



UNITED NATIONS



## *Integrating gender into macroeconomic policy and The use of gender indicators in public policy-making.*

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This issue of the Gender Dialogue focuses on two programmatic areas of ECLAC's work over recent years, namely



(i) **integrating gender into macroeconomic policy** and (ii) **the use of gender indicators in public policy-making**. In its work on integrating gender into macroeconomic policy, the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean conducted a study to determine the capacity of economic planning units in selected countries of the subregion to integrate gender into the macroeconomic planning process and the findings are highlighted below. The study is intended to assist in the development of a training agenda for Caribbean economic planners and others involved in the formulation of macroeconomic policy. Further, as part of a wider ECLAC project on the use of gender indicators in public policy-making, a database of gender indicators for the Caribbean has been created and the broad elements of the database are also presented in this issue.

### *I. Gender and Macroeconomic Policy*

The importance of integrating gender into macroeconomic policy has been recognized internationally as well as regionally. The Port-of-Spain Consensus adopted at the Third Ministerial Conference on Women convened by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean/Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (ECLAC/CDCC) urges governments in the Caribbean subregion to engage in gender impact assessments of macroeconomic and budgetary policies, with a view not only to influencing policy responses, but also to taking full account of all the potential negative effects of the ongoing process of globalization. It further recommends the application of data on female-headed households as part of macroeconomic policy formulation. The concern for the development of macroeconomic policies which are compatible with the goals of gender equality, development and peace were restated at the Special Session on Women 2000 (Beijing+5) where it was agreed that a gender perspective must be applied in macroeconomic and social policy development in order to ensure equal access to social services and to economic resources. Further, at the Fourth Caribbean Ministerial Conference on Women, held in St Vincent and the Grenadines from 11-13 February 2004, Ministers with responsibility for women's/gender affairs urged that policies which take into account the rapid pace of globalisation and the resultant displacement of women seeking better working conditions outside of their home be strengthened. More recently, at the twelfth Meeting of the Council for Human and Social Development of CARICOM, held in Georgetown, Guyana from 27-29 April 2005, 'Gender Mainstreaming in Macroeconomics and Labour' was an important area of focus.

The Port-of-Spain Consensus adopted at the Third Ministerial Conference on Women convened by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean/Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (ECLAC/CDCC) urges governments in the Caribbean subregion to engage in gender impact assessments of macroeconomic and budgetary policies, with a view not only to influencing policy responses, but also to taking full account of all the potential negative effects of the ongoing process of globalization.

*Needs Assessment of Economic Planning Units in Gender Analysis in Selected Caribbean Countries - A study undertaken in 2004 by the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean.*

ECLAC/CDCC developed a Gender and Macroeconomic Policy Special Project as part of its work in assisting member countries to meet the above commitments, and following recommendations emerging from an ECLAC/CDCC expert meeting on gender and macroeconomics. The overall objective of this Project is to catalyse and strengthen the understanding of gender differentials in the formulation and implementation of macroeconomic policies, so as to improve gender equity outcomes in the Caribbean. The specific objectives are to: determine the knowledge gaps in economic planning units which potentially proscribe gender-aware policy development; and to close any such gaps by building the capacity of national and regional economic planners in gender analysis and planning.

As the first activity in this project, ECLAC undertook a needs assessment of economic planning units in four countries of the subregion – Belize, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago and St. Vincent and the Grenadines – to evaluate their capacity to integrate gender into macroeconomic planning processes.

The study considered the extent to which the countries under study have sought to integrate gender into macroeconomic planning and the institutional, human resource capacity and attitudinal factors that facilitated or hindered such integration. The process involved interviews with key resource persons in each of the four countries. Represented in these interviews were economists, planners, directors and ministers from planning, finance and other strategic ministries; central banks; universities; the national women's machineries (NWMs); and relevant non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Government policy documents and existing research on gender and macroeconomic policy in the region were also taken into consideration.

