

2055

# NINTH REGIONAL CONFERENCE on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean



UNITED NATIONS

**ECLAC**

**Mexico City  
10-12 June 2004**

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**



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## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**



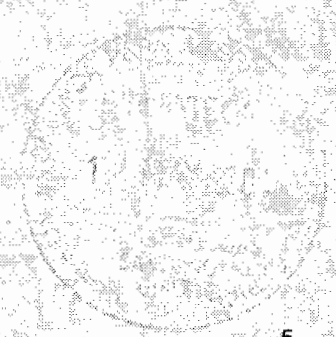
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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

Santiago, Chile, March 2004

LC/L 2055  
March 2004



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REGIONAL  
CONFERENCE  
ON WOMEN IN  
LATIN AMERICA  
AND THE  
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## 1. WHAT IS THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE?

The Regional Conference is a subsidiary body of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) which is convened on a regular basis. Its purposes are to identify women's needs at the regional and subregional levels, present recommendations, undertake periodic assessments of the activities carried out in fulfilment of regional and international plans and agreements on the subject, and serve as a forum for debates on relevant issues.

### PERMANENT AUXILIARY BODIES OF ECLAC:

The Commission, which holds a session once every two years, has established the following permanent bodies:

- Committee of the Whole
- Committee of High-level Government Experts
- Central American Economic Cooperation Committee
- Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee
- Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean
- Regional Council for Planning
- Statistical Conference of the Americas



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To date, the States members<sup>1</sup> of ECLAC have held eight sessions of the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean. The locations and dates of these sessions have been the following: Havana, Cuba (1977), Macuto, Venezuela (1979), Mexico City (1983), Guatemala City (1988), Curaçao, Netherlands Antilles (1991), Mar del Plata, Argentina (1994), Santiago, Chile (1997) and Lima, Peru (1991). In addition, in 1984 in Havana, the member States held the Regional Meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean in Preparation for the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, which was held in Nairobi in 1985.

## **2. WHO CONVENES THE SESSIONS OF THE CONFERENCE?**

ECLAC has been given the mandate to convene the member States to sessions of the Regional Conference.<sup>2</sup>

In accordance with the corresponding regulations, no later than six weeks prior to each session of the Regional Conference, the Executive Secretary of ECLAC sends out invitations to the member countries and associate members of the Commission to participate in the deliberations. Other States Members of the United Nations and representatives of other bodies and programmes forming part of the United Nations system are invited to attend as observers, as are representatives of intergovernmental organizations and of non-governmental organizations enjoying consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, and special guests.

## **3. WHERE ARE THE SESSIONS OF THE CONFERENCE HELD?**

Generally, a member country of ECLAC offers to host the conference. On this occasion, the Government of Mexico will host the meeting, which is to be held from 10 to 12 June 2004 in Mexico City.



## 4.

### **WHAT ARE THE AIMS OF THE NINTH SESSION OF THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE?**

At the ninth session of the Regional Conference, member States shall review the implementation of the international commitments made in the Regional Programme of Action for the Women of Latin America and the Caribbean, which was adopted in 1994 by the sixth session of the Regional Conference and ratified in 2000 in the Lima Consensus. The Conference shall also serve as a forum for deciding on the regional contribution to the forty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, which is to be held in March 2005.

## 5.

### **WHO ATTENDS THE SESSIONS OF THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE?**

The sessions of the Regional Conference are attended by representatives of the member States and associate members of ECLAC and, as observers, by representatives of States holding consultative status.<sup>3</sup>

In addition, the sessions are attended by observers from United Nations programmes and bodies,<sup>4</sup> the specialized agencies and other autonomous organizations within the system,<sup>5</sup> intergovernmental organizations,<sup>6</sup> and non-governmental organizations holding category I or category II consultative status with the Economic and Social Council. In the interests of the member States, ECLAC has also traditionally invited other institutions to attend which are in a position to provide valuable inputs in their fields; in extending such invitations, priority is given to regional or subregional organizations.

## 6.

### **WHO ARE THE PRESIDING OFFICERS OF THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE?**

The Commission elects Presiding Officers at the beginning of each session of the Regional Conference. The Heads of Delegation are summoned to a meeting which is held prior to the opening of the regular session for this purpose. The Presiding Officers usually include a Chairperson (this office



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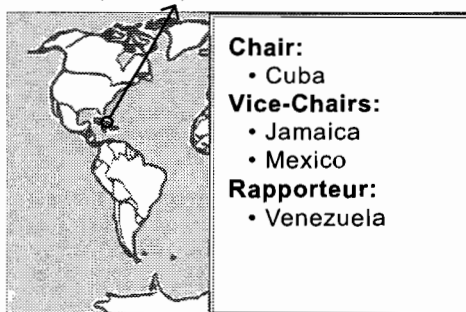
is usually held by the host country), two Vice-Chairpersons and a Rapporteur. The members chosen to serve as Presiding Officers continue to do so until their successors are elected (ECLAC, 1990).

