.

During the reporting period, some countries are found to have made significant progress in creating care services, time policies (maternity leave, parental leave, flexible working hours for employees with dependents) and comprehensive policies involving a number of interrelated components and sectors, such as national care systems.

In Uruguay, there has been considerable progress with the implementation of the National Integrated Care System (SNIC) since its creation in 2015, and cooperation efforts have been undertaken to transfer this experience to other countries in the region. In addition, monitoring and evaluation processes have been implemented with a view to extending parental leave and developing committed parenthood programmes, with regulatory mechanisms generated by the State and with the active participation of organized civil society. In addition, specific regulations were established in 2017 within the framework of the General Education Act to establish flexible conditions in educational centres, such as flexible timetables, support grants and face-to-face and virtual tutorials, and to avoid night classes so that students with children can remain in the education system.

The Chile Cares programme was designed and implemented in Chile between 2015 and 2017, targeting particularly vulnerable households in the country with dependent persons. The design includes strategies to support caregivers and those they care for. The programme frees up time for female family caregivers and enables them to be trained for the workplace.

Paraguay is working on the formulation of a national care policy, to which end it has set up the Inter-Institutional Development Group for the Preparation of Care Policy in Paraguay (GIPC), comprising 12 public institutions and supported by international cooperation and the Government of Uruguay.

In Costa Rica, similarly, a number of measures are being taken in this area, including the creation of the National Care System, which encompasses the National Child Care and Development Network and the Progressive Support Network for the Comprehensive Care of Older Persons.

In the case of Brazil, Law No. 13509 of 2017 amended the consolidation of labour laws, guaranteeing the right to security of employment in cases of provisional custody for adoption purposes and the right to 120 days maternity leave for adoption. In Panama, regulations have been implemented to enforce the Law Creating Paternity Leave for Workers in Private Companies and Public Servants.

As regards services, mention may be made of Argentina, where the National Early Childhood Plan includes components dealing with the comprehensive care of children with the aim of ensuring their full development and helping to remove barriers to mothers returning to work by promoting shared responsibility for care tasks. Mention may also be made of the Bahamas, where childcare services have been expanded and made more affordable with a view to achieving universal preschool education within five years. In Saint Kitts and Nevis, similarly, early childhood development centres, established to support low-income women, now serve middle-income residents and enable women to enter the workforce. In Saint Lucia, childcare services have become more affordable and care for the elderly has been expanded thanks to the Home Care programme. Also worthy of note is the Basic Needs Trust Fund in Saint Kitts and Nevis, a regional poverty alleviation programme jointly funded by the government and the Caribbean Development Bank, which has provided funds for projects benefiting women (childcare centres, health centres, schools and job training programmes).

Guyana has expanded social safety nets with initiatives such as the Single Parent Assistance Programme, the Special Circumstances Programme and the Public Assistance Programme, whereby single mothers are given assistance to participate in training programmes designed for women entrepreneurs.

The Turks and Caicos Islands have established a National Registry of Persons with Special Needs, and in 2015 increased payments were approved for the social programmes of the Department of Social Development, such as foster care for orphaned children and programmes of home support for people that need it.

A number of Caribbean countries mention the need to recognize and value the care economy and to generate active policies for it. For example, Guyana points to the need to provide public services and encourage the sharing of responsibility within households.

A number of non-contributory policies have also been reported, many of them for the elderly, a population group in which women are overrepresented. The Plurinational State of Bolivia has had a universal non-contributory old-age pension since 2007. In 2013, the country's government approved the General Law on the Elderly, which provides for economic security and social respect for the elderly. In 2014, the Government extended protection and granted an annual bonus to those already receiving the universal old-age pension. The five-year planning of the Bolivian State in different areas includes the Multisectoral Plan for the Comprehensive Development of the Elderly 2016–2020, the purpose of which is to give ever-increasing effect to the aforementioned rights.

A similar initiative was introduced in Mexico in the form of the Old-Age Pension Programme, which in 2015 significantly increased the number of programme beneficiaries. In El Salvador, the Comprehensive Care for the Elderly Act is designed to protect this group and ensure they are integrated into their families. Mention may be made of other programmes along the same lines in Panama (the “120 at 65” programme) and Guatemala (the Old-Age Financial Support Programme).

Antigua and Barbuda has implemented the Government's Residential Assistance and Care for the Elderly and Eligible (GRACE) programme, and Saint Lucia has set up a home care programme for the elderly as part of the National Initiative to Create Employment (NICE).

## 2. Education and vocational training

According to data from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), the net primary school enrolment rate<sup>2</sup> in Latin America and the Caribbean averaged 93.1% in 2017, with rates of 93.5% for girls and 92.7% for boys. At the secondary level, the region's average net enrolment rate was 76.9%: 78.8% for girls and 75.2% for boys. When the proportions of students completing their studies by education level are examined, large percentages are found to complete both primary and secondary education in the region.

Despite progress with access, the gender gap in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) persists and is a feature of the whole educational process, from access and progression to retention and resumption of studies (UNESCO, 2018). Furthermore, it exists at all levels of education, becoming more apparent from the secondary stage onward: in the case of science, the gap between women and men is found to increase significantly in the stages from the higher secondary levels to postgraduate levels (such as master's degrees and doctorates) and then on into research and professional careers (UNESCO, 2019).

Although there is greater public recognition of the importance of gender stereotypes and discrimination against girls and women in the science and technology sectors, only 34.6% of STEM graduates in the region are women, and strong gender segmentation persists in education and technical and vocational training. This is then reproduced in the production system and in employment opportunities, especially when it comes to high-quality jobs (ECLAC, 2018b).

A number of initiatives in this area may be mentioned. In Mexico, for example, the Secretariat of Communications and Transportation has implemented Women in STEM, Future Leaders, a mentoring programme for young female secondary school students in State schools. Another example along these lines can be

<sup>2</sup> This indicator is the percentage of the total population of children of official school age who are enrolled in each level of education.

found in Saint Kitts and Nevis, where the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Enhancement Project has been undergoing restructuring since 2018, including support systems to reduce gender disparities and gender-sensitive vocational guidance in secondary schools to support skills selection and programme completion.

As regards programmes promoting educational inclusion, mention may be made of El Salvador's National Intersectoral Strategy for the Prevention of Pregnancy among Girls and Adolescents 2017–2027, which aims to keep girls and adolescents in school, guarantee the right to general education and comprehensive sexuality education, improve access to health services and prevent violence.

Likewise, Mexico's National Study Grant Programme incorporates the Basic Education Grant for Young Mothers and Young Expectant Mothers, which benefits adolescent mothers and mothers-to-be so that they can complete their basic education, and lays down priority criteria for allocating study grants to students who are pregnant or have children. The Turks and Caicos Islands have established alternative education programmes providing continuing education and vocational training for adolescents who have to discontinue their studies because of pregnancy. Similarly, Saint Lucia's Department of Sustainable Development organized a site for women in STEM in 2018 to encourage young women and girls in this field, and there has been an increase in the number of young women continuing their studies after pregnancy.

In the Plurinational State of Bolivia, a productive social and community education model is being promoted. The basis for its implementation is laid out in the Sectoral Plan for the Comprehensive Development of Education for Living Well 2016–2020, and it has succeeded in reducing the gender gap in secondary school completion rates, increasing the number of women entering university and raising the school attendance rate for girls and adolescents and the number of women enrolled in alternative and special education. In Argentina, Law No. 27234 on Educating in Equality: Prevention and Eradication of Gender Violence requires all educational establishments in the country, public or private, to hold a session on the prevention and eradication of gender-based violence. In the Dominican Republic, the Ministry of Education has given priority to the design and introduction of gender policy at the different levels of pre-university education and the development of teaching tools that promote a gender perspective for the construction of non-sexist education.

### 3. Sexual and reproductive health services

A number of initiatives to guarantee the right to health of women and girls can be identified for the period 2014–2019, most particularly: gender mainstreaming in health institutions and systems, programmes to disseminate relevant and timely information, access to sexual and reproductive health services and training actions for practitioners, and concrete actions to reduce teenage pregnancy rates.

In Mexico, several programmes implemented under the Health Sector Programme 2013–2018 improved access to sexual and reproductive health information and services. The National Strategy for the Prevention of Teenage Pregnancy was also established. In Uruguay, the Intersectoral and National Strategy for the Prevention of Unintended Pregnancy among Adolescents has been implemented since 2016 with the aim of reducing the number of such pregnancies from a human rights and gender perspective, the focus being on knowledge of, access to and use of contraceptive methods, voluntary termination of pregnancy, sexuality and motherhood, among other things.

The Dominican Republic has carried out training and awareness-raising campaigns on sexual and reproductive rights, breastfeeding, HIV/AIDS and women's health. Inter-institutional cooperation between the Ministry of Women's Affairs and the Ministry of Education has resulted in sex education based on a gender and human rights perspective being offered to schools via the Centre for the Promotion of Comprehensive Adolescent Health in order to help reduce the country's high rates of teenage pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), HIV, violence and other health problems for adolescents and young people. In Argentina, the National Bureau of Family and Community Health passed a resolution in 2015 providing increased recognition for the right of persons with disabilities to accessible, acceptable and high-quality sexual and reproductive health services. In Brazil, Law No. 13798 of 2019 added an article to the Children's and Adolescents' Charter instituting the National Week for the Prevention of Teenage Pregnancy, an initiative that the Ministry of

Women's Affairs, the Family and Human Rights is supporting through a number of actions. In the Turks and Caicos Islands, the Ministry of Education, Youth, Culture and Library Services has introduced a sexual health and family programme in all State schools that aims to give girls and women the opportunity to make more informed decisions about their sexual and family lives.

With regard to the consolidation of gender-oriented health policies and systems, mention may be made of the National Policy on Gender in Health of Honduras, as part of which the Gender Mechanism of the Secretariat of Health was created and the National Strategy on Gender in Health was developed in 2016. Likewise, Paraguay's National Adolescent Health Plan 2016–2021 aims to put adolescents in charge of building their own lives and help them exercise their rights to a better quality of life and full health, with preventive actions to reduce teenage pregnancy.

In Chile, Law No. 21030 Regulating the Decriminalization of Voluntary Termination of Pregnancy on Three Grounds was published in September 2017, the three grounds being: (i) risk to the woman's life, (ii) an acquired or genetic congenital pathology affecting the embryo or foetus that is incompatible with life and (iii) rape, up to 12 weeks of pregnancy.

The Grenada Ministry of Health has made progress in establishing operating procedures for the care of victims of gender-based violence, and has trained medical personnel in gender-sensitive responses to victims of sexual abuse. It has also approved a sexual and reproductive health policy and strategic plan and a draft adolescent health policy.

Access to health care for women and girls in Saint Lucia has been improved by expanding public health services and sexual and reproductive health services for vulnerable young women. In addition, prenatal and postnatal primary health services are free of charge. The Bureau of Health Education has introduced health promotion campaigns and strengthened comprehensive sexual education through ongoing community outreach programs such as the mobile health clinic.

The Government of Suriname has improved the structure of the Elimination of Mother to Child Transmission Programme and the design and implementation of the Third National Strategic Plan for HIV/AIDS (2014–2020), whose objectives are the reduction of HIV transmission among key and vulnerable population groups, the expansion of treatment and high-quality comprehensive HIV care.

### C. Eradicating gender-based violence against women and stereotypes

Gender-based violence against women has been recognized and prioritized by all Latin American and Caribbean countries as part of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, the recommendations of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (Convention of Belém do Pará) (1994). This has given rise to a considerable body of comprehensive and sectoral public policies and legal frameworks reflecting the diversity of manifestations of gender-based violence against women (United Nations, 1979). However, these efforts have taken place in a context in which patriarchal, discriminatory and violent cultural patterns remain in place, with gender stereotypes persisting in the education system, the media and political, cultural and economic institutions. In response, States have reported a variety of measures related to prevention, protection, prosecution and punishment, as well as reparation, monitoring and data production, international cooperation and communication and awareness-raising campaigns.

Among the recommendations made to States parties by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women are that measures should take a victim- or survivor-centred approach, recognizing women as rights holders and promoting their capacity for action and autonomy, in particular the evolving capabilities of girls, from childhood to adolescence. In addition, measures should be designed and implemented with the participation of women, taking into account the particular situation of women affected by interrelated forms of discrimination (United Nations, 1979).