## **Parameters of the study**

This needs assessment sought to answer the following questions:

***What, for each country under study, is involved in integrating gender into macroeconomic policy?***

***What are the organizations or institutions which support or could potentially support the work of the economic planning unit; what is their capacity to lend such support?***

***What opportunities for integration of gender are provided by the institutional framework in which policy is developed?***

***What is the gap between the attitudes, levels of technical skill and theoretical knowledge required for integration of gender into macroeconomic planning, and those observed in the four countries under study?***

***Would training be sufficient to effect some substantial improvement in the way gender is currently integrated into planning processes, and if so, what general recommendations can be made for the design of such training?***

## Conceptual basis of integrating gender into macroeconomic policy

The study also provided a conceptual understanding of the need to integrate gender into macroeconomic policy as follows:

Macroeconomic analysis may be described as the consideration of the interaction of a few highly aggregated markets of the economy; traditionally the labour market, asset market, and the goods market. Based on theoretical assumptions about what constitutes these markets, macroeconomists functionally specify the connections and the nature of the interaction among them, in order to be able to identify economic problems and determine what policies could be implemented to bring about conditions of growth and an increase in per capita levels of income. Implicit in this process is the assumption that higher growth rates are of necessity accompanied by increased well-being. Although high growth rates are an important factor in poverty reduction and have a high positive correlation with many indices of human development, they do not ensure an equitable distribution of income to all sectors of society. This is evidenced by many regional examples of moderate to high growth rates accompanied by worsening poverty levels.

In identifying Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as an economic target, governments usually pursue three types of policy objectives: a balanced foreign sector, full or high employment and low inflation; for which they make use of three instruments: exchange rate policy, monetary policy and fiscal policy. The study focuses on the interrelation of gender and fiscal policy.

The gendered division of labour, which sees women primarily responsible for reproductive work, and men for **productive work**, also has macroeconomic implications. Cagatay, Elson and Grown (1995a) assert that 'free market' economies, as socially constructed institutions, reflect and perpetuate gender inequalities in their failure to capture unpaid reproductive work as an economic activity. Such work must be made visible if gender biases are to be removed from economic planning.

The structural adjustment policies of the 1980s and 1990s demonstrated the economic value of reproductive and voluntary work, and its link to productive sectors. The primary objective of these programmes was to increase the capability of the market system to respond to signals by eliminating structural and institutional rigidities that inhibit market adjustment. Such rigidities included government intervention through subsidies and protectionist trade policies which, it was thought, maintained balance of payment crises by distorting relative prices and thus inhibiting the allocative function of the market. With the subsequent decreases in public investment in health, education and other social services, costs, (in the form of increased women's labour and time use), for provision of discontinued government services were shifted to the (invisible) reproductive sector. Therefore, as Elson (1995) observes, forced savings at the macroeconomic level assumes 'forced-labour' in the reproductive sector, with repercussions manifested in the disintegration of the health and social cohesion of the population. This, in turn, may require the restoration of government intervention through public expenditure on social services, returning the economy to the very situation in which contractionary policies were thought to have been necessary.

Moreover, there is growing research indicating that gender biases and inequalities in income and asset distribution, in the labour market, in access to credit and in decision-making could hamper the effective and productive use of human resources in meeting human needs. Research on economic growth and education shows that failing to invest in education lowers gross national product (GNP): everything else being equal, countries in which the ratio of male to female enrolment in primary or secondary education is less than 0.75 can expect levels of GNP that are roughly 25 per cent lower than countries in which there is less gender disparity in education. (Hill and King, 1995)

**Productive activities** are those income-generating activities generally associated with the formal market, whereas reproductive activities are associated with the household and involve the care and development of people. It is biological differences which dictate that women give birth to children, but it is socially-constructed gender relations which account for women being primarily responsible for unpaid, reproductive activities.