The member States elect the Presiding Officers for each session of the Conference based on the principles of rotation of duties and of adequate representation of the various subregions. In order to maintain a permanent mechanism for action in relation to women's issues, it was established in the Regional Plan of Action that the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference would continue their work during the intervals between sessions of the Conference and would serve as a liaison between the Governments and the secretariat of ECLAC with regard to the integration of women into development.<sup>7</sup> Accordingly, the Presiding Officers have met twice a year for the past decade and have held 35 such meetings since 1978.

## 7. WHICH COUNTRIES HAVE BEEN REPRESENTED BY THE PRESIDING OFFICERS?\*

The Presiding Officers for the sessions of the Regional Conference have been as follows:

### First session Havana, Cuba, 1977



\* The boundaries and names shown on these maps do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

**Second session  
Macuto, Venezuela, 1979**



- Chair:**
- Venezuela
- Vice-Chairs:**
- Brazil
  - Colombia
  - Cuba
  - Jamaica
  - Mexico
  - Uruguay
- Rapporteur:**
- Costa Rica

**Third session  
Mexico City, 1983**



- Chair:**
- Mexico
- Vice-Chairs:**
- Ecuador
  - Guyana
  - Panama
- Rapporteur:**
- Argentina

**Fourth session  
Guatemala City, 1988**



- Chair:**
- Guatemala
- Vice-Chairs:**
- Argentina
  - Cuba
  - Netherlands Antilles
- Rapporteur:**
- Venezuela



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**Fifth session**  
**Curaçao, Netherlands Antilles, 1991**



**Chair:**

- Netherlands Antilles

**Vice-Chairs:**

- Cuba
- Chile
- Guatemala
- Mexico
- St. Kitts and Nevis
- Venezuela

**Rapporteur:**

- Argentina

**Sixth session**  
**Mar del Plata, Argentina, 1994**



**Chair:**

- Argentina

**Vice-Chairs:**

- Barbados
- Bolivia
- Chile
- Cuba
- Ecuador
- Honduras
- Netherlands Antilles
- Uruguay

**Rapporteur:**

- Mexico

**Seventh session**  
**Santiago, Chile, 1997**



**Chair:**

- Chile

**Vice-Chairs:**

- Argentina
- Barbados
- Bolivia
- Brazil
- Cuba
- El Salvador
- Netherlands Antilles
- Paraguay
- Venezuela

**Rapporteur:**

- Mexico

**Eighth session  
Lima, Peru, 2000**



**Chair:**

- Peru

**Vice-Chairs:**

- Antigua and Barbuda
- Argentina
- Bolivia
- Brazil
- Chile
- Costa Rica
- Cuba
- Ecuador
- El Salvador
- Netherlands Antilles
- Paraguay
- Suriname
- Uruguay
- Venezuela

**Rapporteur:**

- Mexico

## **8. WHAT ISSUES WILL BE CONSIDERED AT THE NINTH SESSION OF THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE?**

The reference framework for the work of the ninth session will be the Millennium Development Goals adopted by the General Assembly (New York, 2000) (United Nations, 2000), the Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995),<sup>8</sup> the international commitments relating to the advancement of women adopted by the world summits held in the 1990s,<sup>9</sup> and the Regional Programme of Action for the Women of Latin America and the Caribbean adopted at the sixth session of the Regional Conference on Women (Mar del Plata, 1994)<sup>10</sup> and ratified by the Lima Consensus (2000).<sup>11</sup>

In this context, the Presiding Officers, at their thirty-fifth meeting, held in Havana, Cuba, on 28 and 29 April 2003, recommended that the work of the ninth session be divided into an ongoing plenary meeting and two parallel thematic meetings, one on each of the two thematic areas tentatively referred to as “poverty, economy and gender



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equity” and “empowerment, institution-building and gender equity” (ECLAC, 2003).

## 9.

### **WHO PREPARES THE DOCUMENTS FOR THE CONFERENCE?**

The position paper for the Conference is prepared by the secretariat of ECLAC and will be submitted to the governments at the three subregional preparatory meetings, whose inputs will be included in the final version that will serve as a basis for the debates to be held at this session.