The violence experienced by women and its crudest expression, femicide, is one of the greatest concerns raised by the countries in their reports. Femicide or femicide is most likely to be committed by partners or ex-partners in most countries of the region, exceptions being El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, where most femicidal violence is related to organized crime (ECLAC, 2019b).

## 1. Measures to eradicate violence against women and girls

The eradication of gender-based violence against women has been one of the central focuses of national equality policies and of the work of mechanisms for the advancement of women. The multiplicity of causes of gender-based violence and the diversity of strategies developed by countries to deal with it has forced countries to generate national plans and policies for the eradication of violence against women with an intersectoral and interdisciplinary approach to action and governing instruments whose function is to direct, coordinate and budget for public action and to regulate and operationalize the efforts of the various State actors. A large number of countries in the region now have new plans, with eight Caribbean countries (Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Belize, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica and Saint Lucia) in particular having developed them.

**Table II.1**

Latin America and the Caribbean (23 countries): national plans and policies dealing with gender-based violence against women

|                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Antigua and Barbuda              | National Strategic Action Plan to End Violence against Women and Girls (2015–2018)   |
| Argentina                        | National Action Plan for the Prevention, Assistance and Eradication of Violence against Women (2017–2019)                              |
| Bahamas                          | Strategic Plan to Address Gender-Based Violence (2015)   |
| Belize                           | National Gender-Based Violence Action Plan: A Multisectoral Plan to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence in Belize (2017–2020) |
| Bolivia (Plurinational State of) | Comprehensive Public Policy for a Decent Life for Bolivian Women (2017)  |
| Chile                            | National Action Plan to Combat Violence against Women (2014–2019)  |
| Colombia                         | Comprehensive Plan to Guarantee Women a Life Free of Violence (2012–2022)  |
| Costa Rica                       | National Policy for Addressing and Preventing Violence against Women of All Ages (2017–2032)   |
| Dominican Republic               | National Plan against Gender Violence (2017)   |
| Ecuador                          | National Plan for the Eradication of Gender Violence towards Women, Children and Adolescents (2015)                                    |
| El Salvador                      | National Policy for Women's Access to a Life Free of Violence (2013)   |
| Grenada                          | National Strategic Action Plan to Reduce Gender Based Violence (2013–2018)   |
| Guatemala                        | National Plan for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Violence against Women (2010–2028)   |
| Guyana                           | National Action Plan for the Implementation of the Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Acts (2013–2018)                              |
| Haiti                            | National Plan to Combat Violence against Women (2017–2027)   |
| Honduras                         | National Plan against Violence towards Women (2014–2022)   |
| Jamaica                          | National Strategic Action Plan to Eliminate Gender-Based Violence in Jamaica (2017–2027)   |
| Mexico                           | Emerging Plan to Secure the Safety, Security and Lives of Women and Girls in Mexico (2019)   |
| Nicaragua                        | National Committee to Combat Violence towards Women, Children and Adolescents and its National Action Plan (2012)                      |
| Paraguay                         | II National Plan against Violence towards Women (2015–2020)  |
| Peru                             | National Plan against Gender Violence (2016–2021)  |
| Saint Lucia                      | National Plan/Partnership of Action to End Gender-Based Violence (2016)  |
| Uruguay                          | Action Plan 2016–2019: For a Life Free of Gender Violence, with a Generational Approach  |

**Source:** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of national reports on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action 25 years on from its approval.

## 2. Comprehensive laws against violence

Twenty-five years on from the Beijing Platform, all the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean have laws dealing with violence against women and, in the last five years, four of them have passed comprehensive anti-violence laws (Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay). Accordingly, 13 Latin American countries now have legislation to address the different manifestations of violence in the many settings in which it occurs and to develop tools and protocols for inter-institutional action to comply with the obligations and responsibilities of States.

Four countries criminalized femicide in the period 2014–2019 (Ecuador in 2014, Brazil in 2015, Paraguay in 2016 and Uruguay in 2017), and two others brought in reforms to laws that already punished the murder of women as aggravated homicide (the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in 2014 and Colombia in 2015), bringing to 18 the number of Latin American countries that have defined this as a criminal offence and instituted the corresponding reforms of their penal codes.

Argentina and Mexico have been developing legislation to provide redress to the children of femicide victims. In the case of Argentina, Law No. 27452 on the System of Financial Redress for Children and Adolescents (the Brisa Act) provides for monetary compensation for children under the age of 21 who have lost their mother to femicide. In Mexico, the government of Jalisco has set up a programme to provide redress to the orphaned children of women who have fallen victim to femicide.

### 3. Protocols and frameworks for action

A developing field is that of protocols or guidelines for action to deal with violence. Created as framework management tools, they can be used to carry out specialized or sectoral action and involve different actors in order to improve the application of national and sectoral laws and public policies. In addition, most of them include action guides for the launching of criminal investigations, for reparation after punishment, and for victim care and support.

The Plurinational State of Bolivia has developed the Inter-Institutional Protocol and Critical Route for the Care and Protection of Victims within the Framework of Law No. 348, which describes and organizes inter-institutional coordination from the start of the criminal investigation through to victim follow-up and support. Similarly, Ecuador and Panama have produced the General Protocol for Action on Violence against Children, Adolescents, Persons with Disabilities and the Elderly and Women, and the National Protocol for Comprehensive Care of Women Victims of Domestic Violence, which establish procedures for giving effect to the right to comprehensive care.

In sectoral terms, Peru has reported on the Protocol for Joint Action between Women's Emergency Centres and Health Establishments for the care of female victims of violence and members of their families, while Panama has reported on the Manual of Standards and Procedures for the Comprehensive Treatment of Domestic Violence and the Promotion of Forms of Solidarity in the National Health System. Saint Kitts and Nevis has reported on the Complaint and Response Protocol for Domestic and Sexual Violence, and Colombia's National Institute of Legal Medicine and Forensic Sciences has implemented the Protocol for Assessing the Risk of Lethal Violence against Women by a partner or former partner. The assessment is intended to activate institutional efforts to stop violence and prevent femicide.

In addition, several countries have implemented policies that operationalize femicide laws and are generating initiatives to improve the recording and investigation of cases, such as the Minimum Guidelines for the Investigation of Gender-based Offences against Women's Lives-Femicide in the Plurinational State of Bolivia (2016); the Inter-Institutional Protocol for Action against Femicide, Attempted Femicide and Violence by High-Risk Partners (2018) in Peru; and the Protocol for the Investigation of the Crime of Femicide in the Dominican Republic (2014).

### 4. Coordination as a strategic step

Protocols or guidelines for action provide for a number of inter-institutional coordination mechanisms as a strategy for dealing with specific manifestations of violence against women, such as femicide. For example, Honduras has set up the Inter-Institutional Commission for the Follow-up of Investigations into Violent Deaths of Women and Femicides, a body composed of State institutions and women's organizations, while Guatemala has created the Prosecutor's Office for the Crime of Femicide and the Unit for the Control, Follow-up and Evaluation of Agencies Specializing in Femicide and Other Forms of Violence against Women. In Ecuador, the Secretariat for Human Rights is developing processes to strengthen the coordination of the Integrated National System for Preventing and Eradicating Violence against Women at the national and local levels.

Peru set up its National Working Group as a multisectoral technical body to coordinate, integrate, support and supervise actions associated with the implementation of the National Plan against Gender Violence 2016–2021. Meanwhile, Suriname’s National Council on Domestic Violence is charged with following up on and coordinating actions to update the policy to combat domestic violence, as required.

## 5. Specialized services and training for public officials

The countries have reported on the creation of an institutional framework specializing in issues of violence, such as police services, prosecutors’ offices and other specialized services. In Argentina, the Specialized Fiscal Unit on Violence against Women and Investigation of Gender Violence was created to investigate crimes of violence against women and to work on the ways in which its different manifestations affect other vulnerable groups because of their sexual orientation and gender identity.

In El Salvador, Specialized Tribunals for a Life Free of Violence and Discrimination for Women were created in 2016, with jurisdiction to judge the crimes established by law, follow up and supervise precautionary and protective measures and investigate crimes of discrimination in the workplace and violations of the right to equality.

Among the police coordination services created in different countries, the Guyana Police Force is notable for having established domestic violence units within its headquarters to assist women subjected to sexual crimes. These units collaborate with non-governmental organizations and the Ministry of Social Protection. Another example is the Specialized Gender Violence Police Service, which forms part of the protection coverage of the Panama National Police.

With regard to capacity-building for public officials, police officers in Barbados have been trained to intervene in cases of domestic violence, and this has been added to the training curriculum for police personnel. In Honduras, measures have been taken to change the way violence against women is dealt with by strengthening the technical capacities of the civil service, including in particular justice workers and gender unit coordinators, while efforts are being made to incorporate and professionalize women in the ranks of the National Police. In Argentina, the Micaela Law on Compulsory Training in Gender Violence for all Members of the Three Branches of the State (Law No. 27499) is in force.

## 6. Observatories and systems of dissemination

The adoption of laws on violence against women has encouraged the establishment of observatories managed by various agencies at national level.

Thus, in the case of Costa Rica, the judiciary’s Gender Violence Observatory is the mechanism that provides official figures on femicide and information on prevalence and the performance of the public sector, derived from administrative records. In Uruguay, the operations of the Observatory are the responsibility of an inter-institutional commission made up of the most important public institutions and the Uruguayan Network against Domestic and Sexual Violence. Argentina has reported on its National Register of Genetic Data Linked to Sex Crimes. In Honduras, in addition to the National Observatory on Violence, the Secretariat of Security coordinates 30 Municipal Observatories on Community Life and Citizen Security. In 2014, Nicaragua created the Judicial Observatory on Gender Violence of Nicaragua, which reports to the Supreme Court of Justice. In Ecuador and Paraguay, there are plans to establish a Unified Register of Violence against Women and a Gender Violence Observatory. In the Plurinational State of Bolivia, supreme Decree No. 3834 strengthening the Special Force to Combat Violence was issued in March 2019, creating the “Adela Zamudio” Registration and Immediate Alert System and increasing the budget for this special force of the national police in order to improve women’s access to justice.

## 7. Emergency centres, hostels and shelters

Almost all countries in the region have established services for direct assistance to women victims of violence. They include services associated with security systems and hotlines for emergency calls and immediate counselling. These are found in Argentina (144), the Dominican Republic (\*212), Ecuador (ECU 911),

El Salvador (126) and Honduras (911), among other countries. They have trained personnel to provide advice, information and an immediate response to complaints of violence against women. These call centres refer women to comprehensive assistance services. In all cases, direct assistance is provided face to face in central or decentralized offices, and women are referred to hostels or shelters when their lives are at risk.

The creation of safe spaces for women whose lives are in immediate danger as a result of the violence they experience from their partners or ex-partners entails the provision of psychosocial and legal assistance and support to start again with new life projects. These initiatives are being implemented in Chile, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador and Peru. In Peru, the comprehensive strategy known as the Women's Protection Circle was launched in 2016 and combines prevention, care and social, emotional and financial recovery services for victims, with a view to eradicating gender-based violence and femicide. As of 2019, there are 351 women's emergency centres nationwide that provide care and support to women affected by violence and members of their families, contributing to protection, an end to violence, access to justice and recovery for victims.

## 8. Awareness-raising campaigns

In El Salvador, the various institutions making up the Specialized Technical Commission report on the implementation of awareness-raising campaigns for the prevention of violence against women, the holding of educational workshops and information on the care services provided by the different State agencies (2018). In Uruguay, the Office of the President of the Republic has launched the #UruguaySinViolenciadeGénero public campaign to raise awareness of gender-based violence and encourage society to reflect on the issue (2019).

In Panama, the "CINAMU in your community" prevention and awareness-raising campaign has been carried out as an extension of the assistance model of the National Women's Institute Centres (CINAMU), which guides responses at the three levels of prevention: primary, secondary and tertiary. Suriname has been carrying out activities to raise public awareness of gender and domestic violence for government officials, community organizations, youth and priests; programmes for aggressors; work with men and boys; and a pilot programme on "a comprehensive school-based approach to improving sexual and reproductive health and preventing and reducing gender violence".