***The probability of children being enrolled in school increases with their mother's educational level, and extra income going to mothers has more positive impact on household investment in nutrition, health and education of children than extra income going to fathers, which tends to be skewed towards leisure commodities and goods that are status symbols***

**Photo: Marco Gatica / El Mercurio**

Research on gender inequality in the labour market shows that eliminating gender discrimination in occupation and pay could increase not only women's income, but national income. For instance, if gender inequality in the labour markets in Latin America were to be eliminated, not only could women's wages rise by about 50 per cent, but national output could rise by 5 per cent. (*Tzannatos, 1997*)

Gender inequality also reduces the productivity of the next generation. The World Bank reports mounting evidence that increases in women's well-being yield productivity gains in the future. The probability of children being enrolled in school increases with their mother's educational level, and extra income going to mothers has more positive impact on household investment in nutrition, health and education of children than extra income going to fathers, which tends to be skewed towards leisure commodities and goods that are status symbols. (*World Bank, 1997*)

In terms of agricultural production, research shows that reducing gender inequality could significantly increase agricultural yields, and this is especially significant for many agrarian Caribbean territories such as Saint Lucia and St Vincent and the Grenadines. For instance, it was found that giving women farmers in Cuba the same level of agricultural inputs and education as men farmers could increase yields obtained by women farmers by more than 20 per cent.

While it is true that policy interventions which promote equal access of men and women to resources often need to be made at the micro and meso levels – e.g. education and job training; and legal and institutional reform of policies which prevent or disadvantage women's participation in economic activity – such interventions must be reinforced by gender-aware macroeconomic planning, for which fiscal policy provides a sound entry point. Gender may be integrated into macroeconomic models, medium term planning processes, specific development strategies such as poverty strategies, or in the budget process.

## Summary of findings

*The overall findings of the study point not only to a systematic absence of gender analysis in macroeconomic policy formulation but, in some cases, the absence of a clearly-defined planning machinery which would support the complete integration of social and economic planning processes. Even in those countries where official government documents seem to indicate efforts to consider the gender and other social content of macroeconomic policies, planning remains a largely financial exercise based more on historical monetary values than on informed socio-economic research.*

However, the study discovered some promising foundations on which future efforts at integration of gender into macroeconomic policy may build, ranging from efforts at collection of time-use data in Trinidad and Tobago, to the construction of a gender-sensitive social accounting matrix in Suriname. What is crucial at this time, however, given the difficulties in capacity being experienced by economic planning units and related institutions in the region, is to focus as an initial priority on gender-aware allocation of public expenditures within the budget process, while emphasizing the importance of unifying all processes of macroeconomic planning within a gender-sensitive framework

## Conclusion and recommendations

Although regional economic planning units are responsible for macroeconomic policy development, an assessment of their capacity to integrate gender must take into account available resources in other areas of government and outside government; and mechanisms for access to such resources. This study has found that *generally*, with the exception of Suriname (and, to a much lesser extent, Trinidad and Tobago with its Centre for Gender and Development Studies), both planning units and organizations which might potentially provide support lack the technical capacity to mainstream gender into macro planning. Economic planning units require training in concepts of the social construction of gender, household bargaining and the differential management of resources, and the interaction of gender and the economy. This should form the basis for further country-specific training in gender budget analysis.

The interaction of macroeconomic planning and the budget process with trade policies has also been identified as an issue requiring attention. The broad reorientation of government resources toward the 'productive' sectors in the light of trade policies is indicative of a lack of recognition of the productive nature of reproductive work, and compromises economic growth and well-being. These issues need to be borne in mind in the design of a regional training programme in gender and macroeconomics.

The fact that many donor organizations with portfolios in the region, including regional organizations, do not prioritize gender as a criterion in the approval and *implementation* of projects is an area which also requires attention. This constrains the level of gender-awareness of country programmes in a context of ever-decreasing official development assistance.

Despite these limitations, the outlook appears favourable to begin the integration of gender into macroeconomic policies in the region. Each of the countries under study has had some exposure to the principles of gender and macroeconomic analysis, and there exists a reasonable level of political will towards initiatives which promote the use of gender as a point of economic analysis.

As a crucial step in overcoming difficulties in capacity and institutional structure, it is important that member countries be encouraged to reaffirm their commitment not only to this specific exercise, but to activities of institutional strengthening and reform which would support this exercise. This commitment must come from the highest levels of government office not in response to an abstract goal of gender equality, but as a result of active, substantive participation in initiatives such as the present one.