The secretariat will also present other background papers for the Conference, prepared by ECLAC exclusively or in collaboration with other United Nations bodies or academic institutions in the region.

## 10.

### **HOW WILL THE SESSION BE ORGANIZED?**

The preparations for the ninth session of the Regional Conference shall consist of three subregional meetings that will take place in Central America (Tegucigalpa, Honduras, 5 and 6 February 2004), the Caribbean (St. Vincent and the Grenadines, 11-13 February 2004) and South America (Brasilia, Brazil, 23 and 24 March 2004). These shall be working meetings at which the position paper shall be analysed and which shall be attended by representatives of the national women’s offices of the member countries of the respective subregions.

The first day of the Conference shall be devoted to the election of the Presiding Officers and to a plenary meeting, at which the activities carried out in the past four years shall be reviewed. Plenary meetings shall also be held on the other days, and on the second day and the morning of the third, two working groups shall meet to consider the subjects selected.



# 11. OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED IN RECENT DECADES

## Regional level

In 1973, ECLAC adopted resolution 321(XV) on the “participation of women in Latin American development” at its fifteenth session, held in Quito. The secretariat was also asked to prepare a number of studies on the status of women in Latin America and the Caribbean.

## International level

In 1974, the Commission on the Status of Women decided to convene a world conference in Mexico City in 1975 to mark International Women’s Year.

## Regional level

In 1975, the first baseline studies on the subject were presented at a regional seminar for Latin America on the integration of women into development, with special emphasis on demographic factors (Caracas, May 1975). A compilation of studies and reports served as the basis for the book entitled *Mujeres en América Latina: aportes para una discusión*, which ECLAC presented at the first World Conference.

## International level

In 1975 the first meeting at the international level, the World Conference of the International Women’s Year, was held in Mexico City. Its objectives were as follows: (a) to evaluate the performance of the United Nations system with respect to the implementation of the recommendations formulated by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women; (b) to analyse new ways of promoting women’s full participation in the development process, with particular attention to women in rural areas; (c) to develop a plan of action for enhancing the contribution of women to the achievement of the objectives of the Second United Nations Development Decade; and (d) to recognize women’s contribution to the attainment of world peace. The World Conference concluded with the adoption of a World Plan of Action.

## Regional level

In 1977 the Regional Plan of Action for the Integration of Women into Latin American Economic and Social Development



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was adopted at the first session of the Regional Conference and was ratified at the eleventh special session of the ECLAC Committee of the Whole.

### **International level**

In December 1979, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

### **Regional level**

In 1979, the second session of the Regional Conference was held in Macuto, Venezuela. During the session the participants evaluated the progress made towards fulfilling the Regional Plan of Action and drew up recommendations in that connection.

### **International level**

In 1980 the second international meeting, the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, was held in Copenhagen. The Programme of Action for the Second Half of the United Nations Decade for Women was approved on this occasion.

### **Regional level**

In 1983, the third session of the Regional Conference was held in Mexico City. At that session the participants evaluated the progress made towards fulfilling the Regional Plan of Action, formulated recommendations in that regard and embarked upon activities at the regional level in preparation for the Third World Conference on Women.

### **Regional level**

In 1984, the Regional Meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean in Preparation for the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women was held in Havana. This preparatory meeting was organized by the Branch for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs and the secretariat of ECLAC.

### **International level**

In 1985 the first edition of the *World Survey on the Role of Women in Development* was published. The Third World Conference on

Women was held in Nairobi for the purpose of developing specific action proposals. The Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women were adopted at the Conference.

### **Regional level**

In 1988 the fourth session of the Regional Conference was held in Guatemala City. Among other matters, the participants analysed the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies and their implementation at the national, subregional and regional levels.

### **International level**

In 1990 General Assembly resolution 45/129, Economic and Social Council resolution 1990/12 and Commission on the Status of Women resolution 36/8A on the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies and preparations for the fourth world conference, including the Platform for Action, were adopted.

### **Regional level**

In 1991 the fifth session of the Regional Conference was held in Curaçao. In one of the resolutions adopted at that session, the Regional Conference affirmed that “the changes experienced by the region since then [since the adoption of the Regional Plan of Action in 1977] have been radical ones, requiring an analysis of the future from a new perspective, including a reorientation of concepts and programmes relating to women”. Accordingly, it recommended that a new regional plan of action for the integration of women into Latin American and Caribbean economic and social development should be prepared to serve as a new regional instrument in preparation for the world conference in 1995.