## 9. Strategies for women's disappearances

An emerging phenomenon in the countries of the region is that of forced disappearances. In Guatemala, for example, at least two women disappear every day. The country has passed several laws in response, including the Law on Immediate Searches for Missing Women (Decree No. 9-2016) and the Law on the Genetic Data Bank for Forensic Use (Decree No. 22-2017), providing for a register of convicted sex offenders. These laws, together with existing ones, serve to combat violence against women, girls and adolescents. The Law on Immediate Searches for Missing Women provides for the creation of the National Coordinating Office of the Mechanism for Immediate Searches for Missing Women as the body responsible for planning, coordinating, initiating, executing and evaluating the activities involved in searching for, locating and providing immediate protection for missing women. In 2018, the Coordinating Office implemented the mechanism known as the Isabel-Claudina Alert, designed to ensure that women are searched for and located immediately, across the country.

## 10. Other forms of violence

Other forms of violence include female genital mutilation in Colombia, where the lives and health of indigenous girls and women continue to be threatened. Two strategies were established to eliminate female genital mutilation as part of the "Everyone for a New Country" National Development Plan 2014–2018. One guarantees human and financial resources for indigenous peoples and communities to engage in intergenerational dialogue and provide care and follow-up in cases of female genital mutilation. The other aims to develop agreed guidelines for the care and promotion of sexual and reproductive health. With regard to obstetric violence, the project on access to justice for women facing criminal proceedings over terminations of pregnancies or obstetric

emergencies in El Salvador set out to create a specialized training process for staff at the Public Defender's Office in order to have the tools to effectively defend women accused of aggravated homicide in cases of terminations of pregnancies or obstetric emergencies.

During this period, Peru implemented the Prevention, Care and Protection Strategy for Domestic and Sexual Violence in Rural Areas, with the aim of promoting access to services for people in rural and remote areas. The Ministry of Justice and Human Rights has recruited public defenders who are proficient in the indigenous languages of the areas where the service is provided and has participated in the drafting of the Legal Assistance and Guidance Protocol with an intercultural approach for justice system officials.

Street harassment is one of the new manifestations of violence that have been criminalized. Among the countries that have done so are Argentina (Law No. 27501 of 2019), Chile (Law No. 21153 of 2019) and Peru (Law No. 30314 of 2015). Moreover, concerning specific laws on other forms of violence not yet criminalized in most countries, Brazil reports progress since the adoption of Law No. 13642 of 2018, which gives the Federal Police a mandate to investigate crimes associated with the dissemination of messages with misogynistic content over the Internet. In 2018, Antigua and Barbuda introduced an amendment to the Electronic Crimes Act to protect women and girls from digital harassment.

## 11. Preventive actions and access to justice

Progress with prevention and access to justice for women victims of violence has been reported throughout the region. It is considered that the priority given to this issue will continue to increase in the next five years, and it thus remains a major challenge for most of the countries.

In 2019, the Government of Mexico presented the Emergency Plan to Secure the Safety, Security and Lives of Women and Girls in Mexico, which provides for a comprehensive reform of the General Law on Women's Access to a Life Free of Violence, emphasizing the Gender Violence against Women Alert system and the adoption of a single penal code to standardize all crimes committed against women and girls in the country. Forty-three Women's Justice Centres have been established to guarantee access to justice for victims of gender-based violence in Mexico.

Guatemala passed the Law against Femicide and Other Forms of Violence against Women in 2018. Between 2014 and 2017, an average of 212 cases of femicide were reported each year, while 58,175 cases of violence against women were notified to the Public Prosecutor's Office. Nicaragua has made access to justice a priority, especially for women, children and adolescents, and to that end has created 29 new courts specializing in family matters, violence and adolescence, as well as the System of Judicial Facilitators and the Institute of Legal Medicine (IML) with its Women's and Children's Clinics. In 2014, Law No. 870 of the Family Code was enacted and an institutional capacity-building process was carried out, guaranteeing families access to a free, straightforward and rapid specialized oral justice procedure to protect their rights.

In May 2019, the Plurinational State of Bolivia adopted Law No. 1173 on the Abridging of Criminal Proceedings and the Strengthening of the Comprehensive Fight against Violence towards Children, Adolescents and Women, which was a step forward as regards the right of access to impartial, prompt and effective justice. On the basis of the proposals in the Depatriarchalization Agenda for Living Well, the Special Office to Combat Violence against Women and Children and the "Ana María Romero" Plurinational Service for Women and Depatriarchalization were set up. At the same time, article 18 of Law No. 348 stipulates that indigenous, *campesino* and Afro-Bolivian authorities must adopt the preventive measures they consider most appropriate to prevent all acts of violence against women in the communities where they exercise their functions.

Colombia's Higher Council of the Judiciary implements monitoring strategies for law offices nationwide to determine the number of judgments delivered with a gender perspective and to ensure that Colombian and international laws are properly applied in court rulings. For its part, the Attorney-General's Office has adopted guidelines for prosecutors and judicial police officers on the parameters for ensuring due diligence in the conduct of investigations in cases of violence against women and for setting standards for the protection of women victims to ensure no further crimes are committed against them.

In November 2015, Law No. 27210 was enacted in Argentina, creating the Corps of Lawyers for Victims of Gender Violence to ensure access to justice by providing legal support for women victims. In addition, in July 2016 the first National Action Plan for the Prevention, Assistance and Eradication of Violence against Women 2017–2019 was presented, with two main lines of action (prevention and comprehensive care) and three cross-cutting lines (training, institutional strengthening, and monitoring and evaluation).

Particularly noteworthy in Brazil are the Women: Living Without Violence programme and the provisions of the Maria da Penha Law concerning women living in rural and remote areas. This programme focuses on strengthening the National Compact to Combat Violence against Women and coordinates actions to facilitate the access of women in situations of violence to their rights and public services in the areas of security, justice, health, psychosocial assistance, housing, employment and income generation.

In 2016, the Office of the Attorney General of Uruguay created the Gender Unit, which strives for the implementation of intra- and inter-institutional actions and the incorporation of the gender perspective into the judicial and administrative processes it participates in. At the same time, the Code of Criminal Procedure gives victims a new role in criminal proceedings, recognizing their right to participate in and be informed of all proceedings, to be heard and to request measures of protection against attacks.

Saint Lucia has used some specific strategies to prevent violence against women and girls in primary and secondary education, such as the Youth Active Response Team, an initiative of the Division of Gender Relations targeting secondary school students and serving as a means to combat dating violence. The Family Court introduced some psychoeducational programmes, particularly for male perpetrators of domestic violence, with the aim of strengthening families. The Saint Kitts and Nevis Department of Gender Affairs, in partnership with the National Women's Council and the National Men's Council, works inside and outside prisons, providing training sessions aimed at changing the mindset and behaviour of men and women in order to eradicate gender-based violence in society.

## D. Women's participation and representation in decision-making

The Beijing Platform for Action states that achieving the goal of equal participation of women and men in decision-making is necessary to strengthen democracy and promote its proper functioning (United Nations, 1995). The progress made with women's participation in political life is positive for the region. However, there is still a long way to go in order to achieve parity and equal participation in the different branches of government.

There is currently no female head of State in Latin America. In the Caribbean region, women hold the highest executive positions in Barbados, Grenada, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago and Puerto Rico. According to data from the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, the average representation of women in ministerial cabinets in Latin America as of December 2018 was 28.5% for the most recent period of government available and 19.4% in the Caribbean. In 2014, the average was 23.9% for Latin America and 19.2% for the Caribbean. Although progress has been made, most appointments of women to ministerial cabinets are in the social and cultural sectors, where they account for 50%.

In legislatures, clear progress has been made thanks to quota and parity laws. In the lower or only chamber, the regional average was 28.3% in 2015 and 31.2% in 2019. So far, only two countries have exceeded parity: the Plurinational State of Bolivia with 53.1% and Cuba with 53.2%. In the Caribbean, Grenada is the country with the highest participation of women (46.7%). In the judiciary, the proportion of women serving on the highest courts in Latin America was 32.1% in 2018. In local government, the regional average of elected councillors who were women as of December 2018 was 29.6% and the regional average for mayors was 15.5%.

Among the main advances, particular mention may be made of Mexico's political and electoral reform of 2014, which established the principle of parity, leaving gender quotas behind and representing a major step forward in the recognition of women's political rights. In addition, the Observatory on the Political Participation of Women in Mexico was created, comprising the National Women's Institute (INMUJERES), the Electoral Tribunal of the Federal Judiciary and the National Electoral Institute. The Observatory monitors women's

achievements and challenges as they seek to exercise their political and electoral rights and stand for public office. Moreover, the Protocol for Addressing Gender-Based Political Violence against Women was adopted in 2016, this being a tool that fosters citizen participation, a culture of exposure and improved conditions of justice for women participating in the public sphere.

In Costa Rica, progress has been made on the constitutional interpretation of the effective equality principle of vertical and horizontal parity in election processes. The Supreme Electoral Court has established the obligation for political parties to alternate 50% of people of each sex on provincial lists and at the heads of lists. An initial result was that in February 2018 the proportion of women in parliament reached 45.6%, the largest in Costa Rica's history. In the executive branch, an Afro-descendent woman has become the First Vice-President for the first time, and the first cabinet to attain gender parity has been appointed, consisting of 14 female and 11 male ministers. Likewise, a woman has been elected president of the Legislative Assembly for the third time and a female-majority Legislative Executive Committee has been formed.

In El Salvador, the Legislative Assembly created the Observatory for Women's Political Eligibility and Participation in 2014, in time for the 2015 elections. In 2017, proposals to amend the Political Parties Act and the Electoral Code were submitted by the Women's Parliamentary Group, the Supreme Electoral Court, the Salvadoran Institute for the Development of Women (ISDEMU) and other bodies. These proposals are intended to incorporate the mechanism of alternation between a woman and a man or vice versa when drawing up the lists of candidates for elections to the Legislative Assembly, Central American Parliament and municipal councils. For the 2018 elections, ISDEMU, together with the Women's Parliamentary Group and the Supreme Electoral Court, promoted the Pact for Women's Political Participation Free of Violence and Discrimination, in which 9 of the 10 political parties in contention for the 2018 elections participated.

In Guatemala, the Supreme Electoral Court's Technical Group on Equity approved the Gender Equity Policy 2015–2023. In the 2015 electoral process, women accounted for just 14% of deputies and 3% of mayors and held only 12% of positions in municipal corporations. In Nicaragua, Law No. 854 on the Partial Reform of the Political Constitution of the Republic of Nicaragua was passed, giving constitutional status to parity and equity in elected positions. In addition, the Ministry of Women's Affairs formulated strategies to strengthen women's roles, leadership, empowerment and participation in the political, economic and social spheres. In local government, women accounted for 43% of mayors, 57% of deputy mayors and 51% of councillors during the period 2016–2020, with 52% being young women in leadership positions at the territorial level.

In the Dominican Republic, the Central Electoral Board created the Gender Equality Observatory and the Gender Equality Policy Commissions. In the latest elections, in 2016, female representation in the Chamber of Deputies reached 28%, the highest level recorded so far, following the establishment of the women's quota.

Panama has amended its electoral legislation to include electoral parity in party primaries, requiring nominations in political party primaries to be made in such a way that at least 50% of candidates are women. In 2017, the Electoral Tribunal created the Office of Gender and Equal Opportunities to provide technical assistance to the National Forum of Women in Political Parties in publicizing electoral reforms. In 2018, the rules were adjusted so that the number of women in decision-making areas in public and private bodies would increase by at least 30% over the course of three years. In Honduras, the Regulations for the Application of the Principle of Parity and of the Mechanism for Alternation in the Political Participation of Women and Men in Electoral Processes were approved in 2016.

The More Women, More Democracy programme was created in Colombia in 2015 to promote women's leadership, inclusion and political participation in subnational elections. In 2018, the Pact for Peace and the Inclusion of Women in Electoral Participation was signed at the National Summit of Women and Peace. In addition, the Plan for the Promotion of Women's Political Participation was designed in 2019 with the aim of strengthening the position of women in political parties and movements, creating training opportunities for women and raising awareness of political violence against women. In addition, the equity pact for women, which is part of the National Development Plan 2018–2022, sets a target of women holding 50% of executive positions in the State by 2022.