Also as a general recommendation, countries should be encouraged (especially for the purposes of participation in this initiative) to pull all economic planning exercises into a transparent and unified activity whose center is the national budget. Any capacity building exercise should focus as a matter of initial priority on public expenditures within the national budget, with emphasis being placed on the integration of the technical exercise of financial planning and other processes such as multi-annual development plans and macroeconomic modeling.

It is also instructive to support the continued visibility of the importance of gender analysis in both economic planning units and line ministries, through regular internal training exercises that include the participation of NGOs. Although this study emphasizes the value of the monitoring role of civil society in sustaining the demand of initiatives which seek to integrate gender into macroeconomic policy, the ultimate responsibility of governments cannot be overlooked. In order to build consensus among government planners and economists, initiatives such as this must underscore the value of gender aware-planning to economic growth, and to economic and human well-being.

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**"Planning remains a largely financial exercise based more on historical monetary values than on informed socio-economic research"**



Photo: Marco Gatica/El Mercurio

**The Social Accounting Matrix (SAM) is one of the more useful tools of economic research. The matrix can be used for policy analysis and economic planning, and offers an efficient means of summarizing complex economic relationships and identifying gaps in statistical information.**



## *II. Making gender indicators available for policy-making*

### *“Identifying Caribbean-specific Gender Indicators”*

The need to develop systems of gender statistics to monitor changes in the situation of women as against that of men has led to the recognition of the vital importance of selecting indicators that are appropriate for this purpose. This fact has been acknowledged in the Beijing Platform for Action which recommended that governments, statistical institutes, and the United Nations agencies collect, compile, analyse and present on a regular basis data disaggregated by age, sex, socio-economic and other relevant indicators. The United Nations was specially requested to promote the further development of statistical methods to improve data that relate to women in economic, social, cultural and political development. This mandate was reinforced by the twenty-third special session of the general assembly: “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century” (Beijing +5).

Responding to this mandate, the Women and Development Unit of ECLAC, Santiago, in close collaboration with the Statistics and Economic Projections Division and the Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE) and with financial support from the Government of Italy, UNIFEM and UNFPA, has been executing an interagency project: “Use of gender Indicators in public policy-making”. One of the main objectives of this project is to provide governments, researchers, and persons interested in the situation of women and men in Latin America and the Caribbean with access to sex disaggregated information for each country, and allow comparison with other countries in the region for the purpose of gender analysis. In this context, activities have been carried out for constructing an integrated and flexible system of gender indicators. The information is available on the website <http://www.eclac.cl/mujer/proyectos/indicadores/Edefault.htm>.

In September 2004, with financial support from UNFPA, the project was extended to the Caribbean for the creation of a database of Gender Indicators for the Caribbean. This database would fulfill the objective of creating a database of gender indicators that could be utilized by policy makers in the Caribbean for the creation of gender-sensitive socio-economic policies. The database would also be comparable, as far as possible, to the database constructed for Latin America, thus allowing cross-regional and cross-country gender analysis. However, differences in access to resources; differences in institutional statistical capacity and specific cultural characteristics required that assessments of the indicators be made in order to select those that were both relevant to the Caribbean and available for presentation in the required format.

A final list of 66 indicators was selected for the construction of the database. Due to issues related to data availability, the database targeted 14 of the 23 member countries of the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, with the aim of providing a template that would result in the future collection of data for the remaining countries. In some cases, such as the Dominican Republic and Cuba, data for these countries have been included as part of the Latin American database. In the case of the non-independent countries (Anguilla, Aruba, the British Virgin Islands, the Netherlands Antilles, Puerto Rico and the United States Virgin Islands), these territories are governed by laws originating from the countries to which they belong concerning the release of country data.

The final set of indicators selected for the database is listed below.