### **Regional level**

In 1994 the sixth session of the Regional Conference was held in Mar del Plata, Argentina. The Regional Programme of Action for the Women of Latin America and the Caribbean, 1995-2001 (see page 10) was approved at the Conference, which also served as a preparatory meeting for the Fourth World Conference on Women.

### **International level**

In 1995 the Fourth World Conference on Women was held in Beijing. The Platform for Action was approved at this meeting.



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### **Regional level**

In 1997 the seventh session of the Regional Conference was held in Santiago, Chile. The regional process of analysis and follow-up in connection with the Regional Programme of Action for the Women of Latin America and the Caribbean, 1995-2001, and the Beijing Platform for Action was put in motion. The Santiago Consensus was approved.

### **International level**

In 1999 the Commission on the Status of Women held its forty-third session and approved the optional protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which was subsequently adopted at the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly. The draft optional protocol establishes a procedure for submitting a petition under the Convention and a procedure for the investigation of serious or systematic violations of the human rights articulated therein.

### **Regional level**

In February 2000 the eighth session of the Regional Conference was held in Lima Peru, at which the member countries made a commitment in the Lima Consensus to strengthen implementation of the Regional Programme of Action beyond the year 2001.

### **International level**

In June 2000, a special session was held of the United Nations General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century". It was held five years after the Fourth World Conference, and also known as the Beijing five-year review. The progress achieved in the application of the Nairobi Strategies (1985) and the Beijing Platform of Action (1995) was reviewed and evaluated at this session. New actions and initiatives were approved for 2000 and subsequent years.

In September 2000, the Millennium Declaration was adopted at the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly, also known as the "Millennium Assembly". The Declaration established eight development goals and the countries resolved to take new measures and combine their efforts in the fight against poverty, illiteracy, hunger, lack of education, gender inequality, infant and maternal mortality, disease and environmental degradation. In connection with the eighth goal, it urges the rich countries to take debt alleviation measures, increase assistance and allow the poorest countries to have access to their markets and technologies.

## **Activities of non-governmental organizations related to the Ninth Session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean**

### **Alternative women's forum of civil-society and social organizations**

1. **Hosted by:** "Milenio feminista" of Mexico, in coordination with the "Equipo operativo hacia Beijing + 10 de redes y campañas regionales" (Beijing + 10 task force of regional networks and campaigns)
2. **Date:** 8 and 9 June 2004
3. **Place:** Mexico City
4. **Information and registration:**

Friné López  
"Milenio feminista" of Mexico  
frinel@laneta.apc.org

Ximena Machicao Barbery  
Red de educación popular entre mujeres (REPEM)  
cidem2@accelerate.com / repem@repem.org.uy



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## Notes

- 1 The States members of ECLAC are: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, France, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Italy, Jamaica, Mexico, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Portugal, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Spain, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay and Venezuela.

The following territories are associate members of ECLAC: Anguilla, Aruba, British Virgin Islands, Montserrat, Netherlands Antilles, Puerto Rico and United States Virgin Islands.

- 2 The mandates received by ECLAC regarding activities oriented towards the women of the region are primarily set forth in the *Regional Plan of Action for the Integration of Women into Latin American Economic and Social Development* (ECLAC, 1977), which was adopted by the member States at the eleventh special meeting of the Committee of the Whole of ECLAC on 21 November 1977 and in the *Regional Programme of Action for the Women of Latin America and the Caribbean, 1995-2001* (ECLAC/United Nations Development Fund for Women), which was approved by the member States at the sixth session of the Regional Conference and adopted by resolution 558(XXVI) at the twenty-sixth session of ECLAC.
- 3 States Members of the United Nations which do not belong to the Commission and States which are not members of the United Nations, hold consultative *status* and attend the sessions as observers.
- 4 United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations International Drug Control



Programme (UNDCP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and World Food Programme (WFP).

- 5 These institutions *include* the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), International Labour Organization (ILO) and World Health Organization/Pan American Health Organization (WHO/PAHO).
- 6 Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), Inter-American Commission of Women (IACW), Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Latin American Social Sciences Council (CLACSO), Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO), Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), Inter-American Institute of Human Rights (IIDH), Organization of American States (OAS), International Organization for Migration (IOM) and Latin American Parliament.
- 7 See ECLAC, 1997, chapter IV, article 88, paragraph 2.
- 8 See Beijing Platform for Action, 1995.
- 9 World Summit for Children (New York, 1990); United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, 1992); World Conference on Human Rights (Vienna, 1993); International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 1994); World Summit on Social Development (Copenhagen, 1995).
- 10 See ECLAC/UNIFEM, 1995.
- 11 See Lima Consensus, 2000.



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