In Peru's 2018 regional and municipal elections, the National Election Board established that the gender quota for candidates for regional and local councils was an absolute legal requirement. Consequently, any application for registration that failed to comply with it was to be ruled inadmissible. Alongside this, the National Plan for Citizens' Civic Education and Training (PNEF) 2016–2019 provides for concrete actions to reduce the gaps in political representation affecting women, young people and members of indigenous communities. In the area of political violence, political harassment is addressed through the National Plan against Gender Violence 2016–2021. In addition, the National Survey of Candidates is applied, one of its objectives having been to detect cases of discrimination and political harassment against women candidates during the 2018 electoral campaign.

In the Plurinational State of Bolivia, the parity criterion was achieved in the 2015 municipal elections: more than half the authorities elected were women. The Law against Harassment and Political Violence towards Women was regulated in 2016 and is now being fully implemented. A year later, the Observatory of Democratic Parity was established with the objectives of managing knowledge about women's political rights and achieving parity in order to create conditions of political equality in a representative, participatory and community-based democracy.

In Argentina, Law No. 27412 on Gender Parity in Political Representation was passed in 2017, providing that candidates for the national Congress (both chambers) and the Parliament of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) must alternate between women and men from the first nominated main candidate to the last alternate candidate, observing the principle of equivalent participation by gender. In addition, the Women's Political Participation Observatory of the National Women's Institute (INAM) was created to monitor compliance with the Gender Parity in Political Representation Act.

In Brazil, the National Secretariat for Women's Policies focused its efforts in 2017 on implementation of the Brazil Women's Network (*Rede Brasil Mulher*), one of whose five priorities is to strengthen women in power and decision-making. One of the measures to ensure women's political participation was established by the Supreme Electoral Court, which in 2018 ruled that at least 30% of the total amount received by parties from the Electoral Fund should be used to finance women candidates' election campaigns.

In Chile, Law No. 20840 Replacing the Binominal Electoral System with One of an Inclusive Proportional Character and Strengthening the Representativeness of the National Congress was passed in 2015, establishing as temporary measures that candidate lists may not include more than 60% of either women or men. As a result of this measure, the proportion of candidates standing for election to the Chamber of Deputies who were women increased from 19.3% in 2013 to 41.3 % in 2017, while the female proportion of Senate candidates rose from 17.91% in 2013 to 40.9% in 2017. Accordingly, the proportion of women in Congress rose from 15% to 23% as a result of the new legislation. In addition, the Constitutional Act on Political Parties was amended, establishing a gender parity criterion to ensure that at least 40% of their collegiate bodies would be women.

Progress has also been made with women's political participation in the Caribbean. In Guyana, the local government law requiring political parties to submit a list of candidates consisting of at least 25 qualified women has been revised; in addition, national legislation has been amended to establish a quota requiring that at least one-third of candidates on the lists for local and national elections are women. In Grenada, women have held 47% of seats in parliament since the 2018 general election and women hold the positions of Governor General (the head of State, the current incumbent being the first woman to hold this position), Cabinet Secretary, Accountant General and Ombudswoman. In Suriname, the National Assembly undertook activities to increase the number of women in parliament during the 2015 general elections, including the More Women in Decision-Making project, with the aim of mobilizing political parties' commitment to nominating more women as parliamentary candidates.

## E. Peaceful and inclusive societies

The Beijing Platform for Action recognizes "that the achievement and maintenance of peace and security are a precondition for economic and social progress" and adds that the full participation of women "in decision-making, conflict prevention and resolution and all other peace initiatives is essential to the realization of lasting

peace” (United Nations, 1995, para. 23). Analysis of long-term trends indicates that countries that do not seek to establish robust systems of security and justice within a framework of respect for human rights are more likely to be caught in a spiral of chronic violence and insecurity (UNODC, 2019).

Among the initiatives taken by governments during this period, the progress made in Colombia is particularly noteworthy. In accordance with United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 of 2000, four lines of action were implemented: prevention of violence, increased participation and representation, promotion and protection of rights, and attention to needs and priorities in situations of relief and recovery. Furthermore, the Havana peace talks included women negotiators from the Government of Colombia and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), and a Gender Subcommittee was formed, the only one of its kind, with responsibility for ensuring the gender approach was applied to the whole peace agreement and prescribing differentiated measures to deal with the particular effects experienced by people for gender reasons. The Final Agreement for the Termination of the Conflict and the Construction of a Stable and Lasting Peace resulting from these negotiations was signed by the National Government of Colombia and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People’s Army (FARC-EP) in November 2016 and established the need for affirmative measures to promote gender equity, the active participation of women and their organizations in peacebuilding and recognition for women victims of the conflict. In addition, the Intersectoral Commission for the Guarantees of Women Leaders and Human Rights Defenders was created in Colombia in 2016.

A National Action Plan was launched in Brazil in 2017 to implement United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 of 2000 in the country. By adopting an action plan on women, peace and security, the Government of Brazil reaffirmed its commitment to the promotion of international peace and security and the advancement of women’s equality and participation in such initiatives, particularly in the areas of defence and foreign relations. In El Salvador, the National Committee for the Implementation of Resolution 1325 of 2000 was created, and in 2016 it formulated the “Women, Peace and Security” National Action Plan 2017–2022. In Guatemala, the National Action Plan for Resolution 1325 was presented in 2017, its purpose being to transform the status and position of women in a post-conflict environment.

Migration is a challenge for the region. Migration laws in 12 countries (Argentina, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Uruguay) contain references to migrant women, which is important because these are rules that regulate entry, exit and the agencies responsible, and that confer rights and protection on migrants. Another five countries (Brazil, Chile, Colombia, the Dominican Republic and Peru) also make provision for migrant women, but do so in lower-ranking migration regulations, while Cuba, Haiti, Paraguay and Puerto Rico do so only in related regulations. Some countries have also incorporated migrant women into their legislation on violence, examples being Chile, El Salvador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama and Peru. With regard to the principle of non-discrimination, nine countries (Argentina, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Uruguay) have laws formulated much like human rights treaties that provide direct protection to migrant women and girls. Although most countries that regulate trafficking and smuggling and establish protection measures leave this unspecified, some countries have gone further and included migration status (Brazil, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama) (Fries Monleón, 2019).

It is particularly important to ensure that migrant, refugee and displaced women have full access to economic opportunities. Despite the efforts made, this challenge is far from being met and, in some cases, is interlinked with the issue of trafficking in women and girls.

Since the adoption of the United Nations Trafficking in Persons Protocol in 2003 (Palermo Protocol), the States of Latin America and the Caribbean have made substantial efforts to generate information and to investigate and punish this crime. In the last five years, some countries have passed or amended laws to address the issue of human trafficking and smuggling. A significant number of these legal instruments establish that account must be taken of age, sex and gender, among other aspects, in the care provided to victims. This is the case, for example, with the human trafficking and smuggling laws in force in Brazil, Haiti, Mexico and Peru (Fries Monleón, 2019).

Some of the main legal measures adopted in Latin America since 2014 have been the Organic Law on Human Mobility in Ecuador (2017), the Special Law against Trafficking in Persons in El Salvador (2014), Law No. 896 against Trafficking in Persons in Nicaragua (2015) and Law No. 19643 on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Persons in Uruguay (2018).

The reports of the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Ecuador highlight the signing of bilateral agreements with other countries in the region for prevention, care and protection, for prosecution and criminal sanctions, and for the repatriation of victims of human trafficking and smuggling. The Plurinational State of Bolivia, in particular, also reports having a Protocol for the Repatriation of Victims of Trafficking and Smuggling of Persons of Bolivian Nationality Abroad. The Brazilian report states that the country is making efforts to implement a protocol on the care of internationally trafficked women within the framework of the Meeting of Women Ministers and High Authorities of MERCOSUR.

In the Caribbean, Antigua and Barbuda reformed its Trafficking in Persons (Prevention) Act in 2018, instituting more severe penalties for those who commit the crime. In Barbados, the passage of the Trafficking in Persons Prevention Act (2016) gave effect to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. The Turks and Caicos Islands also enacted the Trafficking in Persons (Prevention) Ordinance in 2016, while Grenada enacted the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act (2014). In Suriname, the Penal Code on human trafficking and smuggling has been amended to extend the scope of the law to Surinamese citizens who commit this crime abroad and to provide specifically for cases of trafficking for forced labour and organ harvesting.

Alongside legal measures, the countries of the region have made progress in generating inter-institutional coordination mechanisms for the formulation, implementation and follow-up of public policies for the prevention, investigation, care and protection of victims of human trafficking and smuggling, including prosecution and punishment of the crime. In Panama, the National Commission against Trafficking in Persons was created, bringing together 16 State organizations and institutions to combat this crime. Peru states in its national report that it has launched a process to decentralize public policy on trafficking in persons, encouraging coordination with regional governments in different departments of the country. In the Dominican Republic, the Inter-Agency Committee for the Protection of Migrant Women (CIPROM), coordinated by the Ministry of Women's Affairs, has been set up with the aim of strengthening the country's capacity to prevent and deal with smuggling and trafficking in persons.

In the same vein, countries have reported on the development of planning tools to better address this issue. The national reports of Argentina, the Bahamas, Brazil, Chile, Honduras and the Plurinational State of Bolivia describe the implementation of national plans to combat trafficking in persons.<sup>3</sup> Several countries, including Chile, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guyana, Nicaragua and Panama, also indicate that they have implemented training processes for public servants in order to provide better care for victims. In addition, the countries have referred to the implementation of communication campaigns to raise awareness of trafficking and smuggling of persons. Particularly noteworthy is the case of Paraguay, whose Law No. 5683 of 2016 established the obligation to display a sign in visible public places that reads "Trafficking in persons, especially for the purpose of sexual exploitation of children and adolescents, is a crime in the Republic of Paraguay. Report it."

Lastly, some countries, such as Brazil and the Plurinational State of Bolivia, also reported on the specific efforts they have made to combat human trafficking and smuggling in the virtual environment, while others, such as Chile, reported on the construction of special shelters for trafficked women and exploited migrants.

<sup>3</sup> Argentina: National Plan 2018–2020 to Combat Trafficking and Exploitation of Persons; Bahamas: National Anti-Trafficking in Persons Strategy and Action Plan 2014–2018; Brazil: II National Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons 2018–2021; Chile: National Plan of Action against Trafficking in Persons 2015–2018; Honduras: Strategic Plan against Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking in Persons 2016–2022; Plurinational State of Bolivia: National Plan to Combat Trafficking and Smuggling of Persons 2015–2019 and Multisectoral Plan for Comprehensive Development to Combat Trafficking and Smuggling of Persons with a Gender Perspective.

## F. Conservation, protection and the environment

The Beijing Platform for Action states that sustainable development can only be achieved by improving the economic, social, political, legal and cultural status of women, in line with the 2030 Agenda.

The visibility of the debate on sustainable development and the need to conserve, protect and rehabilitate the environment shows that this is a key dimension for the countries of the region. However, when analysing public spending on environmental protection, ECLAC (2019a) found that less was spent on this at the central government level on average than on any other social function (0.1% of GDP in 2016). Panama and Peru allocate resources equivalent to four times this average (0.43% of GDP), followed by Haiti (0.24%), Honduras (0.19%), Guatemala (0.16%) and Jamaica (0.15%). At the same time, a review of the priorities of the region's countries in implementing the Beijing Platform during this period shows that, in some Caribbean countries, priority is given to strengthening women's participation in order to ensure environmental sustainability.

Several countries highlight the incorporation or mainstreaming of gender in the framework of national policies, strategies or plans on climate change and the environment. In Costa Rica, a number of policies look ahead to 2030. Examples include the National Policy on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion for the Costa Rican Agricultural and Rural Sector 2019–2030, the National Wetlands Policy 2017–2030, the National Biodiversity Policy 2015–2030 and the National Policy on Adaptation to Climate Change 2018–2030, all of which take gender issues into account. In addition, the Action Plan of the National REDD+ Strategy for the Forests and Rural Development Programme incorporates the gender perspective, has specific indicators and results for the advancement of women in forest protection and rural development and promotes the consolidation of rural women's organizations in the protection of the country's forest areas. Furthermore, in 2018 the gender perspective was incorporated for the first time in the preparation of Costa Rica's Sixth National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

In Mexico, the Vision 10-20-40 National Climate Change Strategy considers the aspects of gender, ethnicity, disability, inequality, health status and inequity in access to public services in the design of all policies and involves the different sectors of society in their implementation. The National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2016–2030 incorporates gender equality transversally, as does the Climate Change Vulnerability Atlas, as part of an integrating vision that detects gender gaps at the local level.