## Household

1. Distribution of household heads by age groups
2. Composition of household heads by age groups
3. Composition of households by sex of head of household and type of household
4. Distribution of households by sex of head of household and type of household
5. Most frequent relationship to head of household by age group
6. Composition of heads of household
7. Heads of households according to presence of spouse in Household (marital status)
8. Dependency ratio (Population census dataset)
9. Dependency ratio (Projections & estimates)
10. Dependency ratio by sex of head of household
11. Heads of household according to presence of children in household aged 0-6; 7-14; 15-19;
12. Number of persons in household by sex of head of household

## Population/Demography

13. Total population by sex (Pop. Census)
14. Total population by sex (Projections and Estimates)
15. Total population by sex and 5-year age groups (Pop. Census)
16. Total population by sex and 5-year age groups (Projections and Estimates)
17. Annual growth rates (population)
18. Crude birth rates
19. Crude death rates
20. Life Expectancy at birth
21. Infant mortality rates per 1000 live births
22. Child mortality rates per 1000 live births
23. Adult mortality
24. Distribution of population 60 years and over (Pop. Census)
25. Distribution of population 60 years and over (Projections and Estimates)
26. Composition of population 60 years and over (Pop. Census)
27. Composition of population 60 years and over (Projections and Estimates)
28. Female Sex Ratio of population by age group

## Poverty

29. Population by age groups and socioeconomic status
30. Population by sex and socioeconomic status
31. Ratio of females to males by socioeconomic status
32. Distribution of heads of households by sex and socioeconomic status
33. Composition of heads of Households by socioeconomic status

## Fertility

34. Total fertility rates (by five year periods or five year age groups) 1980-2005
35. (World Population Prospects)
36. Total fertility rates (1980-2000) (World Bank – Gender Stats.)
37. Adolescent fertility rates (15-19 years old) 1970-2025

## Education

38. Total illiteracy rates (15 years and older) 1980, 1990, 2000
39. Level of education of youths aged 15-19

## Work

40. Unemployment rates by sex
41. Labour Force Participation rates by sex
42. Rate of domestic activity

## Labour Force Participation

43. Distribution of Labour force by age group
44. Composition of Labour force by age group;
45. Distribution of Labour force by level of education;
46. Composition of Labour force by level of education;

## Employed labour force

47. Composition of the employed labour force by age groups 15 years and older
48. Distribution of the employed labour force by age groups 15 years and older
49. Composition of the employed labour force by economic activity;
50. Distribution of the employed labour force economic activity;
51. Composition of the employed labour force by occupational categories;
52. Distribution of the employed labour force occupational categories;
53. Composition of the employed labour force by sector of employment
54. Distribution of the employed labour force sector of employment
55. Composition of employed by level of education
56. Distribution of employed by level of education

## Unemployed labour force

57. Distribution of the unemployed by age group by sex

## Health

58. Estimate of Maternal Mortality
59. Health Insurance Coverage by quintile and sex
60. Estimated prevalence of HIV among 15-49 years old by sex
61. Percentage of pregnant women assisted by trained personnel during their pregnancy

## Women's Empowerment

62. Proportion of women in Parliament
63. Ministers of government by sex

## Economy

64. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita
65. External Debt
66. External Debt as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product

The information is available on the website:

<http://www.eclac.cl/mujer/proyectos/indicadores/Edefault.htm>.



The project also analysed the weaknesses and strengths of the sources and availability of data in the Caribbean. It makes the point that the statistical capacity for social statistics in the Caribbean is generally weak. A rapid assessment of the infrastructure for social statistics, conducted by the Social Development Unit of the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean revealed that the human resource capacity of National Statistical Offices, as well as the availability of financial and technical resources for the collection and processing of data present the greatest challenge to the production of social statistics in the subregion. This picture is variable, however, and some countries have relatively stronger statistical capacity than others.

### Sources of data

Jamaica stands out in this regard since this is the only country in the English-speaking Caribbean that boasts of country poverty assessments that have been conducted on an annual basis since 1988, providing time series data for various indicators that are unavailable for other countries.

For most of the other countries in the region, the Population Census is the main source of social statistics. Country Poverty Assessments (CPAs) have also been conducted in a few countries with the assistance of the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) and the Department for International Development (DFID). While these CPAs are potentially rich sources of data on living conditions and poverty status, only nine countries have conducted these surveys, and so far none of them, with the exception of Belize, which recently completed its second CPA, has more than one data point available. Labour Force Surveys (LFS) and Reproductive Health Surveys are produced on an irregular basis and are generally not up-to-date. Financial and personnel constraints has been cited as obstacles to the conduct of the Reproductive Health Surveys.

Vital statistics are an important source of data for births and deaths. Almost all of the countries have vital statistics that are updated on an annual basis. Research suggests, however, that the methodologies used for the collection of these statistics need to be harmonized, since the different methods of collating data can result in an inability to compare this data when collected at the country level. Vital statistics are also not usually available in micro data format.

The ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean has constructed databases of available datasets in the region, obtained from countries that have agreed to use the organization as a repository for its data. The databases currently hold the 1990/1991 Population and Housing Census for 14 CARICOM countries, and the 2000/2001 Population and Housing Census for Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, and Saint Lucia. Aggregated census data for this period has been received from the Netherlands Antilles. The database also includes Surveys of Living Conditions (SLC), and Labour Force Data. In the case of the Survey of Living Conditions, the datasets from Belize, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia and St Vincent and the Grenadines are most comparable and manipulable. Due to the size of the population and survey from Jamaica, the dataset has been split into smaller datasets. It has been recognized that re-linking the datasets require technical information related to the link variables. Countries had initially expressed reservations about depositing its data outside of the statistical offices since the small size of countries meant that individuals in the population could be easily identified when they belonged to unique groups. However, the benefits of having a second repository for its data, in case of natural disasters, convinced governments to share its data, with the caveat that they were the only ones authorized to allow users access to disaggregated data, with the Subregional office acting as facilitator of these requests.

Another source of data for the development of the Caribbean-specific gender indicators are publications of international and regional organizations. These sources of data have been used to provide standardized, comparable indicators. The international and regional sources of these indicators include publications of the International Labour Organisation (ILO); the Pan-American

**“Statistical capacity for social statistics in the Caribbean is generally weak”**



*Suriname lost a lot of its data in a fire, just after completing the field-work for its 2000/2001 Population and Housing Census.*

Jamaica is the only country in the English-speaking Caribbean that boasts of country poverty assessments that have been conducted on an annual basis since 1988, providing time series data for various indicators that are unavailable for other countries.

Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO) in the Caribbean; the Caribbean Epidemiological Centre (CAREC); the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); the United Nations Statistical Division; and UNDP.

#### Availability of indicators

The report notes that the poor availability of social statistical data for the development of social indicators is reflected in an even worse situation regarding availability of gender indicators. This is because gender indicators depend on social statistics for their development and, more importantly, there has been little appreciation of the need for gender analysis of social issues by most policy makers and researchers. There has however been a push, largely from Women's Bureaus and by feminist researchers and activists, for a robust body of indicators with which to conduct gender analysis and monitor and evaluate programmes for the advancement and empowerment of women and girls.

In terms of comparable indicators, a number of challenges have been revealed. The first challenge is that even when countries attempt to construct and present gender indicators from a country perspective, there is no core set of indicators, which they can use as a guideline for this construction. As a result, each country tends to collect different indicators based on the guidance of the responsible officer at the time of production and presentation of these indicators. This absence of a core group of gender indicators has implications for the ability of researchers to construct regional gender indicators. Another important area needed for the construction of comparable indicators is the harmonization of data. The harmonization of data includes: (i) the classification of methods and procedures for data collection and processing that are compatible with each other; and (ii) the standardization of terminologies, sampling procedures, classification systems, methods of quality control and quality assurance, and data reliability indices.

These are some of the issues of harmonization, which impact on the processing of data for the construction of indicators, and which must be dealt with if the Caribbean is to benefit from the production of robust, comparable indicators that can be used in policy-making throughout the region, as well as the sharing of best practices in the collection of data.

The project also critiqued the relative strengths and weaknesses of data on poverty, reproductive health, work and income, education, household (headship and relationship of household members to household head) as well as demographic data.

#### Conclusion

Every attempt to construct indicators using survey data in the Caribbean is an opportunity to strengthen existing capacity in the subregion for the collection and construction of more robust indicators. The project has pointed to the need for further strengthening of data collection and processing, as important stages in the construction of reliable indicators.

Further, the importance of poverty indicators for planning and the formulation of policy cannot be overstated. There must be increased support for the conduct of more poverty surveys in order to create time series data and gain greater understanding of the living conditions of the populations in the subregion. Sampling must also take account of the need to analyze data for subpopulations, thus creating the need for larger samples than are currently used. The importance of collecting sex-disaggregated data must also be underscored, since this is an important, although not the only, step in the construction of gender indicators.