In Paraguay, the Ministry of Women forms part of the National Commission on Climate Change, a deliberative and consultative body for the National Climate Change Policy, within the framework of which the National Gender Strategy on Climate Change is being prepared. This strategy serves as a guide to advance the development and promotion of women's rights, which must be considered from the perspective of their own reality and in relation to the environment.

In Uruguay, the gender perspective is included in 30 of the 96 emissions reduction measures for 2020–2025. Within the framework of the National System of Response to Climate Change, vulnerabilities with a gender perspective were detected in the National Plan for Adaptation to Climate Change in Cities and Infrastructures. In addition, the National Coastal Adaptation Plan was formulated and a gender perspective was incorporated into it, as was also done in planning the nationally determined contributions of the Paris Agreement.

In El Salvador, the Commission on the Environment and Climate Change, with technical assistance from the Salvadoran Institute for the Development of Women (ISDEMU) and with a view to progressively incorporating the principle of equality and non-discrimination against women in the areas of climate change and environmental risk reduction, made recommendations for the cross-cutting mainstreaming of the principle of equality and non-discrimination into the National Climate Change Plan.

In Honduras, the Secretariat of Energy, Natural Resources, Environment and Mines has made progress in implementing the gender policy for the sustainable management of natural resources and the environment, the gender diagnosis within the Secretariat, and the incorporation of the gender dimension into programmes such as the REDD+ Honduras Project. In addition, the National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy for the Agrifood Sector of Honduras 2015–2025 incorporates the intercultural and gender equity approach into vulnerability and impact assessments and into adaptation and mitigation strategies and measures.

In Guyana, gender policies have been integrated into the Caribbean Climate Change Partnership, including gender mainstreaming in the National Adaptation Plan and in the Strengthening of National Institutional Mechanism for Climate Change project.

In Saint Lucia, both the coordination of and participation in climate change initiatives, including the preparation of the National Adaptation Plan 2018–2028, are mainly driven by women. In addition, there has been support for women's participation and leadership in environmental and natural resource management and governance. The Division of Gender Relations participated in the consultation process for the Climate Change Bill.

As regards Colombia's environmental policies, guidelines are being established as part of the National Environmental Education Policy for the inclusion of the issue of women and gender in the environmental education provided in the country. A centrepiece is the policy of citizen participation in environmental management, which seeks to structure a specific chapter on women and gender with indicators reflecting progress on women's participation in environmental management. In Guatemala, a Gender Unit has been created within the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources with the aim of mainstreaming the gender perspective in environmental policies in three strategic areas: (i) the strengthening of institutions in the area of gender equity; (ii) conservation and sustainable use of natural goods and services with gender equity; and (iii) implementation of the National Policy for the Advancement and Comprehensive Development of Women and the Equal Opportunities Plan 2008–2023.

In Nicaragua, the Ministry of Household, Community, Cooperative and Associative Economy promotes women's participation, enhancing their ability to make decisions about aspects of the design of water collection systems and production issues such as the selection of seeds and the choice of sowing area. In addition, measures have been adopted to protect and preserve the knowledge and practices of women in indigenous and local communities in relation to traditional medicine, biodiversity and conservation techniques.

In the Caribbean, efforts have been made in Antigua and Barbuda to incorporate the gender perspective into the functioning of the Department of the Environment, which has implemented an environmental social protection policy as well as a gender policy and action plan. The Sustainable Island Resource Framework Fund is the main channel for environmental management, climate mitigation and adaptation. In addition, women and girls were actively involved in Hurricane Irma recovery efforts through the Barbuda Council.<sup>4</sup>

In the Turks and Caicos Islands, as part of the response to Hurricanes Irma and Maria, emergency services with a gender perspective were provided to women and men and their families in collaboration with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), with a team of psychosocial consultants available to incorporate the gender approach into mental health interventions, emphasizing gender-based violence.

Progress has also been made in disaster and risk management with a gender perspective, considering the particular vulnerabilities of women and girls and promoting women's participation in the development of plans and strategies. In the Dominican Republic, the Protection, Gender and Age Advisory Team of the Ministry of Women's Affairs has been advising the National Emergency Commission since 2016, creating, reviewing and advising on risk management tools with a humanitarian protection and gender focus. In the Bahamas, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 was adopted in 2015, which emphasizes that women and their participation are fundamental when it comes to effectively managing disaster risk and designing, resourcing and implementing gender-sensitive disaster risk reduction policies, plans and programmes.

Grenada will be part of the Enabling Gender-Responsive Disaster Recovery, Climate and Environmental Resilience in the Caribbean (EnGenDER) project, and will provide technical support to the agencies responsible for the formulation and implementation of inclusive, gender-sensitive national adaptation plans and appropriate mitigation actions at the national level.

<sup>4</sup> The passage of Hurricane Matthew in 2016 and the passage of Hurricanes Maria and Irma in 2017 severely damaged the islands of the Caribbean. Hurricane Irma devastated Antigua and Barbuda, the British Virgin Islands, the Turks and Caicos Islands and Anguilla, as well as Sint Maarten and Saint Barthélemy. It also caused extensive damage in the Bahamas and Haiti and affected Saint Kitts and Nevis. In September 2019, Hurricane Dorian devastated the Bahamas.

In Suriname, the 2019–2020 Gender Action Plan and the 2021–2035 Gender Vision Policy Document have incorporated environmental and climate change activities specifically related to gender equality. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) is supporting the government in the implementation of the Sexual and reproductive health programme in humanitarian settings (SPRINT) Initiative, which aims to ensure that sexual and reproductive health services are available to populations during humanitarian crises, through the Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP) for reproductive health in emergency situations. This coordinates the sexual and reproductive health response, prevents sexual violence and provides care for survivors of sexual violence, reduces HIV transmission, prevents maternal and neonatal deaths, treats sexually transmitted infections (STIs), provides contraception and ensures that antiretrovirals are available for HIV treatment.

Lastly, 18 Caribbean countries are members of the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), which comes under the auspices of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and is pursuing a Comprehensive Disaster Management Strategy 2014–2024 in the region. The cross-cutting theme of this strategy includes climate change and adaptation, information and communication technology, gender mainstreaming and environmental sustainability.

## CHAPTER III

### National institutions and processes

#### A. Machineries for the advancement of women

Machineries for the advancement of women should serve as catalysts for gender mainstreaming across all areas and at all levels of government. However, there is little evidence of systematic inclusion of these mechanisms in the design, monitoring and evaluation of the public policies implemented by governments. These mechanisms are often poorly resourced and lack the mandate, influence, institutional hierarchy and capacity to hold other government agencies to account (UN-Women, 2018b).

According to the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, in 2019, half of these machineries could be classified as high level (ministerial status, or its head has ministerial rank and participates fully in cabinet meetings).<sup>1</sup> Roughly 25% could be classified as intermediate level (attached to the office of the president, but its head does not attend cabinet meetings),<sup>2</sup> and 20% as low level (reporting to a ministry or vice-ministry).<sup>3</sup> The situation is different for Caribbean countries, where low level mechanisms are predominant (83.3%).<sup>4</sup> Only Haiti and Trinidad and Tobago have high level machineries for the advancement of women.

In order to speed up the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and guarantee gender mainstreaming in all public policies, political will is needed to assign the highest hierarchical level to agencies that coordinate gender equality policies. In the past five years, two countries in the region have raised the hierarchical level of their machineries for the advancement of women. In Argentina in 2017, the National Institute for Women (INAM) was created through Decree No. 698/2017, 25 years after the establishment of the National Council for Women—the first mechanism for the advancement of women and for the promotion of gender equality. The 2017 decree ratified the commitment made by the State to guarantee women’s rights in light of any form of discrimination or violence, establishing INAM as a jurisdictionally decentralized body of the Ministry of Health and Social Development, with the ranking of State secretariat and autonomous management of its resources.

Meanwhile, in 2015, Chile passed Law No. 20820 to create the Ministry of Women’s Affairs and Gender Equity. This law included an institutional reformulation which resulted in the establishment of the new ministry and the maintenance of the National Service for Women and Gender Equity (SERNAM), which, until then, had been responsible for policies for the advancement of women in the country. The Ministry of Women’s Affairs and Gender Equity outlines, coordinates and implements the measures agreed in the Beijing Platform for Action and the Montevideo Strategy of 2016, thereby also contributing towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in the region.

Efforts have also been made to strengthen management at the local level, with the expansion of the network of subnational offices. Honduras has highlighted efforts to implement the 2010–2022 National Gender Equality and Equity Plan in relation to municipal management, in coordination with the country’s 268 municipal offices for women’s affairs. In Panama, the National Institute for Women has established a presence in every province of the country and in some indigenous areas, where it focuses on women’s economic autonomy and political participation.

In 2017, Peru adopted a regulation stipulating the creation of a gender equality mechanism in national and regional government entities. In 2019, an intergovernmental committee for gender equality and vulnerable populations was created as a mechanism for coordination between the Ministry for Women and Vulnerable Populations and representatives of regional and local governments.

<sup>1</sup> Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay and Peru.

<sup>2</sup> Argentina, Colombia, Ecuador and Guatemala.

<sup>3</sup> El Salvador, Panama, Plurinational State of Bolivia and Uruguay.

<sup>4</sup> Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Suriname.

## B. Equality plans and budgets with a gender perspective

According to the Beijing Platform for Action, “the success of policies and measures aimed at supporting or strengthening the promotion of gender equality and the improvement of the status of women should be based on the integration of the gender perspective in general policies relating to all spheres of society as well as the implementation of positive measures with adequate institutional and financial support at all levels” (United Nations, 1995). Public institutions, budgets, human resources, legal frameworks, policies and means of implementation to achieve or move closer towards gender equality reflect the commitment of the States to transforming historically discriminatory structures.

The countries of the region have made various efforts to plan equality policies. During this period, most countries are implementing their second or third editions of plans for equality between women and men, or launching their first gender equality plans or strategies.

Overall, the region as a whole has just over 20 years of experience in designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating national gender equality plans, although institutional capacity for implementation and mainstreaming at the national and subnational levels, along with financing for lines of action, are still major challenges. In addition to gender equality plans, several countries have highlighted their progress in incorporating an intersectional approach into plans and public policies for equality.

In the past five years, the countries of the region have aligned their planning initiatives with the commitments outlined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and have made efforts to mainstream the gender perspective in national development plans. For example, Uruguay has included gender equality and the need to eliminate discrimination against women and gender stereotypes as one of the three central pillars of its national development strategy to 2030. Similarly, in Colombia, the pluriannual investment plan of the National Development Plan 2018–2022, “A compact for Colombia, a compact for equity”, includes resources aimed at gender equity, is cross-cutting and, for the first time in the country’s history, incorporates initiatives for equal opportunities for women in a specific chapter of the development plan.

Other countries have updated or evaluated their previous strategies and plans to adapt them to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, incorporating this time horizon into their commitments and plans. For example, Costa Rica updated its two main equality and gender policies: the National Policy for Effective Equality between Women and Men (PIEG 2018–2030) and the National Policy for Preventing and Addressing Violence against Women of all Ages (PLANOVI 2017–2032). Moreover, the Dominican Republic has made progress on its National Plan on Gender Equality and Equity (PLANEG III) which extends to 2030 in alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals and the National Development Strategy 2030. Regarding the Ministry for Women’s Affairs of Paraguay, an analysis of the fourth National Equality Plan (2018–2024) shows that it is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 5.

According to the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), in recent years, countries such as Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic and Paraguay have evaluated their national equality policies and plans, in response to the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women regarding the establishment of accountability mechanisms for the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation and impacts of these policies and plans.

Although the region has made progress in this period in the consolidation of budgets with a gender perspective, national and subnational budgets with a gender perspective must continue to be developed and fine-tuned and these efforts should be complemented with analysis and evaluation, in order to understand how these policies and programmes align with the principles of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including human rights principles such as equality, non-discrimination and universality, so as to leave no one behind (UN-Women, 2018b).

**Table III.1**

Latin America and the Caribbean (20 countries): equality plans, policies and strategies implemented in the past five years

| Country                            | National policy   | Plan  | Responsible entity   |
|------------------------------------|---|---|--|
| Argentina                          |   | Plan for Equal Opportunities and Rights (2018–2022)   | Ministry of Health and Social Development<br>National Institute for Women  |
| Belize                             | Revised National Gender Policy 2013   |   | National Women's Commission (NWC)<br>Ministry of Human Development, Social Transformation and Poverty Alleviation                                  |
| Bolivia (Plurinational State of)   |   | National Equal Opportunity Plan "Women building the new Bolivia in the interest of living well" (2009–2020)   | Vice-Ministry of Equal Opportunity of the Ministry of Justice and Institutional Transparency<br>Ministry of Justice and Institutional Transparency |
| Chile                              |   | Women's Agenda 2018–2022<br>Fourth Plan for Equality between Men and Women 2018–2030<br>Plan for Equality between Men and Women 2011–2020   | Office of the President of the Republic<br>Ministry of Women's Affairs and Gender Equity<br>Ministry of Women's Affairs and Gender Equity          |
| Colombia                           | National Public Policy on Gender Equity<br>CONPES document (2013–2016)  | Indicative Action Plan 2013–2016 of the National Public Policy on Gender Equity for Women   | Presidential Advisory Council for Women's Equity   |
| Cuba                               |   | National plan of action to follow up the Beijing Conference (since 1997)  | State of Cuba and Federation of Cuban Women  |
| Costa Rica                         | National Policy for Effective Equality between Women and Men in Costa Rica 2018–2030<br>National Policy on Gender Equality and Equity (2007–2017) | 2019–2022 Plan of Action of the National Policy on Equality and Equity<br>2015–2018 Plan of Action of the National Policy on Equality and Equity<br>Third Plan of Action of the National Policy on Gender Equality and Equity 2007–2017 | National Institute for Women (INAMU)   |
| Dominican Republic                 |   | Second National Plan on Gender Equality and Equity (PLANEG II) 2007–2017  | Ministry for Women's Affairs   |
| Ecuador                            |   | National Agenda for Equality of Women and LGBTI Persons 2018–2021<br>National Agenda for Women and Gender Equality 2014–2017  | National Council for Gender Equality   |
| El Salvador                        | National Women's Policy 2016–2020   | National Plan for Equality 2016–2020  | Salvadoran Institute for the Development of Women (ISDEMU)   |
| Grenada                            | Gender Equality Policy and Action Plan 2014–2024  | Action Plan 2014–2024   | Ministry of Social Development, Housing and Community Empowerment  |
| Guatemala                          | National Policy for Women's Advancement and Comprehensive Development 2008–2023   | Equity of Opportunities Plan 2008–2023  | Presidential Secretariat for Women (SEPREM)  |
| Honduras                           | National Women's Policy 2010–2022   | Second Honduran Gender Equality and Equity Plan, 2010–2022 (II PIEGH)   | National Institute for Women (INAM)  |
| Mexico                             |   | National Programme for Equal Opportunities and Non-Discrimination against Women, 2013–2018 (PROIGUALDAD)  | National Institute for Women (INMUJERES)   |
| Panama                             |   | Plan of Action for Equal Opportunities for Women 2016–2019  | National Institute for Women (INAMU)   |
| Paraguay                           |   | Fourth National Plan for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, 2018–2024<br>Third National Plan for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, 2008–2017   | Ministry for Women's Affairs   |
| Peru                               | National Policy on Gender Equality  | National Gender Equality Plan 2012–2017 (PLANIG)  | Ministry for Women and Vulnerable Populations  |
| Suriname                           |   | Gender Action Plan for 2019 and 2020  | National Bureau for Gender Policy  |
| Uruguay                            | National Strategy for Gender Equality to 2030   | National Plan for Equal Opportunities and Rights 2007–2011  | National Gender Council  |
| Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) |   | "Mamá Rosa" Plan for Gender Equality and Equity 2013–2019   | People's Ministry of Women's Affairs and Gender Equality   |

**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>.

The legislative assembly of El Salvador approved a 13.6% increase in the budget of the Salvadoran Institute for the Development of Women (ISDEMU) for fiscal year 2019. In the case of Mexico, the lines of action of the National Programme for Equal Opportunities and Non-Discrimination against Women (PROIGUALDAD) 2013–2018 were carried out with resources outlined in the annex of the Federal Budget, named “Expenditures for achieving equality between women and men” for the corresponding fiscal year. These expenditures are proposed by the departments and agencies of the federal public administration, and are validated and modified as appropriate by the Chamber of Deputies. Since the inclusion of this annex in compliance with the 2008 decree of the Federal Budget, approved resources increased by an average of 12.1% per year until 2018.

In Honduras, the National Institute for Women has been included in the steering committee and the technical committee of budgetary policy. In addition, it was established that the judiciary should clearly and progressively record budget resources allocated to strengthening and expanding specialized domestic violence courts and tribunals in cities most affected by this type of violence.

Similarly, Colombia has made progress in planning and budgeting with a gender perspective by creating a gender-based budgetary classification for projects of the National Planning Department. This classification helps examine institutional investment in public policies for gender equality and the closure of inequality gaps at the territorial and national levels.

### C. Gradual incorporation of an intersectional and intercultural approach into public policy design

Recognizing the diversity of women living in the region, countries have also made progress in incorporating an intersectional and intercultural approach into public policy design.

For example, Peru has adopted the National Policy for the Mainstreaming of the Intercultural Approach, establishing gender equality as one of its focuses. Moreover, in 2016 it approved the National Development Plan for the Afro-Peruvian Population 2016–2020 (PLANDEPA) as a strategy to narrow the social gaps affecting Afro-Peruvians. The Ministry of Culture produced a geo-ethnic map of the country’s Afro-Peruvian population to determine their geographic location with the aim of reducing the high inequality and poverty levels that affect indigenous peoples and the Afro-Peruvian population.

Mexico’s supreme court designed a protocol for those who deliver justice in cases involving the rights of indigenous individuals, communities and peoples, accompanied by a virtual course for its implementation. In addition, between 2013 and 2016, support was provided for 286 projects with an intercultural approach to preventing and addressing violence and 466 projects to strengthen the rights of indigenous women.

Similarly, in Chile, the Ministry of Education created a technical secretariat to coordinate different interculturalism initiatives and policies in 2015. These include the incorporation of indigenous language learning into the academic curriculum, allowing indigenous languages to be taught in 1,200 schools.

Since 2013, Uruguay has been developing affirmative action for Afrodescendants within the framework of Act No. 19122, which stipulates that 8% of public administration posts must be reserved for Afrodescendants who meet the constitutional and legal requirements, following a public call for applications. Act No. 19670 established a national consultative council for ethnic and racial equity and Afrodescendent people, which follows up and monitors national plans as well as laws relating to this population, among other tasks, and includes representatives from all the ministries, the judiciary, subnational governments, academia and civil society.

In Ecuador, the National Council for Equality of Peoples and Nationalities was urged to create agendas for equality including public policy proposals to be discussed and agreed on by sectoral public policy councils for their coordination and implementation, with sectoral ministries and in coordination with planning instruments of the National Decentralized System of Participatory Planning. Meanwhile, the National Council for the Equality of Persons with Disabilities created the National Agenda for the Equality of Persons with Disabilities for 2014–2017 and 2017–2021. The most recent agenda identified the cross-cutting nature of Sustainable Development Goal 5 on gender equality in the pillars of participation and access to justice and a life free of violence.

## CHAPTER IV

### Data and statistics

The Beijing Platform for Action is clear about the need for States to prepare and disseminate gender-sensitive data and statistics to inform the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of public policies aimed at improving the lives of women. In the 25 years since its adoption, the international community has made progress in understanding that for the successful implementation of relevant and effective policies and interventions, it is increasingly important to have timely data on gender inequalities and the situation of women in all their diversity.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals have heightened global awareness of the need for statistical information to monitor progress towards the Goals and for disaggregated data to ensure that no one is left behind. This undoubtedly provides an opportunity to strengthen statistical systems and to mainstream gender into official statistics.

At the regional level, information is of the utmost importance in order to follow up on the commitments set forth in the Regional Gender Agenda. In 2016, States enshrined the need for information systems in the Montevideo Strategy for Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda within the Sustainable Development Framework by 2030, considering them a fundamental axis for the implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda. The governments of the region have thus reiterated their commitment to producing information in order to shed the light on gender inequalities.

Furthermore, the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean has become the foremost sphere for cooperation, coordination and harmonization of work in the field of official statistics, and its Working Group on Gender Statistics has played a key role in the methodological discussion of indicators that shed light on issues affecting women's autonomy. The Statistical Coordination Group for the 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean acts as a hub for the region's major statistical actors with a view to accelerating the statistical production needed to follow up the Sustainable Development Goals.

The countries of the region have made significant strides in monitoring progress made on the SDGs with a gender perspective. In Colombia, of the 167 indicators that were defined at the national level to follow up and monitor the Goals, 31 are gender-sensitive. In Mexico, 169 indicators are to be monitored, with 43 of them having a specific gender equality perspective.

Chile has worked actively to calculate all of the indicators in SDG 5 and, in turn, has mainstreamed gender in the generation of information on all other Goals. The country has indicators for all targets under SDG 5 as well as 10 complementary indicators. In Paraguay, 77 indicators have been developed to monitor the SDGs, including global, alternative and complementary indicators which partially address 12 Goals and 38 targets. Of those 77 indicators, 6 refer specifically to SDG 5 on gender equality.

The Bahamas reports that it has included indicators for monitoring SDG 5 in its National Gender Equality Policy, while Grenada adopted the set of 33 gender-specific indicators agreed upon by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) for monitoring progress on the SDGs.

One regional characteristic that has facilitated the production of statistics with a gender perspective has been the partnership between machineries for the advancement of women, as the main users of information, and national statistical offices, as the governing bodies of national statistical systems. Also noteworthy in the last five years has been the establishment of inter-agency coordination mechanisms designed to create or strengthen gender-sensitive national information systems for the follow-up of equality plans and policies as well as systems on gender-based violence against women.

For example, the Specialized Technical Committee on Gender Information of Mexico spearheaded the adoption of gender mainstreaming guidelines for the country's National Statistical and Geographical Information System. A statistical group on violence against women was also established with a view to providing input for designing and improving statistical projects that measure violence, its causes and consequences and for defining and monitoring the set of strategic indicators. The group also aims to improve and strengthen the survey on violence against women and girls, and to assist in the design of the integrated information system on violence against women. In addition, the National Women's Institute (INMUJERES) has two gender-sensitive information systems that are updated with information produced or published internally, or obtained from the reprocessing of survey and census databases. Both systems —the Gender Indicators System and SIS-Proigualdad— are publicly accessible.

Between 2014 and 2016, the Plurinational State of Bolivia established mechanisms to guide, coordinate and disseminate official data from the State Statistical System, as well as criteria to ensure interoperability between statistical units in sectoral and subnational subsystems and in the National Institute of Statistics (INE). INE reprocessed existing census and survey data to generate more disaggregated gender statistics, in addition to developing new surveys that would provide national baseline data on specific topics: time use, gender-based violence, asset ownership, poverty, disability, among others.

In 2018, Uruguay's Observatory for Gender-Based Violence against Women was established by law and an inter-agency working group was established within the Observatory to design and draft the methodology for the second survey on the prevalence of gender and generational violence. Since 2008, the gender information system of the National Women's Institute has been producing an uninterrupted series of gender statistics that reflect trends in gender inequalities, based primarily on the Continuous Household Survey conducted by the National Institute of Statistics and other surveys relating to youth, gender-based violence, time use, and administrative data.

Under the auspices of Chile's National Statistics Commission, a subcommittee on gender statistics was established, coordinated jointly by the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Gender Equity and the National Institute of Statistics. The subcommittee has emerged as a coordination mechanism between ministries and public services with links to the national statistical system through their involvement in the collection and production of gender data or in the systematization and analysis of gender indicators. Ministries have identified priority indicators to be built and monitored, in accordance with the conceptual framework of women's autonomy. Once produced, these indicators are compiled in a website, which is one of the subcommittee's outputs. The National Institute of Statistics also produced a guide book on the use of gender-neutral language in the analysis of statistical information.