Apart from technical considerations, there is a need to highlight the importance of understanding the cultural specificities of countries in the subregion. This understanding impacts greatly on the collection of data and inevitably on the ability of the researcher to construct and analyze indicators. This understanding and sensitivity also goes beyond the ability to interpret and analyze data and extends also to collaboration efforts that lead to the overall improvement of survey instruments, data processing and construction of indicators. Sharing of best practices can result in an improved product, especially as it relates to issues of harmonization, and sometimes standardization of variables and values. Documentation of current practices is also important if users are to understand the data that are presently available.

There are some clear Information Technology issues to be dealt with, which would make the datasets more amenable to the

construction of new indicators. These include the pulling together of the modules of the Jamaica Survey of Living utilizing the services of someone who is familiar with the appropriate link variables for doing so.

Finally, there is also a need to investigate how the existing datasets that have no clear unique ID (identification) for the aggregation of variables in the personal dataset to the level of the household can be manipulated or processed to allow such aggregation. This is a very useful tool for the creation of many interesting indicators and efforts should be made to investigate the extent to which it is possible to create unique IDs for the datasets that already exist.



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**ECLAC**

- Spanish version
- Country profiles
- Regional indicators
- Millennium Summit indicators
- Beijing indicators
- Inventory of gender indicators
- Related information
- Women and Development Unit

Governments, researchers, and people interested in knowing about the situation of women and men in Latin America and The Caribbean will find on this site all the information available for each country, disaggregated by sex, and a compared overview of the whole region.

**Criteria for the selection of indicators**

The selection of the indicators presented in country profiles was based on the necessity that these fulfilled simultaneously three requirements. Firstly, they must represent some of the principal social dimensions in which gender inequalities, identified by the Regional Programme of Action for the Women of Latin America and The Caribbean (1995-2001) and the Beijing Platform for Action, are expressed. Secondly, they must be shared by every country, and finally, they must reflect the present situation with the latest statistical information compared among countries and validated by the ECLAC and the specialised international organisations.

**Types of indicators**

The selected indicators are **quantitative**, presented in relative values for males and females, gender gaps for each pertinent indicator are not presented. Nevertheless, they may be easily calculated from the difference between the value of a female indicator and the value of a male indicator.

They are **result** indicators, i.e., they reflect inequalities produced as a consequence of the behaviour of structural factors that are found on the basis of gender relationships.

They are of **diagnosis**, they give a global and synthesised view of the relative situation of women at a specific point in time through a group of indicators that cover partially social subjects in which inequality is expressed. Therefore, it is a partial diagnosis due to the fact that the production of statistics for some subjects, especially the emergent ones, is still incipient.

<http://www.eclac.cl/mujer/proyectos/indicadores/Edefault.htm>

\* The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean wishes to acknowledge the assistance of Lynette Joseph-Brown in the preparation of the report.

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*The Statistics and Social Development Unit of the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean has as its focus the conduct of research and analysis on the areas of women and development; population and development, (migration and teenage fertility), poverty, and other social development issues such as the conditions of vulnerable groups in the society, social reform and social policy formulation. In this regard, the ECLAC/CDCC Secretariat is responsible for assisting member States with the implementation of programmes of action coming out of international conferences such as the World Summit for Social Development (WSSD); the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), and the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing Conference).*



Group Picture, ECLAC Staff Members, September 2005



## *Gender Dialogue*



GENDER DIALOGUE was created in response to calls from participants at the Third Caribbean Ministerial Meeting on Women, held in Trinidad and Tobago in October 1999, for a more systematic sharing of information and dialogue around policies and programmes for women. In addition to this call we, too, at the ECLAC/CDCC Secretariat, have felt the need for a medium through which we could routinely share our work.

The newsletter is available both in print form and at the ECLAC website. We are exploring as well, the creation of a chat room to expand the possibilities for dynamic dialogue.

## *Contact Us*

Please feel free to send your contributions and feedback to:  
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