In Guatemala, an office to coordinate gender statistics and indigenous peoples (OCTEGP) was established under the National Institute of Statistics as the main inter-agency coordination body for gender statistics at the national level. Over the last five years, the office has provided advice and support to the national statistical system in the production of statistics, with technical assistance from the Presidential Secretariat for Women. A tangible product of inter-agency coordination has been the establishment of a commission for the construction of satellite accounts for unpaid household work in Guatemala, which has been responsible for building satellite accounts over the period 2014–2019. In addition, gender equality and indigenous peoples' issues were mainstreamed in the national census.

In Costa Rica, the guidelines for the incorporation of the gender perspective in the production and dissemination of statistics of the National Statistical System (SEN) were adopted on 24 November 2015 by means of agreement No. 3 of the Ordinary Session No. 792-2015 of the Executive Committee of the National Institute of Statistics and Censuses (INEC). These guidelines are mandatory for all institutions affiliated with the national statistical system and are intended to serve as a model for the generation of gender-sensitive statistics at all stages of production (design, collection, systematization, analysis and dissemination).

The Statistics and Monitoring for Equality System (SEMI) of El Salvador is an institutional management tool used to access, classify and analyse relevant and timely information on the progress made by institutions in compliance with the national regulatory framework on women's rights and to report on the situation and

condition of Salvadoran women. Its modules are fed with information from the Department of Statistics and Censuses (DIGESTYC) and from the institutions responsible for implementing the National Equality Plan and the five-year plan under the National Policy on Women's Access to a Violence-Free Life.

An initiative that is gaining momentum in the region is the preparation of gender atlases, which are hosted on web platforms and contain georeferenced information that sheds light on the differences between women based on various dimensions of analysis. Chile, Ecuador, Mexico and Paraguay are among the countries that have begun preparation of atlases.

Over the last five years, the countries of the region have also made major efforts to conduct specialized surveys on gender-based violence against women in order to come up with national benchmark data and to monitor SDG indicators 5.2.1<sup>1</sup> and 5.2.2.<sup>2</sup>

Progress has been made in the development of national time use surveys to highlight the sexual division of labour and women's excessive burden of unpaid work, as well as to monitor SDG indicator 5.4.1.<sup>3</sup> The Plurinational State of Bolivia is also conducting a pilot survey with a view to launching its first national time-use survey, while Argentina, Chile and Mexico are currently preparing their time-use surveys for 2020.

Although the number of countries measuring time-use has increased, it remains a challenge to guarantee the periodicity of and budget for these statistical events. Colombia is a good example in this regard, as Law No. 1413 incorporates the care economy in the system of national accounts, thus guaranteeing the periodicity of time-use surveys. The National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE), which serves as the technical secretariat of the Intersectoral Commission on the Care Economy and Data Use of Colombia (established pursuant to Decree No. 2490 of 2013) and reports on gender issues in policymaking and the implementation of programmes and projects, has supported progress in the creation of the National Care System and has renewed its commitment in this area by producing statistics for the design and operation thereof. The Department has implemented methodologies to measure the contribution of unpaid domestic and care work to the national economy. To do so, it developed statistical operations derived from the National Time Use Survey, such as a care economy satellite account and the measurement of time and income poverty, in addition to a simulator of unpaid domestic and care work for the home and the community which is intended to shed light on the contribution of unpaid domestic and care work.

Also noteworthy is the passing in Costa Rica of Law No. 9325 on measuring the contribution of unpaid domestic work. The law proposes the creation of a satellite account for unpaid domestic work, under the responsibility of the Central Bank of Costa Rica, to highlight how the economy benefits from this type of work done by women.

The region has also made strides in the use of administrative records for statistical purposes with a gender perspective, strengthening of inter-agency coordination and the creation of a central register of gender-based violence against women and femicide. The measurement of femicide has resulted in a number of highly effective inter-agency actions. More and more countries are planning campaigns to produce reliable and rigorous administrative records in order to document cases of femicide as well as State responses to gender-based violence against women and girls. The proposed creation of central registers of violence, determined by law, is a step forward in the measurement of violence. Ecuador's practice of combining complementary information from surveys and administrative records is a noteworthy example in this regard.

<sup>1</sup> Indicator 5.2.1: Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by form of violence and by age.

<sup>2</sup> Indicator 5.2.2: Proportion of women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to sexual violence by persons other than an intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by age and place of occurrence.

<sup>3</sup> SDG Indicator 5.4.1: Proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex, age and location.

**Map IV.1**

Latin America: surveys, modules or questions for measuring time use, 1985–2018



**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/es/infografias/repositorio-informacion-uso-tiempo-america-latina-caribe>.

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

In Argentina, the single register for cases of violence against women (RUCVM) —developed jointly by the National Institute of Statistics and Censuses (INDEC) and the National Women’s Institute— centralizes data and generates statistics on the number of cases of violence against girls aged 14 and older that have been registered by any State administrative body in all sectors (for example health, education, justice, childhood, women’s affairs). However, the register does not include cases recorded in the National Register of Femicides.

In 2016, as part of the Strategic Action Plan to End Gender-based and Sexual Violence, Antigua and Barbuda developed a national electronic database on gender-based and sexual violence and established an inter-agency coordination mechanism.<sup>4</sup> Efforts are currently underway to merge the database with the Sexual Offences Model Court's monitoring and evaluation system to ensure follow-up of cases from the initial report throughout the justice chain.

In order to guarantee the statistical quality of information on deaths of women linked to gender-based violence in Ecuador, a technical group was set up under the umbrella of the Special Commission on Gender Statistics, which was established in 2010, to carry out technical validation across institutions of the national figures for femicides and present consensus and up-to-date findings.

Costa Rica has also established a number of inter-agency coordination mechanisms on gender statistics, including the Inter-Agency Commission for the National Survey on Violence against Women and the joint preparation by the National Institute of Statistics and Census and the National Institute of Women commission of technical guidelines for producing gender statistics.

While there has been clear progress in terms of measurement, some challenges remain, including the need for greater disaggregation of statistics. Information is required on the multiple discriminations suffered by women living in poverty, women with disabilities, migrant women, rural women, Afrodescendent women, women living with HIV, and lesbian, gay, bisexual transgender and intersex (LGBTI) persons.

The efforts made by Peru to include a question on ethnic self-identification in the 2017 national census, as well as the methodological review of the virtual survey for the LGTBI community, are noteworthy in this regard. Progress was made in the definitions to be included and the formulation of specific questions for the LGTBI community in the next national survey on strategic programmes (ENAPRES). Similarly, the National Institute of Statistics (INE) of Chile has conducted studies on the measurement of sex, gender identity and sexual orientation in the population census and household surveys.

There is also a need to strengthen the statistical capacities of the people and institutions using information so that they can better understand and use gender statistics, and the capacities of producers of information, to ensure the mainstreaming of gender in the overall production of the National Statistical System.

For example, Paraguay, has significantly improved the availability of gender-sensitive and sex-disaggregated data and statistics in recent years, driven by the Department of Statistics, Surveys and Censuses (DGEEC) and by public institutions' interest in having data, thanks to improved administrative records, on the situation of women and men and how they are served by public policies.

Through its Bureau of Gender Affairs, the Government of Barbados organized a national research consultation on gender indicators in May 2019, the first in a series of activities designed to build awareness about the linkages between gender indicators and the international conventions which the country has signed and ratified and to develop a strategy for storing information and data based on the gender indicators.

Gender statistics are not an end in themselves, hence the importance for governments to encourage the use of information in the formulation of public policies that aim to close gender gaps and guarantee women's autonomy. This will require better dissemination of information and data analyses from different statistical sources and enhanced coordination among various State entities.

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<sup>4</sup> The aim is to standardize admission and evaluation forms in order to facilitate data gathering among the Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda (RPFAB), the Family and Social Services Division (FSSD), the health sector, the Statistics Division, the Directorate of Gender Affairs (DoGA) and civil society.



## CHAPTER V

# The challenges of implementing the Beijing Platform for Action, between now and 2030

## A. The challenges of guaranteeing women's rights in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in Latin American and Caribbean countries

Twenty-five years after the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action, significant progress has been made in the recognition of women's rights and autonomy, and in the reduction of gender inequalities in Latin America and the Caribbean. Nonetheless, these advances in the different dimensions of women's autonomy have been slow and uneven. Furthermore, they have not been consistent, and obstacles remain which limit the scope of equality policies and their impact on the improvement of the living conditions of women and girls in the region.

The Montevideo Strategy for Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda within the Sustainable Development Framework by 2030 is the regional instrument for expediting the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, in synergy with the Regional Gender Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It recognizes the universal, indivisible, inalienable and interdependent nature of the economic, social, cultural, sexual and reproductive rights of women, as well as their civil, political and collective rights.

The challenges arising from the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action are presented in line with the women's human rights dimensions expressed in the Montevideo Strategy. These dimensions are re-examined, and problems relating to the conditions required for the full implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action by 2030 in Latin America and the Caribbean are analysed.

### 1. Right to a life free of violence and discrimination

The adoption of overarching strategies for the elimination of gender-based violence against women is one of the most significant institutional advances in the past five years. At least 17 countries have developed national policies or plans against violence.<sup>1</sup> Also in this time period, some countries have continued to develop comprehensive laws on violence against women, such as Peru (2015), Paraguay (2016), Uruguay (2017) and Ecuador (2018).

Nonetheless, challenges relating to the effective implementation of these laws and regulations remain. Access to justice and mechanisms for prevention, care and protection geared towards victims are still limited and the fight against femicide is a major challenge. In addition, the failure to prioritize these policies in budgets sometimes results in partial and insufficient implementation of regulations.

Figures on violence against women and femicide are still a matter of great concern for the region. There is an urgent need for the enforcement of laws and policies and the adoption of a broad range of preventative, punitive, protective and support measures to eliminate all forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls.

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<sup>1</sup> Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Belize, Chile, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Grenada, Haiti, Jamaica, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Plurinational State of Bolivia, Saint Lucia and Uruguay.

## 2. Sexual and reproductive rights

In the Regional Gender Agenda, governments made specific commitments to recognize and guarantee sexual and reproductive rights which complement those of the Cairo Declaration on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action. These commitments include access to sexual and reproductive health services, comprehensive sex education, the revision of laws that punish women who have undergone abortions and the guarantee that abortions are performed safely where authorized by the law.

However, the recognition of these rights in normative frameworks at the national level is an unresolved issue. The countries that have made considerable progress in this area, particularly in the decriminalization of abortion, face challenges in the implementation of universal, comprehensive, timely, accessible and good-quality services. In cases where the voluntary termination of pregnancy is legal, some countries have had to formulate regulations and protocols of care to overcome obstacles to implementation. There is also a need to adopt strategies to reduce maternal mortality, especially in countries that maintain restrictions on abortion laws.

Several countries mention concerns about child and adolescent pregnancy, particularly among indigenous, Afrodescendent and migrant girls and adolescents. Countries such as Argentina, Honduras, Mexico, Saint Kitts and Nevis and Uruguay have developed specific programmes in that regard. Uruguay, for example, has implemented a national intersectoral strategy for the prevention of unintended adolescent pregnancy, which aims to reduce the incidence of these pregnancies with a focus on human rights and gender. However, there is still work to be done to ensure comprehensive, timely and confidential services for adolescents and young people.

Another challenge is identifying and tackling the multiple forms of violence in the health sector. For example, the conceptualization of obstetric violence has allowed an understanding of the linkage between a right to a life free of violence and the enjoyment of sexual and reproductive rights. Several countries —such as Argentina, Costa Rica, Guatemala, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Uruguay— consider it necessary to include obstetric violence in their normative frameworks and to have the mechanisms to ensure that this issue is addressed effectively in health-care systems.

## 3. Economic, social and cultural rights

In recent years, active employment policies for women have been implemented. However, these have not been enough to eliminate gender-based labour market segregation and the precarious and informal working conditions experienced mainly by women in Latin America and the Caribbean. Moreover, in the region, poverty continues to have a greater impact on women than on men, especially at the critical productive and reproductive ages. Reverting the increase in poverty and the worsening feminization of poverty in the region is a major challenge.

With regard to social protection and security, progress has been made in policies for the redistribution of care and for the provision of non-contributory income. Nonetheless, labour market segregation and the overburden of unpaid work for women continue to have repercussions on access to social protection. Women have less coverage in terms of contributory retirement benefits and pensions, and receive lower amounts than men. Population ageing, and especially the increase in the proportion of women among older persons, implies new challenges for social protection systems and the guarantee of older women's rights. As a result, the systematic incorporation of the gender and rights perspective across all social programmes and policies and into social protection systems remains a test for countries. Progress in the design of comprehensive care systems within the social protection matrix must continue. It is also fundamental to encourage fair social organization of care, fostering co-responsibility and equality, for example through equal parental leave for men and women and State investment to guarantee a broad public offering of good-quality care services.

Digital and financial inclusion can serve as instruments for women's economic autonomy, and thus, accelerate the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. Some initiatives have been implemented to narrow gender gaps in access to the financial system in countries such as Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua and Saint Kitts and Nevis. However, these areas have not been reflected in governments' top priorities in the past five years.

The progress made in terms of women's greater participation in different levels of education should be accompanied by the provision of good-quality, timely education, that is free from stereotypes, and that helps to eliminate segregation in the education system and labour market. Various countries have developed action plans that seek to increase women's participation in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields. However, these efforts must be bolstered by lifelong education programmes and initiatives that provide women with the tools and knowledge to ensure their full participation in the most dynamic and innovative economic sectors.

#### 4. Civil and political rights

In the past five years, significant progress has been made on the normative and institutional fronts to guarantee women's political participation. However, in light of heterogeneous conditions in the region, some countries have achieved parity in parliamentary representation while in others, women's representation remains very low. Parity democracies are essential and require the creation of conditions for women's full participation. Some of the institutional instruments that could achieve this are transparent and sufficient financing systems and norms that include follow-up and monitoring mechanisms. Countries such as Honduras, Panama and Uruguay have emphasized the need to accelerate the movement towards parity in the economic sphere, through access to decision-making positions in public and private companies, for instance.

With regard to the recognition of civil rights, considerable efforts have been made through regulations and policies on sexual orientation and gender identity. For example, Chile passed a gender identity law in 2018, which allows persons over the age of 18 to change their name and sex in official records. In the institutional sphere, there have been advances reflected in the creation of forums for the design and development of programmes to guarantee the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersexual (LGBTI) persons, for example in Costa Rica, Ecuador and Uruguay. In Uruguay, the National Council on Sexual Diversity adopted the National Plan for Sexual Diversity 2018–2020, which fosters the full citizenship of LGBTI persons, guaranteeing the equal exercise of rights and social, political, labour, economic and cultural inclusion free from all stigma, discrimination and violence.

Lastly, in terms of the protection and guarantee of rights of human rights defenders, although some progress has been made with respect to prevention and support strategies in situations of violence towards social and environmental leaders and human rights defenders, cases of attacked or murdered leaders are increasing in the region. This represents a warning about the urgent need for change in cultural and representation patterns to ensure that social mobilization does not pose threats to women's lives.

#### 5. Collective and environmental rights

Some countries have made progress in incorporating the gender perspective into policies on sustainable development, climate change and disaster risk reduction (e.g. Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Paraguay and Uruguay). This is an area of particular concern for Caribbean countries (e.g. Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Guyana, Turks and Caicos Islands, Saint Lucia and Suriname). Moreover, strengthening women's participation to guarantee environmental sustainability has been a priority for countries such as Barbados and Grenada in the past five years.

Although the link between gender equality and the environment was an area of concern expressed in the Beijing Platform for Action, the impacts of climate change on women's lives over the past 25 years pose additional problems. Several national reports from the Caribbean highlight the challenges faced with regard to vulnerability to hurricanes, the damage they can do, and the need for public investment in reconstruction. Hurricanes can result in the loss of dwellings, productive assets, services and infrastructure, with a specific impact on women's rights. Therefore, the link between gender equality policies and climate change adaptation and mitigation and disaster risk reduction strategies must be analysed, to ensure greater coordination and impact between now and 2030.

## 6. The indivisibility of women's rights warrants comprehensive responses

International and regional human rights norms have established the indivisibility of rights as a key principle. Public policies that recognize the importance of guaranteeing women's rights in their entirety are needed. For example, gender-based violence is manifested in many ways and in different areas, limiting the full realization of women's rights. Several governments have highlighted the emergence of political violence and harassment targeting women as their political participation has increased. One of the challenges underlined in the report by Mexico is the lack of a legal framework that conceptualizes and punishes political violence against women because of their gender. The Plurinational State of Bolivia passed Law No. 243 against political harassment and violence against women, and faces the challenge of effective application of the law through the establishment of mechanisms for punishment and monitoring of implementation, for raising awareness of the law and for training justice officials and civil servants in order to end impunity.

### B. Challenges relating to conditions for the implementation of equality policies

Advances towards equality and the guarantee of rights have not been consistent. Changes in the economic and political cycle in the region pose risks for the achievements and rights won in recent years and warn of the possible widening of inequality gaps. The emergence and greater protagonism of conservative groups in the public space and their questioning of the scope of equality policies is a concern for some governments of the region (e.g. Costa Rica and Uruguay). In order to protect achievements, avoid backsliding and accelerate the fulfilment of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Regional Gender Agenda, emphasis must be placed on the political, economic and institutional sustainability of gender equality policies. Therefore, the 10 pillars of the Montevideo Strategy focus on overcoming implementation gaps and institutional resistance to equality. In that regard, national progress reports on the execution of the Beijing Platform for Action refer to challenges in four implementation pillars: institutional architecture, financing, information systems and participation.

#### 1. Institutional architecture

Countries have prioritized the need to consolidate the gender institutional architecture through the hierarchization of machineries for the advancement of women and the strengthening of the institutional framework in order to mainstream the gender perspective at different levels of the State.

Some countries have strengthened gender institutions, for example El Salvador, Honduras and Panama. Progress has been made with regard to inter-agency structures for national and subnational coordination; in other words, the introduction of national machineries for women and their coordination with other public and civil society institutions at the subnational level (e.g. in Honduras, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Uruguay).

Several national reports (e.g. from Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico and Uruguay) also highlight the need to incorporate intersectionality and interculturalism, in addition to the gender perspective, into public programmes and policies, so that women's diversity is taken into consideration. With regard to policies to eliminate violence, the intersectional approach is key to identifying the intertwining forms of discrimination that women face and to designing policies and programmes that provide comprehensive solutions.

#### 2. Financing

Access to sufficient resources for the full implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Regional Gender Agenda is a constant challenge. The scope of commitments requires resources not only for the gender institutional architecture and policies to end gender-based violence, but also for other sectoral policies and national plans, such as those associated with the productive sphere, care, innovation, education and the environment, to name a few. Some countries have made progress in incorporating the gender perspective into

budgetary measures. This has allowed institutions to identify and set aside financial resources for investment in policies and actions to promote gender equality, and to monitor the budget allocated to equality. Honduras and Mexico have underscored that beyond the progress made, there is a need to strengthen the incorporation of the gender perspective into planning and budgeting instruments, and systems for the follow-up of resources allocated to equality and women's autonomy.

Some countries have also warned of the impact of fiscal consolidation policies on spending which, in particular, could affect the resources destined for gender policies and institutional architecture.

### 3. Information systems

Although considerable progress has been made in the production of information, coordination mechanisms with an intersectoral approach are needed to guarantee the mainstreaming of the gender perspective in all outputs of national statistical systems. The countries believe it is necessary to build capacity for the production, analysis and use of statistical information with a gender focus.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, it is essential to continue encouraging partnerships between producers and users of information, and to ensure sufficient budgets to carry out systematic and comparable statistical events.

One concern shared by several countries is the need to regularly build disaggregated indicators for a set of variables that incorporate the situation of women facing intertwining forms of discrimination, especially adolescent and young women, indigenous, rural and Afrodescendent women, migrant women, women with disabilities and LGBTI persons, among others. This places considerable pressure on statistical systems and requires the strengthening of political will and of efforts to ensure that measurement instruments fulfil these objectives. This information is also essential to improve the design of public policies and strengthen monitoring and evaluation systems, and to analyse the advances towards the closure of gaps and respect for the principle of leaving no one behind established in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

### 4. Participation of civil society

Various national reports show the fundamental role played by the contributions and support of civil society organizations, particularly women's and feminist organizations and other strategic actors, in the implementation of policies and strengthening of institutions focused on the gender perspective in public management.

In particular, the report from Uruguay reinforces this idea, indicating that the implementation of the public policy on gender must encourage spaces that strengthen women's participation and influence, as rights bearers, and that public policies on gender must foster women's organization, either in local forums for participation or according to the scope of these policies, bolstering the influence and monitoring of public intervention. Argentina and the Dominican Republic also emphasize the importance of women's and feminist movements' participation in the monitoring of public policies, including those aimed at eliminating gender-based violence against women.

## C. Synergies between regional and global commitments, between now and 2030

Twenty-five years after the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action, the comprehensive focus on women's rights and the 12 critical areas outlined in that document remain valid in the effort to overcome gender inequalities in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development reaffirms the commitments made in the Beijing Platform for Action and includes gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment as a key requirement for the achievement of sustainable development and for leaving no one behind.

<sup>2</sup> Bahamas, Dominican Republic, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Plurinational State of Bolivia, Saint Lucia and Suriname.

The Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean is part of the region's heritage, and the leading forum for the implementation and coordinated follow-up of the Beijing Platform for Action, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Regional Gender Agenda. For governments, the United Nations system and civil society, the sessions of the Conference serve as the ideal setting to analyse synergies and address the structural causes of gender inequality in order to advance towards fairer and more egalitarian societies. All these instruments provide a solid base for action and represent a commitment to continue advancing towards gender equality and the realization of women's and girls' rights.

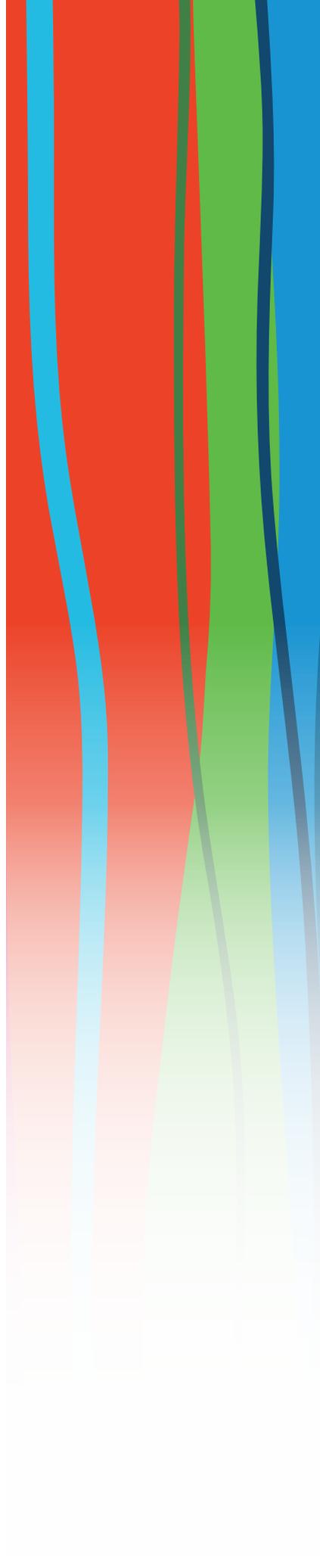
For more than 40 years, the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean has emphasized the need for information to shed light on the situation of women and girls. The Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) has established gender statistics as one of its priority lines of work. Therefore, deepening the coordinated efforts of these ECLAC subsidiary bodies is fundamental to continue promoting the production of information to follow up the commitments of the Regional Gender Agenda, the Beijing Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Montevideo Strategy has been crucial to accelerating the implementation of international and regional commitments on gender equality and women's rights. It has contributed to the hierarchization of machineries for the advancement of women in State structures and strengthened governments' commitments to incorporating gender equality into sustainable development strategies and plans. Between now and 2030, it is essential to continue addressing implementation obstacles and gaps to guarantee the full realization of women's and girls' rights.

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